

SOLE E OMBRA: A STUDY OF SIXTEENTH CENTURY HUMOURISM AND GROTESQUE THROUGH THE
WORKS OF ANTONFRANCESCO GRAZZINI, L'ACCADEMIA DEGLI HUMIDI, AND L'ACCADEMIA DEGLI
INFIAMMATI

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Abstract

This doctoral dissertation is an interdisciplinary engagement with two intellectual circles of the early to mid-sixteenth century - the *Accademia degli Umidi* in Florence and the *Accademia degli Infiammati* in Padua - that examines the historical and literary interaction of these groups' key members in an increasingly tense cultural climate. It is primarily a literary exercise in textual interpretation and intertextual analysis to three ends. The first is the identification of the intellectual trends common to both groups, which contribute to the creation of a literary genre related to the larger traditions of realism and the grotesque. The second is the relation of this literary genre to the history of medical discourse. The last is the examination of these trends as anticipations of the *sentimento del contrario* at the heart of Luigi Pirandello's early twentieth century theory of humourism and the *teatro del grottesco*.

The main point of interest across my analysis is Antonfrancesco Grazzini. As one of the founding members of the *Accademia degli umidi*, his works – poetic, prosaic, and dramatic - speak to both the environment of rivalry inherent to artistic production of his time, and to a growing engagement with discourse on the four bodily humours and earthly elements. The latter of these, I argue, both signals a shift, in Italian literature, from the introspective and lyrical to the social, prosaic, and performative, and provides a more substantial link to the twentieth century and Pirandello's humourism.

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Many translations of the texts I examine and any errors, discrepancies, or oversights therein and more generally, it goes without saying, are exclusively and entirely my own.

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Introduction

Overlooking the grounds on which the Medicean Villa of Pratolino once stood is Jean de Boulogne's celebrated Appenine Colossus. Built between 1579 and 1580 and commissioned by the young Francesco I de' Medici more than ten years after his purchase of the lands surrounding it, the seated giant, aged and bearded, right arm between his knees, towers forty-five meters over the man-made lake beneath him into which water he squeezes out of a defeated dragon's mouth underfoot flows. Arguably Giambologna's masterpiece, though not the work for which he is best known, the *Colosso* exemplifies the defining aesthetic of these Medici grounds. The regenerative and purifying properties of water central to Giambologna's giant soon become not only the focal point of Bernardo Buontalenti's general design of the lands and its gardens, but an extended allegory of the Medici family's influence and power both in Florence and beyond.

Giambologna's massive creation also recalls and draws attention to a series of stylistic and philosophical principles that dominate Florentine culture, under the Medici rule, from the death of Alessandro de' Medici in 1537 onward. An on-site description of the *Colossus* at present-day Villa Demidoff sees in its symbolic relevance and in the submission of the dragon under the giant's foot the triumph of intellect over instinct. But Giambologna's creation also speaks to larger issues that, by the time of its installation, had made their way into mainstream discourse: the dialogue among the planet's four elements – earth, air, fire, and water –, the competition between opposing and hostile forces, the presence and significance of the grotesque, marvelous, or anomalous, and the relationship between youth and old age, tradition and trend, republic and dukedom. In short, alongside a number of works commissioned to glorify the life and accomplishments of Francesco's

father, Cosimo I de' Medici, Giambologna's giant encapsulates what for decades before him constitute the most important literary and political debates of central and northern Italy.

At the heart of this artistic climate and the complex tensions it generates are two central-northern Italian academies and the acerbic relationship between them. 1540 witnesses the birth first of the *Accademia degli Infiammati* in Padua, and soon thereafter, of the *Accademia degli Humidi* in Florence. In name as in purpose and, at least initially, structure, the formation of the latter is intended to be a response to and reaction against the former it deems to be a pedantic adherent to strict humanistic practices in an era of literary growth and experimentation elsewhere. The animosity between these two groups – notwithstanding their shared members – in fact stems from a growing skepticism in all literary circles, and theirs specifically, about the definition, nature, importance, and utility of the humanistic tendencies they inherit from generations preceding them both immediately and by decades. While the *Infiammati* see themselves as enlightened reformers of a tradition grown stale in the formal and restrictive environment of the Paduan studio, to the *Humidi*, still more resistant to humanistic conservatism, they seem nothing more than the natural extension of it in a renewed and less formal literary setting.

Although there is no shortage of scholarship on humanism, its many definitions, and the various reactions it generates, relatively little has been written, to date, either about the *Infiammati* as an independent society or about their interaction with the more renowned and better studied *Fiorentina*. Still fewer are the attempts made to link these two societies not only by their members or shared historical framework, but by their common influences and, often, mutual contribution to or reaction against a trend they help to define: the Renaissance grotesque. Valerio Vianello's studies of the Florentine *fuorusciti* (or politically

exiled communities), the academic communities they come to form, and of Sperone Speroni's role within them are among the most notable and important contributions to the study of the societies surrounding the *Infiammati* and promoting their eventual formation. Not since his articles from the 1980s, however, has any significant scholarship been produced on the *Infiammati* circle. To date, Richard S. Samuels's 1976 article, "Benedetto Varchi, the Accademia degli Infiammati, and the Origins of the Italian Academic Movement," is still the first and perhaps best point of reference not only on the formation of the *Infiammati*, but on their direct influence on the *Humidi* to follow.

Much more has been written, however, on the *Humidi* circle, and much of it in recent years. Like the *Infiammati*, the *Fiorentina* came under the biggest amount of contemporary critical scrutiny in the late 1970s and 1980s, but often in either exclusively historical or exclusively literary terms; when they were not studied as Cosimo I's personal propagandistic tool, they were viewed in connection with comic and burlesque literature. The past ten years, however, have witnessed a proliferation of studies related to the members of the *Humidi* academy. Domenico Zanrè's *Cultural Non-Conformity in Early Modern Florence* (2004) is in many ways an updated and more ambitious take on Robert J. Rodini's 1970 *Antonfrancesco Grazzini. Poet, Dramatist, and Novelliere. 1503-1584*. Both prove indispensable to an in-depth examination of Grazzini and the intellectual connections that most influence his work. Ian F. McNeely's 2009 article, "The Renaissance Academies Between Science and the Humanities," necessarily complicates a reading of these and other academic societies as strictly literary groups, perhaps in response to Michael Sherberg's focus on language and Granducal politics in his 2003 article, "The Accademia Fiorentina and the Question of the Language: The Politics of Theory in Ducal Florence." Increasingly with an eye to both societies here discussed, Michel Plaisance has

also published a number of seminal studies on Grazzini, the *Humidi* more generally and, more recently, the members of the *Infiammati*, all between 2002 and 2011. Still, the intertext -more than the interaction - between these circles remains a point of interest beyond the scope of contemporary research. It is precisely here that I wish to begin this study of elemental discourse, humour, and literary genre.

To examine the interaction of the *Infiammati* and the *Humidi* and the source of their dissent, it will be necessary to review their humanistic heritage and the advent of literary academies in response to it. The “humanist” program predominates most literature from Petrarch to the seventeenth-century pastoral, despite various strands of anti-humanism that come against it over the centuries. The definitions of and debates surrounding “Humanism” as a term are varied and lengthy. Paul Oskar Kristeller calls it a revival of interest in the Ancient past, a return to forms of Classical learning, and the widespread institution of the Liberal Arts.¹ Eugenio Garin identifies it as a period of sustained attempts, among literary and historical figures, at active self-actualisation through the imitation of the Ancients – the means to the formation of the good, cultured, refined, well rounded, and exemplary citizen.² Hans Baron associates the term with political action and

¹ When Kristeller speaks of the Liberal Arts, he refers not – or not only – to the well-known division of seven subjects into trivium (grammar, rhetoric, logic) and quadrivium (geometry, arithmetic, music, astronomy); rather, he defines them as “a clearly defined cycle of scholarly disciplines, namely grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and moral philosophy” often physically manifested in “documents, letters, and public speeches” (Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, ed. Michael Mooney (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979) 22, 24).

² Garin writes, “Ciò che caratterizza lo spirito di tutta l’educazione umanistica è l’esigenza della formazione dell’uomo integrale, buon cittadino, e se occorre, buon soldato, ma, insieme, uomo colto, di buon gusto, che sa godere della bellezza e sa gustare della vita.” Later in the same essay and along the same lines, he writes, “Questa fu l’educazione umanistica: non, come a volte si crede, studio grammaticale e retorico fine a se stesso, bensì formazione di una coscienza davvero umana, aperta in ogni direzione attraverso la

social engagement oriented toward a desired return to Ancient Rome.³ Still other schools of thought consider Humanism an entirely individualistic and irreligious movement characterised mostly by “una specie di ribellismo preriformistico, una sorta di stridente, cinico immanentismo che reagirebbe ad ogni autorità e riscoprirebbe un orgoglioso individualismo.”⁴ This last definition is the one most heavily and frequently contested by contemporary scholars who almost unequivocally agree that what is most essential to the humanist movement or program is a concern with Antiquity, the imitation of Classical form, and the desirability of a return to a more ideal past.

In concrete terms, this label translates to a variety of literary behaviours and practices that evolve over time, and with the times. In fifteenth century Florence, it is characteristically expressed in the ambitions and exercises of the *studio fiorentino* or the Platonic Academy of Florence, Marsilio Ficino at its center. The primary concern of this literary group is, of course, the reconciliation of Christianity and pagan influence via the study of Plato and the neo-Platonists. Their return to Antiquity is located in their appreciation of the philosophical ancient past and in their application of ancient thought and rhetoric to growing literary trends, even in the face of strong Medici patronage. Writers like Angelo Poliziano capitalize on the returned popularity of pagan traditions to increase

consapevolezza storico-critica della tradizione culturale,” Eugenio Garin, “L’educazione umanistica,” *La letteratura italiana. Per saggi storicamente disposti*, 2 vols., vol. 2, *Il quattrocento*, eds. Lanfranco Caretti and Giorgio Luti (Milano: Mursia editore, 1975) 15-18, 15, 18. Christopher Celenza offers a comparable explanation of humansim in his, “Humanism and the Classical Tradition” wherein he asserts “To be ‘humane’ (*humanus*) meant not only to be a human being but also to have exercised one’s capacity as a human being to the fullest through learning” (*Annali d’Italianistica* 26 (2008), 25-49).

³ Hans Baron, *In search of Florentine Civic Humanism. Essays on the Transition from Medieval to Modern Thought*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) 134-139.

⁴ A type of pre-Reform rebellion, a kind of derisive, cynical transcendentalism that reacts to every authority and reveals a proud individualism. (Giulio Vallese, “Il ‘Morgante’ e l’antiumanesimo del Pulci,” *Italica* 3.2 (1953): 81-86, 82).

their favour with the Medici clan; his *Stanze per la giostra* are just one example of a literature aimed to align the Medici family with Ancient greatness. Further north, in Padua's studio and, perhaps to a lesser extent, in Venice, and at the other end of the Renaissance philosophical spectrum, it becomes associated with and evidenced by a growing proclivity toward naturalism and the study of Thomistic and Aristotelian belief systems, and the incorporation and explication of such belief systems. More generally, however, in both places as in other centers of important erudite exchange, the defining characteristic of literary examination and production is the study and appreciation of systems of thought – and style – past, remembered and, occasionally, reinvented.

Still, despite its stronghold over most intellectual activity from the late fourteenth century onward, Humanism as a general philosophy and methodology does not go unchallenged. Neither are its first opponents members of the *Humidi* clan.⁵ One century earlier, Luigi Pulci, a case in point, displays a similar disengagement from the trends central to the works of many of his contemporaries. One of Pulci's most antagonistic relationships is, in fact, with Marsilio Ficino.⁶ Pulci, "ignaro di latino e di classici, noncurante delle tradizioni trecentesche ... e legato indubbiamente, nel suo dispregio di problemi religiosi, aristotelico-tomistici o platonico-ficiniani, alla miscredenza degli israeliti fiorentini, e

⁵ Teofilo Folengo, in Padua and Venice in the 1520s and 1530s is another notable contemporary of Grazzini's and Aretino (and in frequent contact with the latter) with a similar though by no means identical literary project. He has been likened, and more than once, to Pulci (see, for instance, Jefferson Butler Fletcher, *Literature of the Italian Renaissance* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1934) 243), and has been called "troppo anticortigiano, antiletterario, anticurialesco ... per non venire emarginato dall'oppsto spirito della critica aristotelica e dal gusto classicistico imperante" of his time (*La letteratura italiana, storia e testi*, dir. da Raffaele Mattioli, Pietro Pancrazi e Alfredo Schiaffini, vol. 26, tomo 1: *Folengo, Aretino, Doni: Teofilo Folengo* (Milano: Ricciardi editore, 1976?), "Nota introduttiva," p. XIII).

⁶ See Edoardo A. Lebano, "Luigi Pulci and Late Fifteenth-Century Humanism in Florence," *Renaissance Quarterly* 27.4 (1974): 489-98.

all'averroismo scientifico e al naturalismo padovano" undoubtedly butts heads both with the Florentine academy around him and its clear emphasis on classical learning, and its Paduan counterpart.⁷ Pulci's position with respect to his peers, as Giorgio Vallese sees, it has been challenged and, to a degree, disproven since the publication of his article in 1953.⁸ Most scholars agree, however, that despite his position as official writer at the Medici court, Pulci displays no interest in participating fully in the Florentine humanism surrounding him, and instead chooses to focus his efforts, especially notable in his *Morgante*, on the celebration of the "comico e burlesco di uomini e d'ambienti."⁹

Reducing the problem of Humanism to its very core, much of the tension between what might be termed the "Pulci camp" and its opposing "Ficino camp" lingers well beyond the deaths of both authors and influences the movement, regrouping, and motives of writers for generations. The early sixteenth century sees a proliferation of Italian academies that only becomes more pronounced with time. Though by no means a new concept, the Italian academy as often skeptical "anti-institutional institution" becomes increasingly popular toward the end of the fifteenth century in many writers' turn away

⁷ Ignorant of Latin and the classics, heedless of the traditions of the Trecento ... and, in his contempt of aristotelic-thomistic or platonico-ficinian religious questions, undeniably tied to the irreligiousness of the Florentine Israelites, to scientific averroism, and to Paduan naturalism. (Vallese 83.)

⁸ see Paolo Orvieto, *Pulci medievale* (Roma, Salerno editrice, 1978). Paolo Orvieto, in his 1978 book *Pulci medievale*, identifies a number of medieval *topoi* influential to Pulci's *Morgante*, his most canonical poem, and outlines the ways in which they are modified and transformed in this context. Indeed, Vallese's claim that the *Morgante* was pieced together and inspired by "motivi cavallereschi che trovava rozzamente aggruppati o ingenuamente pariodati in cantari anonimi" speaks as much to Pulci's turn to medieval models in his writing as much to his appreciation for sources of popular entertainment rather than erudite example.

⁹ the comic and burlesque [properties] of men and [their] environments (Vallese 83-84. For more on Pulci's appreciation of the burlesque and the grotesque, see Mark Davie, "Luigi Pulci's *Stanze per la giostra*: Verse and Prose Accounts of a Florentine Joust of 1469," *Italian Studies* 44 (1989): 41-58).

from the formal *studio*.¹⁰ In most early cases, these are informal collections of likeminded individuals working toward a common goal not always explicitly or overtly articulated. Later, and with the creation of the *Infiammati* and later still, *Fiorentina*, this term takes on more charged implications.

Annibale Caro, Matteo Franzesi, and Francesco Berni in Rome, however, might be considered a primary example of the former kind of academy; all adherents to the “Pulci camp” and concerned with the comic, realistic, and burlesque, their literary production is defined in terms not only of each other, but of their collective resistance to competing trends around them. Toward the end of the 1520s, they and other members of their unofficial sect come into contact and regular conversation with pockets of *fuorusciti* scholars: men of letters expelled voluntarily or by force from their native Florence and in constant transit among Italy’s most important courts and cultural centers, eventually settling in other, more organized academies there. Most famous among them is Benedetto Varchi, who, traveling frequently between Padua and Florence, later becomes the lynchpin in the association between the academies under examination formed there. Others notably include Pietro Aretino and Lodovico Dolce in Venice, alongside native of the Veneto, Sperone Speroni.¹¹ This conversation in many ways facilitates the consequences that naturally follow it. The “freelance” *fuorusciti* soon also become divided on the issue of

¹⁰ see C.S. Celenza, “Academy,” in A. Grafton, G. Most, and S. Settis, eds., *The Classical Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010) 1-3. There, Celenza traces the history of the term from its earliest use with Plato to the 19th century and outlines its various definitions. Chief among them are the conception of the academy as a substitution for institutionalized learning, and as a profoundly skeptical assembly of individuals – also in Platonic terms.

¹¹ S. Longhi, “La poesia burlesca, satirica, didascalica” in *Manuale di Letteratura Italiani: Storia per generi e problemi*, vol. 2, *Dal cinquecento alla metà del settecento*, a cura di Franco Brioschi e Costanzo Di Girolamo (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 1994) 293- 304.

Humanism and the promotion of humanist thought and activity. Some, and perhaps the larger part, see in Caro's and Berni's literary renewal of the burlesque an opportunity for innovation beyond the confines of the by then centuries-old humanism to which they have become accustomed. Others view it as a mere distraction from more important literary and philosophical matters more worthy of intellectual men.

This growing movement toward *anti*-humanism, then, only somewhat successful, largely defines the interactions and central concerns of many of the early sixteenth century's academies and academic leaders. It is at the core of the conflict, albeit mostly artificial, as will be shown, between the *Infiammati* and the *Humidi*. Each fancies itself a pioneer in its field. But the *Infiammati*'s insistence on Aristotelian and Ptolomaic teaching and imitation of classical models and tropes both in rhetoric and in theatre seem outdated to the *Humidi*, chief among them Antonfrancesco Grazzini, whose playful exchange of verse in reaction against the humanist circles around them comes across to the *Infiammati* as frivolous and shallow. Superficially, these groups seem entirely and exclusively at odds with each other, both in terms of purpose and of style. The circumstances leading up to and surrounding the creation of these academies, however, suggest a more complicated relationship between them; indeed, many members of the *Infiammati* – some part of its founding circle – were, at one time or another, also members of the *Umidi*.¹² As well, the significant overlap of members belonging to both academies and their literary production indicates an at least occasional if not consistently shared interest in similar literary genres.

Indeed, a closer reading of their works in relation to each other and to others that follow reveals a much richer and more complex relationship between these two groups.

¹² Varchi was one of these. Interestingly, his pseudonym within the *Accademia degli Umidi* was “L’Infiammato.”

Both in correspondence and in artistic works, some theatrical, these authors enter a documented “gioco di proposte e risposte”¹³ which in many ways not only reshapes the literary landscape of their time, but also challenges the purposes and limitations of the academies to which they belong and of academic organizations more generally.¹⁴ Growing out of and, at times, away from the humanist tradition that informs the largest portion of their production, they eventually generate a literature that decisively breaks with previous literary models and heavily influences the literary production of the following centuries, all the way, indeed, until the early Novecento. In other words, the rivalry between the *Infiammati* and the *Umidi* academies unhinges one of the *filoni rossi* of Italian literature until then and, reshaping it, recycles it in a new form more accessible to future generations of writers.

The seeds of this transformation lie in two separate but related fields of interest to the Renaissance writer. The first, and a tribute to humanist education, is the study of or general preoccupation with the four earthly elements and bodily humours, which lends itself to both academies’ names. The study of the humours predates even the earliest recorded academic activity, and begins with Galen’s and Hippocrates’ studies and belief in humoral balance. To both early medical theorists, a proper balance of blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm in a human body promotes overall health, but an excess of any of

¹³ Game of propositions and responses

¹⁴ Ibid, 295. On the question of the term *academy* more generally, see C.S. Celenza, “Academy,” in A. Grafton, G. Most, and S. Settis, eds., *The Classical Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010) 1-3. There, Celenza traces the history of the term from its earliest use with Plato to the 19th century and outlines its various definitions (most interestingly to my purposes the nuanced meanings the term held in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) from the expression of likemindedness to the physical gathering place of a group of intellectuals. What is, I think, essential to retain in the context of this paper is the tendency, as Celenza notes it, of Renaissance humanists and later to form academies in order to avoid or substitute with them institutionalized learning (2).

these entails drastic health consequences on its victim, felt physically as well as mentally and emotionally. Italian literature from the Duecento onward sees a high concentration in literature influenced primarily by the surplus of one of these four humours, black bile, and the condition it generates: melancholy. This literature, perhaps best exemplified by Petrarch in his *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, is characteristically lyrical, introspective, and equivocal. For centuries, from Dante to Ficino, melancholy assumes a central position in artistic production and immediately becomes associated with the genius or the man of great intellect. But the social climate surrounding the *Infiammati* and the *Humidi* as well as their inherent antagonism toward each other lends itself to a different kind of literary thought influenced by a series of humoral relations that fundamentally point to the literary dominance of another of the four humours, yellow bile, and its associated disease, cholera. At the core of this switch, as I will argue, is a sustained jealousy among rivaling academics. A symptom of the choleric tradition as well as a consequence of literary debate, this jealousy, as a subset of love, becomes a principal point of discussion among academics in their ongoing war of words.

Indeed, in the social dimension of early sixteenth century circulation of ideas lies the second seed of what I suggest to be the definitive literary transformation it introduces. The rebirth of “realism” in a new, social sphere, where spectator participation is just as necessary to the successful interpretation of a work of art as the individual author’s skill factors heavily into the production of texts and performances no longer concerned with detached introspection, but with social interaction. In this budding milieu of increasing intellectual exchange not only within individual academies but among them, the “progetto dell’io” rendered famous by desert monks and their later secular followers quickly gives

way to a spectacular “progetto d'intrattenimento dell'altro” whose primary function is to entertain its public, often in the most ribald fashion. What the literature of this period witnesses, then, is a change in “mood” – from melancholic to choleric, from private to public – the effects of which linger well beyond the eventual collapse of the *Infiammati* and *Humidi* circles.

This change of “mood” is also invariably linked to the academics’ contribution to specific literary genres – the “ghiribizzo,” and the “grotesque” - rooted in the burlesque tradition more than once qualified as “capricious:” a style that presents itself, at least through poetry, as a genre of “things” reacting against the “words” privileged by the lyric tradition.¹⁵ This opposition of the concrete to the theoretical is not new to academics in either circle. It becomes, however, a key element of their interaction; the “capriccio” with which it is concerned over the course of the early to mid sixteenth century steadily grows into a distinct artistic style that rivals its equivalent in the visual arts and that becomes increasingly associated with the composition not only of “realistic” texts, but of “humourous” texts.¹⁶

This designation – “humourous” – enjoys a variety of related significances. At its most straightforward, it refers to literature aiming only to entertain by way of laughter. But historically, it also points to any literary production at all concerned with or dominated by the influence of any of the four humours, the passage from one to another, or the interaction among them. Pushing ahead, it looks forward to and to some degree anticipates

¹⁵ “I *capricci* e le *fantasie* burlesche si presentano come poesia delle ‘cose’ contro le ‘parole’ usurate della tradizione lirica” (Longhi 296); for information on the *capriccio*, mannerism, and anti-classical thought, see Reinhold Grimm, “From Callot to Butor. E.T.A. Hoffman and the Tradition of the Capriccio,” *MLN* 93.3 (1978) 399-415.

¹⁶ As will be seen later, Michelangelo Buonarroti is the primary example of sixteenth-century capriccio, most particularly in his representation of nudes.

what will later constitute the crux of Luigi Pirandello's 1908 theory of humourism that shares its root.

The bridge from sixteenth to nineteenth century humour is, I think, located in this very concept of the *capriccio*; it is worth taking a short detour here, to recall both Pirandello's early 20th century *umorismo* and the "capriccioso" style of writing that is born and takes shape precisely in the 1530s alongside the formation of the academies in question. *The Enciclopedia italiana di scienze, lettere ed arti* calls "il capriccio" the central element of Pirandello's brand of humourism – an interpretive category most saliently and particularly signaled by "il sorridere in mezzo alle lacrime" interpretable within a text belonging to it.¹⁷ Centuries before Pirandello's theory, however, the "capriccio" develops in Italy first as a literary art form, then takes off a century later as a genre primarily associated with visual arts, and later still with music. Though it circulates by various means, the word itself in the context of 16th-century Italy is rendered most famous by its appearance in Vasari's *Lives* and the letters, later appendixes, preceding them. To be sure, Vasari's use of the term "capriccio" is by no means one-dimensional, nor could it have been. Its meanings, the most negative among them inherited from medieval treatises, ranged from a whimsical flight of fancy to the product of divine inspiration – the feverish *furor*, in neo-Platonic thought, so central to artistic genius. Vasari's employment of the term, then, is, accordingly, complicated proportionately to its increasingly acquired charges.¹⁸ Though his most nuanced use of it occurs only in the 1568 edition of his *Lives*, however, "capriccio" first appears in two of his letters dated 1532 and 1534, and in both, refers not to a visual,

¹⁷ Roma: Istituto Giovanni Treccani, 1929-1939, 671-672.

¹⁸ Michelangelo is often cited as an artist whose "capriccio" is most closely linked to neo-Platonic artistic frenzy. For one such example, see Patricia Emison, "The *Ignudo* as Proto-Capriccio," *Word and Image* 14.3 (1998) 281-295.

but – it bears pause – to a *burlesque* literary source.¹⁹ Indeed, the *capriccio* was deemed both a central tenet of burlesque and “realistic” literature and the very defining characteristic of the grotesque. One need only think of Giovan Battista Gelli’s 1546 *I capricci del bottaio* to be reminded of the term’s immediate and explicit application to these irreverent genres.

In her 1980 article, “Le capriccio dans les lettres italiennes,” the late Alice Rathé makes several critical observations on 16th-century “capriccio,” and not least, on its close ties to the works of Gelli and his like-minded peers.²⁰ Her work here is seminal for a number of reasons and too many exhaustively to acknowledge. Most importantly, it establishes a veritable framework for the study of an Italian “scuola capricciosa” - deliberately fashioned - and its influence on not only Italian but also French (and, as Grimm has noted, German) baroque artistic production. Rathé locates the nexus of “capricious” activity in Florence, Venice, and Rome, and calculates the moment of its primary production between 1535 and 1550. She identifies as its major authors some already previously mentioned and others not quite as celebrated, among them Anton Francesco Doni, Francesco Sansovino, and Luigi Tansillo. What she leaves unstated is the belonging of each of the above authors either to the *Accademia degli Umidi* or to its twin and rival, the *Accademia degli Infiammati*.

At the heart of its definition, “capricious” refers to a sudden change in mood – or, perhaps better, humour. Rathé fails to account for – but leaves open to interpretation – both the link between the *capriccio* and its development within these suggestively named

¹⁹ See Alice Rathé, “Le Capriccio dans les écrits de Vasari,” *Italica* 57.4 (1980) 239-254, p. 240. On Vasari’s use and interpretation of “capriccio,” see also Paul Barolsky, “Cellini, Vasari, and the Marvels of Malady,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 24.1 (1993) 41-45.

²⁰ *Les lettres romanes* 34 (1980) 207-245.

academic circles, and, accordingly, the shift from one until then dominant humour (or mood) to a set of others. Michel Plaisance, in his detailed accounts of Italian academies and, more specifically among them, the *Humidi*, studies more closely the interaction between these two sets of Renaissance intellectuals, but fails to position them or their work definitively in the literary tradition of their native land. It is precisely the space between their scholarship that interests me: a space where connecting “capriccio” to grotesque and humour is but a short step away from linking it, next, to Pirandello’s humoural theory. In short, what I hope to show over the course of the next five chapters and following the conversation among *Infiammati* and *Humidi* academics is the evolution of a humourous literary style – and, to an extent, genre – born of elemental discourse in the crossfire of humanist evolution (and devolution), rooted in jealousy, and prescriptive of Pirandello’s later *umorismo*.

The nature, scope, and goals of my dissertation, then, are several-fold. In it, first, I will seek to shed light on the formation of the *Accademia degli Humidi* and that of the *Infiammati*, their most celebrated members, their interaction, their shared networks, and their common characteristics both in the time leading up to their foundation and during their coexistence. Next, analyzing humoural theories from Hippocrates onward, and paying particular attention to elemental discourse present and significant in these academics’ texts, I will aim in concrete and lexical terms to identify the 16th-century shift from privileging melancholy to cholera I maintain exists in the context of these academies. My third chapter will identify jealousy as the reason central to this shift, and will discuss its prevalence in literary discussion among *Infiammati* and *Humidi* members between 1542 and 1557. In my fourth chapter, I examine the consequences of this jealous rivalry on the

creation of a “social grotesque” literature both in prose and in theatre. Finally, and to close, bringing together this social grotesque and the properties of what I will term “choleric writing,” I draw a link to Pirandello’s *umorismo*, to the *sentimento del contrario* at its root, and to the theatre of the grotesque that eventually grows out of it.

To do so, I have chosen to limit my study to a number of texts and, more frequently, authors, I deem most representative of the literary events I examine. My first two chapters consider the *Infiammati* and *Humidi* academies more broadly and speak to a variety of related texts across the vast literary field they define, beginning in 1534 and extending as far as 1566. My particular focus in these early chapters is on Pietro Aretino, Lodovico Dolce, Angelo Firenzuola, and Antonfrancesco Grazzini. My third chapter looks more closely at the interaction among Benedetto Varchi, Sperone Speroni, Alfonso de’ Pazzi, and Antonfrancesco Grazzini between 1542 and 1557 in the increasing discussion of jealousy, love, nature, and discord common to them all and particularly predictive of the social grotesque it later generates. I locate in Grazzini, however, not only the most important example of this rivalry or of the new literary tendencies the academy to which he belongs precipitates, but also of this social grotesque that follows. My fourth chapter, then, concentrates exclusively on his six comedies and twenty-two surviving novelle. In my fifth chapter, and extending my case study of Grazzini and the social marginalization that characterizes most of his work, I read in his *Cene* an effective precursor both to Pirandello’s *umorismo* (as exemplified explicitly by his *Il Fu Mattia Pascal*), and to the early twentieth century’s theatre of the grotesque movement. In it, then, I also consider and examine a select number of grotesque plays particularly evident of the link I see between them and Grazzini’s social milieu.

Given the limited number and availability of monographs or other studies on the academies as ensembles or on their individual members, the greatest part of my literary analysis is based on my interpretation of primary source material taken in a variety of formats. I have chosen to examine, when available, the full range of editions of the texts I read, from manuscripts and autographs to twentieth century publications and critical editions. I have done so in order to identify, when possible and applicable, any meaningful evolutions in the texts over time, any significant marginalia in early editions, and, collating them, any useful discrepancies among them. I have not made the study of this collation a part of my project here; instead, I have used it as a tool to inform my ultimate selection of the texts I cite herein. I focus my study of Grazzini on eighteenth century editions of his plays and novelle by Pietro Fanfani, and of his poetry by Francesco Moücke, since each was the first critical edition of its kind, a collation of previous editions, complete with culturally relevant and time-sensitive notes and appendices, and in many ways, the most comprehensive extant versions of these texts. A number of contemporary scholars, however, undoubtedly helped complicate and eventually shape my reading of the texts I have chosen to examine. Raymond Klibansky and Mark Grant greatly inform my understanding and assimilation of early humoural studies, while Wolfgang Kayser's canonical study of the grotesque figures centrally in my survey of the same term. Silvio D'Amico and Gigi Livio most strongly influence my fifth chapter analysis of humourist poetics in the early twentieth century.

Despite its eventual application to other fields of study, I view this exercise as primarily literary, and primarily focused on the sixteenth rather than twentieth century. Still, the range of this dissertation extends beyond the exegetical or the "close reading." In

it, among other considerations, I hope to examine the interaction of medicine and literature (specifically in the context of the prevalence of humoral theory and its presence, application to, or parallel with contemporary literary production). I aim to investigate the role and importance of collective literary production in the creation or dissemination of a literary movement, and to expand on the relationship, as I see it exist, between humour and genre. In so doing, I will evaluate the claim that melancholy is best suited to lyric poetry, while other humours might more easily fit more public expressive media designed only to “entertain.” Finally, and in my conclusion, I hope also to point to the relevance of these academic interactions and the literary genres they engender to contemporary Italian cultural studies.

It is important to remember, in addition, that although more popular academies begin to sprout in the first half of the 16th century (and as early as 1500), their most significant proliferation occurs only in the following century.²¹ Accompanying it is the debate begun by the *Infiammati* and the *Humidi* and the new brand of literature it generates. Turning once more to Giambologna’s massive Appenine giant, and to close, I hope my dissertation will also shed light on the distinct ramifications and influences of these *Infiammati* and *Humidi* exchanges on the artistic expression of subsequent generations, both within the Medici circle and outside it.

²¹ By “popular” I mean not open only to erudite members of society or people of a particular pedigree.

Chapter One: History and Foundations

Literary currents: 1526-1540

The years predating the formation of the *Infiammati* and, immediately following them, the *Humidi* in great part define the tone and nature of the literary exchange among these two, as well as other groups. The late 1520s usher in a period of profoundly felt political unrest for Florence. The death of Giovanni delle Bande Nere in 1526 signals the end of the Medici dominance over Florence and instigates growing attempts, eventually successful, at restoring the city's former republic. As a result and in anticipation of the outbursts to follow, many members of the Medici family flee from Tuscany, finding refuge and hospitality elsewhere. In 1527, Florence celebrates its new republic under the rule of *I Piagnoni*, a number of them champions of Savonarola's earlier republican formula in Rome. Interpersonal political conflicts persist, however, despite the restoration of the council, and the *Piagnoni* are from the start divided into pro-Medicean and anti-Medicean factions.

So, too, are most of Florence's intellectuals who, with a Medici as pope, find themselves in a precarious artistic position; a great number of their patrons are very clearly anti-Medicean members of the council and confraternity. But defaming the renowned family or negating its decisive influence on the growth and development of Florence risked their censorship. Clement VII's naming of Alessandro de' Medici as the Duke of Florence in 1530 and the latter's return to the city one year later after a period of self-imposed exile further aggravates the literary community's unease and initiates an

exodus of many of its members that continues throughout the decade.²² Some, staunch republicans, are banished under the Medici's return to power. Others having previously left are denied re-entry. The literary descendents of Marsilio Ficino, Cristoforo Landino, and Ugolino Verino and political exiles of the same ilk – the so-called *fuorusciti* – scatter throughout the peninsula, the vast majority landing eventually in Venice, Padua, and Rome, or seeking artistic refuge in other parts of Tuscany, slightly removed from Florence's central political conflict.²³

Among them are Piero Vettori in San Casciano, and his star student, the then young Benedetto Varchi who spends the greater part of the 1530s traveling among present-day Veneto, Tuscany, and Emilia-Romagna, resting at length in Padova in 1538 and entering into contact there with some of the most influential writers and philosophers of the time: Pietro Aretino, Pietro Bembo, Alessandro Piccolomini, Sperone Speroni. In Varchi's correspondence, as in Vettori's later recounting of these early *fuorusciti* years, Padua is described as a literary milieu shining with the promise of novelty and literary freedom.²⁴ As a result, "il Veneto subentra alla Toscana nel [...] ruolo di avanguardia offrendosi come residenza permanente o temporanea degli scrittori, sì che nel giro della diaspora repubblicana di Firenze, si palleggia tra Venezia e Padova ... alimentando una rovente

²² For a detailed political history of medieval and early Renaissance Florence, see John M. Najemy, *A History of Florence: 1200-1575* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2006).

²³ See Valerio Vianello, "Fuoriuscitismo politico fiorentino e produzione letteraria nel Cinquecento," *Contributi Rinascimentali: Venezia e Firenze*, a cura di Giorgio Padoan (Padova: Aldo Francisi editore, 1982) 133-163.

²⁴ See, also, Valerio Vianello, "Fuoriuscitismo politico fiorentino e produzione letteraria nel Cinquecento": "Padova agisce tra i giovani come il miraggio di una fonte più limpida e fresca, carica degli umori di un terreno non inaridito nella sterile conservazione dei risultati conseguiti, fertile dall'apporto di una mentalità critica, avida di novità, di una rilettura meditata, di una diarmina non d'accatto della recente tradizione volgare" (142).

circolazione di testi e di teorizzazioni” not only among Paduan residents, but extending as far as their interlocutors in Rome.²⁵

The need for literary renewal felt in Padua during this time, however, begins long before this sprouting of literary activity and exchange there. Decades of discussion on the role of the artist or intellectual and the value and utility of the vernacular to his particular ends lead academics, officially affiliated or otherwise, to re-evaluate many of Humanism’s central claims regarding the imitation of classical models or the strict adherence to classical rhetorical, poetic, or theatrical formulae. Two questions begin to take shape and occupy greater space in the critical thought of the intellectual. First, and most especially through the reflections of Pietro Bembo, is the *questione della lingua*, which strives to accredit the Tuscan vernacular with the same function, if not prestige, of Latin or Greek. Next, the question of “novelty” in style as in content becomes a keynote of textual composition and exegesis from the beginning of the century onward. In 1513, in a prologue written for Bernardo Dovizi da Bibbiena’s play in five acts, *La Calandra*, Baldassare Castiglione underlines the need explicitly for new *theatrical* models. There, and in an eloquent discourse of a piece with both of the above growing questions of his generation of thinkers, he distances da Bibbiena’s work from its theatrical predecessors, appreciating, instead, its currency and appeal to a modern audience.²⁶ “Voi sarete oggi spettatori d’una nuova commedia, intitolata *Calandra*, in prosa non in versi, moderna non antica, vulgare non latina,” he immediately establishes:

Che antica non sia, dispiacere non vi dee, se di sano gusto vi trovate;

perciocchè le cose moderne e nuove diletano sempre e piacciono più

²⁵ Valerio Vianello, *Il letterato, l’accademia, il libro* (Padova: editrice Antenore, 1987) 5.

²⁶ The *questione della lingua* will be addressed at greater length in Chapter 3.

che le antiche e le vecchie, le quali per lungo uso soglino sapere di vieto.
Non è latina, perocchè dovendosi recitare ad infiniti, che tutti dotti non
sono, lo autore che di piacervi sommamente cerca, ha voluto farla
vulgare, affinché da ognuno intesa, parimente a ciascuno diletta, oltrechè
la lingua, che Dio e Natura ci ha data, non dee appresso di noi essere di
manco estimazione, né di minor grazia, che la Latina, la Greca, e la
Ebraica.²⁷

In Castiglione's remarks here, readers find an early call to rebellion against established literary forms, and the promotion of linguistic as well as formal experimentation -- and for the benefit of a wider audience.²⁸

It is the combative sentiment latent in Castiglione's words here that grows stronger with the arrival of the Florentine *fuorusciti* in Padua and Venice and increases with their interaction with writers long since established there. The years from roughly 1534 to 1540 can be generally characterized by an inconsistency that troubles many authors in their quest for novelty. On the heels of growing attempts to withdraw from the influence of

²⁷ "Today, you will see a new comedy entitled *Calandra* - in prose, not in verse; modern, not ancient; Italian, not Latin. . . . That this comedy is not ancient should upset no one of good taste, for modern things and the new are always more enjoyable than the old or the ancient. The latter, from long use, often seem musty. It's not in Latin, because it is being played before large numbers of people who are not all learned, and the author - wanting to give you greater pleasure - decided to use Italian so that everyone could understand and enjoy the comedy equally. Moreover, given that Italian is the language that God and Nature have given us, it shouldn't be less appreciated or enjoyed than Latin, Greek, or Hebrew. Our language wouldn't be inferior if we praised, practiced, and polished it with the same diligence that the Greeks and the others did theirs" (MS Rome, Biblioteca Corsiniana, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 93.F, 32, A2r-v (3-4)), translation found in Bernardo Dovizi da Bibbiena, *The Comedy of Calandro in Five Comedies from the Italian Renaissance*, ed. and transl. Laura Giannetti and Guido Ruggiero (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2003) 2).

²⁸ A wider audience was also particularly befitting of the theatrical genre, expanding in its scope from a private or courtly form of entertainment to a customary staple of carnival festivities.

Antiquity, these writers turn increasingly to more recent examples of illustrious writing – the vernacular canon formed by Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio – for inspiration and sources of imitation. But unable to best their forefathers, they choose, instead, to emphasize their differences from these literary in what they hope will lead to literary distinction. Only in the next decade is this ideological conflict resolved to some degree of satisfaction in the formal study of the canon within the context of the academies. Until then, this conflicted attitude toward the canon, ultimately translated into a depreciation of it, is masked as a desire for literary originality and freshness. In 1537, Pietro Aretino, in Venice, spearheads a movement of literary skepticism based on and consistent with the growing trend of the avant-garde, anti-establishment, and anti-traditional. In a letter to Fausto da Longiano, he openly declares his perceived need for a literary renewal introduced only by an active distancing from previous, over-indulged models. He writes: “Ma io mi rido de i pedanti ... Io non mi son tolto da gli andari del Petrarca né del Boccaccio per ignoranza, che pur so ciò che essi sono ma per non perder il tempo, la pacienza e il nome ne la pazzia del volermi trasformare in loro, non essendo possibile.”²⁹ His message is clear: though he has no difficulty stating forthwith his inferiority and debt to the founders of the canon of which he will later be a part, he in no uncertain terms calls for, rather than a dismissal of the past, a conscious step away from it and toward, instead, a more socially oriented literature concerned less with self-reflection or evaluation of literary form than with a popular critique – or at times celebration – of contemporary society. In other words, what Aretino

²⁹ I mock the pedants ... I have not avoided Petrarch and Boccaaccio out of ignorance – I know what they are – but in order not to waste my time, my patience, or my name on a foolish desire to turn into them, such a transformation being impossible. (17 dicembre 1537, cit. in *Teatro del Cinquecento*, tomo 1: La Tragedia, a cura di Renzo Cremante (Milano: Ricciardi editore, 1988) 566, translation mine).

advocates above all else is a literary turn toward action and away from the contemplative aspects that previously characterized it, or a call to write and to produce original content, rather than merely to study repeatedly imitated texts.

Responses to Aretino's proposed literary model are mixed, as increasingly, like-minded writers begin to come together to form new *studi* or academies to consider these and other literary questions. Of concern to all of them is this distinction between the *vita attiva* or *civile* and the *vita contemplativa*, which inevitably colours the nature of their literary production and the questions they choose to address, and is carried over from a Humanist tradition still centered on this same opposition.³⁰ Common to the cultural climate is a renewed interest in the arrival at and elucidation of the truth, generally speaking, either by way of philosophical debate and discussion, or by the production of politically pregnant literature. On June 6, 1540, and by the initiative of Leone Orsini, the *Accademia degli Infiammati* is born and with it – and within it – a set of literary rivalries that obscure its central concern with “truth” and that fracture the way in which the work of the academy is perceived by others.³¹ Though, like Aretino, dedicated to literary renewal, the *Infiammati* address the question of “truth” in two fundamentally contrary ways that, through the circulation of their texts and ideas, sparks controversial debate in the other

³⁰ The opposition of the *vita attiva* to the *vita contemplativa* is among the defining characteristics of Petrarchan prose and poetry, developed at length throughout the *RVF* and, more specifically still, in his Latin *De otio religioso* and *De ignorantia*. Central to the Humanists to follow Petrarch, then, becomes a concern with the proper balance of (civil) activism and literary reflection. This question takes on a different dimension with players of the circles under examination, as literary “action” comes increasingly to refer to more burlesque forms of poetry – or “realism” – while contemplation becomes restricted to and characteristic of the lessons given by academies.

³¹ This date is tenuous and disputed by scholars, as is the naming of Leone Orsini as the first elected leader of the *Infiammati*. See Richard S. Samuels, “Benedetto Varchi, the *Accademia degli Infiammati*, and the Origins of the Italian Academic Movement,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 29.4 (1976): 599-634.

centers of *fuoruscito* production and, eventually, in Florence itself. At the center of it is the century's increasingly relevant opposition of *res* and *verba* – things and words - and the growing trend of prioritizing the former above the latter.

But the interpretation of the very terms *res* and *verba* themselves become complicated with the advent of the press and the novelty both of the book as object, and of the reader as active participant in the text. By November of 1540, and primarily through the correspondence of Benedetto Varchi and his frequent visits and eventual move back to Florence, the same questions of *res* against *verba*, reality versus truth (and fiction), action opposed to contemplation, surface in Florence, now under Cosimo I. First independent of Cosimo I's knowledge, patronage, or official sponsorship, the *Humidi* are formed in support of Aretino's decree and in direct response to the *Infiammati*'s interpretation of it. Though their project shares the same point of departure with the *Infiammati*, through the works of Antonfrancesco Grazzini and other early members of the *Humidi* circle, they come to a very different end before the academy's absorption into the official Medici circuit. The remainder of this chapter will outline the dynamic of members of both groups in the years leading up to their formation and early organization.

Infiammati and *Humidi*: origins, beginnings, and the Petrarchan problem

The early works and, eventually, literary innovations of the *fuorusciti* grow out of and are necessarily dependent on the Humanist tradition predating them. The Paduan *studio*, like Marsilio Ficino's Neo-Platonist circle in Florence, leaves a lingering taste for the study and imitation of Antiquity and classical models that pervades Padua's literary society. Not even the growing interest in medieval vernacular works and the appropriation of

classical culture within them is able to shift the literary focus of working writers in Italy's major cities until the 1530s, with the eventual validation of vulgate prose and its study. Florence's *fuorusciti*, many of them in or traveling to Rome, inherit the remnants of this concentration on ancient forms even outside the context of the formal university. The reaction to it is often ambivalent even within smaller studios groupings. Some intellectuals continue to subscribe and contribute to this more conservative brand of Humanism, while others attempt to renew and, eventually, reform it entirely experimenting with and gradually inventing new literary genres that form the basis of literary production until the 1570s.

Not much has been officially documented about the nature of the exchanges among *fuorusciti* intellectuals and their mutual contacts. In several of his seminal works on the subject, Michel Plaisance traces lines of friendship and mutual influence among authors traveling between Florence, Venice, Padua, and Bologna in the 1530s. More recently, Franco Pignati identifies similar correspondences, both ideological and literal, among Florentine and Roman circles.³² The work of both depends largely on a series of autograph letters between Benedetto Varchi and the many writers he frequented in his lifetime and across his travels. He begins his most substantial and important voyages in the mid-1530s in a cultural climate pervaded by burlesque poetry, satire, and frequent polemical interaction, if unofficial, between warring writers.³³ Francesco Berni is at the center of this

³² See, recently, "Il Comento di Maestro Niccodemo dalla Pietra al Migliaio' del Lasca: Preliminari per un'edizione e note critiche," *L'esegesi parodistica e giocosa del Cinquecento*, a cura di Antonio Corsaro e Paolo Procaccioli (Roma: Vecchiarelli editore, 2002) 109-146.

³³ *ibid.* In this same essay, Pignati outlines the broad strokes of the literary interactions among burlesque writers, primarily in Rome, during this period. See, also, in the same anthology, Antonio Corsaro, "Esegesi Comica e storia del comico nel Cinquecento," 33-48, and Michel Plaisance, "Il Piangirida d'Antonfrancesco Grazzini," 99-108.

world. Born in Lamporecchio and early on sent to Florence to be educated, Berni makes his reputation in Rome shortly after 1520 and in papal service through a number of lampoons and brief satirical poems he circulates there. By the time he relocates to Florence around 1532 and under the reign of Alessandro de' Medici - and a frequent foe - Berni has already branded a poetic style today known as the *capitolo bernesco* - customarily a burlesque caricature, and often directed at or addressed to a specific person. His criticism and at times praise extends as far south as Annibale Caro in Rome and as far north as Pietro Aretino in Venice. He dies in 1535, and his satirical compositions are first published posthumously in 1537 and next in Giunti's 1555 edition, edited by Grazzini himself. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, his works appear both in volumes unto themselves and, perhaps more frequently, in the collected works of authors both his contemporaries and his successors, contributing or benefiting from the style of verse he mastered. The environment surrounding Varchi's travels, then, and predating the formation of either the *Infiammati* or the *Humidi* is already one of abundant poetic exchange not only on the basis of common discourse, but also of social reality, personal and social criticism, and collective composition within a stated genre.

Varchi's letters make clear the continuation of this kind of exchange following Berni's death, and also reveal the emergence of themes both related to and intended departures from Berni's "realism" that, through travel and exchange, come to constitute the formation of "academies" and smaller fractions within them. Two volumes of letters to and by Varchi contained today in Florence's Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale's Autografi Palatini collection follow Varchi from 1537 to the late 1560s as he weaves in and out of the conflicting factions, at the center of the literary activity among them. Key correspondents in

the early phase (1537-1541) are Luigi Alamanni in Rome, Giovanbattista Alamanni, Daniello Bernardino, and Alessandro Piccolomini in Padua, Lodovico Dolce and Donato Giannotti in Venice, and Luca Martelli, Cosimo Rucellai, and Piero Vettori in and around Florence. Their messages shed light on the sentiments in circulation concerning the formation of such academies and their proposed goals. Luigi Alamanni, the most proactive and widely traveled among them and a *fuoruscito* himself, several times shows interest in regrouping the various members of his literary circuits in Rome, in his native Florence, and in various parts of Emilia-Romagna and the Veneto.³⁴ His plan never seems to come to fruition, but through his letters to Varchi, it becomes clear that texts were in open circulation among their mutual contacts before the formation of either the *Infiammati* or the *Humidi*.³⁵ Daniello Bernardino's missives confirm the same activity, while Lodovico Dolce's letters simultaneously reveal the profound respect demonstrated between corresponding intellectuals and their open debate about works and ideas more generally.³⁶ At the other end of the spectrum, Giovanbattista Alamanni's letters show an almost total retreat from the academic atmosphere, and a celebration, if slightly embittered, of the peace found without its social confines.³⁷ Alessandro Piccolomini's, Donato Giannotti's and Piero Vettori's letters all hint strongly at the overwhelming concentration of intellectuals and professional writers in Padua between 1537 and 1540, but Cosimo Rucellai's letters

³⁴ He writes regularly from Ferrara, Bologna, and Mantua, and makes frequent mention of these cities and the intellectuals within them even when writing from elsewhere. Pockets of the fuorusciti population are likely to have established themselves there, as Varchi also makes frequent visits to the same locations.

³⁵ See in particular *Autografi Palatini*, Lett. al Varchi I, no. 5, 6.

³⁶ See *ibid*, 81, 82, 84, all from Lodovico Dolce to Benedetto Varchi. The last of these, later (1546) documents Dolce's critique of Giovambattista Gelli's *Dialoghi* – an important footnote to the later development of the *Fiorentina* right before the (re)decisive council of 1547.

³⁷ See *ibid*, no. 8.

from Florence are perhaps the most useful in establishing the main literary concerns of writers of these pre-academic years and the debate that separates them from each other.

One particular letter dated June 28th, 1539 speaks to two contemporaneous concerns of Varchi's intellectual circles that largely define the literary war to follow: the reproduction and imitation of Petrarch and Petrarchan style, and the production of original poetic material.³⁸

Petrarchism predates the formation of either academy by the better part of thirty years and is already mainstream literary practice by the time either comes to life. Even writers in the burlesque tradition typically gain credibility in their field early on in their literary careers through Petrarchan imitation, though most of their strictly imitative works come to resemble each other.³⁹ Some are more successful than others, however, at eventually distinguishing their personal style from their imitative works. Il Molza and Annibal Caro in Rome are what become for the *Humidi* defining examples of this achievement. Caro, more specifically, is described, in an editorial note preceding a 1757 edition of his comedy *Gli Straccioni* and collected poems, as an author who, “liberandosi però da que' seppi ne' quali vien posto l'ingegno umano dallo scrupolo dell'imitare un solo autore, vestì i suo' pensieri regolatamente; ma a modo suo, e aggiunse alla tintura presa da buoni scrittori Greci e Latini, una certa sua naturale vivacità e uno splendore che nasca dal

³⁸ See *ibid*, no. 97.

³⁹ Giambattista Novelli's editorial note to Annibal Caro's *Rime del commendatore Annibal Caro e la Commedia Gli Straccioni* (Venezia: 1757) conveys this idea two centuries later. He writes: “Ma siccome avvenir suole a coloro, che troppo puntualmente imitano, mentre che ciascheduno gareggiava d'esprimere propri sentimenti co' modi, colle sentenze, e co' vocaboli di quell'autore, perdettero in tanta accuratezza le forze; ed estinsero in gran parte la fantasia per la diligenza soverchia. Quindi è che di tanti canzonieri che uscirono a quei tempi, pochi sono quelli, ne' quali qualche diversità apparisce, e sì l'uno all'altro somiglia, che se i nomi degli scrittori non si leggessero in fronte di quelli, agevolmente si potrebbero credere tutti fatica d'un solo” (Padova, Biblioteca Universitaria, 62.a.194, vii).

suo ingegno.”⁴⁰ This conflict, resolved in Caro, between the old and the new, the traditional and the avant-garde, comes to constitute another, if not the principal, source of dissension between the *Infiammati* and the *Humidi* academies.

In Padua and Venice, the “Petrarchan problem” takes on two dimensions. With Pietro Bembo and his followers in Padua, and primarily at its university, it is addressed literally in the *questione della lingua*: a celebration of the Tuscan language as literary template, and a confirmation of Petrarch’s canonical supremacy in lyric poetry and Boccaccio’s in prose in their formal use of words and style. Central to these intellectuals is the analysis of literary texts in historical context and at face value, stripped of any contemporary interpretation in a focused approach to *verba* – style – as opposed to *res* – content.⁴¹ With a new generation of Paduan scholars, Alessandro Piccolomini and Sperone Speroni among them, however, the “Petrarchan problem” lends itself to other areas of examination and instigates further questions not only about literary production, but also about the philosophical convictions and frameworks behind it. Examining Petrarch, for these latter scholars, also means evaluating the validity of his literary models as mutual predecessors and founding literary fathers to their own works. What necessarily follows is a reaction against the Platonism of Marsilio Ficino’s earlier and infamous Florentine academy and a growing appreciation of the Aristotelianism that, with the development of

⁴⁰ *ibid* viii, “liberating himself, however, from those hedged-in corners where human talent is pitted against the scrupulousness of imitating only one author, he conditions his thoughts appropriately, and in his own way, and adds to the literary colour borrowed from good Greek and Latin writers the certain natural vivaciousness and splendour born of his skill.”

⁴¹ See Vianello, *Il letterato* 90: “La mentalità analitica deve essere applicata alla stessa scrittura provvedendo a ricostruire il libro nella nascita per rimontare dal basso il meccanismo compositivo, recuperando l’esatto significato di ogni parola, il senso preciso del periodo, il vero messaggio dell’opera liberato dalle sovrastrutture interpretative.”

the university and its faculty of medicine, comes to dominate the Paduan intellectual sphere.⁴² But these intellectuals' adherence to Aristotle's three unities in theatre and poetic ideals in verse is in no way unfaithful to the atmosphere of growth, expansion, and literary rebellion that surrounds them. Instead, they aim to absorb and re-propose these Aristotelian ideals in an active literature a departure from the *studio* and its legacy.

The *Accademia degli Infiammati* is formed, then, in response and as an alternative to the Paduan and, to an extent, Florentine *studi* and other officially organized associations that until recently had dominated the intellectual scene from Rome to Venice. Like the *Humidi* immediately to follow, it is born as an informal gathering among like-minded individuals that meets semi-regularly at a *cenacolo* hosted at the homes of its members. It grows from there into what Varchi, in Padua at the time of its formation, later calls the perfect template of the academy and the model to follow everywhere.⁴³ Its literary activity ranges in accordance with its members, running the gamut from the erudite comedies of later member, Angelo Beolco (il Ruzante), to the scientific examinations of Alessandro

⁴² Chapter 2 will outline some of the new trends in medicine in northern-central Italy over the years under examination. Fundamental to a great number of developments in the medical field is Girolamo Cardano, who studies in Padua and is awarded his medical degree there in 1526 before settling as a professor of medicine at the University of Pavia in 1543. He writes most significantly on diet, which will be discussed at greater length in the following chapter. For a comprehensive monograph on Cardano, see Nancy Siraisi, *The Clock and the Mirror: Girolamo Cardano and Renaissance Medicine* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997).

⁴³ Samuels has contributed the most accurate and noteworthy summary of the *Infiammati*'s early organization and later demise (at the flourishing of the *Fiorentina*). As he rightly notes, little is concretely known, still today and more than thirty-five years after his seminal study of them, on the formative years of the academy. Generally speaking, the *Infiammati* were known to appoint "principi" or presidents for six-month terms. Although the *Infiammati* were not a collective in the sense that the *Umidi* later demonstrate, members still submitted their works – usually erudite sonnets – to committee censors for touch-ups and final approval. The later *Fiorentina* borrows much of its formal proceedings from this model.

Piccolomini. It soon becomes known for its lessons on material from a variety of disciplines spanning literature to philosophy. Of particular concern to the *Infiammati*, however, becomes the reading and exegesis of poetry, both contemporary to them and by their literary antecedents – a practice that influences later generations of academics both in Padua and beyond it. To sum, though they fancy themselves the active equivalent of the more contemplative *studio* before them, the *Infiammati* are an intellectual society of literary élites unsatisfied with the growing trend of the burlesque and eager to turn their attention to more serious matters worthy of study and, eventually, imitation.

It is this turn away from Berni and the tradition he forges that, together with Varchi's continuing travels to and from Florence in the early years of the academy's history, sow the seed of dissent from which the *Accademia degli Humidi* is born. Followers of the maccheronic and faithful to the long-established tradition of writing for pleasure (as opposed to instruction), the *Humidi's* first members see in the *Infiammati's* lessons and sustained studies of Aristotle a pedantic exercise that slows the progress of the “rebellious” or, perhaps better, carefree literary production they advocate. Despite their self-stated goal to illuminate literature into a more active and dynamic sphere, the first generation of *Infiammati* academics come across to their *Humidi* counterparts as nothing more than an extension of the Paduan *studio* and its dogmatic attention to literary details of little consequence. Thus, on November 1st, 1540, at the home of Giovanni Mazzuoli, and in direct reaction against the *Infiammati* in the north, is born the *Accademia degli Humidi*.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ The *Humidi* begin as an informal gathering of *tornatelle* in the home of Mazzuoli. This date is also disputed among scholars, but generally held to be the most accurate among the options presented.

The *Humidi* – a deliberate play on the *Infiammati*'s chosen name – from the first categorise themselves as a band of “misfit” writers reclaiming the bernesque/burlesque tradition and counteracting the pedantic tendencies of their contemporaries to the north. Their chosen format of academy, though perhaps deliberately ironic given the nature of their early meetings, nonetheless comes with strict guidelines, rules, and minutes conserved today in its original manuscript form at Florence’s Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale.⁴⁵ Their official ledger reads, alternately, as a farce on the academic tradition, and as a preservation of the *Humidi*'s status as a socially legitimate collective of authors. It opens with a declaration, in Latin, of Cosimo I’s reign over the academy created in the home of Giovanni Mazzuoli, called lo Stradino.⁴⁶ It then reveals an almost infinite list of members, likely exaggerated to include sympathetic parties or others whose works circulated among the *Humidi*, even in their absence from official academic meetings and interactions. Among them are Florence’s (and, at times, Rome’s) most renowned and prestigious names - Francesco Maria Molza, Carlo and Giovanni Strozzi, Francesco Verino, Giovambattista Gelli, Agnolo Firenzuola, Pietro Aretino, Girolamo degli Albizi, Michelangelo Buonarroti, Anselmo and Lorenzo Venturi – and an impressive collection of women writers until then not formally acknowledged by any literary collective; Tullia d’Aragona, Virginia Salvi, and Vittoria Colonna all find their names in the academy’s ledger. A lengthy correspondence with Benedetto Varchi also reveals Laura Battiferri’s later inclusion in the *Fiorentina*'s

⁴⁵ bound by Antonio Francesco Marmi in 1730. Mgl. II, IV, 1.

⁴⁶ It reads, “quo Como I regnante Accademia Humidorum in domo Ioannis Mazzuoli cognom Stradino creata fuit” but may be a later insertion in the hand of the binder, Marmi. At the time of its creation, the academy was not yet recognized by the Medici government, and Cosimo I, though perhaps an early member, would not have been considered its official head under the rules established for its creation and production.

academic circle.⁴⁷ But only its primary members at this first phase of creation are also given a nickname and an illustrated symbol by which they are recognized. These include Niccolò Martelli (il Gelato; the Frozen), Gismondo Martelli (il Cigno; the Swan), Antonfrancesco Grazzini (il Lasca; the Roach), Cintio d'Amelia (Romano l'Umoroso; the Humorous Roman), Filippo Salvetti (il Frigido; the Frigid), Piero Fabbrini (l'Assiderato; the Frozen (by exposure)), Michelangelo Vivaldi (il Torbido; the Murky), Bartolomeo Baccelli (il Pantanoso; the Boggy), Paolo de' gei (lo Scoglio; the Rock), Bartolomeo Benci (lo Spumoso; the Foamy), Giovanni Norchiati (il Lacrimoso; the Tearful), Simone della Volta (l'Annacquato; the Diluted), Benedetto Varchi (l'Infiammato; the Enflamed) These are the founding fathers of the *Humidi* and the earliest contributors to its revival of the burlesque or, perhaps more loosely, the "realistic" style.⁴⁸ As will later be shown, most noteworthy among them is Antonfrancesco Grazzini, the most representative, if problematic, member of the *Humidi* and its most loyal follower even in the face of later controversy. Born in 1503 to a respectable Florentine family, likely of merchants and pharmacists, not much is known about his youth or upbringing. He is thought to have been trained as an apothecary at the boutique of an uncle, and it is almost certain that Grazzini lacked the kind of formal liberal education many of his contemporaries enjoyed. Instead, largely self-taught and following the recommendations and examples of reputable literary men both in the academy and outside it, he establishes the series of connections that position him well for professional growth in the early stages of the academy's history.

⁴⁷ See Autografi Palatini, Lett. al Varchi I, 18-32.

⁴⁸ Varchi is named for his involvement in the earlier *Infiammati* movement, and is the exception in a list otherwise composed of names that play on the "humidity" referred to in the academy's official name.

The *Humidi*'s mandate is simple and straightforward: the academy is "creata per passatempo"⁴⁹ and is open, by unlimited number, to anyone deemed clever enough by two thirds of its original members to join.⁵⁰ The sincerity of its official respect of form is dubious, but its collective nature is immediately underlined. The founding fathers declare that "chi volessi scrivere alcuna particular compositione possa in nome suo . . . e a suo piacimento. Ma non possa comporre nel cognome della accademia ne mandarle fuori se non si sono prima lette, viste et corrette dalli carrolì deputando o da i censori che saranno [eletti]."⁵¹ The final result is an academy simultaneously more cohesive and less exclusive than its Paduan model, which aims to appeal to the greatest number of people possible.

The 1730 ledger reveals the nature of the *Humidi*'s earliest and most representative interactions and activities. Like the *Infiammati* to the north, the *Humidi* are intent on preserving the literary legacy of the Tuscan canon; immediately following the presentation of the academics' crests and figurative emblems are illustrations of Dante, Petrarch, Zanobi da Strada, and Giovanni Boccaccio and, following them, epigrams to these same figures.⁵² But contrary to the *Infiammati* who, in the eyes of the *Humidi*, make of their literary fathers the subject of cold literary dissection, the *Humidi*'s interaction with the Tuscan canon is one of pure respect, appreciation, and acknowledgment. Their aim in interacting with the three crowns is not to undo them, but to duly recognize their debt to them. Simone della Volta's epigram to Dante and the first of the series makes clear this sentiment. He writes: "Quest'è colui che dottamente scrisse / del ciel, del purgatorio et del Inferno / Pasce l'antico stile et

⁴⁹ later referred to as "honesto passatempo" (5r).

⁵⁰ See Mgl. II, IV, 1: "Il numero degli Accademici sia indeterminato. Chi volessi entrar in detta Accademia degli Humidi non possa entrare se . . . non è vinto per l'astuzia et si ha ad intendere vinto ogni volta che 'l dua terzi . . . a lui disse" (5r).

⁵¹ Mgl II, IV, 1, 5r.

⁵² *ibid*, 5v and following.

al Moderno / Tolse fatica perché 'l tutto disse."⁵³ Other members follow suit, each week addressing another literary figure they hold dear.

One of the academy's other chief endeavours, and in keeping with their model academy to the north, is the preparation and delivery, at times public, of lessons on and close readings of Petrarchan sonnets, passages from Dante's *Divina Commedia* and, eventually, contemporary poetry. Even here, however, and as opposed to the *Infiammati*, the *Humidi* insist on humility and simplicity in their approach to these canonical texts, unable, as they are, to enhance their perfection. The earliest recorded lesson of this nature, according to this same 1730 ledger, is delivered by Piero Verino in the church of Santa Maria Novella for "l'Accademia Fiorentina degli Humidi" on February 17, 1541, and addresses the twenty-sixth canto of Dante's *Purgatorio*.⁵⁴ It begins with an explanation of Verino's chosen language – Tuscan – and register – familiar – very much in line with the academy's aesthetics and practices, and an exhortation to readers to respond emotionally as well as intellectually to his proposed reading. "Parlerò in lingua Toscana," he writes, "per tre cose, prima per essere più facile, come più da Natura, secondo per essere a quella più obligato, tertio per poter [compiacere] a più. Pregovi ascoltatori non solo con la fronte et orecchie corporali mi ascoltiate ma col petto," he adds.⁵⁵ Eventually, other academics insist, the practice of delivering lessons both within the academy and outside it becomes obscured by needless and confusing interpretation, or by exclusive focus on

⁵³ *ibid*, 9r.

⁵⁴ Mgl. II, IV, 1, 84r-87r.

⁵⁵ *ibid*, 84v, "I will speak in the Tuscan language for three reasons. First, to be more at ease since it comes to more naturally, next, because it is the language to which I am most indebted, and third in order to please you all. I pray you listen not only with your mind and ears, but also with your heart."

Aristotelianism – a pervasive presence from the north.⁵⁶ As a result, the *Humidi* academics actively seek to restore proper literary balance by denouncing other academics' interpretative acts. Grazzini, in a sonnet to Vincenzo Buonanni some years after the foundation of the original *Humidi* clan, perhaps best demonstrates this frustration when he writes: "O tu ch'hai preso Dante a comentare / Io non vo' dir se bene o male hai fatto, / Ma dirò che non è troppo buon atto / a voler quel ch'è chiaro, intorbidare."⁵⁷ Indeed, the promulgation of these lessons within the *Humidi* academy itself, under its later guise as the *Fiorentina*, is an important aspect of the rivalries within it.

To be clear, even il Lasca, self-declared anti-conformist, anti-pedagogue, and in many ways autodidact plans semi-public readings of Petrarchan sonnets and writes lessons, modeled closely after Varchi's and others of his contemporaries, based nearly entirely on Petrarch's vernacular literary production and others still on that of his well-respected peers.⁵⁸ As Michel Plaisance points out, "Loin de refuser les enseignements de ceux qui savent, Lasca declare vouloir aller 'dietro a coloro sempre che più sanno e tuttavia cercano d'apparare, né perché molto abbiano appreso ardiscono dannare l'altrui opere."⁵⁹

⁵⁶ See, for example, within the *Humidi* circle, the "Lettura di Ms. Cosimo Bartoli . . . letta pubblicamente nella sala del Papa Addi, 8 di gennaio 1541," in Mgl. II, IV, 1, 190v-193v.

⁵⁷ Oh you who have taken up Dante commentary, / I do not wish to say whether you have done it well or badly / but I will say that it is great bad manners / to wish to muddle that which is already clear. (Sonetto XLV, 1-4 in *Rime di Antonfrancesco Grazzini detto il Lasca*, parte seconda, (Firenze, Stamperia di F. Moücke, 1741-42); translation mine).

⁵⁸ See Michel Plaisance, *L'académie et le prince: Culture et politique à Florence au temps de Côme Ier et de François de Médicis* (Roma: Vecchiarelli editore, 2004) 39-49, 66-68. On il Lasca's non-conformity and anti-pedantry, see Adriano Spatola, *Introduzione all'Arzigogolo* (Bologna: Sampietro editore, 1967).

⁵⁹ "Far from rejecting the teachings of the knowledgeable, Lasca declares wanting to 'always follow those who know the most and who, however, seek to learn, and not in order to dare to condemn the work of others by the many things they have learned.' We are far from the municipal amateurishness of which criticism often speaks" (Plaisance 68, translation mine); Grazzini probably states this in a lesson he writes prior to 1542.

Indeed, he, too, imitates Petrarch, both literally (in theme and in vocabulary as a later chapter will show), and loosely, in structure.⁶⁰ His resistance to Petrarchan imitation and exegesis is a response to what he views as pedantic exercises of little value or use beyond the exaltation of the individual academic's reputation.

The sustained conflict between classical and "realist" models

The nature of the academics' interaction with each other also differs from the Paduan model to its successive Florentine version, and to a similar effect. While the *Infiammati* choose to limit their literary interaction among each other to correspondence or to the composition of *dialoghi* in which a number of members fictitiously participate, the *Humidi* do away with the ceremony of formal composition and instead embrace the earlier tradition of the *tenzone*.⁶¹ It is a conscious decision based on the need, as they perceived it, to return to the basic tenets of "realism" – the genre espoused earliest by Cecco Angiolieri, and focused on the representation of daily life, popular culture, and common sentiment on an easily accessible register in direct opposition to the lyrical tradition's concentration on

⁶⁰ See, for example, his introduction to his 1555 edition of the collected poems of Berni. The opening sonnet, a direct adaptation of *RVF* 1, reads, "Voi ch'ascoltate in rime sparse il suono / De i capricci, che 'l Berni peregrino / scrisse cantando in volgar Fiorentino; / Udite ne la fin quel, ch'io ragiono. / Quanto mai fur poeti al mondo, e sono / Volete in Greco, in Toscano, o in Latino, / Apresso lui non vagliano un lupino. / Tant'è dotto, faceto, bello, e buono. / E con un stil senza'arte, puro e piano, / Apre i concetti suoi sì gentilmente, / Che ve gli par toccar proprio con mano. / Non offende gli orecchi de la gente / Colle lascivie del Parlar Toscano, / Unquanco, guari, mai sempre, e sovente / Che più? da lui si sente, / Anzi s'impara con gioia infinita / Come allegrar si debbe in questa vita" ("Il Lasca in lode di M. Francesco Berni," *Delle rime piacevoli del Borgogna, Ruscelli, Sansovino, Doni, Lasca, Remigio, Anguillara, Sansedonio, e d'altri vivac'ingegni mentre hanno scritto sue intenzioni, capricci, fantasie, e ghiribizzi* (Vicenza: Barezzo Barezzi, 1603, 1v) in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chigi VI, 1557.

⁶¹ several examples follow in Mgl. II, IV, 1, the most adherent to the *tenzone* tradition between l'Humoroso (Cintio d'Amelia) and il Cigno (Gismondo Martelli) (see 22v, 23r).

interiority and elevated poetic form. A poem of dubious attribution (to Grazzini) addresses this tension present in the works of the *Humidi* academics:

A giudizio del popol fiorentino
E delle donne, che più pesa e grava
Il Cecchi ha vinto e superato il Cino
Che prima era un poeta a scaccafava:
Hor come havesse spirito divino,
Se ne va altiero, e gonfia, e sbuffa e brana
Dato havendo al Buonanni anche la stretta
E 'l Lasca sguizza, e Frosino sgambetta.⁶²

In other words and in the context of the debate surrounding the formation of the *Infiammati* and the *Humidi*, the main concern of medieval realists, as it is for the early members of Mazzuoli's clan, is content rather than form, *res* rather than *verba*, action rather than speech or contemplation. Of course, this desire is far from pervasive in the collected works of the *Humidi*: many of their exchanged sonnets read as nothing more than exercises in Petrarchan style. They most frequently articulate their penchant for "realism" in sonnets, *capitoli* or other poems addressed to each other and concerning the nature of poetic production itself. Here again, Grazzini emerges as particularly relevant. His relationship with tradition more closely resembles Aretino's – a position most eccentrically

⁶² Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, *Antinori 57. Cart XVI*. 103 fols. *Stanze burlesche del Lasca*, 29v. The Buonanni mentioned here is the same one Grazzini addresses earlier in his sonnet against lessons on Dante. Loosely translated, the poem confirms the Florentine people's (and women, especially) rejection of Cino's lyrical poetry in favour of Cecco's burlesque style. This new sanctification of Cecco's realism leaves Buonanni at a loss and Grazzini at a distinct poetic advantage.

displayed in a sonnet addressed to Ridolfo Castravilla.⁶³ There, in complete formal transgression, Grazzini in few verses summarises not only his own ideas about the ideal nature of literary content, but, indeed, the movement from *verba* to *res* so characteristic of the society of which he takes part and of those with which he is in most frequent contact:

Far, far, far, far bisogna: ognun sa dire,
E biasmar; ch'è proprio un vitupero,
Mille parabolani oggi sentire,
Riprendere e garrire
Gli uomin più dotti e di virtù più carchi,
Come fai tu or Dante e 'l Padre Varchi.
Tu se' cagion, ch'io scarchi
La mia balestra, e di nuovo entri in tresca,
Per batter l'insolenza pedantesca.⁶⁴

Indeed, in the formative years of the academy, the *Humidi* view themselves as literary soldiers whose sole duty is the restoration of realism, and for a mixed public. Later on, they will turn their attention away from original production and toward publishers and the legitimacy of certain publications of a certain style.⁶⁵

⁶³ A Sieneſe writer and occasional contributor to *Humidi* meetings; moſt famous for his ſtudies of Dante's *Comedy* and for his attack of Varchi's *Dialogo delle lingue*; a frequent interlocutor and addreſſee in Grazzini's poetry.

⁶⁴ It is neceſſary to do, do, do; everyone knows how to ſay, / and how to blame; and what a downright diſgrace it is / to hear today a thouſand blathering idiots / ſhrieking and taking up again / the moſt gifted and illuſtrious men, / As you and Father Varchi do with Dante. / You are the reaſon why I ſhoot my croſſbow and enter once again into the dance, / to battle pedantic inſolence (ſonetto XLIV in *Rime di Antonfrancesco Grazzini detto il Laſca*, parte ſeconda, edizione a ſtampa Moücke (Firenze, MDCCXXXII) p. 261, translation mine).

⁶⁵ Il Laſca's poem "In nome di Luigi Pulci" is perhaps the beſt example. Here, and aſſuming Pulci's voice for effect, he laments and condemns Giunti's loſs of the publication rights to an

Their sentiment extends to theatrical production, too. Members of both the *Infiammati* and the *Humidi* are heirs to two competing theatrical traditions: the classical line of Plautus and Terrence in comedy and Sophocles and Euripides in tragedy, and the burgeoning trend of *commedia dell'arte*, born in Tuscany at the beginning of the century and quickly finding its way – and its larger fortune – up to and through the Veneto in the second half of the century and throughout the next. This situation causes a divide among academics and further promotes the conflict between them. On one end of the spectrum, the *Infiammati* err on the side of conservatism if not current convention, decidedly more reserved in their theatrical approach. In Padua, Sperone Speroni and Lodovico Dolce emerge as masters of classical tragedy more particularly. Dolce writes a total of 13 plays, 8 of them tragedies, all of them verse adaptations of their original classical versions. Even Dolce's comedies are re-workings of Plautus and Terence's respective texts.⁶⁶ Speroni limits his theatrical experimentation to tragedy, but similarly rewrites classic texts. The novelty of both writers resides not in content or in form, but in style and linguistic exercise: both rewire ancient scripts in modern, vernacular key, in a renewal of this classical style by then no longer as fashionable as it had been a century earlier.

edition of Pulci's *Morgante*, edited by Grazzini himself. It reads: "Con allegrezza e gioia inteso havia/ Come i Giunti facevon ristampare / Il mio Morgante e che lo correggia / Il Lasca nostro, amico singolare / Tanto che firmamente mi credeva / Udirlo in brie un tempo ritornare / Senza alcun dubbio al suo primiero stato / Ma più che mai corretto e ammendato. // Ma hor dinnovo un certo stampatore / Per altro veramente buon cristiano / A me ha tolto c'al Lasca l'honore / E a Giunti l'ha vinta dalla mano. / Ond'ho tenerezza in grado assai peggiore / Vederlo esser condotto ammano ammano, / E sarà ver, se per disgrazia mia / Si conduce alla man di Ser Tarsia / Questo e quel dotto e letterato sire / Filosofo e teologo eccellente . . ." (Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Antinori 57. Cart XVI. 103 fols., *Stanze burlesque del Lasca*, 58v).

⁶⁶ He is best known, in tragedy, for his *Marianna*, and in comedy for his *Fabritia*. For a full list of his theatrical adaptations and compositions, their similarities to the original texts, and their verse particularities, see Renzo Cremante, *Teatro del Cinquecento*, vol. 1., *Tragedia* (Milano; Napoli: R. Ricciardi, 1988) 730-.

Though these *Infiammati* swim against the overwhelming current of popular-culture commedia dell'arte, asserting their proactiveness in their retrovision, the *Humidi* continue to see in their theatrical presentations formalist exercises out of touch with the needs of a contemporary audience. Indeed, conflicts arise even within the *Infiammati* circle for some of its members' recourse to classical models and lack of fantasy in doing so. Pietro Aretino, in a letter dated June 25, 1537, and before the formation of the academy or his appointment to it, sent from Venice to Lodovico Dolce laments Speroni's frequent imitation of ancient writers and subsequent denial both of Speroni's own personal style and of a poetry rife with the life and vividness it customarily displays. After comparing Speroni to an infant unable to separate from the nurse that teaches him to walk, talk, and exist as a human being, in a prolonged visual artistic metaphor, he writes, along similar lines:

Che honor si fanno i colori vaghi, che si consumano in dipingere frascariuole senza disegno? La lor gloria sta ne i tratti con che gli distende Michelangelo; il quale ha messo in tanto travaglio la natura e l'arte, che non sanno se gli sono maestre o discepoli: altro ci vuole per esser buon dipintore; che contrafar bene un veluto e una fibbia da cintura: . . . la poesia è un ghiribizzo de la natura ne le sue allegrezze, il qual si sta nel furor proprio e mancandone il cantar poetico diventa un cimbalo senza sonagli et un campanil senza campane per la qualcosa chi vuol comporre, e non trahe cotal gratia da le fasce, è un zugo infreddato.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ *Del primo libro de le lettere di M. Pietro Aretino* (1542), Padova, Biblioteca universitaria, Rari Nuova serie 8, 222-224. "What glory is there in beautiful colours used to paint frivolities without design? Their glory lies in the brushstrokes Michelangelo gives them; he has employed nature and art so much to the same extent that it is impossible to tell which is the master and which the disciple. Being a good painter requires more than the ability to

His vision of theatre revolves around the notion of its usefulness only as social satire or criticism – a result he achieves early with *La cortigiana*, and reattempts with varying degrees of success in his later *Il Marescalco* (1539) and *L’Orazia* (1546).⁶⁸

The *Humidi*’s criticism of Speroni’s and Dolce’s approaches will be less socially charged, but no less biting than Aretino’s. At its core is a concern both with mode of composition – prose – and novelty of content. Grazzini openly revolts against the frequently repeated claim against the legitimacy and value of prose poetry and comedy. To this effect, and appealing to the works of Boccaccio, he writes:

La Fiammetta, L’Ameto, e l’altre belle
Sue poesie, ch’io non voglio hor contare
Son tutti in prosa, e li cento novelle
Che fan la terra e ’l ciel maravigliare
E si poesia mai sotto le stelle
Si debbe in prosa, in questa lingua fare
E desta miramenti la commedia
Che troppo in versi altrui rincesce . . .⁶⁹

reproduce well a velvet drape or the clasp of a belt . . . Poetry is a *ghiribizzo* of nature in its happiness, which is located in divine furor. In its absence, poetic song is like the rattle of cymbals, or a bell-tower without a bell. For this reason, he who desires to write and benefits not from inspiration is a cold fish.”

⁶⁸ See P. Larivaille, “L’Orazia de l’Arétin,” in *Les écrivains et le pouvoir en Italie à l’époque de la Renaissance, première série*, ed. André Rochon (Paris, Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1973) pp. 279-360, pp. 291-293. Larivaille, in his examination of three of Aretino’s major theatrical pieces, deems *Il Marescalco* (1539) more a grotesque portrait of social climate than satire of it, and calls the tragedy *L’Orazia* (1546) a failed political exposé.

⁶⁹ Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Antinori 57. Cart XVI. 103 fols, 40v/41r. “The Fiammetta, the Ameto, and his other beautiful / poems, that I wish not to count / Are all in prose, as are the hundred stories / That make the earth and sky marvel. / And if prose

The other offense, against novelty of content and form, he addresses throughout his theatrical production and most specifically in prologues to plays discussed in a later chapter. The crux of his position lies in his “fastidio per l’eredità pesante del teatro latino, per la monotonia dei tipi e dei ruoli, per la ripetività di certe clausole strutturali,” and in his disbelief in “moral” theatre – or theatre aimed at conveying a conventional social message for the greater good of its audience.⁷⁰ Instead, Grazzini, as the only notable playwright of the *Humidi* group, turns to commedia dell’arte and the commedia erudita traditions when composing his own comedies. Therein he attempts to maintain his “ideale di una letteratura vera, libera e diletta – vera perché mira ad enucleare il nocciolo ‘vero’ delle cose; libera dalle incrostazioni dell’erudizione e d’una troppa paludata retorica; diletta perché deve arrecare diletto intellettuale.”⁷¹

Sources of a Schism: The *Humidi*’s transformation to the *Fiorentina*

But not all *Humidi* members agree with Grazzini’s plan or literary style, and very soon after its formation, the academy fractures, mutates, and eventually dissolves in a way the *Infiammati*, for all their internal conflicts and discrepancies, never do. Almost immediately after their first official assembly, news of the *Humidi*’s organization reaches Cosimo I, who is eager to use it to his political advantage as proper propagandistic tool.

Under his official patronage, the academy is renamed the *Accademia Fiorentina*; along with

poetry should ever be written under the stars / It should be in this language / And the same goes for theatre / Which too often is written by others in verse.

⁷⁰ Guido Davide Bonico, *Grazzini, Opere scelte* (Torino: UTET, 1974) 27; “his boredom with the heavy inheritance of Latin theatre, with the monotony of its prototypes and roles, with the repetitiveness of its structures.”

⁷¹ *ibid*, 34; “his ideal of a *real* literature, *free and pleasant* – real because it seeks to clarify the ‘real’ core of things; free from the limitations of erudition and rhetoric grown too murky; pleasant because it aims to instigate intellectual delight.”

its new nomination comes a new set of rules and customs to respect within its literary production and presentation of it abroad. As of 1542, then, the academy's main concern shifts from amateur production of literary capricci, ghiribizzi, and burlesque works, to the professional writing and dissemination of texts that would aggrandize Florence and increase popular support of the Medici family after years of struggle and political disfavour. Integral to Cosimo I's plan is the artistic recollection of Florence's former republican grandeur, transformed to underline his own political importance.⁷² In literary terms, this translates, for the academy, into a turn toward elite public culture. Academics cease to meet in private homes, and begin delivering an increasing number of public lectures, usually on canonical Tuscan texts. Their focus turns to formal issues of style and philosophical interpretation of content, backed by a return to the study of Neo-Platonism, as proposed by Ficino nearly a century earlier, and during Florence's "golden age." The academy becomes governed by a consulate and committee, which is re-elected regularly to ensure literary progress; detailed minutes of the academy's meetings are kept.

This transition entails a series of advantages for academics in favour of it. Those willing to comply with Cosimo I's demands are immediately guaranteed publication by Doni and later Torrentino, the official press of the Medici; plays written for or dedicated to the Medici family are afforded public presentation, attendance, and sponsorship; even somewhat clandestine members of society in line with Medici guidelines and in support of the reformed academy benefit from Medici protection against discrimination laws that

⁷² For the significance of Cosimo I's renewal in specifically artistic terms, see Najemy on Vasari and "the remembrance of the republican past," pp. 487-515. Cosimo I's campaign consisted primarily of remodeling republican piazze and buildings to Florence's new principate system, without stripping them of their essence or ability to be recognized. Vasari undertook or supervised many of the works aimed at linking Cosimo I's greatness and intention of municipal renewal with Florence's earlier republican fortune.

might otherwise target them.⁷³ Members of what will later be termed the “new generation” of academics profit the most from this situation. Among them are Giovambattista Gelli and the Aramei – a subset of the academy intent on revising the Tuscan alphabet and in that way revolutionizing Tuscan literary production.⁷⁴ But with the implementation of Cosimo I’s paradigm, the founding members of the academy watch their original vision fade and eventually transform into a proponent of the very attitude against which it originally reacts. The fantasy and carefree whimsy of lo Stradino, il Lasca, and others of the academy’s first members soon give way to pedantic exercises much like those of the *Infiammati* to the north. Indeed, and as will be addressed in a later chapter, a number of the *Humidi-cum-Fiorentina*’s official texts produced between 1542 and 1555 closely resemble *Infiammati* publications of the same period.

Benedetto Varchi and the *Fiorentina* controversy

Caught in the crosshairs of the *Humidi*’s original vision, the *Infiammati*’s proposed purpose, and the exigencies of the newly reformed *Fiorentina* under Cosimo I is Benedetto Varchi. Sole active member of both academies as well as *fuoruscito* returned to his native Florence, he finds himself in a distinctly delicate position that requires a balancing of his

⁷³ One case in point is Tullia d’Aragona, member of the academy and renowned Florentine escort. A public decree of (insert year) demanded that all prostitutes wear a yellow veil for public recognition of their trade. Tullia, however, who famously opened her home to informal meetings of the reformed academy, was granted exceptional status by (insert name and citation).

⁷⁴ I take a closer look at the Aramei in Chapter 3, and in the context of the *questione della lingua*.

literary and political tendencies.⁷⁵ He is called back to Florence to be an official member of the academy and regular Medici writer in 1542. Accepting the post means both turning away from the *Infiammati's* Aristotelianism, rejecting the former republicanism that got him expelled from Florence more than twenty years prior, and following the *Fiorentina* reform despite his loyalty to the original *Humidi* clan.⁷⁶ His desire to experiment with literary forms and in that way to contribute to the wave of literary avant-garde around him in Florence is compromised by Cosimo I's project of systemic praise of the past; his practice of Aristotelian exegesis is hindered by the revival of Florentine Neo-Platonism. His works thus bear the marks of this conflict. The most transparent example of it is found in the prologue to his comedy in five acts, *La suocera*, first published posthumously in 1569 and probably written quite some time before then. There, Varchi, positions himself, with great caution, in relation to the traditions by which he is surrounded. "Voi udirete, spettatori nobilissimi, se vi piacerà di prestarne cheta e riposata udienza, una commedia, la quale non è né del tutto antica, né moderna affatto, ma parte moderna, e parte antica; e benché ella sia in lingua fiorentina, è però cavata in buona parte della latina," he writes.⁷⁷ Varchi's equivocation is indeed in equal parts diplomatic and complacent: his text is accompanied by a dedicatory letter to Cosimo I wherein he discusses the sad state of contemporary

⁷⁵ In theory, Pietro Aretino also belongs to both academies, though only his participation in the *Infiammati*, at Piccolomini's invitation, has been documented and recognized. His name appears in the *Humidi's* 1730 ledger, though dubiously.

⁷⁶ In his early years, Varchi was also a member of the Neo-Platonic academy of Bernardo Rucellai, meeting regularly at the Orti Orticellari and disseminating there staunch republican sentiment.

⁷⁷ Should it please you to lend it your calm and quiet viewership, you will hear, most noble spectators, a comedy which is neither entirely ancient nor entirely modern, but rather partly modern and partly ancient. And though it is written in Florentine language, much of it is extracted from Latin (Lettera dedicatoria a Cosimo de' Medici in *La suocera*, MS Rome, Biblioteca Corsiniana, Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, 58, H, 41, A2r-v, translation mine).

comedy debased from its classical roots into production often synonymous with debauchery the primary goal of which is to elicit mindless laughter. Hoping, no doubt, to please his patron, in writing *his* comedy, he will set the record straight, he says, and relegate the inspiration of laughter in the audience to its appropriately (and originally) secondary role.⁷⁸ *His* will be a comedy still rather informed by the giants of the classical period, even if his linguistic aim will be “non solo d’agguagliare la Latina ma di vincerla.”⁷⁹ Still, he insists on underlining the presence of some novelty in his composition, lest his fellow academics write him off as nothing more than a political puppet.

Despite his best attempts at walking the line, Varchi falls into heavy disfavour with the original *Humidi* clan, chief among them Antonfrancesco Grazzini. Il Lasca viciously criticizes both Varchi’s irresolution and his sustained collaboration with the *Infiammati* after his appointment to the *Fiorentina* council, embittered by his inability to obtain official or adequate recognition within it.⁸⁰ What follows, from 1543 to roughly 1561, is an ongoing literary war between Grazzini on one end, exclusive proponents of the Medici reform – the Aramei – on the other, continuing members of the *Infiammati* to the north, and Varchi, notoriously neutral, at the center of them all.⁸¹ Individual battles in this war come in the form of correspondence, exchange of poetry, and, most frequently, indirect responses to circulating, if not yet published, texts.⁸² Some of the ongoing intertext among these authors

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ not only to equal the Latin, but to conquer it, (ibid, A3 verso, translation mine).

⁸⁰ More will be said on this point in chapter 3.

⁸¹ Specifically on the question of the Aramei and the reform of the Tuscan alphabet, Aretino, in Venice, sides with Grazzini and the original members of the *Humidi* clan. Most notable is his letter to lo Stradino (Giovanni Mazzuoli) concerning the proposed changes today held in Florence’s Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Carte Strozziene: II.i.398: Poesie toscane piacevoli di diversi autori, “Lettera dell’Aretino allo Stradino,” May 6, 1541 (123r-124v).

⁸² examples will be given in the third chapter.

is voluntary and intentional, if not directly acknowledged; similarities between Varchi and Speroni during this period are many, and not surprising, in light of their mutual sympathy. Other parts of it are deliberately polemical, as is the case with Grazzini's and Alfonso de' Pazzi's responses.

Antonfrancesco Grazzini and the 1547 academic reform

By 1547, the literary climate has become so tense and fraught with negativity that the *Fiorentina* resolves to undergo a second and decisive reform.⁸³ De' Pazzi is shunned in his rejection and, often, ridicule of Varchi's chosen "political correctness" and Grazzini is expelled from the academy altogether, no longer recognized as one of its founding members. Though dating of most of his (poetic) works is still tenuous, this break from the academy ostensibly generates the greatest amount of his productivity: we know for certain that most of his theatrical and prose production occurs after the academic reform of 1547, by which time Grazzini is already feeling the full effects of social marginalization and is writing on the fringe of contemporary culture. His works bear the marks of his social exclusion and the frustration that comes with it. Removing himself from official academic exchanges and stepping away from Petrarchan models of production, he focuses his energy, in poetry, on exposing the academy for its political pretention. His prose works, increasing in number in proportion to the quest for literary vindication that fuels them, likewise emphasize the divide between the formally educated (pedants and priests) and the

⁸³ Two years earlier, Benedetto Varchi, then presiding *consolo* had predicted the academy's demise, attributing it to jealous hostility. In 1547, any member not interested in promoting Cosimo I's strict agenda was expelled from the academy. Domenico Zanré presents the most comprehensive analysis of this period in his *Cultural Non-Conformity in Early Modern Florence* (Cornwall: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2004).

commoner, generally preferring the latter for his astuteness and intuition.⁸⁴ His theatre, though faithful to the models, plots, and structure of erudite comedy, detaches from the trend of classical imitation; his prologues and prefaces seek to renew the genre of erudite comedy altogether. Between 1547 and 1561, Grazzini pens six comedies, one farce, and at least twenty-two novelle, demonstrating in practice the literary goal of his original *Humidi* clan – a preference of doing over saying or writing.

The tone of Grazzini's works shifts accordingly, in a tendency often observable in his interlocutors and contemporaries. With his disappointment in and eventual expulsion from the academy comes the anger that defines and shapes the vast majority of his literary production and, eventually, the decades surrounding it more generally. His vitriol in the face of his former academics and their original *Infiammati* prototype generates a cholera that becomes representative of his *oeuvre* as a whole and that is if often shared and sustained by his supporters abroad. Pietro Aretino, perhaps not surprisingly, is one notable exception. A former friend and follower of Giovanni delle Bande Nere, he champions Grazzini in his hatred of Cosimo I and the academic reforms he imposes on the *Humidi*. One capitolo published first in 1540, and composed during the repeated outbreak of the bubonic plague, likely around 1537 attests early to Aretino's distaste for the new Medici regime under Cosimo I, in a biting satire of the latter's patronage of Michelangelo Buonarroti.⁸⁵ But Aretino lends his greatest support to Grazzini and the early members of

⁸⁴ More will be said on Grazzini's *Cene* in chapter 4.

⁸⁵The manuscript autograph is held in Florence's Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Fondo Palatino: Pal. 10097, vol. III: Rime di diversi autori, *Quattro satire dell'Aretino non stampate all'Albicante*, "Satira II (al duca di Fiorenza)" (1141-1147). The first published copy (*I capitoli del S. Pietro Aretino, Lodovico Dolce, Sansovino, ecc.* (Navò e fratelli, 1540) is held in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Capp. V. 519 (int. 6). The most notable sections read: "... Io odio Michelangel Buonarotto / Perché non caccia i pretacci al bordello / Facendovi di se

the *Humidi* clan in a letter to lo Stradino dated August 6, 1541. By this time, the *questione della lingua* has already taken on specific dimension in Florence's literary circles, where the move to oust Grazzini from the academy is already in full force. Aretino questions the Aramei's proposed reform of the Tuscan alphabet, and sympathises with a Grazzini incapable of winning popular support from any source:

L'altra sera mi capitò a casa il Lasca, tutto pieno di collora et rabbia, sudato e trafelato e appunto in sul hora ch'io stavo per andarmene alletto, et era poverello venuto in poste sì che salutato mi prima et io fattogli le debite accoglienze, mi venne addire chome gli accademici fiorentini in sul riformare la a.b.c. havevano consultato cacciarlo via, et con non so che altre letter confirmarlo fuora di Toscana in perpetuo . . . schonfortato, . . . il Lasca, doloroso si partì per disperato con animo di quei celarsene a giove innipotente et venne subito a Roma per consigliarsene coi virtuosi ma trovatogli dispersi se ne andò a Siena et non trovatovi ne i Capassoni, ne gli Intronati, se ne cammina a Padova agli Infiammati et quegli anchora trovano in disparte perché chi a Roma, chi a Bologna, chi qua et chi di là, sì che preso partito de venirmi a trovare e perché solo vaglio più che tutta l'accademia insieme, ne venne a Vinegia et come vi ho detto, mi trova nella chiusa raccontami e narratomi il caso interamente et chiesomi sopra il parer mio, gli risposi che mi pareva che gli fussi fatto torto, et nel vero questi vostri

debito voto. / Dovrebbe uno spirito come quello / Far miracoli in voi, che somigliasse / La signoria dell'Angel Gabbriello / Colla fronta le turbe, rallegrate" (1141) and, "Di Venezia, refugio d'ogni gente / nel mese di novembre a giorni doi, / l'annaio affamato troppo pestialmente: / Pietro Aretin, servo de' servi suoi" (1147).

accademici mi parano molto saccenti a voler fare quello che non fecero et non pensarono mai di far gli antichi.⁸⁶

Aretino ultimately counsels Mazzuoli to subvert the conflict this difference in opinion has caused among his fellow academics by affording Grazzini an audience and allowing him to pursue his individual projects in peaceful ignorance of the formal changes around him. His proposed solution proves to be valid for some time, but when Grazzini is ignored in the election of the Fiorentina council in 1547, after years of resistance, he is finally separated from his academic colleagues.

It would be nineteen years before Grazzini would be admitted re-entry into the circle he reluctantly, if bitterly left. A series of pastoral plays celebrating Lorenzo de' Medici's early milestones and the personal recommendation of Leonardo Salviati afford him reconciliation with his peers on May 6, 1566 just before the subsequent transformation of the *Fiorentina* into the original *Accademia della Crusca*. The vitriol of the years leading up to his schism with the academy and those between his association with it, however, generate a new brand of literary production beyond the familiar rift between *res* and *verba* that characterizes it. Increasingly, the *Humidi-Infiammati* opposition and, later, the *Humidi-Fiorentina* hostility take on humoural notes worthy not only of each academy's name – “Inflamed” and “Humid” respectively – but of the very nature of humoural opposition itself. In this climate of forced subscription to a Mediecean prescribed aesthetic, *Humidi* adherents become verbal doctors attempting, by their work, to seek renewed humoural balance in their immediate sphere, or, by the irony of comparison, to undermine

⁸⁶ Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Firenze, Carte Stroziane: II.i.397: Poesie toscane di diversi autori, *Lettera dall'Aretino allo Stradino, 6 agosto 1541* (123r-124v). See Appendix for translation.

Medici legitimacy in its involvement with an academy of letters.⁸⁷ What begins as a play on words based on popular discourse surrounding the four humours and their relation to each other soon gives way to a larger discussion, both philosophical and literary, on the relationship between contrasting elements, love and hate, nature and anomaly. Such will be the main focus of the following chapter.

⁸⁷ See, for example, in Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chigi VI. 1557, *Delle rime piacevole del Borgogna, Ruscelli, Sansovino, Doni, Lasca, Remigio, Anguillara, Sansedonio, e d'altri vivac'ingegni mentre hanno scritto sue in vertigini, capricci, fantasie e ghiribizzi* (Vicenza, Barezzo Barezzi, 1603), Lasca's, "Sonetto dell'accademico fiorentino" (175v-176r): "... son medico in volgar, non in grammatica, / Signor mio caro, e con poca attitudine, / Che l'ho male studiata in gioventudine, / Sì ch'io non ti guarrei d'una volatica. / Ma se tu hai catarro o gotta sciatica / O scesa ò rena, ò senti amaritudine / Di podagre, ch'affliggon vecchitudine / O hai disavolatao o spata o natica, / Di tutte queste, e d'ogni altro difetto / Di doglia, o nova, o vecchia corporale, / Ti fia il bagno utile, e perfetto. / La pancia ti verrà come un grembiale / Per la cald'acque e pe'l sudar dal letto. / E scorcierasse il lungo pastorale. / Pur nondimeno quali / Procura ben, per fantasi di sonno / che non gli paia / tirar qualche conno."

Chapter Two: Humours and Elemental Discourse

Come né più né meno i rioni ai fiumi, i quali avvolgendo e aggirandosi in qua e in là, in giù et in su, si ritrovano alla fine tutti quanti in corpo all'oceano: così generoso e dolcissimo Padre Stradino, accade alle composizioni d'hoggidi: le quali o di colta, o di balzo capitano tutti quanti nel contro dell'armadiaccio vostro: sì che quello dell'Acqua, e questo dei versi e delle prose si possano chiamar riedito e ripostiglio."

-Antonfrancesco Grazzini to Lo Stradino, mid-May 1547⁸⁸

As has been noted earlier, the *Accademia degli umidi* owes its foundation – and its name – entirely to an already extant academic community to the north: Padova's *Accademia degli Infiammati*. Yet despite the academies' occasionally shared members, the correspondences between writers of both groups, and the proximity of their dates of formation – the *Infiammati* in June and the *Umidi* in September of 1540 – only with the creation of Giovanni Mazzuoli's Florentine circle comes the tension that marks a shift in Florence's literary production, the ripple effects of which are felt as far, geographically, as Venice (in the interactions among various academics) and as far forward as the 20th century and Pirandello's theory of humourism. It is only seemingly superficial to find in the *Umidi's* very name a first indication of such a shift. Though formed and named in reaction against the *Infiammati* and their pedantic study of language and philosophy, the *Umidi* are the first and, within their generation, the only academy intentionally to embed a humoural reference within their name. Though Padova's *Infiammati* are lit – literally, enflamed – by the fire of learning, their literary production bears no mark of the passion in their name, nor do their official proceedings; in other words, their title only in a limited way defines them. By contrast, Mazzuoli's *Umidi*, and Antonfrancesco Grazzini chief among them, make of their "humidity" a central part of their identity not only in the naming of their members –

⁸⁸ MS Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Antinori 57. Cart XVI. 103 fols. *Stanze burlesche del Lasca*, 1r.

as shown – and in the content of their poetry and theatre – as will be shown – but also in their reaction to contemporary philosophical debates and in the precise direction of their mutability – literary, political, and social. The following chapters will more concretely propose and expand upon the link I suggest exists from the *Umidi* to the *Umoristi* through a chain of related concepts. This chapter, however, will locate within the *Umidi*, using Grazzini as main point of reference, the very “humoural” nature that is both a departure from the *Umidi*’s contemporary literary models and the prototype for the consciously “humoural” literature of the early 20th century and the “capriccio” at its root.

Humoural theory – the theory of the four humours and their proper functioning within the human body – dates back centuries, to the canons of Galen, Hippocrates, and Avicenna and enjoys an impressive breadth of scholarship from its origins to the present day. In its vernacular manifestations, it is arguably if not indigenous to, then at least remarkably present in the literary fabric of Tuscany from the Duecento onward, as the following survey will show. Contrary, however, to previous poetic and philosophical production that both grew and witnessed melancholy’s prevalence on the humoural spectrum over the three previous centuries, the *Umidi*’s composition takes a turn away from an explicit and exclusive relationship with Saturn to favour, instead, a more complicated appropriation of and play on humoural theory and its association with personality and interpersonal conflicts.

From Hippocrates to Ficino: A Survey of Humoural Theory

According to humoral studies in the canons of Galen, Hippocrates, and Avicenna – still trusted and authoritative medical codes in the 16th –century -⁸⁹, phlegm, a substance both wet and cold (or “umido”) stands directly opposite cholera, itself hot and dry. The water associated with the one counteracts the fire associated with the next, and between them sits melancholy: cold like the first, dry like the second, represented by earth, and, most notably, a condition generated by the excess, in the body of any given man (and usually an artist), of black bile. No less noteworthy, of course, is the alternate name given to the cholera associated with the sphere of fire: yellow bile. These categories prove to be fundamental to early medical practitioners in their diagnosis of both the physical and psychological ailments of their patients up until the sixteenth century. Over Grazzini’s lifetime, however, medical experimentation – dissections and the closer study of blood – challenges the assumptions of humoral theory and provides a real alternative to it. It would be at least another few generations, however, before the discoveries of Cardano and his contemporaries changes the face of both medical theory and practice.⁹⁰

To go back to the beginning, at its most basic, humoral theory associates each of the four bodily humours – or, as in Greek, liquids – with an element, a season, a stage of life, a series of physical properties, and a ruling planet. It posits that only a perfect balance of all four humours guarantees physical and psychological health, and that the excess of any one humour in man leads to a number of physiological diseases or personality disorders specific to the humour in excess, more generally expressed as “bad temperament.” Blood is

⁸⁹ Though Hippocrates was theoretically its founding father, Galen, writing in the 2nd century AD, is more frequently credited with its sophistication into what would become the leading medical theory until the 1530s – the period here under examination.

⁹⁰ On the decreasing influence of humoral theory in Renaissance Italy, see Charles Richet, “An Address on Ancient Humourism and Modern Humourism,” *The British Medical Journal* 2.2596 (1910): 921-26.

associated with air, springtime, and youth, and is considered moist and hot. An excess of it causes the sanguine condition, ruled by Jupiter. Yellow bile (or choler) is associated with fire, summer, and adolescence, is considered hot and dry and is governed by Mars. Black bile, dry, cold, and proper to the melancholic, matches up with earth, autumn, and maturity and falls under the jurisdiction of Saturn. Phlegm, dominating humour of the phlegmatic and ruled by the moon, is associated with water, winter, and senility, coldness and moistness. Any illness caused by the overabundance of one humour could, it was upheld, be cured mainly by suppressing it, either by eliminating it or by abstaining from its probable cause, often food.

Alternately and no less effectively, one could negate it through the application of its opposite; were one to suffer from choler, for example, an appropriate cure might be the consumption of cold and watery substances.⁹¹ In other words, and as Galen writes:

So in uneven bad temperament, the primary cause of change is heat and cold, since these qualities are extremely powerful; but there is also moistening and drying, in other words hunger and thirst, the former being a lack of what is dry, the latter a lack of what is moist. ... Air is easily changed, because it is composed of the tiniest particles. Yellow bile is hottest by nature, phlegm coolest ... Hence yellow bile is easily changed by whatever it comes into contact with, whilst black bile is changed with difficulty. ... Everything grows and is nourished by whatever is similar, but is killed and destroyed by whatever is opposite. In this way the

⁹¹ For a detailed description of humoral theory, see Galen, *On the Humours*, trans. Mark Grant in *Galen on Food and Diet* (New York, Routledge, 2000) 14-18.

preservation of health is through whatever is similar, whilst the cure for diseases is through whatever is opposite.⁹²

The causes of humoral imbalances were many and varied. In addition to improper or imbalanced nutrition, fevers, for instance, were caused by immoderate heat in the body, itself caused by anger, stress, insomnia, or dehydration.⁹³ Blood was thought to be the most important physical element for its promotion of the proportionate circulation of air and water within the body, and air was most commonly considered the portal of diseases. “Green Sickness,” or chlorosis, was a disease particular to virgins in whom “an excess of blood, due to ‘food and the growth of the body,’ [was] unable to escape because the ‘mouth of exit,’ [was] closed,” and its proposed remedies were either bloodletting or, more desirably, marriage.⁹⁴ There was no perceivable limit to the discomforts and afflictions for which humoral theory was held accountable until the mid-sixteenth century.

The transmutations of humoral theory and its association with physiognomic conditions and character traits are many and complex.⁹⁵ Intersections with Theophrastus, Aristotle, and pseudo-Aristotle associated various physical symptoms to psychological dispositions; the *Nicomachean Ethics* shows a tendency, thereafter ever growing, to describe character not in terms of individual propensities, but of catalogued “types” of behaviours. In fact, it is the Hippocratic corpus’s passage through Aristotelian and pseudo-Aristotelian texts that arguably most greatly shapes the study of humoral theory and its

⁹² *On uneven bad temperament*, trans. Mark Grant, 37-45.

⁹³ *On the Causes of Diseases*, 53.

⁹⁴ Hippocrates, *On the diseases of virgins*, trans. Littré, as cited in Helen King, “Green Sickness: Hippocrates, Galen, and the Origins of the ‘Disease of Virgins,’” *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 2.3 (1996): 372-87, 379.

⁹⁵ For a rather comprehensive review of humoral psychology from Hippocrates to Hobbes, see Jacques Bos, “The rise and decline of character: humoral psychology in ancient and early modern medical theory,” *History of the Human Sciences* 22.29 (2009): 30-51.

manifestation in various art forms, not least among them, literature. The *Problemata*, thirty questions attributed to Aristotle, are perhaps the best place to start. In their work *Saturn and Melancholy*, Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, and Fritz Saxl take a detailed look at pseudo-Aristotle's *Problem XXX.I* made infamous by its treatment of the prevalence of black bile in great heroes or men of particular artistic genius.⁹⁶ There, pseudo-Aristotle argues that black bile is latent in all men but, and only under certain circumstances, makes itself manifest in heroic men who, saturnine, are most prone to its effects.

The association of melancholy with greatness (and sometimes even magnanimity) would turn out to be a trope of persistent interest throughout antiquity and into the Middle Ages. It is a question of interest to Stoic philosophers to no lesser extent than it is a matter of investigation to early Church fathers. With Cicero, an abundance of black bile is linked to an analogous condition termed *aegritudo*. With Evagrius Ponticus and John Cassian in the 4th and 5th centuries AD, melancholy is translated into the capital sin of *acedia* and deemed particular to the cloistered or desert monk.⁹⁷ Over a century later, St. Gregory the Great links *acedia* to another monastic vice, *tristitia*, and casts them, together as one and the same sin – the scheme later adopted by St. Thomas Aquinas. Not surprisingly, then, melancholy, in its various vestments, comes to play a considerable role in the artistic production of the Middle Ages.

⁹⁶ *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion, and Art* (New York: Basic Books, 1964).

⁹⁷ For a more detailed account of the relationship between melancholy, melancholia, black bile, *tristitia*, *aegritudo*, and *acedia*, see Noel L. Brann, "Is *acedia* melancholy? A re-examination of this question in the light of Fra Battista da Crema's *Della cognitione et vittoria di se stesso* (1531)," *Journal of the history of medicine and the allied sciences* 34.2 (1979): 180-99.

In Italy, it reveals itself in various ways. Up until Petrarch, and indeed, to a large extent even with him, it is most commonly presented, at least in a secular vein, as love-sickness: a male variant on the chlorosis particular to virgins discussed above.⁹⁸ But though it might seem logical, in this context, to attribute the *malattia d'amore* to the sanguine condition caused by an excess of blood, humoral theory is anything but straightforward, even just from one generation of physicians and artists to the next. In fact, as will later be discussed, the properties inherent to each humour are sometimes so similar to those of another that dissociating them becomes a near-impossible task; not surprisingly, the overlap of yellow with black bile and this latter with phlegm is so great that by one account or another, melancholy is almost always interchangeable with the one or the other.⁹⁹ With his *Secretum*, though, and his exploration, within it, of the sin he calls *accidia*, Petrarch takes *acedia* – whether we are to call it *tristitia* or *malinconia* – out of the cloister and ushers it into secular literature of the fourteenth century. In the preface to his *De remediis utriusque fortunae*, he identifies writing – or artistic release the result or process of introspection – as the most effective antidote to melancholy. A century later, the discussion of melancholy is taken still one step forward largely by way of Giovanni Pontano, Marsilio Ficino, and his Neo-Platonist circle who not only reopen the astrological component of

⁹⁸ For more on the association of malinonia to love-sickness, see Massimo Ciavolella, *La malattia d'amore dall'antichità al medioevo* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1976).

⁹⁹ Ficino's astrology at least partially explains the astral reason for such overlap. Speaking for himself, "Ficino was convinced that the location of the planet Saturn in his ascendant Aquarius at the time of his birth exerted a malevolent influence in his life," but he was no less aware of other planetary configurations that might also be contributing to his mood and mental health (Bullard 694). He writes: "Saturn seems to have impressed the seal of melancholy from the beginning; set, as it is, almost in the midst of my ascendant Aquarius, it is influenced by Mars, also in Aquarius, and the Moon in Capricorn" (Op. 1:733 and Letters 2:33, translated by and cited in Bullard 694).

discourse on the humours, but also attempt to reconcile it with the currency of their neo-platonic philosophy.¹⁰⁰

Ficino's treatment of the humours is a topic of its own particular, complex, and frequent analysis. Though this chapter will not attempt to do it justice or to examine it in detail, it would be useful to highlight some of the components instrumental in understanding humoral theory – melancholy more specifically – or some of the avenues through which it passes in the fifteenth century. Ficino's major concern with humoral theory is astrological, and is not contained in any one of his treatises; a "melancholic" himself, Ficino's interest in the disease that plagues him persists throughout his life, but his dealings with melancholia are located primarily in his *De vita libri tres*. His purpose there is several-fold. He hopes, among other things, to describe the melancholic condition both psychologically and physically, then to justify its particularity to men of genius – like himself – and finally, astrologically to explain it and propose antidotes to it.

Anyone born under the influence of Saturn, he maintains, is subject, for the rest of his life, to its astral effects and their elemental equivalents. This predisposition assumes associated character traits: Saturn's cold and dry influence often leads to indecision, social retreat, contempt, boredom and – almost always – to the fear and sorrow that Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxl have claimed to be characteristic of the fifteenth century more generally.

¹⁰⁰ The debate over Renaissance astrology and the possibility (or impossibility) of reconciling it with Christian and neo-platonic thought was taken up by both Pontano and Ficino around the same time, 1475-77, Pontano in his *De rebus coelestibus* and Ficino in his *Disputatio*. In these as well as in others of their respective treatises, both authors deal with the Christian notion of free will in the context of astrology. For Pontano's view on the matter see, for instance, Charles Trinkaus, "The Astrological Cosmos and Rhetorical Culture of Giovanni Gioviano Pontano," *Renaissance Quarterly* 38.3 (1985): 446-72. For a more general survey of some components of the debate from a medical point of view, see Giancarlo Zanier, "Platonic Trends in Renaissance Medicine," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 48.3 (1987): 509-19.

It plagues great heroes of the past, and Ficino, too, in line with his learned (if not inherent) Humanism finds men of great genius to be its greatest victims. Still, though his belief in astral influences on mental health persists, he is eager, in his *Disputatio* and in an effort to bridge the gap between his astrological studies and Christian discourse of free will, to argue for the melancholic's ability to "dominate the stars" or to "utilize the heavens and the medicines and talismans associated with individual planets in order to draw upon their particular influences, or conversely, to avoid them," rather than either accepting their own powerlessness or discounting astral influence altogether.¹⁰¹

It should suffice, for the moment, to acknowledge the influence of Ficino's thought on medical theory and practices contemporary to him. In his lifetime and well after it, the third book of the *De vita*, a treatise on astral medicine, though heavily critiqued by humanists of the time, remains an important point of reference for practicing physicians.

For centuries and prominent as early as the duecento in the works of the *scuola siciliana*, *siculo-toscani*, and *stilnovisti*, then, melancholy, in its various manifestations, dominates what today is considered canonical Italian literature. Yet for all its fame or, perhaps better, early notoriety, melancholy all but disappears from Italy's literary scene and production until at least the late 17th century, when it again surfaces, mutated somewhat, in pastoral literature. The gap it leaves empty is soon filled, however, by the *Umidi's* more variegated elemental discourse and implicit espousal of "choler" within it. Although its name and main causes remain the same over centuries, like melancholy, choler also undergoes a series of diversified significances between Galen and Girolamo Cardano's generation. Originally, it is associated with intelligence only slightly inferior to the genius of

¹⁰¹ Melissa Meriam Bullard, "The Inward Zodiac: A Development In Ficino's Thought on Astrology," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 43.4 (1990): 687-708, 700.

the melancholic. Over time, however, the characteristics of this intelligence are further specified: the choleric's intelligence is owed in no small part to his harshness and irascibility – or vice versa.¹⁰² In the sixteenth century explicitly, it is defined as – and not merely characterized by – *ira* or *stizza* (ire or vexation). It is thought to originate in the ears, sometimes in response to sound, and to engender a series of related versions of “bad humour”: mania, bitterness, and impatience. Physiologically, it is believed to cause jaundice (*collera del fegato e dello stomaco*), tumours, ulcers, and some cancers. Perhaps most importantly to my purposes and to its replacement of melancholy in the literary milieu, Brunetto Latini in the Duecento calls both it and melancholy variants of “choler” – the one yellow, the other black.¹⁰³ To explain the *Umidi*'s take on the humours and, more frequently, the elements, and its relation to literary practices of their day, however, it will be helpful to examine medical practice and the use, in vernacular literature, of medical language both within the *Umidi* generation and in the centuries leading up to it.

Humoural Shift and 16th-century Medicine in Theory and Practice

The shift in emphasis from melancholy to choler in the sixteenth century Florentine academic sphere is neither simple nor immediate. Humoural theory, from the 4th century BC onwards, is, for all intents and purposes, in a case of constant flux, as, too, are its development, and reception throughout Europe. The dissemination of humoural theory after the fifteenth century and its eventual descent into more popular art forms, remains a

¹⁰² See Bos 37.

¹⁰³ These are the definitions of the term “collera” given in the first three editions of the *Vocabolario della Crusca*, contemporary to and immediately following Grazzini's and the *Umidi*'s lifetime. The TLIO corroborates the *Crusca*'s definition, attributing to choler “Sapore amaro, amarezza. Collera amara: amarezza (della bile); ira.

little-studied phenomenon. The Middle Ages do much, for better or worse, for the development of medicine not only from an art form (or a topic of theoretical study) to a practice (or a craft), but also for the collection, translation, commentary, and circulation of what would become a canon of medicinal treatises consulted by doctors from Bologna to Salerno. Most medical practice from the 11th century onward is based principally on Hippocrates's aphorisms, translated from their original Greek into Arabic and only then into the vastly more accessible Latin. By Gentile da Foligno and Taddeo Alderotti's time,¹⁰⁴ however, Galen's once almost exclusive influence begins to wane; Avicenna, Averroes, and Haly Abbas, alongside Celsus and Pliny, become equally important sources of medical information both practical and theoretical.¹⁰⁵ In fact, as Roger French points out, it is largely thanks to Gentile that Galen's works were ever rendered intelligible.¹⁰⁶ His aphorisms, integrated with those of Hippocrates and added to Avicenna's already extant canon, eventually come to consist of a major portion of the *Articella*: a medicinal textbook or, perhaps more accurately, compendium of medical sources from Constantine the African onward, intended specifically for pedagogical as well as practical use and subject to a continuous series of revisions, additions, and editions with the commentary of each passing generation of doctors.

The *Articella* remains the most prevalent and useful collection of primary medicinal sources for centuries after its initial compilation. "All doctors trained within a university

¹⁰⁴ Both Gentile and Alderotti were famous doctors of the high Middle Ages.

¹⁰⁵ See Roger French, *Medicine Before Science. The Business of Medicine from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

¹⁰⁶ See Roger French, *Canonical Medicine. Gentile da Foligno and Scholasticism* (Boston: Brill, 2001).

and many who were not, would have been familiar with the *Articella*.¹⁰⁷ Printed editions of it proliferated and circulated from 1476 to 1534 when it very suddenly, very abruptly, and quite decisively goes out of print and is replaced, instead, by a widespread Hellenist medical movement, in keeping with the humanist tendencies still abounding more generally.¹⁰⁸ In fact, the 1520s already witness a growing tendency to rotate Avicenna's teachings out of medical pedagogy while cycling Galen's back in.

By the time Giovanni Argenterio accepts a position at the University of Pisa in the early 1540s, Avicenna is all but discounted as a reputable medical source, and Galen's teachings, too, are being heavily questioned, and not only by Argenterio himself.¹⁰⁹ At Bologna in 1541, anatomist Andreas Vesalius disproves many of Galen's theories, pedagogically privileges the findings of his own dissections to theoretical study, and writes a new and boldly original anatomical text for use in future instruction.¹¹⁰ Throughout central and northern Italy, then, the medical field sees a concrete and increasing preference of the practical over the theoretical, the directly applicable over the abstract. To be sure, though Galen and Avicenna's theoretical teachings remain in frequent and sometimes even exclusive use at Italian universities, by the 1540s, medical theory escapes the classroom and enters into a conversation not only with other university disciplines, but also with the

¹⁰⁷ Jon Arrizabalaga, "The Death of a Medieval Text: The *Articella* and the Early Press," in *Medicine from the Black Death to the French Disease*, eds. Roger French, Jon Arrizabalaga et al (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1998) 184-220, 184.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ See Nancy Siraisi, "Giovanni Argenterio and Sixteenth-Century Medical Innovation: Between Princely Patronage and Academic Controversy," *Osiris*, second series, vol. 6, 1990, 161-80. See also Noga Arikha, "'Just life in a nutshell': Humours as common sense," *The Philosophical Forum* 39.3 (2008): 303-14.

¹¹⁰ For more on Vesalius, see Nancy Siraisi, "Medicine and the Renaissance World of Learning," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 78 (1) Spring 2004: 1-36.

general public at large- a tendency ostensibly also observable in the literary production of the time.

In other words, the trends perceivable in medical practice – a focus on *res* rather than *verba*; a movement toward inclusion and expansion rather than elitist pigeon-holing – find analogous expressions in literature which, more and more, aims to do new things against the increasingly ominous background of past greatness. But the similarities of the medical world in the 1540s to its literary counterpart do not end there. Though medicine and literature are by now distinct spheres of activity and specialisation in the university, their shared properties and concerns outside of it blurs the lines of influence from the one to the other; while the doctor is rarely also a writer in his craft, the contrary is seldom also true – or so would the writers of the academies have their audiences believe.

Humoural Theory and the Collision of Medicine and Popular Literature

Of course, not all academics wear only literary hats; though they seldom step forth as diagnostic specialists in their lessons or poetry, while most are thought to have been merchants, a visible minority are if not physicians by trade, then well-versed, at least superficially, in medical philosophy.¹¹¹ Far more frequently, however, hard and fast poets are the authors, in their works, of a proliferation of “natural” claims, appropriating medical language and reprising elemental discourse on humoural theory to lend credibility to their art. Generally, their musings fall into one of three categories: a concern with food, diet, and proper nutrition; reflections on illness both personal – a case of a bad cough, a surplus of

¹¹¹ Though his concerns are more philosophical than medical, Francesco Verino displays a considerable knowledge of the dominant medical debates of his time and their theoretical precedent.

mucous production, poor blood or air circulation within the body – and communal – plagues; a (regional) play on the word “medico” and “Medici” often paired with a parodistic recasting of humoral vocabulary. Before arriving at the members of the *Umidi* academy properly, I shall briefly consider these major tropes in the years leading up to the academy’s formation.

Galen takes up explicitly the issue of diet in at least two of his major treatises – *On Diet* and *On the Powers of Foods* – and implicitly in at least four more: *On the Humours*, *On Black Bile*, *On Uneven Bad Temperament*, and *On the Causes of Disease*. As Mark Grant points out, “that a good diet ensured health was a fundamental concept of ancient medicine, since food could cause disease or restore health through its effects on the balance of the humours.”¹¹² Authors in the 1520s and 30s display a similar preoccupation with food in various capacities, indicating an at least superficial and topical discussion of medicinal treatises on food, and perhaps even their satirisation.¹¹³ For Agnolo Firenzuola and Lodovico Dolce, to name only two, food is often simultaneously the object of praise, in ode form, and a source of a great range of emotion from elation to rage. One need only read Dolce’s poem to the “Magnifico M. Francesco Giorgio” on the “Cinghiale, / che solo a

¹¹² Mark Grant, *Galen on Food and Diet* (New York, Routledge, 2000) 7.

¹¹³ In an article entitled “Italian Renaissance Food Fashioning or the Triumph of Greens,” Laura Giannetti analyses a series of early sixteenth-century poems, often by poets in correspondence with each other, Pietro Aretino among them, centered on the food as status symbol and the use of salad as a sexual analogy. As she shows, the popularity of such topics among early sixteenth-century writers led, ultimately, to the development of “salad” as a poetic trope of popular literature (*California Italian Studies Journal*, 2010 1(2): <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/1n97s00d>). On the therapeutic qualities of foods, see Pina Palma, “Of Courtesans, Knights, Cooks, and Writers: Food in the Renaissance,” *MLN* 1.19 (2004): 37-51.

riguardar [gli] diè paura” to understand.¹¹⁴ In a period of vast literary production concerning food, banquets, and hearty meals, most of which not only predates but also greatly influences Grazzini and his clan, it bears mentioning that “an excessive consumption of food, however nutritious and excellent, is the cause of cold diseases” – a concern for which the authors in question clearly have no regard. Along the same line of observation, “the fifth cause of excessive heat lies in foods that have hot and harsh powers” – those, indeed, more frequently the subject of poetic praise in circles anticipating our poets’ own.¹¹⁵

At times, however, and as noted above, specific components of humoral theory are touched on more directly, often in treatises on contemporary, fashionable, or sought out topics. The Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze’s Mgl. 1248 Cl. VII manuscript contains a poem attributed to Gabriel Bettini entitled “Sopra il recere” notable not only for its treatment of this medical phenomenon, but for its commission despite the poet’s lack of expertise: “M’ha

¹¹⁴ “The mere sight of which inspires awesome fear.” The whole poem reads: “Salva la verità, fra i deci nove/o forse a venti del passato mese/ Del Mille cinquecento trentanove:/ L’anno cotanto avaro e discortese;/ Nel qual tristo che vivo a la ventura;/ E non ha soldi da farsi le spese:/ Con tutti i peli con la pelle dura/ Hebbi quel pezzo di porco. Cinghiale,/ Che solo a riguardar mi diè paura./
 Dono invero Magnifico e reale/ Da far morir di gola l’astinenza;/ E leccarsi le dita a Carnevale./ E esso era Porco di gran riverenza:/ Degno non d’un mio par, ma d’un Prelato,/ o d’un Cosimo Duca di Fiorenza./ O Porco pretioso e delicato;/ Benedetta la scoffa (?) onde nascesti,/ E benedetto chi mi t’ha mandato./ Benedette le Rape, onde ingrassasti:/ Benedetta sia l’acqua, che beesti./ Così diceva ricercando i tasti/ Hor qua, hor la di quella carne ghiotta/ Sequendo; ella fia (?) robba per tre pasti./ Parve mill’anni di vederla colta/ A me: duo tanti la seguente sera:/ C’havea gran rabbia di mangiarla alhora./ Ma perché del futuro incerto io era;/ Per ben godermi nel certo presente,/ La fei por nel schidone intera intera./ Arrosto (?) con l’odor, che m’è in la mente/ E sarà sempre posta in su’l Tagliere,/ Dio vi dica il rumor ch’io fei col dente./ Gli è pasto da mercanti io mangiar pere,/ Io da che nacqui al mondo non gustai/ Carne miglior, ne che più inviti il bere./ Se in Inferno ci son vivande tai:/ E vadino in bordel starne e caponi:/ Io per me non direi d’uscirci mai” (MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Capp. V, 519, int. 6, f.16r-v).

¹¹⁵ Galen, *On the Causes of Diseases*, in *Galen on Food and Diet*, transl. Mark Grant (New York: Routledge, 2000) 46-61, 51, 48.

commandato il Messere Bettino / Ch'io faccia sopra 'l recere un sonetto, / Se ben tal roba sia degno soggetto / Della musa e del muso di Merlino," it begins.¹¹⁶ Another, in Cl. VII, 349 and attributed, though likely falsely, to Benedetto Varchi, takes under examination the topic of gout and opens with an exhortation to Galen: "Galeno, ola! Risorgi e squoti il sasso, / Tu che insegnasti a risanare il flusso; / Per la podagra al tuo sepolcro io bisso / Ch'ella pur è flussion che cala basso."¹¹⁷ Agnolo Firenzuola's *Dialogo delle bellezze delle donne* is, however, the most prominent example. There, Firenzuola comments both on the theory that air was the most common bodily vessel and distributor of disease and on humidity, or wetness, as necessary to the proper maintenance of a healthy body. He begins by applying this latter idea to the eyes: "la natura ... fecele [gli occhi] tondi ... la quale volubilità fu aiutata eziandio da quel puro liquor col quale gli occhi stanno sempre umettati; che ben sapete che nell'umido nasce il lubrico ed in su lubrico molto più facilmente che in su l'arido si rivoltano e volgono tutte le cose," he writes.¹¹⁸ Later, in a section entitled, "Dell'aria," he returns to his primary topic and goes on to state:

¹¹⁶ MS Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Libreria Mediceo-Palatina: Mgl. 1248 cl. VII, 105r/v; "Sir Bettino has commissioned me / A sonnet on vomiting, / Even though it is a subject more worthy / of the muses and the face of Merlin."

¹¹⁷ MS Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Libreria Mediceo-Palatina: Cl. VII, 249: *Varchi (et al), Poesie diverse di diverse autori*, 1r.

¹¹⁸ "First the eyes, in which the noblest and most perfect of all the senses resides, through which our intellect gathers, as through windows of transparent glass, everything visible. And furthermore, since through the eyes our faculties are known better than through any of the other senses, we must, therefore, believe that Nature made them with great skill. As a result, since they examine the universe, she placed them in the highest part of the body so that from here they could fulfill their office with greater ease. She made them round so that, given the shape that is the most comprehensive of all, sight could more fully take in the objects that presented themselves to it. Nature realized there was another advantage in this, namely that such a spherical shape, not impeded by any type of corner, can look in all directions and turn in whichever direction it likes more easily. This variability is further aided by that pure liquid that keeps the eyes constantly wet, for you know very well that from wetness comes lubrication, and all things move and turn more easily on a lubricant

Diremo che tutte quelle donne che hanno macchiata la coscienza di quella feccia che deturpa e imbratta la purità e la nettezza della volontà causata dal mal uso della ragione... incorrono in una certa malattia di animo, la quale continuamente le inquieta e le perturba. La qual perturbazione e inquietudine genera una cotale disposizione di umori, i quali con i fumi loro guastano e macchiano la purità della faccia e degli occhi massimamente e, come volgarmente si dice, una certa *mal'aria* indice e dimostratrice della infirmità dello animo.¹¹⁹

On the importance of air as part and parcel of a process of healing, Gino Capponi writes, along the same lines: "Se vuoi fuggire il catarro et la tossa / bisogna che ti parta da questa aria / troppo sottile, al viver tuo contraria / et riformi in maremma ove l'è grossa."¹²⁰

Firenze (perhaps ironically) falls ill in 1526 at the end of a period of prolific literary productivity in Rome during which time he may, indeed, have known Francesco

than on a dry surface" (Torino: UTET, 1969), discorso primo, 501; translation found in Agnolo Firenzuola, *On the Beauty of Women*, transl. and ed. Konrad Eisenbichler and Jacqueline Murray (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1992) 26.

¹¹⁹ "we will say that all those women who have stained their conscience with that foulness that defaces and sullies the purity and cleanness of the will, a foulness caused by the misuse of reason, for they are pierced all day long by the recollection of their fault and shaken by the evidence of the thousand witnesses of their wounded conscience, these women fall into a certain disease of the soul that continually worries and upsets them. This upset and worry produces such an arrangement of the humors that with their vapors they soil and stain the purity of the face and especially of the eyes which, as we said before, are the ministers and messengers of the heart. These vapors produce such an expression in the eyes, or, as is generally said, a certain bad air that indicates and reveals the infirmity of the soul not any differently than the paleness of the cheeks and of the other features indicates the diseased and imbalances of the body and the upsets and agitations of its humours" (Ibid, discorso secondo 515-516; translation found in Eisenbichler 40).

¹²⁰ If you wish to avoid a throat full of phlegm and a cough, / you must leave this too-thin air, / contrary (in the sense of harmful) to your existence, / and recover in the Maremma, where it is thick (MS Florence, Biblioteca nazionale centrale, Mgl. II, IV, 1, 46 verso).

Berni. He writes his *Dialogo delle bellezze delle donne* in 1540 in Prato, a considerable distance outside Florence but close enough to it to be in consistent contact both with members of the growing *Umidisti* and with elements of humoral theory and medical practice in Pisa. His own interest in humoral theories may have also been informed by Berni's, whose writings on the humours remain widely read long after his death and into the seventeenth century. In a 1603 collection of "Rime piacevoli del Borgogna" featuring the "capricci, fantasie, e ghiribizzi" of Ruscelli, Sansovino, Doni, Lasca, Sansedonio, and others, the Lasca reproduces Berni's "Capitolo secondo della Peste" – a piece that exhibits well in poetry the assumed interaction between the bodily humours and the occurrence of disease. There, Berni writes:

Trovò la peste, perché bisognava;
Eravamo spacciati tutti quanti
Cattivi, e buon, s'ella non si trovava.
Tanto molteplicavano i furfanti
Sai che ne l'altro canto io messi questo
Tra i primi effetti de la peste; e santi.
Come si crea in un corpo indigesto
Collora, e flemma, e altri mali humori
Per mangiar, per dormir, per istar desto.
E bisogna ir del corpo, e cacciar fuori
Con riverenza, e tenersi rimendo,
Com'un pozzo che sia di più signori.
Così a questo corpaccio del mondo,

Che, per esser maggior, più feccia mena,
Bisogna spesso risciaquare il fondo.¹²¹

By the time the *Umidi* and *Infiammati* are born, the sense of malaise introduced to the peninsula via a series of plagues and other epidemics lingering among its people is translated into poetic consciousness that will feature humoural theory as one of its central characteristics.¹²² Not surprising, moreover, is the notable use of the elements and seasons in metaphor among poets (especially, though not exclusively) of this period.¹²³

The last category of “medical” literature is one that comes closest to the term itself. The prevalence and importance of “medici” – doctors – in both poetry and prose dates as far back, in Florence, as Franco Sacchetti’s *Trecentonovelle*. But the association of *medici* and the Medici family and, consequently, a growing disdain for both groups is somewhat new to sixteenth century Florentine circles. Not surprisingly, Grazzini is the leading example among such disillusioned artists, though he is by no means alone in his lack of appreciation for the granducal family. “Molti medici dotti e honorati / Sono in Firenze,” he

¹²¹ Nature brought the plague, out of necessity; /
We would have perished one and all, / the wicked and the good, had it not been discovered.
/The scoundrels kept multiplying, so much so that in my other canto, I placed them /
among the first affected by the plague – and God be thanked. /
Just as choler and phlegm and other ill humours are produced in an imbalanced body / and
in order to eat, or to sleep, or to stay alive, / it is necessary to draw them out and away
from it / with reverence, to stay on the mend; / Like water from a well that is used by
many, / Just so, this world’s gross body / Which, because it’s bigger, leaves more dregs, /
Must often be rinsed down to its depths (MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana,
Chigi, VI, 1, 9v-10r).

¹²² See also, Lodovico Dolce, “Capitolo in lode dello sputo, a Messer Giacomo Gigli,” *ibid*,
154r-v).

¹²³ See especially the huge proliferation of poetry in praise of a specific season, most
notable among other examples, Matteo Franzesi’s “Capitolo in laude del verno” (in *Il primo
libro delle opere burlesche di M. Francesco Berni et al* (Jacopo Broedelet, 1726, vol. II) MS
Padova, Biblioteca Universitaria, 63, a, 80, 118, and Niccolò Martelli’s “Capitolo della
partenza da Roma” (vol. III) MS Padova, Biblioteca Universitaria, 63.1, 81, 295-296.

begins one capitolo, “ma dir so lamento / Infermi l’uno e l’altro, anzi storpiati,” he continues. The rest of the poem goes on to lament the state of Florence under the oppressive presence of these groups, ending in his final prophecy that “tra pochi anni alfine e pochi mesi / Tutti habbiamo a cercar nuovi paesi.”¹²⁴ Elsewhere in his poetry, he makes the link between the Medici family and their original fortune as bankers more explicit in his insistent play on the medici/Medici homograph. A sonnet to Benedetto Varchi begins: “Varchi, alla fe, tu hai dell’Ognissanti, / Del nuovo pesce, anzi dell’animale, / Cercando tu come i medici il male, / E comperando le brighe a contanti.”¹²⁵ His point in both is clear, as is the trope more generally: neither doctors nor the Medici family can cure their ailing patients – or, perhaps better, they are no more qualified at their respective crafts than anyone else with a basic understanding of either of them.

Benedetto Varchi, Alchemy, and Elemental Hierarchy

As might be expected, however, Benedetto Varchi escapes this rigid categorisation. Combing against the literary fashions of his burlesque contemporaries, his rhymes are wholly unconcerned with humoural imagery or *topoi*. He does, however, engage in elemental discourse in a number of his lessons, each of which aims to examine the relationship among the four elements not (or not only) with respect to their combination, as humours, in the human body, but to their larger effect on some of the most hotly debated topics of his generation: Nature, Love, Alchemy. These first two questions will be taken up

¹²⁴ MS Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Antinori 57. Cart XVI. 103 fols., 77v-78r; “There are many famous and learned medics in Florence, / But I lament them / They are both ill, or better, mangled.”

¹²⁵ *Rime del Lasca*, parte prima (Firenze: Francesco Moücke, 1741) 96.

at the start of the following chapter. His lessons on alchemy outline the basic tenets of his broader philosophical approach.

In an unfinished examination of the validity and efficacy – s'è vera o no – of alchemy now contained in the Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze's Fondo Magliabechiano, Varchi undertakes both to prove and to disprove the alchemist's ability to manufacture precious metals through his art. He does so by breaking down the question into smaller, specific components, and by using Avicenna, Averroes – both of whom he refers to as “medici” as well as “filosofi” – and, primarily, Aristotle as points of reference to support his claims on either side of the argument.¹²⁶ He takes up the matter of contrasting but, more often, cooperating elements early in the first chapter:

havendo Aristotele nel fine del terzo libro della Meteora dichiarato
generalmente, et in universale la generatione de' metalli et detto, che tutti si
generavano dentro la terra, de i duoi fumi, o vero aliti, cio è della esalatione
calda, et secha, che si leva dalla terra per virtù del sole et dalla esalatione
calda, et humida, che per virtù medesimamente del sole si leva da l'acqua in
quel modo, che noi havemo dichiarato lungamente nel libro de i principii
della meteora all'eccellentissimo et illustrissimo Signor Cosimo de Medici,
Duca di Firenze Principe et Padron nostro . . .¹²⁷

¹²⁶ He also likens alchemists to doctors, and the art of alchemy to that of medicine, twice in the same lesson.

¹²⁷ MS Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze, Fondo Magliabechiano, Cl. XVI, 126: Benedetto Varchi, dell'Alchimia, 6r/v. “Aristole, at the end of the third book of his treatise *Meteorology*, generally [declares] and universally [explains] the generation of metals, and has said that all metals are generated within the earth, and by two sources, or, more specifically, breaths, that is, the hot and dry exhalation that comes up from the earth by virtue of the sun, and the hot and humid exhalation that is lifted from water, also by virtue of the sun, in the way in which we have lengthily discussed in our book on the principles of

His central claim here, and rooted in Aristotelian principles, is that metals are born of the cooperating forces of hot and dry (choleric humour) and hot and wet (sanguine humour), both individuated and pulled forth by their singular father, the sun. It is a cooperation that, as he later goes on to explain, is not spared the complication of any other natural collaboration. One passage rather centrally located in the text reads:

tutte le cose generabili e corrottibili di questo mondo inferiore sono o semplice, o composte: semplice si chiamano i quattro elementi, avvenga che ancora essi siano composti di materia et di forma come s'è detto nel libro ... Miste poi, o vero, composte si chiamano tutte quelle che sono generati de i quattro elementi e tutte le cose essendo d'una medesima materia, benché rimota, si puo dire, che habbiano tra loro alcuna somiglianza, et così alcuna dissomiglianza, essendo diverse tutte l'una da l'altra come si può conoscere mediante l'operatione et passioni loro.¹²⁸

Varchi repeats here the crux of humoral theory and elemental discourse in its every iteration since Galen onward: all of the earth's substances are some combination of elements. Yet rather than focus exclusively on the differences among these substances as an effect of their precise elemental make-up and the abundance of one over any other within them, Varchi also not only points out their shared properties, but, indeed, makes of

weather, dedicated to the most excellent and illustrious Signor Cosimo de' Medici, Duke of Florence, our Prince and Patron."

¹²⁸ *ibid*, 21r. "Everything that this inferior world generates and is able also to corrupt is either simple or compound: the four elements are called simple, even though they, too, are composed of various materials and forms, as has been said in book ... Everything that is mixed together, then, or better, composed of the four elements is called compound and because it is all made of the same stuff, albeit remotely, we might say that among these things, certain similarities may be found, as well as certain dissimilarities, since they are all different, one from the other, as can be ascertained by their individual operations and passions."

these similarities among them – generated, in turn, by the shared qualities of the humours – a central tenet of his observation. All things are made of the same material, he claims, albeit remote and governed each by its own passion.

Not much further ahead, and en route to a justification of gold as the most perfect among the metals (by way of an extended philosophical argument whereby gold is the most perfect of animate things, which are the most perfect of mixed substances), he prolongs this line of reasoning:

et alcuna più tosto secondo la varia et diversa dispositione delle agenti, et de pazienti, cioè, delle qualità attive, cioè caldo et freddo, et delle passive, cioè umido e secco, et chi dubitava che l'acqua se bene tutti gl'elementi si trasformano in tutti gl'elementi, non si trasformi più agevolmente, et più tosto in aria che in fuoco, et el medesimo modo di tutti gl'altri elementi et questo voleva dire il filosofo, quando disse che le cose che havevano fra loro simbolo, cioè, convenienza in alcuna delle qualità si trasformavano l'una nell'altra più agevolmente.¹²⁹

Here, too, though drafted another way, Varchi's main concern is to underline the difficulty with which elements can successfully be separated from each other, each one capable of turning into any of the others, and most easily into those with which they share a certain affinity.

¹²⁹ *ibid*, 21v. "and some are one [way] more than another, based on the various and diverse dispositions of agents and patients, that is, of the active qualities – that is, hot and cold – and of the passive qualities – wet and dry – and there were some that doubted that water, although all the elements can transform into any of the other elements, could transform with more agility, and more easily turn to air than the fire, and the same for all the other elements, and this is what the philosopher meant when he said that the things that shared certain similarities, that is, that displayed the same ease of certain qualities, swapped places with greater ease."

Varchi's point, here twice made, becomes more meaningful in the context of the discussion on humoral theory, its contribution to personality – and illness – and the shift, in the literature of the period, from the central display of one humoral disposition (melancholy) to another (cholera). The take-home message of Varchi's lesson is, rather unsatisfactorily, "che di questo problema [dell'archimia] non si possa sapere determinatamente la certezza perché moltissime cose, et assai meno utili et meno incerte che questa non è si trovano nelle cose della natura, delle quali non si può sapere indubitamente la verità."¹³⁰ Nature's secrets are unintelligible, he claims, or at the very least, unable to be ascertained beyond doubt; thus, the relationship among the elements, and its contribution to the veracity – or illegitimacy – of alchemy cannot be determined. Despite the emphasis he places on the similarities among the elements and the near impossibility of considering them individually or in preferential relation to each other, he does, however, leave his readers with a more or less comprehensible interpretation of elemental hierarchy, calling on his original separation – and fraternity – of hot/dry and hot/wet exhalations. He writes:

come tutte le impressioni che si generano nell'aria verbigratia piogge, venti, saette, comete, et tutte l'altre qualunque siano, si generano dell'esalatione calda et secca, et del vapore caldo et humido, con tutti i minerali, che si generano sotto terra qualunque siano, si generano di queste due medesime fumi, o vero vapore et esalatione, et come quelle che ne generano nell'aria, sono di due sorte, ignite et queste sono tutte quelle che si generano dalla

¹³⁰ *ibid*, 33r/v: "that it is impossible to determine the certainty of this [question] because many things, and far less useful and less uncertain than this, are found in nature, of which the indubitable truth cannot be known."

esalatione, come le comete, et le saette, et humide, et queste sono tutte quelle che si generano dal vapore come le pioggie, et le nevi, con quelle che si generano sotto terra sono medesimamente di due maniere, perché quelle che si generano dalla esalatione si chiamano pietre, et quelle che si generano dal vapore si chiamano metalli.¹³¹

This explanation, like many others in his other lessons to a similar effect, reduces, for our purposes, Varchi's central question – elemental relationships – to a duality of forces more united by their common “parent” – the sun – than separated by their superficial opposition to each other – wet and dry. This unique dynamic if not informs, then at least explains the use Grazzini makes of elemental discourse in his own works, and the relationships among the elements that he creates or draws upon there.

Grazzini, Foul Humour, and the Academy

In both his poetry and his theatrical production, Grazzini demonstrates not only a keen knowledge of humoral theory, the contemporary debates surrounding it, and the literary tradition preceding those, but also the willful ability intentionally to manipulate, maximize, and make the most of all of it. His theatre, which I will examine in part later in this chapter and in other part in chapter four, he often reserves for humoral “caricatures”

¹³¹ *ibid*, 22r/v: “just as all the natural impressions that are generated in the air, for example rains, winds, lightning flashes, comets, and all the others, whatever they may be, are generated by hot and dry exhalations and hot and wet vapours, so too, all minerals, whichever they be, and whether they be generated within the earth, are born of these same two sources, in other words, vapour and exhalation, and just as those that are airborne are of two natures, igneous – and these are all those things which are generated by exhalations, like comets, lightning – and humid – and these are all those things that are generated by vapours, like rain and snow -, anything produced under the earth is similarly generated in these two manners, [in such a way that] those which are generated by exhalations are called stones, and those which are born of vapours are called metals.”

of his central characters – exaggerated displays of common stereotypes associated with every “genre” of character he drafts. His poetry, though no less playful, reveals a more sophisticated understanding and reassembly of humoral tropes. His poems – which range from odes in tercets to sonnets to madrigalesse in *terza rima* – either parodically recast humoral theory or, when they do not, are best labeled as following: poems in which the dichotomy Varchi expands upon in his lessons is also shown; poems that acknowledge the force and influence of the elements on human life and activity; distinctly “choleric” poems; commonly “melancholy” poems. Not all these categories are created equal; the same can be said of Grazzini’s poetry, which runs the critical gamut from mundane to divinely inspired. All do, however, contribute to a comprehensive reading of Grazzini’s take on humoral theory and use of it.

Up until the early Cinquecento, heat and cold, fire and ice offered the predominant and imitated elemental pairing – or better, opposition – in literature, rendered notorious by Petrarch in his *Rime sparse*. Not surprisingly, then, and in keeping both with Grazzini’s autodidactic training and the early modalities of the academy, it is also present in Grazzini’s poetry, and especially (and most obviously) in the madrigals and sonnets deliberately modeled after Petrarch, most of them elegies to loved ones since passed on. Grazzini does, however, also take up this tradition when addressing the academy directly. Moücke reproduces a cycle of “humoral” addresses *agli Accademici umidi* that display these elements in opposition. The first reads:

Gentili spirti, che di sacro umore
Cercate inumidirvi in dolce gioco;
Perchè de’ vostri ingegni, e del suo foco

Qualche bel frutto ne produca Amore.
Il disio vostro d'alto e degno onore
Vi darà nome eterno in ogni loco;
Ma ben conviensi raffrenarlo un poco:
Troppo lo sprona il giovenil furore.¹³²

Here, Grazzini writes his academics a warning, if not an admonition, to temper their fiery ambition with its contrary humour. The two compositions that follow are as different from each other as they are from the first, while the third is a seemingly simple praise of the air – “quell'umor santo . . . / Questo, come gli par, governa e muove / Tutte quante le cose naturali: / Chi vuol volare al ciel con sicur'ali, / In lui si fidi, e non ricorra altrove.”¹³³ The second again opposes heat to coldness and hopes for a tempering of the one by the other, but the directionality of this tempering is perfectly unclear:

Riscalda il Sol la fredda Luna, ed ella
tempera il gran calor di sua chiarezza;
Che senza questo la supern'Altezza
Avrebbe fatto indarno ogni altra stella.
Ma voi, che come 'l Sol siete, o più bella,
Messa dal ciel nella mortal bassezza;
Perché non può la vostra frigidezza

¹³² *Rime del Lasca, parte seconda* (Firenze: Francesco Moücke, 1742) 245; “Gentle spirits, who from the sacred humour / seek to temper yourselves in sweet play; / So that Love might produce some pleasant fruit / out of your talent and its fire. / Your desire for lofty, worthy honour / Will afford you eternal fame everywhere; / But you would do well to slow it down a little: / Young fury spurs it on too much.”

¹³³ *ibid*, 246; “that sacred humour . . . / This, as it seems, governs and moves / All natural things: / Whosoever wishes to fly to the sky on secure wings, / Should put his faith in it [the air] and not elsewhere.”

Scaldare il foco mio, come 'l Sol quella?
Che i mar, gli stagni, i laghi, i fonti, i fiumi
Dell'Universo non avrebber forza
A spegnere una fiamma del mio foco.
Perché avete voi car, ch'io mi consumi?
[...] voi vedete l'arida mia scorza
Struggersi come neve appoco appoco.¹³⁴

Though he compares his interlocutor, the academy, to the sun, he describes it as frigid, and seemingly opposes its coldness to his own heat, no match for oceans, lakes, wells, rivers, and swamps. In his final verses, he compares himself first to a burnt and arid bark, and next to melting snow. Here as in the first sonnet in Moücke's cycle, Grazzini displays a keen ability to manipulate Petrarch's adopted binaries for his own purposes.

But, like Varchi, Grazzini adds another possibility to the spectrum of literary elemental opposites. Alongside Varchi's dry exhalations and wet vapours (both hot), are Grazzini's academics – now *umidi*, in their natural state, now *asciutti* when aggrieved, and an infinite variety of plays on this elemental opposition in related contexts. With them comes a poetic field doubled in opportunity, both for the composer and for the reader interpreting.

¹³⁴ *ibid*; "The Sun heats up the cold Moon, who / tempers the great heat of the sun's clear light; / Without which, his Highness [the sun] / Would have dried up every other star. / But you, who are as beautiful as the Sun, or still lovelier, / Taken from the sky and placed here on mortal earth; / Why can't your coldness / Cool my fire, like the moon cools the Sun? / For the seas, the ponds, the lakes, fountains, and rivers / Of the universe would not have enough strength / To put out a flame of my fire. / Why would you have me burn and perish? / [You will} see my arid skin / Destroy itself like snow, little by little."

Grazzini's most notable contribution to this development is his "Lamento dell'Accademici degli Humidi," in which the problem of "dryness" is quickly linked to the competing and coexisting states of fury and sadness. It begins:

Gia quarantotto e mille e cinquecento
Correvon gli anni del nostro signore
Quando d'agosto immezzo all'acqua e 'l vento
Restaron gli Humidi asciutti et senza humore;
L'accademia, e di rabbia e di furore
Finendo in verso il ciel li luci fisse
Così piangendo et sospirando disse:

Chi non ha il cor di ferro o di diamante,
E l'anima di vipera o di drago,
Chi non è in tutto sfacciato o furfante,
O di malfar e tradimenti vago
Più d'affanni, e di duol si faccia avanti
E vedra me che di lagrimi un lago
Verso da gli occhi, e aspra compagnia
Tingo coi miei lamenti a Gheremia.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Already forty-eight and one thousand and five hundred of our Lord's years had gone by, when, in August, and surrounded by water and wind, the *Humidi* were dried up and left without humour; The academy, irate and furious in verse, fixed its eyes to the sky, and in this way, sighing and crying, said: if you have not a heart of iron or of diamond, and the soul of a viper or a dragon, if you are not a wholly shameless rascal, or more desirous of wrongdoing and betrayal than of pain and worry, come forward, and you shall see that I pour

The Academy's response to betrayal, as Grazzini sees it, is at once irate, furious and mournful, tearful. His early choice of this choleric/melancholic display seems unjustified and, indeed, completely contrary to his end in upholding the virtues of the *Umidi*, given their name. It is useful to remember at this point, however, cholera's direct opposition to phlegm in Galen's conception, and the consequential belief that the excessive application of contraries to each other results in the elimination of the weaker and the preponderance of the stronger. So, too, Grazzini's *Umidi*, now deprived of the essence that defines them, become defined by their contrary, itself still, for all intents and purposes, a variant of its neighbour, melancholy.¹³⁶

The import of Grazzini's entire poem and its interpretation, however, hinge on the figure of Saint Jeremiah. Betrayed by his brothers, led to the stocks by fellow priests and false prophets, thrown into a cistern by King Zedekiah's advisors and imprisoned there – and all for prophesying the fall of Judah to the Babylonian army – Jeremiah, through the biblical book of Lamentations, becomes known at once both as the “Weeping Prophet” and as the tireless – and furious – mouthpiece of God in the face of unending adversity, the one chosen to direct a people out of sin, who instead, and as a result, is scorned, but not silenced by them. He is a man unable to escape persecution if not by divine intervention, but determined to recount the injustice of his treatment. The association is no doubt self-

forth a lake of tears from my eyes, and with my laments, I keep bitter company with Jeremy. MS Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Antinori 57. Cart XVI. 103 fols., 9r.

¹³⁶ In another poem written in the occasion of Giovanni Mazzuoli's death, and in Mazzuoli's voice, Grazzini again makes use of the umidi-asciutti metaphor, writing: “La Poesia in iscoglio / Ha dato al fine: e gli Umidi miei tutti / Per sempre rimarranno secchi e asciutti: / E senza alcun contrasto / Faranno gli Aramei sicuro guasto / Dell'Accademia, ov'io fui già beato, / Pappandosi a vicenda il Consolato” (*Rime del Lasca, parte prima*, 135).

aggrandizing.¹³⁷ Still, in Jeremiah is the intersection of melancholic and choleric properties once the steady – perhaps better, lazy – condition of the phlegmatic has been disrupted.

A surprisingly scanty amount of historical scholarship on Saint Jeremiah is available today. What is known of him derives primarily from contrasting readings of his new covenant, one by Saint Augustine, the other by Saint Jerome.¹³⁸ It is unclear which of these Grazzini may have had access to, or even if it was his interest to scrape beyond the surface of his analogous self-comparison to the prophet. From the fourteenth century on, however, and in keeping with Medieval Augustinian study, Jeremiah becomes a point of interest for secular scholars and ecclesiasts alike, who see in him a range of personal emotions and characteristics from the nostalgic and melancholic to the uproarious and enraged all associated with the figure of the prophet more generally. Jacob B. Agus outlines the properties of the Hebrew prophet in his 1957 book, *The Prophet in Modern Hebrew Literature*. There, he describes him, by now expectedly contradictorily, as “both active and passive . . . He is both artist and engineer, both philosopher and saint, so that perpetual tension and dynamic restlessness is the characteristic mark of his being.”¹³⁹ He is at once

¹³⁷ It continues, and more explicitly, in the next stanza: “O Gheremia, si tu fusti tradito / Io son ristato laccio, e smembrato; / Si tu già fusti poeta gradito, / Anch’io già fu Accademia honorato / Si tu rivolto in vulgar sei fallito, / Io son peggio che morto e sotterato / Poi che pur m’hanno condotto in bordello / L’etrusco, l’aramaio, lo scuro, e ‘l Gello.” (O Jeremiah, if you were betrayed, then I was ensnared and dismembered;/ You were once a valued poet, / And I, too, was once honoured by the Academy / If you turned away by the people, / Then I am worse than dead and buried / Since Etruscan, Aramaic, the dark one, and Gello / Have together led me to the brothel; *ibid*, 9r). He later continues, in the voice of Jeremiah urging him to speak, “Non sai tu ch’i poeti han privilegio, / E non stanno sotto posto a legger / Di dir la de altrui come il dispregio; / Lasciando star solchi governa e reggi: / Hor dunque sendo des sagro collegio, / Delle musi e d’Apollo; le coreggi / Puoi far dietro a gli scribi e Farisei / Te stesso defendendo e gli honor miei.”

¹³⁸ See, for example, Joshua N. Moon, *Jeremiah’s New Covenant: an Augustinian Reading* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011).

¹³⁹ Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1957, 292.

devoted submissively to the will of his Lord, and compelled to speak out against what he perceives to be holy injustices -- an “ethical absolutist, unyielding and uncompromising.”¹⁴⁰ As such, he makes an appropriate model of comparison for Grazzini himself, who shares with him, in the first place, a fundamental state of woe, nostalgia, and contempt: “Ove son hor quei primi Fondatori, / Gl’Antichi, Valorosi, Humidi mei / Per cui con mille e mille e uni honore / M’alzai volgendo al regno degli Iddi?” he writes.¹⁴¹ “Il primo che dovria mia scorta e guida / Essere in questa tenebrosa valle; / Sacendo la poetica del vida / M’ha rifiutato e voltomi le spalle.”¹⁴² Like the prophet Jeremiah who laments the fall of the heroes around him, Grazzini laments not only the loss of a society in which he once had great faith, but also his private relationships with former mentors within it. His feelings of ostracism and marginality lead him to threaten to leave Florence, no longer welcome among Florentines, and lock himself in silence until his *Umidi*, missing him, come to reclaim his greatness:

Sol di me lasciarogli l’ombra sola,
 Et io me n’andro d’Arno alla Pescara;
 Do me fitta nell’Acqua infin a gola
 Sosterro doglie, e pene a centinaia;
 Quivi starommi senza far parole
 Come s’io fussi in una colombaia
 Tanto ch’un giorno, lieti me verranno

¹⁴⁰ *ibid* 311.

¹⁴¹ Where are they now, those founding fathers /my Ancient, Valorous *Humidi* / For whom with a thousand and a thousand and one honours / I lifted myself up to the ranks of the gods? (*ibid*).

¹⁴² The one who should be my first guide and escort / Through this darkened valley; / Knowing the poetry of life / Has refused me and turned his back on me (*ibid*).

Gli Humidi miei, e mena adviranno.¹⁴³

Yet the prophet Jeremiah's tongue could never be contained, nor could he ever be imprisoned for very long. The same is true for Grazzini. Urged by Jeremiah to speak – "E tu Lasca, che fai o che t'aspetti? Vuoi tu tanto indugiare ch'io sia basito? / Non sai che medianti i suoi sonetti / Speranza ho da chi puoi havere aita?" – Grazzini devotes the last five stanzas of his lament to a drawn-out determination to be heard publicly, interspersed with threats of silence like the one above. In other words, try as he might to take bitter solace in his melancholy state, his raging desire for vocal retribution complicates his need for quiet rest, and ultimately undermines it. His closing stanza shows best these two forces in contention:

E alla barba poi de i farisei
E degli scribi, furba empia e maligna
Sensa indranno sghazzando gli honor miei
Da rovizzan per acqua info a signa
Ma hor, ch'io piango, e miserer mio
Chieggo dolence a chi si tace e ghigna,
E sommi un pezzo lamentata in darno
Lascio qui l'ombra; e vo correndo ad Arno.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ I will leave them with only my shadow, / And go from the Arno to Pescara; / Where, stuffed to my throat with Water, / I'll suffer hundreds of pains and woes; / there I'll stay without speaking a word / As if kept in a pigeon coop / Until one day, happy, my *Umidi* / Will come to me and lift me away (ibid, 12r).

¹⁴⁴ ibid; "And to the beards of the Pharisees / and of the Scribes, clever, ungodly, and malicious / Pitilessly mocking the waters of my honour / From Rovezzano to Signa / But now, I cry, and in my misery / I beg the indulgence of those who who remain silent and laugh / [...] / I leave my shadow here and go running to the Arno."

It is a conflicting relationship Grazzini takes up elsewhere, either directly, by way of this elemental discourse, or indirectly through a description of opposing humoural states. In another short poem contained in the same manuscript at the Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Grazzini repeats this opposition of phlegm/flight and cholera/confrontation: Maestro Baccio, la mia infreddatura / Si feroce e robusta e tanto brava / Al primo scontro hebbi di voi paura / E si fuggì ch'io non me l'aspettava," he writes. He continues, however: "Ma fu vostro consiglio; e mia ventura / Ch'io vi scontrassi, che s'io mi purgava / Certo hor qui non sarai; questo è l'effetto / Voi dunque e chi mi fa sia benedetto," he concludes.¹⁴⁵ In another included in Moücke's edition, he compares the solitary state of exile (or self-imposed house arrest) to freedom, again contrasting mounting waters with all-consuming rage.¹⁴⁶ He makes varied use of such opposition throughout his poetry. At times, it is used to demonstrate personal tendencies: "A me convien d'Aprile stare al fuoco: / Né da lui posso gir troppo lontano / Che come io esco fuori, a mano a mano / Convien ch'io torni a riscaldarmi un poco."¹⁴⁷ Other times, and in keeping with his contemporaries, it is used to describe illness, either his own, or someone else's;¹⁴⁸ at still other times, it is employed in

¹⁴⁵ *ibid*, 90r. "Master Baccio, my coldness, / So ferocious and robust and great, / At our first scuffle, was afraid of you / And fled so fast, I hardly expected it to / But it was your counsel; and my great fortune / That I came against you, for if I had purged myself / Surely you would not now be here; this is the effect / Thus, you and whoever made me so, be blessed.

¹⁴⁶ The opening half reads: "Quaggiù mi trovo, e non vi so ben dire, / Se per destino o per elezione, / Dov'esser quasi mi pare in prigione, / Poich'io non posso fuor di casa uscire. / Soletto stommi, e per più mio martire, / Son colle Muse in collera e 'n quistione, / Tanto ch'I crepo: e per questa cagione / Vegliar non posso, aimè! nè so dormire/ L'acqua rinforza e prende ognor vigore, Tanto ch'io penso in isola trovarmi, / Se così dura il tempo almen dure ore" (*Rime del Lasca, parte prima*, 12).

¹⁴⁷ The implication, here, is that Grazzini is phlegmatic by nature, or easily susceptible to the cold, so that counteracting it frequently with heat – even in the month of April – would be necessary (*ibid* 19).

¹⁴⁸ *ibid*, 61, 63, 264.

religious cycles and applied to religious motifs.¹⁴⁹ Most frequently, however, Grazzini appeals to contraries when describing or addressing the academy or its individual members.

He does so only implicitly in the following extract, likely addressed to Cosimo I de' Medici:

Se nel fin, ch'io stia cheto a voi pur piace,
Così, che lasci andar la Poesia;
Ecco, Principe illustre, che la mia
Lingua e la penna omai per sempre tace.
Io bramo, e cerco più la vostra pace,
Che nessun'altra cosa, e qual vuol sia;
Piuttosto andare schiavo in Berberia,
Che cascare tantino in contumace.
E siate certo in quanto all'Accadema,
Ch'io non scrissi, e non dissi mai parola,
Per fare in parte la sua gloria scema.¹⁵⁰

Grazzini's displeasure with the Medici at the reform of the Academy and its subsequent transformation into the largely pedantic and theoretically propagandistic Accademia Fiorentina is notorious. Here, he picks up from where he leaves off in the Lament quoted

¹⁴⁹ *Rime del Lasca, parte seconda*, 282-284.

¹⁵⁰ *Rime del Lasca, parte prima*, 86; "If, in the end, my silence pleases you, / And I should abandon poetry; / Here, Illustrious Prince, let my / Tongue and my pen forever be silenced. / I admire and seek nothing more than your peace, / And do as you wish; / I would rather be a Moroccan slave, / Than fall even slightly into contempt of you. / And be certain that as for the Academy, / That I will never write or pronounce a word, / That should in any part ridicule its glory."

above: although he promises to silence his pen in order to content his prince's wishes, he both breaks his vow in setting it to writing and demonstrates its fundamental insincerity in doing so. His poem's opening quatrain seems well meaning enough. The quatrain that follows, however, very quickly gives him away: in a cycle of poems discussing the benefits of exile, he admits here to preferring enslavement to being held in contempt of the court. The concluding tercet makes his meaning clear beyond doubt: he intends in no way to sing the praises of an academy he no longer respects, let alone admires. Grazzini's contrariness is contained within the structure of the poem itself. Moving from appeasing to appalled, he again puts to use the full spectrum of humoural dispositions.

His association with the conflicting humours Saint Jeremiah embodies – through a comparison, now, with Saint Sebastian - is still more explicitly drawn in the poem immediately following the above in Moücke's edition. There, in addition to the pains of marginalization and betrayal, Grazzini also describes the damage caused by hidden scars of shame, the threat of being forgotten, the overbearing weight of metaphorical imprisonment. He writes:

Da te mi parto, e vommene in obliò
Per balze e macchie incognite e nascose,
O santa Poesia, che tra rabbiose
Fiere non vo' più star, nè viver io.
Addio Febo, addio Muse, addio, addio:
Addio voi rime, voi versi, e voi prose,
Petrarchesche, burlesche e amorose,
Restate in pace, e fatevi con Dio.

Poich'oggi giorno alle vostre cagioni,
Com'io fussi Longino, o Giuda o Gano,
Son minacciato di mille prigioni.
Non ci avre' pazienza San Bastiano,
Bench'egli stesse forte a quei freccioni:
Quest'è tormento maggiore, e più strano.

Così stando lontano
Dal mondo traditor, che m'ha schernito,
In qualche selva mi sarò romito.
E con sì stran partito,
Sarò sicuro e libero in eterno
Da' birri il corpo, e l'alma dall'Inferno.¹⁵¹

As in the previous poem, however, here, too, Grazzini's alignment with various literary figures essentially annuls his intended forest escape. He is leaving Poetry, he says, but not before also declaring himself of the company of Poetry itself, of Apollo, god of poetry, the Muses, Petrarch, and every brand of literature: rhymes, verses, prose, of both the burlesque

¹⁵¹ *ibid* 86-87; "I take my leave of you, and go into oblivion / Through hidden and unknown crags and brushes, / O holy Poetry, for I no longer wish to stay or live / Among such angry places. / Goodbye Phoebus, goodbye Muse, goodbye, goodbye: / Goodbye you rhymes, you verses, and you prose, / Petrarchan, burlesque, and lyrical, / Rest in peace, and go with God. / Since today, and because of you, / As if I were Longinus or Judas or Ganymede, / I am threatened by a thousand prisons. / Not even Saint Sebastian would have the patience [to endure this condition], / Though he resisted those arrows: / This is a still greater and stranger torment. / In this way, staying far away from the traitorous world that shunned me, / I will become a hermit in some forest / And in this strange condition, / My body will be safe and free for eternity / From my captors, and my soul from Hell.

and the long-standing tradition of love. His closing verse, finally, recalls even the literary strength of Dante.

In fact, it is hard to believe Grazzini any time he threatens to silence himself. Increasingly, his scenarios lose credibility, become contingent on impossibility, display more of a raging frustration with life than a quiet resignation to it. “Io non vorrei più in questo [mondo] esser veduto,” he writes, but only “s’io potessi nascondermi o fuggire / In qualche mondo nuovo e sconosciuto.” The ardent fury of “i nugoli e i venti” all around him, which prevents him from either composing his poetry or sleeping, is matched point to point by the language he uses to describe it: “Che quello vento arrabbiato e cornuto, / Vi so dir’io, che s’è fatto sentire. / Certo non ha tanto fracasso il Diavolo, / Quando va colla moglie a processione, / Menando seco suo padre e suo avolo, / Quant’ha fatto stanotte quel poltrone, / O tramontano o Rovajo o Ventavolo, / Chiaminlo come voglion le persone.”¹⁵² To sum, Grazzini is conflicted at his very core and struggles with the contrasting forces of action and contemplation, but falls significantly short of either goal. His is neither a contemplative inertia nor a social paralysis, but a never-ending fight against the forces that try to contain him – and hardly succeed. Or, when it is not, it is, rather than the melancholic’s inability to act, the choleric’s inability to rest. “È questa nostra vita un mar, ch’accoglie / Fiumi infiniti d’ogni malattia; E però molti con lor fantasia / Scritt’han qual sia maggior tra l’alte doglie. / . . . / Ma fra tutti il peggiore, / Che si possa nel mondo sofferire, / È l’aver sonno, e non poter dormire,” he writes.¹⁵³

¹⁵² *Rime del Lasca, parte seconda*, 253.

¹⁵³ *Rime del Lasca, parte prima*, 63. “This our life is an ocean that collects / Infinite lakes of every illness; / And many, with their fantasy / Have written on which is the greatest among the strongest woes. / . . . / But among them all, the worst, / One can ever suffer in the world, / Is being tired, yet unable to sleep.” On the topic of action vs. contemplation, see also *ibid*,

Il Lasca makes no secret of his irascibility.¹⁵⁴ His scorn stretches as far as insults to God and to Fortune herself, and often also comes to the defense of others.¹⁵⁵ Not surprisingly, when it does, it aims to offer retribution to silenced or underappreciated authors – much like him. In one such famous instance, writing in the voice of Luigi Pulci, he defends the *Morgante* against Varchi's attacks.¹⁵⁶ More interesting to my purposes, however, is his poem "In lode del Zazzirino" in which the figure of Jeremiah yet again resurfaces, if indirectly. The poem is not so much an ode of praise to Zazzirino – even if "La

135, CLIV "Al Padre Stradino," wherein the only comfort il Lasca finds to soothe his fever comes from the chivalric romances (*Orlando furioso* chief among them) Stradino has lent him, and the example of the active heroes at the core of each: "Io m'er, Stradin mio, quasi promesso / Di ritornarvi tosto allegro e sano; / Ma la febbre mi prese a mano a mano, / Talch'ho fatica or d'aiutar me stesso. / Mi stia pur male, o ben: sia lungi, o presto, / I vostri gran libron sempre ho fra mano, / Rinaldo, Orlando, Namò, Astolfo e Gano, / Brunamonte, Antifore e Polinesso. / Colui, che 'l forte, bello e buon Girone, / Con tanta gloria sua fece pur dianzi, / Dette al primo nel vostro Pandragone. / Perocchè fatto avrebbe pochi avanzi: / E sarebbe ito ancor forse a Girone, / Se i libri vostri non aveva innanzi. / Chi vuol compor Romanzi, / E non si tuffa nel vostro armadiaccio, / Riuscirà, cantando, un ucellaccio."

¹⁵⁴ Madrigalessa XXI in Moücke's edition (*Rime del Lasca, parte prima*, 211) is a strong example.

¹⁵⁵ For a complaint against the gods and Fortune, see *ibid*, 213: "Quanto par, che m'annoj / E m'affligga e m'affanni, / Lasso! il pensar, che di quì a cent'anni / Non sarà vivo più nessun di noi! / Oimè! ohi, ohi! / O pensier vaghi, o voglie mie diverse, / Che diavolo ha a far Serse / Testè co' versi miei? / Ditemi dunque voi, superni Dei, / Che 'l ciel tutto reggete e governate, / Perchè gli uomini fate / Sì nobili e sì belli, / Per voler poscia quelli / Disfar con tanta furia? / Pur lassù non alberga ira nè sdegno. / Basta, ch'un fasso, un legno, / Un cuojo, un osso, un ferro, / Un olmo, un pino, un cerro / Di senso e d'alma privi / Un mondo d'anni si mantengan vivi; / Con mille ancor nocivi / Diversi e velenosi animalacci, / Che danno mille sturbi e mille impacci; / E noi, ch'abbiam discorso e discrezione, / Intelletto e ragione, / Senza remissione / Dal dire al far n'andiamo al Baldone. / O povere persone!"

¹⁵⁶ The poem in full, contained in MS Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Libreria Mediceo-Palatina: Cl. VII, 177: *Rime piacevoli del Lasca* and entitled "In nome di Luigi Pulci al Varchi," reads: Se Morgante, e Cirisso Calvaneo / Non son secondo te come Girone / Dovevi aver di me compassione / E non mi darn el capo del plebeo / Tu non se però Varchi un semideo / Uscito di Lutrech, o di Borbone / Pur di superbia, e di prosunzione / Sopravanzi Hembrotte e Briareo / Ch'hai tu fatto altro mai, che le ricotte / E biasmi il libro / mio, ch'è buono e bello. / Per I volgari, e per persone dotte / Leggi Margutte un po' del feगतello / Considera il discorso d'Astarotte / Se sene può levar con lo scarpello / Va domandane il Gello / Primo Soldano, e secondo Amostante / Poi se e ti par di mal del mio Morgante." (20r/v)

grazia, il canto, il suono, e la scienza / Sue meritan premio grande e sommi honori” – as it is a lament of his dismissal by Florentine society. He recalls the gospels, and their affirmation that “Nessun profeta alla sua patria accetto,” and sees in Zazzirino yet another example in this long-standing tradition of discredited prophets, Jeremiah perhaps the first among them: “Non mi par cosa inusitata e nuova,” he writes. His anger at the lack of respect shown to Zazzirino is no milder than the resentment he feels on his own behalf, in a similar position as described earlier. Here, he writes, “Ma ben crepo di rabbia e di dispetto / Quando un gentil spirito in cui fa prova / E mostra la natura ogni sua possa / Non habbia tanto pan, che viver possa,” in compassion extending beyond his own condition.¹⁵⁷

Often – and perhaps unexpectedly – impropriety and disrespect of rituals or life positions figure just as centrally to Grazzini’s ire as the attempts at silencing him and others of his ilk do. In a poem titled simply and addressed “Agli accademici,” both aspects of his fury come into play. The main issue, in context, is the assignment of a minor position within the academy to Grazzini – one usually afforded younger, less experienced members. This blatant disrespect not only of Grazzini’s age, but of his instrumentality in founding the academy, inspires his outrage:

Non ben si conveniva all’età mia,
La tazza presentar manco l’Anello;
Un’altra volta ufizio tal si dia
A Giovin letterato, honesto e bello;
Non estimate dunque villania
il mio tacer, più che tacere è bello

¹⁵⁷ The full poem is contained in MS Firenze Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Antinori 57. Cart XLV, 103 fols., 81r.

più che parlare, dappoi che col tacere
ho fatto l'honor vostro e 'l mio dovere.

...

Se già per tanto tempo tanti ho fatti
Componimenti e pur di qualche stima;
E ho tenuto allegri i savi e i matti;
Scrivendo spesso in prosa, in versi, e in rima,
Correvo rischio, che in parole e in fatti
In un sol giorno s'oscuri, o s'opprima
Quel poco; anzi per sempre sia macchiato,
Nome che per tanti anni m'ho acquistato.

Se volevate pure alcun favore
farmi in questa accademia, o beneficio
per esser stato primo fondatore
e mostrar voi, d'haver qualche giudizio
per che non farmi piu tosto censore?
Ch'era proprio da me, cotale ufizio
Sendo in quest'arti assai pratico e scaltro;
Poi l'harmi fatto al paragon d'ogni altro.

What is more, the outrage it inspires extends beyond the academics that have slighted him, and to the people they address and affect, dim-witted, gullible, and undiscerning:

Chi brama esser tenuto dalla gente
In concetto d'intendere e sapere
Biasma ognicosa; e non faccia niente, [...]
Che quando il volgo, gli altrui biasmi sente,
Con meraviglia ascolta, e con piacere;
E non guardando più crudo, che cotto;
Dice fra se costui è un gran dotto.¹⁵⁸

To their company, and in another poem, he adds (yet again) the gods and muses, who seem no more sophisticated in the favour of their graces:

Andate, Muse, andatene al bordello,
Ch'io vi rinnego, e te, Febo, ho stoppato;
Poiché da Caifasse e da Pilato
Avut'ho la senteza dell'agnello.
Io mi spoeto, poich'io veggio quello,
Che Madonna Accademia ha ordinato:
Dov'io son casso, e dentro v'è restato
L'Etrusco, l'Arameo, lo Scuro e 'l Gello.
Son questi, Febo, son questi gli onori,
Che degnamente si solevan dare
A' tuoi seguaci ne' tempi migliori?

¹⁵⁸ MS Firenze Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Antinori 57. Cart XLV, 103 fols., 57r-58r. See appendix for translation.

O pensieri invidiosi, o voglie avare!
 A questo modo dunque i fondatori
 Dell'Accademia s'anno a ristorare?
 Dì sù, che te ne pare?
 Io vo' far teco, Febo, una batosta.
 Tu taci, perchè 'l ver non ha risposta.
 Ma casino a lor posta,
 Meninsi il zugo e rinneghino Dio,
 Che l'Accademia ho fatta e fondat'io.¹⁵⁹

Here, however, it is Apollo, god of poetry and favourite of Petrarch that Grazzini relegates to silence, not himself. His contempt, never internalised, is rooted not in self-doubt, but in self-righteousness, not in despair, but in pride.

It is a pride he displays throughout his parodic *Capitolo in terza rima*, “In lode del dispetto,” which in many ways sums up Grazzini’s key poetic characteristics and accomplishments.¹⁶⁰ Like the more common reflections on Discord being penned and circulated around this time, it applies the formulaic approbation of a sought-after quality –

¹⁵⁹ *Rime del Lasca, parte prima*, 85: Go on, Muses, go off to the brothel, / I reject you, and you, Phoebus, I am through with you; / Since I've received the lamb's sentence / From Caiaphas and Pilate. / I un-poet myself, now that I see what Lady Academy has ordained: / I have been cast out, and within it remains / Etruscan, Aramean, the Dark one, and Gello. / Are these, Phoebus, are these the honours, / You customarily and with dignity gave / Your followers, in better times? / O invidious thoughts, o greedy desires! / Must the founders of the Academy / Be reduced in this way? / Tell, now, how does it seem to you? / I am going to tell you, Phoebus, a calamity. / You stay quiet, because the truth has no response. / Let them cast [me] out of their company / Let them lead themselves, and reject God, / But I made and founded the Academy.

¹⁶⁰ See *Rime del Lasca, parte seconda*, 31.

in this case, graciousness or respect – to its opposite: spite.¹⁶¹ His customary self-aggrandisement is clear from the start: “Io non credo, che mai Latino o Greco, / O stil Toscano abbia cantato o detto, / Quelchè dire e cantar disposto ho meco,” he begins.¹⁶² It is rapidly followed by an appeal to his audience whom he assumes already holds him in low opinion: “Io vo’ cantar le lodi del Dispetto. / Voi direte, ch’io sia del cervel fuora, / Lodando un male, il più tristo e ribaldo, / Ch’uscito sia del vaso di Pandora.”¹⁶³ Quickly thereafter comes the first of several humoural references, all of which bear witness to his choleric state, if not natural, then begotten necessarily by the anger that accompanies betrayal: “Di grazia adagio un po’, state qui saldo, / Sozio mio caro, / e statemi a udire, / Or che co’ versi m’infurio e riscaldo.”¹⁶⁴ What comes next is a full engagement with a long set of contraries employed, ultimately, to make his final point – and one Varchi and others make alongside him, too – that no one thing can exist without its opposite. “Per la fame si prezzì il mangiare,” he writes, and “la veglia fa dolce il dormire.”¹⁶⁵ Just as war and illness help us to appreciate peace and health, so too “se non fossi il dispiacere, / Anzi il dispetto, ch’innanzi gli viene, / Non si conosceria gioja o piacere.”¹⁶⁶ At the tail of this opening section on the necessity of spite – a consideration of its virtue follows – is, finally, another jab at the injudicious followers of his literary enemies: “Chi sa far i dispetti, in ogni terra / È tenuto persona valorosa, / E ne’ tempi di pace, e in quei di guerra. / Fa il dispetto la mente

¹⁶¹ More will be said on these reflections in the following chapter.

¹⁶² I don’t believe what I intend to sing about / Has ever been sung or spoken about in Latin or Greek or Tuscan style.

¹⁶³ I will sing the praises of Spite. / Surely, you will say I am out of my mind, / To praise the saddest and most ribald evil / Ever to come out of Pandora’s box.

¹⁶⁴ But stay steadfast here a bit, in graceful composure, / My dear associates, / And listen to me, / As I warm myself up with verse and become furious.

¹⁶⁵ Hunger leads to the appreciation of feeding; waking makes sleeping sweet.

¹⁶⁶ were it not for displeasure, or better, spite, which comes before it, / We might never know joy or pleasure.

industriosa: / Aguzza l'intelletto e la memoria: / Chi vuol dispetti far, mai non si posa."¹⁶⁷

He goes on to list historical examples – The Greeks in Troy, Aeneas in Rome – before returning, again, to his present age: “Il far dispetti in quest'età presente / Altrui, fa riverire e onorare, / E tener bravo e dotto dalla gente.¹⁶⁸” He does not stop there, however. The next tercets link his central thesis on the merit of spite to the traditions of courtly love, chivalric romance, customs of the courtier. He concludes, finally, with a compelling argument on the need to execute one's spite with skill in order to obtain both earthly fame and everlasting glory in posterity. “Saper pensarli [i dispetti], e poi metterli in atto, / Non è da mercatanti o bottegai, / Che di lor merce perdon tratto tratto. / . . . / Or chi vivendo vuol sempre gioire: / Chi vuol farsi famoso in terra e 'n mare: / Chi dopo morte al ciel se ne vuol ire, / Faccia dispetti altrui, quanti si può fare,” he closes.¹⁶⁹

Grazzini's parody is only somewhat successful at achieving its goals, however. His desire to expose and condemn the foul play of his peers is undermined by two professional considerations: Grazzini's need to stay in – or, perhaps better, reenter – the good graces of the Medici family for financial sustenance, and his still keen desire to appeal to the masses that have rejected him, despite their fickleness, both of which, attained, would ensure earthly fame. He arrives at neither of these goals through spite and ill will. His more choleric compositions, like this one, have him neither expelled from the Academy, nor

¹⁶⁷ He who knows how to be spiteful, / Is deemed a valorous person in every land, / And in times of peace, as in times of war. / The industrious mind is spiteful: / It [spite] sharpens the intellect and the memory: / Whosoever is spiteful never rests.

¹⁶⁸ Being spiteful toward others, in this present day / Wins you honour and reverence, / And people think you learned and good.

¹⁶⁹ It is necessary to think of [spiteful acts] and put them in action. / This is not an operation for merchants or shop-owners, / Who lose bits and pieces of their merchandise, / ... / So whoever would live to live his life in perpetual joy: / He who seeks fame on earth and at sea: / He who wishes to go to heaven after death, / Be spiteful of others as much as you can.

reinstated to it; they are, however, *sfoghi* that prove necessary to the cooling of the humours that will, eventually, and by way of ten pastoral plays composed for the house of Medici, gain him reentry to the *fiorentina*. His theatrical production provides a different outlet for his social and literary frustrations. Indeed, he uses his plays – eventually, the linchpins of his reputation – to make public, accessible, and acceptable his disdain for certain (arche)types, which he immortalises in caricature.

Humours in Performance: *L'Arzigogolo* and *La Gelosia*

... non vi guastate il viso,
Che Tartaro parate, o a riso
Nel rimirarvi il più delle persone:
L'havere il volto in due parti diviso
L'una da vecchio, e l'altra da garzone
Con quei gran mustacchioni, e raso il mento
O rider fanno, o danno altrui spavento.¹⁷⁰

Thus Grazzini begins a *capitolo* to a certain Messer Ridolfo de' Bardi, one of his more frequent interlocutors. Here, as in the context of most of his poetry, two-facedness is a condition particular to Florentine men who change their minds as easily and as frequently as they change the style of their beards. But "l'havere il volto in due parti diviso / L'una da vecchio, e l'altra da garzone" takes on a different and quite literal meaning in his theatrical production. *L'Arzigogolo*, composed likely after 1562, tells the story of old man Alesso's quest to regain his youth in order to win the favour of the lady he loves (ironically, she, like

¹⁷⁰ "A Messer Ridolfo de' Bardi," MS Firenze Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Antinori 57. Cart XVI. 103 fols., 88v-90r.

he, is rather advanced in life). The plot is typical of the *commedia erudita*: Alesso is duped into purchasing and drinking a potion he is told will restore his youth, and spends most of the play believing he is a twenty-five year-old man; his son, in turn, uses the money gained to loan to a friend. Eventually, unable to win the object of his affection and preferring his old age to his new condition, Alesso goes to great lengths to obtain the money necessary to buy the antidote that will bring back his older, former identity. By the play's end, he succeeds, but not without the complications necessary to guarantee the audience's engagement and enjoyment. The play hinges, however, not on the development of its plot, but on the interpersonal dynamic of its main characters, each one a "humoural caricature."

From the very start, *L'Arzigogolo's* characters are divided into camps separated by age and stage of life.¹⁷¹ Though they are all perfectly congruent with the stock characters of the *commedia erudita* tradition, each displays the humoural properties stereotypically associated with members of their respective groups. In a play about aging and reversing the process of aging, Dario, Alesso's young son, fits to measure the profile of a sanguine youth, carefree (for the most part) and cunning, while Alesso fluctuates between the phlegmatic properties of a senior citizen and the choleric associated with middle-youth when he ostensibly – or so he thinks – regains it. The judge and Marcello round off the categories of plausible characterisations: the former, in his middle age, demonstrates the bitterness of a melancholy man unable to find the daughter he once forcibly gave up to the *Innocenti*, the latter ensnared hopelessly in the *malattia d'amore*.

¹⁷¹ Grazzini is very careful to ensure this separation not only through characterization, but in his *didascalie*, which repeatedly label characters as old, young, young servants, older servants, or middle aged.

Dario's description of himself provides a strong baseline not only for his own temperament, but for all the others, too. In Dario's voice, Grazzini writes:

Non si può fare altro: così vuole che ci governa, che sempre qualche
dispiacere guasti i contenti nostri, e ogni ora ne naschino, dove altri non
pensa. Ecco, io, ché a rari accade nella nostra età, sono in tutto libero da
quelli desiderj che fanno assai sempre il fine alle commedie: dico alle
commedie, perché, come si vede quasi sempre, in quelle è ritrovare qualche
perso parente, o conseguire un desiato amore: io de' parenti ne ho pur troppi,
e più presto ne vorrei perdere qualcuno che ritrovarne delli altri; e d'amore
non fu mai uomo che ne fussi più libero di me; e non sono di questi che
consumano le notti su per i muricciuoli, per vedere le mura delle lor donne;
non mi dispero, non ardo e aggiaccio in un tempo medesimo, come gli
innamorati fanno: onde per questo assai contento viver potevo, se non mi
s'interponeva questa nuova sollecitudine di Marcello, il quale m'ha ricerca
con molti preghi di cinquanta scudi, come quello che non sa quanti pochi
danari io maneggi per la incredibile avarizia di mio padre.¹⁷²

¹⁷² Fanfani *Commedie*, 445; "It must be so: [love] wishes only to govern us, to ruin our happiness with some displeasure, and to generate other displeasures where there were none before. I, unlike those of my age, are entirely free from those desires that are frequently the subject of comedies: I say comedies, because, as is almost always the case, in comedies characters rediscover lost relatives, or pursue a desired love. I have too many relateives, and would sooner lose a few than find others. As for love, no man has ever been freer of it than I am -- I am not one of those who spend their nights climbing walls to see the chambers of their ladies. I do not despair, I don't burn and freeze at the same time, as lovers do. For this reason, I might have lived happily had Marcello not importuned me with this new favour of his, for which he will pay me only fifty scudi, as one who cannot know how little money I manage because of my father's incredible avarice." Toward the play's end, Giannicco, the judge's young servant, makes a similar observation on age and the stages of life.

In this brief passage, Grazzini alludes to the irresponsible contentedness of the young (sanguine), the impassioned state of the lover (bibulous, both melancholic and choleric), the spendthriftness of the old and miserly (phlegmatic). It is against this establishing description that the play's other "caricatures" are essentially defined, and across genders. Marcello, the friend Dario intends to help, falls in with the traditional team of star-crossed lovers, but Lesbia, youthful servant to Ser Alesso's targeted Mona Papera, occupies the space on the flip side of the bilious coin: where Marcello languishes in his love sickness, showing neither pause nor progress there, Lesbia displays, instead, the active temperament of the choleric in pursuit of her goal, likewise, the love of Valerio.¹⁷³ Airy Giannicco, servant to the judge, weaves among characters and situations with the nonchalance Dario might possess if not charged with the task at hand. Among its main characters, only Valerio, as the play's *prime mover* and Grazzini's alter ego, escapes the rigid confines of caricature.¹⁷⁴

It is his master, Ser Alesso, who best embodies the nature of Grazzini's grotesque humoural portraits. Despite the constancy of his biological age, his behaviour and attitude throughout the play fluctuate in perfect humoural accordance with the age he believes himself to be. In other words, he passes from one humoural state to the next and back as he seeks the state of being most comfortable and convenient to him. He is described, at the play's outset, as a cold, deflated, and essentially impotent man nostalgic for a youth his financial instability never allowed him to enjoy. He says:

Quelli si possono dire che in questa vita sieno veramente avventurati, che
nascono ricchi, e in ogni età hanno il modo a potere spendere largamente e

¹⁷³ See, most tellingly, her sharp-tongued dialogue with Giannicco, the judge's servant, in V.x

¹⁷⁴ Grazzini's alter-egos, arguably one per play and Valerio chief among them, will be discussed in chapter four.

darsi bel tempo, massimamente in gioventù: perché a loro non interviene come a quelli che nascono poveri. Del che se pure qualcuno ne è, chè pochi sono, che per industria guadagni, è prima vecchio ch'egli abbia fatta la roba; e nella vecchiaja poi manca ogni piacere, e cresce più la voglia del possedere. Ché, se avessimo noi altri vecchi tutto il mondo, non ci pare avere a sufficienza: siamo simili, come si dice, d'uno animale che vive poco tempo, e si pasce solo di terra; né perciò si cava mai la fame, perché ha paura non li manchi.¹⁷⁵

The Ser Alesso we meet here, in Act I, scene I, is, as he continues to be throughout the first and second acts, a man struggling, essentially, with a mid-life crisis, yearning for renewed youth and the emboldened personality that comes with it, eager to try to display it himself, yet fundamentally incapable of making of his fantasy a reality. His conversation with Valerio later in the same scene points to this central conflict of desire and ability:

ALESSO: Tu mi pari una bestia.

VALERIO: Ora sì che avete ragione a domandarmi, poiché non vedete lume, giacché gli uomini vi pajon bestie: non ho però le corna.

ALESSO: Che sì, che sì ch'io ti farò che tu uccellerai un tuo pari.

¹⁷⁵ Fanfani *Commedie*, 439; "Those who are born rich and who have the means to spend healthily and to pay himself a good time at all ages and mostly in youth are truly most advantaged in this life. They are not the subjects of charity, as poor people are. And those who earn their money by being industrious – and they are few – they are old before they have enough to buy anything, at which point they lack all pleasure and desire to own anything. And as old people, even if we owned the entire world, it would seem insufficient to us. We are similar, you might say, to animals that live little time and live only off the offerings of the earth; and still our hunger is not satisfied because we are afraid of not having enough."

VALERIO: Domine! ho io le reti e' panioni e la civetta per uccellare? credo che voi farnetichiate.

ALESSO: Guarda se io sto fresco!

VALERIO: Venite al fuoco, se e'vi fa fresco: è mala cosa patire freddo, sapete.

ALESSO: Al corpo di ...

VALERIO: Vi duole il corpo? non dubitate, passerà via presto: è ventosità.

ALESSO: Non è possibile ch'io possa avere più pazienza; manigolda, aspetta ch'io ti farò vedere se ...

VALERIO: Ah, ah, ser Alesso, che volete fare? non è lecito in questo tempo burlare qualche volta con i suoi patroni? Vi sono servitore, fate di me ciò che voi volete.

ALESSO: Vedi, tu hai campato un gran punto: poco più oltre che tu seguitavi, con furia ti spiccavo il collo dal busto con un sol pugno.

VALERIO: Un'altra volta sarò più accorto; ch'io veggo che con voi non bisogna scherzare.

ALESSO: Si ve', e massimamente quando mi viene quella collora subito, che ammazzerei un gigante; e ben lo sanno gli altri procuratori alla Mercatanzia, se per un clientolo facevo il diavolo, ché col gridare solo vincevo.

VALERIO: Col gridare e col rubare.¹⁷⁶

Valerio is quick to play on Ser Alesso's irritaion – "Guarda se io sto fresco!" – in order to point out his master's old age: "Venite al fuoco, se e'vi fa fresco: è mala cosa patire freddo,

¹⁷⁶ Fanfani *Commedie*, 441; see appendix for translation.

sapete.” As their dialogue develops, Valerio remains unaffected by Ser Alesso’s growing threats; he undercuts each one easily with a witticism that only draws more attention to Ser Alesso’s weakened state. This dynamic continues in Act II, scene vi, where Ser Alesso, though eager to acquire the magic water that will erase thirty-six of his years from his countenance and comportment, seems hesitant to commit to the idea of it. The entire scene pits an indecisive, frail, and fearful Alesso against his vital, forceful, and convincing counterpart. It is not until he drinks the supposed supernatural liquid and is disappointed by its effects that his behaviour begins to change in the direction of his reversed youth – ironically, just as he begins to regret it.

The scene leading up to his meeting with Mona Papera, once he has drunk Valerio’s divine water, unveils a much more confident and jovial Ser Alesso. Still, when juxtaposed, as he is here, in Act III, scene iii, to Valerio, it becomes clear that his mood is no more than affectation. Scene v of the same act, however, introduces audiences to a new and genuinely furious Ser Alesso who, for the first time, embodies the youth he believes to have regained. In a monologue leaving no room for ambiguity or comparison with others on stage, he rails against his servant and the silly decision he has let himself make. Rejected by Mona Papera, he complains:

O va’ ora, e spendi cento scudi per ringiovanire! che venga il morbo a colui e a la sua acqua, e a Valerio che me lo misse innanzi: ho fatto un bell’avanzo! speso per amor di costei, e ella non mi vuol vedere; ho perso i danari e la grazia sua; che sia maladetta la gioventù e la mia disgrazia; e se costei seguita a non mi conoscere e non mi voler bene, son disperato. O vecchiaja mia, dove sei tu? o anni miei gettati via, vi ricomperrei altrettanto. Lasciami andar

presto a cercar di costui, e vedere se c'è rimedio a ritornar vecchio; e se io ritorno in me, togasi pur la gioventù e le frascherie chi le vuole; ché oramai si vede per isperienza, che non la gioventù sola piace alle donne.¹⁷⁷

Perhaps nowhere else in any of his works does Grazzini so economically and convincingly condense the overlapping qualities of black and yellow bile, melancholy and cholera, youth and age, all only seemingly diametrical opposites. Ser Alesso displays the cholera of his (he thinks) regained youth long enough only to bemoan it and to wish, instead, for his old age. His cholera quickly gives way to the melancholy nostalgia he displays at the play's opening, but in the opposite direction. Still, and unlike the Ser Alesso audiences meet in *I.i*, the Ser Alesso seen here is resolved to act – perhaps better to counteract – in order to remedy this failed experiment: it is a willingness characteristic of youth and acquired only once he steps back into it, albeit only with his mind.¹⁷⁸ The solution to unwanted youth that Grazzini ultimately affords Ser Alesso comes in the form of a rebalancing of the body's humours via a beverage of hot water and vinegar to induce vomiting of excessive acidity.¹⁷⁹ It is a

¹⁷⁷ Fanfani *Commedie*, 464-65; “Go ahead, spend a hundred scudi to be rejuvenated! A curse on him and on his water and on Valerio who gave it to me. What a great decision I have made! All for love of her, and she doesn't want to see me... I lost my money and her good graces ... cursed be youth and my disgrace! And if all this causes her to stop knowing and loving me, I'll be lost. Oh, my old age, where are you? Oh, my thrown away years, I would buy you all back just as quickly as I gave you away. Let me quickly go look for him now, and see if there is any way to regain my old age. If I return to my former self, to hell with youth and the frivolities that make it up – I've learned from experience that not only youth is pleasing to women.

¹⁷⁸ Grazzini again confuses these two poles in the play's conclusion. Mona Papera eventually agrees to marry Ser Alesso, happy that her adopted daughter, Camilla, the judge's biological daughter has, by way of Dario, found a suitable husband in Marcello. Ironically, then, young Dario, by duping his father, finds him a wife.

¹⁷⁹ Ser Alesso complains of “tutta quella amaritudine in su lo stomaco” as a result of drinking the magic water. Valerio's reply reads: “La vomiterete, avanti faccia tutta l'operazione, bevendo un gran bicchier d'aceto e acqua calda; e di poi, aggiunte certe

technique consistent with the medical applications of Grazzini's time, even if openly parodied here, more of which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Grazzini again experiments with humoural characterization and age-specific caricatures in another of his comedies, *La gelosia*. There, again, Grazzini groups his characters by age in a comedy that revolves, now, around both a literal play on the humoural properties of the phlegmatic senior and a pun on its relation to love and jealousy. *La gelosia* thought to be the earliest and in many ways most conservative of Grazzini's comedies,¹⁸⁰ typically interweaves two contrasted love plots with an economical agreement among *paterfamilias*: young Pierantonio is in love with Cassandra. Her father, Giovacchino, has promised her to Lazzero, an old man without immediate family, in return for the cancellation of some debts. Cassandra's brother, Alfonso, however, is in love with Lazzero's niece, Camilla, and is eager to develop a ruse that would both allow him to gain entry to Lazzero's house, and bring his sister and her love, Pierantonio, together. He, Cassandra, and Pierantonio enlist the help of Orsola and Ciullo, their respective servants, and successfully devise a plan that not only liberates Cassandra from her betrothal to Lazzero, but also deliberately humiliates the old man, both emotionally and, perhaps more important to my purposes here, physically.

The play, in its second and third editions opens (after two gender-specific prologues) with an intermezzo: a madrigal to the goddess Diana – whose attribute is the moon – and, at least in print editions, an explanation to its particular significance:

parole, vi addormenterete, e in un tratto vi troverrete quello ch'eravate prima" (IV.iii, Fanfani 468).

¹⁸⁰ By conservative, I mean typical of the transition from *commedia erudita* to *commedia dell'arte* witnessed from the 1560s onward. *La gelosia* is the only play in which Grazzini also includes intermezzi and, for all intents and purposes, lazzi, which he does away with entirely in a subsequent and more self-conscious phase of composition.

e perché l'azione, o il caso che interviene nella comedia, segui, come veder potrete, di notte, la invenzione de gl'intermedj fu anche notturna tutta quanta, e variata a ogni atto: e perché subito al cader delle cortine si vide nel cielo della scena una luna, fatta con mirabile artificio, luminosa e chiara nella sua quintadecima, fu il primo intermedio di sacerdotesse di Diana, le quali fingevano d'andar a farle sacrifico, come leggendo si potrà intendere agevolmente.¹⁸¹

Grazzini here underwrites the symbolic prevalence the moon takes on in the comedy to follow. There, his moon is more than a mere prop to the night-scene perpetually on set; rather, it is the first tool he uses in penning his humoural caricatures. While he endows some of his characters with artificial light (by candlestick), others he leaves dependent entirely on the frail light of the moon. His choice is precise: as of the very first scene, Orsola and Alfonso, both young and vital, are given candles with which to navigate the darkness of their surroundings.¹⁸² Lazzero and his aging servant, Agnesa, however, are deprived of this gift. In fact, it is taken away from them. In the fifth scene of the first act, and as Ciullo prepares to take Lazzero to Cassandra's house to witness a tryst between Orsola in Cassandra's clothing and servant Muciatto in Pierantonio's that will ultimately lead to Cassandra's "shaming," he instructs the old man to put out the light he carries: "Non dubitate, io ho pensato ad ogni cosa: spegnete cotesto lume in tanto; non vedete voi che gli

¹⁸¹ Madrigal Primo, Fanfani 12;"and because, as you can see, the action of the comedy or the case it represents happened at night, the innovation of the intermezzi is also nocturnal, and varies from act to act. As soon as the curtain falls, a moon is seen in the sky of the set, made with great artifice to shine, clearly, in its fifteenth day. The first intermezzo is dedicated to Diana's priestesses, pretending to administer a sacrifice, as you will now be able to ascertain, reading."

¹⁸² For examples of Orsola's specific association with light and heat, see I.i and III.iii.

è levato la luna, e splende in guisa che par di giorno?”¹⁸³ Were it not for a similar treatment of Agnesa, Grazzini’s authorial decision here would seem merely propitious to the success of the ruse to be carried out, contingent entirely on Lazzero’s weakness and inability to see properly in the darkness. But Grazzini does extend the same treatment to Agnesa, and for no explicit reason: the plan’s success depends in only a very small measure on *her* eyesight.¹⁸⁴ Yet twice in the fourth act, the candle she bears goes out, first voluntarily snuffed, then blown out by the wind. Still, this is only Grazzini’s first step in establishing age-specific and humoural caricatures for his characters.

Filippo, Alfonso’s young friend, is often associated with air, and Ciullo with fury. The most consistent and best defined of these caricatures, however, is, of course, Lazzero’s. He is first called “geloso” in the second scene of the first act and here at least, the nomination pertains exclusively to his jealous inability to see Cassandra married to the suitor of her choice. Alfonso describes him as a man “acces[o dal]lo sdegno e la gelosia, che drento si rode tutto.”¹⁸⁵ It is not long before Grazzini brings Lazzero’s inner jealousy to the surface, and in a number of ways. The rest of the comedy, set mostly in the open air of a February night, capitalizes on the play between jealousy and the act of freezing, “gelare.” As he prepares to disguise himself as Ciullo’s brother and be taken to Giovacchino’s house, Lazzero repeatedly displays concern with keeping warm. “Abbia cure a mantenere il fuoco. Si ch’io vo’ poi che colui mi scaldi il letto,” he tells Agnesa before leaving his home.¹⁸⁶ Barely

¹⁸³ I.v, Fanfani 27; “Never fear, I’ve taken care of everything. Now blow out this light – can’t you see that the moon has risen? It shines so bright, it seems like daytime.”

¹⁸⁴ Ciullo distracts Agnesa in order for Alfonso to meet Camilla in her bedroom.

¹⁸⁵ I.ii, Fanfani, *Commedie* 21: “lit by disdain and jealousy, which destroys everything inside him.”

¹⁸⁶ I.v, Fanfani, *Commedie* 25: “Be sure to keep the fire burning. I should like it to warm my bed later.”

outside, he once again laments the cold: “Coheè, cò: coheè, cò, cò. Egli è questa notte per disgrazia una certa brezzolina sottile, che mi penetra per infino al cervello! e pure ho bene in capo.”¹⁸⁷ Once Ciullo has revealed the full extent of his plan, Lazzero’s only concern is yet again with protection from the elements: “Ma dimmi, in che guisa mi vestirai tu?” he asks Ciullo. “Così alla leggiera,” Ciullo replies. “Con che panni? abbi pur cura che non mi faccia freddo . . . Ma per in capo abbi avvertenza coprirmi bene; acciocchè poi non mi affogasse il catarro,” Lazzero responds.¹⁸⁸

This language persists throughout the third act and as the plan is underway, until coldness and wetness become Lazzero’s (exclusive) literary attributes. As Muciatto, a servant in Giovacchino’s house, observes in act three, scene eleven, by the play’s end, Lazzero seems to be “l’ambasciatore del freddo.”¹⁸⁹ “Io ho paura nella fine di non aver poco indosso, e anche non ho molto in piede,” he says, standing outside Giovacchino’s house. “Il capo, ch’è l’importanza, è coperto pure assai bene: questo berrettone suggella per ogni verso a capello: e poi la festa non ha da durar troppo; perché subito che io arò veduto e sentito, . . . ritornerommene a casa,” he self-reassuringly adds.¹⁹⁰ Even Ciullo and Alfonso take note of Lazzero’s particular sensitivity to the night air:

¹⁸⁷ *ibid*: “As bad luck would have it, tonight a light breeze blows, and it penetrates me to my brain! And yet, my head is well covered.”

¹⁸⁸ I.v, Fanfani 28, 29: “But tell me, how will you dress me?”; “In this way, with light clothing”; “With which clothes? Do be sure I won’t be cold . . . But be warned: my head should be well covered, so that I don’t choke on mucous.”

¹⁸⁹ III.xi, Fanfani 61.

¹⁹⁰ III.vii, Fanfani 53: “I fear I am wearing too little, and not enough on my feet, either. The head is the important part, and it is covered fairly well: this cap seals in every side like a hat. Besides, the meeting shouldn’t last long, and once I’ve seen and heard everything, . . . I’ll go back home.”

LAZZERO: Ma lasciamo oramai: questo ragionamento è durato troppo;
andianne, ch'io mi rivesta: bu, bu, bu, oimei! io comincio agghiadar di
freddo. Bu, bu, bu.

CIULLO: Lazzero, oh voi tremate?

LAZZERO: Tu hai buon dir tu, che sei uso alle male notti, e a' disagi.

CIULLO: Come farem noi, ché non si può entrare in camera né in casa?

LAZZERO: Che vuol dire?

...

CIULLO: Voi non potete, prima che le dieci ore suonino, riavere i panni vostri.

LAZZERO: Come? bu, bu, bu: io sarei morto sei volte di freddo.

CIULLO: E io, che far ne posso?

...

LAZZERO: vàvvi, e escine: bu, bu, bu; ch'io abbrivido.

ALFONSO: Mi par ch'ei triemi.¹⁹¹

As an older gentleman and a man of a certain amount of privilege, Lazzero is quite right to point out both his unfamiliarity with prolonged exposure to the cold and his inability to cope with it. His age and socio-familial status are, in fact, at the very core of Grazzini's caricature.

Lazzero's defining moment, however, occurs elsewhere. The first is found in a conversation among Ciullo, Pierantonio, and Lazzero that, according to Pietro Fanfani, editor of the 1857 *Le Monnier* edition from which I cite here, appears in the presumed

¹⁹¹ III.x, Fanfani 58; see appendix for translation.

original autograph but not, however, in the printed editions prior to his own.¹⁹² Its absence from them is remarkable, and worthy of further investigation, since it is rather central to the example Grazzini consistently makes of Lazzero throughout the play. Ciullo brings Lazzero, disguised as his brother, to meet Pierantonio outside Giovacchino's house. Cassandra's lover is astounded by the old man's appearance and behaviour:

PIERANTONIO: Dì che metta in capo: non odi tu com'ei parla? Egli è infreddato
troppo.

CIULLO: Ah! ah! niente; non vien da cotesto.

PIERANTONIO: O da che viene?

CIULLO: Ègli cascato l'ugola.

PIERANTONIO: Che è stato malfranzese?

CIULLO: Rispondete.

LAZZERO: No, Dio! scesa, scesa.

PIERANTONIO: Che dice?

CIULLO: Dolori maninconici.

¹⁹² He refers to the 1582 Giunti edition of all of Grazzini's comedies, as well as the 1750 Venetian edition and the individual edition of *La Gelosia* published, by Giunti, in 1551, of which he says, "sebbene ci sia chi dice, potere essere state queste edizioni sopravvegliate dall'autore medesimo, non vanno scevre da sformati errori le due commedie stampate divisamente dai Giunti, e di sformatissimi son piene quelle sei stampate poscia tutte insieme da loro medesimi. Più corretta è senza fallo la edizione del 1750: ma tuttavia è così sragionevole la puntura, che spesso ne rimane offuscato il costruito; e non son poche quelle volte che certe capresterie e proprietà di lingua ci si vedono alterate dall'esser loro, e mutate a fantasia per non essere state intese. Che ho fatto io dunque per rendere meno imperfetta la presente ristampa? Eccolo. Ho preso per testo la edizione del 1750 e ne ho fatto diligente riscontro con le stampe antiche, le quali, comechè assai mendose, conservano pure quelle forme antiche alteratesi dappoi, e però mi hanno dato materia a rassetare non pochi luoghi, I quali chiedevano pietosamente mercè, come vedrassi via via dalle note: della *Gelosia* poi e dell'*Arzigogolo* si ha nella Biblioteca Magliabechiana il manoscritto, che si dice autografo (di che per altro dubito forte), e su questo io ho riscontrate parola per parola esse due commedie, senza lasciarmi vincere dall'accidia."

LAZZERO: No, Ciullo: no, no: umidezza.

PIERANTONIO: Come? eh?

CIULLO: Da frigidezza dice ch'è venuto.

PIERANTONIO: In cotesto modo può essere; ma i dolor melanconici, pazzo da catene, dove hai tu trovato che partorischino simili effetti?

LAZZERO: Che ne sa egli?

PIERANTONIO: finiam le parole oramai, e avviànci in là.¹⁹³

The three characters present place Lazzero's behaviour on different notches of the humoural spectrum. Pierantonio sees in it merely a senselessness brought on by an extreme reaction to the cold. Lazzero takes his interpretation one step further and adds to it the humidity of the night air. Both of their accounts are consistent with the phlegmatic humour: Pierantonio describes its symbolic and Lazzero its physical symptoms and properties. But Ciullo associates it, instead, with melancholy – and is berated for it by both other men.

The interpretive problem he faces, however, is not his alone. A few scenes later, and when Ciullo escorts a frail and frigid Lazzero to Giovacchino's house temporarily to be warmed there, Muciatto has great difficulty identifying Lazzero as human, let alone as a phlegmatic old man. He interprets Lazzero's peevishness, instead, as rage: "Oimè! che s'è levato in collora: Dio mi ajuti; bello aspetto di bravo!" he exclaims.¹⁹⁴ It is not difficult to understand his conviction – or Ciullo's, earlier, for that matter: with so many shared properties among neighbouring humours, one manifestation of ill-humour is always just a short step away from another. The phlegmatic may look just as much like the melancholic,

¹⁹³ III.viii, Fanfani 53, 54; see appendix for translation.

¹⁹⁴ III.xi, Fanfani 62: "Oh, my! He's riled up with choler: God help me! Nice man, sure!"

in certain lights and under certain circumstances, as the melancholic may look and act, in others, like the choleric. In fact, the only temperament infrequently confused with any other is the sanguine. On a sliding scale of bad temperaments – choleric, melancholic, phlegmatic – the sanguine condition is the only unequivocally good, if naïve, one at the scale's end.

But humoral discrepancies are not the only reason for such confused and often overlapping descriptions of individual temperaments. Indeed, jealousy and its relation first to love, then to nature, play inestimable roles in the Florentine academics' understanding of individual dispositions and interpersonal relationships. While here, Grazzini pairs it with phlegm, for example, he elsewhere likens it more closely to choler. The next chapter will explore in greater detail the link between jealousy and rivalry still within the context of elemental discourse.

Chapter Three: Love, Jealousy, and Literary Rivalry

In one of his *lezioni d'amore* - more precisely, the close study of Petrarch's sonnet *S'Amor non è, che dunque e' quel, ch'io sento?* – Varchi writes:

Onde è da sapere, che come niuno falso si può trovare, il quale non habbia alcuna cosa del vero, perché altramente non sarebbe vero, che del falso si potesse cavare la verità; così nessun male trovare si può, il quale non sia fondato in alcun bene; perché il male da se e di sua natura non è nulla. Onde egli non si truova in nessun lato, dove non sia bene; non altramente che non si truova ombra o vero rezzo in luogo nessuno dove non sia sole.¹⁹⁵

This lesson was recited for the *Accademia fiorentina* on the third Sunday of Lent, 1543, not long after Varchi's official return to his native Florence under Cosimo I's patronage. The city's socio-political climate at his arrival, it is worth recalling, was still one of only slowly growing political stability – Alessandro de' Medici's passing in 1537 left the Medicean principate to build itself without a veritable patriarch – and cultural patronage until Cosimo I, whose progress was, however, initially slow. In a change of mandate not even Varchi himself much appreciated, the *Umidi* had just been reconstituted into the *Fiorentina*, many of its most prominent members either pushed to the margins or otherwise relegated to minor offices within it. Entirely contrary to the nature and purpose of the academy they had founded, friends and colleagues were pitted against each other, allies became rivals,

¹⁹⁵ Therefore, it is necessary to know that just as it would be impossible to find any falsity that didn't also contain something of the truth, since otherwise, it wouldn't be true that truth could be drawn out of falsity, in this way, one can find no evil that is not rooted in some good; because evil in itself and of its nature is not anything at all. Therefore, it cannot be found in any place where good is not present; just as no shade or shadow is ever found where there is no sun.

and smaller factions formed within larger academies pushing against those who refused, in a manner of speaking, to take sides.

Not surprisingly, then, the themes this passage directly treats – the nature of opposing forces and the relationship between love and hatred - enjoy repeated examination from 1540 to 1553, by members both of the *Accademia fiorentina* and of its mentor-rival *Accademia degli Infiammati*. A disciple of Francesco Cattani da Diacceto, in this lesson as in several others like it,¹⁹⁶ Varchi revisits the most commonly held neo-Platonist and neo-Aristotelian conceptions of love – as a necessarily beneficent force, as inherent to most living things – dwelling lengthily on the dangers of its misuse or misinterpretation, what, in his 1545 lesson on Giovanni della Casa’s sonnet, “La Gelosia,” he will identify as jealousy.¹⁹⁷ Together with Francesco Cattani da Diacceto’s *Tre libri d’amore* (1508)¹⁹⁸ and Sperone Speroni’s *Dialoghi* (1542, 1543),¹⁹⁹ Varchi’s lesson speaks to the general climate of rivalry among these competing, and sometimes collaborating, academies

¹⁹⁶ an unnamed lesson of uncertain dating on three questions of love; *Lezione di M. Benedetto Varchi nella quale si dichiarano cinque questioni d’amore* recited for the Accademia fiorentina the fourth Sunday of April, 1553; *Lezione di M. Benedetto Varchi sopra un sonetto del Reverendissimo Monsignore Pietro Bembo, letta di lui pubblicamente nell’Accademia Padovana, la seconda domenica di settembre dell’anno 1540*; see *La seconda parte delle lezioni di M. Benedetto Varchi, nella quale si contengono cinque lezioni d’amore, lette da lui pubblicamente nell’Accademia di Fiorenza e di Padova* (Fiorenza: Giunti, 1561); Firenze, Biblioteca nazionale centrale, fondo Magliabechiano MAGL 3.5.481.2.

¹⁹⁷ *Lezione sopra un sonetto del molto reverendo e virtuosissimo Mons. M. Giovanni della Casa, Dove si tratta della Gelosia. Con alcune quistioni dal medesimo autore nuovamente aggiunte.* in Mgl. 3.4.481.2

¹⁹⁸ *Francesco de’ Cattani da Diacceto: Dello Amore, in 3 libri*, MS Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Fondo Magliabechiano: Magl VIII 1444, cart. misc. XVI, 178-257.

¹⁹⁹ *Dialoghi di M. S. Speroni, nuovamente ristampati e con molta diligenza riveduti e corretti* (Venezia: Aldus Manutius, 1543) MS Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MAGL 12.7.331; *Dialoghi di M. S. Speroni, nuovamente ristampati e con molta diligenza riveduti e corretti* (Venezia: Aldus Manutius, 1542) MS Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, RARI. Ald. 1.3.34./a.

from 1540 to 1566.²⁰⁰ Looking closely at these various treatises chronologically, both by date of composition and by date of publication, reveals jealousy, its link with love, and the latter's relationship with nature, to be a keystone of interpretation to understanding the often conflicting natures of the academies, the relationship between Varchi himself and Antonfrancesco Grazzini, and the practical transition, in literature, from themes of melancholy to themes of choler, as seen in the previous chapter, in these second and third quarters of the sixteenth century.

Love and Jealousy as Literary Currency: de' Cattani, Varchi, Grazzini, Speroni, de' Pazzi

Before addressing in detail any of these works, it will be necessary to relate them, chronologically, to each other as well as to key events of the period and to some of Grazzini's more relevant works. In 1508, Francesco Cattani da Diacceto writes his *Tre libri d'amore* during his occupancy of chair at the Florentine studio. Though it may have circulated among other members of the studio or in the larger context of Marsilio Ficino's neo-Platonic circle, it was otherwise forgotten and only published for the first time in 1561, along with Varchi's biography of the author. In the many years between its composition and its publication, *I tre libri d'amore* exerted a definitive effect, as will be shown, in many of Varchi's own works. In September of 1540, Varchi recites his *Lezione sopra un sonetto del*

²⁰⁰ see also: *Lezione di M. Benedetto Varchi sopra la generazione de' Mostri e se sono intesi dalla Natura o no, fatta da lui pubblicamente nell'Accademia Fiorentina la prima e seconda Domenica di luglio, l'anno 1548; Lezione su Purgatorio XXV (ossia, sulla generazione del corpo umano), letto da lui pubblicamente nella felicissima Accademia Fiorentina, il giorno dopo San Giovanni dell'anno 1543; Lezione della natura, letta pubblicamente nell'Accademia Fiorentina, la prima Domenica di Quaresima dell'anno 1547; see: Lezioni di M. Benedetto Varchi, nella quale si tratta della natura, della generazione del corpo humano e dei mostri, letta da lui pubblicamente nell'Accademia Fiorentina* (Firenze: Giunti, 1560); Firenze, Biblioteca nazionale centrale, Fondo Magliabechiano, MAGL.3.5.481.1.

Reverendissimo Monsignor Pietro Bembo for the Accademia degli Infiammati; in 1542 and then again in 1543, Sperone Speroni publishes his *Dialoghi*, including one on love which appropriates many of what can be considered the academy's "public domain" ideas on the matter; on the third Sunday of Lent, 1543, Varchi recites his *Lezione sopra il sonetto di M. Francesco Petrarca, il quale incomincia . S'Amor non è, che dunque è quel, ch'io sento?* for the Accademia fiorentina; his *Lezione su Purgatorio XXV (ossia, sulla generazione del corpo umano)* follows later that same year, presented before the *Fiorentina* on June 25th. Next comes his lesson on Della Casa's sonnet, in 1545, for the *Infiammati's* visit to Florence. On the first Sunday of Lent in 1547 – and the year in which Grazzini was expelled from the *Fiorentina* – he delivers his *Lezione della natura* again for the *Fiorentina*, and on the first and second Sunday of July in 1548, his *Lezione sopra la generazione de' Mostri e se sono intesi dalla Natura o no*. Finally, perhaps his best known or best received work on love, the *Lezione nella quale si dichiarano cinque questioni d'amore*, he presents for the *Fiorentina* on the fourth Sunday of April, 1553. The years between 1540 and 1561, then, are charged with a proliferation of production on love and nature, love and jealousy, jealousy and nature – theoretical questions that trickle down, also, into the artistic and literary production of the same period.

Varchi and Grazzini

The relationship between Varchi and Antonfrancesco Grazzini might be a good place to begin an investigation of this theme. That theirs was a complicated relationship is, alongside Alfonso de' Pazzi's concurrent animosity toward Varchi, one of the few well-

documented facts of the *Accademia fiorentina* and the interaction of its members.²⁰¹ The two men knew each other prior to Varchi's more permanent return to Florence and dedication to the *Fiorentina*. Through Piero Vettori and Giovanni Mazzuoli (lo Stradino), they would have been in touch especially during Varchi's 1540-41 stay in Padua. The two were originally on neutral if not perfectly friendly terms: they afforded each other mutual respect and admiration. Eventually, Varchi becomes friend and mentor to the younger and inexpert Grazzini, who looks to Varchi for advice on the composition and dissemination of his verse. Accordingly, Grazzini is, early in his career, Varchi's champion, and defends him against Alfonso de' Pazzi's ongoing raillery. Later on, and with Varchi's increasing influence on the *Fiorentina* and its politics under Cosimo I, il Lasca becomes his most threatening enemy.²⁰² As much is clear simply in Grazzini's poems to *Vostra Signoria Padre Varchi*, who is routinely – and alternately – represented as a great thinker, master of his craft, traitor, and literary poseur. At times, in fact, he is depicted as a composite of these contradictory elements. In what I think are some of Grazzini's earlier poems, Varchi comes across almost

²⁰¹ On Varchi's relationship with both men, and on their subsequent participation in Berni's burlesque tradition in their animosity against Varchi, see Francesco Bruni, *Sistemi critici e strutture narrative (Ricerche sulla cultura fiorentina del rinascimento)* (Napoli: Liguori, 1969).

²⁰² see *Rime del Lasca, parte seconda*, sonetto XLI, "A Alfonso de' Pazzi": "Alfonso, tu ci hai stracco e 'nfastidito / Con Occhi e Varchi, con Varche e Bacello, / Con Varchi e Tasso; omai vane al bordello; / Sai tu dir altro, goffo scimunito? / I plebei tutti ti mostrano a ditto, / Dicendo l'uno all'altro: Vello, vello, / Quell'è Alfonso, ch'ha perso il cervello: / Non ha più invenzion, gli è rimbambito. / Sempremai dice la cosa medesima: / Per questo è doventato più sazievole, / Che non è il Sollione o la Quaresima. / Or se far vuoi cosa degna e lodevole, / Alfonso, non star più co' versi a cresima; / Ma lasci'ire il tuo stil rozzo e stucchevole; / Perchè lo sconvenevole / Tuo tanto Varchi Varchi, e Tasso Tasso, / T'ha nella fin chiarito un babbuasso." Interestingly, at de' Pazzi's death, Grazzini implores Varchi and Gello to mourn him as an honoured compatriot. See *Rime del Lasca, parte prima*, sonnet LXXIV, "Nella morte di Alfonso de' Pazzi," which ends with "Chi ama il vero, e 'n odio ha la bugia, / Pianga Alfonso de' Pazzi tuttavia. / Ma con maninconia / Maggior degli altri, e di più doglia carchi, / Pianger lo dovrien sempre il Gello e 'l Varchi" (11-14).

always and almost exclusively as a literary hero: a great role model for future generations of academics.²⁰³ Often, however, even when depicted in this adoring light, he is subject, still, to Grazzini's at first gentle, then increasingly remarkable and grating contempt. In one capitolo, Grazzini presents Varchi with a young poet just entering the academic scene and looking for guidance. His hopes for his young friend in the hands of Varchi are high: "All'accademia ancor col vostro ajuto, / Legger con grazia e con facondia, come / I Leli e' Luzi, l'aremmo veduto. / Voi gli areste trovato un altro nome, / (che in verità n'avea bisogno grande:) / Di quelli usati nelle antiche Rome," he writes. But the tone of the rest of it is bleak: in a world "diventato tanto strano, / Che spesso il bianco si piglia pel nero," Grazzini is unconvinced of his mentor's hoped-for success.²⁰⁴ The capitolo ends in dismayed pessimism: If Varchi is unable to "istruir" this young poet, surely, "Il mondo e la Fortuna n'incolpate, / La Luna, il Sol, le Stelle e le Comete;" in other words, the poet's Fortune depends not on his level of instruction a posteriori, but on the nobility of his family by birth.²⁰⁵ It is an accusation Grazzini will several times repeat in his dealings with Varchi, making of him the intellectual equivalent of the socio-political elite. Il Lasca's increasing loss of faith in Varchi is less guarded in others of his works. In a sonnet again addressed to his former mentor, he makes reference to another young poet to take under his wing; only this time, the poet in question is of a younger generation – "Pur alla fin v'ha fatto il ciel trovare / Dopo tanti anni un poeta novello," – and who, unlike his former counterpart, "Ha nome di signor, non di bilello; / Che come Giammaria o Raffaello, / Voi non 'avrete, Varchi a

²⁰³ See *Rime del Lasca, parte prima*, sonetti XXXI, XXXII (p. 17); the first of these closes with, "La virtù vostra più lucente e bella / Adorna d'ora in ora il secol nostro"; in the second, all of Florence praises Varchi for his great mind.

²⁰⁴ His doubt is compounded by the fact that his presented friend, in what will be shown to be a reversal of Varchi's take on love, "sol a se stesso e non altri simiglia" (18).

²⁰⁵ *ibid.*

sbattezzare.” The implication here is that Varchi lends his most sincere efforts to the apprenticeship of poets already, prior to coming to him, “sav[i] e buon[i] e bell[i]” in need neither of renaming – the original members of the *Umidi* voluntarily took on pseudonyms – nor of being “sbatezzato” or cast out of a company of which he is unworthy.²⁰⁶ Although the instruction of the last poet was a failure, Varchi is more successful with this new one – noble by pedigree. His victory, however, leaves Grazzini notably embittered: the last was quick-witted and spirited and truly fresh-faced, but still unable to garner literary fame; this one, by contrast, and due seemingly only to the strength of his name, is given a high position in the principate of the Academy. More than likely, Grazzini’s first, livelier poet was a stand-in for himself, while the second was a member of the academy after its official reform. It is, as yet, impossible to determine with certainty whether this was the case. What remains is his disappointment in Varchi in the first cited poem, and his bitterness toward him in the second.

Grazzini’s distrust and, ultimately, distaste for Varchi does not, however, end there.

In another sonnet in one of his many Varchi cycles, Grazzini literally stacks the entire Tuscan population against him: “Questo popol non vuol più i tuoi Sonetti, / O Padre Varchi, cornacchion d’Apollo;” calls him a liar, “Poichè mentir per la gola e pel collo / Tanto

²⁰⁶ This verse is cited from the immediately preceding sonnet in which Grazzini again alludes to the idea of Varchi’s privileging those already formally instructed when appointing positions in the academy. He writes: “O padre Varchi, Socrate novello, / O vogliam dir Pitagora secondo, / A voi doverrieno a drappello / Scolar venir da tutto quant oil mondo; / Poichè ‘l vostro sapere alto e profondo / Cacciate lor sì tosto nel cervello; / Ma non ritrova così l’uovo mondo, / Se non quegli, ch’è savio, buono e bello. / Alcibiade e Fedro fur dilette / Scolar, come già vide e seppe Atene, / Perocchè furon savj, e assai perfetti: / E perché la saviezza dal ciel viene, / Anno solo giudizi e ingegni retti / I giovan savj, e imparan tosto e bene. / Ma pria saper conviene / Il mondo d’insegnare antico e nuovo, / Ch’avete, Varchi, voi trovate a covo. / Onde io la lingua muovo, / E dico: O voi, che figli vi trovate / Savj, e che son nella più verde etate, / Se veder gli bramate / Di virtù pieni, e di dottrina carichi, / Dategli a custodire al Padre Varchi (*Rime del Lasca, parte seconda*, 229).

sfacciatamente ti diletta,” and accuses him of having gone mad.²⁰⁷ In another, he pokes at Varchi’s persistent hobnobbing still more directly and more crudely: “A braccia aperte, ed a brache calate / V’aspetta il vostro Bembo a’ campi Elissi, / Fra’ i fior di nepitella e fioralisi.” The Varchi Grazzini depicts here is not only ready to perform any favour for professional gain, but also, because suggestively homosexual, morally depraved (Grazzini, of course, dismisses and forgives his own purported homosexuality), and absent; he is a Varchi who has “lasciat[o] / i [suoi] amici in sette sì divisi” while he goes to cultivate Parnassus, “Vive[ndo] dunque allegramente nosco, / Insegnando a pedanti il parlar Tosco.”²⁰⁸ No longer a father figure, he chooses, instead, to privilege his own reputation at the expense of those of his colleagues and pupils. Grazzini is not surprised: Varchi’s success in Florence seems, to him, based entirely on his choice to leave it for an extended period or, more explicitly, on his betrayal of his *campanile*. Not taking into consideration Varchi’s many run-ins with anti-republican sentiment within Florence and his forced exit from it years earlier, Grazzini assimilates him to Judas: “Il Varchi è stato gran tempo Giudeo, / Pur or di nuovo alla Fede è tornato” who is baptized under the later “Etruscan” bent of the *Fiorentina*: “E l’Etrusco gentil l’ha battezzato.”²⁰⁹ Grazzini’s reversal of the act of baptism here is also worth pointing out as a more or less subtle suggestion of Varchi’s hypocrisy: though he is newly baptized himself, and under a practically different religion, the revered intellectual casts away any in a similarly prodigal position, in need of reinvention, or in search of a

²⁰⁷ *Rime del Lasca, parte prima*, 230. “This populace no longer wants your sonnets, / Father Varchi, Apollo’s crow; / Since you take such shameful delight / In lying through your teeth and in your throat.” It is worth mentioning that Grazzini later composes another poem, “Canto del Corbo” the complete version of which can be found in Cl. VII, 356 (Libreria Medico-Palatina) conserved at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze.

²⁰⁸ See *Rime del Lasca, parte prima*, 230-31.

²⁰⁹ *Rime del Lasca, parte prima*, p. 265-66; more will be said on the *Fiorentina*’s new Etruscan program later in this chapter.

literary prestige not guaranteed by birth. Grazzini, it bears recalling, is ostensibly born to a family of merchants, probably apothecaries, and is the first literary figure of his genetic line.

In the poems above, Grazzini's criticism is more or less straightforward. Elsewhere, he stylises it for a different, perhaps greater effect. In one, he assumes the voice of Luigi Pulci and reacts against Varchi's evaluation of the *Morgante*.²¹⁰ Another, he writes in praise of spinach and there simultaneously displays an impressive lack of self-importance and draws attention to Varchi's stunning unawareness of his own egotistical nature and inflated reputation within the academy:

Oh se venisse al Varchi fantasia
Cantar degli Spinaci! Tu vedresti
I pedagoghi tutti stare al qui:
E mille belle cose intenderesti
Intorno alle lor lodi: e allegare
Chiose e pretelle, e le pentole e' testi:
E per esempio e per ragion mostrare,
E con autorità, che paragone
Agli spinaci non si può trovare.²¹¹

Were Grazzini to write about a topic as trivial as spinach, he would be met – rightfully – with laughter. In Varchi's plume, however, even the absurd is granted *gravitas* owed not necessarily to a mastery of style or a complexity of philosophical thought, but more likely to the politico-literary reputation that precedes him.

²¹⁰ *Rime del Lasca, parte seconda*, sonnet CXLVIII, p. 94.

²¹¹ *Rime del Lasca, parte seconda*, "Capitolo in lode degli Spinaci" (XXI, 77-79).

Grazzini's early poetic production is, with very few exceptions, intentionally light-hearted, if sardonic. Still, Varchi is no stranger to il Lasca's not so thinly veiled contempt, or to the general aversion of many of his other contemporaries. Concomitant with the conclusions he draws in his lessons from 1540 to 1555, when asked to explain it, he finds the root of it in envy - *invidia*.²¹² True to his form, Grazzini finds a way to mock this assumption, too.²¹³ In sonnet XXXIII of the 1741 Moücke edition, he describes Varchi as a man neither to be revered nor feared, but as a poet who has relied only on his reputation to win the public's favour. Like gold worked in a fire, he emerges from the hands of his defenders "sette volte più netto e più purgato" ready to climb to heaven "la 'nvidia e l'odio superato / E 'l mondo traditor vinto e schernito." Grazzini's irony is obvious, heavy-handed: by his calculation, jealousy is the crutch on which Varchi leans to explain – and perhaps, to a lesser degree, excuse – his many and considerable difficult personal relationships, with complete disregard for (or denial of) his own artistic shortcomings.

Varchi's 1545 lesson on Giovanni della Casa's sonnet on jealousy offers a better understanding of what he means by the very term *invidia*. There, he associates it directly – though not synonymously – with jealousy: "nella nostra lingua Gelosia, non significa altro,

²¹² Umberto Pirotti, *Benedetto Varchi e la cultura del suo tempo* (Firenze: Olschki editore, 1971) 24.

²¹³ His sonnet XXXIII is worth citing in full: "Non fu mai visto il più bell'omaccione / Del mio gran Varchi, e non si vedrà mai, / Grasso, grosso, gentil, dotto e d'assai, / Dove ne fusse bene un milione. / Non ha potuto il dir delle persone / Maligne e ree, bench'abbian detto assai / False calunnie, oimè! toglia giammai / L'onor, la gloria e la reputazione. / Come l'oro nel fuoco travagliato; / Così delle lor mani è sempre uscito, / Sette volte più netto e più purgato. / Or tanto verso il cielo alto è salito, / Ch'egli ha la 'nvidia e l'odio superato / E 'l mondo traditor vinto e schernito; / Talch'egli è mostro a ditto / Con meraviglia e con gran divozione, / Come s'ei fosse Socrate o Platone, / O Lino o Anisone, / O Moisè o Davide Samistra, / O Macone o Mercurio Timigista; / Né per questo ha la vista, / Come molti babbion, punto ingrossato, / Che mutan condizion, mutando stato. / Se quel, ch'ha meritato / Avesse, o quel che merta il suo valore, / Sarebbe il Varchi Papa o Imperadore" (*Rime del Lasca, parte prima*, 18).

che una emulazione, o vero invidia di forma, o vero bellezza,” he writes.²¹⁴ He goes on to qualify it and list some of its various definitions, both classical and contemporary:

Marco Tullio la tradusse obtrettaione²¹⁵, e la diffinì una passione che alcuno ha perché un’altro gode e possiede quello che vorrebbe possedere e godere egli solo. Altri dissero la Gelosia essere una sospizione, la quale ha l’amante circa la cosa amata, ch’ella non s’innamori d’un altro. Altri, la Gelosia essere un pauroso sospetto, dell’amante della cosa amata, la quale egli non vorrebbe havere comune con alcuno, non faccia copia di sé a niuno altro; le quali tutte significano in effetto una cosa medesima.²¹⁶

Jealousy is a subset of envy, of the third kind, either good or bad, and which at times merits blame, and at others, praise.²¹⁷ This is an imperfect definition, as Varchi readily admits, built of opinions “particolari ma non universali” but an insight into the very prevalence of the sentiment as a subject of literary analysis.²¹⁸ What, he says, is common to all variants of jealousy, is its designation as a “malattia [che] genera ne gl’animi una perpetua e continua inquietudine, che mai non posa, ma sempre sta attenta, e con gl’orecchi tesi, ad ascoltare

²¹⁴ Mgl. 3.4.481.2 89r; “in our language, Jealousy means nothing more than an emulation, or rather, an envy of form, or more precisely, of beauty.”

²¹⁵ obtretactio: a disparagement; Varchi’s rendition of the Latin word might have been an attempt to vernacularise it –literally – for his Italian audience.

²¹⁶ *ibid*; “Marcus Tullius translates it as a disparagement and defines it a passion that some have because another enjoys and possesses that which he alone would like to enjoy and possess. Others claim jealousy to be a lover’s suspicion that his loved one loves another. Others think of it as the fearful suspicion of a lover unwilling to have his loved one paralleled to anyone else, or copied by another; all of these definitions effectively mean one and the same thing.”

²¹⁷ *ibid*, 113v: “La terza spezia dell’invidia è la gelosia, la quale può essere cattiva e buona, e così merita hora biasimo, e quando loda.”

²¹⁸ *ibid*; “specific but not universal”

ogni voce, ogni romore, ogni vento.”²¹⁹ As will later be shown, no more succinct or appropriate description exists for Grazzini’s literary production from the moment of his expulsion from the *Fiorentina* in 1547, to his readmission in 1566. In fact, despite their essentially antagonistic relationship, Grazzini, when he writes of jealousy, agrees almost perfectly with Varchi’s interpretation of it, though he is, of course, careful, as well, to add to it his particular opinion on the matter. In his octaves “Sopra la gelosia,” he describes jealousy as love’s bitter sister – “Di questo dunque pio e dolce amore / È l’empia Gelosia sorella amara” – twins born of the same parents, but unequal in personality:

Di padre e di madre e in un parto stesso
Amore e Gelosia nacquero insieme:
E crescendo s’andar sempre mai presso:
L’un canta e ride, e l’altra piange e geme:
E così di lontan, come d’appresso,
Quà somma gioje, e colà doglie estreme,
Con dispari voler si veggon sempre,
Ora in soavi, ora in amare tempore.²²⁰

²¹⁹ *ibid*, 98v; “an illness [that] generates in the souls it afflicts perpetual and continuous worry, which causes him never to be tranquil, but, always attentive and with ears alert, to listen to every voice, every sound, every gust of wind.”

²²⁰ Stanzas 3, 5.1-2: Of the same mother and father and at the same time / Love and Jealousy were born together: / And growing up, they went forever together: / The one laughs and sings, the other sighs and cries: Both from afar and from nearby, / In the one, supreme joy, in the other, extreme pain, / They are always seen with unequal desires, / Ora in soavi, ora in amare tempore” (*Rime del Lasca, parte seconda*, 146). In a sonnet on jealousy found elsewhere in his collection, Grazzini will call Jealousy Hatred’s sister and Love’s mortal enemy: “Carnal dell’ira, e dell’odio sorella,, / Del furor sposa, e del disdegno ancella, / Nemica eterna e capital d’Amore” (Sonetto LXXVII, *Rime del Lasca, parte seconda*, 42).

He even agrees with Varchi's identification of more than one type of jealousy, and division of the term into various categories. In stanza four, Grazzini writes, "Ma perché molti e vari son gli Amori, / Molte e variate son le Gelosie, / Che in ogni tempo e loco i nostri cori / Van tormentando per diverse vie."²²¹

Varchi and Speroni

Of course, and of a piece with the nature of della Casa's sonnet, Varchi speaks in his lesson (and Grazzini in his octaves) of the jealousy associated with (and an excess of) love – amorous love – the love of which Petrarch and later Bembo write, a love composed of binary forces and seemingly irreconcilable opposites. Sperone Speroni, in his 1542 *Dialogo dell'amore* (perhaps written contemporaneously to Varchi's lesson on della Casa) confirms – or perhaps preempts – a good deal of Varchi's claims. There, his characters, fictional, though ostensibly based on real personalities, Tullia d'Aragona, Bernardo Tasso, Nicola Gratia, and il Molza – all at one point members of the *Fiorentina* or in some way affiliated with it – begin their treatment of the nature of love with a discussion on jealousy. Like Varchi, they identify it as a necessary byproduct of love; jealousy is to love, as Tullia states, what a ray is to light, what lightning is to a thunderbolt, what the soul is to human life.²²² It is an illness without remedy and which leads him who suffers from it to see only things that

²²¹ "But because many and varied are the types of Love, / Many and varied are the Jealousies that go with them, / That always and everywhere torment our hearts / In various ways."

²²² "Io per me mai non amo, ch'io non mi muoia di gelosia ne mai sono stata gelosa, che io non amassi, e ardessi. Onde io credo, che tali sieno tra loro la gelosia, e lo amore, quale è il raggio e la luce; il baleno e la folgore; lo spirito, e la vita." (*Dialogi di M. S. Speroni, nuovamente ristampati e con molta diligenza riveduti e corretti* (Venezia: Aldus Manutio, 1543) MAGL 12.7.331; *Dialogi di M. S. Speroni, nuovamente ristampati e con molta diligenza riveduti e corretti* (1542), RARI. Ald. 1.3.34./a

profoundly irritate him, converting “quello dentro da se . . . in sospetto, onde (se sano fosse) sommamente ne gioirebbe.”²²³ And just as Varchi does in a later (undated) lesson, Molza more specifically among them compares the strength of love – jealous or not – to the power of the sun, both of them, “eterni, ambi di forza quasi infinita, notissimi in altrui e in se stessi invisibili per troppa luce . . . Però sappiate che così come il raggio del sole scevro da ogni mortal qualità scende dal cielo e di rimbalzo scalda, e accende ogni cosa, così Amore dal viso e da gli atti d’alcuna bella e virtuosa persona doma e sforza le nostre voglie.”²²⁴

Speroni writes, here, of amorous love (between lovers). Still, Varchi’s assertion that jealousy, if improperly treated (if one is not careful to curb the excessiveness of his love), “cresce alcuna volta tanto che diventa odio e si converte in rabbia, e questo non solo contro la cosa amata, o il suo avversario o rivale, ma contro tutti quelli ancora, i quali giudica esserli stati in qualunque modo contrarii”²²⁵ is applicable, too, to the jealousy of his rivals and to the rivals of the *Infiammati* more generally. In other words, what Varchi indirectly posits is that the contempt of his peers is a product of love rather than hate and, as such, is entirely natural – and necessarily good. “È da sapere che tutti gl’amori, essendo naturali sono buoni, come havemo detto di sopra, e diremo di sotto, ma il non sapergli usare gli fa

²²³ *ibid*, 10r/v, “everything within him to suspicion, when, if healthy, he would rejoice from it.”

²²⁴ “eternal, both of almost infinite force, highly noticeable in others, but invisible to themselves in their excessive brightness . . . But know that just as a ray of sun free of every mortal quality descends from the sky and, bouncing back up, heats and ignites everything, in that way, Love, generated from the face and *beaux gestes* of a graceful and virtuous person, dominates and forces our desires.” (*ibid*, 13v/14r)

²²⁵ MAGL 3.4.481.2, 103r; “sometimes grows so large that it turns into hatred and is converted to anger, and not only against the loved one, or his adversary, or rival, but against all those he judges to have in some way gone against him.”

rei,” he writes in his lesson on Petrarch’s sonnet.²²⁶ All love is natural and good, and still, “Amare senza amaro non si può.”²²⁷

His position here is hardly surprising when taken in the context of other, surrounding lessons. Nor is it surprising when considering his overall project of promoting Aristotle in a dominantly – and dogmatically so – platonic environment.²²⁸ He takes it a step further in another lesson on three questions related to love. The second of these, a reflection on Dante’s *Paradiso* XIII, asks whether love or hate is the stronger and more powerful passion. Varchi’s treatment of the issue is interesting for a number of reasons. I quote here, in full, the most notable passage of his explanation:

l’odio prevaglia all’amore: la qual dimanda e risoluzione non è, si può dire altro che dimandare prima qual sia più lucente, e di maggior possanza o il Sole, o l’ombra; poi risolvendo in favor dell’ombra dire, che ella più luce e più può, che il Sole stesso non fa. Devemo dunque sapere per intendere non la verità di questa quistione (la quale è per se chiarissima) ma per conoscere

²²⁶ MAGL 3.5. 481.2, 14v; “it should be known that all loves, in that they are natural, are also good, as we have said above and as we will say below, but that the misuse of them is damaging.”

²²⁷ MAGL 3.5.481.2, 21v; “it is impossible to love without bitterness.”

²²⁸ For a review of neo-Platonism in Renaissance Florence especially in the context of the early 16th century and in the works of Francesco Cattani da Diacceto, see Paul O. Kristeller, *Francesco da Diacceto and Florentine Platonism in the sixteenth century* (Vatican City: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1946). Here, Kristeller traces the line of neo-Platonic thought in Florence from Marsilio Ficino and the studio fiorentino down to the Sacred Academy of the Medici, which considered itself the natural successor to the projects begun by Ficino and his circle. Platonism, Kristeller contends, though still far less popular than the prevailing Aristotelianism of many Renaissance academies, was still the key source of material for a wide array of public academic lectures, and increasingly so over the years. Varchi’s position is, as stated, somewhere between the Aristotelian fanaticism of some of his contemporaries, and the growing Platonic bent of the sixteenth century. Platonism did remain, however, a primary concern for the Medici family and the official sponsors of the Accademia fiorentina.

l'inganno che l'amore e l'odio sono due passioni contrarie; cioè che s'oppongono l'una all'altra, ma privativamente, non altramente, che il bene, e il male: devemo ancora saper, che le privazioni come il male, l'ombra, l'odio e altre cotali non operano per se cosa nessuna, e insomma sono nulla; ma tutto quello che sono e che operano, sono e operano in virtù del loro habito: perché il male non opera nulla, se non in virtù del bene; né puo essere male alcuno, che in qualche bene fondato non sia: ne è dubbio che ogni odio precede da alcuno amore, come da sua cagione, onde l'odio è effetto d'amore; del che seguita che amore gli soprastia, non possendo alcuno effetto trovarsi più forte e più possente, come nel primo si disse, della sua causa. (42r/v, italics mine)²²⁹

²²⁹ MAGL 3.5.481.2: "hatred (...) love, the question and answer to which is nothing if not to ask first which is brighter and more powerful, the sun or shade; then, favouring the shade, to say that it could give more light and could do more than the sun itself. We must, then, understand [this matter] not to understand the truth of the question (which is clear in and of itself) but to gain familiarity with the misconception – the fallacy – that love and hate are two contrary passions, that is, that they oppose each other, but by way of privation, not otherwise, like good and evil: we must know, moreover, that privations, like evil, shade, hatred, and other such things do not operate on anything on their own, and, in brief, they are nothing. But all that which they are and which they do, they are and they operate by virtue of their source of origin, because evil does nothing if not as a function of good, nor can there exist any evil that is not in some way founded in good. In such a way, there is no doubt that all hatred is born of some love, as if love were its reason, so that hatred is the effect of love. From this follows that love surpasses it, since no effect could ever be found to be stronger or more powerful than its cause, as was said in the prologue." See also, Antonfrancesco Grazzini's sonnet on Jealousy wherein a similar relationship is depicted. Here, however, Grazzini points to a destructive rather than regenerative relationship between love and jealousy. Though they are born of the same source, in Grazzini's eyes, Love and Jealousy fundamentally cancel each other out, the latter an annihilation of all forms of good. See appendix for a full transcription.

To summarise, then, Varchi's logic presumes the nonexistence of opposites and favours, instead, a theory of cause and effect, where causes are sole authors of any and all effects, no matter how contrary. In such a way, he does away with the absolutism of categories like "good" and "bad" to instead favour a fluid spectrum of only "good." For our purposes, he eliminates the binary of "love" and "hate" to view "hate" as only a degree on the sliding scale of love, a necessary consequence not of the inherent goodness of love, but of the power of love itself – misused or otherwise.²³⁰

As we have already seen, jealousy is one "misuse" of love. But Varchi offers another practical example of a different kind: fire burns wood not out of hatred for wood, but out of love for itself, he writes, just as fire puts out water only in an effort to preserve itself, again out of love.²³¹ Speroni hammers at this very point, too, in his *Dialogo sopra la Discordia* in which Jove states it "natural cosa . . . a gli huomini l'esser concordi tra loro, e contra natura l'esser discordi; come anche contra natura sarebbe che l'un fuoco l'altro stinguesse; e l'una

²³⁰ In his untitled lesson on three questions of love, Varchi, following the neoplatonic philosophy of his mentor, da Diacceto, is careful to break love down into five categories, the lowest of which (amore ferino and carnal in nature) leads to condemnation, and the highest of which (amore divino and defined as the reverence of God in the loved one) leads the way to heaven (see MAGL 3.5.481.2 34r-35v). Grazzini plays with this concept in one of his sonnets to Varchi perhaps, again, to point to his contemporary and former mentor's hypocrisy. See Appendix 1 for full transcription and translation.

²³¹ "perciò che non creda alcuno che o il fuoco arda legno, o l'acqua spenge il fuoco per odio, ma solo per amore: perché il fuoco non cerca di distare le legne per odio che porti loro, ma solo per amore che porta a se; disiderando ciascuna cosa naturalmente non solo di mantenersi, ma di crescere; e così diciamo dell'acqua, e di tutte l'altre cose somiglianti" (ibid, 43r).

acqua si secasse per l'altra."²³² All love is born of similarity (and, ultimately, of the human desire to be perfectly similar to God),²³³ but every vice is rooted in "amore di se stesso."²³⁴

These two effects or consequences of love – jealousy and (excessive) self-love – might likely have afforded Varchi a neat explanation for his rivals' opinion and treatment of him in their works. They might, indeed, continue to afford a plausible explanation for it to readers today. It is clear, at the very least, that his contemporaries were directly tuned into the reigning philosophy of the *Infiammati* and former-*Infiammati* circles and appropriated the same rhetoric – albeit sarcastically – to mock and, presumably, counter his beliefs. Their execution, however, more often indirectly aligns them with Varchi than distinguishes them from him. Although at times, this alignment is intended – and then intentionally surpassed or reversed – it more often recalls the neatness and pervasiveness of Varchi's thoughts than the originality or artistic virtue of those who counter him.

Varchi and de' Pazzi

Alfonso de' Pazzi, as already mentioned, is a figure key to witnessing and understanding the jealousy and self-love about which Varchi so lengthily writes at play. Born in 1509 to the Pazzi family – notoriously antagonistic to the Medici since their 1478 conspiracy against Giuliano de' Medici – Alfonso was a highly educated if notably marginalized member of Florence's greater academic society. He was elected to the

²³² "natural for men to be in agreement among each other, and unnatural for them to be in discord, just as it would be contrary to nature for one fire to put out another, or for water to dry itself out to help the other grow" (RARI. Ald. 1.3.34./a, 92v/93r).

²³³ see the third and final question of the same lesson (43v).

²³⁴ see *Lezione di M. Benedetto Varchi nella quale si dichiarano cinque questioni d'amore letta da lui pubblicamente nell'Accademia Fiorentina, la quarta domenica d'aprile dell'anno 1553,* 56r.

Accademia fiorentina in September of 1543, only a few months after Varchi's delivery of his lesson on Petrarch's sonnet, and on *Purgatorio* XXV and, presumably, on the basis of his attendance at and participation in previous informal or unofficial gatherings of already established *fiorentina* members. Though not much has been written about his life, from the little that is known, much could explain his assumed jealousy toward Varchi: Alfonso, born and bred in Florence and most active within its confines or immediate surroundings,²³⁵ only ever holds the position of *Provveditore* in the Academy – one substantially inferior to the offices of Consul and Censor for which he frequently came into consideration, though ultimately unsuccessfully – and only four years after joining.²³⁶ Furthermore, his career advances come not as a result of personal merit, but rather on the recommendations of lo Stradino, the *Umidi's* founding father and still long-revered member of the later *fiorentina*, at a desperate time of restructure in the academy. Varchi, by contrast, is a *fuoruscito*: in some ways (and from some perspectives) a traitor to his native province who seeks to establish a name for himself outside it before returning to it triumphantly. No sooner does he come back to his neglected Florence than he is he immediately and without debate bestowed the privileged responsibility of redefining the academy in the Medici's best interests, and awarded the office of Censor to do so. Pazzi is arguably the more prolific writer, but Varchi's are the lessons and rhymes most circulated, or at least most visible, among his peers. And though they have many mutual contacts, the only way for Pazzi to feel more specifically allied with them is to turn them against their mutual friend. Or so, at least, Varchi would claim.

²³⁵ He was elected *Podestà* of Fiesole in May 1548 for a six-month term (see: Domenico Zanrè, *Cultural Non-Conformity in Early Modern Florence*, 112).

²³⁶ *ibid*

But nothing speaks to Pazzi's rancorous envy more than Pazzi's works themselves. Though hardly critical masterpieces in either form or content, a cycle of his poems conserved in a manuscript of the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma reveals a Pazzi running the full gamut of Varchi's jealousy/envy spectrum from outright contempt to near-adoring emulation. These are pieces that notably play on conventional contraries or conflicting terms: something (*cosa*) and nothing (*nulla*); meaning or understanding (*intende*) and saying (*dire*).²³⁷ Not all are remarkable, but some, indeed, are worth reproducing in full. The first plays explicitly on the well/unwell (or the good/evil) dichotomy Varchi frequently visits in his lessons:

Varchi se tu havesti sempre male
Opereresti et scriveresti sempre bene;
Però ch'in fatti quando tu stai bene,
A dirti il vero, tu fai poco et male.
Mentre che a questi giorni havesti male
Tu componesti assai presso che bene
Et così spesso il male adduce bene
Et pel contrario ben apposta male
Rinverde l'alma quando il corpo ha male
Languisce mentre che 'l senso sta bene,
Et così 'l ben del'uno del altro è male,
Et però Varchi chiunque ti vuole ben,
Desidera per ben che tu stia male

²³⁷ see Biblioteca Palatina, Parma, Pal. 557. Cart, misc. XVI, 243-246; for full transcription and translations, see Appendix.

Hor distinguere in futuro 'l male dal bene.²³⁸

As will later be shown, this contribution of de' Pazzi's plays not only with Varchi's lessons on love, but also with his lessons on the creation of the human body, and the generation of monsters. In these fourteen verses, several jealous operations are at play, the most striking of which might be found in Pazzi's very choice of words; here as elsewhere, his insistence on playing (literally) on Varchi's terms, invites readers to make a direct association between the two academics. But the content of Pazzi's sonnet goes beyond the simultaneous mockery and emulation of its tone and form. More specifically, its last four verses display directly not only the qualities of envy Varchi outlines in his lesson on della Casa, but also the added element of self-love as a direct consequence of love in its original form. The irony of Pazzi's position is, of course, abundantly clear, so that his wishes for Varchi can right away be read as insincere. When he writes, "chiunque ti vuole ben, / Desidera per ben che tu stia male," then, readers immediately identify almost word for word the fourth type of envy outlined in Varchi's reflection on della Casa: "contristarsi de gl'altrui beni, o rallegrarsi da gl'altrui mali," one of the few types of envy specifically deemed reproachable, it is worth recalling.²³⁹ The self-love that necessarily accompanies such a sentiment, however, is a little better hidden in Pazzi's sonnet, tucked away on either end of a juicy physical and medical metaphor wrapped fashionably in the leading

²³⁸ *ibid*, 254. Varchi, if you were always ill / You'd always work and write well; / Since, in fact, when you are well, / In truth, you write little, and poorly. / But in these days, when you were ill, / You wrote much, and fast, and well / So that often evil produces good / And, to the contrary, in good lurks evil. / The soul is reborn when the body is ill / But it languishes when the senses are well, / And in this way, what is good for one is bad for the other, / So that, Varchi, whoever wishes you well, Should want you to be ill. / To distinguish good from evil in the future.

²³⁹ MAGL 3.5.481.2, 113v; "to be saddened by the well-being of others, or to rejoice in their illness."

philosophy of the time. I paraphrase: Pazzi admits that when Varchi is ill, he writes well, “et così spesso il male adduce bene / Et pel contrario ben apposta male.” Pazzi goes on to exemplify his point using commonly-held views of the relationship between body and soul. It is a trendy move that detracts attention from what would have been clear by eliminating it: “Et così ‘l ben dell’uno dell’altro è male.” Otherwise said: what is good for the one is bad for the other; or still more explicitly, Varchi’s success means Pazzi’s failure – and vice-versa. What emerge in these verses, then, are not only the properties of envy either lifted from Varchi or an inspiration to him, but also the very tendencies of self-preservation and survival underlined in Varchi’s lessons on love.²⁴⁰

Another of Pazzi’s sonnets speaks still more directly to them, again adopting the exact same vocabulary to do so:

Dimmi se tu sei agente o paziente
O se odio ti muove, o pur’amore,
Varchi? Che questo tuo sì fiero amore
Fa divenir la gente impatiente.
Già ti mostrasti assai indiscreto agente,
Odio mostrando assai, più che amore;
Ed a chi t’ammonisce con amore
Ti mostri odioso, et poco paziente.
Dicci se Dante mosse odio o amore?

²⁴⁰ It is nearly impossible to date with certainty any of Pazzi’s compositions. It is likely that this cycle of poems was written more or less contemporaneously to Varchi’s 1543-1552 lessons, since both men were active members of the *Fiorentina* during that time. Only more research can determine whether this sonnet was written prior to or following Varchi’s lesson on Della Casa’s *La gelosia*.

Et s'egli fu agente o paziente?
O se lascivo il Petrararch'hebbe Amore?
Così sarai un bel Toscano agente,
Che al fine gl'è odioso il tuo amore,
Agente che tu sia, o paziente.²⁴¹

This time, Pazzi's vitriol is still more explicit: he makes no secret of his profound distaste for Varchi. In fact, he makes a still more pronounced effort, here, not only to preserve his own status as learned, literary academic, but, in fact, to surpass Varchi on his own terrain. His first step in doing so, as was also the case in the previous sonnet examined, is to recast Varchi's vocabulary in a clearly satirical fashion - he wonders if Varchi is moved by love or hate - and to make specific reference to its use in Varchi's lessons - on Dante, on Petrarch, on Tuscan authors in general. To it, he then adds a discourse on agency lifted from another of Varchi's lessons: the second half of his 1543 lecture on the generation of human bodies in which he looks explicitly at Dante's *Purgatorio* XXV. There, Varchi writes of agency in the explicit context of blood and its unique (with respect to the other humours) transformative properties: as agent, it has the capacity to assimilate the patient to itself: "perché sempre l'agente somiglia il paziente a se stesso."²⁴² In Varchi's poetry as in his lessons, the "agent" in a love clause is the lover, leaving the loved passive to the former's agency, and

²⁴¹ Biblioteca Palatina, Parma, Pal. 557. Cart, misc. XVI, 275; "Tell me if you are the agent or the patient, / Or if hatred or rather love moves you / Varchi? Because your love, so proud, / Makes people impatient. / Already, you've revealed yourself a most indiscreet agent, / Showing much more hatred than love; / And to he who admonishes you out of love / You reveal yourself to be hateful and impatient. / Tell us if Dante moved hatred or love? / And if he was agent or patient? / Or if the lascivious Petrarch felt Love? / That way, you'll be a good Tuscan agent, / And in the end, your love is hateful / Whether you are agent or patient.; see also: *Poesie di mille autori intorno a Dante Alighieri*, 287

²⁴² MAGL 3.5.481.1, 63r

transformed by it. But in Pazzi's reworking of the term, the loved one becomes a "patient" as if doctored by his lover – an association reminiscent also, it bears mentioning, of another of Pazzi's poems wherein the crazy – pazzo, and an obvious play on Pazzi's family name - is repeatedly contrasted, juxtaposed, and eventually made equivalent to the doctored – dotto – or learned: Varchi himself.

Mentre che 'l Varchi sia tenuto dotto,
Io sarò sempre mai tenuto pazzo;
Ma com'il Varchi sia tenuto pazzo
All'hor l'Etrusco sia gradito et dotto,
Et non può un che'è pazzo esser mai dotto;
Ma ei può ben un dotto esser gran pazzo
Per consequenza de gl'altri è più dotto
Colui ch'è dotto, spesso si tien pazzo
Et chi è pazzo sempre si tien dotto,
Ma è non si può insiem'esser dotto et pazzo.
Hor concludiamo, o che ogn'uno è pazzo,
O veramente che nessuno è dotto,
Over l'Etrusco è dotto, e il Varchi è pazzo.²⁴³

In both cases, however, Varchi is both a bad doctor and a bad patient. In the first sonnet here quoted, he is an "indiscreto agente" whose "fiero amore" makes people "impaciente"; his love is a force that hurts more than it heals and makes of those subject to it victims rather than patients. Likewise, when he is shown love, albeit "tough love," he is a bad

²⁴³ See Appendix for translation and further commentary

patient, “poco paziente,” and shuns it. In the other composition – just one verse shy of a sonnet, and perhaps explicitly so given its terms of comparison – Varchi is first “dotto,” (doctored, or loved) then “dotto” and also “gran pazzo,” next a “dotto” who “spesso si tien pazzo” and, just beyond that, a “pazzo” who “sempre si tien dotto.” Finally, since it is impossible to be both doctored and crazy at once, Pazzi’s proposed solutions to the problem of their dichotomy are three: that both he (l’Etrusco, also his nickname in the academy) and Varchi are crazy, that neither is doctored, or that he is doctored while Varchi is crazy. In the first case, Varchi is neither doctor (agent; lover) nor doctored (patient; loved); in the second, though he is initially doctored (loved), he is finally forgotten, dismissed. Of course, in his place, Pazzi himself emerges as the doctored – or the loved. Again here, his popularity necessarily precludes Varchi’s – and again, the contrary proves also to be true.

De’ Pazzi is last registered as a member of the *fiorentina* on February 21, 1552: the last date on which his name appears in the “Annali.”²⁴⁴ He dies on November 3, 1555, and may well have continued being a member of the academy – in records now lost – until then. In On the fourth Sunday of April 1553, Varchi delivers, again for the *fiorentina*, his lesson on the five questions of love. Though de’ Pazzi’s poems have not yet been dated with respect to this lesson of Varchi’s or read in light of it, one specific passage in the first question on “se si può amare più s’uno in un tempo medesimo” seems to speak almost directly to the last of Pazzi’s cited works. Varchi’s essential message, here, is that it is practically impossible to love more than one being perfectly; though, according to the Peripatetics, the intellect is free and capable of understanding all things, the rational soul, linked as it is to the senses, is

²⁴⁴ Zanrè 112.

able to concentrate only on one love at a time, so that while the body may go in different places, it may not be in each place in the same moment. But the passage almost specific to de' Pazzi appears later. Varchi writes that:

se l'amante vive nell'amato, se sempre pensa di lui, o di lui favella, come si potrebbe ciò di due fare in un tempo medesimo? Più oltra, rallegrarsi, e attristarsi sono contrarii, i contrarii non possono stare in un subbietto medesimo, a un medesimo tempo, dunque è impossibile che s'ami perfettamente più d'uno, perché poniamo che sia quello, ch'esser può, che uno de gli amati stea bene, o gli sia favorevole, e l'altro faccia il contrario: dunque in un medesimo a un medesimo tempo farà dolore e letizia, questo è impossibile, dunque è impossibile che s'ami più d'uno, e finalmente nessuno può essere più d'uno, dunque non può amare perfettamente più d'uno, perché chi ama non cerca altro, che diventare l'amato, e che l'amato divenga lui.²⁴⁵

His reasoning is straight-forward: the lover lives in the loved one, thinks and speaks only of him, and not of himself, or better: of both together, as one; it is impossible both to love and not to love contemporaneously, in the same being, since opposites cannot coexist in the same subject; finally, he who loves seeks nothing more than to become his loved one, and for his loved one to become himself – precisely what happens in de' Pazzi's poem just above. In other words, read in this light, Varchi situates de' Pazzi's rancour toward him in love, not hatred. His argument is only superficially complicated by the next question examined in the lesson: "se alcuno può amare più altrui che sé stesso." There, Varchi's take-

²⁴⁵ 3.5.481.2, 53r/v

home message is that although it would be best to love “i migliori di sé” more than “sé medesimo,” all love, even the most noble, is essentially self-motivated so that even he who dies for another or for his country does so more out of the sense of honour that would be associated with his name in his sacrifice than out of love for the reason of the sacrifice itself.²⁴⁶ But again – and, notably, finally - he reiterates that “l’Amore nasce da alcuna convenienza, o similitudine naturale, onde dove non è cotal convenienza e similitudine naturale non è amore . . . quanto una cosa è più congiunta o più simile, tanto più s’ama.”²⁴⁷ Whether or not Varchi believes de’ Pazzi to be “congiunto” or “simile” to himself, this particular interpretation of his words facilitates a reading of de’ Pazzi’s numerous comparisons of himself to Varchi as an operation of love rather than, or perhaps in addition to, a social and literary competition.

Later, and to close that same lesson, Varchi answers to the by then centuries-old question of both literary and philosophical interest: “se l’amore può sanarsi in alcun modo.” Of a piece with contemporary practice, he restates that love deals swift blows both to the mind and to the body, and calls it a fatal disease, a “passione somigliantissima all’humore melanconico,”²⁴⁸ according to doctors, the remedies to which are traditionally many and varied, but the most certain of which consists of “un giusto, e valoroso sdegno, per lo quale un cuor gentile non rivolgerà, come molti fanno l’amore in odio, il che senza cagione più,

²⁴⁶ *ibid* 55v, 57r/v

²⁴⁷ “love is born of some convenience or natural similarity, in such a way that love is absent in the absence of such convenience or natural similarity . . . the greater the similarity [to the loved one], the greater the love,” (*ibid* 57v-58r).

²⁴⁸ a passion most similar to the melancholic humour” (*ibid*, 62v).

che grande è cosa bruttissima, anzi non finirà d'amare la cosa amata, ma solo d'odiare se stesso."²⁴⁹

Grazzini, Loathing, and the Aramei's "Etruscan Project": *La Guerra de' Mostri*

On this note, I shift my focus back to Antonfrancesco Grazzini who, though his persistent attempts at being readmitted into the academy finally pay off at the formation of the *Crusca*, initially does turn much of his love for the academy into rage against some of its members. As has been shown, his literary treatment of Varchi, though not at all consistent and often, indeed, self-contradictory, is often biting. But his vitriol extends far beyond his expatriate ex-friend and former mentor. Indeed, a far greater portion of it is directed toward another group of literary antagonists and a subset of the 1547 reformed *Fiorentina*: gli Aramei, already an imposing and threatening presence in the *Fiorentina* as early as 1542.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ "a rightful and valorous disdain because of which a noble heart will not turn love to hate, as many [others] do, for no reason other than because to do so would be a dirty, awful thing; instead, it will not cease to love the loved thing, but only to hate itself," (ibid, 63r)

²⁵⁰ Varchi had a complicated relationship with members of the Aramei clan. Commonly under the patronage of Cosimo de' Medici I and in every way responsible to him, artistically, all the members of the academy had at least superficially to agree with and support each other. Varchi was in no way hostile to the Aramei clan, though he made specific attempts to temper their radical "Etruscanism" by repeatedly praising the work of Bembo on the questione della lingua both in formal and informal settings and publications. Still, in the eyes of Grazzini, Varchi's public support – necessarily mandated – of the Aramei clan lumped him together with them and made of Varchi, at best, nothing more than their ally. In one sonnet to his former mentor, Grazzini accuses Varchi of following too closely Gello, of forgetting his place ("[fare] Aristotile in volgare"), and of writing bad theatre as a result: "Con gran meraviglia, e con gran divozione / Era la vostra Commedia aspettata; / Ma perch'ell'è da Terenzio copiata, / Son cadute le braccia alle persone. / . . . / Infine il Varchi non ha invenzione. / E in questa parte ha somigliato il Gello, / Che fece anch'egli una Commedia nuova, / Ch'avea prima compost oil Machiavello" (*Rime del Lasca, parte prima* sonnetto CL 1-4, 8-11, 14, p. 96). In the one that immediately follows (in the Moücke edition), he takes a stab at Varchi indirectly in the context of the *Guerra de' Mostri*, later to

It is worth recalling, here, the *questione della lingua*, a major concern for all sixteenth century writers and one of the principal motivations for the formation of the original *Umidi* clan. Under Sperone Speroni's leadership and heavily influenced by Pietro Bembo, the initial mandate of the *Infiammati* in Padua is the refurbishment and presentation of vernacular Tuscan – Boccaccio's, Petrarch's, Dante's – as the most suitable literary language and equivalent to the until then much more appreciated Latin and Greek. Though the *Umidi* essentially agree with the *Infiammati* about the superiority of their native dialect, they differ from them greatly in their approach to its exaltation. The *Umidi* regroup to reclaim Tuscany's literary prestige from the hands of non-Tuscans, and to prevent the separation of the Tuscan language from Tuscany itself. Their practical purpose is fundamentally identical to the *Infiammati's*: to deliver lessons on Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Dante, celebrating all three great authors stylistically. Their aim in so doing, however, and contrary to their pedantic peers, is to revive public interest in these *tre corone* and to view their literary style not as elite or learned, but as a still current model to follow, accessible to the masses, though very specifically Tuscan.²⁵¹ As has previously been examined, the nature and very day-to-day operation of the academy changes drastically as

be examined: "Ma tu, nella zucca hai poco sale, / Se' nano, e vuoi combattere co' giganti" (ibid, sonetto CLL 7-8, p. 96).

²⁵¹ Michael Sherberg provides a comprehensive summary and analysis of the geo-politics of the *questione della lingua* in Florence in the context of the *Umidi* and *Infiammati* academies in his article, "The Accademia Fiorentina and the Question of the Language: The Politics of Theory in Ducal Florence," *Renaissance Quarterly* 56.1 (2003): 26-55. There, he not only details specifically the change of scope of the *Fiorentina* program under Cosimo I, but also looks at the geographical implications of its new project: a charge of civic pride noticeable not only in the shift in its theoretical focus, but also in the academy's move – as evidenced by the geographical location of its meetings and performances – from the private sector to the public, Florentine sphere.

its function becomes one of municipal glorification and powerful representation of Medici patronage; the fragmentation of its members soon necessarily follows.²⁵²

One implication of the Medici overhaul is a redirected focus on the state of the Tuscan language. Longer-standing academics with much political clout and a great deal of influence at stake, like Varchi, try often to reconcile the earlier *Umidi's* position with the *Infiammati's*, lending equal support to Bembo and to those Florentines who, in some way inspired by him, take the Tuscan vernacular back into their own custody. Others, like Grazzini, though they react strongly against any tendency to uproot the Tuscan vernacular and transport it north, like their northern counterparts, still appreciate and seek to preserve its Trecento heritage. But another group composed mainly of Pierfrancesco Giambullari, Giambattista Gelli, and Carlo Lenzoni seeks, instead, to locate in their contemporary Tuscan rather than in the language of their literary predecessors the indisputable standard of excellence. They draw direct lineage from Aramaic – the language of Christ – through Etruscan to current-day Tuscan and find there the literary model they promote publically. More problematic than their actual position on the matter, however, is their means of arrival: establishing this line of descent means tampering with the language of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, emphasizing certain letters – E, O, S, Z – reducing the role of others – H, J - and eliminating entirely still more – K, X, Y.²⁵³ To authors like Grazzini, theirs was a pedantic operation disrespectful of Tuscany's literary past and a nuisance to its future. The issue was often referred to as “la questione del K,” (Ca) some academics like

²⁵² See also Judith Bryce, “The oral world of the early Accademia Fiorentina,” *Renaissance Studies* 9.1 (1995): 77-103.

²⁵³ For a comprehensive summary of the issue and the major players involved, see Domenico Zanrè, “Che K.zo vuol dire? A Rereading of Mid-Sixteenth-Century Linguistic Debates in the Accademia Fiorentina,” *Italian Studies* 53 (1998): 20-37.

Grazzini and Agnolo Firenzuola adding “zo” to it, making an erotic mockery of the “Aramaic cause” altogether.²⁵⁴

Grazzini’s unfinished mock-epic, *La Guerra de’ mostri* has been interpreted as a satirical stab at the Aramei and their supporters.²⁵⁵ Also interesting to my purpose here, it is, in addition, rife with suggestions of Varchi’s lessons on nature and on the generation of monsters as the process of nature – or natural love – gone awry. That the *Guerra* is political satire aimed at the academics in and around the Florentine circle is clear as of its opening octaves. In the first, Grazzini recalls the mythical story of the giants making their way up to Olympus to battle – and be defeated by – the gods. In the second, he chastises “un Gobbo, poeta pisano,” or Girolamo Amelonghi, for reversing this classical turn of events in his 1547 *Gigantea* – a work that invites several responses, including the later *Nanea*, ostensibly by Serafini, and Grazzini’s own *Guerra de’ mostri*. Amelonghi’s original text grants Giants the victory over the gods, whom they replace in the heavens. Serafini’s *Nanea*, then, features an eventually successful army of dwarves set on expelling the now reigning giants from the heavens. Grazzini’s *Guerra de’ mostri* pits an army of monsters against both the dwarves and the giants and, predicting their victory, attributes them with the original qualities of

²⁵⁴ In a sonnet to Piero Orsilago, elected to the consolate, Grazzini indirectly calls the campaign of the Aramei the “cagion principale, / Che fa venir altrui la malattia” and beseeches Orsilago – also a medical doctor – to use both his practice and his political power to find the “cure” to this illness: “Mettami in mano degli Umidi miei, / Ed abbatta e sconfonda gli Aramei,” he asks (*Rime del Lasca, parte prima*, sonnet XXXVI 9-10, 13-14, p. 20).

²⁵⁵ It was likely not the first composition of its kind. Presumably before it came also Grazzini’s “Sonetto del K” (preserved in the Biblioteca nazionale centrale di Firenze, Carte strozziane II.i.398, 125v-126r) and his poem in octaves, “Ai riformatori della lingua Toscana,” the first a ridicule of the entire K debate, the second, a lengthy description – and criticism – of the Aramei project (*Rime del Lasca parte seconda*, 126). It is included in Appendix, with a translation.

the classical giant.²⁵⁶ Grazzini *would* have had a personally-motivated axe to grind with Amelonghi, occasional enemy to his friend Alfonso de' Pazzi, and several times accused of lifting the idea for his *Gigantea* from the more loyal, if less successful Betto Arrighi.²⁵⁷ Still, Grazzini's invocation of him here serves only to set the stage for the recounting of another reversal of nature: the Aramei (Grazzini's monsters) attack on their literary fathers (the Olympian gods).

Though Grazzini's work is immediately situated with respect to his Aramei enemies, it benefits from the long and complex tradition of the giant as a mythological figure central also to the development and justification of the western world's three major religions. As Walter Stephens points out in his seminal book, *Giants in Those Days*, the giant passes through a series of representations and interpretive significances from Antiquity to the Renaissance in both folkloric and "official" texts. Grazzini's understanding of it is contextualized by the conversation among these variants. Common to all of them, however, is the giant's representation of Otherness, first cultural and, eventually, moral. The figure of the giant "in the scheme of Jewish and Christian theology, . . . evolved from such representations of external otherness into a symbol of religious psychology. Once

²⁵⁶ An analysis of the texts' similarities to each other and the tradition from which they derive appears in a 1772 edition of the three texts presented together (Firenze: Yverdon, 1772) Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale. In it, the editor (Yverdon) makes direct reference to Crescimbeni's analysis of the same text in his *Dell'Istoria della volgar poesia, terzo volume* (Venezia: Basegio, 1730). Following it are Amelonghi's dedicatory letter of his *Gigantea* to de' Pazzi, and Serafini's dedicatory letter of his *Nanea* to Stradino. It is clear by these interlinked components that these texts were not only written in response to each other, but were likely composed together or in the context of shared networks of acquaintances and intellectuals. All three would have been in circulation in the *Fiorentina*.

²⁵⁷ Grazzini is sure to include his criticism of Amelonghi in his cycle of Epitaphs on members of the *Fiorentina* and surrounding circles. "A un Gobbo cattivo" describes an Amelonghi whose soul has gone to the devil, whose works have gone to the city custodians (a pejorative reference to the Medici and the artists they patronize), and whose honour can be found in a brothel (*Rime del Lasca, parte seconda*, Epitaph XVIII, p. 178).

articulated as historic figures of consummate evil, they came to represent the gravest faults in human nature: pride, presumption, and the illusion of self-sufficiency.”²⁵⁸ Together with Dante’s Nimrod – a “stupid” giant associated with the destruction of the tower of Babel and the linguistic discord that followed – these are the most likely sources of Grazzini’s giants.²⁵⁹ His *Guerra de’ mostri* is also likely a reaction against a major source of the Aramei’s “Etruscan Project”: the 1498 collected forgeries of Giovanni Nanni (or Annio da Viterbo). Found within them is not only the justification of Etruscan as a divine language, but also the biblical lineage of giants.²⁶⁰ In his *Guerra de’ mostri*, Grazzini transposes these qualities of the giant to the monsters that represent the Aramei clan. His is a conscious decision informed by the growing tendency to view giants as intermediate creatures between animals and humans, sharing with the latter free will, and justified by the discussion this decision permits between him and Varchi’s later lesson on the Generation of Monsters as unnatural – and inhuman – beings.

Consistent with this tradition of enmity and otherness, Grazzini is clear to distinguish himself from the objects of his contempt early on. They are “gente altera e

²⁵⁸ Walter Stephens, *Giants in those days: Folklore, Ancient History, and Nationalism* (Lincoln: U of N Press, 1989) 98.

²⁵⁹ On the nature of Nimrod in Dante’s *Divina Commedia*, see Stephens 69: “Thanks to their great size and their perverted mentality, the Giants had one form of knowledge, the ability to wage war. But they could not transcend this purely technical *scientia* and attain wisdom (*sapientia* or *disciplina*). Their pride in their physical prowess, and their illusions of self-sufficiency caused their stupidity ... or what Virgilio also calls *mal coto* (*Inferno* 31.77). This ‘bad thinking’ manifested itself as *tracotanza* or presumption, the desire to test themselves against their Maker. Virgilio says that the prideful Ephialtes wished to test his power against that of Jove, ... echoing Flavius Josephus’s notion that the biblical Giants resembled those of Greek myth because they ‘despised the Good owing to their pride in their strength.’ This stupidity of the Giants has a linguistic side that accords with the Babel myth; the silence of all Dante’s Giants seems to agree with the judgment of Ecclesiasticus, who said that the ancient Giants were destroyed because, being so prideful, they would not pray for their sins.”

²⁶⁰ See Stephens 101.

disdegnosa” who make gods lesser than mortals (“gli Dei son da meno or che i mortali”). He, by contrast, is merely a humble servant to his Muse, who dares not “[piegare] in giù la fantasia / A ritrovar gli spiriti Infernali.” In this verse, he indirectly submits himself and his composition to the veritable author of all inferni, Dante. His army of monsters, though, not much later and going against its very literary maker, “minaccia il sol, le stelle e le comete, / E vuole, innanzichè ne venga il verno, / Disfare il cielo, e rovinar l’inferno.” Of course, Grazzini fails to follow through on this projected humility; he does, in fact, draw much from Dante’s *Inferno* for his own monstrous creations. Still, his goal – at least superficially achieved – is to place himself directly opposite to his antagonists in a reflection of his real-life relationship with them.

The army consists of twelve named monsters, each described in great detail. Finimondo (or, the End of the World) appears first among them: he is their leader and captain, and he “affetta, e taglia, e squarta a più potere” (slices, cuts, and butchers with all his might). Of course, there is no direct evidence associating his description specifically with any of the Aramei. This reference to butchering, cutting, and slicing, however, is suggestive either of the author of an academic schism or, more plausibly, one responsible for the hacking up of the traditional Tuscan alphabet. More clues as to the real-life analogous identity of Finimondo follow:

Questi dal mezzo insuso è corpo umano,
Da indi ingiuso è poi lupo cerviere:
E perch’egli ha due visi come Giano,
Può innanzi e ‘ndietro a sua posta vedere,
Senza voltarsi: e non vi paja poco;

Ma l'armadura sua tutta è di foco.²⁶¹

He is a two-faced wild wolf, both forward and backward looking – just as one who locates both far in the past and in the immediate present the glory of his contemporary written language might be. Perhaps more revealingly, he is associated with Janus: the very first celebrated figure in the Etruscan tradition. Furthermore, his very name – Finimondo – also calls to mind one of Grazzini's madrigalesse against Gello – or Gelli - a member of the Aramei clan and perhaps its ringleader, wherein a grand parade makes its way through all of Florence in the middle of August, Via de' Bardi crowded with "calcinacci," as he calls them, neither because "guerra o peste sia, / Né manco carestia, / Che 'l Turco passi, o che sia Finimondo; / Ma perché nel profondo / Se n'è andata del marcio bordello, / Con suo danno e rovina, / La misera Accademia Fiorentina, / Perch'ell'è stata maritata al Gello."²⁶² Grazzini's association of Gelli with what he considers an apocalyptic scene is just a short step away from lending Gelli's personality to the captain of the Monster tribes.

In Finimondo's cortège are other unimaginable beasts, part dog, part bird, part human, often irate, always passionate, usually menacing in some or another way. But three in particular hint, again, at the Aramei clan. The first is Gazzalletto "che fa poche parole, / E molti fatti, ma nello scrittojo / Vien dopo: e della Guerra ha poca pratica, / Tenendo scuola a' Mostri di gramatica / ... E porta nello scudo divisato / Un pedante, ch'uccella alla

²⁶¹ From the navel up, he is a human body, / From the waist down, a wild wolf: / And since he has two faces, like Janus, / He can see both ahead of and behind him from where he stands, / Without turning around: and if that should seem little to you, / His armour is made entirely of fire.

²⁶² "Not because of war or plague, / Neither because of famine, / Not because of a Turkish invasion, or to usher in the end of days; / But because the miserable Florentine Academy, / Has gone from filthy brothel to damage and ruin / Marrying itself with Gello" (*Rime del Lasca, parte prima*, p. 257, madrigalesse XLIX 12-19).

fraschetta.”²⁶³ Later follows Struggilupo, who, similar to Finimondo, is also “Furioso sì, che par ch’abbia l’assillo, / In corpo dico, e per cacciarlo fuori, / Rompe ogni cosa, straccia, spezza e fora”; similar to Gazzabetto, he does his greatest amount of damage with his writing implement, in this case the sharpened crane feather he carries with him at all times (“Di gru porta una penna temperata”): “Con essa mena colpi aspri e robusti: / Con essa uccide e storpia la brigata.”²⁶⁴ Last is Guastatorte, “Costui co’ gridi altrui dava la morte, / Tanto avea fiera e spaventevol voce: / ...Ma poco grida la bestia superba, / Ch’all’ultimo bisogno la riserba” since, “ in scambio di spada o bastone / Portava dì e notte sempre allato / Un grande e grosso e ben fatto panione, / Che gli ha mille vittorie, e mille dato.”²⁶⁵ In the description of Gazzabetto, Grazzini makes an obvious play on the debate, among the academies, between words and things (or theory and practice, or pedantry and public entertainment), at first pointing to this character’s preference of the latter over the former, only then, and in the next line, to reveal his ultimately quibbling nature: he does many things, but only at his desk – presumably with words -, and only under the wing of the Grammarians, sheltered from war, and protected (literally) by a shield of superfluous pedantry. He attributes to Struggilupo an analogous quality: though protected to the gills with Perseus’s arms, and gifted with Orpheus’s lyre, his weapon of choice is a sharpened quill. Similarly, despite the great gift of his booming, fear-inspiring voice, Guastatorte says

²⁶³ Who makes few words, / and many facts, but at his desk / He comes next: and he has little experience of War, / Keeping school with the Monsters of Grammar / ... And on his military shield / Is a pedant, who sings foolish nothings.

²⁶⁴ “Appears to be tormented by fury / Throughout his body, and, removing him, / He breaks, tears, shatters, and pierces everything”; “With this [feather] he deals robust and bitter blows: / With it, he kills and mangles the brigade” (24, 26).

²⁶⁵ He whose shouting brought death to others, / So proud and frightening was his voice: / ... Though the prideful beast shouted little, / Saving his effort as a last resort” since “instead of a sword or stick / Day and night, he carried by his side / A big, and thick, and well-made rod.

little, drawing on his strength as only a last resort since he can more frequently count on the power in the rod he bears: a “panione” or, more commonly, *vergella* – a better-known double-entendre for a penis, and another obvious hearkening to *la questione del K.zo*.

Studying closely each of these twelve monsters and finding potential or near-analogues in real-life members of the *Fiorentina* is a project much larger than the scope of this chapter, but one worth pursuing outside of it. What is immediately clear after even only a superficial reading of the *Guerra de' mostri* is Grazzini's loud, if implicit, competition with and, simultaneously, tribute to authors contemporary to him, of an immediately preceding generation, of his traditional Tuscan heritage, and of more classical import. His references to Ariosto, Homer, Boiardo, and to the medieval legend, several times adapted, of Tristan and Isolde are explicit and contained within one stanza: “Orlando taccia qui, stia cheto Achille, / Nascondasi Ruggier, fugga Tristano: / Fiamme gettan costor[o], non pur faville, / Rimboma d'alte grida il monte e 'l piano; / Talchè gli Dei con gran timore stanno, / Aspettando di corto scorno e danno,” he writes, later describing the legions of monsters headed by each of the twelve previously described.²⁶⁶ His reference to Dante is implicit in this same passage, as well as in many elements of his monstrous creations. His “Orlando taccia qui” is a direct echo of Dante's *Inferno* 25, just as his above-cited description of Finimondo strongly recalls Dante's Ulysses and Diomedes, two faces inhabiting the same flame.²⁶⁷ More interesting, still, is the relationship between Grazzini's mock epic and two

²⁶⁶ “Let Orlando be silent here, let Achilles hold his tongue, / Let Roger hide, and Tristan run: / These [legions] throw flames, and not only do the mountains / and the plains burn, they rumble with roaring shouts / So that the gods wait in great fear / Shortly expecting insult and injury.”

²⁶⁷ “Taccia Lucano omai la dov'è tocca / del misero Sabello e di Nasidio, / e attenda udir quel ch'or si scocca. / Taccia di Cadmo e d'Aretusa Ovidio, / che se quello in serpente e quella in fonte /converte poetando, io non lo 'nvidio” (*Inferno* XXV, 94-99); *Inferno* XXVI.

lessons Varchi delivers to the *Fiorentina* on the first Sunday of Lent, 1547, and on the first and second Sundays of July, 1548: his *Lezione sulla natura* and *Lezione sulla generazione dei mostri*, respectively.

Grazzini's and Varchi's monsters

Though dating of the *Guerra de' Mostri* is still uncertain, it was likely composed between 1547 – the original date of composition of Amelonghi's *La Gigantea*, and the year Grazzini was expelled from the academy – and 1552, when il Lasca's accusations of plagiarism were taken up also by Doni in *I Marmi*.²⁶⁸ These are the same years during which de' Pazzi and Varchi presumably had their most significantly antagonistic exchange. Locating within them the composition of Grazzini's mock-epic seems a natural extrapolation, especially given the unfolding of the first canto, and its closing stanza:

Ma per non far più lunga intemerata,
A voi mi rivolgo or, Padre Stradino,
E prego voi pel vostro Consagrata,
Per Namo di Baviera, e per Mambrino,
Per l'Accademia che vi fu rubata,
Per l'anima di Buovo Paladino,
Che voi abbiate cura a questo, intanto
Ch'io compongo e riscrivo l'altro Canto.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ Enciclopedia Treccani, "La Gigantea," [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/girolamo-amelonghi_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/girolamo-amelonghi_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) see also, Crescimbeni 108.

²⁶⁹ "But in order not to tarry any longer, / I turn to you, now, Father Stradino, / And pray that for your holy status, / For Namo of Bavaria, and for Mambrino, / For the academy that was stolen from you, / For the soul of Buovo Paladino, / That you keep care of this first

Here, Grazzini beseeches Padre Stradino – or, il Consagrata – to keep watch over his poem while he writes its second canto. The academy has already “been stolen” (vi fu rubata) from underneath him, indicating a date of composition 1547 at earliest. Grazzini’s request here would only make sense, furthermore, if it were coming from a removed distance: Stradino was one of the few respectfully spared by the restructuring efforts of the academy. While many were ousted or voluntarily left it, he stayed behind and continued holding various authoritative offices until his death. That Grazzini would turn to him as a protective figure would only carry weight if he were still a member of the academy when Grazzini himself was no longer one. Grazzini’s preview of things to come in later *canti* supports this assumption. Deeming the threat of the monsters both undignified and unacceptable, the Giants and Dwarves team up to battle Finimondo’s twelve tribes – reminiscent, also, of the Twelve Tribes of Israel – but to no avail: a cursed fight leaves the Giants and Dwarves wrapped and soaking in their own blood, while the monsters march on into the heavens left free and uninhabited for them by the gods who, anticipating the invasion, flee and take refuge on Earth, hiding themselves in the bodies of its creatures.²⁷⁰

episode / While I compose and write the next Canto.” It may be worth mentioning that “Consagrata” was one of Grazzini’s many terms of endearment for Padre Stradino, born of the profound respect he had for him as founder of the academy. This reference to “riscrivere” l’altro Canto might also be indicative of Grazzini’s larger desire to rewrite the history of the academy, while Stradino watches over it in the former’s absence.

²⁷⁰ “Ma non valse niente, perch’al fine, / Dopo una zuffa fiera e maladetta, / Quelle anime gentili e pellegrine / De’ Giganti e de’ Nani ebber la stretta. / Questa una fu delle maggior rovine, / Che sia stata giammai veduta o letta; / Poichè I Nani e i Giganti restar tutti / Nel sangue involti, imbrodolati e brutti. // Laonde i Mostri poi vittoriosi / Inverso il ciel presero a camminare: / Dove gli Dei tremanti e paurosi / Facean disegno di non gli aspettare: / E per viaggi incogniti e nascosi / S’eran fuggiti, senz’altro indugiare, / Tutti quaggiuso ne’ paesi nostri, / Lasciando voto il ciel in preda a’ Mostri. // E così sotto forme varie e strane / Tra noi si stanno pien di passione: / Chi pare un lupo, e chi somiglia un cane: / Chi s’è fatto giovenco, e chi montone: / Febo s’è convertito in pulicane, / Venere in

Varchi's 1547 and 1548 lessons also support this dating. His lesson on nature, when read in the context of Grazzini's mock epic, renders still more explicitly clear Grazzini's relegation of gli Aramei and their supporters – his monsters – to the sphere of the unnatural, the obscene, the dishonoured. Where nature is just, balanced, united, and distributes fair compensation, the unnatural exaggerates, dissimulates, separates; where nature classifies, brings order, makes logical, the unnatural confuses, combines, distorts; where nature breeds harmony, the unnatural breeds dissent. To Varchi's "orsi," "havendo il corpo molto piloso," Nature "fece loro la coda picciola."²⁷¹ But Grazzini's monsters are often explosions of anatomical parts, one on top of the next: Fieramosca "ha tre piedi e quattro braccia." Where Nature organizes the desires and properties particular to man into definite categories – those pertaining to his generic nature as an animal, those pertaining to his specific nature as a human being, and those pertaining to his particular nature as an individual – Grazzini's monsters are in their very appearance amalgamations of these three natures combined.²⁷² Pappalefave is "un mostro . . . che sempre ride e Cianci," – and indeed, the only one who does so - "E tutti allegri sono i gesti suoi."²⁷³ He is:

grosso e grasso, come un Carnasciale,

Fresco nel viso, e va sempre mai raso:

leper, e Marte in un pippione, / Giove in bertuccia: e con doglia infinita / van qui e quà buscandosi la vita."

²⁷¹ MAGL 3.5.481.1, 28v.

²⁷² "all'huomo convengono molte cose, hora secondo la sua natura GENERICA, cio è come animale, hora secondo la natura SPECIFICA cio è come huomo, hor secondo la natura INDIVIDUALE, cio è come Socrate o Platone" (ibid 22v)

²⁷³ "A monster ... who always laughs and chatters, / Whose every gest is happy"; "He is big and fat like a carnival, / Fresh-faced, always clean-shaven: / With a great big head and ...?, / That seems to have been made of scraps of dough; / Only his feet are those of the animal, / That allowed Pegasus to fly: / And he is armed from head to heel / In the rosy skin of a capon."

Un bel capone ha grande e badiale,
Che fatto nella madia pare a caso:
I piedi solo ha di quello animale,
Che fe volando il fonte del Pegaso:
Ed è armato dal capo al tallone
Di pelle rosolata di cappone.

Forasiepe “l capo sol ha di tigre, e ‘l resto tutto / D’un omaccin sparuto, secco e brutto. // È costui traditore e mariuolo, / E becco e ladro, e sodomita e spia: / Va fuor di notte il più del tempo e solo, / Avendo in odio assai la compagnia.”²⁷⁴ Part men, part beasts, part individuals, these beings are grotesque excesses of nature – a theme Grazzini will explore in a different direction in his theatre and *novelle*, as will later be shown. But above all else, Grazzini’s monsters are contradictory composites of dissonant parts deprived of the rationality of man, that reverse Varchi’s assertion that “un fico non farà mai delle nespole, ne i pesci nasceranno mai su per gli monti, e nelle selve; ma ha ancora un certo termine, e fine in tutte le cose sue.”²⁷⁵ Radigozzo wears the face of a pig horned like a ram and

²⁷⁴“Only has the head of a tiger, and the rest [of him] is all / A withering little man, thin and ugly. // He is a traitor and a fraud, / A cuckold and a thief, a sodomite and a spy: / He goes out at night, mostly alone, / Very much hating the company of others.”

²⁷⁵ The full passage reads: “La natura non solamente è certa, e diterminata, cio è che tutte le cose nascono di tutte le cose, ma ciascuna d’una certa, e diterminata; onde un fico non fara mai delle nespole, ne i pesci nasceranno mai su per gli monti, e nelle selve; ma ancora ha un certo termine, e fine in tutte le cose sue; perché tutte le cose naturali possono crescere infino a una certa grandezza, e non piu, la quale è diterminata così nel poco, come nel molto, onde la forma dell’huomo non puo stare in minor materia, ne in maggiore, che tanta, verbigrizia da un braccio infino a cinque, o sei, e così di tutte le altre cose” (MAGL 3.5.481.1, 30v) ; “Nature not only certifies and determines, that is, that everything is born of everything, but that each thing is born of its proper and determined source; in this way, a fig tree will never blossom with medlar fruit, nor will fish ever be born atop mountains or in the woods; but everything has a determined term and limitations specific to what it is; because all natural things can grow to a certain stature, and not beyond it, which is

griffon's wings for arms, while the rest of him, "l'avanzo delle membra, che gli resta, . . . , dalle cosce, le gambe, e' piedi infuori, / . . . son di nibbi, di gusi e d'astori";²⁷⁶ Malandroccio, "che piedi e cosce e busto ha di serpente; / Ma capo e collo e viso ha poi d'alocco," has the arms and hands of a Moroccan man, "Neri e piccin," while "Un toro ha per destrier, che salta e sbuffa";²⁷⁷ Sparapane is man, woman, lioness and dog;²⁷⁸ , Succialardo, "feroce e gagliardo / . . . pien d'ira e di furore," is "Mezzo gigante, e mezzo lipardo,"²⁷⁹ while Salvalaglio "ha di donzella i fianchi, il corpo, e 'l petto, / Il resto è tutto poi di verde drago, / Eccetto il volto, ch'è d'un Satiretto."²⁸⁰ Where Nature privileges similarity and, in so doing, eliminates the very concept of contrariness, Grazzini points to a world turned upside down by the Monsters' conquering of the heavens:

I Mostri se ne andaro in Paradiso:

Come presser di quel la signoria,

Dov'or si stanno in festa, in canto e 'n riso:

Onde più tempo già la carestia,

I venti e l'acqua il mondo anno conquiso,

Nè tra Dicembre e Maggio è più divario:

E par, che vada ogni cosa al contrario.²⁸¹

determined both in the lower extreme and in the higher, so that the form of man is found in materials neither beneath it nor above it, so that everything is determined from the number of arms one has, whether one, or five, or six, to everything else."

²⁷⁶ Stanza 11

²⁷⁷ stanza 16

²⁷⁸ stanza 19

²⁷⁹ stanza 22

²⁸⁰ "Has the flanks and body and chest of a woman, / The rest of him, though, is a green dragon, / Except for his face, which is that of a satyr" (stanza 28).

²⁸¹ "The Monsters went up to the Heavens: / [...] they took control of it, / And there they stay, in great feast, singing and laughing: / While, famine, winds, and rains / Have already

Grazzini's beasts, then, break neatly and decidedly with all the rules of nature Varchi outlines in his 1547 lecture. What is more, they are just as much creatures of the Unnatural as they are creators of it themselves.

By the same token, they are perfectly consonant with the teachings of his 1548 lesson "Sopra la generazione de' Mostri e se sono intesi dalla Natura o no." There, Varchi begins by citing various definitions of the word "monster," most of them classical, some pertaining to the subset of seers – those who "dimostrare" something, others belonging to the group Pliny writes about in the sixth book of *Natural History*, and most akin to Grazzini's monsters themselves: Cyclopes, men with heads of dogs, and other such strange creatures. By way of a general, all-encompassing definition, he offers the following: "Mostro (pigliandolo generalmente, e nella sua più larga significazione) si chiamano tutte quelle cose, le quali avvengono fuori dell'ordine consueto, e usitato corso della Natura in qualunque modo avvengano, e per qualunque cagione" and includes in this definition those born blind, deaf, or mute, the lame or otherwise crippled, as well as dwarves, hunchbacks, and others in this way "contrafatti da natura."²⁸² It is a definition Grazzini plays with in many ways: superficially, his monsters resemble Pliny's the most, but some among them also bear the birth defects and particularities of which Varchi speaks here in his general definition. More interestingly, and just a few years after his lessons on love and on Della Casa's sonnet on jealousy, in these back-to-back lectures, the relationship between Nature and Monsters (or the Unnatural) is noticeably similar to the relationship Varchi earlier

long conquered the world, / So that May and December feel exactly the same: / And, it seems, everything has gone to its opposite" (41).

²⁸² "A monster (in its widest and most general meaning) is anything which comes about or is created outside the usual and customary order of Nature, in some way and for some reason;" (MAGL 3.5.481.1, 98r/v)

draws between Love (Natural) and Jealousy (Natural Love gone wrong). Here, he writes: “la Natura, come quella, che sempre delle cose buone fa il migliore, e delle ree il manco cattivo, che viene in tal caso ad essere in luogo di buono, veggendo di non poter correggere cotale eccesso, lo nutrice per minor male, accio non si putrefaccia, e putrefaccendosi, corrompa tutto il membro o tutto l’animale, della conservazione del quale ha principale, e grandissima cura.”²⁸³ So just as jealousy is akin to misdirected love still rooted within it, monsters are born of a putrefaction or mutation of Nature where it misses its mark. Grazzini employs this very logic himself in the fifth octave of his mock epic, using a language that reverberates with echoes of Varchi’s own:

Non per arte di streghe, o per incanti
Si generar questi Mostri villani;
Ma fegli la Natura tutti quanti,
Contr’a sua voglia sì feroci e strani:
Molti han la testa e’ piè come Giganti;
Nel resto poi sono sparuti e nani:
Chi ha due capi, sei piedi, e tre braccia,
Chi d’assiuolo, e chi di bue la faccia.²⁸⁴

In this latter interpretation is where Grazzini comes full circle. His love for the academy, by way of jealousy, is turned into hatred of its members; his rage generates monsters as aberrant to Nature as his attitude and literary activity as a result of it are to Love. What is

²⁸³ “Nature, being that which improves all good things and makes bad things less evil, when it comes,” *ibid*, 119v.

²⁸⁴ Not by the art of witchery or by spells / Were these villanous Monsters born; / But made of Nature, all of them, / Against its will, ferocious and strange: / Many have heads and feet like Giants; / While the rest of them is small and thin: / Some have two heads, six feet, and three arms, / Some have faces of asses, and some of bulls (6).

more, he does it appropriating the very terminology of one of his assumed foes. In this way, both he and his subjects become equally deviant in the eyes of the leading philosophies from 1540-1553 as expressed through Varchi's lessons. Finally, and notable on yet another level, Grazzini's inability – or perhaps unwillingness – to complete his *Guerra* is located, by his account, in the suspected jealousy of his peers, so that his relationship with them is truly bidirectional.²⁸⁵ In stanza 42, he identifies the cause of his silence as “certe maligne e cancherose / Persone” who “poi mi fanno cornamusa: / E travolgono i versi e le mie prose / Più stranamente, che Circe o Medusa.”²⁸⁶

But Grazzini is as monstrous as his adversaries in yet another way, and one which recalls Varchi's other variation on mutated love: self-love. By Varchi's own definition still in this 1548 lesson, “Mostri dell'animo tutti coloro, i quali eccedono tanto e sopravanzano gl'altri nell'opere loro, o di mano o d'ingegno, che vincono quasi la Natura, cioè fanno quello, che non è solito a farsi ordinariamente da gl'altri e in questo significato diciamo, che il Bembo fu, e Michelangelo è un Mostro della Natura.”²⁸⁷ I have already shown the ways in which Grazzini attempts, consciously or otherwise, to draw a line of association between

²⁸⁵ Such is still more the case in a sonnet addressed to Giovanbattista Doni, where the jealousy and ire of which Grazzini speaks is ambiguously either his, his enemies', or common to them all. He writes: “Voi m'avete quassù lasciato solo / In un mar procelloso, alto e profondo, / Dove insieme non han riva né fondo / La povertà, l'invidia, l'ira e 'l duolo / . . . / Increscavi di me, che son restato / A colpi di Fortuna mira e segno, / E dagli amici tradito e 'ngannato. / Onde la gelosia, l'odio e lo sdegno / M'anno condotto a tal, che disperato / Morir non posso, e la vita aggio a sdegno” (*Rime del Lasca, parte prima*, p. 60, sonnet CI 1-4, 9-14).

²⁸⁶ “certain evil and cancerous / People . . . / will later make of me a piper: / They twist around my verse and prose / More strangely than Circe or Medusa.”

²⁸⁷ “Monsters of the soul are all those who, in exceeding and going well above others in their works, either by their skill or by their imagination, nearly conquer Nature, that is, they create something that is unusual and extraordinary in the company they keep, and in this way, we say that Bembo was and that Michelangelo is a Monster of Nature” (ibid, 101v).

himself and Dante in his mock epic; his self-imagined literary superiority, however, goes beyond even that. In the third stanza of his *Guerra*, he asserts the uniqueness of his work and position: “Ciurma, gente o genia simile a questa / Non fu giammai cantata in versi o in prosa: / E giorno e notte sempre mi molesta, / Che di lei canti con rima orgogliosa; / Ond’io forzato sono a questa volta, / Di scriverne, cantando, a briglia sciolta.”²⁸⁸ As usual, of course, readers know better than to take Grazzini at face-value: though his may be the first literary evisceration of his chosen subjects, his mock epic is original neither in form nor in style nor even in content, itself spawned of Amelonghi’s earlier work. Still, in writing about his monsters, he assumes a position of novelty that, he may hope, will make of him a monster of Varchi’s other nature: anomalous only in his exceptional talent and artistry; it is perhaps no coincidence that Grazzini’s first reference to Dante immediately follows in the fourth stanza, or that his reappropriation of Varchi’s language on Nature and Monsters follows that, in the fifth.²⁸⁹

This kind of progression in thought and reaction – from admiration of the “enemy” to alignment with him, to more or less unclever attacks on him, to veritable attempts to surpass his genius in part by assuming his literary identity – is by no means unique to Grazzini and de’ Pazzi or even a specific byproduct of the literary company they hold. Jealousy and the resulting operation that follows from it are themes frequently at play in a large number of Pietro Aretino’s works from 1537 to 1545, culminating in what can be

²⁸⁸ “Nothing has ever been sung in verse or prose / About this company, these people, or similar breeds: / And day and night, I am continuously pestered / By the idea of singing their song in boastful rhymes; / And so it is that I am now forced / To write, singing at full galop” (3).

²⁸⁹ *La Guerra de’ Mostri* is not the only composition in which Grazzini makes explicit reference to his literary superiority, as he sees it. His capitolo “In lode del dispetto,” begins: “Io non credo, che mai Latino o Greco / O stil Toscano abbia cantato o detto, / Quelchè dire e cantar disposto ho meco” (*Rime del Lasca, parte seconda*, p. 31, capit. IX, 1-3).

considered an inherently personal rivalry between himself and Michelangelo Buonarroti.²⁹⁰ Aretino's place in the debate is important for a number of reasons. Most superficially, though only a slippery member of both the *Umidi* and *Infiammati* academies and in some way evading the official ceremony of each, Aretino was in frequent contact not only with many of their members – including Varchi – as well as with many other artists mutual to them: Lodovico Dolce, Annibal Caro, Matteo Franzesi, Francesco Berni, Antonfrancesco Doni, to name only a few. His ideas would have thus circulated alongside those of the academics and often in the same direction and to the same final destination. But still more importantly, in his works and in his treatment of jealousy as an umbrella theme, readers see jealousy matched consistently with choler, as if a third sister born of the parents of Love. This trio – Love, Jealousy, Choler – when read specifically following or preceding any of Petrarch's sonnets – as, indeed, may have been the case, and, as shown, would have been common academic practice – would have been striking only in its third constituent. Even in Varchi's lessons, by his very analysis, readers find a Petrarch so afflicted by love that he is at once jealous and melancholic as a result. Aretino's lover is, by contrast, jealous and enraged, as is Grazzini's (and Grazzini himself), and, ostensibly, as is de' Pazzi himself in his cycle of sonnets to Varchi.

²⁹⁰ Aretino's conflicted relationship with Michelangelo profits from ample scholarship on his letters that display both his early and later sentiments toward the painter and poet. They are collected and commented most comprehensively and most recently in Filippo Tuena, *La passione dell'error mio: Carteggio di Michelangelo, lettere scelte 1532-1564* (Roma: Fazi, 2002). The most significant among them is his letter to Michelangelo himself dated November 1545, part of which reads: "Signor mio, nel rivedere lo schizzo intiero di tutto il vostro dì del Giudicio, ho fornito di conoscere la illustre gratia di Raffaello ne la grata bellezza de la inventione. Intanto io, come battezzato, mi vergogno de la licentia, sì illecita a lo spirito, che havete preso ne lo isprimere I concetti u' si risolve il fine al quale aspira ogni senso de la veracissima credenza nostra."

But even this shift from melancholy to cholera in the presence of *invidia* can be explained by Varchi's lessons on Jealousy, her twin sister, Love, and their parents, Nature. To recall, according to Varchi, Love and Jealousy are daughters of Nature. Love is the natural desire to seek sustenance in like substances and by that way become strengthened, and only manifests itself as jealousy when its main operation is subverted or exaggerated to the point of self-love. To Varchi, not even Hatred is Love's opposite; it is, rather, its child, just as the shade is son of the sun. A similar relationship exists between melancholy and cholera on the cyclical continuum of the humours. Like Love and Hatred, melancholy and cholera are opposites only in name, and their association with each other is much closer to that between Love and Jealousy. As was shown in the previous chapter, their positions adjacent to each other on the humoral chart lend them similar properties, at least in part: melancholy is cold and dry; cholera is dry and hot. An excess of either one in a man's general constitution will translate as bitterness, *contemptus mundi* – or contempt for the world – and verbosity. Only in one (melancholy) that verboseness expresses timidity, fearfulness, disengagement; in the other (cholera), it speaks of rancour, gossip, revenge. No two elements could seem so at odds with each other, and yet, both stem from the same root. Both are aberrations on the natural, ideal state of being, and, like Love and Jealousy, agree with each other only half the time.

The perceived shift from melancholy to cholera, then, seems justified by the very works that, as I have shown, are themselves sources of continuous rivalry between competing members of the Florentine academy. In the following chapter, I will further elaborate on the link between jealousy and the grotesque, and, subsequently, that between the grotesque and the capriccio

Chapter Four: Grazzini and the Social Grotesque

Onde dopo di lui sempre ne viene
Quest'altra donna più malvagia e ria,
Che va struggendo il cor con aspre pene.
Quest'è l'iniqua e impronta Gelosia,
Che 'l dosso ha tutto pien d'occhi e d'orecchi;
Per udire e veder quel non vorria:
E sempre par di nuocer s'apparecchi.
Questa certo è colei, che guasta il mondo:
Chi mal giammai non vide, in lei si specchi.

Grazzini describes (allegorical) Jealousy in this way - a destructive, involuntarily omniscient woman – in one of his later capitoli.²⁹¹ In a long parade of characters rather similar to those Petrarch fashions in his *Trionfi*, she follows “questo, che 'l volgo errante chiama Amore, / Amaro è piucchè toscò.” Here, Love, born of Ozio and Lascivia, is the primary source of deceit, torment, pain, and emotional damage. Still, only those that follow her, are afflicted by her and bear her mark, are described as veritable monsters.

They are not the monsters of the *Guerra de' Mostri*, and notably so; Grazzini's concoctions here are neither contemporaries in literary masquerade, nor are they undefeatable enemies. In fact, as a later passage will reveal, Hope stands up to them all. What they share with Grazzini's Aramei in disguise, however, are their roots in the

²⁹¹ *Rime del Lasca, parte seconda*, 96.

grotesque: an artistic-cum-literary genre Grazzini indeed helps to define in his sixteenth-century literary milieu, and the focus of this chapter.

Grotesque: A preliminary (and streamlined) definition

A review of the term itself will prove helpful to its larger consideration. This operation is instantly complicated by the fact that, as Wolfgang Kayser and Paul Remshardt suggest, “grotesque” has no fixed or absolute definition. Both scholars, leading in the field, view it as an artistic genre conditioned as much by differing cultural environments as by continuously changing *zeitgeist*, so that, for example, French “grotesque” of the sixteenth century differs just as much from German, Spanish, or Italian “grotesque” of the same period, as it does from French grotesque of a later or earlier period. As will be shown, many of Grazzini’s grotesque compositions display, at once, the characteristics specific to the term in sixteenth-century Italy, and later aspects of it *avant-la-lettre* both chronologically and geographically. In fact, the next chapter will consider its specific ties to the formation of the 20th century “teatro del grottesco” in Italy– a movement to which the genre clearly lends its name.

Etymologically, “grotesque” is an explicitly Italian term and makes specific reference to Roman drawings discovered in caves – or grottos – during the period of classical excavation of the late fifteenth century. These illustrations, or “monstrosities of the imagination” were, at once, a series of conflicting aesthetic ideals. In the mid-sixteenth century in France, Michel de Montaigne uses the term to refer to his essays, calling them, “grotesque and monstrous bodies, pieced together of the most diverse members, without distinct form, in which order and proportion are left to chance” - compositional hodge-

podges and unlikely combinations of incompatible elements.²⁹² But, in this context, not only were the form and content of a grotesque composition haphazard and mismatched: so, too, was its message. Kayser explains:

By the word *grotesco* the Renaissance, which used it to designate a specific ornamental style suggested by antiquity, understood not only something playfully gay and carelessly fantastic, but also something ominous and sinister in the face of a world totally different from the familiar one – a world in which the realm of inanimate things is no longer separated from those of plants, animals, and human beings, and where the laws of statics, symmetry, and proportion are no longer valid.²⁹³

This definition extended well beyond the caves, and applied most frequently to art (Raphael's grotesques are only one notable example; Agostino Veneziano, a Florentine engraver of the early 16th century is another). The literary sphere also soon boasted its own variant on the grotesque tradition. In its most straightforward interpretation, a literary grotesque was, like a "ghiribizzo" or a "capriccio" – terms that will later also be examined – a flight of fancy neither central nor necessary to a text, and entirely incompatible with any examination of common or daily life:²⁹⁴ it described, in its very nature, improbabilities mutually exclusive with reality; elements of the supernatural, the marvelous, or the incredible. A grotesque, in any form or genre, often also easily summoned a mixed response

²⁹² *Les Essais*, bk. I, ch. 28, ed. Simon Millanges (Bordeaux: 1580, first edition).

²⁹³ Kayser 21.

²⁹⁴ On the "marginality" of the grotesque, see Brad Epps, "Grotesque Identities: Writing Death, and the Space of the Subject Between Michel de Montaigne and Reinaldo Arenas," *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 28.1 (1995): 38-55.

from its audience, partly comical, partly horrific. But this definition is again complicated by another dimension of the Italian sixteenth-century grotesque: performance.

As Paul Remshardt has stated, regardless of its expression or manifestation the grotesque is inseparable from performance: every performance is grotesque, and every grotesque, a performance. As an artistic genre steeped in shock value, even when not explicitly theatrical, grotesque production demanded and relied on an impressionable audience and its reaction to potentially problematic, morally upsetting, or paradoxical situations or combinations.²⁹⁵ In other words, the grotesque gives power of witness and responsibility of judgment to the audience rather than the artist, author, or playwright; its success depends entirely on their direct involvement. As such, the term “grotesque” becomes increasingly linked to the world of performative arts. In Renaissance Italy, this translates to an association of grotesque culture with carnival culture and, accordingly, with a concern with realism more than or in addition to the supernaturally bizarre. Such becomes even more the case in the carnival setting where, indeed, occurrences of daily life rather than the supernatural are more often the focus of artistic production. Not half a century after Grazzini’s rise to notoriety, Italian grotesque, by way of specifically performative or musical terms – farces, one-act interludes, street plays – becomes nearly synonymous with *commedia dell’arte*. As a largely unrehearsed, unplanned, improvised art form that at first generally followed, interrupted, or preceded a longer and more sophisticated piece during Carnival, *commedia dell’arte* came to be associated not only with the ornamental definition of the grotesque, but also with the topsy-turviness it, and the

²⁹⁵ Paul Remshardt, *Staging the Savage God. The Grotesque in Performance* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004) 2-3.

carnival, suggested.²⁹⁶ More importantly, and increasingly as it developed as an art-form in its own right, *commedia dell'arte* adhered to all three functions of the festival, as Michael Bristol has defined them: as “unselfconscious ritual,” as facilitator of social cohesion, and as open challenger of the status quo.²⁹⁷ As every good festival performance should, *commedia dell'arte* pieces inverted social standards and, by way of laughter, questioned their usefulness as moral or aesthetic categories.

It is at the crossroads of the ornamental grotesque, marvel at the “supernatural”, and “carnival” performance that I locate Grazzini’s brand of grotesque, patented in his *Cene* and in theatrical production. It is important, I think, to underline that at the time of Grazzini’s composition, grotesque, marvel, capriccio, and ghiribizzo were, by and large, rather dissociated, and even competing categories. Grazzini’s works themselves display this generic difference: though he denies it, and while his poetry inhabits the sphere of the burlesque capriccio, his novelle bring readers closer to a carnivalesque and grotesque realm of existence, and his theatrical production displays something in-between, possessing both the frivolous, “delightful” characteristics of the capriccio or the ghiribizzo, and the inverted, sometimes dark nature of the grotesque world. The twofold purpose of this chapter will be to examine Grazzini’s brand of grotesque in his novelle and playwriting specifically, and, in a sustained effort to understand the author as a competitive player in his literary milieu, to link it to the folly and genius of capriccio that would have aligned him

²⁹⁶ Although “carnival” is a useful category to examine in this specific development of the grotesque genre, it cannot be treated extensively here. Of course, most canonically, see chapter on Folk Humour and Carnival Laughter in *The Bakhtin Reader. Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, Voloshinov*, ed. Pam Morris (London: Glossary Edward Arnold Publishers Ltd., 1994); see section Four on Carnival Ambivalence (pp. 194-245). See also Mikhail Bakhtin and Patricia Sollner, “Rabelais and Gogol: The Art of Discourse and the Popular Culture of Laughter,” *Mississippi Review* 11.3 (1983): 34-50.

²⁹⁷ See Remshardt 43.

with – or, perhaps preferably, differentiated him from - many of his more prolific or respected contemporaries.

Grazzini and grotesque: the comedies

I will begin my analysis by turning my attention again to Grazzini's theatrical production between 1540 and 1566 – the date of his reinstatement to the *Fiorentina*.²⁹⁸ In this quarter-century alone, and alongside consistent poetic production, Grazzini writes, publishes, and often also publicly stages – in private homes as well as on larger municipal platforms - nine to ten comedies, three-act farces, or one-act plays, at least a couple of which are now lost.²⁹⁹ Compositionally, they are all rather similar to each other: in each, two houses of characters are generally pitted against each other in a contest undoubtedly complicated but ultimately helped by the development of at least one subplot. Formally, little is left of the staging instructions, since Grazzini no recorded stage directions exist in any editions.³⁰⁰ All are set early in the new year, likely during carnival, and rely on the beffa – perfected by Boccaccio and conventional by this time – played on an old, gullible man by a younger outfit of characters, usually servants combined with lovers. Consistent with his general philosophy, characters lacking formal education but displaying astuteness and cleverness are routinely favoured to others like the pedant who, in most cases, is ridiculed

²⁹⁸ I am heavily indebted to Robert J. Rodini's rather comprehensive coverage of Grazzini's theatre in *Antonfrancesco Grazzini. Poet, Dramatist, and Novelliere, 1503-1584* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1970).

²⁹⁹ "La Monica" has never been found, while "La giostra," a one-act farce, was later subsumed in "L'Arzigogolo."

³⁰⁰ I examined a variety of eighteenth, nineteenth, and, when available (though less frequently) twentieth century editions. I was unable to locate the original manuscripts of these plays, as they are assumed to be lost or held in private family collections.

mercilessly.³⁰¹ Much could be said about the roles of women in Grazzini's plays, furthermore, and their consistent association with the supernatural – or supranatural – world. Immediately interesting to my purpose here, however, is the fact that most were composed after his 1547 expulsion from the Academy; a 1566 cycle of eclogues and ten pastoral plays are what eventually get him readmitted under Lionardo Salviati's recommendation to the Medici.³⁰² The roughly twenty year lacuna between his membership in the academy was necessarily bridged, then, and in equal part, by cautious adherence to popular custom, and vocal criticism of contemporary literary practices. In his theatre, this pragmatic duplicity translates as conservative traditionalism with an eye to future rather than (or in addition to) current trends;³⁰³ although Grazzini's plays in most ways formally mimic the five-act *commedie erudite* against which they were intended as a reaction, and even exploit some of their most common tropes and characters (cross-dressing, gender-bending, father-son conflicts; the pedant, the fool, the charlatan),³⁰⁴ in their specifically Tuscan focus, in their subversion of daily reality, and in their ironic

³⁰¹ The strongest example of such mockery is found in the character of Taddeo from *La strega*, Grazzini's most popular play.

³⁰² For more on Grazzini's relationship with Salviati, the Giunti press, and the Accademia della Crusca, see Peter M. Brown, *Lionardo Salviati. A Critical Biography* (Glasgow: Oxford UP, 1974).

³⁰³ Grazzini also famously crossed literary boundaries: in his prologue to *La spiritata*, he takes on the spirit of Boccaccio, writing above all for women. One passage reads as particularly relevant: "pregherovvi bene, e maggiormente voi leggiadre e graziose donne, che stiate attente, acciochè meglio la nostra comedia intendiate e possiate cavarne qualche frutto all'altrui spese. A gli uomino so io bene che ella passerà quasi invisibile, e che poco l'udiranno, attendendo a mirare la celeste bellezza, e l'infinita grazia, e l'immensa leggiadria del bel viso e de i sereni occhi vostri, che per dirne il vero, fanno oggi in terra manifesta fede della bellezza e della dolcezza de gli Angeli e del Paradiso" (110).

³⁰⁴ For a comprehensive review of Cinquecento theatre, its classical roots (in Plautus and Terrence), its main characteristics and tropes, see *Il teatro italiano del Rinascimento*, a cura di Maristella de Panizza Lorch (Milano, Edizioni di Comunità, 1980) and more specifically within it, Mario Baratto's, "La fondazione di un genere (per un'analisi drammaturgica della commedia del Cinquecento)" (3-24).

appropriation of supernatural elements, they not only look forward to the slowly blossoming *commedia dell'arte* tradition, but emerge in their own time as caricatures of theatre, where Grazzini's interaction with the grotesque-and his creation of a response to it occur on three levels.³⁰⁵ He first engages with grotesque and its link to marvel classically (if mockingly) and thematically through the comical interpretation of "supernatural" events. He next applies his treatment of the supernatural to social scenarios in which, however "realistic," the "natural order" of things is reversed or otherwise disturbed. Lastly, he summons it on a formal level, making of his compositions the kind of "monstrous bodies, pieced together of diverse members" so central to Renaissance definitions of the grotesque, that elicit the same reaction from viewers and readers as the marvelous aspects of his plays and stories do from their characters.

The grotesque is most explicitly on display in those of his plays that treat supernatural themes directly: *La spiritata*, *La strega*, and *La Pinzochera*. In each of these, the traditionally grotesque – or that which might naturally inspire fear and awe in viewers – is treated ironically in order to shift the focus from the otherworldly to the gritty reality of daily life. The first tells the story of Maddalena and Giulio, young lovers clandestinely wed for lack of a proper dowry from Maddalena's father, Niccodemo. Together, they scheme to steal the dowry money from Giulio's much wealthier father, Giovangualberto (who also, incidentally, is indebted to Niccodemo), reroute it to Niccodemo via a relative, and marry publicly. To do so, Maddalena pretends to be possessed by the aerial spirit Tintinnago who refuses to leave her unless she is wed to the man of her choice – her father

³⁰⁵ I will be quoting all plays from Pietro Fanfani's 1897 edition, compilation, and commentary of all six comedies, *Commedie di Antonfrancesco Grazzini* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1897).

has already found her a suitable and far less expensive alternative. Simultaneously, Giulio, with the help of friends and servants, convinces his father that their house is plagued by demons called *cuccubeoni* who, when exorcised, will take with them the most precious belonging in the house - in this case, 3000 scudi, the exact amount of the required dowry. Giulio, via Maddalena's uncle, later passes the treasure on to her father to fund the expected union. Once the scheme is accomplished, Albizo, the faux-necromancer hired to legitimate the demons' presence, declares all the false spirits departed, and the young lovers are publicly wed.

The plot is not unlike others of the cinquecento theatre tradition; the presence of Giovanguilberto's young servant, Trafela as early as the first scene further underlines Grazzini's willingness to cooperate with the norms of theatrical production.³⁰⁶ His innovation lies within his ability to manipulate the expected components of a comedy to redirect his audience's attention to the details he wishes to highlight. In the second scene of the first act, viewers find Lucia, Niccodemo's servant, speaking to Trafela about the child to whom her charge, Maddalena, has just given birth – a birth and pregnancy disguised as enchantment. The power dynamics of the ensemble are immediately clear: at the center are the young lovers hiding their sin. Above them, and orchestrating their ruse are the servants (and, in this case, necromancer) to whom they are indebted; beneath them and oblivious to every indiscretion happening around them are the elder parents.³⁰⁷ It is a social reversal

³⁰⁶ The relationship between master and servant is a trope that extends beyond the *commedia erudite* genre and is inherited and perhaps amplified by the *commedia dell'arte* tradition.

³⁰⁷ Grazzini's hierarchy here is in two ways in accordance with carnival culture: firstly, it constitutes a standard role reversal; next, it does so by way of the servant or the buffone: "tanto quello antico quanto quello medioevale e moderno, frequenta dimora patrizie e rappresentanti del potere, ma resta sostanzialmente legato alla sfera dell'immondo e

not uncommon to Grazzini or to playwrights of his time and immediately places the audience in the powerful position of knowing witness: viewers are straight away called to participate in the humiliation of two of the play's characters. They are set up, then, to view the supernatural demons at the plot's core as an only secondary spectacle.

Of course the social reversal at work (or, perhaps better, at play) is still hidden comfortably from the people it most affects – Giovanguualberto and Niccodemo – and is enjoyed only by the audience, complicit with the play's overarching scheme. It is a social reversal Grazzini repeatedly draws attention to, however, not only in the play's action, but also in a number of carefully crafted soliloquies, asides, and monologues. The most compelling of these is spoken by Guagniele, servant neither to Niccodemo nor to Giovanguualberto, but to Amerigo, one of Giulio's young companions. Amerigo's youth here (like Fabio's, later, in *I parentadi*) does make a notable difference in his treatment of his servant – and Guagniele is the first to admit it. His soliloquy in II.ii speaks both specifically to it and to the larger issue of master-servant relationships present elsewhere in the play.

dell'osceno. La sua funzione mediatrice tra classi superiori e inferiori, tra cultura alta e cultura subalterna, tra mondo clericale e mondo popolare resta insostituibile. Il frequente scambio di tecniche oratorie e persuasive tra frati e buffoni rinascimentali elude e confonde i confini tra sacro e profano. In questa contaminazione delle forme, il miracoloso convive con il demoniaco, il normale con il grottesco e il caricaturale, il naturale con il soprannaturale, le visioni divine con quelle sataniche" (37). See Daniele Vianello, *L'arte del buffone. Maschere e spettacolo tra Italia e Baviera nel XVI secolo* (Roma: Bulzoni editore, 2005). What is more, this social inversion is immediately pointed out by one of the "buffoni" himself, by way of an equalizing proclamation. In the first scene of the first act, Trafela tells his master, "Messersì che voi siete ricco, e io son povero; sete padrone, e io son servo; del resto, io son di carne e d'ossa, come vi siate voi (pdf 125). The very order of the elements listed gives the phrase its ultimate meaning: though they are separated by class distinction, Trafela and his master are equal in their formal composition. As the action unfolds and the buffoni reveal themselves to be the concrete, active complements to their masters' passive natures, Trafela's early leveling of himself with Giovanguualberto resonates further still.

He has been awake for several nights at his master's whim – a deprivation of a basic need that prompts the following dreamlike reflection and hope:

Per mia fè, che io non posso tener gli occhi aperti: chi crederebbe mai che ora che noi semo di verno, e che sono le notti sì lunghe, io mi morissi di sonno? In fine, questi padroni non hanno una descrizione al mondo: ma se essi fussero stati prima servidori, questo non avverrebbe, e tratterebbono i famigli in altro modo che non fanno. Oh, se la fortuna mi facesse un tratto diventar padrone! Buon per quei servidori che stessero meco: io procederei con un'amorevolezza meravigliosa: darei lor buon salario, paghere'gli al tempo, farei ch'egli avessero buon letto, da bere e da mangiare a ogni lor posta di quel vino e di quel pan sempre che beesse e mangiasse la persona mia; non gli griderei mai senza proposito; mandere'gli poco attorno testé di verno quando rovina il ciel d'acqua, e massimamente la notte; né anche le state in su la sferza del caldo non gli farei venirmi dietro correndo alla staffa; e come io avessi a far viaggio da tre miglia in là, gli metterei a cavallo: vorrei che la sera se ne andassero a dormire a ora ragionevole, e così la mattina si levassero. Oh che vita beata, che vita santa per me e per loro! So che sarebbero forzati a volermi bene a mio marcio dispetto, e sarei servito con amore. Dove questi padroni fanno tutto il contrario; benché io non mi possa molto rammaricare, perché Amerigo è giovane dabbene e amorevole: ma per far piacere a questo Giulio suo vicino, già due notti non sono entrato in letto, perché da mezza notte in là m'hanno fatto con esso loro insieme saltare, stridere e urlare per infino quasi a giorno; ma questo ci è di buono, che la

festa dicono ch'è fornita, o per me' dire, si fornirà oggi; e a questo effetto mi mandano ora nella via de' Servi per certe maschere...³⁰⁸

Guagniele's laments and fantasies are only one side of a coin stamped, on its tail, with the power and authority resulting from his mistreatment. Amerigo subjects him, along with Trafela and Giulio, to long nights of exhausting behaviour. The payoff, however, though not monetary, is much more satisfying than the labour is tiring: Grazzini's servants are the authors of the play's central characters' undoing.

Between this social reversal and what I define the play's central spectacle is a series of traditionally grotesque elements, demons aside. There are the lists of unlikely combinations (akin to the contents of a cabinet of wonders) that display a convergence of the ridiculous, the horrific, and the comic; there are the manufactured masks for a terrifying masquerade, the constant recurrence to dreams and dreamlike states of being, the confusion of appearance and reality and the resulting cross-contamination of beffa and horror.³⁰⁹ The play's main grotesque, however, and the "marvelous" spectacle intended to elicit a reaction both from participants in the story and from its audience happens only in the fourth act. More to the point, the spectacle in question involves not the evil spirits – false - after which the play is named, but Giovangualberto and Niccodemo's reaction to them; the response it hopes to inspire from viewers, accordingly, is laughter rather than the fear the two old men exhibit.

Niccodemo and Giovangualberto have been discussing their respective situations when Giovangualberto suggests Niccodemo join him at his house to eat. In the meantime, Trafela, Giovangualberto's servant, has set the scene to fool his master. He has Giulio and

³⁰⁸ Fanfani, *Commedie* 122-23.

³⁰⁹ II.ii, III.iii; II.iii, III.ii, IV.i.

some friends disguise themselves as cuccubeoni and wreak havoc on the master bedroom aflame with hellfire. Grazzini describes the scene in a few lines, but not before he has dwelt on Giovangu Alberto and Niccodemo's hesitance to inspect the premises. Giovangu Alberto accuses Trafela of exaggerating what he sees out of fear, but Niccodemo suggests that they have a look at the situation just the same:

Niccodemo: Io vo' che noi v'andiamo a ogni modo.

Giovangu Alberto: Vuoi tu venire?

Niccodemo: Verrò se tu vieni anche tu.

Giovangu Alberto: Io son contento, ma va innanzi.

Niccodemo: Va' pure innanzi tu che sei padrone.

Giovangu Alberto: In questo caso, io vo' lasciare essere a te.

Niccodemo: tu hai paura. Io non vo' veder altro.

Giovangu Alberto: Paura debbi aver tu!

Niccodemo: Or su, andiamo a un pari e a un'otta.

Giovangu Alberto: Da' qua la mano.³¹⁰

As they tremble, Trafela, and the audience with him, mocks them: "Andate pur là;" he says, "poco starete a favellar d'un altro linguaggio: se ei non si cacàn sotto questa volta, io non ne vo' dannajo" (IV.iii). It is only moments before he adds, now coming full circle: "forse faranno peggio: caso sarebbe ch'egli spiritassero tuttadue daddovero? E non sarebbe anche troppo gran miracolo: de i maggiori se ne veggono a i Servi."³¹¹ Here, all three levels of Grazzini's grotesque are at play. On a literal level, the focus of the scene is the supernatural

³¹⁰ IV.iii, Fanfani, *Commedie* 139.

³¹¹ *ibid.*

demons frightening Niccodemo and Giovanguualberto. The larger spectacle, as far as the audience is concerned, however, is their reaction – one that necessarily juxtaposes comedy and fear (and, later, death).³¹² Finally, in this passage alone, the nature of things is twice reversed: once in the victory of the false demons over the duped men, and next in the triumph of the servants over their masters, so that when Niccodemo later rejoices in the restoration of sanity upon his household, he is twice fooled – both disserved and served again by the authors of his undoing – and redoing.³¹³

When considering his position on love, jealousy, and greed, it is perhaps no coincidence, furthermore, that Grazzini's demons, here, though born of the same situation, should be so seemingly opposed to each other. The (false) spirit that haunts Maddalena is called "Amoroso," the audience later discovers: a spirit that is "di quegli della luce, di buona e di benigna natura." Those that plague the house of Giovanguualberto, however, the *cuccubeoni*, are "d'un'altra sorte, anzi della più cattiva e pessima razza che si possa trovare, e di quelli delle tenebre;"³¹⁴ they "succiano, beono, tirando a lor l'alito, i ducati de i forzieri e delle casse, come i beoni il vino de i bicchieri e delle tazze."³¹⁵ Still, and as might be expected, they work together to bring love's ultimate plan to fruition.

The relationship among these opposing forces is again picked up in what Grazzini intends to be a bawdier play, *La Pinzochera*.³¹⁶ It is set in 1550s Florence and its *beffa*

³¹² Later in the same scene and having witnessed the demons' destructive force themselves, Giovanguualberto and Niccodemo continue their conversation: "G: Io son morto. / N: E io non son vivo." Trafela chimes in only to reassure them: "Non abbiate paura: egli hanno serrato l'uscio" in another mocking quip.

³¹³ V.vi, Fanfani, *Commedie* 156.

³¹⁴ V.i, Fanfani, *Commedie* 145, 147.

³¹⁵ V.iv, Fanfani, *Commedie* 152.

³¹⁶ Perhaps the most important of Grazzini's plays for a number of reasons: its display of the grotesque, its consistent concern with opposites, the elements, and the relationship

revolves entirely around prostitution, as its title suggests. Presenting a play either specifically about private sex workers (anywhere outside the sphere of courtesans) or heavily involving them would have been a risky move. Indeed, and despite its thematic importance to Grazzini's general corpus, it is unlikely that this production was ever staged. Its plot is sheer entanglement (and I here present only two threads of it): Gerozzo and Albiera have a daughter, Fiammetta, who, though in love with Federigo, is not allowed to marry him. Gerozzo, meanwhile, is in love with his neighbour Alberto's wife, Diamante. The drama begins when, looking to meet with his love in her home, Federigo convinces Gerozzo that Diamante has requested an audience with him at her house. She hasn't: in fact, she, along with her husband and Federigo's parents, are away in the country. To bring the ruse to term, Federigo, who has a key to Alberto's house, hires Sandra, a prostitute, and her mistress, Madonna Antonia and the play's titular character, to act as Diamante and her mother there. He summons Gerozzo and, in a beffa modeled on Boccaccio's heliotrope episode in *Decameron* 8.3, gives him two balls of wax, one for himself and one for Sandra that, when placed in their mouths, supposedly make them invisible. The scene in which they meet is fraught with tension and ridicule. Gerozzo puts the ball of wax in his mouth but Sandra, disgusted by his bad breath, keeps shrinking away, insisting on entering the house as he tries to put the other in hers. Thinking he is quite invisible, he is appalled when Albiera discovers him lingering on the street outside his house with a prostitute and chastises him appropriately. In this segment, the "natural order" of things is reversed several times over, and always at Gerozzo's expense. He finds himself in the middle of an

between these two categories, its final predilection for the state of action rather than the state of contemplation. It will be referred to throughout the other chapters as its importance relates to the theme treated within them. Here, I examine only the first dimension listed.

extra-marital affair, unknowingly with a less than esteemed member of society, and the medium he hopes will set to order a precarious situation only causes another and the one from which he is fleeing.

This time, however, Grazzini denies viewers the character customarily afforded them to assist their testimony; in the case of *La spiritata*, Trafela. Gerozzo and Sandra aside, only Albiera and her maid Veronica appear in the scene, neither of them involved in the beffa. Gerozzo is fixated on the “miracle” of his invisibility: “Sta’ pur forte e ferma: e tienla in bocca, che vedrai una meraviglia” he tells Sandra; “serra la bocca pure e non parlar più, che tu vedrai miracoli” (IV.ix, p. 346). But the “seeing” being done in this scene is of precisely the opposite nature. Albiera and Veronica look on from their house at the scenario unfolding before them, while Sandra seems still more preoccupied with the many other wandering eyes all around them: “Oimé, fermatevi, fermatevi; ecco di qua gente,” she protests to Gerozzo” (IV.ix, 346). If they are to take their cue from the characters that witness to the scene, then, the audience’s reaction to it can be confused at best. Should they laugh derisively with some passers-by, or shun the old man with others? Or should they become irate alongside Albiera and attribute Gerozzo’s strange behaviour and mutated identity to demonic possession?

Or perhaps, and consistent both with contemporary theories of the grotesque and with Grazzini’s stance on love and its consequences, their reaction should consist of a mixture of improbable and largely incompatible emotions. Grazzini sets the stage for this kind of interpretation early in the play. In the sixth scene of the first act, Federigo, in love with Gerozzo’s daughter, speaks of his ailment with a mutual friend, Ambrogio. He describes his condition as “la maggior disgrazia che fusse mai sentita” while Ambrogio

reassures him that no matter his discomfort, “nascono sempre le malattie e i rimedi d’uno stesso parto” – in the very same language both Grazzini and Varchi use to describe the birth of Love and Jealousy, the birth of Love and Hate, and the birth of Love and its remedy. This passage, of course, is not the only one in which this vocabulary emerges. A full act later, Carletto, one of Federigo’s relatives, conveys a related thought: “Certamente, che dove è assai amore, come dice il proverbio, è assai timore.”³¹⁷ In III.viii, Federigo employs the much exploited Petrarchan trope of burning and freezing simultaneously; in IV.i, he draws on the parallel between love and folly, then on correspondence of folly and old age; in IV.iv, Giannino, a servant in Federigo’s house, plays openly on the correlation of “Fiammetta” and the flames of love, and on the opposition (and assonance) of fiamme, fuoco, fiume, and fonte: the flames, and the river source that will extinguish them.³¹⁸ Most convincingly, in III.x, Gerozzo, speaking to his servant Giannino, in a single *battuta* recalls the relationship between Benedetto Varchi and Alfonso de’ Pazzi as examined in the previous chapter. Gerozzo is waiting for news from Giannino, and, just as he is about to leave to find him, his servant appears. “Ombè, che nuove mi porti tu?” Gerozzo asks. “Triste e buone,” responds Giannino, instigating Gerozzo’s telling response: “Questa è bella ora! Come vuoi tu che il male e ’l bene stiano insieme? Tu mi par matto; dove vedestù mai l’acqua col fuoco? Castrone!” Here, Grazzini toys neither with the unexpected nor with the bizarre or the inverted, but with the paradoxical.

He directs his attention to the other mentioned categories elsewhere in the same work, as well as in others. Here, the bizarre is literally on display in the instrument used to

³¹⁷ III.vi; it is worth recalling that in the above-cited Grazzini capitolo on Love, timore immediately follows Gelosia.

³¹⁸ see appendix 2 for transcription of pertinent passages.

humiliate Gerozzo: the heliotrope-like ball of wax. It is summoned in Albiera's reaction to his use of it in IV.ix: "O costui è spiritato, o egli è uscito del cervello affatto." It is presented alongside the social reversal evident in Gerozzo and Albiera's relationship. Grazzini never hesitates to pen ineffectual male characters both in his plays and in his novelle. But *La Pinzochera* is perhaps the only one of his works in which he makes direct reference to the frequent (if rarely mentioned) reversal of marital roles; in a scene that also (and again) underlines the ironic relationship between master and servant, this domestic anomaly (for all intents and purposes) is still further highlighted. In II.vi, Giannino comes to speak with his master to announce Diamante's request to see him. Before he can deliver the news, Giannino subtly brings up the fact that he has yet to be paid for his normal services. Gerozzo, who, and in one breath, had previously compared himself to a king, a pope, and an emperor here blames the oversight on his wife:

Gerozzo: Che vuoi tu ch'io faccia se mògliama s'è messo le brache, e vuòlle portare ella? Tu sai pur com'ella è subita e bizzarra; ogni po' po' ch'ella si stuzzica, monta in bestia, e quistionerebbe in su 'n una cruna d'ago.

Giannino: O bella sentenza!

Gerozzo: Che sentenza, bue!

Giannino: Che fu? Un avverbio?

Gerozzo: Un proverbio, vuoi tu dire: ah, ah, ah! Infinita è la schiera de gli sciocchi.

Giannino: (Questo è quanto egli disse mai da savio.) O, voi ridete?

Gerozzo; Chi non riderebbe? Io rido delle tue castronerie: ah, ah, ah! Egli è
pur bella cosa al mondo intendere.

Here, Albiera is described as quick-tempered and bizarre, animalistic – the result of her insisting, literally, on wearing the pants in their relationship and in all household affairs: a classically unnatural role for her. But the character being defaced in this passage is not Albiera, but rather Gerozzo. What is more, he is ridiculed by his servant, and another social inferior, who insults his knowledge, though alongside only the audience. Gerozzo laughs, seemingly at Giannino's silliness. Yet Giannino remains stone-faced and unimpressed, and invites viewers to join him in his mockery of Gerozzo by addressing them directly in his aside. What results is a double social-inversion embedded in what superficially reads as a straightforward allusion to the bizarre -- that directly inverts it.

More of these social inversions are found in what Rodini estimates to be Grazzini's earliest play and the one most heavily modeled on classical precedence and the *commedia erudita*, *I parentadi*. Here, a family traveling from Sicily to Florence is split up, only to be reunited years later, once all its junior members are grown to adolescence. Lattanzio Marcassini, a Florentine, moves to Sicily and marries Lucantonio Fiorinelli's daughter. They have a son, Fabio. The family of three, together with Lattanzio's sister-in-law, Eugenia, move back to Florence, but Lattanzio is attacked on the way and separated from his family. His wife gives birth to twins, Cornelio and Porzia, and dies; Porzia ends up in the custody of her aunt, Eugenia; Fabio becomes heir to the rich man that adopts and raises him; Cornelio disguises himself as a girl (Cornelia) and lives with the family of Gianmatteo Lotteringhi and Cangenova, his wife. It isn't long before Cornelio/a falls in love with Gianmatteo's daughter, Lisabetta: the first of many amorous complications in the plot. Meanwhile, Fabio,

unaware of her true identity, falls in love with Cornelia, and enlists the help of Spinello to have her. Frosino is a jealous parasite who, in an attempt to help two of his friends (Ruberto, Gianmatteo's son who has stolen 500 ducats from his father, and Mario, in love with Cangenova) convinces Gianmatteo that Cangenova has a lover, and convinces Cangenova that Gianmatteo is frequenting whores. He tells Gianmatteo to dress as a woman to enter surreptitiously the place where his wife and her lover customarily meet, and tells Cangenova to dress as a man to be admitted to the brothel her husband frequents. He brings Gianmatteo to the house of Eugenia and Porzia, where Ruberto is hiding, hoping for forgiveness for the theft. There, Frosino intends to reveal that his accusations about Cangenova were untrue. He takes Cangenova to his own house so his friend Mario, waiting there, can have his way with her. Returning home, Gianmatteo discovers Cornelia's true sex when he finds him in bed with Lisabetta. He makes peace with Ruberto (at Eugenia's house), and Cangenova escapes Mario. Fabio comes to look for Cornelio, still thinking he is a girl, but Lattanzio miraculously arrives and recognizes all his children. Cornelio is married to Lisabetta, Porzia is married to Ruberto, and Fabio takes Gianmatteo's rich niece as a wife.

But more interesting than the mistaken identities (Cornelio's and Porzia's), the beffa played on Gianmatteo (Mario's enjoyment of Gianmatteo's wife), and the cross-dressing (Gianmatteo's and Cangenova's) present here is again the relationship between master and servant – Fabio and Guidotto. Only this time, in addition to the by now expected disturbance of the servant's customary role, is the dimension of age – a paradox Grazzini later picks up and elaborates upon in *L'Arzigogolo*. Fabio is barely younger than his servant, Guidotto – or, and perhaps not coincidentally, the “learned guide” – but is early in the play

schooled by him on basic human relations.³¹⁹ The very first scene of the very first act records their conversation about Fabio and Spinello's plan to win over Cornelia. Guidotto, untrusting of Spinello and his real motives – financial gain – disapproves entirely of his involvement, and spares Fabio no part of his criticism. At first, Fabio seems open at least to listen to his servant's counsel, but soon reminds Guidotto both of his position in the household, and of his similarity, in social status, to Spinello: "Questo sarebbe troppo gran tradimento: e non credo che un servo suo pari vi si mettesse, né altra persona viva," he says. Guidotto is penitent, but his response gives testimony to the wisdom Grazzini affords him beyond both his years and his station. He replies, not without gumption, "Perdonatemi, padrone, voi sete indietro, e mostrate d'esser venuto pure ieri al mondo: noi semo in una età troppo cattiva." Fabio continues to be unimpressed with his servant, but carries on the conversation, anyway, and likely strictly for narrative purposes to the audience's benefit; the lengthy passage that follows recounts both Fabio's and Cornelia's stories of recovery and adoption into wealthy families - Cornelia's wealthier still than Fabio's – and reveals Guidotto's primary concern: that, despite Spinello's intervention, careful about social status and the comfort associated with a noble and stable lifestyle, Cornelia's family will never consider Fabio a good enough match for their daughter, even if adopted. His concern is born of his personal relationship with Fabio: "ben m'incresce di voi, perch'io v'amo non come padrone, ma come maggior fratello," he says. Of course, Fabio disagrees with such familiarity: "Gran cosa che questi servidori voglion pure con la lunga consuetudine farsi

³¹⁹ It is also worth mentioning, I think, that as of this first scene, Guidotto is associated with the truth. He tells Fabio, "Voi credete bene a quello impiccato: io starei a patti che mi fussi tagliato la testa, se non guadagnare un pajo di calze, e direi che Spinello non ha mai favellato alla Cornelia per conto vostro." Fabio replies, "Ohimè, che mi di' tu?" to which Guidotto's response is, "La verità." Grazzini will later in this same scene as well as elsewhere insist on this point (I.i).

fratelli a i padroni, e par lor dovere di consigliargli, quando altra cura aver non doverrebbero che ubbidirgli: io lo feci venir fuori per fargli fare una faccenda,” he says, to conclude the scene and to remind viewers of the natural course of things.³²⁰

Here, and through Fabio, Grazzini is quite conscious of his appropriation of a trope already common to the theatre – the familiar servant – and, perhaps to make a further point of playing with it, has Fabio not only berate but also correct his “guide” about Cornelia’s coming to Florence and upbringing there. He also puts in Fabio’s mouth his perhaps most compelling prose definition yet of life as grotesque endeavour:

In varj modi, e da strani pensieri, e diverse sollecitudini è aggravato e percosso questo nostro vivere; ma gli stimoli, e le amorse cure, tormentandolo, e battendolo, mi par che di gran lunga ogni altra cosa passione: e questo poss’io dire con la prova avere sperimentato; perciocchè né la povertà, né la servitù, inimiche crudeli dell’umana vita, non mi dieron giammai né si aspre punture, né si mortali trafitte. E se non fussi la speranza, che mi nutrica d’ora in ora, impossibil sarebbe che io vivessi: e nel vero, che io ho da sperare, e non poco, facendomi ella così buon viso; anzi si benignamente alle volte mi guarda, che io veggio apertamente nei suoi begli occhi la immagine vera della pietà e nella serena fronte leggo com’ella si consuma, com’egli si strugge di trovarsi meco. Tosto mi chiarirò se io son losco, e s’io so leggere.

Still, in the larger context of the play as a whole, Guidotto emerges neatly as the more important figure between the two: not only does he appear in almost twice as many scenes

³²⁰ This passage is inconsistent with another, earlier in the scene, wherein Fabio confesses that his affection for Guidotto goes beyond the customary esteem for a servant and friend.

as his employer (Guidotto is seen in 11, Fabio in only 6), he assumes responsibility for his master's actions and becomes a consistent stand-in on his behalf the more the play progresses. Fabio disappears halfway through the fourth act, but Guidotto's presence only increases as soon as his master's decreases. Classically: Fabio sets the scene, and Guidotto ensures a proper denouement. More than that, in the scenes in which he does appear, Fabio is by and large presented as the very archetype of the star-crossed lover, and is generally ridiculed by all, including his supposed confidant and hired helper, Spinello.³²¹ What Grazzini accomplishes in his development of Fabio's relationship with Guidotto, then, is not so much an antagonistic reaction to the *commedia erudita* or an unexpected distortion of social values, but rather, a carnivalesque celebration of the bottom dwellers - here, also a sage - over their socially superior counterparts.

In *I parentadi*, Guidotto's intervention is, from the start, well intentioned and ultimately helpful. What is more, it is consistently pitted against Spinello's (heavy) involvement in his master's affairs, which is almost always deliberately misleading and selfishly complicated. His double-handedness comes as no surprise in the service of a character representative of Grazzini's typical social disdain: the author's consistently mocking treatment of Taddeo Saliscendi, an incorrigible pedant in *La strega*, and Messer Giansimone, an old doctor of law and letters in *La sibilla*, is perfectly consistent with his general dislike for the social archetypes they bring to life on the stage. Fabio, however, belongs to none of Grazzini's favourite categories of literary victims; he is a man born into a merchant middle class family, adopted into a family with money, and shown every

³²¹ I.ii. It is worth noting that in the passage found in the appendix, Spinello's "responses" to Fabio's lines are delivered in an aside, and shared only with the audience until he formally greets his young master.

advantage of life thanks not to pedigree, but to Fortune - a happy coincidence Grazzini is careful to underline in the play's opening scene.³²² Of all the play's characters, however, he is the one treated with the greatest degree of moral ambiguity. A great deal of it is written directly into his character from the start. He is in love with a woman he knows not to be either a man or his brother, and is willing to go to great lengths to be with her. But Grazzini swiftly deals with this hiccup both by keeping these siblings separate from each other – Cornelio never appears in the play, much less in a scene with Fabio – and by ensuring that Fabio's plan fails. By bringing Spinello, commercially in bed with Frosino, to Fabio's service, Grazzini categorically prohibits Fabio's moral digression and affords him a socially suitable alternative (or, rather, mainstream) existence. He does so, however, by duping and ridiculing him, not entirely unlike Niccodemo and Giovanguualberto in *La spiritata*, or Gerozzo in *La Pinzochera*.

Grazzini and social grotesque: the *Cene*

It is this particular ambiguity that surfaces more frequently in Grazzini's *Cene* and that eventually leads readers to revise their definitions of grotesque, marvel, and spectacle altogether – to consider them in perhaps moral terms. To explore this dimension, it will be necessary to make a detour at the *Cene* before returning to Grazzini's theatre. Grazzini's *Cene* – or, novelle modeled largely on Boccaccio's *Decameron*, were written, in three incomplete books, between 1540 and 1550. They were strikingly performative themselves; each revolves around either a public spectacle, or a celebrated retelling of a popular ruse.

³²² Of all Grazzini's literary creations, Fabio perhaps most closely resembles himself, biographically. Grazzini himself and his brothers and sisters were left orphaned by their parents; Grazzini and his brothers were taken in by a well-to-do, merchant middle class uncle, while his sisters were likely adopted together by another family member.

Only 24 survive, some of them of dubious origin or attribution, and were, from their first circulation in manuscript, intentionally controversial, and not only in terms of content: Grazzini sent them only to friends, colleagues, and, often, academic and literary enemies he expected to react against them with particular vitriol -- and openly invited them to do so.³²³ Despite their provocative nature, many are dedicated to elite families and set against the apparent background of the Florentine patrician domestic sphere.³²⁴

Like Boccaccio's novelle, Grazzini's are linked by a *cornice* that sees a *brigata* – the very word Grazzini uses to describe it - of 10 Florentines assembled at three weekly Thursday evening dinner parties, the first of which takes place at the end of January and right before the start of carnival. The group is composed of the elderly mistress of the house – the first arbiter, or, in Boccaccian terms, the *regina* of the first banquet, Amaranta – her brother, four young Florentine men, and four married women (neighbours or relatives) to complement them. To enliven their gathering and after much discussion, the mistress of the house ultimately proposes that, in the spirit of Boccaccio's *brigata* by whom they are all inspired, each member of their gathering should contribute to the weekly entertainment

³²³ see Grazzini, Antonfrancesco, *Le cene*, a cura di Enrico Emanuelli (Milano: Bompiani, 1946), intro by Emanuelli, pp. vii-xxii. To this effect, see Grazzini's letter to Masaccio di Calorigna, included in Pietro Fanfani's 1857 edition (Firenze: Le Monnier), wherein il Lasca writes: "Non che io pensi che l'abbino sopra l'altre composizioni privilegio, e che non sia di lor fatto come di tutte l'altre state composte insino a ora; perchè io so molto bene che ancora vivono, e forse più belle che mai, l'ignoranza, la presunzione, l'invidia e la malevolenzia; ma non me ne curo, e non ne voltarei la mano sotto-sopra. Chi non le vuol, le lasci stare; et a chi le non piacciono, le sputi: elle non son per farsi leggere a nessuno a forza; e se non basta ai letterati, agli squisiti, a' linguacciuti, agli sputasenno et ai cacasentenzie, graffiarle, morderle, trafiggerle, lacerarle e dilaniarle, scortichinle, stréghinle e strangolinle, perchè manco mi possono giovare le lodi che nuocere I biasmi. Ma se di loro mi vien mai qualcosa nelle mani, non faremo a farcela: tu sai che io ho la lingua anch'io" (Fanfani 241).

³²⁴ prominent members of Florentine elite culture (including Lorenzo de' Medici himself) are explicitly mentioned in at least two novelle, both in the first day: I.iii and I.viii; others feature fictional figures in high socio-political positions: II.v, most compellingly.

not only with their musical accomplishment, but also with a particularly noteworthy story of his or her own. Consonant both with Boccaccio's style in the *Decameron* and Dante's in the *Divine Comedy*, their stories should increase in richness and complexity from week to week, thus covering the full range of aesthetic genres, climbing from low to middle to high registers. Of course, only the first two *cene* fully survive: what is left of the third – four *novelle* – is still in an early stage of composition.

The *brigata's* contributions have been called “typically Tuscan” and are heavily steeped in the tradition of the “*beffa*” present to a lesser degree in Grazzini's comedies, and of a notable literary heritage from the Boccaccio's *Calandrino* in the *trecento* onward.³²⁵ Though not all are deliberately, intentionally, directly, or even indirectly funny, most provoke grotesque laughter, each in some way (not surprisingly) playing with social mores and expectations, or pitting society against an individual it deems too unconventional not to be marginalized or expelled.³²⁶ Although the *Cene* are works – perhaps, of Grazzini's corpus, masterpieces – in their own right, the themes they explore and the characters they exploit are by and large consistent with his comedies. Only, what Grazzini finds himself diluting in his theatrical production out of a superficial concern for public propriety in performance, he allows himself fully to develop in his more private and imaginative *Cene*. In them, Grazzini creates a world – in many ways a literary dysmorphia of Florentine

³²⁵ At least ten of the original twenty-one *novelle* are explicitly referred to with the word “*beffa*” both by their narrators and by later summaries added to the start of each.

³²⁶ Michel Plaisance has suggested folly as Grazzini's main brand of marginality, followed closely by the latent homosexuality he interprets in several of Grazzini's works. He links it, furthermore, to an overarching political critique and concern with social class distinction consistent with Grazzini's larger corpus (see: Michel Plaisance, *Antonfrancesco Grazzini Dit Lasca (1505-1584). Écrire dans la Forence des Médicis* (Roma: Vecchiarelli editore, 2005)).

society, almost each story set in very public Florentine spaces – only difficultly subject to absolute moral judgment from any one party.³²⁷

As one might expect, the general target of Grazzini's *beffe* – or, in the case of I.v and II.v, tragedies - are pedagogues, physicians, doctors of letters, politicians, and priests: all archetypes he openly and consistently disdains in his public life. Some are straightforward or accidental: the first novella of the first *cena*, told by Ghiacinto, affirms the old adage that coitus is a cure-all for sick women. When Salvestro Bisdomini notices that his wife is ill, he consults with a doctor, who orders a urine test. Salvestro enlists his chambermaid in the task of collecting her mistress's urine in a cup to send to the doctor; only, she discovers it spilled over minutes before it is intended for shipment, and replaces it with some of her own. Analysing the urine, the doctor advises Salvestro to lie with his wife and enjoy his conjugal rights to heal her. Once she is cured, the chambermaid admits her error. Because the tale ends happily, however, she is spared any of her master's anger, and the doctor's mistake – and overtly generic advice – are both overlooked. In I.iv, Giannetto della Torre publicly humiliates a pompous youth in a *pronta risposta* aimed to play both on the detto popolare, “alla barba di chi non ha debiti” and on the youth's lush, well-groomed beard. In the first *cena*'s closing novella, Cintia recounts a tale about another doctor who helps an old notary's young bride spite her jealous husband, Ser Anastagio, by coming in to treat her feigned illness, then lying with her. Ser Anastagio is effectively duped, but his wife is afforded permanent enjoyment of the doctor's company only when her husband accidentally falls down the stairs of their house and dies. Ghiacinto's closing tale of the second *cena* retells how, to settle a dispute between them, a priest allows Beco, whose

³²⁷ Some take place elsewhere in Tuscany (Prato, Siena, Pisa, and Fiesole, most commonly); one is set in Milan (II.ix).

fiancée, in his absence feigns engagement to and ultimately lies with Nencio in order to obtain a certain amount of dowry money from her adoptive mother, to lie with Nencio's wife. In each of these, the central conflict is settled without occasion for a scandalous reaction or moral judgment: a doctor commits a funny, but unintrusive and ultimately negligible error; a pompous man is justly and skillfully put in his place; a jealous husband is punished for his suspicion and his death rewards his cunning wife with a lover; wives are swapped for peaceful retribution. Even in the case of the last two, less morally conventional than the first, Grazzini finds a way to justify his authorial decisions: Ser Anastagio suspects his wife of infidelity before she is unfaithful, thus meriting her reaction and cosmic reward; Nencio upholds the promise he makes to the bride Pippa's mother not to mention anything of marriage to her while sharing a bed for the night, thus absolving him of improper behaviour. In all cases, Grazzini affords his audience an uncomplicated moral role.

Their moral fiber is put heavily to the test, however, in a number of other novelle, each time by way of a grotesque public spectacle that elicits marvel within the story, and forces readers to reflect upon it outside of it. As might be expected, the novelle presented in the first *cena* are still relatively morally unambiguous, though public spectacle often underlines Grazzini's intended judicial moment. The first, and mildest, case occurs in *I.iii*, the first in a non-consecutive cycle of stories featuring customary beffatori, *Lo Scheggia*, *il Monaco*, and *il Pilucca*. Here, the trio gets together to play a trick on Neri Chiaramontesi, a rich man and another famed beffatore, that essentially and ultimately drives him out of Florence until he is old and his humiliation is forgotten.³²⁸ Gathered at the home of Mario Tornaquinci, a friend of the trio's and often duped by Neri himself, *lo Scheggia* finds a way

³²⁸ Neri is "nobile e benestante" and "amico grandissimo di Lorenzo de' Medici, che governava Firenze" (Fanfani *Cene* 22).

to repay Neri for his many and frequent humiliations of his circle of friends. Neri first throws the gauntlet by challenging lo Scheggia to dye his face and hands and present a pair of gloves to a well-known courtesan of Florence for a scudo d'oro. But lo Scheggia ups the ante: with two florins on the line – “che [Neri] aveva più caro che da un altro diece, per poter poi schernirlo e uccellarlo a suo piacere” – he challenges Neri to appear at Ceccherino merciajo's *bottega*, strategically situated in the richest and poshest area of the city, dressed in white battle armour, brandishing a billhook, and threatening to slice any passers-by to bits. Neri accepts the challenge, and while he dresses in the armour held at Mario Tornaquinci's estate and slowly makes his way to Ceccherino's store, heavy with weaponry, lo Scheggia sends Monaco to the *bottega* and Pilucca to a fencing academy nearby to spread word that Neri had gone crazy, attempted to kill his mother, thrown his bedroom furniture down a well, and now, dressed in Tornaquinci's armour, was touring the city with his billhook, causing all to flee in fright, and threatening to visit Ceccherino's store to beat the storekeeper to a pulp. Not surprisingly, then, a crowd gathers outside Ceccherino's *bottega*, “[sì come] la maggior parte di quei giovani si partirono per veder questa festa,”³²⁹ and reacts to the sight of Neri first with laughter, then with fear:

Il quale da casa il cavalier partitosi, che stava da Santa Maria Novella, non senza meraviglia e riso di chiunque lo vedeva, s'era condotto alla bottega di Ceccherino; nella quale a prima giunta dato una spinta grandissima e spalancato lo sportello, entrò furiosamente dentro così armato, nella guisa che voi avete inteso; e gridando *Ahi traditori, voi sieti morti*, inalberò la roncola. Coloro, per la subita venuta, per la vista delle armi, per lo grido delle

³²⁹ Fanfani, *Cene 22*

parole minacciose, e per veder la roncola per l'aria, ebbero tutti una grandissima paura; e di fatto chi si fuggì nel fondaco, chi si nascose nella mostra, chi ricoverò sotto le panche e sotto il desco, chi gridava, chi minacciava, chi garriva, chi si raccomandava; un trambusto era il maggiore del mondo.³³⁰

To add insult to injury, lo Scheggia next hurries to Neri's uncle's wool studio in Porta Rossa, to report his nephew's folly and to beseech him to call in for reinforcements to have his nephew restrained. What follows is a quick succession of consecutive humiliations, each worse than the last. Neri is restrained by his uncle's men, consulted by doctors who recommend he be locked in a bedroom in his mother's house, shut there in the dark, deprived of food and water, still fully dressed and armed, for a full day. In the meantime, rumour of his mental illness spreads throughout Florence; even his mother and uncle are convinced of it.

Eventually, Neri has the opportunity to clear his name: when visited by doctors again the following day, and having pieced together the probable series of causes and consequences, he tells his side of the story. His level-headedness convinces the doctors, his uncle, and his mother of his innocence; they ask for forgiveness, he is released, and travels to Rome, then to Naples to live out the rest of his adult life in peace, far from the city that ruined his reputation. Still, although he is absolved, his humiliation is absolute, and readers, in on the joke, partake of it fully:

Coloro se gli scagliarono subito addosso; e presolo, chi per le gambe, chi per le braccia e chi per lo collo, lo distesero in un tempo in sul mattonato, che egli

³³⁰ Fanfani, *Cene* 23.

non ebbe agio a fatica di poter raccor l'alito; e gridando ad alta voce *Che fate voi, traditori, lo non sono pazzo*, potette rangolare, che essi gli legarono le bracci e le gambe di maniera, che non poteva pur dar crollo ... Lo Scheggia, da parte recatosi, e udendolo in quella guisa guaire, minacciare e bestemmiare, aveva una allegrezza si fatta che egli non capiva nella pelle. Le genti, che erano fuggite e nascostesi, sentendo e veggendo che gli era legato il pazzo, si facevano avanti; e riguardandolo da presso, a tutti ne incresceva, e lo dimostravano chiaramente co' gesti e colle parole.³³¹

It is worsened, of course, by the crowd gathered to witness it.

Readers may be tempted to empathise with Neri. They watch him “gongolando fra sé, fac[endo] loro una tagliata e uno squartamento che si sarebbe disdetto al Bevilacqua, girando intorno con quella roncola, ma guardando sempre a corre dove potesse far loro assai paura e poco danno,” then see him carted off like the mad-man they know he isn't.³³² Still, it is in the novella's most crucial moments that Grazzini steps in as a critical, if biased guide: Neri is “superbissimo di natura e bizzarro,” he reminds readers, immediately before Neri is removed from the premises in shackles. He has it coming: “La novella raccontata me n'ha fatta tornare una nella memoria, dove una beffa similmente si contiene,” Florido states at the outset of his tale, “ma fatto a uno che era solito di farne agli altri e però gli stette tanto meglio.”³³³ What is more, Neri himself acknowledges the error of his ways and almost personally affords lo Scheggia the victory Grazzini hardly has to:

³³¹ Fanfani, *Cene* 24.

³³² *ibid.*

³³³ Fanfani, *Cene* 21.

La cosa già, per bocca de' tre compagni e de' medici, si sapeva per tutto Firenze si come ella era seguita appunto; e ne andò per infino agli orecchi del Magnifico, il quale, mandato per lo Scheggia, volle intendere ogni particolarità: il che poi risapendo Neri, venne in tanta disperazione, che egli fu tutto tentato di dar loro, e massimamente allo Scheggia, un monte di bastonate, e vendicarsene per quella via. Ma poi, considerando che egli ne aveva fatte tante a loro et ad altri, che troppa vergogna e forse danno gliene risulterebbe, deliberò di guidarla per altro verso ...³³⁴

With Lorenzo de' Medici implicitly on his side, lo Scheggia emerges triumphant, while his nemesis is relegated to self-imposed exile.

Here, Grazzini's audience is prompted to side with the audience he writes into his stories; the reaction of the crowd in some way dictates the intended reaction of his readers. Such is the case twice more in the first *cena*. In I.v, one of only two stories that recounts "non accorti avvedimenti, non pronte risposte, non audaci parole, non arguti motti, non scempia goffaggine, non goffa scempiezza, non faceta invenzione, non piacevole o stravagante fine, non la letizia et il contento" but "focosi sdegni, feroci accenti d'ira, ingiuriose parole, angosciosi lamenti, rabbiosa gelosia, gelosa rabbia, crudele invenzione, disperato et inumano fine, il dispiacere et il dolore" and that inspires not laughter, but tears from the *brigata*, readers are again called to moral evaluation only when they are joined by a scripted audience in shock at a public spectacle.³³⁵ Guglielmo Grimaldi, a miserly moneylender, rich after a solitary life of penny-pinching, stumbles injured and rain-soaked

³³⁴ Fanfani, *Cene* 26.

³³⁵ "questa volta dai begli occhi delle vaghe giovani tirato in abbondanza giù le lagrime, e bagnato loro le colorite guancie et il dilicato seno" (44).

one night into the house of Fazio, a goldsmith and alchemist, and dies there. After a few attempts at bringing him back to life, Fazio searches Grimaldi for money and finds four lire on his person, and the keys to his house. Fully aware of Grimaldi's reputation of being a hermit and a filthily rich man, and afraid of being suspected of a homicide he did not commit, Fazio takes Grimaldi's keys, enters his home, and lifts a coffer of three hundred thousand golden scudi from it, then locks everything on site, buries Grimaldi with his keys in a discreet alley nearby, and retires home with his findings.

Despite his dubious behaviour, up until this point, Fazio is regarded kindly – or at the very least, without suspicion. He is alone in his house when Grimaldi appears, his wife having gone with their twin boys to her father's house. Fazio had tried to call for assistance, but had found no witnesses out in the rain. He had acted on logical impulse and wasn't greedy: in a house dripping with gold and other treasures, all he took was a coffer of golden scudi, just enough to make a fortune and put his miserable existence as a wildly unsuccessful alchemist behind him. Besides, no one misses Grimaldi: he dies without a family, in a city (Pisa) to which he was exiled from one of its greatest rivals (Genoa). Fazio, on the other hand, has a wife and two children in his custody. Grazzini treats him mercifully: theft is no great crime.

His mercy continues into the next part of the story. To legitimate his newfound fortune, Fazio pretends to have concocted the purest silver, and organizes a trip to France to sell it. He further covers his tracks by renting out one of his properties to subsidise his trip. His wife, however, is suspicious of his need to travel to France to sell his findings, so he reveals his plot and enlists her help to achieve his goal. He sets out to France and does everything necessary to confirm his newly earned riches publicly; in Pisa, his wife spreads

the word; people are shocked at his good luck and receive him warmly upon his return, a very wealthy man. Immediately, he procures a mansion and dresses his family in the finest clothes, employs two maids and two servants, and buys two horses and horsemen.

It isn't long, however, before his good fortune turns. Though his theft went unpunished in the story's first half, his greed – and his wife's jealousy - are treated less charitably. He falls in love with one of his maids, la Maddalena, eventually promises to marry her, takes her out of his house and away from the malice of his jealous wife and lives with her in a villa in the countryside. His wife, meanwhile, mortally offended by Fazio's behaviour, denounces him to the police, revealing the false acquisition of his fortune, and accusing him of murdering Grimaldi to steal his millions. The Magistrate finds Fazio guilty, imprisons him, tortures him to a false confession, condemns him to being dragged around the streets of Pisa bound shamefully to a pyre, then quartered publicly, and confiscates all his property – including the home of his wife and children. It is a twist his wife never expects and she reacts erratically: after accusing the Magistrate of gross maltreatment, she drags her sons to the main piazza of Pisa to see their father quartered and to have them bid him their final farewells, then stabs them fatally there, before finally killing herself.

As always, Grazzini suspends the punishment of his protagonists until he can subject them to a public spectacle. Fazio is sentenced for a crime he never commits, but punished for one perhaps worse in Grazzini's view. His luck begins to sour the moment he puts himself into the public eye and flashes his fortune. It is only once his fame grows so large, his execution accrues a following, that Grazzini deals him the fatal blow, while publicly vindicating Grimaldi: "Per lo che diede il Magistrato sentenza che l'altra mattina, facendo le cerchie maggiori per Pisa, fusse attanagliato e finalmente squartato vivo . . . E Guglielmo,

cavato di quella volta, fecero sotterrare in sagrato, con meraviglia e stupore grandissimo di chiunque lo vide.”³³⁶ Grimaldi’s death is quiet, and goes unacknowledged for years; only when it is uncovered by the masses can Fazio’s public execution be achieved:

Venne l’altra mattina, et all’ora deputata sopra un carro lo infelicissimo Fazio, fatto per tutta Pisa le cerchie maggiori, in piazza condotto, sopra un palchetto a posta fatto, bestemmiando sempre sé e la iniqua moglie, dal manigoldo in presenza di tutto il popolo fu squartato; e dipoi insieme ridotto, e sopra il medesimo palchetto acconcio, fu disteso, che quivi tutto l’avanzo del giorno stette, a esempio dei rei e malvagi uomini.³³⁷

Still, and despite this unequivocal penitence, Grazzini is not satisfied to provide his readers with a completely unambiguous moral lesson. Fazio’s execution is immediately followed by the public spectacle of his wife’s filicide and suicide. The sons’ tragic deaths are what Grazzini, his audience, and, by extension, his readers, ultimately mourn. Still, and despite Grazzini’s early attribution of responsibility to “una femmina, ancora che ella non fusse né imperadrice né reina né principessa, disperata e sanguinosa,” it is unclear what the proper cause of it – whether Fazio’s greed, his wife’s jealousy, his “paterno sangue” or her cruelty – is.³³⁸ In the midst of the web of blame, Grazzini calls his readers, with his audience, only to suffer the loss of innocent lives:

Le persone che erano quivi intorno, ciò veggendo, lassù gridando corsero, e i due miseri fratellini e la disperata madre trovarono che davano i tratti agozzati a guisa di semplici agnelli. Il romore e le grida subito si levarono

³³⁶ Fanfani, *Cene* 41.

³³⁷ Fanfani, *Cene* 42.

³³⁸ Fanfani, *Cene* 31.

altissime, e per tutta Pisa si sparse in un tratto la crudele novella; talché le genti, piangendo, correvano là per vedere uno così spaventoso e orribilissimo spettacolo, dove il padre e la madre con due loro così belli e biondi figliolini empivamente feriti, e crudelissimamente insanguinati, morti, l'uno sopra l'altro attraversati giacevano . . . I pianti, i lamenti e le strida intanto erano tali e così fatte per tutta la città, che pareva che dovesse finire il mondo: e sopra tutto doleva ai popoli la morte dei due innocenti fratellini, che, senza colpa o peccato, troppo inumanamente del paterno sangue e di quello dell'empia madre tinti e macchiati, in terra morti stavano, in guisa che pareva che dormissero, avendo la tenera gola aperta; e di quella caldo e rossissimo sangue gemendo, tanta nei petti dei riguardanti e doglia e compassione mettevano, che chi ritener avesse potuto le lagrime e il pianto, o sasso o ferro, più tosto che corpo umano, si sarebbe potuto dire: perciocchè il crudo e scellerato spettacolo avrebbe potuto destare alcuno spirito di pietà nella crudeltade stessa.³³⁹

Readers can rely only on the audience's participation to take the cue for their own. Grazzini uses none of his customary tricks here. His protagonists are, by and large, inconsistent with his usual targets, which Grazzini is careful to underline before Leandro's narration even begins. He writes: 'E quantunque egli non accadesse né in Grecia, né in Roma, né a persone di alta progenie o di regale stripe, pure così fu appunto come io ve lo racconterò: e vedrete che nelle umili e basse case, così come ne' superbi palagi e sotto i dorati tetti, il furore

³³⁹ Fanfani, *Cene* 42-43.

tragico ancora alberga.”³⁴⁰ The grotesqueness of their death elicits a reaction intended to outweigh the attribution of blame to any character.

Fazio’s false confession here, in I.v, foreshadows the real confession that occurs only two novelle later. In Fileno’s tale, Florence’s classic rivalry with Siena rises to the surface in a prolonged and two-way beffa between a Sienese priest and a Florentine altar boy, both serving the pieve at Prato. Because both men are young and because the altar boy, il Fiorentino, ‘era nondimeno sagace e malizioso e bizzarretto alquanto . . . con prete Piero . . . stava sempre in litigj e in quistione.” One night, after all have gone to bed, prete Pietro, to put il Fiorentino in his place, sneaks into the church crypt, removes a young woman prepared for burial just that day from her resting spot, and ties her to the clapper of the churchbell il Fiorentino customarily rings to announce the morning mass, her feet dangling just beyond the bell’s lip in such a way that they would hit il Fiorentino squarely in the head when he went to pull on the bell’s rope. Prete Pietro waits in the wings for his plan to take effect and rejoices when, the next morning, il Fiorentino is frightened within an inch of his life and flees. Quite content with himself, the priest returns to bed. But il Fiorentino soon discovers the trick and devises a way to slip into the priest’s bedroom and plant the girl’s dead body in bed with him. Prete Pietro awakens a few hours later and, like Neri Chiamontesi in I.iii, suffers a series of consecutive humiliations. First, he discovers the dead girl beside him and, thinking himself haunted by her ghost for the sin he committed the night before, rushes out of bed and, in his haste to report his vision, falls down the stairs of his quarters, breaking an arm and a rib, and injuring his head in the process. His tumble draws a crowd: the Prior, the herald, and the maid all rush to his side, providing il

³⁴⁰ Fanfani 31.

Fiorentino with the perfect opportunity to remove the dead body from prete Pietro's room and restore her to her resting place before she can be discovered. After ringing the bells for the rosary mass, il Fiorentino is asked to summon a doctor and joins him, too, at prete Pietro's side. The priest has refused to go back to his room, and explains why, but by the time the premises are inspected for foulplay, the body has been removed from his bed, and prete Pietro appears to have lost his mind entirely, or simply suffered from a nightmare and a bad night's sleep.

Once he is medicated, prete Pietro insists on recounting the whole tale to discover the source of his discomfort, "e in presenza di tutti, tutto quello che per far paura al Fiorentino operato aveva, e quello che gliene era interventuo, pregando il zio e 'l cherico che fussero contenti di volergli perdonare, appalesò."³⁴¹ But il Fiorentino denies the priest's claims, adding only that "a me questa notte non hai fatto né paura né cosa niuna che io sappia." The altar boy's reaction only further provokes the priest, who again runs through the full series of events. But il Fiorentino takes prete Pietro to the church crypt and shows him the girl buried there, as if she'd never been touched. Escorted back to bed, prete Pietro retreats into a melancholy fit of anger, fury, and demonic possession that ultimately leads him to throw himself into the courtyard from his window, dying on impact.

It is a harsh punishment for a priest whose only error was to play a trick, like so many others, on his junior. Grazzini does not spare il Fiorentino penance: he is asked to leave Prato and returns to Florence to serve at San Piero Maggiore. More significant than his expulsion from Prato, however, is the eternal gift of gab Grazzini finally affords him: "in

³⁴¹ Fanfani *Cene* 55.

processo di tempo raccontò più di mille volte questa storia per novella,” in an indefinite extension of prete Pietro’s public humiliation.³⁴²

The complicit relationship between reader and scripted audience continues into the second *Cena*, but is infinitely complicated there, even at its most straightforward. The second evening of storytelling opens comfortably. In II.i, the drowned body of a wealthy Lazzero di Milano is mistaken for that of his neighbour Gabriello who, assuming Lazzero’s identity – and excessive riches – remarries his wife in this new guise and takes residence with her and their family in the deceased man’s lavish home. Here, the period of grief that follows is quickly outlived by the joy that immediately comes of the celebrated nuptials. Grazzini’s scruples are less in question here, however: Sir Lazzero is, for all intents and purposes, a grumpy man with no relatives and few friends. His death leaves the door to his riches open to poor Gabriello, his only friend, who can barely keep his family afloat financially. The happy ending of the novella seems justified and the laughter that accompanies it, too.

On the tragic end of the spectrum, and slightly more morally ambiguous, II.v tells the tale of Currado, Lord of Fiesole, “signore giusto e liberale, e tenuto caro e amato molto dai suoi cittadini” who discovers his new – and much younger – second wife, Tiberia, in the intimate embrace of his then eighteen year-old son, Sergio. Outraged at this double-betrayal, Currado summons the Sheriff, his whole family, and his band of rogues to inflict mortal punishment on Tiberia and Sergio: after suprising the pair of lovers in bed and binding them to each other by their feet and hands, Currado orders the brutal company to gouge out their eyes, snip out their tongues, and, finally, lop off their feet and hands before

³⁴² Fanfani, *Cene* 56.

placing them back in their bed of guilt. The next morning, the inhabitants of Fiesole all rally around the condemned palace to mourn the reported deaths and, “spaventati e sbigottiti per l’inaudita e incomparabile inumanità [del principe]” hunt down their lord, find him hiding in a field of wheat, tie him to a stake, and stone him to death.

Again here, it is Grazzini’s authorial reaction to his characters’ transgressions rather than the transgressions themselves that reveals the complexity of his grotesque apparatus. Tiberia and Sergio are, of course, punished for their adultery, but even in his cruelty, Grazzini deals with them mercifully and charitably. From the first, he is on their side: out of respect for his father and step-mother, lovesick Sergio hides his illness at all costs, even to himself, until Tiberia directly confronts him about it. The lovers confess and consume their love discreetly, and are afforded several months of near-private bliss. When eventually, their luck turns, Grazzini blames their fate not on their actions, but on forces external to them both: the caprice of Fortune, and the sudden inhumanity of their lord, Signor Currado.³⁴³ Even their death, at the hands of Currado, “per la rabbia diventato insano e furioso” is idealized. Grazzini writes, in a rare moment of narratorial and authorial intrusion:

I poveri sfortunati amanti, senza lingua, senza occhi, senza mani e piedi
trovandosi, egualmente per sette parti del corpo a ciascheduno uscendo il
sangue, erano quasi venuti alla fine della vita loro. Nondimeno, udite l’ultime
parole di Currado, e sentito sgombrare la camera e serrar l’uscio, al tasto
s’erano trovati; e con i mozziconi abbracciatisi, l’una bocca all’altra

³⁴³ Ma la fortuna, nemica de’ beni umani, disturbatrice dei piaceri terreni, e contraria alle voglie dei mortali, in guisa si contrapose alla lor gioja, che dove erano il più felici che si trovassero al mondo, in breve furono i più miseri” (Fanfani, *Cene* 145).

accostando, e restringendosi il più che potevano insieme, dolorosamente la morte aspettavano. Deh considerate, pietose donne, se mai udiste o leggeste il più crudele, il più disperato e il più inumano caso di questo! Dove giammai, dove i più scellerati del mondo con tanta acerba pena, con tanto amaro duolo, e con tanto disperato supplizio si punirono, quanto costoro? ... Come non s'aperse la terra, come non caddero le stelle, come non rovinò il cielo al terribile, empio e scellerato spettacolo? Qual Mauro, qual Turco, qual Lestrigone, qual Furia infernale, qual Demonio si sarà immaginato mai, non che mandato ad effetto, una sì crudele e spaventosa morte? Ahi sfortunati e miseri amanti! A voi non pure nell'ultimo vostro fine non fu concesso potervi rammaricare, e sfogando dolervi, né confortare, né consigliari l'un l'altro . . . Ahi infelicissimi! In voi altro che trovar sangue con sangue, intensa e infinita passione non ebbe luogo: almeno Venere pietosa l'anime vostre accolga, e nel terzo cielo guidandole, vi dia grazia di sempre stare insieme, come merita il vostro ferventissimo amore.³⁴⁴

The lovers thus earn – or gratuitously receive – their happy ending in the next world. Still, and despite the brutal death he is dealt, Currado's treatment in the latter half of the novella is severely compromised by his actions in the former. Grazzini presents him first as a beloved leader and celebrated local figure, next as an obliging husband, then as a doting father. Even once he discovers his wife's infidelity and his son's betrayal, he keeps his composure long enough to underline the unjustness of his mistreatment and the ingratitude of those responsible for it. Their love ignites the jealous rage that strips him of

³⁴⁴ Fanfani, *Cene* 149-150.

his humanity – “indurato così nella crudeltà, . . . egli non si sentiva appena di essere uomo” – turns his subjects against him, and sentences him to death.³⁴⁵ Still, it is their love that triumphs at the end of the tale, their love that is mourned by thousands at the castle doors, their love that in their joint burial, overshadows the destruction of Fiesole that eventually follows their death.³⁴⁶

In many ways, Currado’s punishment seems well matched to his excessive force and, given his station and Grazzini’s political inclinations, might be expected. But Grazzini is careful, in the second *cena* as in his comedies, to reverse his audience’s assumptions as quickly as they are formed. The twin stories of II.vii and II.viii function together to this end. Both are tales of fraternal protection and intervention against a sister’s unwanted suitor; both center around a *beffa* played on an unwitting courtier who, in each, is a very typical member of Grazzini’s palette of antagonists – the one is a pedant, the other a priest. Only their endings are vastly dissonant. In II.vii, Agolante intercepts a love letter intended for his young sister, Fiammetta, penned by a known pedagogue from neighbouring Valdarno, Taddeo. Incensed at Taddeo’s gall, Agolante, together with his friend Lamberto and a band of fellow supporters, arranges to play a *beffa* on his sister’s suitor that, as per form, unfolds exponentially into continuous humiliation, both public and private, as the novella proceeds. In his sister’s name (and persona), he invites Taddeo to join Fiammetta in her room that evening and enjoy her embraces there. Only, once the pedagogue arrives, he is attacked by Agolante’s troop of disguised men, beaten, and left bleeding and naked, feet and hands

³⁴⁵ Fanfani, *Cene* 149.

³⁴⁶ Grazzini concludes his novella by explaining that “l’altro giorno i primi e i più vecchi cittadini, nel palagio ragunatisi, non sendo chi succedere alla signorìa, per non aver Currado lasciato erede, saviamente ordinarono, riducendola repubblica, e così stette tanto, che finalmente dai Romani fu distrutta” (Fanfani, *Cene* 151).

bound, in Fiammetta's bedroom. He is next blindfolded and brought to the Mercato Vecchio where, his blindfold temporarily removed, he watches as an effigy dressed in his own clothes and adorned with a sign around its neck accusing him of attempted sodomy is tied around a column and left there, head concealed. At dawn, a morally and physically depleted Taddeo follows Agolante and Lamberto into a stall at his master's house and is again left for dead there, naked, and immobile, while all of Florence marvels at the spectacle of his effigy – which no one dares touch – in the nearby piazza. Despite their appalling treatment of Taddeo – eventually, they go back to liberate him but not before urinating all over his body and setting his beard on fire - Agolante and Lamberto get away with their crime. Taddeo's master, having recognized his pupil in the effigy's clothing, reports the incident to the Magistrate; Agolante and Lamberto take down the effigy, eventually confess their guilt - though they are careful to justify it with copies of Taddeo's unsolicited letters to Fiammetta - and get off with only a proverbial slap on the wrist. When Taddeo is eventually freed onto the diluvial streets of Florence, naked and slippery, he is again ridiculed, laughed off the scene as he retreats to Pontassieve. Agolante and Lamberto, however, rather than atone for their actions, much like *il Fiorentino* in I.vii, are instead rewarded with Posterity's kindness to their legendary tale.³⁴⁷

Despite the similarity of its *argomento* to this previous tale, II.viii concludes rather differently.³⁴⁸ There, a priest, infatuated with a young, noble woman, devises a plan to

³⁴⁷ “Onde [gli Otto], parlatone con i compagni dentro l’Ufizio, dopo avergli sgridati e ripresi, gli licenziarono dal Magistrato; et essi lietissimi per Firenze la beffa raccontando interamente, facevano ridere ognuno che gli ascoltava” (Fanfani, *Cene* 172).

³⁴⁸ As much is acknowledged in the tale's prologue. Silvano, narrating, states, “Che direte, voi, delicate donne e voi altri, che la favola che io ho pensato di raccontarvi, somiglia tanto alla passata, che io sono stato per lasciarla indietro e narrarvene un'altra? E lo farei

surprise her at her lodgings while her brothers are away in Prato at a fair. Instead, that same night, in response to their sister's pleas, the brothers surprise the priest – il Sere - in the backyard of his parish, whip him, strip him, rob his church, tie him to a cypress tree in the church courtyard, and leave him to his parishioners. His absence from the morning mass does not go unnoticed. Startled, the congregation sets about the church premises to look for him, and finds him where his assailants have left him. But rather than respond to him with the ridicule and mockery with which Taddeo is treated in II.vii, the crowd gathered there reacts to il Sere with profound compassion; they meet his repeated pleas, "Misericordia et ajuto per l'amor di Dio" with great generosity, pull him down from the tree, cover him with a heavy cloak, lead him back to his resting place, and leave him there to recover until he is strong enough to administer the next mass. When he does, he shares his woeful tale with the mass-goers, but conveniently omits its cause; the thieves were sent disguised as devils, from God, he says, as a test to his faith. His hardship inspires so much pity that within just two years, his parishioners entirely voluntarily replenish his stolen lifelong savings.

It is a happy ending for the morally questionable protagonist, even despite Grazzini's strongest admonitions. Early in the novella, he puts in the younger brother's mouth his own invocation against corrupt clergymen – a verbal treatment Taddeo never receives. He writes:

Io non so chi mi tiene che io non vi passi fuor fuori: ecco bella costumanza
d'ottimo religioso! questi sono gli ammaestramenti et i ricordi buoni che date
all'anime che sono alla vostra custodia? a questo modo, in questa foggia si

certamente, se non che il fine è differentissimo, e per ciò di raccontarla intendo a ogni modo" (Fanfani, *Cene* 172).

vengono a visitare le sue popolane? Non vi vergognate, pretaccio vituperoso, a venire in casa gli uomini da bene a svergognare le loro famiglie, e ingannare le semplici fanciulle? Ben vi credereste aver questa notte favorevole e propizia alle vostre disoneste voglie e libidinosi pensier; ma in cambio di fare nozze, vi troverete a un mortorio.³⁴⁹

One might indeed question my alignment of Grazzini with his character here, in view of il Sere's ultimate success. The way in which Grazzini generally treats priests throughout the *Cene*, however, supports my point. More importantly still, Grazzini provides his readers with another interpretative clue to a reinforcing effect towards the novella's end. Several days later, the brothers, returning from Prato, hear of the priest's ruse and are flabbergasted. "Si maravigliarono fuor di modo e dall'astuzia sua e della semplicità delle persone," Grazzini writes. *Astuzia* is a commonly praised quality in the novella tradition, and Grazzini in no way departs from it in his own. In the entire collection, *la semplicità delle persone*, however, is offered only here as an explanation to a senseless resolution – and in a text which, as we have seen, relies heavily on personal reaction to public spectacle. Grazzini insists on this public naiveté in the novella's final lines:

Pur poi in spazio di molti anni, morto il maggior fratello, la fante vecchia e il minore lo ridisse [il colpo]: ma non gli fu creduto, benché giurando l'affermasse, et allegasse il compagno per testimonio, raccontando il fatto come gli era andato per isgannare quei popoli; ma senza essergli prestata fede, fu tenuto invidioso e mala lingua. Così con la sagacità e con il suo

³⁴⁹ Fanfani, *Cene* 175.

ingegno il buon prete seppe fuggire danno e vergogna non piccola; ma per sempre se ne ricordò, et uscigli del capo l'amore delle femmine.³⁵⁰

Here, and despite the authority of a first-hand account and a witness's objective testimony, churchgoers – *persone semplici* – refuse to be *isgannati*. They persist in their blind loyalty and see in the truth only a slandering motivated by jealousy.

The most striking collision of public spectacle, questionable morals, and popular “foolishness,” however, is found in the second novella of the second *cena*. It tells the story of Falananna, a simpleton who “diceva e credeva cose tanto sciocche e goffe e fuori d’ogni convenevolezza umana, che più tosto animal domestico che uomo stimar si sarebbe potuto” and of his plain desire to die.³⁵¹ After several times learning about the transience of his earthly life at Lenten masses, Falananna decides he wants to teach himself how to die so that he might truly begin his life in the next world. It is a plan that pleases his wife, too, since she has taken a lover into her home and has been enjoying his attentions since the start of her marriage. Together with her lover, she supports her husband’s wish, prepares his death-bed, and when the time comes, sends her lover disguised as a friar to confess him, pretends he has died, grieves, and attends to his funeral services. He is placed on display in the middle of a room wrapped in the cloak of the dead, where all come to pay homage to what they think is a corpse. The scene that follows, in which Falananna reveals himself still to be alive, is all the more spectacular as a result. Accused of owing a debt to one of his neighbours and unable to live – or, better, to die – with the shame of it, Falananna rises from the dead: lifts the veil covering his face and begins shouting in an attempt both to clear his name and to find solace in what he thinks is his certain death. The crowd’s

³⁵⁰ Fanfani, *Cene* 180.

³⁵¹ Fanfani, *Cene* 90.

reaction to this show is unsettling: they refuse to bury Falananna and, when he flees, take after him with sticks and stones. Running too quickly and tripping over his death-clothes, Falananna eventually falls into the Arno – set aflame by a magician who has poured oil on its surface to perform his act, and there, ultimately dies. It is worth mentioning that in this moment, at least, the crowd does come to his aid:

Ma, veggendo, e più sentendo la fiamma che l'ardeva, cominciò a stridere et a gridare quanto gli usciva dalla gola, e con le mani s'ajutava quanto poteva, gittendosi dell'acqua addosso; e così facevano le genti, che per la Porticciuola erano corse in gran quantità per aiutarlo. Ma quanto più cercavano ammorzarli e spegnerli quelle fiamme, tanto più gliene accendevano; sicchè il povero uomo attendeva a urlare con sì alta voce, che risonando giù per lo corso dell'acque, si saria potuto sentire agevolmente per fino a Peretola; e dimenandosi e scontorcendosi in quelle fiamme, sembrava una di quell'anime che mette Dante nell'Inferno.³⁵²

The closing note of the novella, however, is somewhat less clearly humane. Falananna, “abbronzato et arsiccio,” becomes the butt of local gossip that marvels at the idea of burning in the arno. It is unclear whether any sympathy is paid him. Even the false Frate Berna, Falananna’s cuckold, “piangendo con gli occhi, e ridendo col cuore, se ne tornò a confortare” Falananna’s wife and mother.³⁵³ This reaction is echoed at the start of the following novella by those listening to the tale: “questa novella di Florido gli aveva fatti ridere di cuore e daddovero; né di ridere si potevano ancor tenere, benché a qualcuno per

³⁵² Fanfani, *Cene* 103.

³⁵³ *ibid.*

le risa dolessero gli occhi e il petto; e più avrebbero riso, se il fine veramente troppo crudele di Falananna non gli avesse rattemperati.”³⁵⁴

Here, Grazzini’s social commentary works on two levels: Falananna is both the perfect exemplar of Grazzini’s typical crowds, and the tool that allows him to berate them. Although he is drafted, from the start, as a mere “simpleton” and therefore marginalized member of society, in his gullibleness, Falananna is perfectly equal to the company he holds. Certainly, the tale itself spares him no mockery, his public funeral aside; he is surrounded constantly by people more clever than himself – by default. Still, his willingness to accept everything at face value based only on authorities deemed questionable by any objective means (the church, his mother-in-law, a false friar) is perfectly consonant with the reaction of Grazzini’s public in every other tale examined thus far. Falananna lies in bed beside his wife as she takes her fill of il Berna’s amorous attention, but he never suspects any foul-play; he takes literally the parish priest’s declarations that “questa vita non era vita, anzi una vera morte” and that “noi, mentre vivevamo in questo mondo, eravamo veramente morti, e chi moriva di qua, cominciava a vivere una vita senza affanni, dolce e soave, e senza aspettare mai più la morte.”³⁵⁵ For all intents and purposes, he is a fool. So too, however, are Grazzini’s “choruses” from one novella to the next. Similarly, whether they are led by priests, political figures, beffatori, or even the everyday biases of an assuming crowd, they repeatedly disengage from any rational activity in their reaction to public spectacle. In II.viii, they unquestioningly accept the priest’s story as truth without any room for contest even years later; in II.vii, they dare not even touch Taddeo’s effigy in Mercato Nuovo to verify its legitimacy, but are quick to judge and ridicule the pedant at the

³⁵⁴ Fanfani, *Cene* 104.

³⁵⁵ Fanfani, *Cene* 94.

earliest opportunity. Neri Chiaramontesi is eventually exonerated, but at the expense of his reputation, and is just as quickly dismissed; il Fiorentino, a young boy and junior both in age and in rank to the man he dupes convinces an entire congregation, including the man he tricks, of the priest's folly. Even Grazzini's tragedies feature swarms of fickle bystanders: loyal subjects that turn into a murderous mob without the benefit of context to bolster their cruelty; nosy neighbours that just as quickly side with a murderess, then against her. Here, too, Falananna's followers are little better than he is. They attend his staged funeral in good faith, then turn against him when their faith is proven wrong. Eager to save him one minute, but unable to do so in the next, they watch him burn, bury him, and move on. Grazzini equalizes the two parties still more explicitly, however, in his closing paragraph, where he provides an account of the crowd's explanation for Falananna's unexpected misfortune. He writes:

Molti pensavano che ciò li fusse accaduto per opera di streghe, chi per forza d'incanti e di malie, altri per arte di negromanzia, et altri per illusione diabolica: pure la maggior parte degli uomini si accordava che dalla sua scempiatezza e pazzia incomparabile fusse derivato il tutto.³⁵⁶

Quick to dissolve the incident, they do away with it, as Grazzini's crowds always do, by deeming insanity to be its cause.

Grazzini situates in his brigata's reaction to Falananna's plight both an ideal reader's response to this novella and the overarching grotesque tone of his macrotext. The overall structure of his *Cene* is summarized here: a ten-membered group of voyeurs witnesses a public spectacle - and great cause for marvel - three times removed from it and, with the

³⁵⁶ Fanfani, *Cene* 104.

benefit of distance, objectivity, and casual gest, experiences the full spectrum of grotesque reaction to it: laughter, fear, embarrassment, tears. The ideal reader's reaction to Grazzini's collection of novelle as a whole mirrors the brigata's enjoyment of Falananna's tale: in a corpus ruled by beffe and the laughter they provoke, Grazzini is careful also to insert tragedies, dream sequences, and necromancy; alongside every tale of compassion is one of inhumanity. Unlike its primary model, the *Decameron*, however, Grazzini's *Cene* display no thematic organization or nobilitating end. Though they grow in complexity from the first day of storytelling to the incomplete third, and while some appear to be in conversation with others, the tales of the *Cene*, assembled as they are, form a beast of dissonant parts not dissimilar to the creatures of Grazzini's *Guerra de' mostri*. The public spectacle that threads them all together is, of course, Grazzini's "marvelous" authorial act. Silvano's introductory note to I.ix synthesizes Grazzini's hope: "Ornate donne e amorosi giovani, io voglio, scambio di ridere, farvi colla mia favola meravigliare," he says.³⁵⁷

Grazzini as "marvelous" author (and author of marvel)

In fact here as in his plays, Grazzini is not satisfied to interpret marvel and public spectacle only thematically, or in the storylines of his works. Almost as a rule, he is far more concerned with the "invention" in his technical form than the invention of tropes, plots, or characters. His very *writing*, then, becomes the ultimate spectacle at which he wishes his readers and viewers to marvel. His aim in the *Cene* – if we are to take seriously its modesty – is novelty or inventiveness rather than either skill or aesthetic prowess. In the introduction to his *Cene*, he writes, in the voice of Amaranta:

³⁵⁷ Fanfani 62.

Ma, intanto che l'ora ne venga del cenare, ho io pensato, quando vi piaccia, come passare allegramente il tempo; e questo sarà, non leggendo le favole scritte del Boccaccio, ancora che né più belle né più gioconde né più sentenziose se ne possono ritrovare; ma, trovandone e dicendone da noi, séguiti ognuno la sua; le quali, se non saranno né tanto belle né tanto buone, non saranno né anche né tanto viste né tanto udite, e per la novità e varietà ne doverranno porgere, per una volta, con qualche utilità non poco piacere e contento; sendo tra noi delle persone ingegnose, sofistiche, astratte e capricciose.³⁵⁸

Grazzini's preoccupation with the "capriccio" here speaks to another contemporary literary debate and one in many ways also linked to ongoing discourses on the grotesque. By the time Grazzini writes his *Cene*, the "capriccio," despite being characteristically ungeneric, is ubiquitous from poetry to painting and, later, music. Its definitions from 1530 up until the eighteenth century are as numerous as its manifestations. It straddles the line between folly and divine *furor* – Vasari will see in it both the positivity of invention and inspiration, and the negativity of superfluous whimsy or extravagance³⁵⁹ – is an expression

³⁵⁸ The rest of the passage points to the storytellers' virtue in narration as acquired through familiarity with popular culture in practice: "E voi, giovani, avete tutti buone lettere d'umanità, siete pratici coi poeti, non solamente latini o toscani, ma greci altresì, da non dover mancarvi invenzione o material di dire: e le mie donne ancora s'ingegneranno di farse onore. E per dirne la verità, noi semo ora per carnevale, nel qual tempo è lecito ai religiosi di rallegrarsi; e I frati tra loro fanno al Pallone, recitano comedie, e travestiti suonano, ballano e cantano; e alle monache ancora non si disdice, nel rappresentare le feste, questi giorni vestirsi da uomini, colle berrette di velluto in testa, colle calze chiuse in gamba, e colla spada al fianco. Perché dunque a noi sarà sconvenevole o disonesto il darci piacere novellando?" (Fanfani 5-6).

³⁵⁹ Vasari's definition of "capriccio" is influenced mostly by the works of Michelangelo Buonarroti and more specifically, his "ignudi." See Patricia Emison, "The ignudo as Proto-Capriccio," *Word and Image* 14.3 (1998): 281-95.

of creativity, and is often thought to inspire terror or *ribrezzo*; Alunno da Ferrara's 1543 definition of it in his *Della fabbrica del mondo* includes this latest among other definitions.³⁶⁰ What appears most common to all explications of *capriccio* from Berni in 1530 to Lodovico Dolce in 1555 to Cesare Ripa in 1593, however, is its divergence both from the commonplace and from the control of reason, dependent entirely on the humour of the author in any given text. Most also agree on laughter as its end result – the “capriccio” is a mostly useless function embedded within a text aiming above all to please rather than to edify. Of course, as seen, Grazzini's take on the “capriccio” in his *Cene* and on his frequent, if indirect, call for moral reaction to them decidedly (and often violently) disrupts this last relegation of the capriccio strictly to the spectrum of delight. Still more interesting is the fact that he does it most frequently by playing on popular conceptions of the “folly” also central to artistic production. Grazzini's reappropriation of the capriccio tradition most familiar to him and his cohort is as novel as the tales he tells – and as grotesque. Without departing from realism – another would-be determining feature of the “capriccio” most frequently championed theoretically by Berni – he gives back to the capriccio the features belonging to and in provenance from its etymological root: “capegli arricciare” or, as Alice Rathé has phrased it “faire dresser les cheveux sur la tête sous l'action du froid, de crainte, ou de la fièvre.”³⁶¹ In so doing, he creates an opus that is at once whimsical, grotesque, and marvelous.

His most noteworthy experiments in the creation of grotesque literary bodies arguably occur, however, not in his *Cene*, but in the prologues to *La strega* and *I parentadi*.

³⁶⁰ See Alice Rathé, “La capriccio dans les lettres italiennes,” *Les lettres romanes* 34 (1980): 207-45 and “Le Capriccio dans les écrits de Vasari,” *Italica* 57.4 (1980): 239-54.

³⁶¹ Rathé, “Vasari,” 239.

Neither is actually or conventionally a “prologue” and perhaps misleadingly sets the tone for the work to follow, in both cases a rather traditional contribution to cinquecento comedy. At the start of *La strega*, the Prologue and the Argument are embodied as characters that emerge on opposite ends of the stage at the same time, each one “[favellando] a un tratto, fingendo di non si vedere e non si udire.”³⁶² It isn’t long before both interlocutors see the need to acknowledge each other in a more coherent dialogue, each one justifying its own existence and questioning that of its adversary. What emerge are a veritable debate on contemporary literary and theatrical practices, and Grazzini’s ambivalent position with respect to them. The scene is a performance in and of itself, but not one with which the audience may have been familiar. By colliding two otherwise complementary forces into one competitive atmosphere, Grazzini devises a new kind of literary creation that dazzles readers as much as it delights them. He goes a step further in his Prologue to *I parentadi* where, combining Prologue and Argument into one and the same entity, presents his creation as an animal made of a special selection of parts:

Mai più non cred’io che vi sia venuto innanzi, nobilissimi e onoratissimi spettatori, uno animale come sono io, per dir così, percioche io vengo a farvi a un tratto parte del prologo e parte dell’argomento: laonde, sendo mezzo Argomento e mezzo Prologo, non vengo a esser ne Prologo ne Argomento e sono l’uno e l’altro insieme. Che ne dite voi?³⁶³

Grazzini is aware of other literary experimentation with prologues and experiments both contemporary to him and, often, predating him as well. He acknowledges them almost in

³⁶² Interlocutori nel principio, Fanfani 181.

³⁶³ *I Parentadi*, Prologo e argomento, Fanfani 363.

the same breath Still, his intention here is not only to create something he considers entirely new, but to draw his viewers and readers' attention to it specifically.

He will make similar efforts to underline his inventiveness throughout the comedies, usually by way of a servant interpretable as his mouthpiece. Grazzini ostensibly writes one alter-ego into each of his productions, the most memorable appearing in *La gelosia*, *La spiritata*, *La strega*, and *l'Arzigogolo*. In *La gelosia*, Ciullo is the grand master force behind the organization and execution of the beffa to be played on Lazzero, an old man whose age and sensitivity to the dark and cold are exploited as the means to a series of ends. He orchestrates not only the movements of fellow servant, Muciatto, but controls even the most crucial details to the plot's development: whom to put out in the dark and how, when best to light a fire, when to grant or take away the light needed to recognize people, neighbours, or other players in the beffa. He is integral to the very strategy that is the backbone not only of the beffa, but of the play as a whole. So when he says, "Passate là, che io vi vo far maravigliare," it is Grazzini's voice that readers hear.³⁶⁴ And when he declares his and Muciatto's only function to be "nella fine, [...] di far fine a' pazzi," we again recognize Grazzini's disillusionment with the Florentine academy and its reduction of writers to political instruments.³⁶⁵

This disappointment is further hinted at in *La strega*, by way of Farfannacchio. In perpetual mockery of Taddeo, the caricature of the braggart soldier, Farfannacchio repeatedly wonders, insincerely, at the learning of his master who fashions himself a great philosophical mind with few if any equals. In response to Taddeo's many pontifications one day, Farfannacchio exclaims, "o! voi potresti gagliardamente fare una lettura a veduta, e

³⁶⁴ V.xi, Fanfani *Commedie* 108.

³⁶⁵ III.xi, Fanfani *Commedie* 74.

leggerla a mente nell'Accademia" – a statement clearly only ironically meant as praise.³⁶⁶

Its purpose is not to underline Grazzini's own innovation and its value with respect to established cultural capital; Grazzini will have plenty of opportunity to boast in *l'Arzigogolo* both in his prologue and via Valerio who, like his author himself, with "gran potenza e incredibile [...] li uomini in un medesimo giorno [fa] diventar di vecchi giovani e di giovani vecchi."³⁶⁷ Its purpose is to undermine the power and reputation of the academy, grown pedantic, bureaucratic, and overly traditional. The same effect is achieved when Farfannacchio later calls Taddeo "non vo' dir un Orlando furioso, un Rodomonte bizzarro, ma lo Iddio Marte lo stesso."³⁶⁸ Grazzini's admiration of Ariosto is universally acknowledged; here is not a jab at his wildly appreciated contemporary. Still, it draws a distinction between the kind of literature Grazzini produces, and that at the opposite end of the "marvelous" spectrum, while directing readers' attention to the invention of his oeuvre.

It is an inventiveness which, as previously stated, looks forward rather than – or not only – around it. In Grazzini's grotesque is the grotesque that, centuries later will develop into a school of modern theatre; in his "capriccio" is the ironic-comic-tragic multiplicity inherent to Pirandello's late nineteenth-century theory of humourism. Both will be examined at greater length in the following chapter.

³⁶⁶ II.i, Fanfani *Commedie* 297.

³⁶⁷ IV.vi, Fanfani *Commedie* 483.

³⁶⁸ IV.ii, Fanfani *Commedie* 209.

Chapter Five: From Humours to Humourism

Dietro il cancellino d'un orto due alberetti di mandorlo.

D'inverno, parevano morti.

Forse erano; forse no; o uno sì e uno no. Nessuno poteva dirlo, perché gli alberi che non siano di verde perenne bisogna aspettar marzo per veder quali sono morti e quali no.

A marzo si vide che uno solo di quei due alberetti era vivo; quello dietro al pilastrino più alto del cancello. E fu una pena veder l'altro rimanere lì, nudo e stecchito, accanto a quello che, nella chiar mattina, rideva al sole come d'un brillio di farfalle che vogliono e non vogliono posarsi.

[...]

Era piovuto, in quei giorni, furiosamente. Forse la furia della pioggia aveva abbattuto i fiori dell'uno e svegliato l'altro dal sonno invernale, in cui s'era troppo indugiato?

Ecco, sì; qualche bianca fogliolina ingiallita, superstite, esisteva ancora nei rami di quello ch'era fiorito prima. La pioggia aveva dunque distrutto veramente la lieta, precoce fioritura.

Ma la sorpresa si rinnovò più viva, e accompagnata da uno scoppio di risa, quando davvicino si poté vedere come e di che era tutto fiorito quell'altro alberetto dietro il cancellino di quell'orto chiuso.

Signori miei, di bianche lumachelle! Non erano fiori! Erano lumachelle! Tutti i rami scontorti di quell'alberetto morto s'erano incrostati, rabescati di bianche lumachelle, schiumate or ora dalla terra grassa, dopo l'acquata tempestosa.

[...]

Una fioritura per cui – senza dubbio – chi credesse di doverne ridere, bisognava ci mettesse un po' di buona volontà. Perché non era poi molto allegro fiorir così.

Fioritura finta, sì, ma intendiamoci.

Non volevano mica parer fiori veri tutte quelle bianche lumachelle; e né fiori finti, come sarebbe di pezza o di carta o di cera. No. Volevano parere quel che erano veramente: lumachelle bianche, lì incrostate, in strani e pur naturali rabeschi, su quei rami scontorti dell'alberetto morto.

-Luigi Pirandello, Immagine del "Grottesco"³⁶⁹

Thus Pirandello begins his short, creative expository essay on the grotesque, published as a descriptive example more than a formal study in "L'Ida Nazionale," on February 18, 1920. In it, he condenses and consolidates his views on the two primary concerns (both of which develop into trends in a larger sense) of the literary production of his era: humourism (*umorismo*) and the "modern" grotesque. Between 1908, the year Pirandello publishes his "Saggio sull'umorismo" and 1926, the year in which he debuts his

³⁶⁹ in *Opere di Luigi Pirandello*, edizione diretta da Giovanni Macchi, a cura di Ferdinando Taviani (Milano: Mondadori, 2006) 1077-78.

Uno, nessuno e centomila begun as a draft seventeen years earlier (and just a year after he writes his essay on Humourism), *umorismo*, *pirandelliano*, and *pirandellismo* become synonymous terms – a phenomenon universally accepted, still today, by all major literary critics. Although much academic debate surrounds the mostly unofficial development of the “teatro del grottesco” tradition at the start of the twentieth century - its definition, the direction it takes, its major literary and theatrical representatives, and Pirandello’s role within it - most critics still find its root in the conscious contrariness they see throughout Pirandello’s corpus and as early as his first theatrical productions. These movements, then, are linked indissolubly to each other from the start, albeit not without dissent.

Pirandello is, of course, neither the only nor the last scholar to have written on these topics, both independently and in relation to each other. Nor is he alone in basing his *theory of humourism* on centuries of literary production – of comedy and tragedy just as much as *novelle* and chivalric romance – leading up to his twentieth century vantage point. Scholars his contemporaries to ours have repeatedly questioned the origin of the “sentimento del contrario” and its relation to humourism, grotesque, melancholy, and Italian literature as a whole. In his 1964 book, *Teatro italiano grottesco*, Luigi Ferrante calls the complex relationship among these terms a “filo nero” of Italian literature – the defining characteristic of all comic or grotesque or dramatic literary production from Boccaccio onward – and the darker side of the more traditional “filone rosso” to which critics are accustomed. He asserts:

Il grottesco nasce dal comico e dal drammatico o, più semplicemente, dal comico che ha radici nella malinconia, nel dolore e pur provoca il riso: è

perciò forma consapevole che rivela, sotto all'oggetto del ridicolo, un fondo degno della pietà e della pena, aspra o lieve.

Le burle del Boccaccio conoscono questo difficile equilibrio: ...

Calandrino restò 'malinconioso con la casa piena di pietre'

...

L'amore, il riso, il gioco sono quelli d'un popolo che conosce profonde pene, ammaestrato da guerre e lutti, che ha imparato a ritorcere quel filo nero, cantando, spesso inconsapevolmente, a volte presago: è *l'italicum acteum*, un modo nostro di ridere piangendo e di piangere ridendo, un atteggiamento anti-eroico, anti-retorico.³⁷⁰

More recently, Mario Verdone, in 1981, draws an even firmer connection between the grotesque and *umorismo*, when he offers the following as a definition of the former:

Apparentemente scherzoso, in realtà mira al tragico. Nasce da una visione pessimistica, che ne è la tipica filosofia, ed è basato sul 'sentimento del contrario'. È questa anche la definizione dell'umorismo, nella concezione di Pirandello, tanto che un "sistema" del grottesco" si può ravvisare proprio nel

³⁷⁰ Bologna: Cappelli, 1946, p. 9. "The grotesque is born of the comic and the dramatic, or, more simply, of the comic rooted in melancholy and pain, that still provokes laughter: it is, thus, a conscious form and a subset of the ridiculous that reveals a foundation worthy of pity and pain, sour or sweet. Boccaccio's "burle" display this difficult balance: . . . Calandrino was 'melancholic, his house full of stones' . . . The love, laughter, and game [in question] are those of a people that knows profound pain administered by wars and conflicts, a people that has learned how to wring out this "black thread," and sings, often unconsciously, sometimes forebodingly: it is the "Italian act," our own way of laughing as we cry and crying as we laugh, an attitude both anti-heroic and anti-rhetorical."

saggio *L'umorismo* (1908), che poi Pirandello vuole dedicare “alla buon'anima di Mattia Pascal, bibliotecario.”³⁷¹

Both of the above critics write on the grotesque in the specific context of the *teatro del grottesco*: a theatrical movement contemporary with fascist and avant-garde experimental theatre from Palermo to Milan. Taken together, however, they point to an observable literary characteristic that scholars like Giorgio Arcoleo locate as far back as Antiquity, and critics like Alessandro D'Ancona discuss in the still earlier context of Galen and Hippocrates's humours. “Del resto, poi, la nostra lingua ha umore per *fantasia, capriccio*, e umorista per *fantastico*: e gli *umori* dell'animo e del cervello ognun sa che stanno in stretta relazione con la poesia *umorista*,” D'Ancona writes.³⁷² What is more, both Ferrante and Verdoni, like D'Ancona, Arcoleo and Pirandello himself, in their respective works, point to the centrality of the grotesque (as a subset of the *capriccio* and the *meraviglioso*) to the *ghiribizzi* ubiquitous in sixteenth-century literature.

As might be expected, Grazzini's novelle perhaps more than his comedies are a case in point for the meeting spot of Galen's humourism, Renaissance grotesque, Pirandello's *umorismo* and, finally, its relation to the theatre of the grotesque that ostensibly grew out of it. It is precisely on this network of correlated concepts surrounding the grotesque and the

³⁷¹ *Teatro del Novecento* (Brescia: Editrice La Scuola, 1981) 55. “Seemingly light-hearted, in truth, it more closely resembles the tragic. It is born of a pessimistic vision, which is its customary philosophical root, and is based on the sentiment of contrary. This is also the definition of ‘humourism’ in Pirandello's conception [of it] to such an extent that a ‘system of the grotesque’ is recognizable in the *Essay on Humourism* (1908), which Pirandello then dedicates ‘to the cherished memory of Mattia Pascal, librarian.’”

³⁷² *Studi di Critica e Storia Letteraria*, Zanichelli, Bologna, 1880, cit p. 779 in Luigi Pirandello *L'Umorismo in Opere di Luigi Pirandello, saggi e interventi*, a cura di Ferdinando Taviani (Milano: I Meridiani, Mondadori editore, 2006) 775-948 “Apart from which, our language makes ‘humour’ a synonym of ‘caprice’ and ‘fantasy’ and makes ‘humouristic’ synonymous with ‘fantastic’; and everyone knows that the humours of the soul and of the brain are closely tied to humouristic poetry.”

“sentimento del contrario” that I would like to hinge the major import of this chapter. Examining Grazzini first in light of Pirandello’s lengthy *trattatistica* and fictional production on humourism, grotesque, and irony, then in the context of the teatro del grottesco, I hope to establish his role as a proto-humourist in pirandellian terms, and a nearly conscious predecessor of early twentieth century grotesque. Key to my analysis will be Pirandello’s *Il fu Mattia Pascal* and, from his *Novelle per un anno*, “Sole e ombra,” as well as Luigi Chiarelli’s *La maschera e il volto*, Luigi Antonelli’s *L’uomo che incontrò se stesso*, and, though to a lesser extent, Massimo Bontempelli’s *Minnie la candida*.

Grazzini and Pirandello: *Saggio sull’umorismo*, *Il fu Mattia Pascal*, *Sole e ombra*, and the *Cene*

The *Dizionario enciclopedico universale Le Lettere* defines “umorismo” in two ways; first as “l’antica dottrina umorale;” next, as an “attitudine della mente a cogliere nei fatti della vita ciò che è ridicolo, divertente, comico, paradossale, e ad esprimerlo, parlando o scrivendo, senza lo spirito amaro dell’ironia o la severità della satira, e nemmeno con quello puramente intellettuale dell’arguzia, ma con . . . simpatia per il suo soggetto, in virtù dei quali spesso si accosta al patetico.”³⁷³ Both Grazzini and Pirandello draw on these definitions in their own variations on humourism. That there should be – and, indeed, are – variations on humourism, as on any other contemporary or relevant “ism” is something

³⁷³ (need full cit) p. 1756. “The ancient humoural doctrine,” “mental ability to welcome what is ridiculous, amusing, comical, paradoxical in the facts of life and to express it, speaking or writing, without the bitterness of irony or the severity of satire, or even with the pure intellectualism of wit, but with . . . sympathy for its subject, by virtue of which these facts approach the pathetic.

Pirandello attests to himself in his *Saggio sull'umorismo*.³⁷⁴ Indeed, here might be the best place to start an examination of Grazzini's humourism vis-à-vis the later Pirandello's.

Pirandello's 1908 essay on humourism, much like the concept itself, can be reduced (perhaps unjustly) to two conflicting impulses: the need to establish cultural and literary precedence for the term (from Antiquity onward) and the desire to explain its particular, distinct, and – Pirandello will make a note of it – “correct” significance in the context of the early twentieth century.³⁷⁵ The first part of Pirandello's essay serves to situate himself among his contemporary literary critics with respect to the issue of humourism and its roots. His ultimate position is built on a series of foundational tenets: 1) that the essence of humourism resides in the common source of laughter and tears in the human sentiment – il motto stesso dell'umorismo: *'in tristitia hilaris, in hilaritate tristis'*³⁷⁶; 2) that humourism can – and should – be examined both in its more general sense (spanning centuries, peoples, genres) and in its more limited sense (particular to the 20th century); 3) that there is only limited continuity between humourism taken in its larger sense and in its more specific meaning; 4) that humourism differs from and should not be confused with irony, satire, or social commentary; 5) that humourism *decomposes* where art composes, and, regardless of its place in history, “è sempre stata ed è tuttavia arte d'eccezione”³⁷⁷; 6) that

³⁷⁴ See *Opere* 808: Pirandello is against the concept of national humourism, and refuses to attribute a specific “humour” to each nation. Instead, he argues that there is only one type of umorismo universal and common to all cultures, and that an author or text is either a variant on it or is something else, and something different.

³⁷⁵ He will state this explicitly at the opening of the second half, but originally points to this idea early on: “[Giorgio Arcoleo], pur ammettendo che la nota dell'umorismo, speciale della letteratura moderna, non manchi di legami col mondo antico, e pur citando quell'insegnamento di Socrate che dice; 'Una è l'origine dell'allegria e della tristezza: nei contrapposti un'idea non si conosce che per la sua contraria'” (791).

³⁷⁶ 892.

³⁷⁷ 798.

true humourism is born of an act of reflection particular to modernity. His essay elaborates upon these six tenets contemporaneously and repeatedly, providing nuances and lengthy examples for each. Crucial to the first tenet is what Pirandello calls the *sentimento del contrario*, or the ability to perceive tragedy in comedy and comedy in tragedy and to partake equally of both- or, more generally put, to “tenersi tra il sì e il no.”³⁷⁸ This is a condition not contingent on time, and identifiable as readily in figures of Antiquity as in contemporary writers -- Pirandello cites Socrates and Boccaccio among the first real humourists. But, and of a piece with his second tenet, he is careful to distinguish between the humourism he sees (anachronistically) in Socrates and the larger category of “humourism” in which the *sentimento del contrario* is also visible, but not born of the act of reflection specific to it. He includes “la burla, la baia, la facezia, la satira, la caricatura, tutto il comico insomma nelle sue varie espressioni [e] in questo senso anche tanti altri scrittori faceti, burleschi, grotteschi, satirici, comici d’ogni tempo e d’ogni nazione” in this second grouping, without denying their importance to the development of the humouristic tradition.³⁷⁹ Among them, and of primary relevance to it, he claims, are Tuscan poets³⁸⁰ who, writing in their own dialect and often unconcerned with elements of form, infuse their poetry with the “naturalezza” and “realism” necessary to any work that wishes itself to be considered humouristic. He writes:

Perché l’umorismo ha soprattutto bisogno d’intimità di stile, la quale fu sempre da noi ostacolata dalla preoccupazione della forma, da tutte quelle questioni retoriche che si fecero sempre da noi intorno alla lingua.

³⁷⁸ 813.

³⁷⁹ 809.

³⁸⁰ his immediate example is Cecco Angiolieri

L'umorismo ha bisogno del più vivace, libero spontaneo e immediato movimento della lingua . . . L'umorismo, che non può farne a meno (sia nel senso largo, sia nel proprio senso), lo troveremo – ripeto – nelle espressioni dialettali, nella poesia maccaronica e negli scrittori ribelli alla retorica.³⁸¹

In part because they provide the model later to be imitated, and in larger part because of Tuscan burlesque poets' reluctance to adhere to the more "classical" models available to them (and followed by their more literary contemporaries), Tuscan poets like Cecco fall in with Pirandello's category of rebel poets producing exceptional art. But Pirandello here also points to another defining feature of humourism. Like the *verista*, Pirandello's *umorista* is largely characterised by his ability to "immedesimarsi" in the world he spontaneously creates with his art. Inherent to this ability is, at once, a strong sense of self-awareness, a capacity for empathy, and a rejection of moral judgment of the characters in a humourist text or the environment surrounding them.

It is in this latter characteristic that Pirandello locates both the new reflective activity required for a humouristic work (or the humouristic interpretation of a work), and the difference between it and irony. A humouristic text captures and presents the contrast in a *sentiment*; it considers, at once, the (often) essentially tragic nature of a described situation and the comic elements within it – or, perhaps better, it both unearths an existential problem, and addresses the way in which it might make audiences, or its

³⁸¹ 823. He more specifically categorises these Tuscan poets as rebels in a later passage: "Fra questi scrittori solitari ribelli alla retorica, fra i dialettali bisogna cercar gli umoristi e, in senso largo, ne troveremo in gran copia, fin dagli inizi della nostra letteratura, segnatamente in Toscana" even if, as he continues, "nel senso vero e proprio pochi ne troveremo, ma non se ne trovano di più certo nelle letterature degli altri paesi, ne' questi pochi nostri son da meno dei pochi stranieri, che a confusione nostra ci son messi innanzi di continuo, e son sempre quelli, se ben s'avverte, da contarli su le dita d'una mano" (889).

subject, laugh. Irony, on the other hand, is a stylistic element used to present a contrast not in *sentiment*, but in expression, a distance between the described situation and the position of the author describing it.³⁸² Quite contrary to humourism, which demands the marriage of author and text (to the point of the author's disappearance and the text's autonomous – if problematic – existence),³⁸³ it relies heavily on an author's critical skills and ability to communicate implicit judgment on the characters he creates. Of course, that is not to suggest that humourism is an entirely *subjective*, and irony an entirely *objective* apparatus: Pirandello's humourist understands the humanity he describes and understands himself to be a participant in it, but can choose to distance himself from it or not.

This distinction figures prominently in the second half of Pirandello's essay, in which he addresses the narrower definition of umorismo to which he had until then only alluded, and which he considers its most valid and genuine form. Here, Pirandello's position on umorismo shifts significantly: no longer viewing it as a condition with a lengthy cross-continental history, he now presents it as the product of an *air du temps* born of a "speciale stato d'animo che può, più o meno, diffondersi."³⁸⁴ At the heart of this special emotional state are two compatible convictions: first, that it lacks a unifying ethical or moral base, and second, that, in its variability, it relies as heavily on the humourist author as it does on the reader of a humourist text. The first of these assumptions rests on the humourist's above-mentioned resistance to judgment: "In altre parole, l'umorismo non ha affatto bisogno d'un fondo etico, può averlo o non averlo: questo dipende dalla personalità,

³⁸² 821.

³⁸³ Pirandello's *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore* is the most canonical example of this extreme empathy between author and character(s).

³⁸⁴ 900.

dall'indole dello scrittore."³⁸⁵ The second relies on a more complex composition of modern man's emotional state – and a more modern understanding of it.

He locates the crux of his argument in a frequently cited early example of humourism: Cervantes's *Don Quijote*. The entire passage bears reproduction:

Noi vorremmo ridere di tutto quanto c'è di comico nella rappresentazione di questo povero alienato che maschera della sua follia se stesso e gli altri e tutte le cose; vorremmo ridere, ma il riso non ci viene alle labbra schietto e facile; sentiamo che qualcosa ce lo turba e ce l'ostacola; è un senso di commiserazione, di pena e anche d'ammirazione, sì, perché se le eroiche avventure di questo povero hidalgo sono ridicolissime, pur non v'ha dubbio che egli nella sua ridicolaggine è veramente eroico. Noi abbiamo una rappresentazione comica, ma spira da questa un sentimento che ci impedisce di ridere o ci turba il riso della comicità rappresentata; ce lo rende amaro.

Attraverso il comico stesso, abbiamo anche qui il sentimento del contrario.³⁸⁶

Indeed, and as Pirandello points out, readers' reaction to Don Quijote's character falls in line with humourism's necessary blending of laughter and tears (or consternation, or frustration, or pity). But the reflective act on display in Cervantes's work prevents it from categorization as a purely "humouristic" text, in pirandellian terms:

La riflessione aveva già destato nel poeta il sentimento del contrario, e frutto di esso è appunto il *Don Quijote*; è questo sentimento del contrario oggettivato. Il poeta non ha rappresentato la causa del processo . . . ne ha

³⁸⁵ 887.

³⁸⁶ 913.

rappresentato soltanto l'effetto, e però il sentimento del contrario spira attraverso la comicità della rappresentazione; questa comicità è frutto del sentimento del contrario generato nel poeta dalla speciale attività della riflessione sul primo sentimento tenuto nascosto.³⁸⁷

What Cervantes's Don Quijote ostensibly lacks, in order to be considered a true object of humourism, is the self-awareness that Pirandello's twentieth-century protagonist – or, perhaps better, anti-hero – repeatedly displays. If Don Quijote is a humouristic figure, or one in which the copresence of tragedy and comedy is immediately discernable, he is unintentionally so. Though readers may understand and appreciate his multiform and essentially dissonant nature, his inability to recognize it consciously in himself limits him, in Pirandello's view, to the realm of the farcical, or the *pagliaccio*.

The same might be said, truthfully, of a great number of the novelle contained in Grazzini's *Cene*. By design, they are third-person (sometimes limited, though more often omniscient) narratives that, as addressed in the previous chapter, subscribe twice to the literary practice of marvel through public spectacle, once within the narrative itself – and by pitting the protagonist against a mob of judgmental viewers – and again at the macrotextual level, as each novella is told to (and by) the members of Grazzini's *brigata*, and elicits their reaction. Still, a number of Grazzini's tales reveal an anti-hero not only acutely aware of his personal inconsistencies, as Pirandello might appreciate pointing out, but also subject to the same kind of tragic end Pirandello's characters routinely face. One specific case in point is the only surviving novella (of unambiguous attribution) of Grazzini's third and incomplete *Cena*.

³⁸⁷ 913.

Immediately significant to readers familiar with Grazzini's *Cene* is his allocation of this tale to Amaranta, hostess of the three evenings' entertainment and leading force behind the brigata's decision to move beyond Boccaccio in the composition of their own, original tales. Indeed, this story, like many others in the collection, falls nearly strictly within the *beffa* tradition and follows its every convention. But in the redefinition of its protagonist in strikingly modern terms, it accomplishes on a humoural level what Boccaccio's *beffe* cannot.

The most politically controversial of the twenty-one remaining novelle, III.x recounts the story of maestro Manente, a doctor, captured by two of Lorenzo vecchio de' Medici's men (in disguise) and, with the help of a cunning ruse devised by Monaco, the town buffoon, held hostage long enough to be believed dead and buried. He is released back to normal society, albeit in the guise of a vagabond, only once his wife has remarried and assumed a new identity with her new spouse. Eventually, and in keeping with the *beffa* tradition, Manente's real identity is uncovered, the details of the *beffa* played on him alluded to, but ultimately never discovered; when brought before a jury in order to regain his wife and customary social status, his peculiar figurative passing is deemed the product of strange magic. As would necessarily be the case not only for any tale of the *beffa* tradition, but also for the concluding tale of such a compendium, natural balance is restored after Manente's appearance in court: he is reunited with his wife and, in the home they built together, assumes step-fatherhood of the child conceived in his absence. Grazzini affords Manente the *lieta fine* that, positioned elsewhere in the *Cene* would have been unavailable to him; where other *beffati* are exiled, flee, or die, Manente is afforded a second, then third chance at life.

Instead, were Grazzini to have concluded his novella just short of Manente's happily if dishonestly concluded trial, readers might locate within it the makings of a humourist text in Pirandellian terms. Indeed Manente's story in structure alone calls to mind the greatest extant example of Pirandellian humourism: *Il fu Mattia Pascal*. To be sure, these are very different texts, no matter their superficial plot similarities - exile, rebirth under another identity, and unexpected return to a familiar but fundamentally changed setting. Still, in Grazzini's sixteenth-century tale are the foundations of the humourism Pirandello defines and early illustrates in *Il fu Mattia Pascal*.

To recap Pirandello's masterpiece: Mattia Pascal, a pampered heir in a fictitious town in Liguria, loses his inheritance to the mismanagement of its administrator, Batta Malagna. His rancor pushes him to become involved with, and eventually impregnate, Batta Malagna's niece, Romilda (and, later, his wife), whom he is then forced to marry and to welcome into his household alongside her mother, Marianna Pescatori, with whom he has a mutually odious relationship. He is also left no choice but to take up employment as a librarian. Not long after he finds himself in this unfortunate situation - his humble earnings are not enough to support his family, and Romilda loses his twins - with only money given to him by his brother for his mother's funeral, he decides to flee and begin a new life. He is aided in his goal by a report of his alleged death appearing in the newspaper, which, after a brief period of reconsideration following a visit to Montecarlo, deters him from returning to his former life. This visit to Montecarlo ends in a successful round of roulette that not only awards him a great deal of money, but also, and more importantly, that permits him eventually to reestablish himself, in Rome, under a new alias - Adriano Meis - and there to pursue his personal and professional goals. It is not long before he falls in love with his new

employer's daughter, Adriana. His affection for her alerts him to the impossibility of marrying her under his assumed alias and to the carelessness of his decision to adopt it. He devises a plan to stage the false suicide – of Adriano Meis – in order to reclaim his former identity and use it to marry Adriana and definitively put an end to the advances of her brother-in-law. But his plan ultimately fails. He returns home to find his life as Mattia Pascal irreversibly changed: his wife has, since his departure two years prior, gotten remarried and had children, and his mother has passed. Cold, cynical, and twice buried, Mattia resumes his work as a librarian and passes the long hours at his desk recording his tale.³⁸⁸

Pirandello's and Grazzini's tales, though identically cyclical, and though each explores the same basic tenet of the *sentimento del contrario*, differ in key ways, immediately perceptible. Both Manente and Mattia's ends are governed, fundamentally, by fate, but Manente's misfortune depends almost wholly on the agency of a third party – Lorenzo vecchio de' Medici and his men. By contrast, and despite being pushed to extreme behaviour by social circumstances, Mattia authors his own disaster. His flight from his uncomfortable existence is entirely voluntary, unlike Manente's, which is forced on him, blindfolded, by his captors.³⁸⁹ Though initially upset by the news of his assumed death, it is not long before Mattia rejoices at what he perceives now to be a real opportunity to erase his identity and begin again, and under more auspicious circumstances. But what Mattia sees as a gain, Manente invariably views a loss, and suffers his estrangement. Mattia makes

³⁸⁸ Luigi Pirandello, *Il fu Mattia Pascal*, introduzione e analisi del testo di Romano Luperini (Torino: Loescher, 1993).

³⁸⁹ The presence of the game of roulette, alongside Mattia's inherent (and hereditary) penchant for gambling are the only elements that problematise Mattia's agency. By all accounts, however, his decision to use his roulette earnings to define and pursue a new life assumes his responsibility for the consequences. Mattia uses his free will to his own ends.

a conscious return to his previous life and identity, and is disappointed by what he finds there; Manente is ultimately awarded the comfort of a return to normality, and only in part because of his initiative in regaining it.

Still, Manente undoubtedly displays early marks of the characteristics that make Mattia and other Pirandellian anti-heros such profoundly modern(ist) figures. His self-consciousness is perhaps the first and most striking of these. In a crowd of unidimensional characters, Manente stands out, here, as a man with above-average self-awareness, heightened by his externally imposed estrangement from the outside world. Cut off from all but his captors and frequently left to brood – literally – in darkness, he is afforded a *vita interiore* uncustomary to most of Grazzini's protagonists elsewhere in the *Cene*. Grazzini provides his readers with a glimpse of it very early on:

In questo mentre maestro Manente, avendo dormito una notte e un dì, si era desto; e trovatosi nel letto e al bujo, non sapeva immaginarsi dove egli si fusse, o in casa sua o d'altri; e seco medesimo pensando, si ricordava come nelle Bertucce aveva ultimamente bevuto con Burchiello, col Succia e col Biondo sensale; dipoi essendosi addormentato, gli pareva essere state menato a casa sua; . . . e raggirandosi per la camera se ne tornò finalmente a letto, pauroso e pieno di strana meraviglia, non sappiendo egli stesso in qual mondo si fusse; e seco medesimo riandava tutte le cose che gli erano intervenute. Ma, cominciandoli a venir fame, fu più volte tentato di chiamare;

pur poi, dalla paura ritenuto, si taceva, aspettando quel che seguir dovesse
de' fatti suoi.³⁹⁰

Immediately relevant here is Manente's *sfasamento* and naturally consequent mental reliving of the previous evening's events. But what distinguishes Manente from other beffati partaking in the tradition is the entirely interior nature of his reasoning: "seco medesimo *pensando*," he is filled with a fear and sense of marvel Grazzini readily underlines. But not only are readers made aware of Manente's uncomfortable state of being, they are also privy to the paranoia he feels that continues to grow over the course of the novella: Manente's fear of his captors and situation ultimately trumps even his most basic need to eat.

But Manente's internal world, as Grazzini presents it, extends beyond the recognition of his estrangement and the paranoia that comes with it. Although he is perfectly aware of his imprisonment, shortly before his (unexpected) release, Manente

³⁹⁰ Fanfani 202. This passage also bears a striking resemblance to Antonio Manetti's "Novella del grasso legnaiuolo" in which a similarly duped Grasso awakens in a place he only later recognizes as his home and attempts to piece together the events of the previous evening: "Ma la mattina in su l'avemaria di Santa Maria del Fiore, avendo fatto el beveraggio tutta l'opera sua, déstosi, essendo già buona mattina, riconosciuto la campana ed aperto gli occhi e veduto alcuno spiraglio per la camera, riconobbe sé essere in casa sua, e vennegli una grande allegrezza al cuore subito, parendogli essere ritornato el Grasso ed in signoria d'ogni sua cosa, [...]; e ricordandosi delle cose successe, e dove s'era coricato la sera, e dove si trovava allora, entrò subito in una fantasia d'ambiguità, s'egli aveva sognato quello, o se sognava al presente; e parevagli di certo vero quando l'una cosa e quando l'altra, e guardava la camera dicendo: Questa è pure la camera mia quand'io ero el Grasso, ma quando entrai io qui?». E quando si toccava con l'una mano el braccio dell'altra, e quando el contrario, e quando el petto, affermando di certo essere el Grasso. Poi si rivolgeva: Se così è, come n'andai io preso per Matteo? ché mi ricordo pure ch'io stetti in prigione e che mai nessuno non mi conobbe se non per Matteo e che io ne fu' cavato da que' due fratelli, ch'io andai a Santa Filicita e 'l prete mi parlò cotanto e cenai ed andai a letto quivi, che mi venne sì gran sonno». Ed era in grandissima confusione di nuovo s'egli era stato sogno o se sognava allotta" (A cura di Antonio Lanza. Firenze: Vallecchi, 1989, il 640 --).

comes to terms with – indeed almost celebrates – his solitary existence, even near (presumed) death:

Maestro Manente, trovata la bocca al bujo, con quei capponi e con quella vitella, e beendo al fiasco, alzò il fianco miracolosamente, fra sé dicendo: tutto il male non si sarà mio: or sia che vuole, io so che s'io ho a morire, ch'io morirò oggimai a corpo pieno. E rassettato così il meglio che egli potette le reliquie avanzate, le rinvolve in quella tovagliuola e tornossene al letto, parendogli strano lo esser qui solo al bujo, e non sapere dove né come né da cui vi fusse stato condotto, né quando se ne avesse a uscire; pure, ricordandosi di quei capponi di carnesciale che ridevano, rideva anch'egli fra sé stesso, piacendogli molto la buona provvisione.³⁹¹

The *sentimento del contrario* Grazzini describes here is clear: despite his sequestration, disorientation, and confusion, Manente nonetheless finds a way to laugh at his situation, in complete isolation and in the absence of the audience or the social cues so fundamental to others of Grazzini's protagonists. But unlike Don Quijote, unaware of the tragedy of his own situation, Manente is, here, though confused, perfectly aware of the misfortune befallen him, and cognizant of his very particular circumstances.

But Grazzini's humourism, in Pirandellian terms, is not limited to his description of Manente's self-consciousness or to the *sentimento del contrario* that comes with it. It is supported, in III.x, by two other features that, in the twentieth century, also take on Pirandellian dimensions: the foreshadowing of the death – and, by way of it, duplication – of Manente's character and identity from the early outset of the novella, and the constant

³⁹¹ Fanfai 203.

interplay of light and darkness surrounding him. Together, these three elements constitute a pattern Grazzini also employs elsewhere, though sparingly, in his *Cene* to a similar effect.

Il Fu Mattia Pascal begins with the question of identity on which Grazzini's novella also hinges. Pirandello writes:

Una delle poche cose, anzi, forse la sola ch'io sapessi di certo era questa: che mi chiamavo Mattia Pascal. E me ne approfittavo. Ogni qualvolta qualcuno de' miei amici o conoscenti dimostrava d'aver perduto il senno fino al punto di venire da me per qualche consiglio o suggerimento, mi stringevo nelle spalle, socchiudevo gli occhi e gli rispondevo:

- Io mi chiamo Mattia Pascal.

- Grazie, caro. Questo lo so.

- E ti par poco?

Non pareva molto, per dir la verità, neanche a me. Ma ignoravo allora che cosa volesse dire il non sapere neppur questo, il non poter più rispondere, cioè, come prima, all'occorrenza:

- Io mi chiamo Mattia Pascal.³⁹²

His identity is something he easily takes for granted, unknowing of its imminent annihilation and, paradoxically, contemporaneous duplication. The end of his auto-introduction to his readers alludes immediately to the personal tragedy that befalls him: "Giacchè, per il momento (e Dio sa quanto me ne duole), io sono morto, sì, già due volte, ma la prima per errore, e la seconda ... sentirete."³⁹³ The same can be said of Manente.

³⁹² Luigi Pirandello, *Il fu Mattia Pascal* (Milano: Fratelli Treves, 1919) 1.

³⁹³ *ibid* 1.

Early into the beffa, these same elements – death and the confusion of identity – come into play together, reliant on each other. In fact, the beffa’s success depends in equal measure on the social plausibility of Manente’s death and on the disruption and confusion of his identity. Accordingly, these two categories are repeatedly conflated, so that even in the private sphere, Manente appears as dead, and in the public sphere, his identity is repeatedly questioned. As per Lorenzo de’ Medici’s orders, Manente is sedated with drink, grows heavy, and is ushered away from his drinking quarters and into the Medici palace, where, “per commissione di Lorenzo, così turati, lo spogliarono in camicia, che a mala pena sentito aveva, et era stato quasi come avere spogliato un morto.”³⁹⁴ His associations with death only grow stronger from there. First, Monaco il buffone, dressed in Manente’s clothing, poses as the doctor himself; his strange voice and accent, however, lead those closest to Manente to believe him assailed by some plague rooted in his throat and on the verge of death. Two days later, Monaco il buffone finds and takes into his custody the body of a man recently deceased in a riding accident, drapes him in a bed sheet, places Manente’s hat on his head, wraps his throat in a wet, oily cloth, scatters orange blossoms over his decaying body and leaves him for a dead Dr. Manente. His “disfigurement” is taken as a consequence of his sickness; no one thinks much of it. Within minutes of the discovery of this corpse comes the death of Manente’s identity as he knows it. Thenceforth, he is known no longer as “Manente” or even “il medico,” but only as “il morto” or “il morto e sotterato.”³⁹⁵

Mattia’s identity is challenged even before its first public negation. It, too, is symbolically conflated with death and mourning. As soon as Mattia makes his fortune at the

³⁹⁴ Fanfani 199.

³⁹⁵ Fanfani 205, 216.

roulette table in Montecarlo, his legitimacy is put into question, largely because of his mode of dress: “io sentivo ora un dispetto tanto maggiore in quanto mi pareva di non esser vestito male. Non ero in marsina, è vero, ma avevo un abito nero, da lutto, decentissimo,” he narrates.³⁹⁶ The following day, this association becomes stronger still in Mattia’s discovery of the suicide of one of his fellow gamblers. He is alerted to the event early on the day of his departure and arrives on the scene to find a young man sprawled out, dead and bloody, in oncoming traffic.³⁹⁷ But this event and the image it generates only become relevant to Mattia later, on his train ride out of France. It is then that, reading the daily headlines, he discovers the news of his supposed suicide. Before understanding himself to be the subject of the article, his first thought goes back to the gambler found dead earlier that day: “Gli occhi mi andarono su un ‘Suicidio,’ così, in grassetto. Pensai subito che potesse essere quello di Montecarlo e m’affrettai a leggere. Ma mi arrestai, sorpreso, al primo rigo, stampato di minutissimo carattere: *Ci telegrafano da Miragno.*”³⁹⁸ He soon discovers that a corpse decayed beyond recognition and found in the mill of his property has been mistakenly identified as his. Mattia’s identity is reversed and, for all intents and purposes,

³⁹⁶ Milano: Fratelli Treves, 1919, p. 80.

³⁹⁷His interaction with the corpse of the young man further aligns his grotesque with Grazzini’s spectacular social grotesque: “Pareva più piccolo, lì in mezzo al viale: stava composto, coi piedi uniti, come se si fosse messo a giacere prima, per non farsi male, cadendo; un braccio era aderente al corpo; l’altro, un po’ sospeso, con la mano raggrinchiata e un dito, l’indice, ancora nell’atto di tirare. Era presso a questa mano la rivoltella; più là il cappello. Mi parve dapprima che la palla gli fosse uscita dall’occhio sinistro, donde tanto sangue, ora rappreso, gli era colato su la faccia. Ma no: quel sangue era schizzato di lì, come un po’ dalle narici e dagli orecchi; altro, in gran copia, n’era poi sgorgato dal forellino alla tempia destra, su la rena gialla del viale, tutto raggrumato. Una dozzina di vespe vi ronzavano attorno; qualcuna andava a posarsi anche lì, vorace, su l’occhio. Fra tanti che guardavano, nessuno aveva pensato a cacciarle via. Trassi dalla tasca un fazzoletto e lo stesi su quel misero volto orribilmente sfigurato. Nessuno me ne seppe grado: avevo tolto il meglio dello spettacolo” (1919, 83-84)

³⁹⁸ *ibid* 89.

effaced the minute he makes this discovery. Like Manente, his death is introduced by that of another character – or, in this case, two others. Both here and in Grazzini’s III.x, then, the duplication and confusion of identity particular to the protagonists of each is contingent on imagined death, prefigured in their modes of dress – real or assumed. In both places, the biological death of a secondary character announces the social deaths of the primary one.

Soon, rumors of Doctor Manente’s passing spread throughout the city, reaching his wife who, within six months and still in widow’s dress, remarries. Even Lorenzo de’ Medici forgets entirely about Manente’s existence for months until “gli venne veduto per sorte a cavallo uno di quelli monachi di Camaldoli che fanno le facende del convento; e di fatto gli tornò nella mente, e ricordossi del medico.”³⁹⁹ When finally Manente is released and returns to the Tuscan countryside, he sends his wife a letter personally penned; even that passes as the work of an imposter or ghost. The reply he receives from her new husband, on her behalf, makes him doubt his very existence: “leggendola tutta quanta, per lo stupore e per la doglia rimase attonito e sbalordito, cotalchè ei non pareva né morto né vivo.”⁴⁰⁰ Eventually, and not without sustained effort, he is newly accepted in his former dwellings, though changed beyond the rehabilitation of his nullified former identity.

Here as in *Il fu Mattia Pascal*, the protagonist’s “death,” early alluded to in both cases, is figurative, social, and only to an extent personal. Perhaps more useful in the examination of the role it plays in both cases is its consistent presentation *alongside* life. The “death” featured in both texts fails to exist on its own. It is conditioned, instead, by the very presence, if often unstable and confused, of life, which renders its very definitive nature obsolete or, at the very least, ambiguous. In other words, what both authors point to

³⁹⁹ Fanfani 208.

⁴⁰⁰ Fanfani 214.

in their respective works, and through the early juxtaposition of these two opposite terms, is the contrary and paradoxical nature of “death in life” – not only a distinctly humourist, but also a distinctly modernist sentiment. Grazzini experiments with this same idea elsewhere in his *Cene*; Falananna’s tale, as described in the previous chapter, and as I will return to shortly, is perhaps the most convincing example. His engagement with this idea earlier in the *Cene*, however, generally pivots on the much more commonly explored medieval and early modern notion of “life in death” or the soul’s continued journey in the afterlife. Nowhere else in the *Cene*, is the modern *malaise* with life felt more sincerely than in Amaranta’s closing tale.

It is strengthened, as previously mentioned, by the ongoing interplay of light and darkness surrounding Manente and Mattia, both “in life” and “in death.” This relationship, too, begins to develop early in the novella and grows increasingly complex and nuanced as Manente’s story unfolds. Manente awakes, after his night of heavy drinking, in the dark, disoriented, and unaware of his surroundings. He is intentionally left this way for much of the activity to follow: first, “serratolo dentro a chiavistello, lo lasciarono senza lume, e se ne andarono a spogliarsi e a ragguagliare il Magnifico;”⁴⁰¹ next, “gittatogli quel palandrano in capo, e ravviluppatoglielo in modo che veder non poteva lume, lo cavarono di quella camera.”⁴⁰² Held captive in a remote recess of the Medici palace, he is able to perceive certain shapes and shadows only when the door to the room in which he is being kept is opened long enough to let in a shaft of light: “per non poter fare altro, attendeva solamente a empier il ventre e a dormire, non veggendo mai lume, se non quando coloro gli

⁴⁰¹ Fanfani 203.

⁴⁰² Fanfani 206.

portavano la vettovaglia.”⁴⁰³ Otherwise, he is held entirely in the dark, both literally and figuratively.

Eventually, however, even in this respect, Grazzini evolves beyond the conventions of the beffa and introduces a different kind of relationship between Manente and his immediate environment. Gradually, Manente moves between states of light and darkness, alternatively, in a mirror image of his position between (social) life and death. Just before preparing to release him, Lorenzo de’ Medici arranges for a lamp to be installed in the ceiling of Manente’s room, which “rendeva la stanza alquanto luminosa.”⁴⁰⁴ Accordingly, Manente’s ties to his previous life and identity increase exponentially:

Laonde il medico scorgeva quello che egli mangiava e ciò che egli faceva, tanto che, per rimeritare in parte coloro che gli facevano quel comodo, ancorché non sapesse chi egli si fussero, cantava sovente certe canzonette, che egli era solito cantare a desco molle in compagnia de’ suoi beoni, e diceva qualche volta improvviso. E perché egli aveva bella voce e buona pronunzia, recitava spesso certe stanze di Lorenzo, che nuovamente erano uscite fuori, chiamate *Selve d’Amore*; di che pigliavano i conversi e ‘l Guardiano, che solamente poteano udirlo, maraviglioso piacere e contento: così in questa guisa s’andava trattenendo il meglio che egli poteva, quasi affatto perduta la speranza di aver mai più a rivedere il sole.⁴⁰⁵

Held in darkness and distanced from the outside world, Manente is trapped within his own thoughts and fears. Afforded light, he regains the ability to communicate with the social

⁴⁰³ Fanfani 208.

⁴⁰⁴ Fanfani 209.

⁴⁰⁵ *ibid.*

setting most familiar to him, despite his inability to discern the properties of his immediate environment.

Just as soon as that light is again taken away, however, Manente lends himself onece more to desperation and fear. He is hooded, ushered into the woods, and tied to a tree, his hands bound before him as the torches used to light the way to the woods are put out, one by one. Still, and perhaps on the back of his fleeting contact, however limited, with the world around him, Manente's agency increases proportionately to the light now surrounding him:

agevolente ruppe quella vitabla; sì che di fatto levatosi il cappello d'in su gli occhi, e alzandogli in suso, vide tra albero e albero una parte del cielo stellato; onde, allegro e meraviglioso, conobbe fermamente d'essere al largo e allo scoperto. E rigirando gli occhi più fissamente, perché già cominciava a far dì, vide gli abeti intornosi e l'erba sotto i piedi; per lo che egli fu certo d'essere in un bosco: pur, temendo di qualche cosa nuova e strana, stava fermo e cheto, cotalché a gran pena respirava per non esser sentito, parendogli sempre vedersi addosso quei capponi da far ridere, che gli rimettessero la manette e rimenassinlo via. Pur poi, facendosi giorno alto e chiaro, e già cominciando il sole coi lucenti raggi suoi a illuminare per tutto, e non veggendosi intorno né uomini né animali, su per uno stretto sentiero si diede a camminare in verso l'erta, per uscire di quella valle, conoscendo veramente d'essere ritornato al mondo.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁶ Fanfani 210.

Although certainly still tentative after his recent hostage state, encouraged by the light of dawn and the things illuminated in its path, he once again assumes control of his condition. This fluctuating pattern of Manente's thought persists throughout the doctor's quest for his lost identity. Sunset ushers in his sense of alienation, disorientation, and insecurity; sunlight, by contrast, brings with it his confidence and clarity of thought and action - despite his circumstances and against all odds.

This play on light and darkness - or "lanterninosofia," as Luperini calls it - becomes a defining characteristic of Pirandello's major humourist production, and is apparent within *Il fu Mattia Pascal's* first pages.⁴⁰⁷ As with Grazzini's Manente, the presence of the lantern and light more generally in *Il fu Mattia Pascal* signals a moment of consciousness that often also engenders the *sentimento del contrario* that depends on it. Light is first associated with Mattia's clarity of thought in Pirandello's second premessa, wherein Mattia's mode of writing is revealed. He writes his manuscript, he says, "qua, nella chiesetta sconosciuta, al lume che mi viene dalla lanterna lassù, della cupola," by the light of the dome of a tiny church.⁴⁰⁸ But the same light that affords Mattia lucidity and enhances his consciousness also, in so doing, complicates it. Here, Pirandello differs from Grazzini in the *Cene*, while hearkening back to Varchi's lessons on Nature and Love as discussed in chapter three. In *Il fu Mattia Pascal*, light brings with it the necessary presence of a shadow. Taken together, these elements propel Mattia into a keen state of awareness and, by consequence, mental anguish. Luperini identifies the key moment of Mattia's identity crisis in the following passage:

⁴⁰⁷ see Luperini 95-97.

⁴⁰⁸ Milano: Fratelli Treves, 1919, p. 4.

Uscii di casa, come un matto. Mi ritrovai dopo un pezzo per la via Flaminia,
vicino a Ponte Molle. Che ero andato a far lì? Mi guardai attorno; poi gli occhi
mi s'affissarono su l'ombra del mio corpo, e rimasi un tratto a contemplarla;
infine alzai un piede rabbiosamente su essa. Ma io no, io non potevo
calpestarla, l'ombra mia.

Chi era più ombra di noi due? Io o lei?

Due ombre!⁴⁰⁹

Here, and for the first time, Mattia, by now in Rome and suffering his inability to embrace the life he wants, is faced with the reality of his existential condition as he chooses it: in his undefined state between social death and biological life, he is neither alive nor dead, a shadow of a self that no longer exists. It is his shadow, a product of the light that generates it, that not only brings about this realization, but also inspires Mattia to action, however unsuccessful.

Manente never quite reaches Mattia's level of consciousness – of self or surroundings. Indeed, Grazzini's *Cene* are informed by vastly different social circumstances than Pirandello's *Fu Mattia Pascal*, the latter of which grows in an environment of self-conscious psychological probing. Still, in Grazzini's *Manente* and in his strange tales, readers can legitimately identify themes and motifs that later take greater shape in Pirandello's works. Grazzini's "humoural grotesques," then, can be read as a stepping-stone to Pirandello's humourism.

Grazzini's "modern" beffato: sources for a "grottesco" reading

⁴⁰⁹ See Luperini 91.

As alluded to earlier, Grazzini's preoccupation with man's "modern" condition as expressed through the three humoral elements described above extends beyond the closing episode of the *Cene*. As previously noted not only in this dissertation, but also by leading scholars on the *Humidi*, the sense of alienation, exile, and marginalization so fundamental to humourist texts is also present – and prominent – most specifically in Grazzini's *beffe* or, perhaps more explicitly still, in the existential condition of his *beffati*. In the *Cene*, precisely half of which are dedicated to elaborations of the *beffa*, these characters belong to two separate categories: those *beffati* by others, and, less frequently but more interestingly, those *beffati* by themselves, usually with the cooperation of others, as well. Both present prototypes of twentieth century humourist models that extend beyond Pirandello's prose compositions and that can be found, to an extent or to another, in the themes, plots, and characters of the *teatro del grottesco*.

Of particular interest are the three novelle dedicated to unintentionally self-beffati, two of which result in death, the other in near-death and, as is the case in III.x, an irrevocably changed identity. One of them more particularly reads as an early analogue to Pirandello's short story, "Sole e ombra."⁴¹⁰ There, Pirandello's anti-hero, Ciunna, convinced of eventually being prosecuted for an in-office theft committed to benefit his son's starving family, decides to commit suicide to avoid legal chastisement and social disfavour. He leaves his wife a suicide note and dresses for the occasion, but an unexpected encounter with a friend foils his plan. By the end of their day together, he has changed his outlook – and changed his mind. But, plagued by the remembrance of the suicide letter he earlier left and by the social fulfillment of it he now feels is obligatory, he reconsiders his newfound

⁴¹⁰ Luigi Pirandello, *Novelle per un anno*, "Sole e ombra," vol. 1, tomo 1 (Milano: Mondadori, 1985) 491-506.

optimism. Pirandello's novella ends in ambiguity: Ciunna may or may not have swallowed the poison intended to end his life in its closing lines.

In I.ix, Brancazio Malaspini, on his way home from a night with his married mistress, nearly scares himself to death and emerges from the fright in a perpetual state of shock forever marked by a mysterious baldness on his head. His story, remarkable in its details, begins with a passage strikingly similar to the paranoia Ciunna experiences in "Sole e ombra." Grazzini writes:

Ora accade, tra le altre, che una volta, tornando egli dalla sua innamorata, e passato avendo la nave, e lungo Arno camminando, gli parve, dirimpetto sendo appunto alle forche, udire una voce che dicesse, come dire *Ora pro eo*; per lo che, fermatosi, girò gli occhi verso le forche, e veder gli parve sopra quelle tre o quattro come direste uomini ciondolare a guisa d'impiccati. Si che, stando in fra due, non sapeva che farsi, perciocché, sendo una ora in meno innanzi giorno, e l'aria fosca e senza lume di luna, non bene scorger poteva se quelle fossero ombre o cose vere; ma in quel mentre udi con sommessa voce un'altra volta dire *Ora pro eo*; e gli parve vedere un certo che dimenarsi in cima della scala.⁴¹¹

Pirandello's novella opens with a similar sensation of the uncanny in direct address.

Pirandello writes:

Tra i rami degli alberi che formavano quasi un portico verde e lieve al viale lunghissimo attorno alle mura della vecchia città, la luna, comparando

⁴¹¹ Fanfani 63.

all'improvviso, di sorpresa, pareva dicesse a un uomo d'altissima statura che, in un'ora così insolita, s'avventurava solo a quel bujo mal sicuro:

'Sì, ma io ti vedo.'

E come se veramente si vedesse scoperto, l'uomo si fermava e, spalmando le manacce sul petto, esclamava con intensa esasperazione:

-Io, già! io! Ciunna!

Via via, sul suo capo, tutte le foglie allora, fruscando infinitamente, pareva si confidassero quel nome: 'Ciunna ... Ciunna ...' [...] E seguitavano a bisbigliar di lui [...] e di quel che aveva fatto [...]

Lui allora si guardava dietro, nel bujo lungo il viale interrotto qua e là da tante fantasime di luna.⁴¹²

Right away, both authors cripple their protagonists with mental instability instigated by (traditionally) grotesque forces. In both cases, furthermore, the darkness surrounding the featured characters accentuates both their paranoid sense of marvel and their difficulty in discernment. Malaspini fails to recognize pumpkins in the figures he imagines to be human heads hanging in the gallows over a fork in the road; nor does he understand their placement there to be the work of a batty woman, locally recognized as mentally unstable. Instead, and in the strange, dissipated light of the moon, he believes himself to be enchanted, haunted by the very demons he so frequently ridicules so that when the lady releases one of the pumpkins from its hold and follows it down a steep set of stairs, Malaspini, gripped by great fear, falls unconscious until found the following day.

⁴¹² "Sole e ombra" 491.

Ciunna's lack of judgment is, by contrast, more immediately relevant to his daily life. Under the influence of the moon's persistent "whisper," he imagines his own suicide to escape the shame of being caught stealing. In daylight, though never quite detached from the thought of his suicide as he imagines it, Ciunna is at least able to recognize – and, indeed, enjoy – other courses of action; by the novella's end, and just before darkness falls, he all but forgets his initial plan and begins to envisage life as a steady succession of normal, daily events that, however dismal, are always resolvable. But with the setting of the sun and the rising of the moon, his doubts and fears flood back to him and precipitate him to carry out his plan, in what is a very typical elemental mirroring of his inner insecurities.

The same is true to a certain extent in Malaspina's case. Grazzini's tale displays a similar cyclical structure, beginning in the evening and turning eventually to daytime hours before closing in twilight.⁴¹³ It presents a similar ambiguity in its ending, too: just as readers are left to wonder about the success of Ciunna's suicide at the end of "Sole e ombra," so, too, are they here unable to come to any conclusion about Malaspina's mental health after the scare that nearly renders him permanently comatose. In both cases, the main characters – in psychological as well as physical isolation – are left in a suspended state between life and death foreshadowed not only by their natural environments, but also, in Ciunna's case, by early allusions to suicide and in Malaspina's, by (implicit) images of death and the afterlife.

⁴¹³ "E se non che la sera tornò la Biliorsa in sul tramontar del sole a spiccare quelle zucche, onde fu veduta, e quindi agevolmente trovato la cosa, a Brancazio non avrebbe tutto il mondo cavato della testa che non fusse stato il diavolo veramente quel che egli vide, e che qualche negromante, incantatore, stregone o maliardo non avesse poi quegli uomini, che gli parevano impiccati, fatti convertire in zucche" (Fanfani 65).

As much can be said of the other two *novelle* featuring self-*beffati* described at length in the previous chapter. In I.vii, Pietro da Siena's suicide results only in part from the *beffa* played on him by the Florentine altar boy at his service and relies more heavily on his own neuroses and paranoia:

e tornatogli nella memoria quel che fatto aveva, dubitando non colei fusse venuta quivi per istrangolarlo, in uno stante gli venne tanta paura, che egli si gittò subitamente a terra del letto; et in camicia fuggendo, si uscì di camera: e non restando di correre, pur sempre gridando, giunse per lo verone in capo di una scala che scendeva in terreno; e tanta fu la fretta che egli aveva di dileguarsi, che tutta la tombolò da imo al sommo, e nel cadere si ruppe un braccio, e infransesi un fianco, e in due od in tre lati si spezzò la testa.⁴¹⁴

This moment merely introduces the terror and regret that later take hold of Pietro da Siena, definitively:

gli crebbe in mille doppj la meraviglia e il dolore, e quasi stupido e trasecolato si fece ricondurre al letto; dove, pensando sempre a questo fatto, tanto gli sopraggiunse e la doglia e la maninconia, che poco mangiava e poco o niente dormiva; di maniera che, o fusse la novità del caso o gli umori maninconici, la rabbia e la frenesia, o pure il diavolo che lo accecasse, un giorno fra gli altri, ch'egli era rimasto in camera solo, si gittò a capo innanzi a terra d'una finestra che riusciva in una corte, dove battendo in su le lastre, si sfracellò, e morì che non battò polso.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁴ Fanfani 54.

⁴¹⁵ Fanfani 56.

It is the priest's guilt at having attempted to dupe his young underling more than the beffa played on him itself that drives him to such a drastic measure of behaviour. Again here, his final lot is both prefigured in earlier (and literal) juxtapositions of death and life in the novella – Grazzini places him in bed beside the corpse of the girl he earlier uses to frighten the altar-boy – and traced in the oscillation between light and darkness present throughout: the planning of both beffe takes place during the evening, but their final executions occur, in each case, as day breaks, as too does Pietro da Siena's final reaction and voluntary response.

His agency, however, ultimately renders him the victim of modern Fortune. Despite the absence of the *sentimento del contrario* so clearly seen in both cases above, Pietro da Siena, either by sophistication of thought or by crippling humoral imbalance, evidences the existential anxiety that, often alongside the absurd, defines the modern man in the theatre of the grotesque. The story of which he is a part is by definition comic: it begins poorly but ends well for the Florentine altar boy. But if readers laugh, it is not at Pietro da Siena's expense. They laugh, instead, at the failure of his intended beffa.

Grazzini and the Teatro del Grottesco: Luigi Chiarelli, Luigi Antonelli, and marionettes

While absent, for all intents and purposes, in I.vii, the (proto)modernist *sentimento del contrario* is strikingly present and perhaps strongest in Falananna's tale in II.ii, which also sets the stage for one of the most canonical themes of twentieth century grotesque playwrights: the false funeral. On May 29, 1916, Luigi Chiarelli débuts his hallmark play, *La maschera e il volto*: a social satire, like many others of its kind and generation, intended to subvert and critique both the bourgeois conception of marriage and "bourgeois theatre"

itself.⁴¹⁶ At the center of the plot are Paolo Grazia and his wife, Savina, upper-middle class members of a brilliant company of socialite friends with very fashionable moral habits and anomalies. On the increasingly popular – and decreasingly taboo – topic of marital infidelity, Paolo’s view is inflexible: a spouse’s adultery is punishable by death. On the opposite end of the spectrum, his wife, Savina, engages in an illicit affair with her husband’s dearest friend.⁴¹⁷ When Paolo discovers her betrayal, he insists on staging her murder – but for social rather than emotional reasons, and in order, only, to remain true to his publically-pronounced principles. Savina leaves Como, affording Paolo the space and opportunity to fake her death, confess to her murder, hire her lover for legal defense, emerge from trial free of blame and sentence, and arrange for her funeral. But the woman in the coffin at the wake is not, of course, Paolo’s wife, and Savina returns under a French alias to declare her love for her husband and to ask his forgiveness on the day of her funeral. Eventually, and at the funeral itself, Savina’s true identity is discovered and, with Paolo facing condemnation for falsifying a crime, they flee together to restart their married life.⁴¹⁸

The dissonances between Falananna’s tale and Chiarelli’s play are obvious; to be sure, the failed (though eventually successful) funeral in Grazzini’s novella is as far

⁴¹⁶ Gigi Livio questions the success of the grotesque author’s ability to provide a real alternative to the bourgeois theatre it critiques. He writes: “I grotteschi hanno messo sotto accusa il dramma borghese senza, d’altra parte, aver qualcosa di nuovo da contrapporgli: che se le particolari condizioni storiche che stavano frequentando nella loro espressione sovrastrutturale (decadenza del naturalismo e del dramma borghese) permettevano loro, da una parte, di liquidare definitivamente i brandelli di quell’epoca drammatica, dall’altra, mancando le condizioni oggettive per un mutamento della struttura (che mutamento infatti poi non vi fu, sebbene quel tempo, con i suoi fermenti rivoluzionari, potesse far pensare diversamente), non era loro dato di aprire nuove prospettive” (*Teatro grottesco del Novecento*, Antologia (Milano: Mursia, 1965) xiii).

⁴¹⁷ In Act III, Savina laments her description as a woman without scruples or morals.

⁴¹⁸ Luigi Chiarelli, *La maschera e il volto*, a cura di Giancarlo Sammartano (Roma: Bulzoni editore, 1988).

removed from the staged funeral in *La maschera e il volto* as Chiarelli is, chronologically, from the sixteenth century. But what emerges in Falananna's plight are the social dimensions of the grotesque that, growing out of the more conventional aspects of the same genre, become the exclusive and central concern of grotesque playwrights. In other words, readers find in Grazzini's *Cene* the transition from supernatural marvel to a grotesque dimension contingent entirely on social reaction, interaction, mores, and norms that defines the grotesque in the twentieth century.⁴¹⁹

Scholars disagree fundamentally on both the development of the "teatro grottesco" as a movement and on its chief and most characteristic concerns. Key members of the early debate include Gigi Livio, Adriano Tilgher, Giorgio Pullini, Luigi Tonelli, and Luigi Ferrante, but Silvio D'Amico is the first to provide a tentative definition of it as a school of theatre deriving from but not dependent on or always contingent with Pirandello or consistent within itself that fundamentally displays, "una tendenza 'marionettistica', alla concentrazione in poche e marcatissime smorfie d'una sognata quintessenza del comico e del tragico umano."⁴²⁰ This coexistence of tragedy and comedy within grotesque theatre remains a consistent feature of its description among most scholars, each one adding a particular note to it. Ruggiero Jacobbi points to its moral function and to its requirement of an active and involved audience, deeming it the

⁴¹⁹ On the two tendencies of the grotesque in the twentieth century (the Pirandellian vein and the vein of bourgeois theatre, see O. A. Bontempo, "Italian Literature in 1934," *The Modern Language Journal* 19.8 (1935): 583-95: "Yet, to sum up the point, let it be remarked in passing that the two genres offered composite problems: on one hand, the problem of finding one's self-identity, finding one's character in a world, and in an order of things with literally have no fixity (Pirandello), on the other, the problem of playing one's part in society, as an automaton, a marionette, if necessary, distorted in a thousand different ways under convention's badly focused binoculars" (584).

⁴²⁰ Silvio D'Amico, *Il teatro dei fantocci* (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1920) 81.

highest form of theatrical representation.⁴²¹ Gigi Livio calls it a theatre that provokes disinterested laughter in a public too aware of the problems it illustrates and the shortcomings of the *piccolo borghese* world it describes.⁴²² Giovanni Calendoli points to its novelty on the literary (and theatrical) stage.⁴²³ Lastly, Adriano Tilgher provides this definition for it, encompassing most previously stated opinions:

L'essenza del *grottesco* è, dunque, nella rappresentazione della contraddizione avvertita, sperimentata e, infine, superata della *maschera* e del *volto*, delle idee esteriori astratte sociali e dei sentimenti intimi concreti individuali, dell'io superficiale e dell'io profondo, della spontaneità vitale e delle finzioni sociali inconsciamente accolte, e non percepite perciò inizialmente come finzioni, che le si sovrappongono e tentano deformatela.⁴²⁴

⁴²¹“In teatro . . . l'azione deve svolgersi all'interno dell'uomo, deve avere l'uomo per principio e fine: e perciò è essa un'azione eminentemente morale. E poi l'autore di teatro non può, come il romanziere, spiegare al lettore tutto ciò che si snoda nell'animo del personaggio; non può dire, ad esempio, che il protagonista sente inquietudine e tristezza per il presentimento di qualcosa di male che sta per accadere ... Al contrario, tocca allo spettatore il comprendere tale situazione osservando i modi dei personaggi; ed anzi egli si sentirà particolarmente ricompensato se penserà che lui solo, fra i presenti in sala, ha indovinato la tristezza del personaggio e i suoi cattivi presentimenti” (*Guida per lo spettatore di teatro* (Firenze: Casa editrice G. D'Anna, 1973, p. 20).

⁴²² “La capacità ‘al bel riso franco e disinteressato dei nostri vecchi’ di cui parlerà con rimpianto molti anni dopo il D'Amico in un saggio sul grottesco, e' proprio la capacità a ridere senza occuparsi del problema o, meglio, ma è poi la stessa cosa, avendo ben presente e del tutto pacifica la soluzione piccolo borghese del problema. Un riso in nessun caso corrosivo, peggio, eversivo ma soltanto diversivo: appunto un bel riso franco e disinteressato” (Gigi Livio, *Teatro grottesco del Novecento, Antologia* (Milano: Mursia, 1965, p. v).

⁴²³ “The Theatre of the Grotesque is the theatre that is able to break all ties with the traditional theatre – the theatre that, on the level of scenic experimentation, is able to deny character and to revoke tradition” (trans. Denise Applin, “The Theatre of the Grotesque,” *The Drama Review* 22.1 (1978):13-16, p. 3).

⁴²⁴ Adriano Tilgher, *Studi sul teatro contemporaneo* (Roma: Libreria di Scienze e lettere, 1928) 128.

In short, however, the theatre of the grotesque, when viewed as an ensemble representative of its time, refers to a movement defined by the absurd, the obsessive, the psychologically devious, and the copresence and equal articulation of contradictory ideas in the same text, provoking contradictory reactions from its audience.⁴²⁵

Cena II.ii is, by traditional definition as explored in the previous chapter and in the terms defined above, fundamentally “grotesque.” It pits life against death, derives laughter from tragedy, opposes contrasting elements, and problematises the otherworldliness of the afterlife. But Falananna’s tale is anchored by three primarily social moments and impetuses: his wife’s unfaithfulness, his neighbour’s accusations, and the reaction of the crowd that constitutes his funereal procession. Each of these instances provokes the *sentimento del contrario* in readers of the *Cene* and is at the root of the traditionally grotesque elements of the *novella*. The first occurs early. Readers quickly discover Falananna to be a simpleton in a marriage of convenience. Laughter soon gives way to sympathy in readers of *Falananna* first when they are given the reason for his plainness, and next when they discover his wife’s infidelity. Monna Antonia, Falananna’s mother-in-law, is the primary location of this first instance of social grotesque. On the one hand, she is described as “una vecchierella tutta pietosa et amorevole.” But when she discovers her daughter to be unsatisfied with the sexual dimension of her marriage, Monna Antonia, though poor and clearly benefiting from the union of her daughter with the rather wealthy Falananna, rather than advocate a position of marital chastity, not only encourages her daughter to be unfaithful to her husband, but actively arranges for a lover to enter the

⁴²⁵ See also Domenico Vittorini, “Il grottesco nel teatro italiano moderno e contemporaneo,” *The Modern Language Journal* 10.1 (1925): 21-29; and Michael Vena, “The Grotteschi Revisited,” *Forum Italicum* 31.1 (1997): 153-73.

family's shared bedroom.⁴²⁶ Falananna is none the wiser. In fact, he mistakes his wife's lover, already enjoying her graces, for his mother-in-law. Monna Antonia's unexpected response again denotes a "social grotesque" followed immediately by a carnivalesque celebration of the body and an absurd play on the definition of "death" that resembles more closely traditional grotesque. Grazzini writes:

Onde egli [Falananna], credendo lui esser la madre, disse: Monna Antonia, che fate voi? ohimè! guardate a non impregnar mogliama! Monna Antonia, che si stava vegliando in su la proda sua, quanto più poteva contenta del contento della figliuola, udito Falananna, per riparare che del Berna non s'accorgesse, accostò il capo rasente a quel della Mante; e così favellando gli rispose: Non aver pensiero che io te l'ingrossi, no. Ohimé trista! che io le fe le fregagioni rasente il bellico; perché la poverina è stata per morire . . . Erano coloro appunto, allora che monna Antonia cotali parole dicea, nel colmo della beatitudine amorosa: e la Mante per due volte per la soverchia dolcezza disse: Ohimé, ohimé, io muojo, io muojo! Falananna cominciò a gridare: Aspetta, aspetta, che io vada per lo prete: aspetta, moglie mia, non morire ancora: ohimé, voglio che tu ti confessi prima!

Falananna's simplicity and defenselessness only further highlight the anomaly of Monna Antonia's reaction. More importantly, however, they also provoke in Grazzini's ideal reader a conflicted moral response. On the one hand, she appreciates both Monna Antonia's quick

⁴²⁶ "Sicchè ragionatone con la madre, fece tanto che di lei pietosa venne, e disse: Figliuola mia, lascia pur fare a me, non ti dar pensiero, ché io ti farò tosto contenta; et itasene a trovare il suo amante, che più di lei lo desiderava, dettono ordine fra loro che il Berna da mezza notte ill à, facendo certo cenno, venisse a cavare la figliuola d'affanno, il quale non mancò di niente; et all'ora deputata, fatto il cenno, fu da Monna Antonia messo in casa, e di più nel letto accanto alle sua Mante" (Fanfani 91).

wit and the overall comicity of the given situation. On the other, however, and by mere virtue of Falananna's ingenuousness and disposition to gullibility, she is made to acknowledge the tragedy of his marital existence. In this case, then, the grotesque functions on both the social and the literal level to bring about the *sentimento del contrario* in readers; the social absurdity of the presented scene gives rise to the macabre obsession with death that defines and dominates the rest of the novella, and that pushes readers to complexify their reading of the tale. The transition from the one to the next is seamless.

The same is true twice more during Falananna's funeral procession, where Grazzini, like many grotesque playwrights after him, "si [diverte] a trarre delle note buffe da situazioni funebri . . . per mettere in ridicolo le convenienze sociali intorno a un defunto."⁴²⁷ Grazzini first establishes the proper social parameters for neighbours to grieve alongside Monna Antonia and her daughter, la Mante. Despite the peculiarity of Falananna's appearance in death, the company, unaware of the beffa privately administered the false corpse, respectfully passes on their condolences to the grieving widow and her mother. Even when Falananna soils himself with urine and is taken, reeking, from the room in which he had lain, every funereal observance is kept, in accordance with contemporary practice;⁴²⁸ "E così, a male in corpo, portandolo, quasi ammorbati lo posarono su la bara; onde i fratelli, sendo già i preti e i frati forniti di passare, comportando il meglio che potevano il tristo odore, levato se l'avevano in spalla, e dietro la Croce seguitavano di camminare."⁴²⁹ The spell of propriety is definitively disturbed, however, when one neighbour fails to adhere to social convention:

⁴²⁷ D'Amico 81.

⁴²⁸ Fanfani 99-100; see appendix 5.

⁴²⁹ Fanfani 100.

Ora avvenne, camminando, che ei giunsero sul canto al Leone; e in su la svolta appunto capitata tutta la gente, come è usanza, dimandavano chi fusse il morto; alla quali era risposto: Falananna; tanto che a ciascuno ne increseva, dicendo: Dio abbia avuto l'anima sua. Ma un certo suo conoscente et amico, inteso solo anch'egli, e veggendolo portare a seppellire, poco discreto, anzi addirato, disse: Ah ribaldo giuntatore! egli se ne va con tre lire di mio: e sai che non gliene prestai di contanti! tristo ladro, abbisele sopra l'anima!⁴³⁰

Despite his guilelessness, Falananna is the first to recognize his neighbour's breach in social contract. "Ahi sciaurato," he intervenes, "queste parole si dicono a' morti? tristo! perché non me l'aver chieste, quando io ero vivo, o andare da mogliama, che ti avrebbe pagato?"⁴³¹

The blend of social and traditional grotesque already apparent in Falananna's naïve declaration only grows stronger with the reaction of the crowd surrounding him: "Quelli che lo portavano, udite le parole, spaventati, lasciarono andare la bara, e colui fu per spiritare."⁴³² They marvel at what they deem to be a supernatural event; still, its very coming-to-be is spurred on by a social indecency.

Falananna's story descends into chaos from that point forward. The crowd, attempting to startle Falananna out of his confused stupor and assuming him to be enchanted or deranged, takes to beating him with torches, then with sticks and stones. He, in turn, races across the ponte alla Carraia, over, and eventually into the Arno, "impaurito per lo romore e per lo strepiti de' popoli" where Grazzini provides readers with his coup de grâce and the defining moment of the *sentimento del contrario* in perhaps the entire

⁴³⁰ Fanfani 100.

⁴³¹ *ibid.*

⁴³² *ibid.*

collection of *novelle*. Falling into a pit of burning oil on the surface of the Arno, Falananna is lit aflame. Paradoxically, no amount of social intervention here, no matter how well-intentioned, saves him from his self-sought fate: “Le persone che erano andate per darli ajuto, lo avevano intanto e con funi e con legni tirato alla riva; nientedimeno non restava d’ardere ancora, perché quanto più acqua gittaondoli addosso, per ispegnere adoperavano, tanto più gli accendevano e nutrivangli il fuoco, dimodoché egli era di già quasi tutto consumato et arso.”⁴³³ The grotesque seen here is felt just as strongly in the confusion of death and life and the juxtaposition of fire and water as it is in the contempt for social convention and in the contemporaneous rejection of the anomalous (Falananna) and embrace of socially anomalous behaviour (Monna Antonia, the crowd). In other words, ostensibly, what Grazzini might be said to have done in the composition of II.ii, is *decompose* the traditional pillars not only of proper social behaviour, but of the typical *beffa*.

Grazzini’s grotesque humourism is most clearly seen here, in this descent from social grace to disgrace, from comedy to tragedy, from a playful seduction of death to death itself. The disintegration of Falananna’s tale traces a general shift in both readers’ and participants’ perception of his fate, and denotes the kind of classical tragedy obscured and rendered ambiguous by detail that is the foundation of humourist texts. At its outset, Falananna’s tale seems a comedy peppered by unfortunate accidents, attitudes, and events. By its end, readers recognize in it a tragedy made comedic only by circumstance and by readers’ conscious ability not only to cultivate the irony of the situation Grazzini depicts, but also to locate in Falananna’s character the internal conflict central to humourism. In

⁴³³ Fanfani 103.

other words, what Grazzini accomplishes here is typical of what Pirandello, Chiarelli, and the grotesques do perhaps more explicitly three centuries later: he, like they, renders tangible the vanity and emptiness of human existence summarized, by scholars of the contemporary grotesque, as the sensation that “tutto è vuoto, tutto è vano, l’esistenza umana non è che una tragica farsa.”⁴³⁴

Chiarelli’s play eliminates the marvelous aspect of the traditional grotesque to favour an exclusive emphasis on its social dimension. But, several centuries later, Chiarelli goes further still in his reversal of social expectation than Grazzini, though precocious, is able to do. The defining moments of *La maschera e il volto* occur in the play’s second act, where Paolo Grazia is afforded clemency for his wife’s (feigned) murder, and then again at its end, when he escapes prosecution for falsifying a crime. In neither case does Chiarelli comment on the issue superficially at the heart of his play: marital infidelity. Or, perhaps better put, his comment is implicit and at least initially consistent with bourgeois values: Paolo Grazia is let off for his crime, his wife’s infidelity deemed egregious enough to justify it. But Chiarelli undoes this supposition by the play’s end. In granting Savina not only life, but readmission to her previous existence, Chiarelli exonerates her indiscretion. So, too, does Grazzini pardon la Mante for her involvement in her husband’s death; indeed, he grants her a new one. Ultimately, Paolo is caught, of course, and both he and the lawyer that defends him – incidentally, his best friend and wife’s lover - fall on the hard side of the law. Still, and in a *lieta fine* uncharacteristic of *piccolo borghese* theatre of the time, he, too, avoids punishment and is afforded an opportunity for the renewal not only of his marriage, but of his life.

⁴³⁴ Silvio D’Amico, *Il teatro dei fantocci* (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1920) 82.

The false funeral at the end of *La maschera e il volto* recalls another of Grazzini's in *Cena* II.i, in many ways the reversal of III.x. There, a very wealthy Lazzero di maestro Basilio goes fishing with his poor neighbour and doppelganger, Gabriello, and drowns. Taking advantage of both his neighbour's wealth and their physical similarities, Gabriello, in what society assumes to be his own death, takes on Lazzero's identity – and wealth –, remarries his own wife under this new, rich alias, and, living off the fortune of his deceased neighbour, provides for his family for many happy years. This social death and opportunity to embody a new identity once again foreshadow Pirandello's *Il fu Mattia Pascal*. But in Gabriello's return to his grieving wife in a new guise only to later reveal himself, Grazzini also stands behind another theme taken to extreme social grotesque and seen in Luigi Antonelli's *L'uomo che incontrò se stesso*.

First drafted around 1918 and debuted at Milan's Olympia theatre in May of that same year, *L'uomo che incontrò se stesso* opens on an enchanted island belonging to a mysterious Dr. Climt far removed from the city life to which Luciano De Garbines, 46 years old, has been accustomed for over twenty years. As viewers soon discover, De Garbines is the victim of what he soon into the play calls a "tragedia tellurgica-coniugale": twenty years prior, De Garbines discovers his wife's infidelity when he finds her dead in the debris of an earthquake, in the embraces of his best friend. On this island, he is afforded the opportunity to interact with his deceased wife, young as she was at the moment of her death, and married to his former self. He uses the opportunity to test and to tempt his wife who eventually gives into his advances, pleasing and disappointing him at the same time. Like Chiarelli in *La maschera e il volto*, Antonelli infuses in *L'uomo che incontrò se stesso* not only a critique of modern marriage, but a questioning of the morality surrounding the taboo of

infidelity. Luciano De Garbines is, in the space of one play and in relation to the same woman, both adulterer and cuckold, both sinner and sinned against. It is only with great difficulty that readers and viewers can see in Sonia, his young wife, in an exclusively negative light, thus shrouding in ambiguity the archetype of the “adulteress” of much so-called bourgeois theatre immediately precedent.⁴³⁵

This specific kind of moral ambiguity is absent in Grazzini’s *novella*.⁴³⁶ There, Gabriello’s opportunism – morally sound or otherwise – affords him the chance at renewal under a different alias that he ostensibly deserves. His wife is no less rewarded, and perhaps only for her fidelity: she accepts to marry Lazzero/Gabriello only for the benefit of her children and for their patrimony. Her family urges her to accept Lazzero/Gabriello’s proposal, and, “quasi piangendo disse che non lo faceva per altro che per lo comodo ed utile de’ suoi figliuoli, et ancora perché Lazzaro somigliava tutto il suo Gabbriello.”⁴³⁷ Grazzini shocks expectation and reverses the natural course of events – or perhaps enhances it by way of his pluriform protagonist – within the sanctity of marriage. Antonelli’s exploration of the same theme crumbles under this very institution. Where Santa’s loyalty is the reason for Gabbriello’s successful achievement of a new social identity, Sonia’s infidelity is the reason for Luciano’s disappointment, departure from the island, and retreat to his everyday life.

Yet both scenarios function under the umbrella of Fortune –the characteristic of grotesque theatre that most strongly ties it not only to Grazzini’s *Cene*, but also to the beffa

⁴³⁵ Luigi Antonelli, *L’uomo che incontrò se stesso*, a cura di Giancarlo Sammartano (Roma: Bulzoni editore, 1994).

⁴³⁶ As addressed in the previous chapter, it is in Gabriello’s decision to *trick the neighbours* into believing him to be dead that readers can locate Grazzini’s trademark moral ambiguity in II.i.

⁴³⁷ Fanfani 87.

tradition more generally. For better (as in Gabbriello's case) or worse (as in Luciano's), the theatre of the grotesque displays the "tendenza 'marionettistica', alla concentrazione in poche e marcatissime smorfie d'una sognata quintessenza del comico e del tragico umano" also markedly present in a number of Grazzini's *Cene*, almost all of them *beffe*.⁴³⁸ In other words, at the center of both groteschi production and the *Cene* overall is the operation of Fate or Fortune, manifested in the coexistence of tragedy and comedy and, often, in the contradiction of one contrary to expectation. The primary objective of the groteschi, as Baldo Curato defines it, is, "davanti allo spettacolo caotico ed incoerente della vita [di trovare] un rifugio e una difesa, invece che nel pianto, nell'ironizzare questa nostra misera esistenza, nel porne il rilievo le eterne contraddizioni, le ridicole vanità, dipingendocela insomma come una beffa dinanzi alla quale non si può trattenere il riso."⁴³⁹ The fundamental tragedy of life is lightened in this presentation of it as an ongoing farce.⁴⁴⁰

To this effect, Grazzini's *beffati* set the stage for the *marionette* of the grotesque tradition that display the same socio-psychological tendencies, insecurities, and crises as the former. The function of Grazzini's *beffato*, like the groteschi's *marionette*, is not only to call into question issues of morality and social response; he also serves unambiguously to

⁴³⁸ D'Amico 81.

⁴³⁹ *Sessant'anni di teatro italiano: da Giovanni Verga a Ugo Betti*, a cura di Baldo Curato (Milano: Denti, ??) 241.

⁴⁴⁰ It is important to note, however, that neither the grotesque authors nor Grazzini limit themselves to the generic specificity of the farce – or *farsa* – in their exploration of the *sentimento del contrario* at the root of their production. On the limitations of the farce, see Ruggero Jacobbi, *Guida per lo spettatore di teatro* (Firenze: Casa editrice G. D'Anna, 1973) 29-30: "La *farsa* vuol divertire il pubblico lasciando da parte qualsiasi determinazione psicologica dei personaggi. Più ancora: essa non crede alla personalità individuale, dimentica che il personaggio 'ha un'anima', lo riduce al puro scheletro . . . Essa utilizza gli elementi fisici della comicità, dai movimenti delle azioni (fame, sesso, paura) alla stessa rappresentazione (colpi, capitomboli, amplessi, fughe). Il suo segreto è il ritmo, che mostra il puro divenire: la *farsa* è condannata alla velocità. È atea, non conosce neppure l'idea di Essere."

illustrate man's fundamental weakness and impotence against both the internal and external forces that operate upon him. For Grazzini, those external forces manifest themselves in the form of *beffatori*: physical beings that limit the *beffato's* range of action and response, while the internal forces he investigates remain the psychological effects (paranoia, disorientation) these *beffatori* provoke in the *beffato*. The *grotteschi* attribute this same function to the psychological trappings of the modern mind and the many ways in which it, together with societal expectation, custom, and the disintegration of traditional mores, reduces man to the state of a puppet granted so much free will, he is unable to use it to his advantage and falls victim, instead, to his passions. Grotesque *marionette* are, as Giorgio Pullini writes, "uomini divorati dalla passione che li estenua e stordisce."⁴⁴¹ In grotesque explorations of the *marionette*, then, as Pullini continues, "l'uomo, quindi, non consiste se non per impulso riflesso, è un impasto di reazioni, quello che gli altri o le cose lo fanno essere, ma è privo di un'autonomia propria, di un suo mondo spirituale. . . . Allontanat[o] nella preistoria del sonno, balbett[a] parole sconnesse e trov[a] nell'assopimento la felicità dell'innocenza."⁴⁴² Life is no more than "una potenza cieca e crudele" and "gli autori dei *grotteschi*, se un carattere hanno in comune, è l'assoluta persuasione che tutto è vano, che tutto è vuoto, che gli uomini sono marionette nelle mani del destino, che i loro dolori, le loro gioie, le loro azioni sono sogni di ombre agitantosi in un mondo di tenebre e di mistero dominato da un cieco destino."⁴⁴³

⁴⁴¹ Giorgio Pullini, *Teatro italiano fra due secoli, 1850-1950* (Firenze: Parenti, ????) 303.

⁴⁴² *ibid*, 296.

⁴⁴³ Adriano Tilgher, *Studi sul teatro contemporaneo* (Roma: Libreria di Scienze e lettere, 1928) 119-120.

This kind of half-conscious powerlessness is found in all of Grazzini's *beffati*. In I.ii, Amerigo degli Uberti tricks his boyhood tutor into believing his male member to be chewed off by a cat when instead, he has it sawed off with the help of some friends. The unsuspecting victim of Amerigo's clandestine plan, the tutor, the remnants of his bleeding member in hand, is chased away from the scene of the crime, helpless, and never discovers the true nature of this unfortunate episode. In II.iv, customary beffatori lo Scheggia, il Pilucca and il Monaco trick a certain Gian Simone into believing himself the subject of necromancy and, in order to free him from the spell he believes he is under, get him to pay them a handsome sum. They repeat a similar effort in II.vi, this time with Guasparri del Calandra. There, they stage a false demonic possession of his bedroom, and when he incredulously recounts what he sees there, they demand proof, set up a bet, and take his ring as collateral. Unable to provide proof of the demons' existence in the presence of its alleged source, Guasparri is forced to buy his ring back. Repeatedly throughout the *Cene*, Grazzini exploits the dominant/submissive power dynamic of the traditional beffa.

This relationship of power and control becomes symbolic and systemic of a larger – and modern – issue of consciousness (and fatality), however, in Grazzini's perhaps most notable beffa. II.vii pits Taddeo, an unsuspecting pedant in love with a certain Fiammetta and determined to gain her favour, against a band of her brother's friends and sixteenth-century Florence's best-known beffatori. In an attempt to woo the noble lady, Taddeo sends Fiammetta an ardent love note suggesting a live meeting, but when it falls in the hands of her brother, Taddeo literally watches himself turn victim to an unexpected and unfortunate fate. Fiammetta's brother, writing on Fiammetta's behalf, invites Taddeo to spend a clandestine evening at their home in the company of his beloved lady. When he arrives,

however, he is first abandoned in a room for hours, then, and upon the moment of expected *jouissance*, whipped, tortured, and tormented by Fiammetta's brother's group of disguised bandits before being stripped naked, bound at the hands and feet, and blindfolded:

Lamberto, che già s'era messo in ordine avendo la chiave con i compagni alla camera dove aspettava il pedante, se ne venne; ed erano travestiti tutti con vesti bianche da Battuti, e quattro di loro avevano una scoreggia di sovatto in mano per uno, e gli altri due torce accese. Come Taddeo sentì toccar l'uscio, e conobbe il volgere della chiave, tutto si rallegrò, e rizzosi in sul letto a sedere con le braccia aperte . . . Ma come coloro vide travestiti, fu da tanto dolore e da così fatto spaventato sopraggiunto, che egli non seppe in su quel subito pigliare schermo niuno, e quasi stupido e immobile era venuto. Coloro, entrati dentro, e riserrato l'uscio, presero in un tratto la sargia e il coltrone, e scagliaronlo a mezza la camera; e tutti e quattro quei delle scoregge cominciarono, tacendo sempre, a battere e frustare il misero Pedagogo con tanta forza, quanta uscir poteva loro dalle braccia . . . Onde coloro, non già sazi ma stanchi, in parte restarono di flagellarlo; e senza aver giammai fatto parola, legatoli le mani e i piedi con due scoregge a fine che da sé stesso non s'ammazzasse o si facesse qualche brutto scherzo, lo lasciarono legato in mezzo la camera, e tolti tutti i panni suoi, per infino la camicia e le pianelle, se ne tornarono nella prima camera.⁴⁴⁴

Here, Grazzini makes full use of the "beffato's conditton" twice: first, in the juxtaposition of Taddeo's expected happiness to the cruelty of his fate at the beffatori's hands, and next in

⁴⁴⁴ Fanfani 167-68.

the complete removal of Taddeo's agency in the situation in which he unwittingly finds himself. Not only does the brigata of white-hooded *birbanti* overpower Taddeo with their strength, in binding him, they also deprive him both of harming them and of harming himself, denying him any responsibility for the final outcome of his plight. Theirs is anything but an act of mercy or protection: Taddeo "malediva divotamente il suo amore, la Fiammetta et il giorno che nacque, senza speranza d'aver mai a uscire delle mani a coloro, se non morto . . . e doloroso, non potendo quindi muoversi, faceva il più diretto cordoglio che s'udisse giammai, aspettando d'ora in ora la morte."⁴⁴⁵ He is as powerless before the force of his beffatori as the modern(ist) man, centuries later, becomes before the forces of the Universe, of the Machine, of the Institution.⁴⁴⁶

But the modernity of Taddeo's particular condition is revealed still more concretely further ahead in Grazzini's novella and in the figure of the here literal marionette that will later become central, symbolically, artistically, and iconographically, to the grotteschi. In their prolonged effort to alienate and, eventually, exile Taddeo, Fiammetta's brother and his fellow beffatori fashion a straw-man marionette of Taddeo, his perfect effigy in every way, masked and dressed in the pedagogue's likeness.⁴⁴⁷ The beffatori are not satisfied merely to place the puppet in the Mercato Vecchio at San Lorenzo, however: they insist on bringing Taddeo to look upon it:

⁴⁴⁵ Fanfani 169.

⁴⁴⁶ On the Teatro del grottesco's many links to the Futurist movement, see also Maria Dolores Pesce, *Massimo Bontempelli drammaturgo* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2008).

⁴⁴⁷ "di stucco, di stoppa, di cenci avevan composto un uomo, che alla statura, e al viso massimamente, somigliava tutto il pedante, avendo di nuovo fatto una maschera a posta; il quale vestito poi minutamente di tutti i panni suoi, tutto maniato pareva lui" (Fanfani 169).

se n'andarono in camera dove avevano lasciato Taddeo; il quale fatto rizzare, scioltogli prima avendo le mani e i piedi, così concio e sanguinoso, legatoli una benda agli occhi, menaronlo fuori di casa. . . . i quali, giunti che furono in Mercato Vecchio, quel pedagogo contraffatto messero in gogna alla colonna, et acconciarono in guisa che di lontano un pochetto sembrava proprio vivo; . . . e di fatto sciolsero gli occhi a Taddeo, accennandolo che guardasse se si riconoscesse; il che rimirando il Pedagogo ebbe tanto dispiacere e dolore, che egli fu per gridare; pur si ritenne, temendo di peggio, e gli parve maravigliosa cosa di vedere uno in viso, che tanto somigliasse il suo; . . . Pensate dunque voi che cuore fusse il suo, stimando, tosto che si faceva giorno, d'esser riconosciuto dalla gente, e che lo abbia a intendere e vedere il padrone; ma coloro, tosto rilegandogli la benda al viso, perciocchè l'alba cominciava a biancheggiare, lo menarono via, e lo condussero nel chiasso di messer Bivigliano, in casa un di loro; e legatoli di nuovo le mani e i piedi, lo messero in una stalla, et essi se n'andarono a riposare.⁴⁴⁸

Here, for the first time in both the *Cene*, a beffato is forcibly and uncomfortably made aware of the distinction between his internal and external, personal and social, physical and figurative self. The final effect is unintentional: the beffatori ask Taddeo “se si riconoscesse” in an effort only to upset and confuse him. His reaction, however, goes beyond the expected perturbation, nodding toward the social *disagio* of the modern man in the decadent society that no longer recognizes, accepts, or values his *volto* nude of its social *maschera*.

⁴⁴⁸ Fanfani 169-70.

No sooner does he confront the duality of his identity, however, is Taddeo forced to dispense with both facets of it and instead assume a third, and the complete negation of his former physical and social selves. Following the Otto's decree to take down the puppet in the Mercato Vecchio, Fiammetta's brother, Lamberto, Agolante, and the group, to protect their guilt in this remarkably public beffa, return to the stable where they had left Taddeo and burn him until he is disfigured and unrecognizable even to himself.⁴⁴⁹ When they then release Taddeo into the street and under a, fortunate for them, torrential downpour of rain, Taddeo "non conobbe in quello stante in quale via si fusse" and:

essendo ignudo come Dio lo fece, pareva per sì fatte battiture dipinto e vergato a rosso e pagonazzo: e come egli giunse in sul canto, riconobbe tosto dove egli era; e disperato, non sapendo in quale parte rifuggire, non curando né acqua né altro, si diede a correre per lo mezzo della piazza. Le genti, che nella loggia e sotto il tetto dei Pisani erano fuggiti dalla pioggia, veggendo costui, lo stimarono pazzo pubblico; e maggiormente che, volendo con prestezza fuggire, prima che la piazza attraversato avesse, cascò in terra sdruciolando per la fretta più di dieci volte, e passando dal canto all'Antellesi, fu veduto e considerato da presso, ma non fu già conosciuto da nessuno.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁹ "Et il Piloto, avendo una torcia accesa in mano, gli ficcò fuoco nella barba e nei capelli, che quasi tutto gli arse il mostaccio e il capo, di maniera che le vesciche gli alzarono nelle gote, per la testa e nel collo sì fattamente, che lo trasfigurarono in guisa, che non lo avrebbe conosciuto sua madre che lo fece; e pareva la più strana bestia che fusse mai stata veduta, e buon per lui che ebbe gli occhi fasciati, ch'egli accieca senza dubbio alcuno" (Fanfani 171).

⁴⁵⁰ Fanfani 171.

Taddeo's fate prefigures in three ways the concerns central to Pirandello and the *grotteschi*: the *beffa* results in a splintered identity, a descent into lunacy, publically perceived, and a final loss of identity altogether. His flight from Florence, across the bridge, and into Pontassieve elicits from those that watch him the reaction the *grotteschi*'s protagonists elicit in audiences that watch them, "lasciando di risa e di meraviglia pieno ovunque egli passava."⁴⁵¹ Not unlike the twentieth century marionette to follow, "da indi in là non si seppe giammai quello che se n'avvenisse."⁴⁵² Here as elsewhere, Grazzini concludes his novella with a note on the *beffatore* – ultimately, the storyteller – rather than the *beffato*. So, too, do the *grotteschi* playwrights choose, in their works, to draw audiences' focus to the apparatus of theatre itself and its ability to engage a moral "reader" and participant, rather than on the details of the story represented itself.

In its call for an engaged reader (or audience) as in its vast symbolism, Grazzini's *marionetta*, as seen primarily in II.vii, looks ahead to and paves the way for the *marionette* not only of the *teatro del grottesco*, but also of the futurist movement and of the metaphysical compositions of artists like Giorgio De Chirico. The *grotteschi* make varied uses of the *marionette* that, with De Chirico and in the transition from futurist to fascist to post-war Italy, display a plurality of figurative meanings. As Simona Storchi points out, the "mannequin" or dummy that begins, in De Chirico's art, as a positive symbol of artistic creation, prophetic vision, and the artist's extraordinary understanding of the world around him soon, with the collapse of Italy's socio-political infrastructure in the thirties, becomes representative of the anxieties, fears, and feelings of impotence of the Italian

⁴⁵¹ Fanfani 172.

⁴⁵² *ibid.*

people.⁴⁵³ “In both the literature and the art of the early twentieth century,” Storchi notes, “the mannequin became a powerful symbol of modern life. As Ghislaine Wood observes, it ‘confused the boundaries between animate and inanimate, human and machine, male and female, the sexualized and the sexless, and ultimately, life and death. It was simultaneously a commodity, a simulacrum, an erotic object, and the embodiment of the uncanny.’”⁴⁵⁴

It is in Massimo Bontempelli and Rosso di San Secondo’s appropriations of the modern *marionette*, however, that the twentieth-century dummy most closely comes to resemble Grazzini’s *beffato*, tracing its lineage back to the tradition of the *beffa* more generally. As Simona Storchi points out, in works like *Eva ultima*, the figure of the marionette, at times extended to the robotic and the de-human, is used as a means to the end most common to the *grotteschi* as an ensemble: the “metaphorical representation of the crisis of a man trapped between self and bourgeois values, reduced to being an anonymous, anti-naturalist character whose only function was to express existential malaise.”⁴⁵⁵ It is a theme Bontempelli exploits elsewhere, too, in *Siepe a nordovest*, and recalls the social anxiety on display, if latently and only half-consciously, in Grazzini’s *beffati*, Neri de’ Chiaramontesi and Ser Manente most particularly. In *La scacchiera davanti allo specchio* and *Minnie la candida*, however, Bontempelli engages with the other aspect characteristic of the *marionette* both in Grazzini’s novelle and in the later *grottesco* tradition: the frequent dissonance among perception, appearance, and reality, social, personal, and physical identity. In *Minnie la candida*, a childlike and almost artificial

⁴⁵³ “Massimo Bontempelli between de Chirico and Nietzsche: Mannequins, Marionettes, and the De-Humanized Subject in *La scacchiera davanti allo specchio* and *Eva ultima*,” *Romance Studies*, 27.4: (2009) 298-310, 299.

⁴⁵⁴ *ibid* 300.

⁴⁵⁵ Storchi 306.

simpleton – Minnie – known for her gullibility, is told – and then believes – that artificial men indistinguishable from human men roam the world surrounding her. She is, of course, disconcerted by this news and begins to display the social paralysis associated with her keen paranoia. But when the truth of the ruse is finally revealed, Minnie falls into still deeper confusion and refuses to leave her home for fear of encountering the artificial men. Finally, and believing to be artificial herself for lack of proof to the contrary, and conflicted by an identity she no longer recognizes, she commits suicide.⁴⁵⁶ *La scacchiera davanti allo specchio* displays a similar dissociation between real and imagined identity. Like Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, it takes place in a world beyond the mirror before which Bontempelli's chessboard is placed. Here, Bontempelli uses the physical properties of this mirror to navigate and investigate the tension between perceived and "actual" reality and identity also at play in Grazzini's *Cena* II.vii in the absence of this (or any) metaphorical device. "Massimo's entrance into the mirror offers the author the possibility of exploring the boundaries between reality and image, which he proceeds to question and blur."⁴⁵⁷ Grazzini, however, blurs these same boundaries without the help of an intermediary instrument beyond the marionette common both to his novella and to Bontempelli's play.

In both cases, protagonists are presented with an unexpected doubling of their identity that calls into question both their ability to perceive the truth, and the existence of truth itself. In both cases, readers and viewers are asked to evaluate the validity of the protagonists' confusion and the moral implications of the schism between what they see and feel, and what, objectively or to society, is. In Bontempelli's *Scacchiera*, there is no

⁴⁵⁶ Massimo Bontempelli, *Minnie la candida* (Milano: Mondadori, 1980).

⁴⁵⁷ *ibid.*

difference between Massimo's being and his reflected image⁴⁵⁸ In Grazzini's *Cena* II.vii, the difference readers initially see between Taddeo and his effigy in Mercato Vecchio is severely compromised in the moment Taddeo comes into contact with his stuffed self, and eliminated entirely in his later descent into madness and the Otto's decree to have the dummy pulled down from its pillar at San Lorenzo. By the novella's end, Taddeo's marionette is afforded a stronger identity – Taddeo's – than Taddeo himself who, shamed, naked, disfigured, and unrecognized by anyone around him, flees from the city that indirectly expels him. Centuries later, Bontempelli expands and redirects this idea in his *Scacchiera* where, nameless, one of the dressing mannequins Massimo meets on his journey "asserts its own individual and exclusive distinctiveness" by juxtaposing his abstract universality to man's reliance on labels – individual or collective – for identification: "C'è bisogno d'averne un nome? Il nome serve agli uomini, ai cani, e simili, altrimenti non sanno distinguersi gli uni dagli altri. Io sono io, e basta," the dummy says.⁴⁵⁹

Massimo Bontempelli's *marionette*, then, much like Grazzini's *beffati* before them, emerge as "characters who are obsessed by the agony of losing any sense of self-determination and becoming as marionettes guided by blind destiny."⁴⁶⁰ In Grazzini, this agony is latent in the *Cene's* *beffati* who, easily duped if not generally gullible, swiftly fall prey to the external "system of strings" animating their fates, even if involuntarily. In

⁴⁵⁸ As quoted in Starchi, "In other words, Massimo and his image share the same degree of reality, in the same way that (the reader realizes this as the story unfolds) the world existing beyond the mirror is revealed to be just as real as the so-called 'real' world. This is made clear by an initial exchange between Massimo and the White King: 'Ma io, io, ora, in questo momento, ci sono, di là? / 'Certo' / 'Ma allora io ora qui non sono io? sono soltanto la mia immagine?' / Il Re Bianco con aria sdegnosa mi disse: / 'Fa perfettamente lo stesso'. (Bontempelli, 1978, 297-98)" (302).

⁴⁵⁹ *ibid* 303, cit.

⁴⁶⁰ Giovanni Calendoli, "The Theatre of the Grotesque," transl. Denise Applin, *The Drama Review* 22.1: (1978) 13-16, 14.

Bontempelli, it is rechanneled into a metaphysical and, to an extent, absurd discussion of reality and fiction, man versus puppet. In Rosso di San Secondo, who it is not my intention here to examine closely, it is rendered explicit in the “[tragic autonomy]” of “individuals torn to pieces by an exasperated consciousness.”⁴⁶¹ Common to all three variants, however, is an inability to circumvent the apparatuses at work on them, and that obscure their paths to self-contentment and social fulfillment.

To be sure, Grazzini’s *beffato* is not the modern marionette lost before institutional and traditional decay, unable to recognize himself or his surroundings, and out of touch with the increasing modernity of a life detached from all previous models of Italian existence. Still, in his reduction to a puppet in the hands of other forces – human, physical, mental, environmental, or otherwise – he prefigures the marionette that becomes central to the production of the *grotteschi* playwrights. So, too, do Grazzini’s other protagonists throughout the *Cene* foreshadow the *sentimento del contrario*, the self-conscious paranoia, and the social unease common and crucial both to Pirandello (in *Il fu Mattia Pascal* as in his *Novelle per un anno*) and to the grotesque theatre that ostensibly grows out of the tradition of humourism as he describes it in his 1908 essay on the subject. What readers can identify in Grazzini, then, is an elaboration of the *beffato* tradition rendered famous by Boccaccio that looks more directly ahead – and more directly like – the “cruel joke” of modern life as it is expressed in grotesque authors of the early twentieth century. His grotesque sets the foundation for the socio-psychological experiments with the grotesque to follow, centuries later.

⁴⁶¹ *ibid.*

Afterword: Sem Benelli and the *Cena delle Beffe*

Grazzini's ties to the twentieth century are most heavily felt in the *Cene*'s anticipation of Pirandello's theory of humourism, and in the theatrical experiments of the *grotteschi* playwrights. But his legacy extends beyond these two milestones of modernity. Indeed, it lives on into the nineteen forties and, alongside the influence of authors that shaped much of il Lasca's early thought, remains a source of inspiration not only for Italian post-war neo-realist auteurs, but also, and later, for contemporary Tuscan filmmakers.⁴⁶²

A particular case is to be made, however, of Grazzini's influence on Sem Benelli's 1908 dramatic poem, *La cena delle beffe*, a four-act production that owes a great debt of gratitude to the *Cene* themselves. Benelli's play is twice adapted to film, first under the direction of Alessandro Blasetti, in 1941, and next, in 1965, by Guglielmo Morandi. The plot and most of the dialogue remains consistent from one version to the next, all of it deriving from a composite of Grazzini's *Cene*. To summarise: il Cavaliere Tornaquinci, seen in *Cena* I.iii, hosts a dinner at which long-standing rivals Neri Chiaramontesi (along with his brother, Gabriello and his wife, Ginevra) and Gianetto Malaspini are both in attendance. Though unknown to Tornaquinci, Gianetto soon reveals the purpose of this dinner, requested by Lorenzo de' Medici himself, to be the beginning of an elaborate beffa carried out against Neri not only for his many transgressions against Gianetto and the people of Florence more generally, but ultimately for stealing Gianetto's woman and, wooing her with his fortune and riches, making her his wife.

⁴⁶² A particularly relevant example, for studies of contemporary Italian culture, would be Mario Monicelli's trilogy, *Amici miei* in which four modern *beffatori* regularly gather to perform nonsensical acts – supercazzole – on unsuspecting victims (1975, 1982, 1985). Of further note is the trilogy's division into three acts rather than parts – another reprisal both of Benelli's *Cena* and of the 16th century comedies centered on the beffa tradition more generally.

Benelli's intentions in composing this piece are clear and manifold. He at once seeks to pay homage to the beffa tradition, Grazzini's elaboration of it more specifically, and to make it socially and literarily relevant to his contemporary society by rendering it distinctly "modern." He also illustrates a third agenda perhaps more contingent on politico-historical trend than on artistic expression or literary preparation: an adherence to an early fascist program of national identity. In his revival of notable Renaissance characters – Lorenzo de' Medici, the famed Neri Chiaramontesi – and in his celebration of the literary patrimony they inherit, by way of the beffa, from Boccaccio and father of Italian prose literature, he contributes to a generally diffused effort to fortify contemporary Italian national identity by recalling its historical prestige.⁴⁶³ Such would have been the main purpose of Benelli's work in a classroom setting. It registers differently, however, on stage and in film.

In premise and in structure, the beffa carried out here takes off from Grazzini's *Cena* I.iii, while recycling and incorporating the identities of others of Grazzini's characters present elsewhere in the *Cene*, and reincorporating plot elements of other novelle. To wit: among Gianetto Malaspina's⁴⁶⁴ cortege is Fazio⁴⁶⁵; Neri's brother's name is derived from the protagonist of *Cena* II.i; the Lisabetta that appears in the fourth act of Benelli's play borrows much of her temperance and general demeanour not only from Boccaccio's Lisabetta di Messina, but from the Lisabetta degli Ulberti that appears in Grazzini's *Cena* II.iii. In Benelli's play, after a bout of verbal sparring, Neri Chiaramontesi dares Giannetto to appear at the house of Bella Pellegrina, a known Florentine courtesan, his face tinted with black dye. Gianetto dares Neri, in turn, to present himself at Ceccherino's atelier in via Vacchereccia, where Florence's youngest,

⁴⁶³ See Patrizia Castelli, "La Rinascita del Rinascimento: reinterpretazioni ed estetismi tra melodrama e cinema," *Stor Arte* 118: (2007) 73-104.

⁴⁶⁴ Himself a recast of Giannetto della Torre (*Cena* I.iv) and Brancazio Malaspini (*Cena* I.ix).

⁴⁶⁵ The name of the protagonist in *Cena* I.v and similarly deceitful in nature.

wealthiest, and most prestigious youth regularly gathered, in full armour and brandishing a billhook.⁴⁶⁶ Neri accepts the challenge, and sets off to complete it. But Gianetto takes advantage of Neri's absence (and pride) to sneak into Ginevra's room in Neri's villa, lie with her, convince her – as he had all of Florence – of her husband's insanity, then trap Neri there, in his own home, to be carried off and shackled in isolation.

What follows, primarily as a consequence of Ginevra's inclusion in Benelli's rewrite as central to the fulfillment of the *beffa*, is the "modernization" of Grazzini's *Cena* I.iii. In this incorporation of a domestic element and in its effect on the *beffa* to be carried out, Benelli is at once faithful to the *beffa* tradition and Grazzini's treatment of it, and to the larger function and apparatus of twentieth century grotesque theatre – or, the illustration of social paranoia and imbalance, and its resulting descent to the absurd. Ginevra's character, taking pleasure from various sources, is not unlike any of the women seen either in Grazzini's *Cene* or, indeed, in Boccaccio's *novelle*, their antecedent. Her modernity resides in her involuntary ability to dismantle her household arrangement and drive her husband not – or not only – to revenge, but to insanity. As is the case in the vast majority of grotesque theatre, the main action of Benelli's poem pivots on a disruption of the domestic sphere by way of Ginevra's infidelity and series of

⁴⁶⁶ in Benelli: "Ti vorrei vedere andare / in casa della Bella Pellegrina, / dove ora stanno I suoi molti messeri / cascamorti; vorrei vederti andare / vestito come sei; ma con il viso tinto di nero: gioco due fiorini d'oro ... [...] / Allora gioco che non anderesti, / giusto a quest'ora, dentro la bottega / di Ceccherino, in Vacchereccia, dove / stanno appunto adunati i più notevoli / giovani di Firenze che tu dici / poter gabbare quando più ti piaccia. / E non importerà che li tocchi; / basta che a loro ti presenti armato / d'arme bianca e recando sulle spalle / una roncola" (Milano: Fratelli Treves, editori, 1909, p. 37-38). In Grazzini: "Eccoti uno scudo d'oro; e va ora in casa la Pellegrina Bolognese (che era in quei tempi una famosa cortigiana) così vestito come tu sei: ma tigniti, o collo inchiostro o con altro, solamente le mani e 'l viso, e dale questo pajo di guanti senza dirle cosa alcuna. Rispose lo Scheggia allora, e disse: Eccone un pajo a voi, e andate tutto armato di arme bianca con una roncola in spalla infino in bottega di Ceccherino merciajo (il quale stava allora in sul canto di Vacchereccia, dove si ragunavano quasi tutti i primi e i più ricchi giovani di Firenze)" (*Cena* I.iii, Fanfani 21).

illicit liaisons, one with Giannetto, the other with Neri's brother, Gabriello. It is by discovering his wife's unfaithfulness that Neri becomes careless, allows himself to be overtaken by his passions, is imprisoned, and eventually, seeking vengeance on his wife as well as her lover(s), commits the act that drives him to his demise – unintentional fratricide.⁴⁶⁷ Most notable to audiences and to readers of Grazzini alike, then, is Benelli's reinterpretation, in modern key, of the folly and psychosis present in Neri, central also to Grazzini's Neri, and, as seen, crucial to linking Grazzini's sixteenth-century sense of "humour" – and the shifts therein – to Pirandello's later theory of humourism and the grotteschi's reappropriation of related themes.

The defining moment of Benelli's dramatic poem and his greatest departure from Grazzini's original text occurs in the second half of this work and in the description of Neri's ostensible descent into madness. Most to the point, as of the beginning of the third act, Benelli denies Neri the sanity, recognition of mental wellness, and social escape Grazzini affords him. Though some doubt is originally cast on Neri's soundness of mind in *Cena* I.iii, it is soon resolved both explicitly, and in the exoneration, even if by exile, of Neri's previous transgressions.⁴⁶⁸ Benelli does away with such graces, instead taking Neri's moment of confusion and self-doubt, in Grazzini, to the extreme of unambiguous folly. He emerges, as a result, as a self-made buffoon. His disintegration occurs gradually. At first, it is falsely assumed, then feigned, and eventually becomes real and in proportion both to social expectation and to

⁴⁶⁷ Another nod to Grazzini, this time to *Cena* II.v and *Currado di Fiesole*.

⁴⁶⁸ When discovered in his imprisonment, Neri is given the opportunity to tell his side of the story, and is met with the following reaction: "Il zio e i medici, udendolo favellare sì saviamente, e dir così bene le sue ragioni, giudicarono che egli dicesse la verità, conoscendosi assai bene chi fosse lo Scheggia. Pur, per certificarsi meglio, Angolo, il frate e uno di que' medici, andatisene al cavaliere, trovarono esser vero tutto quello che Neri aveva detto; . . . Sicchè, ritornati in uno stante, il zio si vergognava; e di sua mano sciolto e disarmato e chiestoli perdono, tutta la broda versava addosso allo Scheggia, contro al quale si accese di sdegno e di collera grandissima" (Fanfani 26).

Neri's internal turmoil. In other words, treated as a madman, everyone but Giannetto and his cortège convinced of his insanity, Neri eventually falls prey to the mental condition of which he is accused. He is assailed by a series of former foes: Trinca, another man he cuckolded, and three women "compromised" by his inconstant affection, Fiammetta, Laldomine, and Lisabetta. His morale resists fracture until faced with the unflinching devotion of the last of these ladies, ironically, the only one to extend him the benefit of doubt and, eventually, to believe his rendition of the facts. But though she is the only character to grant him grace, Lisabetta is also the catalyst of his deconstruction. It is her advice to Neri – to feign the folly with which he is charged in order to be released – that both frees him from his shackles and, consequently, facilitates his tragic end.

In this transition from simulated to genuine madness, Benelli makes of Neri a truly "modern" protagonist in all the ways alluded to above. His *Cena*, then, denotes both this thematic consistency in Italian literature and performance art from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries and a clear evolution of it in modern key. It is also in the passage from Grazzini's brand of "humourism" to Benelli's that further links between Pirandello's early twentieth-century discourse and Renaissance humoural theory - and its development into the genre of the "grotesque" - can be made.

Concluding Remarks

Scholars like O. A. Bontempo have recognized in the production of twentieth century literature – and theatre more specifically – two ostensibly distinct but at their root related categories: grotesque – as espoused and primarily exhibited in the theatre of Luigi Chiarelli – and paradox, of which Pirandello is author.⁴⁶⁹ Together, he says, they constitute the “[Literature] of Mental Process,” the former growing chronologically and thematically out of the latter.⁴⁷⁰ As shown in previous chapters, however, the “Mental Process” now so characteristic of “modernity” is conditioned and qualified by a centuries-long belief in the physiological roots of psychological ailment and social alienation alike. From its apparition in 4 BC up until the sixteenth-century’s modification of the compiled *Articella* and beyond, Galen’s humoral theory remains the definitive point of reference on all manners of malaise, not least those pertaining to mental wellness and personality. Though abandoned for a period as a prevalent diagnostic theory, it regains clout and currency in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries’ studies of the links between melancholia and depression and, by association, the other humours in relation to other psychological conditions and disorders. Even after its medical disuse, it lingers as the impulse behind countless works of literature from sixteenth century onward and all throughout what we today know as Europe.

To recap: an imbalance in the four bodily humours that govern good health often results in a physical, mental, or emotional state of alarm whereby one set of characteristics – in any of these categories – is preferred to the other three that counteract it. The effects of this shift in behaviour differ according to the humour out of balance in the subject. The humoral conditions of melancholy and cholera, however, – associated with an excess of

⁴⁶⁹ “Italian literature in 1934,” *The Modern Language Journal* 19.8: (1935) 583-95, 583.

⁴⁷⁰ *ibid.*

black and yellow bile respectively – most closely resemble the “Mental Process” Bontempo sees as central to the early twentieth century. In both cases, the subject of humoral imbalance is indecisive, irrational, irascible, and divisive. Unable to ascertain his place in society or to understand the nature of his own identity, he exists in a constant flux of emotions ranging from dark solitude to frenzied euphoria. The one chooses personal introspection as his preferred curative means. The other, however, shifts his focus outward, onto society, and the impossibility of belonging he finds there to vent his discomfort. Both, however, participate in Bontempo’s bipartite “Mental Process” which he defines as, “on one hand, the problem of finding one’s self-identity, finding one’s character in a world, and in an order of things which literally have no fixity (Pirandello), on the other, the problem of playing one’s part in society, as an automaton, a marionette, if necessary, distorted in a thousand different ways under convention’s badly focused binoculars.”⁴⁷¹ Early twentieth century literature, then, contains both poles of this humoral experience.

So, too, does the literature of the *Umidi* and *Infiammati* circles of the mid-sixteenth century. Indeed, just as Pirandello’s search for identity leads to a social examination of personal and collective worth, so too does the literature examined in both these academic circles, with particular attention paid to the interaction between their most influential members and to the works of Antonfrancesco Grazzini among them, move from a “melancholic” to a “choleric” space – or a search for social rather than personal belonging and identity. The similarities between the two humours responsible for each condition – black and yellow bile – is enough to explain their easy coexistence not only in the same literary sphere, but, often, in the same author or literary personality. Increasingly over

⁴⁷¹ *ibid* 584.

time, however, and just as Pirandello's *sentimento del contrario* gives rise to a series of grotesque revisions after it (and not incompatible with it), Grazzini's works and the literature immediately surrounding and conditioning it slip seamlessly from the lyrical mode of melancholy that Petrarch renders famous and exemplary to the more largely social and choleric sphere.

The transition – incomplete and very gradual – is primarily motivated by a series of academic rivalries, mistrusting relationships, and the jealousy underlying each of them. As seen, as an “elemental” condition tied strongly to the competing but ultimately synonymous natures of love and hate, and as a key component of the choleric disposition, the jealousy that becomes central to discussion among *Humidi* and *Inflammati* scholars from the late 1530s to the early 1560s is also the leading impetus behind Grazzini's anti-conformism and, directly consequent, both his turn to more prosaic forms of composition, and his elaboration of the *beffa* tradition as social grotesque. It is his ostensible excess of love and admiration that generates the *amour-propre* at the heart of his institutional rebellion and the subsequent categorization as a marginalized intellectual that both permits his capitalization on themes of social expulsion and lack of belonging – especially in his *Cene* -, and allows for a psychological reading of his works that puts him in direct contact with humorous movements to follow.

Using his *Cene* as a comprehensive point of reference, then, readers might find in Grazzini a revised definition of “humour” and one that more closely recalls the term's medicinal, physiological, and psychological origins. Indeed, these and his other mid-late compositions are catalysed by the shift in humour that accompanies his expulsion from the academy and, before it, his lack of adequate recognition within it. This shift in mood, or

“capriccio”, not only accompanies, but also defines a large part of the humorous tradition to follow on the Italian peninsula. Grazzini’s choler, inspired by jealousy and first felt in adaptations of the *tenzone* that constitute an interpersonal art-form specifically indexed and limited to a precise group of interlocutors, widens its scope to a local, then municipal scene in his plays and *novelle*, simultaneously increasing the level of social critique and grotesque spectacle. The *commedie erudite* of the early sixteenth century and the *commedia dell’arte* productions that grew steadily out of them already display an interest in caricature that, through Grazzini’s and others’ farces, one-act, and three-act plays, give way both to a more defined sense of social satire and to the elaboration of a “grotesque” performance art that extends beyond the traditional definition of the word.⁴⁷² What Grazzini accomplishes with his plays and above all with his *novelle*, then, is the elaboration of a humorous literature no longer unidimensional and aiming only to please and instruct by way of formulaic repetition, as in the traditions immediately preceding him, but able to display the complexities of competing and incompatible elemental humours coexisting in the same literary parameters and personages. In other words, rather than focusing on or emphasizing one humour and making of it the subject of laughter, Grazzini’s works retain the humoral complexities that both inform his work from a personal point of view, and permit his readers to view his characters as psychological entities with personalities that defy the traditional scope of stock characters both in theatre and in the *beffa* tradition.

Ultimately, and in further work on this subject, it is my intention to suggest a chronological movement in Grazzini’s literary *percorso* from a flat conception of humour more consistent with his contemporaries to the psychologically packed understanding of it

⁴⁷² That is, to refer exclusively to the grotesque as to the witnessing of supernatural, marvelous, or otherworldly events.

that lends itself more easily to the humourous tradition as Pirandello defines it. Still today, a large part of Grazzini's works, and especially his poetry, has gone undated and unordered. A first crucial step in asserting my claim, then, will be successfully to attempt this thorough chronological ordering and to verify any visible fluxes of style or content within it. A subsequent but no less important step will be to identify Grazzini's literary influences beyond the collective debates of his generation, the influence of the *questione della lingua* on his composition, and the literary predecessors immediately recognizable in his works, Boccaccio chief among them. Indeed, it is likely that Grazzini's relationship with the past, with the *beffa* tradition, and with concepts of laughter and good (or bad) humour extend beyond the canon and reference other relevant, if less celebrated, Tuscan authors. Among them is Arlotto Mainardi, or "il Piovano Arlotto," a Florentine priest Boccaccio's contemporary whose aphorisms and "motti," in their local flavour as in their tone and subject matter look forward to Grazzini's *Cene* and his emphasis, within them, on the local clergy. No doubt more work will need to be done before any effective comparisons can be drawn between these two Tuscan writers separated by centuries and worldviews. Examining these and other Tuscan works of the same and later periods, however, may perhaps reveal in Grazzini's humourism a defining and distinctive regionalism previously undetected.

To sum, the interaction of the *Umidi* and *Infiammati* circles and the later transformation of the former into an official promoter of the Medici dynasty reveal a series of important consequences on the literary production of the period. First, they denote the spirit of collective academic debate and discussion and the circulation of ideas among allies and rivals alike. From this diffusion of shared ideas is born the rivalry and jealousy that

becomes central to the academic lessons and poetic compositions of both groups, and, through Grazzini, eventually directs the focus of literature away from the personal and introspective and toward larger issues affecting or the result of the socio-political climate surrounding them. This more socially-charged literature, however realistic, extroverted, and superficial in nature, still proposes a psychological complexity that speaks not only to the historical influence of the humours on poetic production, but also to the coexistence of competing humours in the same composition and to its contribution to the social grotesque that looks ahead to twentieth-century. Still more interesting, however, are the many avenues of research facilitated by this introductory analysis of the *Umidi* and *Infiammati*, from Grazzini's debt to Boccaccio in his singular development of the beffa tradition, to the centrality of love as the prime motor of all humoural activity and composition.

Appendix: Selected Translations

1) *Lettera dall'Aretino allo Stradino, 6 agosto 1541*

L'altra sera mi capitò a casa il Lasca, tutto pieno di collora et rabbia, sudato e trafelato e appunto in sul hora ch'io stavo per andarmene alletto, et era poverello venuto in poste sì che salutato mi prima et io fattogli le debite accoglienze, mi venne addire chome gli accademici fiorentini in sul riformare la a.b.c. havevano consultato cacciarlo via, et con non so che altre lettere confermarlo fuori di Toscana in perpetuo . . . schonfortato, . . . il Lasca, doloroso si partì per disperato con animo di quei celarsene a giove innipotente et venne subito a Roma per consigliarsene coi virtuosi ma trovatogli dispersi se ne andò a Siena et non trovatovi ne i Capassoni, ne gli Intronati, se ne cammina a Padova agli Infiammati et quegli anchora trovano in disparte perché chi a Roma, chi a Bologna, chi qua et chi di là, sì che preso partito de venirmi a trovare e perché solo vaglio più che tutta l'accademia insieme, ne venne a Vinegia et come vi ho detto, mi trova nella chiusa raccontami e narratomi il caso interamente et chiesomi sopra il parer mio, gli risposi che mi pareva che gli fussi fatto torto, et nel vero questi vostri accademici mi parano molto saccenti a voler fare quello che non fecero et non pensarono mai di far gli antichi.

The other night, il Lasca came to visit, filled with choler and rage, sweaty and breathless, and just as I was about to go to bed. The poor man came to greet me, and so I welcomed him into my home, as per custom, and he soon began to explain to me how the Florentine academics, in reforming the alphabet, had consulted to have him expelled [from the academy], and with I know not what other ceremony confirm his

perpetual exile from Florence. [...] Discomforted [...], il Lasca left [the academy] pained and desperate with a disposition of soul similar to those who hide from Almighty Jove, and went straight away to Rome to take counsel with the virtuous men there, but finding them dispersed, he went then to Siena and there found neither the Capassoni nor the Intronati. So in this way, he came to Padua, to the Infiammati, and also found those scattered, some in Rome, some in Bologna, some here, some there, so that soon he came to find me. And because I alone am worth the whole lot of them, he came to Venice as I have said, and found me in my home, and explained his whole situation, and asked me for my advice. I told him that it seemed to me he had been done a great wrong, and in truth, that your academics seemed very presumptuous to me for wanting to do that which not even the Ancients thought of doing or ever did [to their language].

2) Antonfrancesco Grazzini, "Agli Accademici"

Chi brama esser tenuto dalla gente	Whoever desires to be considered
In concetto d'intendere e sapere	A knowledgeable and understanding man
Biasmi ognicosa; e non faccia niente,	Critiques everything and does nothing; . . .
Che quando il volgo, gli altrui biasmi sente,	And when he is addressed, listens with
Con meraviglia ascolta, e con piacere;	great marvel and pleasure to others'
	laments;
E non guardando più crudo, che cotto;	And paying little attention,
Dice fra se costui è un gran dotto.	Says to himself, this is a learned man.
Non ben si conveniva all'eta mia,	The cup and ring you presented me

La tazza presentar manco l'Anello;
Un'altra volta ufizio tal si dia
A Giovin letterato, honesto e bello;
Non estimate dunque villania
il mio tacer, più che tacere è bello
più che parlare, dappoi che col tacere
ho fatto l'honor vostro e 'l mio dovere.

...

Se già per tanto tempo tanti ho fatti
Componimenti e pur di qualche stima;
E ho tentuo allegri i savi e i matti;
Scrivendo spesso in prosa, in versi, e in rima,
Correvo rischio, che in parole e in fatti
In un sol giorno s'oscuri, o s'opprima
Quel poco; anzi per sempre sia macchiato,
Nome che per tanti anni m'ho acquistato.

Se volevate pure alcun favore
farmi in questa accademia, o beneficio
per esser stato primo fondatore
e mostrar voi, d'haver qualche giudizio

Are unworthy of my age;
Once, these offices were given
To young literary men, honest and lithe;
Do not consider my silence impolite, since
Silence is more beautiful than speech,
And in my silence, I've done your will
and my duty.

For many years, I've written many
compositions, some of good reputation;
I've entertained men both wise and crazy
Often writing in prose, verse, and rhymes,
I ran the risk of obscuring or oppressing
that small gain in one day with my words
and deeds, and forever blemishing
the name it took me years to make.

If you would like to do me some favour
or service in this academy,
for having been its first founder,
and demonstrate some commonsense,

per che non farmi piu tosto censore?
Ch'era proprio da me, cotale ufizio
Sendo in quest'arti assai pratico e scaltro;
Poi l'harvi fatto al paragon d'ogni altro.

why not make me censor? This office
was befitting of my state, being as I am
in this art quite experienced and sharp,
And I'd have done it as well as any other.

3) Antonfrancesco Grazzini, *L'Arzigogolo*, I.i.

ALESSO: Tu mi pari una bestia.

VALERIO: Ora sì che avete ragione a domandarmi, poiché non vedete lume,
giacché gli uomini vi pajon bestie: non ho però le corna.

ALESSO: Che sì, che sì ch'io ti farò che tu uccellerai un tuo pari.

VALERIO: Domine! ho io le reti e' panioni e la civetta per uccellare? credo che
voi farnetichiate.

ALESSO: Guarda se io sto fresco!

VALERIO: Venite al fuoco, se e'vi fa fresco: è mala cosa patire freddo, sapete.

ALESSO: Al corpo di ...

VALERIO: Vi duole il corpo? non dubitate, passerà via presto: è ventosità.

ALESSO: Non è possibile ch'io possa avere più pazienza; manigolda, aspetta
ch'io ti farò vedere se ...

VALERIO: Ah, ah, ser Alesso, che volete fare? non è lecito in questo tempo
burlare qualche volta con i suoi patroni? Vi sono servitore, fate di
me ciò che voi volete.

ALESSO: Vedi, tu hai campato un gran punto: poco più oltre che tu seguitavi,
con furia ti spiccavo il collo dal busto con un sol pugno.

VALERIO: Un'altra volta sarò più accorto; ch'io veggo che con voi non bisogna scherzare.

ALESSO: Si ve', e massimamente quando mi viene quella collora subito, che ammazzerei un gigante; e ben lo sanno gli altri procuratori alla Mercatanzia, se per un clientolo facevo il diavolo, ché col gridare solo vincevo.

VALERIO: Col gridare e col rubare.

ALESSO: You look like a beast.

VALERIO: You may be right to say so, since you cannot see the light and without it, men seem like beasts. But I lack the horns of a beast.

ALESSO: Sure, sure. Go ensnare someone of your own station.

VALERIO: Does it look like I have the net or the rod or the hunting dog to ensnare you? I do believe you're talking nonsense.

ALESSO: Oh, I'm a bit chilly now!

VALERIO: Come to the fire if you're chilly: it's bad to catch cold, as you know.

ALESSO: By the body of ...

VALERIO: Does your body hurt? Never fear, the pain will soon pass: it's only wind.

ALESSO: You are exhausting the limits of my patience, villain! You just wait, I'll show you if ...

VALERIO: Ha, ha, ser Alesso, what would you like to do? Is it no longer right, these days, to make fun of your master? I am your servant, do with me what you will.

*ALESSO: Look, you got off easy: any more of this, and I'd have torn your neck
from your bust with only one fist.*

*VALERIO: Next time, I'll be more careful; I see that it's better not to joke around
with you*

*ALESSO: Yes, that's right, and especially when I become so enraged I'd even kill a
giant. The other prosecutors know this about me: when the devil grips
me when I'm with a client, I take him down even only by screaming*

VALERIO: By screaming and by robbing.

4) Antonfrancesco Grazzini, *La gelosia* III.x

LAZZERO: Ma lasciamo oramai: questo ragionamento è durato troppo;
andianne, ch'io mi rivesta: bu, bu, bu, oimei! io comincio agghiadar di
freddo. Bu, bu, bu.

CIULLO: Lazzero, oh voi tremate?

LAZZERO: Tu hai buon dir tu, che sei uso alle male notti, e a' disagi.

CIULLO: Come farem noi, ché non si può entrare in camera né in casa?

LAZZERO: Che vuol dire?

...

CIULLO: Voi non potete, prima che le dieci ore suonino, riavere i panni vostri.

LAZZERO: Come? bu, bu, bu: io sarei morto sei volte di freddo.

CIULLO: E io, che far ne posso?

...

LAZZERO: vàvvi, e escine: bu, bu, bu; ch'io abbrivido.

ALFONSO: Mi par ch'ei triemi.

LAZZERO: *But enough now: this conversation has gone on too long. Let's go, I need to get redressed. Bu, bu, bu, oh my! I'm beginning to freeze in this cold. Bu, bu, bu.*

CIULLO: *Lazzero, are you trembling?*

LAZZERO: *It must be easy for you – you're used to great discomforts and terrible nights.*

CIULLO: *What will we do now? We can't enter from either the house nor the room.*

LAZZERO: *What do you mean?*

...

CIULLO: *You can't get your clothes back before ten o'clock this evening.*

LAZZERO: *What? bu, bu, bu: I'll have died of cold six times by then.*

CIULLO: *What can I do about it?*

...

LAZZERO: *go away, leave: bu, bu, bu; I'm shivering.*

ALFONSO: *It does look like he's trembling.*

5) Antonfrancesco Grazzini, *La gelosia*, III.viii

PIERANTONIO: *Dì che metta in capo: non odi tu com'ei parla? Egli è infreddato troppo.*

CIULLO: *Ah! ah! niente; non vien da cotesto.*

PIERANTONIO: O da che viene?

CIULLO: Ègli cascato l'ugola.

PIERANTONIO: Che è stato malfranzese?

CIULLO: Rispondete.

LAZZERO: No, Dio! scesa, scesa.

PIERANTONIO: Che dice?

CIULLO: Dolori maninconici.

LAZZERO: No, Ciullo: no, no: umidezza.

PIERANTONIO: Come? eh?

CIULLO: Da frigidezza dice ch'è venuto.

PIERANTONIO: In cotesto modo può essere; ma i dolor melanconici, pazzo da
catene, dove hai tu trovato che partorischino simili effetti?

LAZZERO: Che ne sa egli?

PIERANTONIO: finiam le parole oramai, e avviànci in là.

*PIERANTONIO: Tell him to put his hat on. Can't you hear him? He's taken too
much cold.*

CIULLO: Ah! ah! no; that's not the reason.

PIERANTONIO: What's the reason, then?

CIULLO: He's lost his voice.

PIERANTONIO: Has he caught the French sickness?

CIULLO: Answer.

LAZZERO: No, God! she's come down, she's come down.

PIERANTONIO: What is he talking about?

CIULLO: Melancholic pain.

LAZZERO: No, Ciullo: no, no: humidity.

PIERANTONIO: What? eh?

CIULLO: He says it's come of coldness.

*PIERANTONIO: Maybe it's come of coldness, but how can you tell that melancholic
pain is a side-effect?*

LAZZERO: What does he know?

PIERANTONIO: Enough talking, let's go that way.

6) Rime d'Alfonso de' Pazzi, detto l'Hetrusco

(Biblioteca Palatina, Parma, Pal. 557. Cart, misc. XVI)

Il Varchi tuttavia dice ogni cosa

Tal ch'a gli'altri non restadir più nulla,

E alafine e non istrigne nulla,

E così fa ch'abbraccia ogni cosa.

Il Varchi ha detto suo sa ogni cosa,

E non gli pare ch'altri sappi nulla.

E s'egli sente pure o vede nulla

Afferma e dice quella esser sua cosa

Così hoggi nessun può dire cosa

Che a detto del Varchi sappia nulla

E dice, e intende e sa solo ogni cosa.

Riduce spesso ogni cosa a nonnulla
E mette in dubbio alle genti ogni cosa,
Nega ogni cosa e non afferma nulla.
Di nonnulla qual cosa
Ci vuol far spesso e di qualcosa nulla
E così spesso ci annulla ogni cosa.
Il fine suo è nulla,
E se di nulla fu fatto ogni cosa
Vuole che 'l fin d'ogni cosa sia nulla,
Dimentica ogni cosa
Chi odi il Varchi, e non impara nulla
E però più qualcosa
Saria ben 'darch, e non dicessi nulla.

*Yet Varchi continues to say it all,
So that nothing remains for others to say,
And in the end, he grasps at nothing,
In such a way that he embraces it all.
Varchi has spoken and knows it all,
And it seems to him that others know nothing.
And even if he hears or sees nothing
He affirms and says that all of it is his
So that today, no one who, Varchi says, knows nothing*

Can say anything
And Varchi alone says, and understands, and knows it all.
He often reduces everything to nothing
And makes everything doubtful to people,
He denies everything and confirms nothing.
He tries often to make of nothing something
And of something nothing
And this way often cancels everything.
His goal is nothing,
And if everything were made of nothing
He would say that the end of everything is nothing.
He who listens to Varchi forgets everything
And learns nothing.
But it would be far greater something
For him to give us if he said nothing.

*

Il Varchi dice quel che non intende
E però non intende quel che dice;
E chi attento ascolta quel che dice,
Ode assai cose e nessuna n'intende.
A detto suo il Varchi molto intende,
Ma si par poco a fede, a quel che dico
Ei sa quello che sa, ma non lo dice;

Non può dolere se l'huom non intende
In lingua nostra quel ch'el Varchi dice
E dice molto 'l Varchi, e poco intende.
Ch'è dotto 'l Varchi il vulgo tiene e crede
E provalo col dire, che non s'intende,
E tanto è meno, quanto più si dice.

*And he says much, Varchi, but means little.
That he is doctored, Varchi, the vernacular holds true and believes
And confirms by saying things we can't understand
And the more is said, the less is understood.
Varchi says what he does not understand
And doesn't understand what he says;
And he who listens to what he says closely,
Hears many things, but understands not their meaning.
He claims to understand many things,
But, I say, proves it little,
He knows what he knows, but he won't say what;
It's hardly his fault if man can't understand
What Varchi says plainly, in our own tongue.*

*

Mentre che 'l Varchi sia tenuto dotto,
Io sarò sempre mai tenuto pazzo;

Ma com il Varchi sia tenuto pazzo
All'hor l'etrusco fia gradito et dotto,
Et non può un che'è pazzo esser mai dotto;
Ma ei può ben un dotto esser gran pazzo
Per conseguenza de gl'altri è più dotto
Colui ch'è dotto, spesso si tien pazzo
Et chi è pazzo sempre si tien dotto,
Ma ei non si può insiem'esser dotto et pazzo.
Hor concludiamo, o che ogn'uno è pazzo,
O veramente che nessuno è dotto,
Over l'etrusco è dotto, e il Varchi è pazzo.

*While Varchi is considered 'doctored,'
I will always be thought of as crazy;
But when Varchi is considered crazy
Then, Etruscan will be appreciated and learned,
And it is impossible for a crazy person to ever be doctored;
But it is very possible for a doctored person
to also be quite crazy
Though still more learned than the others as a consequence.
He who is learned, often holds himself to be crazy
And he who is crazy, to be doctored,
But one cannot at once be doctored and crazy.*

Now let us conclude, either that every man is crazy,

Now let us conclude, either that every man is crazy.

Or that truly no one is doctored,

Or, in truth, that Etruscan is learned,

and Varchi is crazy.

Rime di Antonfrancesco Grazzini detto il Lasca (parte prima e seconda)

(Firenze: Francesco Moücke, 1741, 1742)

Ai riformatori della lingua toscana

Voi ch'a sì bella impresa e pellegrina

Eletti stati siete a riformare

La lingua nostra volgar Fiorentina,

Se bramate alla gente soddisfare,

Il Buonanni e 'l Melin pien di dottrina,

Poeti egregi, vi convien chiamare

In vostro ajuto: perché senza loro,

Voi non sarete troppo buon lavoro.

Regole più di cento isregolate

Sopra il nostre natìo dolce idioma

Sono state composte e ordinate,

Che giammai tante non ne vide Roma;

Ma sono state fatte da brigate,
Che non han spalle forti a sì gran soma:
E però fino a quì, tutti anno dato,
Come diremmo noi, nello scartato.

Cos'è per dirne il ver, stupenda e strana
Che non la faria Giucca o Calandrino,
Che la gente Lombarda o Marchigiana
Regular voglia il parlar Fiorentino.
Che l'ha chiamata lingua Cortigiana,
Come fece il Calmeta Piacentino,
E ne restò col Tibaldeo d'accorde;
Ma s'egli è pazzo l'un, l'altro è balordo.

Il Triffin poi, che per altra cagione
Fu uom dabben, letterato e galante,
Italiana chiamolla con ragione,
E con autorità del nostre Dante:
Il Sanazzaro con più discrezione
Toscana fella, al ver più simigliante;
Ma il Bembo pien d'insegno e di dottrina,
Pirno chiamolla Lingua Fiorentina.

Levansi Lucca sù, Pisa e Volterra,
Cortona, Arezzo, Castiglione e Siena:
E voglion tutte a Firenze far guerra,
Con lor Perugia vien, Poppi e Bibbiena;
Poiché Toscana ancor lor chiude e serra;
Con dir, che della lingua vaga e piena
Ne vuole ognuna la sua parte avere.

Ma da costoro è tanta differenza
Tra' vocaboli e 'l modo del parlare,
E la pronunzia, ch' s'usa in Fiorenza,
Che nol potrebbe uom vivo mai pensare:
Abbate tutti quanti pacienza,
Che 'l ver non puossi, e non si dee celare;
Che le parole, e 'l vostro profferire
Da sana orecchia non si può sentire.

Quand'io odo Sanesi o Perugini,
E favellare i Lucchesi e i Pisani,
Volterran, Cortonesi e Aretini,
Pistolesi, Pratesi e Borghigiani,
E popoli altri a Firenze vicini,
Mi par proprio sentire abbajar cani;

Con accenti sì strani, e goffi motti,
Che pajon veramente farlingotti.

Fiorenza avria fors'oggi il suo poeta,
Cittadi illustri, e sia con pace vostra,
Disse il Petrarca, che fu già profeta,
Come il suo Canzonier chiaro ne mostra:
Seguì poi di se stesso mosso a pieta,
Quell'uom dabben, che di par seco giostra,
Nel suo Decameron piucchè divino,
Che scriver volle in volgar Fiorentino.

La lingua nostra è sì dolce e capace
D'ogni soggetto, e così bene esprime
Gli affetti e gesti umani in guerra e 'n pace,
Che metter si può ben tra le due prime.
Nella prosa il Boccaccio tanto piace:
Tanto piace il Petrarca nelle rime,
Ch'a tutt'altri poeti vanno avante;
Ma finimondo è poi quando vien Dante.

Questi tre degni e famosi scrittori
Ti danno tanta lode e tanta gloria,

Fiorenza bella, che tra le maggiori
Città, sempre di te sarà memoria;
Onde carca ne vai di tanti onori,
Di dolcezza, e di lodi chiare e vere,
Che di te sia ricordo in ogni storia;
Talchè, la lor mercè, dietro ti viene
L'invitta Roma, e la superba Atene.

Ma dove dove l'Ariosto resta,
Che benché non sia nato Fiorentino,
Sì fiorentinamente l'asta arresta,
Che si può dir, che sia tuo Paladino?
Costui di Chiaramonte la gran gesta,
E del Re Carlo figliuol di Pipino,
Del gran Ruggier sì alto e dolce canta,
Che girgli presso nessun non si vanta.

La Lingua nostra è ben da forestieri
Scritta assai più corretta e regolata;
Perché dagli scrittor puri e sinceri
L'anno leggendo, e studiando imparata.
A noi par di saperla, e volentieri
A noi stessi crediam; ma chi ben guata,

Vedrà gli scritti nostri quasi tutti
D'errori e discordanze pieni e brutti.

Esca omai fuor questa vostra Grammatica:
Non ci fate storiar tutto quest'anno;
Acciocchè per teorica e per pratica
L'imparin ben color, che non la fanno;
Ancorch'a molti par cosa rematica,
Nè le regole lor pel capo vanno;
Tenendo certo, ch'ognun in volgare
Possa a suo modo scrivere e parlare.

Quanto costor s'ingannino, ognun vede:
Lo vede chiaro ognun, ch'ha fior d'ingegno;
Legge il Boccaccio pur chi non lo crede,
E 'l Petrarca, che seco netta il segno.
Faune il gran Bembo manifesta fede,
Mostrando aperto, che l'altero e degno
Nostro sermon, come il Latino e 'l Greco,
Regole anch'egli, e osservanza ha seco.

Sono aspettata con gran sicumera
Queste regole vostre dalla gente;

Perocchè in breve tempo ognuno spera
Scrivere e favellar correttamente.
Oprate dunque voi di tal maniera,
Che ne siate lodati finalmente;
Perchè de' Fiorentin sia l'onor solo:
E i forestier si meni l'assiuolo.

Come di Cantalizio e di Guerrino
Son le regole sposte e dichiarate,
Sopra il parlare o Romano o Latino;
Così le vostre ancor saranno usate,
Non pur dal popol Tosco e Fiorentino,
E per tutta l'Italia celebrate;
Ma nelle terre e paesi lontani,
L'impareranno infin gli Oltramontani.

Accingetevi dunque all'alta impresa:
E lavorando andate di buon core;
Che non vi può la palma esser contesa,
Due scorte avendo di sì gran valore,
Che d'ogn'intrigo alfin, d'ogni contesa
Vi caveran; ma se bramate onore,
Abbiate in quei due pur ferma speranza,

Ch'io vi ricordo nella prima stanza.

Un'altra cosa ancora utile e bella
Far vi conviene, e al popolo mostrare:
Se come si pronunzia e si favella,
Scriver si debba alfine e compitare:
Chiarir, se nella nostra alma favella,
Si debba scempio o doppio il zeta usare;
Che sempre non si vada dubitando:
E se l'X e 'l K denno aver bando.

*To the reformers of the Tuscan language
You, who have been elected to such a noble
Station, like pilgrims, you seek to reform
Our vernacular Florentine tongue.
If you wish to satisfy the people,
It behooves you to call Buonanni and Melin,
Illustrious poets, well-learned,
For help; because without them,
Your work would not be so great.*

*More than a hundred rules and exceptions
On our native tongue, sweet idioms,*

*Have been composed and ordered;
Not even Rome has seen so many;
But they were made by brigades,
Whose shoulders cannot bear the burden:
And until now, everyone has only
Discarded a weight, as we say.*

*In truth, it's a strange and stupendous thing
Not even Giucca or Calandrino would do,
That the Lombards or the Marchesians
Want to regulate Florentine speech.
Some have called it the Courtier's tongue,
Like Calmeta Piacentino,
And agreed with Tibaldeo;
But if one is crazy, the other is wacky.*

*Trissino, then, who was once
A good man, lettered and gallant,
Called it Italian with good reason,
And with the authority of our own Dante:
Sanazzaro, with more discretion,
Thought it more similar to Tuscan:
But Bembo, full of teaching and learning,*

Was first to call it Florentine Language.

*Now Lucca, Pisa, and Volterra are risen,
Cortona, Arezzo, Castiglione and Siena
And all want to wage war on Florence,
With Perugia, Poppi, and Bibbiena;
Since they are still enclosed in Tuscany;
And everyone wants his part of the language
Said to be so beautiful and full.*

*But, in their words and in their way of speaking, and in their pronunciation, is a
Difference so great from Florence's,
That no living man could imagine it:
But be patient, all of you:
The truth can and should not be hidden;
Your words, your utterances,
Are inimical to a sane ear.*

*When I hear Sienese or Peruginese,
Or Luccans and Pisans talking,
Volterrans, Cortonans, and Aretines,
Pistolans, Pratians, and Borghigians,
And other people close to Florence,*

*It sounds, to me, like the barking of dogs;
In accents so strange, in such clumsy quips
That they truly seem like clowns.*

*Florence may have its poet today,
Illustrious citizens, and peace be with you,
Said Petrarch, who was once a prophet,
As his Songbook clearly shows:
Next, moved to pity by his very self, came
That well-meaning man who dallies with
His Decameron, beyond divine,
Who also sought to write in Florentine.*

*Our language is so sweet and versatile
And so well expresses the affects and
Gestures of humanity in war and peace,
That it is worthy of the two above.
In prose, Boccaccio is so pleasing,
And in poetry, Petrarch,
That they are superior to all other poets;
And the line is drawn right after Dante.*

These three worthy and famous writers

*Have given beautiful Florence such praise And glory that among the major cities,
She will always be remembered; and
Goes everywhere heavy with such honours,
Ringing so sweetly with brilliant accolades
That she will be forever remembered
Such that unconquered Rome and superb Athens bow down to her with mercy.*

*But where, where does Ariosto rest,
Who, though not born in Florence,
So Florentinely wields his rod,
That Florence herself seems the champion.
Of Chiaramonte's great deeds,
And of King Charles, son of Pipino,
Of great Roger, he sings so loftily,
That no one around him is not proud.*

*Our language is more correctly written
And regulated by foreigners, because
The purest and sincerest writers learned
By reading and studying it. We seem to
Know it, and believe willingly in ourselves,
But those who look from outside, think our Writing almost completely full of
Errors and ugly contradictions.*

*Pull out your Grammar books, then:
Don't let us historicize all year;
In order that by theory and by practice
They learn it well those who don't do it;
And still, to many it seems a rote operation,
And the rules don't stick in mind;
What is certain is that all can speak and
Write in his own way, in the vernacular.*

*Everyone sees the reformers' denial:
It is clear to everyone with the flower of wit;
Who read Boccaccio even without believing,
And Petrarch, who netta il segno
The great Bembo is a faithful example,
Showing openly, that our lofty and worthy
Sermon, like the Latin and the Greek
Has rules, too, and observances with them.*

*The people solemnly await
These rules of yours;
Because everyone hopes to write and
Sing correctly, without much delay.*

*Work in such a way, then,
That you are finally praised for them;
The only honour should be for Florentines,
While foreigners chirp like nightingales.*

*Just as the rules of Cantalizio and Guerrino
On the Roman or Latin tongue
Exposed and declared;
So, too, your rules will be used
Not just by Tuscan and Florentine people,
And celebrated in all of Italy;
But other lands and faraway countries
Up to the mountains will learn them, too.*

*Brace yourselves for the lofty task:
And working, go with happy hearts;
Your praiseworthiness is uncontested,
Two escorts of undisputed value
Will dig you out of every quarrel,
Every scheming plot, even. But if you desire
Honour, have faith in those escorts,
That I mentioned in the first stanza.*

*It behooves you to do another useful and
Beautiful thing: to show the people
How to pronounce and how to tell stories,
How to write, and how to compose:
Clarify if whether in our soulful singing,
We should use a single or a double z:
So that we should never doubt ourselves:
And if the X and the K should be banned.*

*

La gelosia (Sonetto LXXVI)

Col dolce insieme di Venere figlio
Nacque ad un parto l'empia, iniqua e ria,
Perfida, cruda, ingrata Gelosia,
Contro alla qual non val forza o consiglio.
Questa col dente sempre e coll'artiglio
Strugge il bene amoroso, e sempre cria
Nuovi tormenti; onde per ampia via
Mena gli animali a morte ed a periglio.
Come l'anima il corpo, e 'l corpo l'ombra,
Va seguitando Amor: nè mai si posa,
Tanto, che seco affatto manca e muore.
Così, mentrechè 'n voi sia vivo Amore,
Non mai di questa fiera arete posa,

Che sempre vi terrà la mente ingombra.

Jealousy (Sonnet LXXVI)

Together with sweetness, in one birth, and

*Son of Venus, the impious, filthy, and Damned, perfidious, cruel, ungrateful Jealousy was born,
stronger than any force Or counsel. She, with her teeth and claws*

Destroys the goodness of love, and creates

New torments; she leads animals animals Down a wide path to death and danger.

*Like the soul follows the body, and the Body, the shade, she follows Love, and Never rests, such
that Love goes missing And dies. In this way, while love lives in*

You, it is never separated from Jealousy's Pride, which forever clouds up your mind.

*

A M. Benedetto Varchi

Tempo è omai, poichè cangiate pelo,

Che pensieri e desi cangiar dovreste,

Varchi gentil, volgendogli da queste

Cose basse e mortali, a ben del cielo:

E quel Signor, per cui gran caldo e gielo

In un medesimo tempo al cuore aveste,

Lasciate in tutto: e 'l santo Amor celeste

Meco seguite pien d'ardente zelo.

Dall'uno arete dispiacere e guerra:

Dall'altro sempremai diletto e pace:

Quello è di biasmo, e questa d'onor duce.
L'un poco giova, e l'altro sempre piace:
Quel manda 'l corpo e l'anima sotterra:
Quest'altro al ciel per dritta via conduce.

To M. Benedetto Varchi

*Since you have changed your skin,
Gentle Varchi, it is time also for you to
Change your thoughts and desires, turning
Them from these base and mortal things, to
The heavens: and set aside that Noble sir for
whom your heart simultaneously burns and
freezes: follow with me, in ardent zeal, that
Saintly celestial Love.*

*From one, you'll get hatred and war:
From the other, only delight and peace:
One is duke of blame, the other of honour,
One is rarely joyful, the other always happy:
One sends the body and soul underground:
The other leads straight to heaven.*

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DEGREES AND QUALIFICATIONS

2008-2013

Ph.D. in Italian Language and Literature at the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD;
Department of German and Romance Languages and Literatures
Dissertation title: *Sole e Ombra: A Study of Sixteenth-Century Humourism and Grotesque Through the Works of Antonfrancesco Grazzini, l'Accademia degli Humidi, and l'Accademia degli Infiammati*

2006-2008

M.A. in Italian language and literature from McGill University, Montreal, QC: department of Italian Studies
Title of thesis: *Melancholy and the Modern Consciousness of Francesco Petrarca: A Close Reading of Melancholy, Acedia, and Love-sickness in the Secretum, De Remediis Utriusque Fortunae and Canzoniere*

2003-2006

B.A. in English Literature and Italian Studies from McGill University, Montreal, QC.

2001-2003

DEC (Diplôme d'études collégiales) in Liberal Arts from Marianopolis College, Montreal, QC.

AWARDS AND GRANTS

Singleton Summer Research Grants (\$3000, \$4000, \$5000; 2011, 2012, 2013)
Singleton Fellowship (\$17,500; April 2008)
McGill Recruitment Excellence Fellowship (\$5,000; March 2007)
Graduate with Great Distinction (McGill University, 2006)
McGill University Certificate of Merit (2003)
Golden Key International Society (2003- present)
Beverly Kennedy Award in excellence in the Liberal Arts (2003)
Sister Mary McCormack Bursary (\$200; 2002)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Johns Hopkins University:

Instructor, Survey of Italian Literature (Spring 2013)
Language Instructor, Intermediate Italian I (Fall 2012; Fall 2008)
Language Instructor, Advanced Italian Composition and Conversation I (Fall 2010)
Language Instructor, Advanced Italian Composition and Conversation II (Spring 2011)
Language Instructor, Italian Elements I (Fall 2009)
Language Instructor, Italian Elements II (Spring 2010)
Language Instructor, Intermediate Italian II (Spring 2009)

Graduate Student Guest Lectures

Guest lecture on Dante's *Divine Comedy* (Fall 2008)
Guest lecture on Dante's *Divine Comedy* (Spring 2010)
Guest lecture on Machiavelli's *Prince* (Spring 2010)
Guest lecture on Italo Calvino's *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore* (Spring 2010)

McGill University

Language Instructor, Italian for Beginners (Fall 2007, Spring 2008)
Teaching Assistant, Dante and the Middle Ages (Fall 2007)

Abbey Road Overseas Program

Program Coordinator and Workshop Leader (Summer 2007)

Other

Private Tutor, Intermediate Italian (2009-2013)
Volunteer English Language Arts Instructor, Hand in Hand, Baltimore, MD (Fall 2010, Spring 2011)
Volunteer Project Leader, Community Walls, Baltimore, MD (Fall 2010, Spring 2011)
Volunteer Early Childhood Education Activities Coordinator, O3, Montreal, QC (Fall 2011, Spring 2012)
English Tutor, Inforeal, Montreal, QC (Summer 2006)
Mathematics Peer Tutor, Marianopolis College, Montreal, QC (2002-2003)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Editorial Assistant, MLN Review (September 2011- September 2012); supervision: Prof. Walter Stephens
Research Assistant, *The Thinking Life: How to Thrive in the Age of Distraction*, P. M. Forni (Winter 2010)
Research Assistant, "Atlante Project" (Fall 2009); supervision: Prof. Christopher Celenza
Research Assistant, "The Scholar's Bookshelf" (Summer 2008, Fall 2009) supervision: Profs. Christopher Celenza, Earle Havens, and Walter Stephens
Translation Assistant, "Antonio Pucci Cantari Project" (Fall 2007); supervision: Dr. Maria Predelli

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“Sole e Ombra: Jealousy and Elemental Discourse in Padua’s Accademia degli Infiammati and Florence’s Accademia degli Humidi,” Renaissance Society of America annual meeting, March 27-29, 2014.

“Decameron Reframed: Antonfrancesco Grazzini's Cene and Boccaccio's Cornice Reimagined,” Sixteenth Century Society and Conference annual meeting, San Juan, Puerto Rico, October 24-27, 2013.

“From Censored to Censor: Pietro Aretino and Religious Politics of 16th-Century Venice and Rome,” Sixteenth Century Society and Conference annual meeting, Cincinnati, OH, October 25-28, 2012.

“Grotesque Laughter: Comedy and Marvel in the Works of Antonfrancesco Grazzini,” Renaissance Society of America annual conference, Washington, DC, March 22-25, 2012.

“Sodom and Gomorrah: Pier Paolo Pasolini’s *Salò* and Matteo Garrone’s *Gomorra* as a Comprehensive Critique of Fascist and Post-Fascist Italy, from the Outside-In,” Canadian Society for Italian Studies annual conference, Venice, Italy, June 24-26, 2011.

“Urban Landscapes: Simultaneous Symbolism and the Case of the (Sub)urban Pastoral in the *Decameron*,” 2010 International Boccaccio Conference, American Boccaccio Association, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, April 30 – May 1, 2010.

“Francesco Petrarca, Lorenzo Valla: Passive Literary Activism in Early Modernity,” *Chiasmi Harvard-Brown Graduate Student Conference in Italian Studies; War and Peace: Reflections on Harmony and Conflict in Italian Literature*, Harvard University, April 4-5, 2009.

“La questione etica nella narrativa di Niccolò Ammaniti,” *Up Close and Personal: A Workshop on Contemporary Italian Narrative*, McGill University, March 28-29, 2008.

“Between Man and Beast: Dante on Pre-Humanistic Virtue,” *The Literary Animal: Romance Studies Graduate Student Conference*, Cornell University, February 8-9, 2008.

“Acedia: Tracing Fear and Social Paralysis in Petrarch and Ficino,” *Reading Fear: Representations of Fear in Romance Literatures*, University of Oregon, November 8-10, 2007.

PUBLICATIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

Forthcoming

Book chapter: “Sodom and Gomorrah: Pier Paolo Pasolini’s *Salò* and Matteo Garrone’s *Gomorra* as a Comprehensive Critique of Fascist and Post-Fascist Italy, from the Outside-In,” forthcoming in *New Trends in Italian Cinema: New neorealism*, ed. Carmela Scala (Cambridge Scholars Publishing).

Book review: Janis Vanacker, *Non al suo amante più Diana piacque. I miti venatori nella letteratura italiana*, in *Quaderni d'italianistica* (Toronto, Canada)

English translation: Pier Massimo Forni's Introduction to *Ninfale fiesolano* (U of Chicago P).

Contracted and In Progress

Introduction to *Lives of Popes and Emperors*, ed. Aldo and Reta Bernardo (New York: Italica Press).

LANGUAGES

English, French, Italian (fluent)

Latin (basic; comprehension)

MEMBERSHIPS AND COMMITTEES

Member of the Modern Language Association (2012 – current)

Member of the Renaissance Society of America (2012- current)

Member of the Sixteenth-Century Society and Conference (2012- current)

Member of the American Boccaccio Association (2010)

Member of the Philological Society, The Johns Hopkins University (2009-2011)

Departmental Graduate Student Representative to the McGill AGSS (2006-2007)

Graduate Student Representative to the Department of Italian Studies (2006-2007)

Executive member of the McGill Italian Studies Student Association (2004-2005)

Member of the McGill Italian Association (2003-2005)