

From the Garden to the *Liquid City*: Notes on 2.10,
3.4 and 10, 4.6–7, or a *Decameron* Poetics of the
Erotico-Political Based on Useful Work (*civanza*)¹

Ond' elli ancora: «Or di: sarebbe il peggio
per l'omo in terra, se non fosse cive?». (Pd. 8.115–17)
«Sì», rispuos' io; «e qui ragion non cheggio».

che l'arte vostra quella, quanto pote,
segue, come 'l maestro fa 'l discente;
sì che vostr' arte a Dio quasi è nepote. (Inf. 11.103–05)

In 2010, an invitation to be interviewed by a Swedish journalist interested in the spicy dialogues of the *Decameron* inspired me to study the function of the urban and political in relation to the erotic in several stories narrated by the members of the *brigata*. Panfilo reassures us that the time spent in listening and telling their stories has a civic and political goal, even those stories mostly narrated by Dioneo:

queste cose e dicendo e udendo senza dubbio niuno gli animi vostri ben
disposti a *valorosamente adoperare* accenderà. (9.concl.5, emphasis
added)²

So why is there so much sex in the *Decameron*? I have recently studied the function of the comical-erotic (Morosini 2016), convinced like Dioneo (5.10.3) that in the *Decameron* bad things, more than good deeds, generate laughs for contemporary readers as well as for some intratextual audience

¹ I would like to thank Prof. Marco Veglia for the invitation to his conference *Umana cosa* and the warm hospitality of the colleagues at the Rocca di Bentivoglio in Bazzano. I am immensely grateful to Janet Smarr who has read this paper in different phases of its elaboration and to Michael Papio. The mistakes and imperfections are all mine, but there would be more without their generous editing.

² The *Decameron* is cited in the original from Boccaccio 1992 and in translation from Boccaccio 1972. Quondam and Fiorilla's edition of the *Decameron* 2003 read this passage as "Queste cose e dicendo e facendo senza alcun dubbio gli animi vostri ben disposti a valorosamente adoperare accenderà." Read more in Morosini 2000.

members, such as the general public who attends the trial of Madonna Filippa (6.7).³ In this paper, I intend to show that the presence and the exorbitance of the erotic motif in the *Decameron* had for Boccaccio, as for Dante, its *utilitas*. To this end, I will start by recalling Zygmunt Barański's study on *Inferno* 18 where he reminds us how, “come voleva la retorica sacra, la *Commedia* non esita a descrivere la merdosa condizione oltremondana della ‘puttana’ — Taide — ma si trattiene dal ricordare i comportamenti terreni che la condannarono alla seconda bolgia nell'ambito della natura e delle finalità del poema” (2014, 101). For Boccaccio, and for us, the erotic motif — far from “turpiloquy” and obscenity — allows for an examination of the cultural and ideological systems of the *Decameron*, for discovering the extent to which they serve the nature and the goals of the civic and political project of the *brigata* who, as Franco Cardini notes, did not move to the countryside for its mere survival (2007, 72).

The sexual and erotic motif in the *Decameron* belongs, without doubt, to one of those *forme complesse* identified by Pier Massimo Forni but, I would add, it characterizes itself, to use Zygmunt Bauman's formula (2000 and 2001), as the most “liquid” of them since it functions specifically in, and for, modern times: society in its present moment. Bauman defines as “liquid” a society that, in its first movement toward what he calls the “modern,” develops individualism within a context of institutionalized and rational rules and codes that guarantee a stable *modus vivendi* but soon compromises and weakens those connections and protections. The individual becomes detached from the institution and increasingly acts in his own interest.

A study of sexual desire with its inherent immediacy is revealed to be the best tool of analysis to trace Boccaccio's political intentions, for it shows on the one hand the incongruences and failures of traditional models of behavior in a “liquid society” and, on the other, proposes a new typology of the citizen: the liquid citizen whose features are to be found in Pampinea, on whose initiative the *brigata* leaves Florence.

Rebuilding the city: Liquid citizens in a liquid society

In a “liquid society” like the one Boccaccio represents in his *novelle*, and in a moment when the plague's devastation has done away with all consistent moral and civic laws (when even “non che le solute persone, ma ancora le racchiuse ne' monisteri [...], rotte della obbedienze le leggi, datesi a' dilette carnali, in tal guise avvisando scampare, son divenute lascive e dissolute,”

³ Morosini 2000.

as Pampinea explains in 1.intro.62), only the present time exists. Every person born into this world has a natural right to sustain, preserve and defend his own life to the best of his ability (cf. 1.intro.55).

Pampinea is the first example of a citizen born to “liquid times.” In her speech to the other ladies in the church, as she is trying to make them aware of the need to save their bodies and souls by leaving Florence, she alerts them to the urgency of the moment. She distinguishes their now from their usual past, to banish any form of nostalgia and so that they may react with immediacy:

Ognora che io vengo ben riguardando alli nostri modi di questa mattina e ancora a quegli di più altre passate e pensando chenti e quali li nostri ragionamenti sieno, io comprendo, e voi similmente il potete comprendere, ciascuna di noi di se medesima dubitare. (1.intro.55)

Pampinea shows full awareness of the current moment she is experiencing, as she reinforces her argument with an example from her own personal life: she had a house full of servants, and now there is no one left apart from herself and her maid. In a vivid expression of what fear is, she says, “quasi tutti i capelli adosso mi sento arricciare” (1.intro.59). The present as it is, and the awareness of the changes that it brings, generate fear indeed, but not to the point of blocking and preventing her from taking the initiative to save herself and her body from the new situation where no rules stand. In this sense, Pampinea becomes the role model of a citizen for a “liquid society” and, thanks to her, so too do the other members of the *brigata* who, with their storytelling, propose a series of values that are suited for citizens in a mobile society that moves by sudden changes. Their stories provide them with new models of *utilitas* and *urbanitas* to rebuild the city [fig. 1].

Unlike the reconstruction of a city like Troy [fig. 2], under the vigilant eye of the king and more akin to Villani’s vision of Florence’s rebuilding (as in the beautiful Chigiano manuscript BAV, L VIII 296, in Frugoni 2007), for Boccaccio it will be the citizens who reconstruct the city brick by brick with their work [fig. 3].

The mechanism of the erotico-political: Filippo Balducci and his son.

To explain the political role of the erotic in the *Decameron* and how it is used by Boccaccio to convey the value of the new city (and how detrimental those who are not aware of the present are to its re-founding), I propose the illumination of the “incomplete” story of the Introduction to Day 4 from BNF’s ms. it. 63 [fig. 4]. After the death of his wife, Filippo Balducci decides to retire as a hermit with his two-year-old son and to devote his life to the service of God. Living in a cave, and on alms, the father “sommamente si

guardava di non ragionare, là dove egli fosse, d'alcuna temporal cosa né di lasciarne alcuna vedere [...]. E in questa vita molti anni il tenne, mai della cella non lasciandolo uscire né alcuna altra cosa che sé dimostrandogli” (4.intro.15). When the boy turns eighteen, he asks his father to go with him and meet the devout and charitable people who have supplied them with the means to survive. The Paris illumination eloquently illustrates the *voluptas* that Filippo's son experiences as soon as he arrives in Florence: “Quivi il giovane veggendo i palagi, le case, le chiese e tutte l'altre cose delle quali tutta la città piena si vede [...] sì come colui che mai più per ricordanza vedute no' n'avea, si cominciò forte a maravigliare e di molte domandava il padre che fossero e come si chiamassero” (4.intro.19).

What is striking about the story of Filippo Balducci and his son is that it had been narrated in a political treatise in Venetian dialect entitled *De regimine rectoris* (1314) as an anecdote by Paolino Veneto whose *Chronologia magna* was well known to the Certaldese who transcribed large parts of it in his so-called Zibaldone magliabechiano. Having recently studied the *De regimine* within the literary genre of *Specula principis* (2017), I found in the second book, dedicated to the magistrate's obligation to form a family and raise children, an anecdote (58.15–25, in Veneto 1868) derived from the tale of Barlaam and Iosaphat (21) that Paolino most probably found in Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum historiale* (15.41). The same anecdote was narrated in Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea* (176) and later in the *Novellino* (23), in the *Fiore di virtù* (36) and in Cornazzano's *Proverbs* (9). Giovanna Frosini (2006), who has studied in depth the analogies in the tale of the Barlaam and the Balducci story, points to a major shift in Boccaccio's rewriting, for the demons of the Barlaam tale here become *papere*. Insofar as this is the only tale narrated by the “author” of the *Decameron*, Boccaccio's changes to this story, which had traveled from an exotic “somewhere” in India to Boccaccio's contemporary Florence, give us insights into his political intentions. The protagonist is not in fact a king, but a “cittadino” in “la nostra città,” as Boccaccio tells his readers. This change creates a strong bond between the narrated story and the wellbeing of the city. Filippo Balducci is, like Puccio, a “uomo di condizione assai leggiere, ma ricco e bene inviato e esperto nelle cose quanto lo stato suo richiedeva” (4.intro.12).

Indeed, what does Filippo's son desire? He is not bedazzled by “auro et argento, lapidibus pretiosis, vestibis splendidis, equis regalibus et omnium rerum generibus,” as in the *Legenda aurea* (180), or by similar things, as in the Barlaam tale, but by buildings and women. The artist of ms. it. 63 clearly reproduces Boccaccio's attempt to address the objects of the gaze of the boy's *voluptas*, including among the buildings a church that is in

architectural continuity with the rest of the urban setting and, of course, women. What Filippo's son sees the first time is what makes a modern city: buildings, an urban setting where the only individuals featured there in the illumination are women who seem to be one with, and actually generated by, the city and its walls. In the political perspective here adopted, one that implies interest in the *polis*, the father is dressed in a hermit's tunic and definitely does not fit into the urban setting of Florence, while the son, as is shown by his clothing, fully and naturally belongs to the city that has been kept from him by his father. Like Paolino, Boccaccio is evoking the Barlaam tale within Aristotle's political thought. The philosopher says in the *Politics* that the city "is a creation of nature," and men are inclined by nature to be part of the city or a partnership: "he who by nature and not by mere accident is without a state, is either a bad man or above humanity" (1253^a). Such a man is dangerous. Filippo's asocial nature, clearly indicated by his hermit's tunic in ms.it. 63, will be fully developed in 3.10 with the hermit Rustico who also evokes another Barlaam tale (22) as we shall see later.

It is not the first time that hermits and cloisters with their alienation from the world are condemned by Boccaccio, and here the artist shows both that Filippo does not belong to this new city and that he has made a mistake by taking his son away to live as a hermit. By so doing he has denied his son not only a woman, therefore the possibility to have a family (the microcosm of society), but also the city itself and the opportunity to do his duty as a citizen of the *polis*, the wellbeing of which is guaranteed by the commitment and involvement of each citizen. Here in this illumination we see the typology of the "liquid citizen" who naturally belongs to the city (Filippo's son) and of those who are misfits in the urban setting (Filippo himself).

Boccaccio points out those who do not fit into the liquid society, and illuminators of the French manuscripts show to what extent their space remains outside the urban perimeter: e.g., Filippo, Puccio, Calandrino and the man who hosts Pinuccio and Adriano in 9.6 (Morosini 2016).

The *novella*, told by Dioneo, that concludes Day 2 (cf. Barolini 2006) anticipates⁴ the main features and motifs of Day 3, and the political role of the erotic is conveyed through the metaphor of production and labor. Dioneo's story introduces the theme of the *mal maritata*, based on the injustice of having a young woman, like Puccio's wife, be married to an old man, for the mismatch can be damaging to society. Bartolomea resolves the situation by means of an audacious speech revolving around *utilitas* and *industria*.

⁴ Duranti (1985) has argued that Dioneo's stories are not as far from the topic of the Day as he pretends.

The speech of the young wife to her old husband Ricciardo, who went to Monaco to get her back after she had been kidnapped by pirates, is a manifesto of the erotico-political. It is centered on the advantage to her of remaining with the pirate for a practical reason: there is no *civanza*, no gain in going back to her old husband. *Civanza* is a synonym for *utilitas*, but in Bartolomea's words, it is contextualized in erotic terms of productivity since Paganino works her "little field" night and day:

E dicovi che se voi aveste tante feste fatte fare a' lavoratori che le vostre possession lavorano, quante faciavate fare a colui che il mio piccolo campicello aveva a lavorare, voi non avreste mai ricolto granel di grano. Sommi abbattuta a costui, che ha voluto Idio sì come pietoso rguardatore della mia giovanezza, col quale io mi sto in questa camera, nella quale non si sa che cosa festa sia, dico di quelle feste che voi, più divoto a Dio che a' servigi delle donne, cotante celebravate; né mai dentro a quello uscio entrò né sabato né venerdì né vigilia né quattro tempora né quaresima, che'è così lunga, anzi di dì e di notte ci si lavora e battecisi la lana; e poi che questa notte sonò mattutino, so bene come il fatto andò da una volta in sù. E però con lui intendo di starmi e di lavorare mentre sarò giovane. (2.10.31–34)

The difference between Ricciardo and Paganino is expressed in a metaphor of production: Bartolomea's "little field," which the husband did not tend and from which he therefore did not harvest a single ear of corn, while with Paganino, "they are at work night and day." This is not only agricultural work but also wool processing, thus more "civic" in nature [fig. 5]. *Utilitas* here is clearly an erotic metaphor with a civic connotation: a man should not marry a younger woman because it is against the principle of a community built on individual work and production. Ricciardo fails society even more than his young wife who tells him to move on from his passive life and start being active. It is no coincidence that the word Bartolomea uses to tell him that she has no intention of going back with him because there is no gain or interest for her is *civanza*, a synonym for *utilitas*, but much more contextualized in erotic terms of productivity:

andate e sforzatevi di vivere, ché mi pare anzi che no che voi ci stiate a pigione, sì tiscuzzo e tristanzuolo mi parete. Ancor vi dico di più: che quando costui mi lascerà, che non mi pare a ciò disposto dove io voglia stare, io non intendo per ciò di mai tornare a voi, di cui, tutto premendovi, non si farebbe uno scodellino di salsa, per ciò che con mio grandissimo

danno e interesse vi stetti una volta: per che in altra parte cercherei mia civanza.⁵

Civanza is a merchant word that denotes “saving, advantage, gain,” derived from the verb *civanzare*, “to pursue a gain, take profit, earn,” and related phonetically to the Latin word *civitas*, although the official etymology is the French word *chevance*, derived from the verb *chevir* (*chef* < Lat. CAPUT). I see here, as in Dante, parallels with *cive*, citizen:

Ond' elli ancora: «Or di: sarebbe il peggio
per l'omo in terra, se non fosse cive?».
«Sì», rispuos' io; «e qui ragion non cheggio». (Pd. 8.115–17)

Ricciardo at this point recognizes his *follia*, an adjective that is at the opposite pole from Bartolomea's wisdom and that has new meaning, coinciding, as we said, with a gain for the individual and a “liquid” society, with *utilitas*: “veggendosi a mal partito e pure allora conoscendo la sua follia d'aver moglie giovane tolta essendo sposato, dolente e tristo s'uscì della camera” (2.10.42). Her identification of sex with productive work will resonate into the following Day.

A number of intertextual factors suggest that we consider, in relation to Bartolomea's speech, both the theme of Day 3 (and in particular 3.4), and the miniature garden where the *brigata* moves for the first time at the end of Day 3, a garden that reflects human labor and industriousness. I suggest that Day 3 must be read in relation to the *brigata*'s new location and that the exorbitant presence of sexual motives in relation to work, individual creativity and laboriousness in the Day's tales forces us to reconsider the *cornice*, including the *brigata*'s decision to leave the chaos of Florence at the time of the plague and to spend time away narrating stories.⁶ The erotic motive is as immediate as the *cornice*'s political purpose, which is to narrate stories in an effort to launch new values for the city's rebuilding.

There are other reasons to think that Day 3 is strictly related to the frame's ideological program to reconstruct the city by means of industriousness, or work, starting with the fact that most of the stories in Day 3 unfold in Tuscany or Florence. Although it cannot be considered the most Florentine Day of the *Decameron*, since, as Robert Hollander points out, “Day VI

⁵ McWilliam's translates “in altra parte cercherei mia civanza” as “I would be trying my luck elsewhere” (2.10.41). The translation of *civanza* as “luck” is perhaps unfortunate. See Battaglia 1967, 3:28, and Tesoro della lingua italiana delle origini, s.v.

⁶ Cf. my reading of *Dec.* 3.4 now partially published in Morosini 2013.

is an overwhelmingly Florentine Day,”⁷ one can still make out the strong role played by Florence in Day 3 since only 3.3 unfolds in Pavia, 3.6 in Naples, and 3.10 in Capsa in Tunisia. Novella 3.9 starts in Paris, but Beltramo soon moves to Tuscany, where the rest of his life and vicissitudes take place. In the preface to her novella, Emilia remarks upon the Tuscan setting of the stories dealing with *industria*. “A me piace nella nostra città ritornare, donde alle due passate piacque di dipartirsi,” maybe because Florence, as Filomena says in the preface to her story of the same Day, is “più d’inganni piena che d’amore o di fede” (3.3.5).

Day 3 and the “miniature garden”

Day 3 comes on the first day in a new location, a “miniature garden,” after the *brigata* has left Florence for the countryside. The garden is so beautiful as to be considered a “new Paradise on earth.” In fact, “if Paradise were constructed on earth, it was inconceivable that it could take any other form” (3.intro.11–12). It is no coincidence (cf. Kirkham 210ff.) that in Day 3 Dom Felice teaches Puccio a shortcut to Paradise, Ferondo experiences purgatory while his wife is in Paradise with the monk and Alibech puts the devil in hell through the pleasure of the body [figs. 6, 7, 8]. This is a kind of eschatological-sexual itinerary that invites us to think of the coincidences between the tales of Day 3 and the garden-paradise where the *brigata* has just arrived.

Yet along with the erotic and eschatological elements, there is also a political one. At the end of Day 2, passing the crown to the new queen Neifile, Filomena says: “ormai, cara compagna, di questo piccol popolo il governo sia tuo” (2.concl.2). Hollander emphasizes this passage in terms of “the law of the piccolo popolo,” namely, “how the laws function in an ideal situation, removed from the plague in a provisional community. The *brigata* structures itself as a *piccolo popolo* or miniature nation and appropriates a language of monarchy to impose on its “own” nation. It is the aim of this mini-state to reconstruct its own order” (Hollander 1997, 121).

Upon the *brigata*’s arrival at the new palace, we read: “entrati e per tutto andati, e avendo le gran sale, le pulite e ornate camere compiutamente ripiene di ciò che a camera s’appartiene, sommamente il commendarono e magnifico reputarono il signor di quello” (3.intro.4). These comments convey the same awareness of social status that we see in the very first lines of the Prologue, where the Author’s own disastrous love story is presented more as a “social mistake” rather than as irrational love, since, contradicting

⁷ For Hollander (1997, 78ff), Day 6, with seven of its tales taking place in the city and three others set in Tuscany, is the most Florentine day in the *Decameron*, and not Day 3.

Andreas Capellanus' rule, it was a love beyond measure for someone of a different social class: "Per ciò che, dalla mia prima giovanezza infino a questo tempo oltre modo essendo acceso stato d'altissimo e nobile amor, forse più assai che alla mia bassa condizione non parrebbe, [...] nondimeno mi fu egli di grandissima fatica a sofferire, certo non per crudeltà della donna amata, ma per soverchio fuoco nella mente concetto da poco regolato appetito" (Proemio 3).

The *brigata's* decision to change location is based on a strong consciousness of their social class. Neifile, the queen of the Day 3, decides to move from where they were to avoid being joined by the *nova gente*: "se noi vogliam tor via che gente nuova non ci sopravenga reputo oportuno di mutarci di qui e andarne altrove" (2.concl.7). McWilliam's English translation, "in order to avoid *being joined by others* I think it advisable for us to move elsewhere" (my emphasis) does not convey the reasons that push the *brigata* to move: the eventual intrusion of "gente nuova," or "nova gente," as Boccaccio, like Dante before him, called the people from the areas surrounding Florence, attracted to the city by fast profits (the "subiti guadagni" of *Inferno* 16.73). Boccaccio defines the newcomers in the *Decameron* the same way in more than one instance,⁸ and all the stories of Day 3 seem to focus on attempts to reconstruct an order that the *nova gente* have badly compromised and in a parodic key, in the case of 3.4, as we shall see.

Yet, as I have argued elsewhere (Morosini 2013), Boccaccio's concern is expressed when the *brigata* sets laws for this new Paradise on earth and finds an echo in the contemporary iconographic program and political ideas, in particular, of the notion of the common good. Reading Eva Frojmovič's study of Giotto in Padua in terms of "imposing a novel programme" (Frojmovič 1996, 40), we are reminded of the theory of communal rule, first formulated by Brunetto Latini in the 1260s, and later developed by the Florentine Dominican friar Remigio de' Girolami (1305–19), a celebrated and popular preacher and political writer.⁹ Giotto's bell tower in Florence (1335–40) and Andrea Pisano's panels were inspired by Remigio, who had a vision of the city as the result and the symbol of collaboration among

⁸ Newcomers are foolish and naïve, like Andreuccio (2.5.17). "Uomo nuovo" describes a man who is simple and foolish to the point of being strange and ridiculous, like Chichibio: "Chichibio il quale come nuovo bergolo era così pare va" (6.4.6) or Calandrino in 9.5.10. For more on the adjective *nuovo* in the *Decameron*, see Branca's notes to 6.4.6 and 9.5.10 in Boccaccio 1992.

⁹ On Remigio's communal political theory and his *Tractatus de bono comuni*, see Pannella (1985, esp. 123–68); see also Frojmovič 1996; De Matteis 1967; Davis 1984; Skinner 1978; Rubinstein 1965. For more on Remigio and the *bonum commune*, see Pio 2011.

workers. The weaver hanging above Justice represents *lanificium* [fig. 5 again] as divine labor, the closest to the task of Christ in history, which is to weave the garment of his spouse, the Church, while the art of building is hanging above Charity.

Day 3 concentrates on “people who by dint of their own efforts have achieved an object they greatly desired or recovered a thing previously lost”: individuals who demonstrate experience, wisdom, and liberality in a given time and under given social and political conditions. This day is dedicated to human industry, to the importance of being active, putting the *ingegno* to “ben far” (*Inf.* 16), to do and to act in order to achieve one’s desire, which is, most of the time, erotic in nature. For these individuals, only the present exists, and Masetto, who is the first example of a liquid citizen of day 3, knows this well, for he decides to follow the old gardener’s advice and fake being deaf and mute in order to work the garden of the monastery. Providence and Fortuna are not factors. Usher rightly proposes to call the theme of Day 3 “virtue, although not heroic virtues,” rather than *industria* (Usher 2004, esp. 100).

The first *novella* of Day 3 establishes the poles between which all the Day’s characters will move and make references to working the land. It shows us the wrong assumptions made by stupid people. The category of the foolish is then divided into two main subcategories on the basis of their wrong assumptions. One group believes that nuns and friars have no desire: “e se forse alcuna cosa contra questa lor credenza n’odono, così si turbano come se contra natura un grandissimo e scelerato male fosse stato commesso, non pensando né volendo avere rispetto a se medesimi, li quali la piena licenza di potere far quello che vogliono non può saziare, né ancora alle gran forze dell’ozio e della sollecitudine” (3.1.3). They have no wish to face the fact that they themselves are continually dissatisfied, even though they enjoy full liberty to do as they please. The other group is firmly convinced “che la zappa e la vanga e le grosse vivande e i disagi tolgano del tutto a’ lavoratori della terra i concupiscibili appetiti e rendan loro d’intelletto e d’avedimento grossissimi” (3.1.4). As in the illumination of the French manuscript 240 of the BnF in Paris [fig. 6], more so than in another representation of the first story of Day 3 [fig. 7], Masetto is essentially a worker. When we meet him for the first time he is “un giovane lavoratore” (3.1.7) who leaves Lamporecchio with an axe on his shoulder to work at the monastery. In the monastery he lives where he works and his space is, as H.

Lefebvre would call it, a “productive space” (1981, 370–92),¹⁰ as opposed to the garden at the beginning of the story, which we can call the anti-productive space of the nuns. Masetto thinks like a laborer and his story establishes a relationship between erotic desire and productive labor: “Se voi mi mettete costà entro, io vi lavorerò sì l’orto che mai non vi fu così lavorato” (3.1.18). Pasolini brilliantly caught the drama of the non-productive cloister vs. the productive space of the garden that soon becomes equal to Paradise for the nuns, for in the garden they found pleasure through labor [fig. 8]. Day 3 closes with the ultimate parody of hermit life with a monk like Rustico, who had paradoxically chosen to live away from the world. Masetto’s story exemplifies the role of sex in the city, that is, how the erotic desire conveyed the incongruences of the city. Indeed, the story unfolds in “queste nostre contrade” (3.1.6). Masetto, a worker, is the first liquid citizen because “vecchio, padre e ricco, [...] per lo suo avvedimento avendo saputo la sua giovinezza bene adoperare, donde con una scure in collo partito s’era se ne tornò” (3.1.43). The nuns’ erotic desire finds its fulfilment in the garden that is now a useful and productive space.

Novella 3.4

In *Novella 4* of Day 3, Dom Felice teaches Brother Puccio how to achieve sainthood with a shortcut to Paradise so that he can have a good time with Puccio’s wife. I claim that, although Boccaccio’s story features a lustful priest who plays a trick on a simpleton (Puccio) in order to achieve an erotic desire, it cannot be considered just another *novella* against the hypocrisy and lust of religious people. *Novella 3.4* parodies the *brigata*’s move to the miniature garden that is like a “Paradise on earth” and the reasons for their move. Dom Felice teaching Puccio the quickest way to reach Paradise as a strategy to cuckold him recreates the *brigata*’s exploration of the premise that a (new) earthly and celestial Paradise will not be conquered just with *ciancioni*, that is, with the empty repetition of hymns and prayers listed in certain devotional books,¹¹ nor by idle people like Puccio, but with *industria*, initiative, and energetic work. I believe that the political function of

¹⁰ A “productive space opposes itself to a private space not only because is public, but as a space of exchange and productivity.” Cf. Morosini 2013.

¹¹ Compare how, in *Dec. 7.1*, the friars teach Gianni “buone orazioni e davangli il paternostro in volgare e la canzone di santo Alesso e il lamento di San Bernardo e la lauda di donna Matelda e cotali altri ciancioni, li quali avea molto cari e tutti per la salute dell’anima sua se gli serbava molto dilingentemente” (7.1.5). They gave to Gianni also “il *Te Lucis la*

erotic desire shows, in fact, in particular in Day 3, which Jonathan Usher says deals with “industria or acquisto erotico” (2004). During this Day, the storytelling is dedicated to *industria*, the same theme that characterizes the garden where the *brigata* first moves after escaping from Florence, but it best addresses this theme through the achievement of erotic desire, for the reader with the “liquidity” of Boccaccio’s society.

In 3.4, as often happens in Day 3, the story springs from a contrast between Puccio Rinieri, “un buon uomo e ricco [...], un uomo idiota e di grossa pasta” (3.4.4–5), and Dom Felice, a monk, “di aguto ingegno e di profonda scienza” (3.4.7). He returns from Paris to the convent of San Brancazio, where Puccio soon becomes so familiar with him that he welcomes the religious man into his house. Because Puccio is a simple man, he prays, never misses a mass, fasts and endures penance. Felice knows Puccio’s mind and type (a pious bourgeois who believes that attending church every day and reciting empty prayers will make him a saint and speed him on his way to Heaven):

Io ho già assai volte compreso, fra Puccio, che tutto il tuo disidero è di divenir santo; alla qual cosa mi par che tu vadi per una lunga via, là dove ce n’è una ch’è molto corta. (3.4.12)

Dom Felice is a learned man of science who, in teaching a shortcut to Paradise, plays in a parodic vein the same role of the *brigata*: he establishes a new set of laws to reach a new Paradise, built in the here and now on earth. Don Felice wants to “supplire il difetto” of Puccio’s wife who, although young and beautiful like “una mela casolana,” does not have sex (3.4.6). When Felice sees her, he realizes “qual dovesse essere quella cosa della quale ella patisse maggior difetto: e pensossi, se egli potesse, per torre fatica a fra Puccio, di volerla supplire” (3.4.9–10). Thus, both his teaching of a shortcut to heaven and his sexual activity with Puccio’s wife bring to light the contradictions of those, like Puccio, who perform their work neither in the community nor in the family.

The concern about the rise of newcomers like Puccio cannot be ignored. Giovanni Villani’s *Cronica* and Lorenzetti’s *Good and Bad Government* all contribute to our reading of the social consequences of Puccio’s foolish behavior and that of *nova gente* like him. As Alessandro Barbero observed

Ntemerata e tante altre buone orazioni” (7.1.20). Carlo Delcorno brought to my attention the fact that *ciancioni* are types of devotional books, listed by Boccaccio himself, that denote religious literature in the vernacular, as promoted by the efforts of mendicant orders, particularly the Dominicans. See Delcorno 1975 (66 ff.).

about Villani's *Cronica*, Boccaccio's attacks on *nova gente* / *gente nuova* betray his preoccupation with the rise of the new class, not exclusively merchants, but people whose talent lies in making money, and who are otherwise coarse, unmannerly, and lacking in courtesy.¹² Mario Baratto prefers to inquire into what he calls the "logica dei semplici." Stories like that of the gardener Masetto da Lamporecchio (3.1) and 8.3.9, which portrays the well-off physician Mastro Simone, show to what extent "l'opacità mentale, radicalmente irrecuperabile alle imprese dell'intelligenza, non è infatti l'automatico correlativo di una condizione plebea." Individual merit can go beyond or contradict the limits of social status and reach the "idiotia fanciullesca della quieta e quotidiana follia."¹³ Boccaccio's cruelty toward fools is especially evident in bourgeois surroundings and tends to be directed toward the presumptuousness of the nouveaux riches.

Together with other stories from Day 3, Puccio's story seems a good and bad government in miniature: it calls out for *Prudentia* against stupidity, *Utilitas* against passivity or, to borrow a term from courtly French novels, *recreantise*. As in the *quête* or *aventure* of the courtly knight in Chrétien de Troyes' stories and Boccaccio's *Filocolo*, our author is calling citizens of Florence to an "openness to the sense of life as an adventure, an exposure to personal risk for the sake of personal betterment, an acceptance of the challenge to become, not just to exist" (Hanning 1977, 122; cf. Morosini 2004, 124–25). In Chrétien de Troyes' *Erec and Enide*, Erec, the courtly knight, displays the shameful quality *recreantise* in his inability to act, not only in order to reach his own goals, but also to help society and to serve the collective whole. Lancelot, Chrétien's other hero, helps Gorre and Yvain with the *Pesme Aventure* by teaching them to assume their responsibility to the whole (the Arthurian kingdom in the first instance and society in general or respect for justice in the second). In the *Filocolo*, Florio must help the Caloni and Cireti to overcome their differences and become one population, the Calocepi, who live in peace and order. Florio chooses to build a kingdom under a wise leader, Caleon (5.40–42).

In other words, within a political reading of the erotic motive that is at stake in the story, Puccio's story seems to parody the civic and ideological attempts of the *brigata*, Boccaccio and contemporary artists and intellectuals like Giovanni Villani to launch Florence's reconstruction. It proposes an earthly Paradise instead of an earthly *Inferno* that can be identified with a society led by newcomers, parasites on society, like Puccio. The garden then

¹² Barbero 2005, 22.

¹³ Baratto 1993, 363.

becomes the point of departure and arrival, at the heart of the *Decameron*. The Introduction to Day 3 provides a key to *novella* 3.4.

The miniature garden and the gardens of 4.6 and 7 in ... and out of the “liquid” city.

Recent scholarship (Scianatico 2015; Marchesi 2010; Santagati ed. 2006; Gousset 2001; Cazalé Bérard 2007; Boitani 1983; Frank 2008) has given much attention to the garden in Day 3. The focus remains on its evocation of the *Roman de la Rose* and the debate about the extent to which it should be considered earthly or celestial. There has been much speculation about the garden, its fruits, birds, plants and their derivation, but very little has been said about the experience of the senses. All the senses are involved. Not only is it visually beautiful and filled with the song of birds, but we can almost smell the perfumes of the plants and feel the pleasure (*diletto*) of the place in its wholeness and details (“ombra odorifera e dilettevole” (3.intro.6). The topography of the miniature garden reflects the ideological plan of the *brigata*: human experience through the physical senses.

The garden embodies both contemplative and active life and represents the continuity between *negotium* and *otium*, pleasure and *utilitas*, as the author’s intention is expressed in the Prologue (14). In his essay on *utilità*, Hollander notes that “the *Decameron* contains thirty-nine occurrences of the word *utile* (27) and its related forms *utilità* (11) and *utilmente* (1)” and that the words *utile* and *utilità* “had either the conventional Horatian significance or else a particularly Boccaccian one: that which is useful is exactly that which brings pleasure or the avoidance of pain” (Hollander 1997, 74 and 78).

At first glance, the garden recalls that of Deduit, the garden of Pleasure [fig. 9] that finds its model in the *Roman de la Rose*. We enter, following the point of view of the visitors. At first, it seems like Paradise lost and, as we know, regaining the mystical garden of Heaven is a constant desire of men and women. However, some important differences must be noted: both gardens are enclosed within walls, but this one is “strictly connected to its *utilitas*” (Zoppi 2006, 28). In the *Roman de la Rose*, the lover/author enters the garden with Oiseuse, ready to dance and play music, and there he finds the beauty of nature, including animals and songbirds. Simone Marchesi recently offered a detailed reading of Boccaccio’s garden and that of the *Roman de la Rose*: “unlike the leisurely company of *Deduit*, Boccaccio’s *brigata* has been given a literary and moral garden to tend. In their story-

telling, this is precisely what its members will do” (50).¹⁴ In Boccaccio’s miniature garden, *otium* (Oiseuse) is banished.

Unlike Paradise and the garden of Deduit in the *Roman de la Rose*, the garden where the *brigata* moves cannot be considered “another world” or a place for “spiritual elevation,” as Margherita Levorato has argued.¹⁵ There is no doubt, however, that the garden’s design reflects an ideal plan. The initiation and metanoia, progressive transformation towards maturity, of the *brigata* move through different places, each representing a step toward the *piccola nazione*, the future Florence in miniature, where the new foundation will be laid.¹⁶ Litta Maria Medri argues: “The garden can assume symbolic meaning, Christian or profane, but in any case, it collects the fragments of the outside world” (Medri 2006, 29). Therefore, it cannot be considered “the place of poetry,” an isolated site of literary practice.¹⁷ The *brigata* will not find there a *hortus conclusus* where they may tell each other stories forever removed from the violence of death. Rather, it brings out the political aspect of their temporary “andar in contado,” so that they can work on the new paradise. If the garden is a place designed for pleasure, as we are told in the Author’s Conclusion to the *Decameron*, it is difficult to agree that the miniature garden is a space of abstracted storytelling unless we recognize that it is also a place where one may devise “rules for human coexistence.”¹⁸

The urban garden at the beginning of Day 3 also contains the idea of the Arabic garden [fig. 10] in its *utilitas*; it is not just beautiful to the eye but bears the sign of the new times, in tune with the ideological goals of the *Decameron*. Here, even the two mills are not without *utilità* to the owner of the villa since

[L’acqua] poi, quella dico che soprabondava al pieno della fonte, per occulta via del pratello usciva e, per canaletti assai belli e artificiosamente

¹⁴ Simone Marchesi offers a detailed study of the resonance of Pliny the Younger’s garden (*Ep.* 5.6) in Boccaccio’s miniature garden in the introduction to Day 3. On the relation between Boccaccio’s garden and Pliny, see also Battaglia Ricci (2006, esp. 22 n. 11) who identifies the specific source for Boccaccio’s garden and its cycle of fruits, namely lemons and cedars, in Virgil’s *Georgics* (2.126–35), Isidore of Seville and Pliny. The latter was also widely quoted in Vincent of Beauvais’ *Speculum naturale* (12.21).

¹⁵ Cf. Levorato 2006, 56.

¹⁶ On metanoia in Boccaccio’s work, see Morosini 2003 and Cardini 2007.

¹⁷ Lucia Battaglia Ricci writes, “Che il giardino possa essere luogo della poesia e la brigata nel giardino icona del fare poesia è idea originalissima di Boccaccio” (2006, 16).

¹⁸ Lucia Battaglia Ricci calls it “il luogo topico dell’attività letteraria, e, al contempo, il rifugio contro la morte, dove è possibile raggiungere una forma di immortalità e rifondare le regole del vivere umano” (2006, 16).

fatti fuor di quello divenuta palese, tutto lo 'ntorniava; e quindi per canaletti simili quasi per ogni parte del giardin discorrea, raccogliendosi ultimamente in una parte dalla quale del bel giardino avea l'uscita, e quindi verso il pian discendendo chiarissima, avanti che a quel divenisse, con grandissima forza e con non piccola utilità del signore due mulina volgea. (3.intro.10)

With Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) and the foundation of the religious order of the Cistercians, gardens acquired more and more social relevance as centers of work and production. The transformation of the garden as a place of meditation and prayer that allowed men to elevate themselves to God into the utilitarian garden, as the one where Masetto is hired to work (3.1), reflects a new world where man becomes a gardener of God (Zoppi 2006, 27–28).

Here the garden, unlike that of Deduit, has been filled with new urban and sociological content, as can be seen in the stories that take place within it: Andreuola and Gabriotto (4.6) and Simona and Pasquino (4.7). In 4.6, two young people from different social classes, Andreuola and Gabriotto, enjoy their hidden love and marry in “a beautiful garden” that belongs to her father. The garden has a magnificent, crystal-clear fountain, the roses are in flower, some red, some white, and she plucks one night a great number of them. But this private garden becomes the space of dysfunctional love because its existence relies fully on the perimeters of the garden and on its alienation from families and the urban community. After her nightmare about Gabriotto dying from a strange, dark thing coming out of his body, Gabriotto dies suddenly on the grass of the garden [fig. 11]. Andreuola is at this point compelled to take the body from the garden and give it back to his family for a proper burial. Here, as represented by the artist of the ms. Pal. lat. 1989 kept at the Vatican Library in Rome [Fig. 12; cfr. Branca 1999, (3:207)], conflict arises in the street between the community and a marriage made between two people in a remote garden, alienated from society. When she tries with the help of her maid to take his body to his family for burial, they are stopped by the officers of the watch and brought to the *podestà*. It is quite striking that, while the illuminator of Pal. lat. 1989 brilliantly conveys the dramatic sequence of the closed space (the isolation of the garden) and the artist of the Ital. 63 makes the garden the real protagonist of the story [fig. 13], the artist of the French manuscript 239 chooses to ignore the fact that the arrest of Andreuola happens in public. Instead, he restricts the actions of Gabriotto's death, Andreuola's arrest, and her becoming a nun, to the comfort of a closed room [fig. 14]. At the end of the story, Andreuola withdraws, in fact, into a convent with her maidservant and lives as a nun. If for Piccarda, withdrawing into the “dolce chiostra” (*Par.* 3.107) “relieved

her of the constant pressure of having to renegotiate threats to her family's honor" (Barolini 2012, 19), Andreuola's withdrawal finally demonstrates her dysfunctional role in an urban society conceived for her by Boccaccio who, through Filostrato, the king of Day 4, shows no trace of compassion (4.7.2).

Like Thomas, who in *Tristan et Iseut* brings Béroul's outcast and unhealthy lovers back into the community from their remote shelter in the forest of the Morois, Boccaccio is presenting the anti-urban garden that conflicts with the "miniature garden" of the *brigata*, which is in its essence the continuation of the outside world and cannot be a place of alienation from it. Panfilò the narrator reminds the *brigata* with this story that erotic desire is a part of love that, when healthy, does not need to be hidden. It needs to exist within the community; in other words, one has to live one's life. Panfilò seems to say that monsters (Andreuola's nightmare) are produced by the sleep of reason as when Andreuola believed it would be possible to marry Gabriotto and enjoy her love in total alienation from her family and the society.

From a private enclosed garden in Brescia, we move to a public garden in the city of Florence with the story of Simona and Pasquino, two Florentine lovers, both of humble condition. She worked spinning wool to earn her living and he was employed by a wool merchant to distribute wool for spinning. As intimated by Emilia, who narrates this story, the real protagonist of 4.7 is the garden, again a space where love is born and then dies. It is no coincidence that Simona and Andreuola both lose their lovers in the garden (4.7.3). In both of these tales, the gardens become not only the space of erotic desire but also the privileged place to denounce certain dysfunctional behaviors within the city. Both stories, featuring different social classes, end tragically. Simona, even if she is of low social status, felt a fiery love for Pasquino. It is worth quoting this passage as the erotico-political in action, where the activity of spinning is intrinsically sexual:

Ricevutolo adunque in sé col piacevole aspetto del giovane che l'amava, il cui nome era Pasquino, forte disiderando e non attentando di far più avanti, filando a ogni passo di lana filata che al fuso avvolgeva mille sospiri più cocenti che fuoco gittava, di colui ricordandosi che a filar gliele aveva data. (4.7.7)

So why is it wrong for Simona to desire Paquino? After all, her flames are no different from those that burn in the hearts of the Proemio's women, lovers who have no distractions beyond sitting at the spindle. Unlike those *donne innamorate*, however, Simona's spinning was a genuine occupation and not simply the proverbial activity of respectable women:

E quantunque le convenisse con le proprie braccia il pan che mangiar volea guadagnare e filando lana sua vita reggesse, non fu per ciò di sì povero animo che ella non ardisse a ricevere amore nella sua mente, il quale con gli atti e con le parole piacevoli d'un giovinetto di non maggior peso di lei, che dando andava per un suo maestro lanaiuolo lana a filare, buona pezza mostrato aveva di volervi entrare. (4.7.6, emphasis added)

She should not have attempted to go beyond the boundaries of the proper “space” for a young woman and a member of the textile industry (one of Florence’s principal revenue sources), as boundaries have no relation to her social class. Instead, she should have striven to be a citizen who acts wisely and in compliance with the community’s expectations. I do not think the problem raised by this story is the fact that Simona lies to her father in order to meet Pasquino secretly on Sundays instead of going to Church; rather, the problem lies in her using a public space (the garden where the two lovers meet) to have her first physical union with him, an act that dishonors both her father and herself. One can say about Simona what Teodolinda Barolini says about Dianora (10.5): “Boccaccio sums up the situation of a woman in the real world she lived in: a man was either the protector of a woman’s honor or a threat to her honor, and on her fell the responsibility of assessing all social encounters and of making sure that her honor — that is, the honor of her father, husband, and brothers — could not be impugned” (Barolini 2012, 19). Love and physical passion need to comply with the rules of the urban community that condemns Simona’s irrational affair because it offends her honor (and her father’s honor) as it takes place in a public space, just as Andreuola’s marriage was also irrational because it was confined to a private space, away from the community [fig. 15].

Marriage should be public, whereas sex should not be. Initially, even if Simona desired Pasquino, she tried not to go too far (“non attentando di far più avanti”; 6), she proves to be inadequate for the city as she agrees to have sex secretly in a public space located among the houses of the city’s inhabitants who ultimately bring Simona to justice (not only Stramba). As conveyed by the artist of the French manuscript 239 [fig. 16], the garden as an urban, and therefore public, space is the real protagonist of the story. The real trial for Simona takes place in front of the community, not in the courts, and it is here that she dies.

A closer analysis of the endings of both 4.6 and 4.7 shows to what extent the urban garden is the real protagonist of Simona and Pasquino’s novella. With this story we return from Brescia to the city of Florence (4.6) and “various parts of the world” (4.6.5), as Emilia notes. Besides, while Andreuola’s dysfunctional love is only revealed when she steps out of her

garden, into the streets of the city, Simona's inadequacy in the new urban setting becomes apparent precisely in the garden.

From Andreuola, daughter of the nobleman Negro da Pontecarraro, to a poor woman whose father's name is not even mentioned; from the caprice of a young rich woman to marry and love her man in the family garden, to the need for Simona to work in order to live; from isolation in a private family garden to being surrounded by other people in a public garden. This array of themes, together with the fact that the two lovers are involved with wool-processing, is what now makes the garden urban and gives to the story a more political and "civic" concern. Unlike Andreuola's private family garden, Simona's garden belongs to the city and provides a space for urban stories, stories of workers like herself, the first *filatrice* to deserve a part in a literary text. Through the erotic as a metaphor of production, Boccaccio is pointing again to basic values in the new city. Both the private and public gardens must be an extension of the world outside. In the new city, there is no space either for a private garden as the *locus amoenus*, removed from the world outside, or for an urban public garden used by the citizens to alienate themselves from society. The garden is a productive space, a place that shows human industriousness. Both these stories portray, as if in a deformed mirror, the *brigata's* social and industrious "miniature garden."

Boccaccio believes in the mobility of social classes but also betrays a certain concern for the "liquidity" that is affecting the society of his Florence: the loss of certain values, such as liberality and a sense of community, understood as in Lorenzetti's allegory of *Good Government*, where each person contributes to the society's health. In this sense, Day 3 effectively starts the reconstruction of the new society. The "vera città" (*Purg.* 13.95), which Dante describes in its main features (*Convivio* 4.1–7; *Monarchia* 1.13),¹⁹ will not be only Heaven: the only "civitas Dei" for Boccaccio, as for Augustine, starts on earth.²⁰

Boccaccio is obviously nostalgic for the past of his cherished Florence, just as his admired poet Dante similarly was, but Boccaccio's intention is, first and foremost, the wellbeing of living bodies and of the body of the community while we are on earth. Boccaccio overcomes nostalgia with a plan that can be realized here and now, within a lay, secular project of salvation of the civic and the spiritual soul of men and women. Boccaccio's hope and trust are rooted in the good deeds of good citizens and not in the

¹⁹ See Honess (2006, 61–63) on Dante specifically.

²⁰ On Dante's Florence see also Olson 2009.

intervention of a political figure or a “veltro.” As Baratto says about the introduction to the *Decameron*:

il personaggio del Boccaccio, almeno quello che ci presenta il Decameron, frantumato e dissimulato nella brigata, più discreto (più accorto anche) di quello di Dante nella Commedia, che accentra con prepotenza attorno a sé la responsabilità della scelta e del giudizio della storia, è un personaggio non più coinvolto nelle lotte politiche, nell'immediata valutazione del contesto socio-economico della propria città, ma un narratore che mira a chiarire i termini dei rapporti tra individui, a corrodere superstizioni e pregiudizi, a ricerca per questa via nuovi valori per la convivenza umana. (Baratto 1984, 217)

The decision of the *brigata* to leave Florence stems from the same nostalgia that generates Cantos 15 and 16 of *Paradise* and, in particular, Dante's encounter with Cacciaguida, but with a difference. Boccaccio overcomes Dante's nostalgia in Day 3 by proposing old and new models of behavior that bring about good and bad government,²¹ with a more vigorous civil and social intention to reconstruct Florence and to bring it back to its golden days by means of the good deeds of individuals who work in harmony with the rest of the community. Manfredi Porena's description of the particularly lyrical canto 16 can also be applied to *Decameron* Day 3:

la ripugnanza del cittadino raffinato e sincero (Dante) contro l'astuta volgarità campagnuola; il disprezzo dell'uomo di pensiero e di poesia e di cultura per l'avidità abilità pratica dei trafficanti e dei legulei; la tendenza dell'idealista alla valutazione qualitative d'una società e d'una città, opposta alla materialistica valutazione quantitative delle sue grandezze e delle sue ricchezze; il rimpianto di un piccolo mondo antico irrevocabilmente passato, ricostruito con tanto affetto e abbellito dei colori della fantasia, in confronto di un doloroso presente; la malinconia per la transitorietà delle umane glorie e grandezze. (In Alighieri 2006, 69)

How can Florence be rebuilt and returned to new splendor? Boccaccio is positive: with individual initiative, through labor and the banishment idleness. It is no coincidence that Pisano's panels on Giotto's bell tower face towards Piazza della Signoria, the architectural symbol of political power,

²¹ One can retrace in the *Commedia* the same opposition between old and contemporary Florence: the “grande villa [...] in pace, sobria e pudica,” is now caught up in “superbia, avarizia, and invidia” (*Inf.* 6.74). The habits of Florentine women are condemned and set in opposition to the honesty and modesty of the ancient women by Forese (*Purg.* 23) while the “riposato bello / viver di cittadini,” the “fida cittadinanza” and the “dolce ostello” of *Paradiso* 15 have given way to the “cittadinanza mista” of the peasants, the “maledetta e sventurata fossa,” in which the good aristocrats are obliged “a sostener lo puzzo / del villan d'Aguglion, di quel da Signa” “ottuso” (*Par.* 16.55–56).

and Orsanmichele, a church built in 1337 as a grain market but that soon becomes the center of the powerful craft and trade guilds. Pisano's panels feature virtues and, under them, the professions that bring us back to the very essence of our story of Puccio and the Day in which it is narrated: lay virtues, and I would call them also urban virtues, are fully identified with *industria*. In the story of Adam and Eve, for example, the panels focus not on the sin but on its consequence: work outside of Paradise [figs. 17 and 18]. Even in the episode in which Noah, drunk and naked, is covered by one of his sons, the artist draws attention to the grapes under which the biblical figure lies supine alongside a barrel of wine: from nature the grapes, from men's work to wine [figs. 19–20]. A reference is made to this in the introduction to Day 3: pergolas of wine overhung the miniature garden and "showed every sign of yielding an abundant crop of grapes later in the year" (3.intro.6). The representation of human creativity is thus very Florentine and reminds us of the main goal of the writer: to rebuild Florentine society.

This process has its visual counterpart in the *Good and Bad Government* by the artist Ambrogio Lorenzetti, a fresco cycle that resides in the room where major decisions of the commune were taken in Siena in the late 1330s.²² Jonathan White describes the artworks in his powerful study *Italy: The Enduring Culture*, as follows:

in effect the ideological programme of the painting is one that contrasts the consequences of good and bad rule. What is essentially one and the same city — as in the case of the two Florences of Cacciaguida and Dante — in two different places, on opposite walls, to represent the sharply divergent possibilities of two radically divergent politics: simply speaking a good politics and a bad one. (White 2001, 34 and 53)

As in Lorenzetti's frescos, in Day 3 we obtain a verbal representation of that ideological program of the painting and what good and bad governments are like. With what are fourteenth-century people combatting greed, jealousy, fear (3.6), suspicion and ignorance? It is work [cf. figs. 21–22]. Lorenzetti and Boccaccio were not alone in their preoccupation with a society that has lost its sense of community and an idea of what was needed to restore it.

Ultimately the concern about how Florence can be brought to its old splendor seems to be very strong in Day 3, and Neifile, the Queen of this Day, is the singer at the end of Day 9, just before Panfilò proposes that the

²² See Morosini 2013.

final day's discussion "turn upon those who have *performed liberal or munificent deeds*." Why, of all the narrators, is Neifile to sing before the crown is passed to Panfilo? Because "she is the only member of the brigade to put utility before pleasure," as Roberta Bruno Pagnamenta notes,²³ the same reason for which Neifile is made Queen of Day 3, during which the *brigata* narrates cases of human *industria*. Additionally, the words of Neifile's song in the Conclusion of Day 9 illustrate her role: "Io mi sono giovinetta, e volentieri m'allegro e canto"; her song, like the other "mille canzonette piú sollazzevoli di parole che di canto maestrevoli," is in fact "more entertaining for the words than polished in the singing" (9.concl.6), and again emphasizes the *utile* suggested in her words more than in the refined entertainment of the singing itself. In this sense, writes Luigi Surdich, Neifile has some affinities with Dante's Matelda in her combination of meditative and active life, *utilità* and *diletto* (Surdich 2004, 260). In the *Decameron's* Prologue, the "diletto delle sollazzevoli cose" goes together with "utile consiglio," and is faithful to the words Panfilo uses to introduce the exemplary values of stories proposed for Day 10: "queste cose e dicendo e udendo senza dubbio niuno gli animi vostri ben disposti a *valorosamente adoperare* accenderà." McWilliam translates this as follows: "the telling and the hearing of such things will assuredly fill you with a burning desire, well-disposed as you already are in spirit, *to comport yourselves valorously*." The translator's choice of the verb "comport" instead of Boccaccio's thoughtful "adoperare" weakens and minimizes here the meaningfulness of acting and doing, effectively conveyed by the root "operare" or "work" of the Italian verb purposely used by Panfilo to seal the paragraph. These verbs, *operare* and *adoperare*, bring us back to *utilitas* and *industria*: Panfilo, as the newly elected governor of the "piccolo popolo," in his introductory speech, goes back to the *utilitas* of the brigade's gathering and reminds everyone of Dante's notorious verse, "fatti non foste a viver come bruti," in what follows:

queste cose e dicendo e udendo senza alcun dubbio gli animi vostri ben disposti a valorosamente adoperare accenderà; ché la vita nostra, che altro che breve esser non può nel mortal corpo, si perpetuerà nella laudevola fama; il che ciascuno che al ventre solamente, a guisa che le bestie fanno, non serve, dee non solamente desiderare ma con ogni studio *cercare e operare*. (9.concl.5, emphasis added here and below)

Desire is not enough. One must pursue and strive to attain, that is, *operare* 'actively work.' These words recall the Gospel of Matthew: "Not everyone who keeps saying to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will get into the kingdom from heaven,

²³ Pagnamenta (1999, 84), quoted in Surdich (2004, 260 n. 96).

but only the person who *keeps doing* the will of my Father in heaven” (Matt 7:21, Int’l Std, emphasis added). Only through “industria,” by acting and working, can a house — says the Gospel — be strongly founded and built on rock (Matt 7:27); in other words, only a community of wise believers can grow strong and steadfast. It is quite striking that deeds, such as acts of liberality, are conspicuously portrayed by Panfilo, as he dons his crown at the end of Day 9, and that he there emphasizes the verb *operare*, just as *industria* had been underscored in Day 3. Boccaccio reinforces Panfilo’s use of this specific term in his own rubric: “Incomincia la decima e ultima, nella quale, sotto il reggimento di Panfilo, si ragiona di chi liberalmente o vero magnificamente alcuna cosa *operasse*” (10.1.1). The theme of Day 10, the theme of Day 3 and Puccio’s story all dovetail with the ultimate goal of the *Decameron*: the *brigata* is not there to survive but, as Franco Cardini writes, to rebuild *communitas*:

Lungi dal celebrare l’apologia della società borghese e mercantile, il *Decameron* intende veicolare un messaggio civile esattamente opposto: la condanna di quella società votata al denaro e al commercio, punita da Dio con la piaga della peste, e il suo superamento in nome del recupero dei valori cortesi e cavallereschi basati sull’amore disinteressato, sull’amicizia e la solidarietà, sul disprezzo delle ricchezze materiali. (Cardini 2007, 72)

Florence. San Brancazio: Puccio and Gianni

Puccio’s story unfolds in Florence and the convent of San Brancazio, where Puccio soon becomes familiar with him. Story 7.1 unfolds in the same neighborhood, in the “contrada di San Brancazio.” Gianni Lotteringhi, “uomo più avventurato nella sua arte che savio in altre cose, per ciò che, tenendo egli del semplice, era molto spesso fatto capitano de’ laudesi di Santa Maria Novella, e aveva a ritenere la scuola loro, e altri così fatti uficetti aveva assai sovente, di che egli da molto più si teneva” (7.1.4–5, emphasis added). Again, the English translation betrays the very core of the story’s *deus ex machina* by saying of Gianni: “although he was a simple sort of fellow.” It is not “although,” but *because* of his simplicity, which is like Puccio’s foolishness. They both end up singing hymns, repeating *ciancioni* that the friars would teach them and that Boccaccio considers pure drivel and Branca defines as nonsense, trifles, “cose da poco e sciocche, ciance grossolane,” empty and stupid. The friars teach Gianni “il paternostro in volgare e la canzone di santo Alesso e il lamento di san Bernardo e la lauda di donna Matelda e cotali altri ciancioni, li quali egli avea molto cari” (7.1.5).

Puccio and Gianni share the stupid conviction that all those prayers will send them to Paradise. The monks have taught Gianni something, “molto

spesso, sì come agiato uomo, dava di buone pietanze a' frati" (7.1.5), but he does so all in the hopes of becoming a saint. He prizes them mostly highly "per la salute dell'anima sua" (7.1.5). Puccio "diceva suoi paternostri, andava alle prediche, stava alle messe, né mai falliva che alle laude che cantavano i secolari esso non fosse, e digiunava e disciplinavasi, e bucinavasi che egli era degli scopatori" (3.4.5). They share, therefore, the wrong conception of religion, as if they could, with just a list of prayers and *paternostri* and without useful deeds, win Paradise. Moreover, Puccio, like Gianni, preaches sermons of Brother Anastasius or the Complaint of the Magdalen "o così fatte cose" (3.4.6) to his young wife.

Although Puccio and Gianni are similar in many ways, they are decidedly different in others. Both portraits caricature the typical devotional bourgeois, whose characteristics are described by Carlo Delcorno in his work on the sermons of the early fourteenth-century friar Giordano da Pisa.²⁴ Both are rich. Puccio devotes himself to the church with unfailing regularity because he has reached a certain age and because he has only a wife and a servant, "which relieved him of the necessity of practicing a profession" (3.4.4), but he is more of a parasite than Gianni. His story is presented in Day 3, where the discussion centers on *industria*, not *beffe*, as in Day 7. Gianni is "uno stamaiuolo [...], uomo più avventurato nella sua arte che savio in altre cose" (7.1.4). At least in his profession, Gianni is wise, and we know how much weight Boccaccio gave to work, to doing one's part for the benefit of the community. Puccio, however, retires to the spiritual life simply because he has nothing else to do. What Baratto calls Boccaccio's cruelty toward the fool is visible here: Puccio is an example not just of devotion contaminated by superstition, as in 7.1, but also of malignant municipal amusement (Baratto 1984, 363–64). He is dysfunctional in the new urban context where each citizen needs to work to achieve his own goals and foster the wellbeing of the community at large. Here, Branca explains the verb *civanzarsi* as "modo di fare il proprio utile, provvedere ai loro bisogni,"²⁵ which implies being selfishly focused on one's own interests and unfair to the community.

The story of Rustico, the hermit in Tunis, and Alibech, an adolescent from Capsa, concludes Day 3 in the same tone that opened it: sex as a political motive related to the importance of work/*industria*. Because Paradise needs to be earned, Alibech asks a townsman "in che maniera e con meno impedimento, a Dio si potesse servire" (3.10.5). She is asking for

²⁴ Delcorno 1975, 66ff. See also Branca 1972, 791 n. 4. On 3.4 and other cases of parody of devotional practices in the *Decameron*, see Delcorno 1989, 361–63.

²⁵ See Branca's notes in Boccaccio 1992, 347 n. 5 and 313 n. 7.

“the easiest way,” to reach God. With Alibech’s story, we close the circle opened at the beginning of Day 3 with Masetto’s story and our reading of 3.4: Puccio’s desire, by way of a shortcut, to reach sainthood and Paradise. Unlike Puccio, Alibech is an adolescent (fourteen or thereabouts) who “non da ordinato disidero ma da un cotal fanciullesco appetito, senza altro farne a alcuna persona sentire, la seguente mattina a andare verso il deserto di Tebaida nascosamente tutta sola si mise” (3.10.6). Her choice likely stems from an adolescent impulse; nevertheless, her desire to put the devil back into Hell (and, presumably, to stay in Paradise) leads to further consideration of Rustico the hermit, whose mission is to preach the word of God in the non-Christian regions of Africa, not to retire in the “solitudini de’ deserti di Tebaida” (3.10.5). Alibech eventually finds a way to serve God and wants to keep toiling in that endeavor, despite poor Rustico’s fatigue, in a reversal of 3.4.1 where it is Masetto who is worn out from working at his tale’s outset. So here Rustico is set into opposition with the liquid-citizen Masetto who, as we said, “had the sense to employ his youth to good advantage” in the garden of God, which permits him to retire old and wealthy, whereas Rustico went to Tunisia to serve God but failed to work for it. Meanwhile, Alibech serves God and rejects the devil more than the supposed servant of God who chose not to work, retiring as a hermit. Following Carlo Delcorno’s 1989 study of *Decameron* 3.10, Giovanna Frosini convincingly proposes strong analogies between the Balducci story (4.intro.12–31) and 3.10 on the one hand and with tale 22 of the Barlaam tradition on the other through the motif of the female temptress who pursues an anchorite by showing up at his solitary cave. Nonetheless, once the textual correspondences are established, we still need to inquire into the role played by Alibech’s story and the Balducci tale within the Aristotelian framework of political activity that was embraced by both Paolino da Veneto and Boccaccio: i.e., that men naturally belong to the city as polis, a political community. Furthermore, the man who is without a city is either above or below other men for the reason that his innate difference poses a threat to the welfare of the city. That is to say, such a man’s antisocial nature does not allow him to be a part of the city; and because it is the city that makes human beings, he will never be a complete human being. The man who is without a city by nature cannot therefore be associated in any way with the city. This leads him to be regarded as subhuman and therefore tantamount to a beast. It is from this notion that the hermit of 3.10 gets his name.

In sum, Boccaccio continues, through the character of Rustico, his polemic against religious isolation, as discussed in the foregoing pages (see 4.intro.12–31 and 3. 1), and to the detriment of building a Paradise here on

earth through work. Once again, in 3.10 as in 3.1, the erotic metaphors become functional to Boccaccio's political intentions.

Conclusions.

My attempt to study the function of the erotic motive as one of the “complex forms” of the *Decameron*, specifically a political and civic one, starts with an intertextual reading of Day 3 dedicated to “industriousness” and with the new location where the *brigata* moves for the first time since leaving Florence, a utilitarian garden and not a *locus amoenus*, that serves the community, and to which they shift in order not to be overtaken by *nova gente*. Since this miniature garden has the characteristics of a paradise on earth, I tried to show that the *brigata* is here in this garden, as Cardini has also said, not to survive, but to rebuild. Through storytelling in the miniature garden, they form and propose the values needed to rebuild the city. Indeed, the fact that a paradise on earth (the miniature garden) can be built through labor is the theme of Day 3, just as we see in beautiful illuminations [fig. 23].

Bartolomea's speech to her husband at the end of Day 2 inspired our reading and is strongly connected to the political role of sex to rebuild the city. With the word *civanza* and her numerous sexual metaphors related to work and production, she strongly connects the erotic motive to being productive and being a citizen, a *cive*. She finds paradise on earth with the pirate Paganino, who works her land night and day. Paradise is identified with the achievement of (erotic) desire. As Isabetta, Puccio's wife, says to Dom Felice with whom she is having sex while her husband is doing penance, “tu fai fare la penitenzia a frate Puccio, per la quale noi abbiamo guadagnato il Paradiso” (3.4.32).

In this sense, the utilitarian and paradisiac garden of Day 3 reflects the theme and the ideological goals of Day 3: *industria*, understood as creativity and individual production within one's own community. Puccio's tale becomes the *mise en abîme* of this complex Day and the ideological project upon which the *Decameron* is constructed. It resonates with contemporary iconographic programs and political ideas, in particular the notion of the common good cherished by political thinkers like Remigio di Girolami, intellectuals like Giovanni Villani, and artists like Andrea Pisano and Ambrogio Lorenzetti. Puccio's story could be another panel on Giotto's bell tower to remind the community of its duty to work to attain paradise and to build a heaven on earth like the miniature garden, according to the values and laws of the *brigata*. It also resonates with the *brigata*'s movement toward social and civic maturity, a new Paradise on earth, a new Florence, built by actively operating in and for the society. (Consider architecture and

the art of building as praised as divine on Giotto's bell tower [fig. 24].) Love is unhealthy in the new liquid society when realized in an anachronistic garden, alienated from the society. Boccaccio calls, like Thomas' Tristan and Ysolde, for lovers who are engaged in their community. Stories 4.6 and 7, deal with community, but not one set up in opposition to work. In fact, though Simona works, Puccio, Ferondo, and Alibech all oppose a liquid citizen like Masetto, inasmuch as their desire leads to seeking a shortcut to Paradise, rather than doing the hard and useful work of the *brigata* who set laws for a new Paradise here on earth. Alibech is looking for the short way to serve God, but she ends up willing to keep working long beyond Rustico and, in this way, can be said to have earned Paradise of sorts. The public and private gardens where Andreuola and Simona live their *eros* are themselves set in opposition to the utilitarian civic garden of the *brigata* on Day 3.

Just as society may exist in a fluid state, so too may values become liquid. Once changes and new values are proposed, it is the wise who behave in accordance not only with personal interest but also with a concern for the interests of family and society. Against this backdrop, the immediacy of erotic desire turns out to be abundantly present in the *Decameron* because it best conveys the "liquidity" of Boccaccio's city, a community in need of a rebirth after the devastation of the plague. This juxtaposition lends itself easily to the illustration of the city's incongruences and to the logical underlying question: who should have a place in the new city? From Pampinea's Introduction to the story of Adriano, Boccaccio provides the typology of a liquid citizen for "liquid times," a period when society, beset by enormous change, is in need of new morality and points of reference. He provides as well the proper space in which to do their work: the garden of *urbanitas* and *utilitas*. For this new "liquid society," an urban liquid citizen (such as Pampinea, who takes the initiative to leave Florence and go to the countryside to save her companions' souls and bodies) must acquire the skills to preserve, sustain and defend life, all of which reside in industriousness. Boccaccio, the "liquid" writer of the *Decameron*, chose the immediacy and mobility of sexual desire, on the one hand, to delineate this new typology of citizen needed to rebuild the city and, on the other hand, to show how the behavior of characters such as Puccio and the lovers in the gardens of Day 4 is ultimately obsolete and dysfunctional. A recognition of the erotic motive's usefulness in the reconstruction of the city first appears clearly in the episode of Filippo's son, as we have shown, but then becomes essential to the fulfilment of the ideological project of the *brigata* to build a Paradise on earth. Panfilo reminds his young companions that even *eros* ("fatti

d'amore") possesses a useful civic purpose because "queste cose e dicendo e facendo senza alcun dubbio gli animi vostri ben disposti a valorosamente adoperare accenderà" (9.concl.5). Love has the ability to inspire not only desire, but also the active pursuit and the unrelenting effort to attain. The verbs *cercare* and *operare* return in the last Day to reinforce the *brigata's* brave attempt to engage in, and put into practice, the political project of refounding the Old Florence and its courtly values within the new urban context of "liquid" Florence through work, because for Boccaccio, like Dante, *operare* is an art that "quasi a Dio è nepote."

ROBERTA MOROSINI

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

Figures



Fig. 1. Florence destroyed: "Come la città di Firenze istette guasta e disfatta CCCL anni," in Giovanni Villani, *Cronica* (1.3.21), BAV, ms. Chigiano L VIII 296, fol. 43^r.



Fig. 2. Reconstruction of Troy, in Jean de Courci, *La bouquechardièrre*, BNF, ms. fr. 62, f. 57^r (ca. 1425–50).



Fig. 3. Citizens rebuilds Florence, G. Villani, *Cronica* (1.6.1), BAV, ms. Chigiano L VIII 296, fol. 44r.



Fig. 4. Filippo and his son arrive in Florence (*Dec.* 4.intro), BNF, ms. it. 63, f. 230^r (Tuscany, 1427).



Fig. 5. *Lanificio*, textile production, by A. Pisano, Giotto's bell tower (1334–36), Florence.



Fig. 6. Masetto and the “new” garden, in *Decameron*, BNF, ms. fr. 240, f. 61r (France, ca. 1450–75).



Fig. 7. Masetto arrives at the monastery, in *Decameron*, BNF, ms. it. 63, f. 91r.



Fig. 8. *Decameron* 3.1, P. P. Pasolini, *Decameron* (1971).



Fig. 9. *Jardin de Deduitt*, BNF, ms. fr. 143, f. 198^r.



Fig. 10. Oriental garden, in *Ârifî, hâl-nâma*, BNF, ms. Smith-Lesouef (oriental) 198, ff. 2^v–3^r (India, Seventeenth Century, Hegira 1012 (1603–04)).



Fig. 11. Death in the isolated garden. The guards stop Andreuola in the streets, in *Decameron*, BNF, ms. fr. 5070, fol. 164^r (ca. 1425–50).



Fig. 12. The isolated garden and the city, in *Decameron*, BAV, ms. Pal. lat. 1989, f. 326^r (1414–19). Photo from *Boccaccio visualizzato*, cit.



Fig. 13. Death of Gabriotto in the garden, in *Decameron*, BNF, ms. it. 63, f. 150r.



Fig. 14. Gabriotto dies, Andreuola is arrested, BNF, ms. fr. 239, f. 127r, (ca. 1425–50).



Fig. 15. Death of Pasquino, and Simona under the eyes of Stramba, BNF, ms. it. 63, f. 153v.



Fig. 16. Pasquino dies, Simona's trial in the garden, in *Decameron*, BNF, ms. fr. 239, f. 130v.



Fig. 17. Adam and Eve, by A. Pisano, Giotto's bell tower (1300s), Florence.



Fig. 18. Adam and Eve working, in Jean de Courci, *La bouquechardière*, BNF, ms. fr. 62, f. 1^v (1425–50).



Fig. 19. Noah, by A. Pisano, Giotto's bell tower (1334–36), Florence.



Fig. 20. Noah working his land. Noah drank, in Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum historiale* (Jean de Vigny, tr.), BNF, ms. fr. 50, f. 32^v (France, 1432).



Fig. 21. Society: Workers, in *De informatione principum* (Jean Golein, tr.), BNF, ms. fr. 126, f. 7^v, (Rouen, ca. 1450).



Fig. 22. Society: Workers and merchants, *De informatione principum*, BNF, ms. fr. 126, f. 7^v.



Fig. 23. Italy, in *Secrets de l'histoire naturelle*, BNF, ms fr. 22971, f. 38^v (ca. 1480).



Fig. 24. Architecture, A. Pisano, Giotto's bell tower (1334–36), Florence.

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