



# Acoustemologies in Contact

Sounding Subjects and Modes of  
Listening in Early Modernity

EDITED BY EMILY WILBOURNE AND SUZANNE G. CUSICK



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# 10. ‘Non basta il suono, e la voce’

## Listening for Tasso’s Clorinda<sup>1</sup>

Jane Tylus

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Claudio Monteverdi famously ends his *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* with the last words of the dying Clorinda: ‘S’apre il cielo, vado in pace’ [The heavens open, I go in peace].<sup>2</sup> Slain by the Crusader who has loved her since he first saw her at a fountain, Clorinda has just been baptized with water from another fountain. Tancredi recites the sacred words of the baptismal rite, and she turns her eyes to heaven to sing the final line. As musicologists have long pointed out, however, this is not quite what happens in Torquato Tasso’s *Gerusalemme liberata*, from which the narrative is taken — a point remarkable in itself given Monteverdi’s fidelity to the original text. Monteverdi retains the narrator’s brief phrase introducing Clorinda’s line, ‘Dir pareva’ — she *seemed* to say. But in having Clorinda sing the line herself, Monteverdi replaces what seemed to be, with what *is*, confirming the effectiveness of the baptism Clorinda has just received.<sup>3</sup> He thus allows us to hear what

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- 1 This essay has benefited enormously from the input of our two editors, Suzanne Cusick and Emily Wilbourne, as well as from extremely helpful comments by Kate Driscoll and Nina Treadwell.
  - 2 Claudio Monteverdi, *Il combattimento di Tancredi et Clorinda*, in *Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi* (Venice: Ricciardo Amadino, 1638), available online from the Choral Public Domain Library, [http://www0.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Combattimento\\_di\\_Tancredi\\_e\\_Clorinda\\_\(Claudio\\_Monteverdi\)](http://www0.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Combattimento_di_Tancredi_e_Clorinda_(Claudio_Monteverdi))
  - 3 Suzanne Cusick argues, ‘Monteverdi undermines Tasso’s choice to portray the dead Clorinda as reduced to the object of Tancredi’s fantasy. Monteverdi’s Clorinda is never only the woman of masculine dreams’; Cusick, ‘“Indarno chiedi”: Clorinda and the Interpretation of Monteverdi’s *Combattimento*’, in *Word, Image, and Song: Essays on Early Modern Italy*, ed. Rebecca Cypess, Beth L. Glixon, and Nathan Lik (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2013), pp. 117–144 (p. 134).



Tasso's Tancredi only appeared to hear, words now embodied onstage by a female singer's voice. Such embodiment, as Antonio Cascelli has argued, also accentuates Clorinda's autonomy with respect to the character of the narrator or 'Testo', who has sung the vast majority of the *Il combattimento*.<sup>4</sup> So does Monteverdi liberate Clorinda from Tasso's text.

Yet while Monteverdi may indeed rescue Clorinda's voice, the *Combattimento* represents only a small sampling of that voice as Tasso depicts it. Monteverdi chose not to give us the stanza of Clorinda's actual death from an ottava later, where she reaches out in silence for Tancredi's hand as token of their reconciliation. Nor, technically, does he give us Clorinda's final words; for death does not, necessarily, bring her peace. These final words are (perhaps) only spoken in Canto 13 when her voice, if not Clorinda herself, comes back to haunt Tancredi in the woods that the sorcerer Ismeno — once a Christian, now a Muslim, so reversing Clorinda's own trajectory — has enchanted with the 'spirits' of the dead. Whether it belongs to Clorinda is the question. Tancredi is uncertain enough so as not to destroy the tree in which Clorinda claims to be trapped. Whereas earlier in the poem he failed to identify the voice of the woman he claims to love, here he wavers because he thinks he recognizes it. Clorinda's last sonic traces in the poem thus retroactively introduce a destabilization that may have been there all along, the disjunction between sound and body, between voice and *anima* — the very soul Tancredi thinks must be in heaven, but might not be.

How difficult is it to recognize what one hears, particularly if it is, or seems to be, the voice of the enemy become friend — the shifting terrain which Clorinda inhabits until the very end? What are the sounds of the voice of the other: a woman who remains forever the 'pellegrina' or exotic stranger as she appears to Tancredi on a mountain top in Canto 6 and who utters to him only a single word before their midnight duel, or a language Tasso was accused of making strange and incomprehensible to many of his readers? For Tasso — itinerant that he was, born in Sorrento, raised in Bergamo, resident in Ferrara, Mantova, and

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4 Antonio Cascelli suggests that we identify 'completely with Clorinda, who establishes her presence over the lack of the leading note'; Cascelli, 'Place, Performance and Identity in Monteverdi's *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 29.2 (2018), 152–188 (p. 186),

elsewhere — saw his mastery of language as an embrace of the peninsula's past and present, rather than an exercise in establishing a single privileged dialect as Italian, a dialect to which Tasso was largely foreign: Tuscan.<sup>5</sup> Florence's hegemony in the second half of the sixteenth century may not have been political. But it was certainly cultural, articulated through the Accademia della Crusca, an academy that had Medici support as it undertook to compile the first dictionary of the Italian language. Still in operation today in its splendid villa several miles north of Florence, the Crusca was officially formed in 1582, and its members quickly plunged into the midst of what had just begun to rage as the newest literary debate: whether the great romance of Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso* (1532), had found a serious contender for literary excellence in the *Gerusalemme liberata*, published without Tasso's consent in 1581.<sup>6</sup>

And it was a member of the Crusca, Lionardo Salviati, who, annoyed by a treatise lionizing Tasso's poem, was the first in a long line of critics to attack the *Liberata*, using the phrase cited in this essay's title as one of his main charges: 'Non basta il suono, e la voce': 'the sound and the voice are not enough'.<sup>7</sup> The *Gerusalemme liberata*, in short, was impossible to understand when one simply heard it recited out loud. Only if read and studied could it be understood, given the complexity of its lexicon,

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- 5 On Tasso's life and works, see Margaret Ferguson, *Trials of Desire: Renaissance Defenses of Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), C. P. Brand, *Torquato Tasso: A Study of the Poet and his Contribution to English Literature* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1966), and more recently, three introductory texts to Tasso's life and works in Italian, Matteo Residori, *L'idea del Poema* (Pisa: Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, 2004), Claudio Gigante, *Tasso* (Rome: Salerno, 2007), and Emilio Russo, *Guida alla lettura della Gerusalemme liberata* (Rome: Laterza, 2014).
  - 6 See, among other texts, Bernard Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), II, pp. 942–973; Claudio Marazzini, *La Lingua italiana: Profilo storico* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002), pp. 293–298; and Mario Sansone, *Da Bembo a Galiani: Il Dibattito sulla lingua in Italia* (Bari: Adriatico, 1999).
  - 7 Lionardo Salviati, discussed below; the citation is from Salviati's response to Tasso's *Apologia, Risposta all'Apologia del Tasso dell'Infarinato* (Florence: [n.p.] 1585); cited in Maurizio Vitale's exhaustive study, *L'officina linguistica del Tasso epico: La Gerusalemme liberata* (Milan: LED, 2007), I, 43n. The full phrase is 'udendole recitare ad altrui, rade volte s'intende, e ci bisogna prendere il libro in mano, e leggerle da per noi: essendo elle tali, che non basta il suono, e la voce' [When you hear the text read out loud by others, you rarely understand it, and you have to take the book in your hand and read it for yourself. The words are such that the mere sound of them, and their vocalization, doesn't suffice].

its diction, and its style. According to Salviati, Tasso had violated all of the norms that dignified Tuscan, qualities Ariosto had embraced: *schiettezza, dolcezza, chiarezza* (precision, sweetness, clarity). Moreover, Ariosto honored the rules of Tuscan literature laid out in *Prose della volgar lingua*, composed by Pietro Bembo in the 1520's, and which held up Petrarch and Boccaccio as models for all writers of Italian poetry and prose. Ariosto's willingness to respect Petrarch's stylistic qualities while purging his poem of his Ferrarese dialect was a testament to the poet's conviction that the future of Italian lay in its past: more precisely, its Florentine past. In using a vocabulary free of linguistic impurities as well as borrowings from Latin, Provençal, and Italy's many dialects, Ariosto prepared the way for the Italian poetry of the Renaissance — and wrote a poem that could be easily understood through hearing its 'voce'.

But Tasso refused to follow. In taking on the epic topic of the First Crusade and largely resisting the romance adventures of Ariosto's playful knights, Tasso chose a very different genre, and a very different path. Eager to revive the sublime epic style of Homer and especially Virgil, Tasso attempted to demonstrate Tuscan's foreignness to itself, and therefore to make it, if anything, stronger — rooted as it was in the great languages of classical epic, and companion rather than antagonist to a host of other dialects that characterized the Italian peninsula.<sup>8</sup> As Tasso himself would say in a sonnet to the Florentine ambassador to Ferrara in the late 1570's, his was a 'stile peregrino': a foreign style, assembled from all of the places in Italy where Tasso had sojourned, as well as from the Latin language from which Italian was principally derived.<sup>9</sup>

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8 On Tasso's theory of style see the classic work of Fredi Chiappelli, *Studi sul linguaggio del Tasso epico* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1957), and more recently, S. Bozzola, *Purità ed ornamento di parole* (Florence: Accademia della Crusca, 1999).

9 Tasso closes the sonnet: 'May not your clear intellect find displeasing this pilgrim style with which I write, in solitude, the virtues of magnanimous dukes' [O pur non spiaccia al tuo purgato ingegno/ il peregrino stile onde solingo/ di magnanimi duci i pregi io scrivo]; *Rime di Torquato Tasso*, #828, ed. by Bruno Basile (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2007), I, p. 822. On the *peregrino* in medieval and early modern literature more generally, see Georg Weise, *Il rinascimento e la sua eredità*, ed. by P. Antonio and F. Pugliese-Carratelli (Naples: Ligouri, 1969), pp. 397–487, Charles Klopp, "'Peregrino" and "Errante" in the *Gerusalemme liberata*', *MLN*, 94 (1979), 61–76, and Jane Tylus, 'Parole pellegrine: L'ospitalità linguistica nel Rinascimento', in *L'ospite del libro: Sguardi sull'ospitalità*, ed. by Nicola Catelli and Giovanna Rizzarelli (Pisa: Pacini, 2015), pp. 13–26.

This is a style that announces itself in the very opening of the *Liberata*. In 1:4, Tasso addresses his patron Alfonso II d'Este with these lines:

Tu, magnanimo Alfonso, il qual ritogli  
al furor di fortuna e guidi in porto  
me peregrino errante, e fra gli scogli  
e fra l'onde agitato e quasi absorto,  
queste mie carte in lieta fronte accogli,  
che quasi in voto a te sacrate i'porto.  
Forse un di fia che la presaga penna  
osi scriver di te quel ch'or n'accenna.<sup>10</sup>

You, magnanimous Alfonso, who from the furor of fortune gather and guide into harbor me, a wandering pilgrim/stranger, tossed about, almost submerged by the waves, amid the reefs — accept these, my pages, with happy mien, which I bear consecrated to you as though in votive offering. Perhaps someday my prophetic pen may dare to write of you what I now can only hint at.

The trope of the sea-faring poet eager to end his journey is hardly new to Tasso. It was already used in antiquity by Virgil, and much more recently in the Italian tradition by Dante and Ariosto. The latter sails serenely into port in the final canto of *Orlando furioso*, to be met by the smiling faces of Italy's most celebrated figures. Tasso chooses to *begin* his epic poem with an allusion to his journey — and a journey that is hardly calm. Serenity is replaced by tempestuous tossing on the waves, a man sure of his craft by a shipwrecked figure. The poet, in short, styles himself a foreigner, a wanderer without a home — the original, Latin meaning of *peregrinus*. Playing on the notion of the 'voto' or offering that is the *Liberata* itself, he is a pilgrim who is finally arriving, albeit in distressed circumstances, at the sacred shrine.

And Tasso is a pilgrim who pointedly uses words differently from his Tuscan contemporaries as a single word in this stanza reflects: 'absorto'. In modern, which is to say, late sixteenth-century Italian, the correct spelling of the word would be 'assorto', from 'assorbire' or swallowed up, absorbed. While Italian orthography was hardly standardized when Tasso was composing the *Liberata* in the 1570s, his

10 All citations from the *Gerusalemme liberata* are taken from the edition by Fredi Chiappelli (Milan: Rusconi, 1982); translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

choice of spelling here is notable, as he deliberately calls attention to the Latin root of *assorbire*: *absorbere* [*ab* + *sorbire*]. Tasso replaces the smooth, soft double *ss* sound of typical Tuscan with the more labile *ab*, forcing the reader to stop on the first syllable, and, as it were, to notice the difference — making the sound not only more difficult, but harsher. At the same time, his poetic choices were not simply lexical. Ariosto or his predecessors would usually have introduced a natural caesura at the end of the fourth line. Tasso forces this pause upon us three syllables early, interrupting the flow to the second half of the stanza, and thus impeding effortless listening and comprehension. Unlike Ariosto, Tasso has us stop in places where we shouldn't, forcing us to think twice about words that cannot be easily pronounced or quickly understood.

'Non basta il suon': such was the perceived illegibility of Tasso's sounds to those used to hearing Ariosto's exuberant poem sung by *cantastorie* and madrigalists. Yet it would be wrong to argue that Tasso regarded orality *per se* as detrimental to his project, as Anthony Welch has recently hypothesized.<sup>11</sup> Rather, he uses the dynamics of sound to ask whether we can ever be at home in our own language; whether our voice can ever be construed as entirely our own. Such questions had special meaning in the contexts of Florence's domination of Italian and the success of Petrarchism as the poetic paradigm of the peninsula. Hence in *La Cavaletta: Dialogo della Poesia toscana*, written shortly after Salviati's objections, Tasso's persona observes why it is so difficult to use 'la nostra lingua Toscana' to write an epic poem: 'while it fails to fill our ears with the appropriate sounds of the description of war, it nonetheless uses its great sweetness to delude us in its treatment of romantic passion'.<sup>12</sup> Tuscan, that is, is good for love, but not for war. Asked about his apparent dismissal of sweetness, he responds that he wishes for

11 Andrew Welch, *The Renaissance Epic and the Oral Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 45.

12 See Richard Freedman, 'Marenzio's Madrigali a Quattro, cinque et sei voci of 1588: A Newly-Revealed Madrigal Cycle and Its Intellectual Context', *The Journal of Musicology*, 13.3 (1995), 318–354; the citations are from 354. This was hardly, however, Tasso's first attempt to classify Tuscan as good only for amorous verse. In his youthful (late 1560s) *Discorsi dell'arte poetica*, he observes that each language has particular characteristics. 'La toscana favella' is good at expressing things of love ('accidenti amorosi') with its many vowels and the natural harmony of its rhyme, while Latin is better for addressing war given the predominance of consonants and its long hexameter lines; *Scritti sull'arte poetica*, ed. by Ettore Mazzali, 2 vols. (Turin: Einaudi, 1977), I, p. 34.



moderation (*il temperamento*), adding that poetry, like all the other 'noble arts', needs to protect itself against the lascivious. In this same dialogue, Tasso challenges composers to do for music what he claims to have done for poetics, and to take up their own version of the epic lyre, the 'modo grave' that Aristotle associated with the Dorian, 'il quale è magnifico, costante e grave'. Tasso asks his contemporaries to move from an orality that consists only of 'dolcezza' to something else more sonorous and more appropriate to a literature that went beyond Petrarchism, and to a culture with origins in multiple languages and styles. Sound was essential to creating what he would elsewhere call 'heroic illustriousness [...] based on undertakings of exalted martial valor and on deeds of courtesy, generosity, piety, and religion' and reflective of virtues such as might, prudence, loyalty, and constancy.<sup>13</sup> These are deeds that emerge out of, and despite, the pressures of war — defining the heroic human being under duress.

Monteverdi took up Tasso's challenge, and he used Tasso's poem to do so. Clearly he heard in the fiery, passionate sounds of Tasso's midnight duel the agitation or 'stile concitato' that he argued was central to the *Combattimento* — a *Combattimento* and an episode nonetheless tempered by the sudden 'dolcezza' of Clorinda's request for conversion.<sup>14</sup> Like many composers, Monteverdi's primary engagement with Tasso had been through the madrigal form. But the *Combattimento* was different, composed some thirty years after his first madrigals based on Tasso's poems. Seething with what Gary Tomlinson has called gestural energy as well as sonic energy,<sup>15</sup> it is clearly inspired by Tasso's own elaboration of how the harsh and uncertain sounds of battle emerge from the nocturnal darkness outside Jerusalem. Hence the clanking of Tancredi's armor and weapons ['suon d'armi'] that make Clorinda pause in flight, a phrase Monteverdi considered important enough to repeat four times in his opening stanza; and such 'suoni', surely unpleasant to Salviati and

13 From Tasso's early *Discorsi sull'arte poetica*; cited and translated in Lawrence Rhu, *The Genesis of Tasso's Narrative Theory* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), pp. 107–108.

14 On which see Clemens Risi, 'Claudio Monteverdi's *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* (1624 or 1625): A Christian-Muslim Encounter in Music?', in *Early Modern Encounters with the Islamic East: Performing Cultures*, ed. by Sabine Schülting, Sabine Lucia Müller, and Ralf Hertel (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 153–166 (p. 153).

15 Gary Tomlinson, *Monteverdi and the End of the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 203.

his Florentine associates in the Accademia, makes the reader pause as well. Monteverdi's interest in such sounds, and pauses, is itself indicative of the ultimate success of Tasso's *Liberata*, *pace* Salviati. To what extent, though, do the sounds of Monteverdi's Clorinda differ from those of Tasso's Clorinda? — a complex figure whom Tasso may have used to stage his own protests against the norms of a Tuscan language and literature he opposed? And as Monteverdi 'liberates' Clorinda into the fullness of a female voice, what exactly is he liberating her from, and at what cost?

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'Fra l'onde agitato': twelve cantos after his invocation of himself as a *peregrino errante* at sea, in the midst of the midnight duel between Tancredi and Clorinda, Tasso returned to those waves. But now he writes not of a poet who is 'agitated' and tossed about in their midst, but of the waves themselves, 'agitata e grosse'. In a simile so arresting that Michel de Montaigne thought to cite it in his *Essais* — although Monteverdi curiously omits it from the *Combattimento* — Tasso reflects on what happens to the ocean when the wind stops hammering it. It does not immediately quiet down but remains charged with motion and sound despite the absence of an external force. Or as he puts it in 12:63, in a blatant reference to Homeric epic:

Qual l'alto Egeo, perché Aquilone o Noto  
cessi, che tutto prima il volse e scosse,  
non s'acceta ei però, ma 'l suono e 'l moto  
ritien de l'onde anco agitate e grosse

just as the deep Aegean Sea battered by north or south winds is not quiet  
once the winds have ceased, but their movement and sound still reside in  
its powerful, turbulent waves

Similarly, in Tasso's account, the two warriors retain their original vigor even though — now some ten *ottave* into the fight — their loss of blood has sapped their energy. Propelled by the winds of wrath and disdain, they continue adding blow to blow, rocking in combat through a motion over which they have no control. What has become the force of rhythm — a sound left in reserve — results in the final, mortal blow to Clorinda: 'Spinge egli il ferro nel bel sen di punta/ che vi s'immerge

e 'l sangue avido beve' [He presses the sword into her lovely breast so that it's submerged there, and it greedily drinks her blood; 12:65]. The liquidity of the sea returns as Clorinda herself becomes a dark mass from which the sword can drink, and as Clorinda falls, 'la voce afflitta/ movendo' [moving her afflicted voice], such motion takes us back to the rhythm of the waves. But the words that arise from that motion are 'parole ch'a lei novo un spirto ditta,/ spirto di fé, di carità, di speme' [words that a new spirit dictates to her, the spirit of faith, hope, and charity], an explicit reference to the Christian virtues. The 'afflicted voice' goes on to say, 'Amico, hai vinto — io ti perdon, perdona — / tu ancora, al corpo no, che nulla pave, a l'alma sì!' [Friend, you have won — I forgive you, may you forgive — not my body, which fears nothing, but my soul, yes!] (12:66). Her request for baptism, and hence her immersion into a new body of water ('Dona/ battesimo a me, ch'ogni mia colpa lave') moves her startled listener, as 'un non so che di flebile e soave' [something indescribable, at once faint and sweet] resonates in her languid words, and quickly extinguishes his wrath. This is sound that offers, and effects, something new, especially as the final word, 'perdona', trespasses beyond the normal verse length to break through the artificial barrier of the narrator's standard hendecasyllabic line.<sup>16</sup>

The haunting nocturnal duel between Tancredi and Clorinda stages an emergence into sound: or more precisely, into the sounds of war and its aftermath that Tasso deemed foreign to the Tuscan language. My use of the word 'stages' is not incidental. Tasso declares the episode worthy of a 'pieno teatro, opre sarian sì memorande' [full theatre, so memorable are its works] (12:54). This observation opens a stanza that invokes a new muse: Night, who within her deep, dark bosom has enclosed this powerful and moving story ('fatto sì grande'). And night is an appropriate object of invocation for a duel that will unfold in complete darkness, when one's vision is compromised by all but the silent burning of the Christians' siege tower sitting ominously outside of Jerusalem's walls, set afire by two of the Muslims' most formidable warriors, Argante and Clorinda. At Clorinda's instigation they set out to

16 On Agricane's similar request to Orlando in Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* — albeit in radically different circumstances — see Jo Ann Cavallo, 'Talking Religion: The Conversion of Agricane in Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato*', *MLN*, 127.1S (2012), S178–S188,

destroy the means whereby the Christians planned to scale Jerusalem's high walls, and one can see — 'vedi' — the flame. But darkness descends again as soon as the fire has ceased. Clorinda is locked out of Jerusalem's gate, which accidentally shuts before she can re-enter, thus 'esclusa' — a word Tasso repeats (12:48; 12:49). She feigns to be among the horde of Christians pressing against the walls, and then takes off to seek another entrance but Tancredi singles her out, impetuously chasing her as his armor clanks and attracts her attention, forcing her to stop and turn around to ask, 'O tu che porte/ Che corri sì?' [Oh you, what are you bringing me, you who run so fast?] (12:52). This will thus be a theatre without sight lines, in which the actors depend almost wholly on sound, such as that of the armor that becomes the catalyst of Clorinda's death. For had she not turned and cried out ('si volge e grida'), she might have found her way back into the city walls.

The thrust of Tancredi's sword into Clorinda's breast, in addition to alluding to the sexual fulfillment he had always desired, parallels the poet's desire to penetrate the deep, dark breast ('profondo oscuro seno') (12:54) of the night so that he might draw forth the worthy works concealed within and promise the two warriors eternal fame and glory. That the female bodies of Clorinda and the Notte might be analogous is suggested by Tancredi's own, Tasso-like request that Clorinda divulge her name during a moment when, both wearied by their combat, they rest. He observes, as the narrator has already done, that their valor is covered in silence (*silenzio*) and that evil fate denies them a witness worthy of their work; he begs her to reveal her name and her state, so that at least he alone would know (12:60). The courteous request inspires Clorinda's noted refusal: 'Indarno chiedi/ quel c'ho per uso di non far palese' [you ask in vain for something I rarely reveal] (12:61). But she does inform Tancredi that he sees before him 'one of those two who burnt down the great tower', prompting Tancredi to burn with disdain, and to respond that both Clorinda's words *and* her silence — 'il tuo dir e 'l tacer' — hasten him to take vengeance. Yet what has really provoked him is her line, 'Ma chiunque io mi sia' [whoever I might be]: Clorinda's refusal to name herself.

Such resistance goes against the courtly code of honor, as Tancredi accuses her of being an uncivil barbarian or 'barbaro scortese'. But it also originates in two earlier moments in Canto 12 of which Tancredi



is unaware — as well as in the dynamic of Tancredi's and Clorinda's encounters prior to Canto 12. In the course of those earlier encounters, Tancredi revealed his love for Clorinda three times, while she spoke merely a single word, and never uttered her name. Canto 1 recounts his first glimpse of her at a fountain, where he sought water for his parched tongue following a skirmish with the Persians, when 'a lui d'improvviso una donzella/ tutta, fuor che la fronte, armata apparse:/ era pagana' [all of a sudden a young woman appeared to him, completely armed except for her face: she was a pagan] (1:45) He immediately burned with love, even as this unnamed *donzella* put on her helmet and left, in flight from other Christians who have suddenly arrived on the scene; only her image stays with him ('ma l'immagine sua bella e guerriera/ tale ei serbó nel cor'; 1:48). In Canto 3, he knocks off her helmet in combat and is shocked to see standing before him his beloved: 'le chiome dorate al vento sparse,/ giovane donna in mezzo 'l campo apparse' [her golden hair spread to the wind, a young woman appeared in the midst of battle] (3:21); he then invites her to a private duel off the battlefield, so he can declare his love. And in Canto 6, about to engage in a duel with Argante, Tancredi chances to look up to a nearby hill, where 'in leggiadro aspetto e pellegrino/ s'offerse a gli occhi suoi l'alta guerriera' [in her lovely, foreign bearing, the stately warrior woman offered herself to his eyes] (6:26). Once again he is immobilized, unable to engage in battle, turned to stone by a Medusa unaware of her power ('pare un sasso:/ gelido tutto fuor, ma dentro bolle' [he seems a stone: all ice without, but within he boils]). If Tancredi managed to share with Clorinda his 'disperato amor' on at least one of these occasions, Clorinda herself has uttered but a single word: 'Volgi', the turn that wins him several moments alone with her off the battlefield in Canto 3 before others arrive.

Clorinda is thus an object of sight, the Laura of golden hair spread to the wind, the tall and beautiful warrior who as long as she remains without her helmet reduces Tancredi to forgetfulness and immobility. In none of these instances does she reveal her identity to a Tancredi oblivious to a poetics of 'sound' and hence to the nature of the beloved's voice, or of anything that might detract from the vision of beauty. This silent Clorinda, the fantasized woman of Petrarchan discourse who is the product of the eye and not the ear, is not, however, the Clorinda

the *reader* knows.<sup>17</sup> For Clorinda does have a voice, and one that easily renders her one of the most complex female characters of any early modern poem. Claudio Scarpati's observation that she constantly opposes herself to the 'comun sentenza', or the common norm, is borne out by her first sustained appearance in the *Liberata*.<sup>18</sup> The confident figure rides into Jerusalem in Canto 2 where two Christians are being burnt at the stake, having (falsely) claimed to have stolen an image of Mary from the mosque in order to protect the rest of the Christian community from harm. Clorinda sees through their 'magnanimous lie' and confronts the King of Jerusalem to ask for their release, beginning her appeal with the words 'Io son Clorinda' [I am Clorinda] (2:46). Even though, she courteously notes, it is 'comun sentenza' that the two are guilty, she disagrees: 'ma discordo io da voi', with particular rhetorical emphasis on the *io*: I disagree with all of you. Clorinda's exceptionality reveals itself in battle as well, where in addition to slaughtering dozens of Crusaders, she will be credited as having wounded the Christians' captain, Goffredo, as the narrator addresses Clorinda directly: 'Che di tua man, Clorinda, il colpo uscisse;/ la fama il canta, e tuo l'onor n'è solo;/ se questo dì servaggio e morte schiva/ la tua gente pagana, a te s'ascriva' [Fame has it, Clorinda, that that blow came from your hand, and that this is your honor alone; if this day your pagan people have avoided servitude and death, it is to your credit] (11:54). Elsewhere she rouses others to battle and talks with the refugee princess Erminia into the night in the bed they share within Jerusalem's walls.

But this self-assured Clorinda who acts and speaks will come under attack — not only from Tancredi, who has no need of her voice to fall in love with her, but from the narrative scheme of her own life, as revealed in two separate moments in Book 12. Tasso devotes a significant number of *ottave* to the back story of Clorinda's marvelous birth (a white woman from two Christian black African parents), tragic separation

17 There is a long literature on Laura's silence in the *Canzoniere*, much influenced by Nancy Vickers' seminal essay, 'Diana Described: Scattered Women and Scattered Rhyme', *Critical Inquiry*, 8.2 (1981), 265–279; more recently taken up by Bonnie Gordon in relationship to the figure of the 'ingrata' or ungrateful women in Monteverdi's music: Gordon, *Monteverdi's Unruly Women: The Power of Song in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), esp. pp. 62–66.

18 Claudio Scarpati, 'Geometrie Petrarcesche nella *Gerusalemme liberata*', *Aevum*, 67 (1993), 533–570 (p. 542).

from her mother (who fears her husband's jealous reaction to seeing a white child), and upbringing by the Muslim eunuch Arsete who never baptizes her or apprizes her of her Christian origins until, as it turns out, the night before her death. Moments before she departs with Argante to burn down the tower, Arsete tells her, 'saprai cosa/ di tua condizione che t'era oscura' [you'll now know something of your life that has been hidden from you] (12:20), and divulges the story in tears, ending with the suggestive line that perhaps Christianity *is* the true faith ('Forse [Christianity] é la vera fede'; 12:40).<sup>19</sup> Having just learned of her Christian identity, however, Clorinda seems quick to dispense with it, claiming that she will follow 'Quella fede... che vera or parmi' [that faith that now seems true to me] (12:41). She will not be afraid, she claims, since hers is the work, and the mission, of a constant and magnanimous heart. But the story that Arsete tells of Clorinda's birth into a Christian family gives new meaning to Clorinda's 'feigning' to be one of the enemy ('di lor gente'), as does the phrase Tasso used in his apostrophe to Clorinda in Canto 11 after she wounds Goffredo: 'la tua gente pagana'. Indeed, who are Clorinda's people? Despite her assertions, even Clorinda has a moment of self-doubt while listening to Arsete's story. His account is prompted by a dream he had of a vengeful Saint George threatening Arsete for having ignored the command that Clorinda be baptized; and after he finishes, in tears, 'ella pensa e teme,/ ch'un altro simil sogno il cor le preme' [she thinks, and fears, for another, similar dream burdens her heart] (12:40).

Tasso thus moves from the assured 'Io son Clorinda' of Canto 2 to Clorinda's uncharacteristic fear of Canto 12 — and to the question of who she really is: 'chiunque io mi sia'. But something else has intervened with respect to Clorinda's voice. This is its appropriation by two other characters in the poem, suggesting another way of thinking about who she might or might not be. In Canto 6, the timid Erminia has overcome her doubts, exiting the city of Jerusalem in the heart of night in order to go to heal Tancredi, with whom she is secretly in love, and who has been

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19 For a compelling reading of Clorinda's African origins and the argument that her family was the wrong kind of Christians, see David Quint, *Epic and Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1989), esp. pp. 234–247. His comments on Clorinda as inhabiting a 'grey area of identity and ideology', one of 'internal division, rebellion, and potential heresy', have been vital for this essay (p. 246).

wounded in battle; and she does so wearing Clorinda's armor. At the gate of the city, she must speak: and she says, reciting the same phrase: 'io son Clorinda — disse — apri la porta' [I am Clorinda: open the door] (6:95). And the ruse works, in no small part because 'La voce feminil [era] sembiante a quella/ de la guerriera' [her female voice was similar to that of the warrior]. In Canto 7, in the thick of Christian warriors surrounding a seemingly doomed Argante, the demon Beelzebub takes on the likeness of the imposing Clorinda: 'diegli il parlare e senza mente il noto/ suon de la voce, e 'l portamento e 'l moto' [he took on her speech and the well-known sound of her voice (albeit without thought); and her comportment and her moves] (7:99), so that he can rally her colleagues to help the beleaguered Argante. 'Senza mente' — lacking intelligence or understanding — is an echo from Virgil's *Aeneid*, when Juno creates a phantom of Aeneas, 'dat inania verba, /dat sine mente sonum' [giving it unreal words, a voice without thought] (10:639–640).<sup>20</sup> This may be sound 'without thought' but it is sound that is efficacious, capable of convincing others of its authenticity: from the guard at Jerusalem's gate to Clorinda's fellow warriors, just as Juno's phantom convinces Turnus to follow the spectral vision of Aeneas outside the fray of battle.

Stolen by others, Clorinda's voice progressively becomes foreign to her. Alternately, more provocatively, she herself becomes progressively foreign to the 'sound' of her voice. The continuous marginalization of that voice, moreover, in the course of the duel is enabled through Tasso's attentiveness to the sounds of war. Once the two throw themselves into battle, Tasso invites us to hear not words but the horrible clashing of their blades: 'Odi le spade orribilmente urtarsi/ a mezzo il ferro' [you hear the terrible collision of swords, iron against iron] (12:55). The verb Tasso chooses to depict the crashing together of helmets and shields — 'cozzare', or to strike against — is an impressive earful of sound that fully propels us into this world of violent, clashing noise. Tasso's phrasing is remarkable for its staccato-like insistence on repetitive consonants, both harsh (g's and t's) and soft (sibilant s's) — phrasing that, as Fredi Chiappelli notes, forces us to pause and consider its

20 All citations from the *Aeneid* are in Virgil, *Works*, trans. by H. R. Fairclough, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).



syntagmatic difficulties.<sup>21</sup> Throughout the episode, too, Tasso moves beyond the lexical as he reflects his awareness of the ebb and flow of human voice and vigor in war, and in a struggle between male and female that is far from the 'lascivious' languor of the sensual scenes in Canto 16, where Rinaldo lingers with Armida on the island. And yet this scene could well have been like that of Canto 16, given Tancredi's adoration of the woman he fights. Tasso thus taunts us, as well as the characters, when he calls up the image of the two embracing, albeit in battle: 'Tre volte il cavalier la donna stringe con le robuste braccia' [Three times the knight hugs the lady with his/her forceful arms] (12:57). As the night progresses, Tasso will punctuate the slim number of stanzas with rhythms appropriate to growing fatigue. This is especially apparent when the warriors wearily pause in their confrontation, driven home by lines such as 'e dopo lungo faticar respira' with the deliberate pause after 'faticar' (12:57). The *ottava* continues with the almost immobilizing lines 'L'un l'altro guarda, e del suo corpo essangue/ su 'l pomo de la spada appoggia il peso' [the one looks at the other, and balances the weight of his bleeding body on the handle of his sword] (12:58). The emphasis on 'weight' (*peso*) at the end leads directly into the even heavier weight of Tancredi's question: what is your name?

This is a duel constituted by sonic clashes, in short, that have nothing to do with the voice per se. But it has everything to do with creating impediments to vocal comprehension. Thus does Tasso's poem not merely *narrate* 'arms and war, but also provid[e] a suitable language that captures the *sound* of those very things', as Christopher Geekie has recently put it.<sup>22</sup> Given that 'an appropriately sonorous style [is] potentially alien to the vernacular', in Geekie's phrase, it also complicates our reception — and the characters' reception — of those words that *are* spoken. The voices that speak are strained and fatigued, rendered deformed and difficult through the trauma of combat and the range of intense emotion that it provokes: disdain, anger, pride, hostility, and finally, anguish and forgiveness, as we move from the poetics of war to

21 See Chiappelli's notes through the episode, *Gerusalemme liberata*, pp. 504–511, regarding what he considers the many 'peculiarità sintattic[he]' of the scene (p. 509n).

22 Christopher Geekie, "'Cangiar la lira in tromba": Metaphors for Poetic Form in Torquato Tasso', *Italian Studies*, 72.3 (2018), 256–270 (p. 270).

the poetics of war's aftermath. In the sensorially limited world of a forest at night, outside the walls of Jerusalem, listening is perforce at its highest pitch, and yet the ear can be fooled. The phrase 'Dir pareia' before Clorinda's last line can only accentuate such destabilization. We are beyond knowing what Clorinda, whoever she is, 'truly' says, foreign as she is to herself and to her listener.

The only clarity Tasso allows us is the moment when Tancredi removes the helmet. The end of the battle has coincided with the end of darkness, and in the light from the new dawn, Tancredi can finally see the woman who is dying before him. 'Ahi vista! Ahi conoscenza!' (12:67), declares the narrator, suggesting that only sight conveys knowledge. Yet as though to undermine the revelation, or perhaps to reinforce it, Tasso precedes the Italian words for sight and understanding with a sound that has no semantic meaning at all, a sound with origins not in Tuscan — or Latin — but Greek: 'Ahi!' This moment is seconded by another highly visual moment, that of Clorinda's death when 'la bella donna' offers her hand to Tancredi in a tacit pledge of friendship. The *combattimento* proper ends not with the words Clorinda 'seems to say', but with her silent gesture. It is the only verifiable, because visualized, prelude to her death.

The episode ends as it began, in the same silence in which Clorinda feigned herself a Christian when locked out of her city's gates: 'Di lor gente s'infinge, e fra gli ignoti/ cheta s'avolge; e non è chi la noti' [She pretends to be of their people, and quietly mixes in among the lesser known, and no one notices her] (12:50). Once again, to which *gente* does Clorinda belong? But her fate is sealed when she chooses to stop feigning, becoming like the silent wolf who 'si desvia' — who deviates or takes a different path — when she *will* be noted, if only by a single figure, Tancredi: 'Poi, come lupo tacito s'imbosca/ dopo occulto misfatto, e si desvia, / da la confusion, da l'aura fosca/ favorita e nascosa, ella se 'n gía' [Then, just as a silent wolf heads into the woods after some hidden misdeed, and thus departs from the main road, so hidden and favored by the confusion and the dark, thick air, she takes off] (12:51). Like so much else in this episode, the lines are from that foreign epic poem, the *Aeneid*, and they refer to one Arruns, an Etruscan who hurls his spear at the warrior Camilla and then flees in fright: 'Even as the wolf, when he has slain a shepherd or a great steer, ere hostile

darts can pursue him, straightway plunges by pathless ways among the high mountains, conscious of a reckless deed, and slackening his tail claps it quivering beneath his belly, and seeks the woods: even so does Arruns, in confusion, steal away from sight...' (11:809–814). But if Arruns plunges anonymously into the armed throng ('se immiscuit armis'), Clorinda departs from the crowd; and if Virgil's wolf takes pathless ways among the mountains — 'in montis sese avius abdidit altos' — Tasso's takes a different way, off the main path. Thus does Tasso accentuate her character as one who opposes herself yet again to 'comun sentenza'. But there is something especially poignant about the simile and the Virgilian figure to whom it points. The Trojan Arruns is in flight because he has just killed the woman warrior Camilla, on whom Tasso based his own magnificent character.<sup>23</sup> In suggesting that Clorinda is like the silent wolf who is Arruns, Tasso has us entertain the thought, if for just a moment, that Clorinda's death is a suicide.

Here is where the second passage referenced earlier from Canto 12 becomes, finally, significant. The exploit of the tower is initiated from a single factor: Clorinda's impatience with the restraints imposed on her gender in a world of men, no matter how hard she has tried to behave like a man in that world. The canto opens with the very figure of the night that will dominate it: 'Era la notte' (12:1). While others are at rest, Clorinda is awake, agonizing about having spent the day on the sidelines as an archer while Argante and Soliamano were in the thick of battle. (She has, as an archer, nonetheless wounded Goffredo, a fact of which she is unaware.) She chafes at her inability to do what the men have done and perform marvelous and unusual deeds ('fer meraviglie inusitate e strane'), and laments that wherever 'masculine valor is revealed', she must 'mostrarmi qui tra cavalier donzella!' [reveal herself as a young woman among knights] (12:4). Thus does 'she speak to herself', turning next to Argante who is also awake, to explain that for some time, something indescribably unusual, and bold ('un non so che d'insolito e d'audace') has been working in her unquiet mind, 'la mia mente inquieta' (12:5). This spirit has incited her to the radical plan

23 On Virgil's use of Camilla as an example of the sublime style, see Erich Auerbach's influential chapter, 'Camilla, The Rebirth of the Sublime', in *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 183–233 (esp. pp. 183–186).

to burn down the Christians' siege tower and save Jerusalem. Again, Virgil's Latin text intrudes into Tasso's poem, infiltrating itself here into Clorinda's very words, as the story of Nisus and Euryalus from Book IX returns with the line 'aut pugna aut aliquid iamdudum invadere magnum/ mens agitat mihi, nec placida contenta quiete est' [long has my heart been astir to dare battle or some great deed, and peaceful quiet contents it not] (9:186–187). In this noted episode, the Trojan Nisus boldly plans to go out among the Rutulians' camp while they are sleeping, and slaughter as many as he can, a feat in which he is joined by the young boy Euryalus, and a feat which will lead to their deaths. In Clorinda's case, however, as similar as the sentiment is, it is not her heart that is astir — literally, 'agitated', like Tasso's waves and Tasso himself — but a 'non so che' that stirs up that heart and unsettles her mind. Whether, she muses, this is 'God' who inspires her, or whether 'l'uom del suo voler suo Dio si face' [men fashion their own god from their own longing] (12:5) is unclear — translating Nisus's musing in the *Aeneid*: 'Do the gods put this fire in our hearts, or does his own wild longing become to each man a god?' (9:184–185). But whereas Nisus begins his account with this rhetorical question, Clorinda utters it only after she has already spoken of her frustrations of being a woman, and her desire to be fully a part of a world of men. The 'non so che' in this episode will return in the 'non so che' that makes her voice faint and soft some fifty stanzas later, driving Tancredi to perform baptism. Yet whether it is her own desire or that of a god to defy her gender and perform magnificent deeds, it is a desire that Tasso will grant, even as it takes her, like Nisus, to her death; and a death in which she is arguably complicit as she refuses to reveal herself as a woman ['mostrarsi donzella'] and say her name.

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This monologue, of course, has no place in Monteverdi's text. Nor does the simile of the wolf or that of the restless waves. He begins his *Combattimento* a stanza after Clorinda steals away from the Christian crowd, with the ottava that presents the clanking of Tancredi's armor — the phrase he repeats four times. And he will close his work a stanza before Clorinda's death, suicide or homicide as it may be, with Clorinda's reference to *pace*. And rightly so: in the performance that was the *Combattimento*, as in the later book of Madrigals in which the piece



was published, his focus is on the *voce*: *Madrigali guerrieri, et amorosi. Con alcuni opuscoli in genere rappresentativo*. As musicologists have argued, the preface and this book as a whole can be seen as the culmination of Monteverdi's attempts to elevate Italian music from its engaging but limited emphasis on *dolcezza*. His efforts, it can be argued, are comparable to Tasso's work elevating the Italian language in the confrontation with the strange, the new, the unfamiliar. Monteverdi perhaps achieved this through mingling the effects of love and war to which the title of his madrigal book alludes.<sup>24</sup>

On the surface, the *Combattimento* is so generically innovative as to present an encounter *with* the strange, meant not only to be sung — by the two combatants and a Narrator or Testo who has the lion's share of Tasso's stanzas — but to be physically enacted. But it is the episode's sonic energy that clearly caught Monteverdi's ear as he developed what was truly innovative about the piece: its existence as a 'genere concitato' — a tense or agitated style, that takes us back to the agitated waves, and the contrast between that agitation of war and the calm of the ending in death. The title of the book in which the *Combattimento* featured, with its promise of amorous and bellicose songs, also poses a question that hovers about the entire composition: how might this song had sounded had Tancredi known Clorinda's identity, and what might he have brought her if she had revealed her name midway into the duel? In the ebbs and flows of sound that is the *Combattimento*, Monteverdi plays with dynamics, as well as rhythm and pace, moving back and forth between the intense agitations of the duel and the suggestions that something else might have happened instead. It culminates in the moment when the voice of Clorinda *does* speak in a way that provokes an emotion other than wrath in her opponent — and as she embraces friendship, if not love.

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24 See, among other texts, Tim Carter's careful analysis of the work and its place within the madrigal setting; Carter, *Monteverdi's Musical Theatre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), chapter 7, pp. 167–196. For the possible influence of the well-known genre of the *moresca*, I am indebted to Suzanne Cusick's comments and to Nina Treadwell's chapter in this volume, in which she discusses the 'inherently labile' qualities of the *moresca* dance, where Christian and Muslim soldiers engaged in a battle set to music with especially percussive effects — the very percussive sounds that can be identified in Monteverdi's music as well as in Tasso's lexical choices.

And so, to return to the *Combattimento*'s final line: 'dir pareo: "S'apre il cielo; io vado in pace"'. Like the line Clorinda sang after she was wounded — 'Amico, hai vinto' — it is metrically transgressive, making the reader or singer slow down and articulate the extra three syllables that close the stanza. Monteverdi deliberately draws out the entire final two measures, accompanied by the dying of the string sound on A and D, which appropriately ceases when Clorinda's voice ceases. As noted above, Monteverdi omits Clorinda's death itself, along with the final gesture that unites the lovers, as though the absence of speech signals the absence of life. Monteverdi thus closes with Clorinda rather than the Testo, who would have recited this: 'In questa forma/ passa la bella donna, e par che dorma' [So dies the beautiful woman, and she seems to sleep] (12:69) — another use of *parere*, once again filtering the dramatic moment through Tancredi's perspective. The male gaze — and ear — through which Clorinda *appeared* to say something, is thus replaced, as Cusick and Cascelli argue, by Clorinda's actual song, and hence her resistance to both the Testo's and Tancredi's uncertain appraisal of her words.<sup>25</sup> Monteverdi resists Tancredi's Petrarchan dynamics, in which the woman is a silent if rapturous presence. At the same time, he confirms the event Tancredi has just enabled: Clorinda's peaceful baptism into a religion that it is now too late for her to enjoy on earth. Though 'esclusa' from the gates of Jerusalem, she is not excluded from the Catholic framework of Tasso's poem.<sup>26</sup>

Monteverdi's powerful assertion of an authentic female voice dramatically realizes Clorinda's capacity to shatter boundaries, as she has done throughout the *Liberata* — of heaven, as well as of metrical line. And he does so by unambiguously enabling Clorinda to 'mostrarsi

25 See Cusick, "'Indarno chiedi'", and Cascelli, 'Place, Performance and Identity'.

26 Monteverdi's unambiguous release of Clorinda into heaven may derive from his careful reading of Tasso's *Gerusalemme conquistata*, in which the poet devotes a significant amount of space to the foreboding dream Clorinda has the night before her death: one in which a great figure (Christ, as Tasso explains in his *Giudicio sovra la sua Gerusalemme da lui medesimo riformato*) comes to her on a chariot. Such elaboration suggests concern on Tasso's part that the *Liberata* was indeed ambiguous about Clorinda's fate; see Arnaldo di Benedetto, 'Un esempio di poesia Tassiana', *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 169 (1992), 510–529 (526). For a different interpretation of Monteverdi's ending and the hypothesis that Clorinda's unexpected tonalities 'hint to a foreign world that cannot be contained by the rules of Christian music', see Risi, 'Claudio Monteverdi's *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*', p. 166.

donzella'. But arguably this is possible because Clorinda's has been a dangerous voice all along, and one that must not be allowed to have a future, as Adriana Cavarero has suggested with respect to the necessary deaths of the transgressive, melodramatic heroines of nineteenth-century Italian opera, whose lives Clorinda's interestingly anticipates.<sup>27</sup> Rendered a Christian, Clorinda can pass from the poem and allow Tancredi to fight as, and whom, he should. Monteverdi's refocusing and retelling of Clorinda's story solves the crucial problems of her multiple, indeterminate identities, as her voice is located securely in the body of the woman who takes her role onstage. Both included within and excluded from Tasso's poem, the foreigner is no longer a foreigner, even as she will be foreign to the future of the story. This may account for Monteverdi's description of his audience's reaction to his work when originally performed in the palace of Girolamo Mozzenigo in 1624. As he claims, 'tutta la Nobiltà restò mossa dal affetto di compassione in maniera, che quasi fu per gettar lacrime: & ne diede applauso per essere stato canto di genere non più visto né udito' [All the members of the nobility were so moved by the emotion of compassion that they were almost about to cry, and they applauded because it had been sung in a manner no longer seen or heard].<sup>28</sup> Had Monteverdi recited the actual death of Clorinda, followed by Tancredi's despair, we might be tempted to think that such compassion was for the warrior. But because the *Combattimento* ends where it does, Clorinda must have been its object, the stranger who remains strange even to herself, who realizes too late whom she should have been.<sup>29</sup>

27 Adriana Cavarero, *For More than One Voice: Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression*, trans. by Paul A. Kottman (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), especially chapter 2.3, 'Melodramatic Voices', which ends with the assertion that 'the supremacy of the feminine voice [is the] quintessence of the femininity of the vocal' (p. 130).

28 Monteverdi, *Combattimento*, p. 1.

29 On the role of the 'Pellegrino' or the foreign in inspiring marvel, see an important moment from Tasso's *Discorso sopra l'arte poetica* from 1587, borrowed in part from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*: 'le parole disusate la fanno più venerabile, perché sono come forestieri tra cittadini; laonde paiono peregrine e producono meraviglia; ma la meraviglia sempre porta seco diletto, perché il dilettevole è meraviglioso' [In particular, infrequently-used words will make elocution more venerable, because they are like foreigners mingling with citizens: they seem all the more rare and thus they incite marvel, but a marvel that brings with its delight, because what is delightful is also marvelous]. From *Apologia della Gerusalemme liberata*, in *Tasso, Scritti sull'arte poetica*, ed. Mazzali, I, p. 119.

Tasso's world is not quite as straightforward. If Clorinda only seems to say to an exhausted and emotional Tancredi that the heavens are opening, it may well be that they are not. Tancredi may have failed in his generous act. His 'sacri detti' [holy words], which Tasso does not record, may not have been enough; and Clorinda may have been denied entrance to the heavenly gates. This would be a terrifyingly harsh but viable resolution to the story, leaving Clorinda forever outside the narrative. While much in the poem might militate against this reading, her final appearance in the *Liberata* — or at least the last time we hear her voice — suggests that the possibility remains open.

This is in the spooky forest of Canto 13, a dark, perverse, epic theatre of distorting and discombobulating sights and sounds, although perhaps no less distorted than the space of Clorinda's duel. Still wounded by what he has done, Tancredi goes to attack the demons who have frightened off other Crusaders from cutting down the trees so they can build a new war tower to replace the one Clorinda and Argante destroyed. In the midst of the forest, he sees a tall cypress, with words written in Egyptian that warn him not to commit violence in this sacred site. He nonetheless takes out his sword to cut down the tree, source of the forest's magic. No sooner does he strike it, than it pours forth blood, and then, 'as though from a tomb', 'uscir ne sente/ un indistinto gemito dolento, // che poi distinto in voci: — Ahi! Troppo — disse/ — m'hai tu, Tancredi, offeso; or tanto basti' [he hears an indistinct, mournful noise come forth, that then distinguished itself in words: "Ahh! Too much", it said, "you have offended me, Tancredi: now please, enough!"] (13:41–42). And the voice explains: having been separated from her body at death, her soul has had to take refuge in the tree, along with many others, 'franco o pagano' (both Christian and Muslim), who 'left their bodies at the base of those high walls' (13:43). Each branch and trunk of the forest's trees is animated by their spirits, and thus Tancredi will be a murderer if he attacks the wood. Even though he does not fully believe the false illusions, he resigns himself to defeat, and flees.

"Ahi! Troppo" — again the foreign word that is not a proper word but a sound, and the same sound that accompanied 'Ahi vista! Ahi conoscenza!' For the first time, that voice has spoken Tancredi's name; and for the first time, before Tancredi, its own name — 'Clorinda fui' (12:43) — even as the use of the *passato remoto* suggests that the voice is

no longer Clorinda's.<sup>30</sup> This is moreover a voice that forces its narrator to break through stanzaic lines in a relatively rare example of enjambment in Tasso's poetics. Thus does Tasso insist on the return of this foreign voice without a true home, a voice which only appeared to speak about heaven, and a voice which continues to transgress the boundaries of the orderly *ottave* of Tuscan verse and use words that are not part of that language. We saw similar instances of metric alterity in the verses that preceded and followed the rite of Clorinda's baptism — lines deviant like the sounds of a foreign language that reminds us of Italian's origins, a flow of sound that refuses to be constrained within the 'normal' metrics of a stanza. Such has been Clorinda in her resistance, provoking Tancredi's marvel and compassion and perhaps our own. In this instance it is compassion not for Clorinda's belated recognition of herself as a Christian, but for her commitment to taking the less common path, relying on the precariousness of silence and sound that returns us to the true opening of the duel: her fatal but characteristic choice to 'desviare' — deviate — and separate herself from the Christians outside the walls — possibly for a short time, possibly forever.

*Desviare* deviates from the characteristic Tuscan spelling ('disviare'). Perhaps more than any other term, it describes a Clorinda who has constantly chosen to do things differently, giving her that heroic illustriousness which the youthful Tasso praised in his *Discorsi* as essential to an epic poem. She pays for that difference with her death, in a world that is unable to accept the extent of her otherness or the alterities she forces it to recognize in itself. The traumatic world of war which Clorinda chose to make her own would ideally be alien to anyone's vernacular. But it is a world Tasso's Italy knew well, and one whose sonic and experiential discomforts Tasso expertly probed using Italian's foreign tongues to produce his disturbing masterpiece. And while Tasso arguably makes Clorinda a sacrifice to the success of that poem, he is also closer to Clorinda than one might think — a Tasso whose style, and life,

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30 Had Tancredi read Dante, he would know that Dante's purgatorial souls regularly distance themselves from their earthly bodies using the same remote tense, yet they are still recognized as the beings they were on earth. Is this a voice 'senza mente', taken over by another, diabolical creature? Or does it have continuity with Clorinda's self, like the *anime* in that temporary holding place called Purgatory? Once again Tasso leaves open the possibility of Clorinda's conversion if only through an echo to his most important predecessor in the vernacular.

could be equally defined by the word 'desviare'.<sup>31</sup> As the opening of the *Liberata* reminds us, he is a *peregrino errante* who feels himself excluded from port, while nonetheless seeking, and perhaps only appearing to find, salvation from above.

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31 See Sansone regarding Tasso's stylistic individuality: he wrote 'fuori da ogni dimensione comune' [outside common usage], in order to provoke the marvelous; *Da Bembo a Galiani: Il Dibattito sulla lingua in Italia*, p. 24.