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Dantean Framing Devices in Boccaccio's *Corbaccio*

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The importance of the literary relationship between Dante and Boccaccio has long been recognized; yet, despite the general acknowledgement of this fact, the textual echoes of Dante's works in Boccaccio's writings went largely unremarked until the mid-twentieth century.[1] Although the question is no longer completely neglected, there is still much work to be done. Previous discussion of Boccaccio's *dantismo* has focused almost exclusively on the *Decameron* and has concentrated on the textual presence of the *Commedia* to the exclusion of Dante's other works.[2] The importance of the *Commedia* as a source for Boccaccio is incontestable, but references to the rest of Dante's corpus (in particular to the *Vita nuova*) also abound in his writing. Despite the abundance of textual *dantismi* in Boccaccio's corpus, few have attempted to draw conclusions about the wider significance of this constant Dantean presence. However, if we compare the source passages in Dante with the pattern of allusion in Boccaccio, interesting conclusions can be drawn about the role of Dante in Boccaccio's process of creative composition. This article contends that the *Corbaccio*, rather than the *Decameron*, is the key text of Boccaccio's engagement with Dante, since it is here that Dantean motifs and allusions, some already familiar from the *Decameron*, are deployed to their greatest effect.[3] Depending whether they are taken from the *Vita nuova* or *Commedia*, these Dantean motifs are used in different ways, and I will analyse their function as framing devices in the *Corbaccio*.

It is impossible to quantify or qualify exactly the different types of Dantean allusion which occur in the *Corbaccio*. Dante's influence can be found at every level of the text, ranging in the broadest terms from the overreaching comedic progression of the narrative to penumbral textual echoes.[4] In most cases, the structural, thematic, and contextual factors of the Dantean source are deeply bound to the textual echo itself. The different types of Dantean reference are thus interwoven to

form a new situation, which is an original creation and recognizably Dantean at the same time. Boccaccio's Dantean allusion reinforces and enriches the narrative as a whole, and can be understood to provide an extra level of meaning for the text. However, Dante's importance to the *Corbaccio* is not limited to the provision of a literary subtext. As this article will show, the employment of Dantean structures can even be seen to provide the internal justification for the writing of the misogynist invective itself.

The *Corbaccio*'s debt to Dante is most pronounced in the structural framework of the text. It has been noted that the same is true for the *Decameron*. The most striking *dantismi* are embedded in the deepest architectural structure of that text: in the introductory passages (the title-summary and the *Proemio*), and in the frame narrative (the *Introduzione* and the interlinking narrative during and between each day of storytelling). In the most basic terms, the organization of the text into one hundred *novelle* is considered to reflect the one hundred cantos of the *Commedia*, while the overall movement of the narrative is also commonly held to parallel the comedic progression – from tragedy to salvation, or sin to virtue – of the *Commedia*. The provocative reference to Dante in the very subtitle of the text ('cognominato prencipe Galeotto') reveals Boccaccio's authorial intentions.[5] The ideal reader should consider the *Decameron* through the filter of the *Commedia*, and this forces the reader into an immediate contemplation of the relationship between these two works and these two authors.

The Dantean reference in the *Decameron* underlines the thematic similarities between the *Commedia* and the *Decameron*. If the frame-narrative of the *Decameron* is best understood as an account of a movement towards purgation, it is enhanced by Boccaccio's tactical deployment of *dantismi* taken from contextually appropriate areas of the *Commedia*. The same allusive mechanism is employed to even greater effect in the *Corbaccio*. In the *Decameron*, such contextually appropriate reference can be seen mainly in the Introduction to the First Day and elsewhere in the *cornice*. Certain *novelle*, such as that of Nastagio degli Onesti (*Decameron* V, 8), famously contain substantial allusion to Dante, but for the most part the Dantean allusions are confined to the frame narrative. In the *Corbaccio*, Boccaccio uses Dante in a very similar way. However, in the later work, the *dantismi* are found in much greater concentration than in the *Decameron*, and are employed, with different effect, in every part of the text.

In order to discuss Boccaccio's *dantismo* in the *Corbaccio*, it is necessary first of all to consider the structural organization of the text.[6] In *Boccaccio's Last Fiction: Il Corbaccio* (1988), Hollander has shown how the structure of the *Corbaccio* is a carefully constructed chiasmic arrangement in nine parts. The chiasmic arrangement of the text can be summarized as follows:[7]

1. (§§1-5) *Proemio* (Author *in propria persona*) [§§1-5]
　　2. (§§6-26) Situational frame (situation of Narrator) [§§6-53]
　　　　3. (§§27-82) Dream-vision (Inferno) [§§54-131]
　　　　　　4. (§§83-115) Lover's autobiography [§§132-77]
　　　　　　　　5. (§§116-202) Guide's oration [§§178-290]
　　　　　　6. (§§203-373) Guide's biography [§§291-512]
　　　　7. (§§374-407) Dream-vision (Purgatory) [§§513-54]
　　8. (§§408-11) Situational frame (situation of Narrator) [§§555-59]
9. (§§412-13) *Explicit* (Author *in propria persona*) [§§560-62].

Hollander's model shows the structural subdivisions of the embedded frames in considerable detail. However, in creating such an elaborate model, he overlooks the fundamental tripartite nature of the organization of the text. His model can be reduced to a much simpler framework, which also demonstrates the deliberate similarities between the structure of the *Corbaccio* and the *Commedia*:

(§§1-39) *Proemio*, situational frame, dream-vision landscape
　　(§§40-373) Conversation between Guide and Narrator
(§§374-413) Dream-vision landscape, situational frame, *Explicit*

The first section encompasses the *Proemio*, the situational frame, and the dream-vision up to and including §39, where the Guide first speaks. The second section comprises the dialogue between the Guide and the Narrator, including the Narrator's autobiography, the misogynist invective, and the Guide's biography. The final section is dedicated to the concluding part of the work, a chiasmic reflection of the opening sequence: the 'purgatorial' dream-vision, the situational frame narrative, and the rhetorical *explicit*. It is obvious from this summary that the central part is much longer than the opening and closing sections, but as we shall see, the Dantean material is largely concentrated in the two chiasmic framing narratives (the account of the

Narrator's everyday life and the description of his dream-vision) which 'bookend' the conversation between the Narrator and his Guide.

The misogynist invective is mostly untroubled by Dantean allusion (an absence which may be partly explained by the density of allusions taken from the antifeminist canon). Hollander observes that this invective, which is often considered to characterize the work, is in fact limited to the central part of the structure (the Guide's oration and his biography of his wife).[8] The invective is therefore entirely contained within the frame of the Guide's words, and removed from the Narrator, who is often misguidedly identified with Boccaccio himself. In fact, the embedded layers of narrative and discourse actually serve as a mechanism to distance the reader from the assumed intention of the work, and the paucity of Dantean presences in the antifeminist tirade reveals Boccaccio's skill in manipulating his textual sources and the consistency of his allusive mechanisms.

Despite the absence of a significant Dantean presence in the central section of the work, it seems likely that Boccaccio intended his tripartite organization of the text to reflect the overall pattern of progression of the *Commedia*. The first section, according to the tripartite model, should be seen as corresponding loosely to the *Inferno*, the second and central section to *Purgatorio*, and the final section to *Paradiso*. The first thirty-nine sections of the *Corbaccio* relate the desperate plight of the Narrator up to the point where he encounters his Guide. Once they meet, the Narrator's salvation is assured, in the same way that Dante's journey to God begins at the point when he meets Virgil in *Inferno* I. Their conversation – and in particular the misogynist invective – represents the process of purgation for the Narrator. (A similar function, of course, is served by the relating of the *novelle* in the *Decameron*.) The final section of the *Corbaccio* (§§374-413) describes the Narrator's liberation from the bonds of sin, and the beneficial effects of repentance. It is the third and final part of the Narrator's spiritual journey, and by extension roughly analogous to the *Paradiso*. It is notable that Boccaccio does not render the Narrator's salvation through reference to the cosmology of Dante's final canticle, but instead uses the familiar landscape of the Earthly Paradise to signal this conclusion to the work.

The sources for Dante's textual presence in the *Corbaccio* are not limited to the *Commedia*. An examination of the textual echoes found throughout the work reveals that Boccaccio employs allusions from a selection of Dante's works in contextually appropriate situations. To

illustrate this, I will now consider several specific examples of this type of borrowing which can be found in the *Corbaccio*.

The *Proemio* of the *Corbaccio* (§§1-5) at first appears to be a conventional introduction in Boccaccio's elevated style.[9] Yet, even within the circumscribed stylistic framework of the *exordium*, the textual presence of Dante can be detected, demonstrating Boccaccio's discrimination in his selection of references. The textual *dantismi* embedded in the *Proemio* all correspond to a pattern of reference to stylistically and contextually appropriate instances in Dante's writing. The high rhetorical level of discourse demanded by the *exordium* is mirrored in the choice of *dantismi* which can be found here.

In §3, Boccaccio refers to the work which he is writing as his 'umile trattato', a phrase which suggests several Dantean echoes, and which is placed within a longer period which is also richly Dantean: 'Del quale acciò che niuno mi possa meritamente riprendere, intendo di dimostrare nello umile trattato seguente una speziale grazia' (*Corbaccio* 3). The term 'umile trattato' suggests an exaggerated modesty with regard to the work, which corresponds to the typical rhetorical protestation of incapacity common in literary composition since the late classical period, and also to Boccaccio's own habitual source for matters of literary theory, Dante.[10] In the Introduction to Day IV in the *Decameron*, he describes the style of that work in similarly exaggerated terms: 'non solamente in fiorentin volgare e in prosa scritte per me sono e senza titolo, ma ancora in istilo umilissimo e rimesso quanto il più si possono' (*Decameron* IV, Intr., 3). This definition seems to be an amplification of the words of the author of the *Epistle to Cangrande*: 'ad modum loquendi, remissus est modus et humilis, quia locutio in qua et muliercule comunicant' (*Ep.* XIII, 31).[11] The technical term 'umile' which Boccaccio uses in his introduction to the *Corbaccio* could indicate the comic register if he is following Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* in the definition of genres and the language in which they are to be written:

> Si tragice canenda videntur, tunc assumendum est vulgare illustre, et per consequens cantionem ligare. Si vero comice, tunc quandoque mediocre quandoque humile vulgare sumatur. (*D.V.E.* II, iv, 6)[12]

Boccaccio's term 'trattato' could refer to the antifeminist satire of the *Corbaccio*, which is almost an encyclopaedia of the misogynist

repertory. It has also been observed that 'trattato' has connotations of storytelling in Boccaccio's vocabulary, particularly with regard to the *Commedia* and to Boccaccio's *Esposizioni*.[13] The use of this technical terminology in the third sentence of the text thus reinforces the hypothesis that Boccaccio is drawing on Dante's Latin, non-poetic, works for the rhetorical language he requires in the introductory paragraph of the *Corbaccio*.

The word 'umile' is also used to form a link between the different types of *dantismi* which are found in this sentence. Boccaccio moves from the language of literary theory to that of religious fervour, explaining that his intention is to record the special grace which he has obtained through the agency of the Virgin Mary. 'Umile', apart from its importance in Boccaccio's lexicon of literary terms, is also a key word in St Bernard's prayer in *Paradiso* XXXIII, and as such forms a bridge between the two distinct types of textual *dantismi* present in the sentence.

> intendo di dimostrare nello *umile* trattato seguente una speziale *grazia*, non per mio merito ma per sola *benignità* di *Colei*: che, impetrandola da Colui che volle quello ch'Ella medesima, nuovamente mi fu conceduta. (*Corbaccio* 3; my italics)

This sentence synthesizes several significant terms from St Bernard's prayer to the Virgin:

> Vergine Madre, figlia del tuo figlio,
> *umile* e alta più che creatura,
> termine fisso d'etterno consiglio,
>   tu se' *colei* che l'umana natura
> nobilitasti sí, che 'l suo fattore
> non disdegnò di farsi sua fattura. [...]
>   Donna, se' tanto grande e tanto vali,
> che qual vuol *grazia* e a te non ricorre,
> sua disïanza vuol volar sanz' ali.
>   La tua *benignità* non pur soccorre
> a chi domanda, ma molte fïate
> liberamente al dimandar precorre. (*Par.* XXXIII, 1-6, 13-18;
>   my italics)

In St Bernard's prayer, the Virgin is referred to as 'umile' in the second line, but the most significant textual echo is the repetition of the words 'grazia' and 'benignità' (a word which is in fact a *hapax* in the *Commedia*, thereby showing Boccaccio's dependence on Dante for this passage).[14] References to this prayer will recur again and again throughout the *Corbaccio*, and it is therefore clear that this passage is a favoured *locus* in Dante for Boccaccio. There may be any number of reasons for this: Boccaccio's Marian devotion in later life is well known and well expressed in his writings,[15] and this powerful prayer, written by a layman (Dante), assuming the voice of a saint, may have particularly appealed to both his spiritual and literary tastes. It is interesting to surmise that the contextual trigger for the selection of this Dantean passage may well have been the mention of the words 'fattore' and 'fattura', which are particularly suitable for the *Proemio* on account of their literary connotations.

The word 'impetrandola' (*Corbaccio* 3) alludes to the closing lines of the preceding canto of *Paradiso*:

> Veramente, *ne* forse tu t'arretri
> movendo l'ali tue, credendo oltrarti,
> orando *grazia* conven che s'*impetri*
> *grazia* da quella che puote aiutarti (*Par.* XXXII, 145-48;
> first italics in text, other italics mine)

These lines give especial emphasis to 'grazia', demonstrating a further correspondence between Boccaccio's words and those of Dante. Cassell has posited a link between this third sentence of the *Corbaccio* and two passages in *Inferno* which describe the providential status of Dante-*personaggio*'s journey: 'vuolsi cosí colà dove si puote / ciò che si vuole, e piú non dimandare. (*Inf.* III, 95-96)[16] This central Dantean concept will recur in the *Corbaccio*, first in the situational frame when the Narrator derives comfort in his despair from a thought 'da celeste lume mandato'(*Corbaccio* 8), and again in the dream vision itself, when Boccaccio-*personaggio* tells the Guide that he believes the latter has been sent to help him by divine grace: 'poi che la divina grazia, sì come credo, e non per mio merito, mi t'ha inanzi parato' (*Corbaccio* 43).

The deliberate similarities with the account of Dante-*personaggio*'s journey to salvation are thus reinforced at various narrative levels of the *Corbaccio*. For the purposes of the *exordium*, Boccaccio has

selected and reused passages which exemplify a high rhetorical level, suitable for the conventional introduction to a literary work; all the *dantismi* present are (with the exception of one possible echo from the *Inferno*) taken either from Dante's non-poetic works or from the final cantica of the *Commedia*. (In fact, even the allusion taken from the *Inferno* is actually a contextually appropriate reference to Heaven, and anticipates the recurring theme of the Narrator who is saved by the grace of the Virgin Mary.) The textual *dantismi* have been somewhat concealed: some are translated from Latin, others are translated from poetry to prose. However, from the very first lines of the *Corbaccio*, Dante's presence pervades Boccaccio's language, a remarkable achievement in what is generally considered to be a typical and conventional *Proemio*.[17]

The source *dantismi* tend to complement the situation in the *Corbaccio* in terms of structural presence (in the case of the *Proemio* the linguistic register) and content. It is already apparent that Boccaccio is selecting Dantean allusions which will support his own literary aims. His detailed knowledge of his predecessor's writings means that he is able to identify appropriate Dantean sources which can be reshaped for his purposes (as here, when they are all examples of high register rhetorical writing). He then displays a further level of allusive discrimination in selecting words and phrases which are contextually appropriate and which reinforce the substance of his own words.

Like the *Proemio*, the situational frame of the *Corbaccio* (number 2 on Hollander's model of the narrative frames) shows close parallels with the structure of the *Decameron*. In both cases, the authorial voice shifts from the conventional introduction of the *Proemio* to a vivid account of misery and spiritual decadence. In the *Decameron*, the degradation is collective, the frame story describing the physical and moral collapse of Florence as a result of the plague, whereas in the *Corbaccio* it is the account of one individual's fall. The similarity of approach is reflected in the similarity of reference between the two books. As has been already mentioned, the Introduction to Day 1 of the *Decameron* abounds in textual allusions to the works of Dante, and specifically to the *Inferno*.[18] Boccaccio uses Dante in the same way in the situational frame of the *Corbaccio*, as the primary source for his subsequent account of earthly damnation. He draws principally upon the evocative language of the *Inferno* for his vocabulary of

spiritual dissolution, and reworks passages from the *Vita nuova* as the basis for the events of the narrative.

The frame story begins with the Narrator alone in his room, devastated by the 'accidenti del carnale amore' (*Corbaccio* 6), caused by the rejection of the woman whom he worshipped. The pain of this rejection leads him to contemplate suicide, but he is rescued from his confusion by a personified 'pensiero' with which he engages in a philosophical dialogue. Boccaccio's description of the Narrator's suffering alludes to Dante's account in the *Vita nuova*:

> Non è ancora molto tempo passato che, ritrovandomi solo nella mia camera, la quale è veramente sola testimonia delle mie lagrime, de' sospiri e de' ramarrichii [...] m'avenne che io fortissimamente sopra gli accidenti del carnale amore cominciai a pensare'. (*Corbaccio* 6)   ·

> [...] misimi ne la mia camera, là ov'io potea lamentarmi sanza essere udito (*V.N.* XII, 2)

> [m]i ritornai ne la camera de le lagrime [...] piangendo e vergognandomi (*V.N.* XIV, 9).

The situation of the rejected lover alone in his room is a well-established *topos* in medieval literature, in Petrarch and especially in the early work of Dante. The thematic *dantismo* of the Narrator weeping alone in his room, taken from the *Vita nuova*, is reinforced by the textual *dantismo* of the 'lagrime', 'sospiri', and 'ramarrichii'. These three near-synonyms in succession recall Dante-*personaggio*'s entrance into the *Inferno*:

> Quivi *sospiri*, *pianti* e alti *guai*
> risonavan per l'aere sanza stelle,
> per ch'io al cominciar ne *lagrimai* (*Inf.* III, 22-24; my italics)

The suffering of the *Corbaccio*'s Narrator's is so great that he begins to wish for death to deliver him: 'estimai che molto meno dovesse essere grave la morte che cotal vita; e quello con sommo desiderio cominciai a chiamare' (*Corbaccio* 7). This echoes Dante's suicidal

desire in the *Vita nuova*, when he describes himself as 'chiamando la Morte che venisse a me' (*V.N.* XXIII, 11). Once again, Boccaccio's thematic *dantismi* demonstrate his highly developed sense of allusion. As befits the Narrator's situation as a suffering lover, the references are taken from the most stylistically and contextually appropriate place in Dante's oeuvre. The sentiments of the rejected lover are expressed elsewhere in Dante (notably in the *Rime*), but the *Vita nuova* is the only work which describes, as a sustained prose narrative, the travails of the Poet in love.

For Boccaccio, the *Vita nuova* is the essential Dantean document of the *dolce stil novo*, and therefore it not only provides the literary model for descriptions of the conventions of love, but is also a key text which he will ironically reverse. The importance of the *Vita nuova* as a model (or anti-model) for the *Corbaccio* is most obvious when the two texts begin to diverge.[19] Up to this point, the reader is on familiar ground. The customary rhetorical *Proemio* is followed by a typical account of the sufferings of love, and the Narrator's detailed interior monologue seems to recall chapter XXXVIII of the *Vita nuova*, when Dante-*personaggio* is confronted by a series of personified thoughts which ultimately provide consolation. However, at this point in the *Corbaccio*, the rehearsal of the familiar plot is disrupted by the introduction of an unfamiliar premise. Instead of providing comfort and perhaps suggesting a tactic of sublimation through praise of the beloved, as is customary in these situations, Boccaccio's 'pensiero' advocates a programme of revenge on the beloved, a course of action which Dante does not include in his poetic manual.

The *Vita nuova* is thus ironically reversed in preparation for the misogynist invective which is to follow. Boccaccio's intention that the *Corbaccio* should be seen as an anti-*Vita nuova* is made explicit in the chiasmic closing situational frame of the work (number 8 in Hollander's model of the text). Here, Boccaccio inverts the vow which Dante makes at the end of the *Vita nuova*. Dante describes his intention to praise his beloved in his future work: 'Sì che, se piacere sarà di colui a cui tutte le cose vivono, *che la mia vita duri per alquanti anni, io spero di dicer di lei quello che mai non fue detto d'alcuna*' (*V.N.* XLII, 2). Boccaccio, too, hopes that he will live long enough to see the fruits of his writing: '*Se tempo mi fia conceduto, io spero sì con parole gastigar colei*, che, vilissima cosa essendo, altrui schernire co' suoi amanti presume, che mai lettera non mosterrà, che

mandata le sia, che della mia e del mio nome con dolore e con vergogna non si ricordi' (*Corbaccio* 411). The deliberate allusions to the *Vita nuova* are finally reinforced in the *explicit* of the *Corbaccio* when Boccaccio refers to his book as a 'piccola mia operetta (*Corbaccio* 412), echoing Dante's rhetorical modesty in referring to his personal manifesto of love as a 'libello'.[20] Whereas the *Vita nuova* is dedicated to the glorification and sublimation of the beloved, the *Corbaccio* is dedicated to the degradation and humiliation of the love-object. It is a masterly rewriting of Dante's youthful ideal.

The first section of the dream-vision (number 3 on Hollander's schema of the text), which describes the Narrator's descent into an infernal landscape, contains the greatest concentration of Dantean allusions in the text as a whole. Unlike the preceding narrative frame, in this part of the *Corbaccio*, the majority of allusions are taken from the *Commedia* rather than the *Vita nuova*.[21] Boccaccio's supernatural landscape of the afterlife is structurally and stylistically dependent on the *Commedia*. His detailed awareness of Dante's text allows him to interweave disparate yet contextually significant references, with the result that he creates his own penitential system, recognizably based on features of the Dantean *oltretomba*.

The Narrator falls asleep to find himself on a path in a wood – an unmistakable reference to the opening lines of the *Commedia*. Unlike the 'selva oscura', however, this wood appears initally pleasant: 'avvenne che a me subitamente parve intrare in uno dilettevole e bello sentiero' (*Corbaccio* 27). The scene immediately evokes memories of two instances in Dante: the opening canto of the *Inferno* and the 'divina foresta' of *Purgatorio* XXVIII.[22] However, as the *Corbaccio*'s Narrator proceeds down the path, the delightful scene is rapidly replaced by a bleak landscape which recalls other infernal forests:

> Dove erbe verdi e varii fiori nella entrata m'erano paruti vedere, ora sassi, ortiche e triboli e cardi e simili cose mi parea trovare; sanza che, indietro volgendomi, seguir mi vidi a una nebbia sì folta e sì oscura quanto niuna se ne vedesse già mai. (*Corbaccio* 29-30)[23]

The Edenic landscape is replaced by a bleak and barren forest. The sudden opposition between the two landscapes and the confounding of Boccaccio-*personaggio*'s expectations allude to Dante's description of

the wood in *Inferno* XIII. This description is also achieved by a series of antithetical comparisons with an idealized landscape:

> Non fronda verde, ma di color fosco;
> non rami schietti, ma nodosi e 'nvolti;
> non pomi v'eran, ma stecchi con tòsco' (*Inf.* XIII, 4-6).

Boccaccio is thus able to elide the boundaries between the 'selva oscura' of canto I of the *Inferno* and the wood of the suicides. The two woods are juxtaposed: the Narrator's situation recalls that of Dante-*personaggio* in canto I, while the landscape is that of canto XIII. In fact, Boccaccio's elision of these two woods is not surprising, since at the beginning of the *Commedia* Dante-*personaggio* is presented as being in a state of self-inflicted spiritual death.

Like Dante, the Narrator turns round in his disorientation: 'e fiso riguardai / per conoscer lo loco dov' io fossi' (*Inf.* IV, 4-6). The 'nebbia sì folta' echoes Dante's description of the atmosphere of Hell: 'ché l'occhio nol potea menare a lunga / per l'aere nero e per la nebbia folta' (*Inf.* IX, 5-6).[24] The infernal atmosphere is reinforced by the next sentence, which combines several Dantean calques:

> La quale [nebbia] subitamente intorniatomi, non solamente il mio valore impedìo, ma quasi d'ogni speranza del promesso bene allo 'ntrare del camino mi fece cadere. (*Corbaccio* 30)

Boccaccio's way and 'valore' are blocked by the thick fog, in the same way that Dante's path is blocked by the three beasts in the opening canto of *Inferno*. The final clause of this sentence consists of a contamination of the final line of *Inferno* II, 'intrai per lo cammino alto e silvestro' (*Inf.* II, 142), with the final line of the inscription on Hell's gate: 'Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch'intrate' (*Inf.* III, 9). A further *dantismo* suggested by this line is *Inferno* I, 54: 'ch'io perdei la speranza de l'altezza'.

The deliberate accumulation of Dantean imagery is increased in the next paragraph, where Boccaccio again combines elements from both *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*. He is trapped, motionless, in the wood, in an attitude which alludes in different ways to Dante's fear. Textually, Boccaccio refers to the moment when Dante-*personaggio* hears the earthquake in *Purgatorio* XX which marks the completion of Statius's

purgation, but there is also a more general reference to Dante's night spent alone in the 'selva oscura':

> E così quivi immobile e sospeso trovandomi, mi parve per lungo spazio dimorare avanti che io, pure atorno guardandomi, potessi conoscere dov'io fossi. (*Corbaccio* 31)

> No' istavamo immobili e sospesi. (*Purg.* XX, 139)

> Allor fu la paura un poco queta, che nel lago del cor m'era durata la notte ch'i' passai con tanta pieta. (*Inf.* I, 19-21)

The moment of spiritual liberation for the Narrator of the *Corbaccio* is at hand, and the concealed allusion to Statius's actual moment of release betrays Boccaccio's intention. In the same way, the reference to Dante's solace in God during his dark night of the soul indicates where we are in the superimposed source text.

Boccaccio's subsequent description of his surroundings is an undisguised synthesis of various *dantismi*:

> Conobbi me dal mio volato essere stato lasciato in una solitudine diserta, aspra e fiera, piena di salvatiche piante, di pruni e di bronchi, senza sentieri o via alcuna, e intorniata di montagne asprissime e sì alte che colla loro sommità pareva toccassono il cielo. (*Corbaccio* 31)

For this section of the dream-vision Boccaccio is drawing almost exclusively on the *Inferno*, repeating and reworking elements from the opening cantos and the wood of the suicides. The three adjectives of the 'solitudine diserta, aspra e fiera' recall Dante's 'selva selvaggia e aspra e forte' (*Inf.* I, 5), with additional echoes of Dante's 'gran diserto' (*Inf.* I, 64), and 'diserta piaggia' (*Inf.* II, 62). The 'salvatiche piante' also allude to the 'selva selvaggia' of *Inferno* I, but the 'pruni e bronchi' then modify the field of reference to the wood of the suicides: 'tante voci uscisser, tra quei bronchi' (*Inf.* XIII, 26); 'colsi un ramicel da un gran pruno' (*Inf.* XIII, 32). The description of the wood as being 'senza sentieri o via alcuna' alludes again to the wood of the suicides: 'noi ci mettemmo per un bosco / che da neun sentiero era segnato' (*Inf.* XIII, 2-3). Boccaccio has already foregrounded the

theme of suicide in the plot of the situational frame, and the Narrator's self-destructive impulses find their physical expression in this barren Dantean wasteland. The high mountains are a commonplace in visionary literature, but in this context they cannot help but recall the 'colle' which Dante is unable to reach in *Inferno* I. While they seem to be intended as hostile symbols of the infernal landscape of this part of the dream-vision, later on in the text they will assume a positive significance and be equated with Dante's Mount Purgatory. Perhaps as a hint of their future symbolism, Boccaccio chooses to describe them by alluding to a contextually appropriate *dantismo*, this time from *Purgatorio*: 'questo monte salío verso 'l cielo tanto' (*Purg.*, XXVIII, 101). The dual significance of the mountains indicates that Boccaccio intends them to be used as dialectical symbols of the choice which the Narrator has to make. Both the *Corbaccio* and the *Commedia* can be seen as examples of 'choice' literature, where the protagonist begins at the crossroads where he must choose his spiritual path, and this is the reason for the contextual closeness between them at this point in the narrative.

Like Dante, the Narrator does not know how he entered this place or how he will escape:

> Né per guardare con gli occhi corporali né per estimazione della mente in guisa alcuna mi pareva dovere *comprendere né conoscere da qual parte io mi fossi in quello entrato*; né ancora – che più mi spaventava – poteva discernere dond'io di quindi potessi uscire e in più dimestichi luoghi tornarmi. (*Corbaccio* 32)

> Io non so ben ridir come i' v'intrai. (*Inf.* I, 10)

The whole episode continues to refer to Dante's confusion and fear when he finds himself in the wood. In the next sentence, however, Boccaccio uses *dantismi* taken from inside the pit of Hell itself, combining them with suggestive *dantismi* from the now commonplace situational introductory cantos of the *Inferno*:

> Mi parea per tutto, dove che io mi volgessi, sentire *mughi, urli* e *strida* <di> diversi e ferocissimi animali. (*Corbaccio* 32)

> novi tormenti e novi tormentati
> mi veggio intorno, come ch'io mi mova
> e ch'io mi volga, e come che io guati. (*Inf.* VI, 4-6)

Like Dante-*personaggio*, the *Corbaccio*'s Narrator turns in response to the horrors which appear to surround him. We will learn that the 'mughi, urli e strida' are the cries of the lovers concealed in the wood (in another link to *Inferno* XIII), but they are also textually and contextually connected to *Inferno* V: 'che mugghia come fa mar per tempesta' (*Inf.* V, 29); 'Quando giungon davanti a la ruina, / quivi le strida, il compianto, il lamento' (*Inf.* V, 34-36). This is another excellent example of Boccaccio's discrimination when selecting his *dantismi*. Here he combines the noises of the 'bufera infernal' in the circle of the lustful with the imagery of the wood of the suicides, in order to comment (ironically or not) on the nature of his *personaggio*'s sin as a lustful would-be suicide. The Narrator and the reader, however, believe at this point that the noises are made by animals. Once again, Boccaccio builds up the expectations of his audience by following the literary precedent of Dante. The most prominent thematic references in the dream-vision thus far have been to *Inferno* I, and it is logical for Boccaccio's audience to assume that the noises of the animals signal the advent of the three beasts (although they are actually silent in *Inferno* I). This, of course, does not happen, but at this stage only the concealed textual *dantismi* reveal the true nature of the place in which the Narrator finds himself.

Boccaccio's deliberate reworking of the beginning of the *Commedia* can be seen most clearly in the description of the appearance of the Guide-figure. The advent of the Guide consists of textual elements of Virgil's appearance to Dante, and Cato's arrival in *Purgatorio* I. He comes from the east of the valley, which is one of the elements in Dante's opening canto (*Inf.* I, 13-18), and is also the direction from which Cato appears: 'Lo bel pianeto che d'amar conforta / faceva tutto rider l'oriente' (*Purg.*, I, 19-20). He is alone, like Virgil and Cato when they approach Dante-*personaggio*, and in appearance particularly resembles Cato, being aged, with a partly-white beard:

> Et ecco [...] venire verso me con lento passo, *uno uomo senza alcuna compagnia*; il quale, per quello ch'io poi più dappresso discernessi, era di statura grande e *di pelle e di pelo bruno, benché in parte bianco divenuto fosse per gli anni*, de' quali

> forse sessanta o più dimostrava d'avere. (*Corbaccio* 34-35; my
> italics)

> vidi presso di me *un veglio solo*,
> degno di tanta reverenza in vista,
> che piú non dee a padre alcun figliuolo.
>   Lunga la barba e *di pel bianco mista*
> *portava*, a' suoi capelli simigliante
> de' quai cadeva al petto doppia lista. (*Purg*. I, 31-36)

The introductory phrase 'et ecco' echoes the presentation of another
white-haired figure in the *Inferno*, Charon: 'Ed ecco verso noi venir
per nave / un vecchio, bianco per antico pelo' (*Inf*. III, 82-83). The
contamination of these two source episodes in the *Commedia* suggests
that Boccaccio may be deliberately confusing the identity of the figure
who approaches. It will be made clear later in the text that the man is
the shade of the husband of the Narrator's beloved, but at this stage
neither the Narrator nor the reader have any idea of who he is.
Boccaccio certainly goes out of his way not to name the figure while
still alerting his readers to the question of his identity. The figure's
nature is uncertain, although the textual allusions suggest, as we have
seen, analogous figures in the *Commedia*.

It is perhaps for this reason that Boccaccio playfully hints that the
Guide might be Dante himself. After all, it is Virgil who rescues
Dante when he is lost in the wood, and Dante-*personaggio*
acknowledges him as his literary master in *Inferno* I: 'Tu se' lo mio
maestro e 'l mio autore' (*Inf*. I, 85). There can be no doubt that
Boccaccio viewed Dante in a similar way to that in which Dante
viewed Virgil, as is shown by his words before the picture of Dante in
the *Amorosa visione*: 'il maestro dal qual io / tengo ogni ben'
(*Amorosa visione* VI, 2-3).[25] The description of the mysterious figure
in the *Corbaccio* allows for the possibility that Boccaccio is
reworking this scene once again:

> Il suo vestimento era lunghissimo e largo e di colore
> vermiglio, come che assai più vivo mi paresse – non ostante
> che tenebroso fosse il luogo dov'io era – che quello che qua
> tingono i nostri maestri. (*Cornbaccio* 35)

The man is wearing a long red cloak, which usually signifies academic dress of the period.[26] Boccaccio comments that the brightness of the man's cloak even outdoes the colours of the Florentine master-dyers. This is possibly a concealed reference to the scene in the *Commedia* where Dante-*personaggio* is himself identified by his characteristic Florentine dress: 'Sòstati tu ch'a l'abito ne sembri / essere alcun di nostra terra prava' (*Inf.* XVI, 8-9).

Perhaps more significantly, the man recalls Boccaccio's description of Dante in his biography of the poet, the *Trattatello in laude di Dante*: 'il colore era bruno, e i capelli e la barba spessi, neri e crespi, e sempre nella faccia malinconico e pensoso' (*Trattatello*, first redaction, 112).[27] The colouring of the Guide in the *Corbaccio* is very similar: 'di pelle e di pelo bruno' (*Corbaccio* 35). In the *Trattatello*, Boccaccio uses his description of Dante's physical appearance to introduce a story about the women of Verona who, seeing Dante in the street, assume that his dark complexion is due to his journey through Hell: 'Non vedi tu come egli ha la barba crespa e il color bruno per lo caldo e per lo fummo che è là giù?' (*Trattatello*, first redaction, 113).

While none of these references to the physical appearance of the Guide can be considered conclusive proof of a possible identification with Dante, Boccaccio was surely aware of the effect that such a description would have on his informed readership. It certainly reinforces the deliberate textual parallels to the beginning of *Inferno* in this part of the *Corbaccio*. The ambiguity of the identity of the Guide figure allows Boccaccio to re-run the opening scenes of the *Commedia* with his own Narrator (or Boccaccio-*personaggio*) replacing Dante-*personaggio* in the infernal wood, and Dante-*personaggio*'s *maestro* Virgil being replaced with Boccaccio's own *dux*, Dante.[28] This conceit is not sustainable beyond the beginning of the dream-vision dialogue, since the real identity of the man is central to the plot of the *Corbaccio* as it finally diverges from the *Commedia*. However, at the close of the *Corbaccio*, the two texts converge again. The chiasmic dream-vision section at the end of the text (number 7 in Hollander's model of the structural frames) returns again to the landscape and events of the *Commedia*. The leave-taking of the Guide is a comically abbreviated version of Virgil's departure in *Purgatorio*, summarized in one sentence by the Narrator: 'Avendomi detto me essere libero e potere di me fare a mio senno' (*Corbaccio* 407). This recalls Virgil's solemn parting words to Dante-*personaggio*:

> libero, dritto e sano è tuo arbitrio,
> e fallo fora non fare a suo senno:
>   per ch'io te sovra te corono e mitrio' (*Purg*. XXVII, 140-42)

From this discussion of Dante's presence in the various narrative frames of the *Corbaccio*, it should be obvious that his importance as source and structural model for this text is much greater than has been previously supposed. It now seems impossible that Dante's textual presence can be explained in terms of automatic or unconscious reference on the part of Boccaccio. The subtlety and sophistication of Boccaccio's contextually linked allusions to his predecessor demonstrate his centrality to the framing sections of the text. As has been shown, the rhetorical *Proemio* and *Explicit* contain textual references to appropriate parts of Dante's oeuvre. The *Proemio* contains references to the highest register texts of Dante's writing, the Latin works and the *Paradiso*. In the same way, the *Explicit* refers to a structurally appropriate place in Dante, the concluding paragraph of the *Vita nuova*, and combines a high register epilogue with a contextually inverted allusion to the Narrator's vow to commemorate the evil widow. The situational frame narrative displays a similar specificity of textual reference, when the lovelorn Narrator suffers according to the Dantean template described in the *Vita nuova*. The dream-vision landscape, and the encounter and leave-taking of the Guide, are all closely based on the *Commedia*.

Boccaccio's selective recourse to the words of Dante at key moments in the narrative frames allows him the opportunity of presenting this work as fundamentally analogous to the *Commedia*. The Dantean allusions in the *Corbaccio* serve as a kind of literary shorthand for the spiritual journey undergone by the Narrator, while the references to the allegorical landscape of the afterlife indicate that the reader is literally on familiar ground in the dream-vision section of the text. However, Boccaccio does not incorporate these key Dantean elements for reasons of literary homage, or even for their generic suitability. The textual *dantismi* are used systematically to set up, and then undermine, the reader's expectations of the narrative. It is for this reason that they are mostly found in the frame stories, at those points where the two works can intersect easily. Boccaccio uses Dante as the basic framework for the *cornici* of the text, in such a way as to provide him with an additional storytelling device: the prejudices of assumption of his audience. Throughout the *Corbaccio*, Boccaccio

alludes to Dante in order to anticipate the next stage of his narrative, a promise which he regularly fails to honour.[29] While it would be facile to suggest that the *Corbaccio* is read in the same way nowadays as it was in the Trecento, nonetheless, it seems likely that both medieval and modern readers have initially approached the *Corbaccio* through the filter of the *Commedia*. Boccaccio, too, composed this book (and all his other vernacular texts, to a greater or lesser extent) through the same Dantean filter. As a result of this, the accumulation of Dantean allusions in the *Corbaccio* has a two-fold effect on the reader. On one level, Boccaccio's contextually appropriate allusions are wholly consonant with the organization of the text. The carefully-selected references reinforce the narrative and suggest additional levels of meaning and points for contemplation. At the same time, however, the effect of using *dantismi* as a kind of narrative short-hand means that when the two texts diverge, the reader's expectations are consistently undermined. The comic disproportion between the Dantean framing devices and the content of the central misogynist section could therefore not have been achieved without the close (if unwitting) assistance of Dante.

NOTES

[1] The first modern study on the subject of Boccaccio-*dantista* was written by Giuseppe Billanovich: 'La leggenda dantesca del Boccaccio: dalla *Lettera di Ilaro* al *Trattatello in laude di Dante*', *Studi danteschi*, 28 (1949), 45-144; first published in his *Prime ricerche dantesche* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1947). Robert Hollander has also published several studies on this topic: for example, 'Imitative Distance (*Decameron* I.1 and VI.10)', in his *Boccaccio's Dante and the Shaping Force of Satire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 21-52; first published in *Studi sul Boccaccio*, 13 (1981-82), 169-98. This article provides a general introduction and detailed bibliography on this question. See also A. Rossi, 'Dante nel prospettivo del Boccaccio', *Studi danteschi*, 37 (1960), 63-169; F. Fido, 'Dante personaggio mancato del libro Galeotto', in *Il regime delle simmetrie imperfette* (Milan: F. Angeli, 1988) (first published under the title 'Dante personaggio mancato del *Decameron*', in *Boccaccio: Secoli di Vita*, ed. by M. Cottino-Jones and E. F. Tuttle (Ravenna: Longo, 1977), pp. 177-89; and C. Delcorno, 'Note sui dantismi nell'*Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta*', *Studi sul Boccaccio*, 11

(1979), 251-94. For a bibliography of minor articles dealing with this subject before Billanovich, see Hollander, *Boccaccio's Dante*, p. 22, n. 3.

[2] Attilio Bettinzoli, in his indispensable studies of Boccaccio's *dantismo*, was the first to devise a systematic model of Dantean reference in Boccaccio. See his articles 'Per una definizione delle presenze dantesche nel *Decameron*. I. I registri "ideologici", lirici, drammatici', *Studi sul Boccaccio*, 13 (1981-82), 267-326; 'Per una definizione delle presenze dantesche nel *Decameron*. II. Ironizzazione e espressivismo antifrastico-deformatorio', *Studi sul Boccaccio*, 14 (1983-84), 241-54.

[3] The most recent study of Boccaccio's dantismo in the *Corbaccio* can be found in R. Mercuri, 'Ritrattazione in limitare di vita e ripresa di motivi danteschi nel *Corbaccio*', in *Letteratura italiana: Storia e geografia*, ed. by A. Asor Rosa, 3 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1987), I. *L'età medievale*, pp. 436-45. Mercuri analyses the 'tessuto semantico' (p. 437) of Dantean motifs and allusions, showing the deliberate consonance between the two works. Robert Hollander considers Boccaccio's *dantismo* in more general terms in *Boccaccio's Last Fiction: Il Corbaccio* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), and also supplies a list of possible textual echoes of Dante in the *Corbaccio* (pp. 59-71). See also Attilio Levi's pioneering early study, *Il Corbaccio e la Divina Commedia* (Turin: Loescher, 1889), which contains the first comparative study of the textual *dantismi* in the *Corbaccio*, including a list of references.

[4] However, Mercuri does not accept that the *Corbaccio* follows the same narrative trajectory as the *Commedia*, believing instead that Boccaccio's book is an inversion of the Dantean journey: 'Il senso delle citazioni dell'*Inferno* e del *Purgatorio* è di rovesciare la direzionalità del viaggio dantesco dall'Inferno al Paradiso terrestre, dove Dante incontra Beatrice: Boccaccio parte dal *locus amoenus* ed edenico per ritrovarsi in un luogo infernale per poi uscirne' (p. 444).

[5] The cryptic subtitle is considered to allude to *Inf.* V, 137: 'Galeotto fu 'l libro e chi lo scrisse'. See, for example, Hollander, *Boccaccio's Dante*, p. 4.

[6] All references to Boccaccio's works are taken from the critical editions published in *Tutte le opere di Giovanni Boccaccio*, 12 vols, ed. by V. Branca (Milan: Mondadori, 1964-). References to the

Corbaccio are taken from Giorgio Padoan's recent critical edition, in *Tutte le opere*, V.ii (Milan: Mondadori, 1994), pp. 413-614.

[7] Hollander, *Boccaccio's Last Fiction*, pp. 2-3. The numbers in round brackets refer to Padoan's numbering of the sections of the text in his edition of the *Corbaccio*, which I will follow throughout the analysis. This differs from the numbering used by Hollander, who follows Nurmela's system. I have placed Nurmela's paragraph numbers in square brackets, following the descriptions of the divisions.

[8] Hollander, *Boccaccio's Last Fiction*, p. 3.

[9] Hollander compares the *Proemio* of the *Decameron* and that of the *Corbaccio* in *Boccaccio's Last Fiction*, pp. 72-75.

[10] See the discussion of the modesty *topos* in E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, revised edn, trans. by W. R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 411-12.

[11] It should be noted that Boccaccio's use of elements from this work in his writing in the *Decameron* and the *Corbaccio* does not necessarily imply that he recognized Dante as its author. For a discussion of Boccaccio's knowledge of the early commentators, and especially of the *Epistle*, see L. Jenaro-Maclennan, *The Trecento Commentaries on the 'Divina Commedia' and the Epistle to Cangrande* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), pp. 105-23 (p. 110). See also C. Paolazzi, 'Notizie di "comedía" e tradizione retorica nella dantesca *Epistola a Cangrande*', in his *Dante e la 'Comedía' nel Trecento. Dall'epistola a Cangrande all'età di Petrarca* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1989), pp. 3-110; R. Hollander, *Dante's Epistle to Cangrande* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993). For a general bibliography, see A. R. Ascoli, 'Epistle to Cangrande', in *The Dante Encyclopedia*, ed. by R. Lansing (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), pp. 348-52.

[12] On genre, see Z. G. Baranski, ' "Tres enim sunt manerie dicendi...". Some Observations on Medieval Literature, "Genre", and Dante', in *'Libri poetarum in quattuor species dividuntur': Essays on Dante and Genre*, Supplement[2] to *The Italianist*, 15 (1995), pp. 9-60.

[13] In her edition of the *Corbaccio*, Natali points out Boccaccio's gloss to *Inf*. II, 6: 'che ritrarrà la mente che non erra'. Boccaccio writes 'Che tratterà, cioè racconterà' (*Esposizioni* II, 1, 10). She also notes the similarity to the colloquial title of Boccaccio's biography of Dante, the *Trattatello*: *Il Corbaccio*, ed. by G. Natali (Milan: Mursia, 1992),

p. 3. Hollander also finds an allusion to *Inf.* I, 8: 'ma per trattar del ben ch'i' vi trovai': *Boccaccio's Last Fiction*, p. 59.

[14] Cassell also suggests *Par.* XXXIII, 34-35, and Hollander extends the reference to *Par.* XXXIII, 36-37: 'Ancor ti priego, regina, che puoi / ciò che tu vuoli, che conservi sani, / dopo tanto veder, li affetti suoi. / Vinca tua guardia i movimenti umani'.

[15] See, for example, Boccaccio's later poems in praise of the Virgin Mary (*Rime* CXVII-CXIX).

[16] See also *Inf.* V, 23-24, where Virgil uses the same words. Cassell, p. 80.

[17] For example: 'Si noti l'andamento sentenzioso dell'incipit, in ossequio alla precettistica delle artes poetriae mediolatine' (Natali, p. 3).

[18] Of course, Boccaccio also draws upon other sources for his actual description of the effects of the plague, chief amongst them Paulus Diaconus's *Historia Langobardorum*. See V. Branca, *Boccaccio medievale*, 3rd edn (Florence: Sansoni, 1998), pp. 381-87.

[19] In the notes to his translation of the *Corbaccio*, Cassell recognizes this phenomenon. However, he does not acknowledge Boccaccio's deliberate intention to invert the *Vita nuova*, which I believe is shown in his careful choice of textual allusions. 'The *Corbaccio*, either by design or accident, forms in the history of Italian letters a kind of anti-*Vita nuova* in which the structures and the spirit of the *stil novo* see their dialectical rejection and antithesis. The author's intention is not to say "that which had never been said of any woman," but to collect all the antifeminist sayings with which one had always slandered every woman': *The Corbaccio*, ed. and trans. by A. K. Cassell (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), p. xxv.

[20] *Vita nuova* XXVIII, 2. Interestingly, this reference occurs at the caesura of the text, a structurally marked position, once again showing Boccaccio's awareness of contextually appropriate reference.

[21] For a detailed analysis of the accumulation of Dantean allusions in this part of the *Corbaccio*, see Mercuri, pp. 436-45. See also Hollander, *Boccaccio's Last Fiction*, pp. 60-61, for an uncommented list of *dantismi* found in this section of the work.

[22] It should be noted that the Earthly Paradise is a recurrent locus for intertextual borrowing throughout Boccaccio's literary career, beginning with the idealized landscape of the *Caccia di Diana*.

[23] The similarities between this passage and the *Commedia* are analysed in detail in Mercuri, pp. 439-40. See also Cassell, Natali, and Padoan's notes to their editions, and the list of *dantismi* in Hollander, *Boccaccio's Last Fiction*, pp. 59-71.

[24] Cassell (p. 83) and Hollander (*Boccaccio's Dante*, p. 60) also suggest a link to the terrace of the wrathful in Purgatorio (especially *Purg.* XV, 142-43 and XVII, 2).

[25] All references to the *Amorosa visione* are taken from Branca's critical edition, in *Tutte le opere*, III, 1-272.

[26] The mysterious Guide-figure conforms to the iconographical depiction of Dante to which we have become accustomed. However, the image of Dante dressed in a red robe and a white head-dress only became generally adopted in the fifteenth century. For a discussion of the disputed portrait of Dante in the Bargello, where the figure wears a reddish robe and which has been attributed to Giotto, see E. H. Gombrich, 'Giotto's Portrait of Dante?', *Burlington Magazine*, v. 121, no. 917 (August 1979), 471-83 (p. 471).

[27] All references to the *Trattatello* are taken from Pier Giorgio Ricci's critical edition, in *Tutte le opere*, III, 423-538.

[28] Dante was described by Boccaccio as 'primus studiorum dux et prima fax' in a letter, now lost. See Ricci's introduction to the *Trattatello*, pp. 425-26.

[29] Hans Robert Jauss has defined this phenomenon as the 'horizon of the expectable'. For his theories of *Rezeptionästhetik*, see his essays 'Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory', in *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. by T. Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), pp. 3-45; 'Theory of Genres and Medieval Literature', ibid., pp. 76-109.