

A decorative graphic consisting of a thin gold circle on the left side. A thick, light olive-green horizontal bar spans across the middle of the slide. On the left end of this bar, there is a large, thick black left square bracket. On the right end, there is a large, thick gold right square bracket.

Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando  
Furioso*

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Please Silence Cell Phones

# Ariosto's Biography(1474–1533 )

- d'Este court of Ferrara; Cardinal Ippolito and Duke Alfonso
- *Orlando Furioso*, 1532: Glorify the Este family as Vergil did Augustus; Merges Epic and Romance in a decidedly modern style.
- Wrote comedies based on Roman models and lyric poetry
- Served as Papal ambassador for Cardinal



# [ Duke Alfonso D'Este ]



# [ New Epic Style ]

- Romance themes of Knights and Ladies and jousting and Love
- Complex narrative with many threads (classical epic had 1 or 2 plot lines)
- Begins *Ab Ovo* instead of *In Medias Res*
- Ambivalent Heroes: Distinction between Muslim Knights and Christian Knights is purely formal; Marfisa is a Saracen warrior who is “good”
- Plot is Fantastical: Comic and light hearted
- Ambiguous Moral Point of View

# Story Summary: Angelica and Madness of Love

- Battle over Angelica and flight
- Meanwhile Muslims lay siege to Paris
- Angelica is freed from Orc by Rinaldo; escapes him and falls in love with a Muslim boy
- Angelica frees Orlando from Cave of Atlas with Ring
- Orlando sees names on trees and goes insane

# Ruggiero and Bradamante: Islam and Christianity Married

- Astolfo on Hippograph ends up in Ethiopia and helps the king free his land of Harpies; then off to the Moon; finds lost things there including Orlando's wits
- Astolfo marches on Saracens with Ethiopian army from South
- Saracens are defeated
- Bradamante marries Ruggiero; He converts
- Ruggiero defeats Rodomonte, the Saracen

# [ Satire on Chivalry ]

- Knightly fighting is satirized; Guns have changed everything.; “Wicked, ugly invention, how did you find a place in human hearts? You have destroyed military glory, and dishonoured the profession of arms: valour and martial skill are now discredited, so that often the miscreant will appear a better man than the valiant. Because of you no longer may boldness and courage go into the field to match their strength.” (Canto 11.22)
- Courtly Love disappears as well: What does it mean to love when a fountain can turn hate to love, love to hate? Angelica gives her love to a shepherd boy instead of the valorous knights (220)

# Love: Angelica and Medoro (canto 19)

- Love is Fickle (p. 11)
- Angelica sent by Muslim king to captivate Christian Knights (Love as a Trap motif); Everyone loves Angelica, except Rinaldo; when he loves her, she no longer loves him;
- Fountain of Hate and Love: What is Love if a well can change it?



# [ Illusion and Realism ]

- This concept in art emerged as a literary theme in the Renaissance, above all in *Orlando Furioso*.
- Courtly dissembling: Narrator claims that “If the heart were open to view as is the face, certain men at court who are great...would change roles with certain others held in low account by their lord...” (canto 19)
- Alcina, a witch, looks like a beautiful, lovely maid. A myrtle tree (Knight, Astolfo) warns Ruggiero, but he still falls prey to her seductions until the Ring of Reason reveals Alcina for what she is.
- Allegory from *Romance of the Rose*; Circe from *Odyssey*; Dido from *Aeneid*

# Alcina the Witch, Reality and Appearance; Ring of Angelica



# Voyage of Discovery: Astolfo's Trip to the Moon!

- Goes to Hell (Descent Motif)
- Flies to “Earthly Paradise” and meets St. John; Orlando is punished for turning from God to Angelica—punished with madness like Nebuchadnezzar
- Flies to Moon to recover Orlando's lost wits (everything that is lost is on the moon); Folly remains on earth and is never ‘lost’; 419
- Restores lost wits to Orlando; St. John reveals the future excellence of Ippolito d'Este



# Narrative Complexity and Irony

- Narrator claims to have lost his own wits and asks who will return them! They are lost in the body of his beloved. (canto 35)
- Canto 7: Narrator Reliability Put in Doubt: 1) Those who travel far are often dismissed as liars; 2) “ignorant throng needs to see with their own eyes and touch with their own hands” 3) I won’t trouble about the “ignorant rabble” 4) clear headed listeners will see the truth of the tale and “to convince you and you alone is all that I wish to strive for, the only reward I seek.”

# [ Complex portrayal of Gender ]

- Female heroes and excellences are known from the past (p. 229); More would be known if not for male envy of female accomplishments.
- Marfisa and Bradamante are female knights (Tradition of female knights from Vergil to Tolkien)
- Island of male haters: male children killed or exiled;
- Story of Dishonorable Wife and Knight; Sees Queen and Hunchback; Shared Wife; p. 348
- Narrative Context creates Irony; 441, Men of Old held women down “as though the fair sex’s honor would cloud their own...”

# Islam and Christianity: Ruggiero's Conversion

- Ruggiero the Muslim knight converts before marrying Bradamante; Estes' are descendents of this pair
- Lost in the sea "Penitently he asked God time and again not to punish him now, and he swore faithfully from the bottom of his heart to become a Christian if he set feet on shore, and never more to take up sword or lance for the Moors against the Christians." 490; Hermit tells him about Saul and the parable of the worker who arrived late.
- The final act of the epic, Ruggiero slays the most powerful Muslim knight, Rodomonte, in language that recalls Aeneas and Turnus

# Summary: Ariosto the Renaissance Poet

- Illusion and Realism
- Complex narrative voice
- Multi-Layered thematic (gender or love)
- Complex, and mostly Respectful treatment of Women and Muslims
- Trumpets new age: end of Knightly Era and beginning of Age of Discovery