

Machiavelli and Ariosto, two ways of understanding madness

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to make an approach to the concept of madness in two significant works of Modernity: *Orlando Furioso* by Ariosto and *Mandrake* by Machiavelli. Although both are authors of Italian Renaissance humanism, they make a different approach to the events of their time, which drive the writing of their works, and which reveal the close relationship between the political and social events of the moment in the case of Machiavelli, and the reference to classical and medieval sources in Ariosto. The methodology used in this work constitutes a documentary review of the sources, in order to establish a parallelism between them.

Key words: Madness, *Orlando furioso*, Ludovico Ariosto, *Mandrake*, Nicolaus Machiavelli.

Resumen

Maquiavelo y Ariosto, dos maneras de entender la locura

El objetivo del presente trabajo consiste en realizar una aproximación al concepto de locura en dos obras significativas de la Modernidad: *Orlando Furioso* de Ariosto y *La mandrágora* de Maquiavelo. Si bien ambos son autores del humanismo renacentista italiano, realizan un abordaje diferente de los acontecimientos de su tiempo, que impulsan la escritura de sus obras, y que develan la estrecha relación entre los sucesos políticos y sociales del momento en el caso de Maquiavelo, y la remisión a las fuentes clásicas y medievales en Ariosto. La metodología empleada en este trabajo constituye una revisión de tipo documental de las fuentes, para lograr establecer un paralelismo entre ellas.

Palabras clave: locura, *Orlando furioso*, Ludovico Ariosto, *La mandrágora*, Nicolás Maquiavelo.

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§ 1. Introduction

Madness is a subject that has been studied over time, both directly and indirectly by different authors. Whether we study it from philosophy or literature, it must always take into account the context in which the author in question registers and writes, which will explain why he understands it in a certain way.

In this work we must address the concept of madness in Ariosto with his work *Orlando furioso* and in Machiavelli with the *Mandrake*. Both are authors of Italian Renaissance humanism (Capelli, 2007), but with different ways of understanding the reality that crosses them, which is reflected in their works. Hence, we will try to characterize the construction of madness that Ariosto does in his main character Orlando, through the remission that he makes permanently on certain classical and medieval sources (Longhitano Piazza, 2013: 20; Chiclana, 1996: 147-148). This madness is characterized as a loss of reason for love (García, 2019: 45; Teixidó Vilar, 2013: 24), by Orlando, and paradoxically by an excess of evidence (Abate, 2013: 84), when he finds that Angelica is not the innocent woman he imagined, but an individualistic woman who for convenience has married Medoro. In order to better understand the theme addressed, first, we will make a brief approach to the life of Ariosto and his work *Orlando furioso*, then give way to the analysis on the construction of madness in said work.

As for Machiavelli, we will take the concept of madness that appears in his work the *Mandrake*, and that characterizes through the figure of Callimachus, a rich and ambitious young man, devoid of any scruples, who is willing to do anything (Guerra Díaz, 2013: 297) for having the beautiful Lucretia. Through the characterization of the procedure carried out by Callimachus, it can be evidenced the crisis of values and the

corruption that is lived at that time (Dos Reis, 2019: 413), as well as the role of the Church in it (Unzúe, 2005: 7; Sforza, 2021: 128).

As in the case of Ariosto, we will recover relevant data from the life of Machiavelli and make an approximation to the structure and argument of the *Mandrake*. Later, we will go into the study of the construction of madness in the work of the Florentine.

As can be seen, the link between the two authors is through the approach of the concept of madness that makes each of them, that is, through the particularity with which each one carries out this construction, allows to establish a parallel to determine the causes that originate it, whether the socio-historical context or an individual feeling.

It should be noted that the question of madness is a theme that has been addressed for many years by multiple scholars as far as Ariosto and *Orlando furioso*; not so, the case of madness in the *Mandrake* of Machiavelli, which makes this link between authors relevant to expand the study of the subject, mainly in the case of the Florentine. We believe it is necessary to make this approach to the concept of madness in both Ariosto and Machiavelli, because despite being contemporaries they offer a different view of their time.

§ 2. Brief approach to Ariosto and his *Orlando furioso*

Ludovico Ariosto was born in Italy around 1474, he was an author of the Renaissance, which as such crossed by the humanist model¹, took to classical sources to revive the medieval genre known as «chivalric poem». It should be noted that Humanism had as its main characteristic the rediscovery of classical antiquity from a new approach and in order to show its value in this contemporaneity. According to this model, «man approaches the classics because he wants to learn from them a human lesson, not only rhetoric, of unsurpassed historical value. He strives to see in the documents of that ancient culture the human experience that inspired them.» (Chiclana, 1996: 148).

Orlando furioso stands within the framework of this humanist model and in it can be observed some reference to other sources, both directly and indirectly. Among such

¹ Ariosto not only had a humanist formation but also a Latin neoplatonic formation.

sources we can count Virgil, Ovid, Catullus and Horace, as well as Dante, Petrarch, Boiard, Erasmus, among others; who act as a model of inspiration and writing, and:

Although they are not always present as a textual quotation, they cast their shadow throughout the episode: what is evoked is not only the theme but also the tone, style, formal aspects, some idea that was behind the text or some symbolic value that the text in question covered within contemporary culture to Ariosto. [Longhitano Piazza, 2013: 28]

Therefore, we must find throughout the reading of the poem, the presence of both classical and medieval sources, approached from a humanist perspective. We can say with this, that Ariosto renews the chivalric poem (medieval) and adapts it to the tastes and interests of humanism, and regarding this version obtained, Machiavelli himself after reading it will point out «the whole poem is beautiful and, in many passages, admirable» (Maquiavelo, 2010: 352).

Among this recovery from classical sources carried out by Ariosto, we think it is necessary to point out that there is one that underlies the whole story of the *Orlando furioso* and is the *In Praise of Folly* of Erasmus. It should be noted that for Erasmus there is not a single type of madness, but describes on the one hand, a type of madness that allows the soul to free itself from worries and generate joy; and on the other, a type of madness linked to the evil furor, from which men should protect themselves, since it only brought with it a desire for war, a thirst for money and blinding emotions (Erasmus, 2014: 191-192). While it is recommended to be cautious and protect yourself from madness, even for the wisest is a difficult task. Orlando was the wisest of knights, but in spite of this, he becomes the perfect victim of an unbridled process of madness, girded by the pain of unhappiness that makes him merge into a brutal and indomitable madness.

Focusing properly on *Orlando furioso*, it is necessary to point out that it is a poem that Ariosto begins writing around 1502 while serving Cardinal Hipólito, who financed its publication around 1516. In its first edition consisting of forty chants approximately 1300 copies were published. In the reissue of 1521 although the number of chants is maintained, Ariosto performs a linguistic revision incorporating new verses. In 1532, a new edition consisting of forty-six chants was published.

Regarding its structure, we should note that it is related to the tradition of the chivalrous epic poem and that «is presented as a plot continuation of *Orlando in love* with Matteo Boiardo (1441-1494), a poem that had been left unfinished by the arrival of Charles VIII in Italy and then, by the death of the author» (García, 2019: 44-45). It will be the starting point of the *Orlando furioso* that left Boiardo. So, Charlemagne puts Angelica in the custody of Duke Namor to prevent his knights from being distracted during the battle for the defense of Paris, and this takes advantage of that moment to flee, which starts the countless adventures, encounters, escapes, etc., facts that constitute the basis of the work.

Another question to consider regarding the structure of the poem is that, in the first part of the poem, it can be observed that a search of persons and objects is given; while in the second, the search is transferred to knowledge. This partition in two of the poem (Zatti, 1998: 9), makes it move away from the epic model and becomes more novel.

Finally, as far as the title *Orlando furioso* is concerned, it is directly related to the madness of love that runs through Orlando, a knight who loses his mind out of love, when he learns that Angelica has fallen in love with Medoro, a young Saracen soldier.

§ 3. Building madness in the *Orlando furioso*

The concept of madness has been addressed by different artists, thinkers and writers throughout history, such that according to the historical moment in which it is analyzed we must have multiple constructions or definitions of this concept. In view of this, Foucault points out that: «at the same time the literary, philosophical and moral themes concerning madness are of different species» (Foucault, 1998: 19).

In the epoch of the Renaissance², the predominant figure of the one who carries the madness, that is, the madman, is presented «linked to the phenomenon of self-understanding, being the madman a key character that, through irony, enabled man to know himself, by pointing out and denouncing the defects and vices of the human condition» (Teixidó Vilar, 2013: 220).

² Cultural phenomenon that occurs during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Western Europe, which takes up and revalues the principles of Classical Antiquity in different disciplines pertaining to the arts, natural and human sciences (Burke, 2018).

However, *Orlando furioso* is written within the framework of a certain culture and society, so it is necessary to «understand the general features of the era in which it occurred» (García, 2019: 46), to understand the central topics that cross the work. As we pointed out earlier, the work is framed in the Renaissance period and it is necessary to add, that underlies in Ariosto a critique of the courtly society of that moment, a theme very recurrent throughout this period (Santoro, 1975: 335). The society to which Ariosto will allude then, must show itself as «vain, interested, flattering, traitor, greedy for power, enjoyment and wealth» (Teixidó Vilar, 2013: 230). The product of Ariosto's reading of this society is the way in which it characterizes madness.

Placing ourselves in the central theme of this research, which aims to denote madness from both the eyes of Ariosto and Machiavelli, we will take in the case of Ariosto the episode of the madness of Orlando, which finds its most characteristic point in chants XXIII and XXIV. It should be noted that, although in modern Italian, the adjective furious³ refers to a state of much anger; in the work of Ariosto, alludes to an exacerbated madness. In *Orlando furioso* «all the characters of the poem are more or less affected by envy, jealousy or frustration: feelings that, in the eyes of Ariosto, are forms of madness more or less acute»⁴ (Ferretti, 2008: 63); but in Orlando himself, madness becomes a little more intense and comes to represent a form of absolute love madness.

Orlando presents himself in the play as a wise, strong and therefore perfect gentleman. So, his madness becomes a paradigmatic question that runs through the whole work. However, in this work we are interested in addressing only the chants XXIII and XXIV⁵, since they trigger the madness of Orlando as such, central theme of the work that culminates in the chant XXVII, in the episode of the Discord.

Now, already in chant XXIII, in octave 100, it is pointed out that Orlando arrives after wandering for a couple of days to a meadow, in which he stops to rest:

³ From the Latin *furens*.

⁴ Own translation from Italian.

⁵ It should be noted that in previous chants indirect mentions are made to the madness of Orlando, as is the case of the chant 1, 2nd octave: «I will say at the same time of Orlando a certain thing / that neither in prose nor in verse has been said: / who by such a wise man was had / became by furious and mad love, / if that which is almost the same has me / and that I file my wit for moments / allows me to be granted / the one that suffices to finish the promised» (Ariosto, 2019: 28).

The crazy race of the horse
of the infidel rampant through the forest
made Orlando wander for no use
for a couple of days, no prints.
He came at last by a crystal clear river
to whose side a meadow bloomed
colourfully coloured
and of leafy trees ornate.
[Ariosto, 2019: 489]

And looking around him is that he reads the names together of Angelica and Medoro, carved into the branches and trees that surrounded him, which leaves him astonished and tries to convince himself that it is not the same Angelica, but another:

Go to Angelica and Medoro with a hundred knots
and in a hundred different linked logs.
All the letters are burning nails
with whom Love cleaves his heart.
A thousand ways try not to give credit
to which, to their regret, their eyes saw,
and wishes to believe it was another Angelica
who wrote her name on the barks.
[Ariosto, 2019: 489-490]

However, despite his initial denial, Orlando clearly recognizes the letter of Angelica and despite this, he tries to believe, deceiving himself, that the presence of the name Medoro, is nothing less than a fictitious name that ultimately alludes to himself:

He says later: The truth is that this letter
I know her and I've seen her many times.
Medoro will be an imaginary name
she has chosen to appoint me.
With this explanation so far away
of truth, the troubled Orlando
deceived himself and comforted him
feeding false hopes.
[Ariosto, 2019: 490]

In the following octave (105), Orlando characterized with an attitude of suspicion and uncertainty, is compared to a bird, which falls prisoner in a net, which is expressed in the text as follows:

[...] like the unsuspecting fallen bird
in the league or the net, that when you bat
with more force the wings to be freed,
more and more entangled in deception.
[Ariosto, 2019: 490]

This metaphor finds a certain similarity with a fragment of Ovid's work, which leads us to think that it is inspired or supported by the *Metamorphosis*, more precisely in book XI, when it describes a similar situation in which a bird is captured by a hunter:

[...] and just as when with the ties, those that astute hid the bird-keeper, his paw has entangled the bird and feels it retained, dueling blows are given and shaking tightens the ties with his movement. [Ovidio, s. f.: 347-348]

With the above, we can demonstrate the reference to classical sources, which we point out at the beginning of this section. Now, continuing with the events narrated in chant XXIII, we can observe Orlando entering a cave in which its walls are covered by the names of the lovers, Angelica and Medoro, written with coal and carved with knives. In addition, at the entrance of this cave there is a poem written by Medoro in Arabic, which Orlando clearly understands, since he knows this language as well as Latin itself. The poem alludes to the beauty of both the place and Angelica lying in her arms, which with the phrase «here lay naked in my arms» (present in the eighth 109), resembles the *Decameron* of Boccaccio in VIII, 7: «*lei potere ignuda nelle braccia tenere*» (Longhitano Piazza, 2013: 23). Orlando reads the poem six times, longing to be wrong, in such deep pain that he is left without a voice and cry to express what he feels. Orlando manages to come to himself, and in his mind there are only two possibilities, that someone wrote that to make him mad with jealousy or to dishonor Angelica:

After some time he recovered
imagining it was all fake:

I wanted to think someone wanted
to cover his lady's name with infamy,
or intended to cause his death
with the severe torment of jealousy;
and that, whoever it was, with great
forged the handwriting of his beloved.
[Ariosto, 2019: 492]

Already here we can establish that Orlando is not in his right mind, he tries to deceive himself not to get lost, but little by little he is sinking into a deep pit of mental darkness, which completely detaches him from reality. As Erasmus of Rotterdam rightly points out, «Nothing-they say-is sadder than madness. But stupidity finished off, either it is close to madness or it is, rather, itself madness. Well, being crazy, what else is it, if not misguided?» (Erasmus, 2014: 191).

Recovering a little, Orlando rides his horse and goes to the nearest town, where he stays in a house, in which Medoro happened to have been when he was badly injured. There in search of peace, Orlando finds more pain and torment, as the walls, doors and windows, are written entirely with the names of the lovers. Orlando cannot sleep, so the pastor who is there tells the story of two lovers who stayed there and who even married there. The pastor ends his account (octave 120):

[...] showing Orlando the bracelet
that Angelica gave to his departure
for your hospitality and kindness.
[Ariosto, 2019: 493]

The fact that the pastor showed the bracelet to Orlando could allude to a typical element of classical theatre: the object of recognition. So far we can see several classic references present in the work of Ariosto, and this is not only found in the episode of madness but in most of the story.

Continuing with the narration, one observes an Orlando out of himself, who realizes that he lies in the same bed in which Angelica and Medoro lay. He retreats to the forest hating not only the bed, the house where the lovers were; but also the shepherd himself. He abandons herself to crying and wanders through the jungle, amid constant

cries and sobs. He expresses a desperate lament⁶ and after it, his fury is unleashed⁷, which finds him in his place of departure: the grotto. After the fury in Orlando was unleashed, an enormous force was also unleashed on him, which he used to destroy the inscription and everything containing the name of Angelica and Medoro. Tired and sad, he lay on the ground and for three days with his corresponding nights, he lay there without even eating. On the fourth day, according to the account in octave 133, Orlando, fully enraged, tore off his armor:

Here he threw the helm, there the shield,
beyond the back and the breastplate;
I sum it up, in short: all his weapons
were scattered throughout the forest.
And she tore her dresses open
the hirsute belly, the chest and the backs.
That's how his great madness began,
more terrible and horrific than any.
[Ariosto, 2019: 495]

Totally naked and due to his madness, he starts to pluck pines, elms and oaks as if it were a bunch of fennel. Here we can find a certain resemblance to Boiardo in *Orlando in love*⁸. After this story Ariosto concludes chant XXIII.

Once the analysis of chant XXIII is finished, we will focus on chant XXIV, which completes the episode of Orlando's madness. In this chant at the beginning, in his prologue, Ariosto expresses in the narrator's voice:

[...] my mind is in a lucid interval,
and I intend, as soon as I can,
to rest by leaving the ball,
but I won't be able to do it quickly,
because evil has penetrated to the bone.
[Ariosto, 2019: 497]

⁶ Counterpart of the poem written by Medoro which was alluded to earlier on page 8.

⁷ It could be said that with the term «fury» we do not allude to a single emotion but to several: anger, rage and rage.

⁸ See chant III, octave 29.

With these words according to Ferretti «the narrator admits that his wisdom is only provisional, since the evil of love has penetrated him to the bone» (Ferretti, 2008: 73)⁹. Love is then represented as the loss of oneself in that desire to love the other. In octave 4, Ariosto returns to the madness of Orlando, when he divests of his armor and clothes. He goes on to narrate the slaughter of shepherds and peasants that Orlando carries out in his madness. They only tried to stop Orlando and with it they find death.

The following narrates the wildlife in which Orlando is immersed, hunting and eating raw animals, attacking both horses, oxen, as well as anyone who crosses him: «he killed two dozen people who fell into his hands without order...» (Ariosto, 2019: 498). Madness is represented and linked to the return to the instinctive and wild. The attack that Orlando seeks against the horses and oxen reminds us of the madness that takes hold of Áyax, and with this, some influence of Sophocles is evident.

Now, to conclude this section, we must point out that it is possible to see how we postulate previously, that there is a great influence of classical and medieval sources in Ariosto, which are reflected throughout his work, product of his marked humanist formation. Thanks to them, Ariosto makes an excellent characterization of the madness in the character of Orlando.

§ 4. Machiavelli and the presence of madness in the *Mandrake*

Nicolaus Machiavelli was born in the city of Florence in 1469, in a family from the small nobility. He excelled in multiple disciplines since he was a diplomat, military, public official, political philosopher and even writer. He is known as the father of Modern Political Science and his humanist formation stands out, which in Italy at the time was the best preparation for political life. Thus, all his knowledge and experience acquired in his studies and in life itself, as well as his interests and desires, can be reflected in his works (Skinner, 1984: 14-15).

Among the many works that the Florentine wrote, is the *Mandrake* (1518), his best known comedy, which is considered to have a foundational role in the history of comic theatre (Sforza, 2021: 116), and «whose plot deals with Callimachus' eagerness to achieve Lucretia's love, with the corresponding series of vicissitudes focused on

⁹ Own translation from Italian.

different deceptions on the part of the characters» (Guerra Díaz, 2013: 297-298). The structure of the work responds to «a piece in five acts» (Dos Reis, 2019: p.407), in which beyond the story itself that constitutes comedy, underlies according to many scholars a political meaning (Lettieri, 2019: 44), where each character has some similarity with real figures of contemporary Florence (Bausi, 2018: 94).

Another issue not minor with regard to the *Mandrake* is the influence that is given in it by the *Decameron* (1353) of Boccaccio. Among the multiple references that can be counted we are interested to mention that present in the story VI of the Day III in Riccardo Minutolo, who «like Callimachus of the Mandrake manages, by means of a subterfuge, to become the lover of Catella, a young woman who did not think at all to deceive her husband» (Sforza, 2021: 120).

Now, after briefly presenting Machiavelli and his work, we must focus on analysing the subject proposed in this article, that is, the madness as addressed by Machiavelli in the *Mandrake*. Precisely we will take as a central point the obsessive, calculating and insane personality of Callimachus to carry out his purpose: to hold in his arms the beautiful Lucretia.

To begin with, we should note that Callimachus, after living in Paris for more than twenty years, returns to his hometown of Florence, encouraged by the stories he hears from one of his guests, Camilo Calfucci, with whom he has a discussion about where the most beautiful women were, in Italy or France. He could not comment on Italian women, since he had gone from a very young age to live in France. Some defended the French, but Camilo defended the Italians. To such an extent, he angrily expressed that even if all Italian women were ugly, a relative of his with her beauty would save the honor of others. This is how Camillus spoke of Lucretia, to which he dedicated countless praises, not only about her beauty, but also about her manners, which left everyone perplexed. Callimachus states as a result that:

It aroused in me such a desire to see her that, leaving aside any other decision, without thinking more neither in the wars nor in the peace of Italy, I prepared to come here. When I arrived, I found that Madame Lucretia's fame is much less than the truth, which happens very rarely, and I felt so much desire to be with her that I cannot find peace. [Machiavelo, 2010: 11]

Although Callimachus is young, beautiful and rich, something that makes him a good match for any woman; he encounters an obstacle, Lucretia is married and seems to be a very respectful woman of the institution of marriage. Her husband is Messer Nicias Calfucci, a wealthy lawyer, older than herself and whom everyone finds quite stupid, with whom she has not been able to have children so far. This must be an opportunity for Callimachus, who, obsessed with having her, begins to devise a plan to deceive Nicias and Lucretia herself, in order to enter her bed.

In order to achieve his goal of «conquering» Lucretia, Callimachus, being the possessor of a great fortune, hired the services of the charlatan and astute Lugurio. With this he prepares to draw up a plan and for this he counts on the help of his faithful servant, Sirius.

It is public knowledge, as we mentioned, that what overshadows the happiness in the marriage of Nicias and Lucretia is the lack of children, which worries Nicias very much, who would do anything to get Lucretia pregnant, even paying a high price for it. With this in mind, Lugurio devises a plan that is to the liking of Callimachus, who also in his desperation, is willing to do anything to keep Lucretia in his arms.

The plan devised by Lugurio is to make Nicias believe that Callimachus is a great and respected doctor, who has in his possession a potion made from the mandrake root, which allows the woman who takes it to become pregnant. However, taking this potion has a deadly effect on the man who sleeps with her. This is why a third party is needed to supplant the husband (Nicias), absorb the harmful effects of the dose and that is where Callimachus comes into action. Clearly it is a lie, that after the ingestion of the potion these deadly effects are triggered; but Nicias does not know it and with a certain ingenuity agrees to provide his wife with the potion of mandrake.

The plan is going perfectly, but it is worrying for Callimachus the unwavering moral attitude of Lucretia, so they need someone to support them, even if that person does not know the true intentions of Callimachus. This is how they get the necessary support from Sóstrata, the mother of Lucretia, who suggests to her that she drink from the potion and sleep with the stranger, which although it is a great sacrifice is necessary for her to conceive with Nicias. In addition, she emphasizes the fact that the stranger will die after having sex with her, as if that should relieve her. Despite Sóstrata's attempts to convince Lucretia, she maintains a persistent refusal, so she is

brought before Fray Timothy, a very influential and ambitious friar, who conspires with Callimachus, Lugurius and Syrus in exchange for a high fee. This is how by making use of her endowment of religious authority, she convinces Lucretia to do what was required to give a son to her husband, assuring him that his action is for a good cause, being free of all moral and/or spiritual guilt, and so he must express to him that: «the end must be considered in all things» (Maquiavelo, 2010: 43). Finally, this convinces Lucretia.

Prior to finalizing the plan, Callimachus was enveloped by great uncertainty, and his fears intensified, in the face of which he stated that:

The more I've grown hopeful, the more I've grown fearful. Miserable of me! Is it possible for me to live in the midst of so many anxieties and disturbed by these fears and hopes? [...] The simplicity of Messer Nicias makes me wait; the prudence and obstinacy of Lucretia make me fear. ¡Woe to me, I find no peace anywhere! Sometimes I try to overcome, rebuke myself for this madness of love, and I say, What are you doing? Have you gone mad? When you get it, what will you do? [Maquiavelo, 2010: 47]

Callimachus continues to lament, wandering in his thoughts and thinking aloud. He needs to manifest what he feels, as his inner feeling is devouring him:

Everywhere I feel the desire to be once with her that I feel altered from the bottom of my feet to my head: my legs tremble, my viscera shake, my heart jumps in my chest, my arms loosen, my tongue is muted, my eyes dazzle, my brain is spinning. [Maquiavelo, 2010: 48]

When the time comes to execute the plan, Callimachus disguises himself, puts on a false nose given to him by Lugurio and with an exaggerated gesture twists his mouth, so that Nicias does not recognize him. This is how he is introduced by Nicias himself to his wife's bedroom, believing it to be the unknown he agreed to capture so that he would bear the harmful effects of the mandrake potion. He knows nothing, that everything was a macabre plan in which he participated without being aware of it, all for Callimachus to enter the chambers of Lucretia. Once there, the young Callimachus reveals his true identity to Lucretia and tells her his entire plan, arising from his great love for her. Lucretia, knowing in detail that all have conspired against her, her

husband, her mother and even Brother Timothy, who missed her principles, agrees to Callimachus' wishes.

It is possible to observe that the way in which Machiavelli characterizes the madness of Callimachus, has a deeper background, than simply obtaining the love of Lucretia. Rather, it responds to the problems raised in its time such as the excessive corruption of the ruling classes as well as the institution of the Church, which shows a certain situation of decay at that time. Already in the Foreword of the *Mandrake* it is stated that:

The prize that is expected is that each
stand aside and mock, speaking ill of
what he sees or hears.
On it depends, certainly,
I want to be with you
the present century of ancient virtue,
for the people,
When I see that everyone fails,
is neither weary nor yearning
make a work with a thousand difficulties,
wind or fog.
[Maquiavelo, 2010: 7]

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This fragment speaks of a degenerate virtue, which reaffirms the previously mentioned, about which Machiavelli characterizes through his work the moment in which he lives, a moment of decadence in full Renaissance. This is because:

To the degeneration of the forms of government eaten away by corrupt practices is added the economic decay (which will only become more pronounced as the commercial axis moves inexorably from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic Ocean as a result of the discovery of America), the military decadence, widely proclaimed by the author in other works and undoubtedly, the social decline denounced in all his literary productions. [Unzúe, 2005: 4]

Now, in the madness there is a certain link with political problems; but also, a certain link can be observed with the individual's unstoppable desire. This is evidenced in the fact that Callimachus not only has cravings, desire and fear about

what will happen with Lucretia. All the time he thinks about her, he wants the time to come when they can finally be together, he becomes desperate for her. This makes it resort to an unusual plan, linked to deception and fraud, buying wills and taking advantage of the ingenuity of those involved. Here is unmasked the true madness, which resides in the fact that the individual in question is able to commit the most vile and amoral acts in order to obtain what he desires.

§ 5. Conclusion

In this work we address the concept of madness from two Italian authors, both belonging to Renaissance humanism: Ariosto and Machiavelli. On the one hand, we evidenced the construction made by Ariosto around this term in the figure of Orlando, and there we find that it performs a recovery of classical sources in the elaboration of his work. On the other hand, we highlight the relevance that Machiavelli gives to the political and social situation of his time, which he considers plays a conditioning role in the formation of people's character and attitudes. Therefore, it is possible to see how the madness in Callimachus is not reduced only to the loving plane but has a social background of the moment.

It can be clearly seen that both authors approach madness in different ways and this is because, although Machiavelli is a humanist and takes on the ancients, he does not approach them as the rest of the Renaissance humanists did. Machiavelli, while making use of concepts and works of antiquity, does so to be able to think and analyse his time. Hence, his works make multiple references to ancient writers and philosophers, but only through the model of reception, that is, taking «Antiquity in a creative way, transforming what it appropriated» (Burke, 2018: 15). A clear example of this reference to ancient sources is his work *L'asino* (1517), which is a version of *The Golden Ass* of Apuleius.

Although in the case of Ariosto there are several studies that analyse madness from different perspectives; in the case of Machiavelli these are a little limited, which gives some relevance to this article. Like the fact of addressing both authors in the same work in are of the problems posed. It should be noted that while this conceptual parallelism is novel, there are other types of daily approaches that link Machiavelli

directly with Ariosto before. Among them, mention may be made of a certain relationship of tension between the authors at the time, as evidenced by Machiavelli in his letter to Ludovico Alamanni dated December 17, 1517, where he laments not having been named by Ariosto among the great poets he mentions in *Orlando furioso*. This situation the Florentine lives as a snub that makes him Ariosto, and therefore expresses «he has made me in his Orlando something that I will not do in my Ass» (Maquiavelo, 2010: 352).

To conclude, it is necessary to point out that this work does not exhaust the investigation but allows us to think from the raised future questions to develop in future investigations.

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