Mnemosine in London: The Art of Memory and Giordano Bruno's Spaccio de la bestia trionfante and Degli eroici furori

By the time that Bruno arrived in England in the spring of 1583 he had already published three treatises on mnemotechnics in Paris: a treatise on the art of Ramon Lull, De compendiosa architectura & complemento artis Lulli, the De umbris idearum, and the Cantus Circaeus all published in 1582 by Gilles Gorbin. Shortly after his arrival in London John Charlewood published his Recens et completa Ars Reminiscendi, which included the Sigillus sigillorum and Explicatio triginta sigillorum. It should be no surprise then that the Italian works which Bruno published in England – the works which we now refer to collectively as the Dialoghi Italiani – should bear the imprint of this flurry of mnemotechnical thought. They also help us to understand aspects of Bruno's mnemotechnical practice which are left largely implicit in the predominantly technical treatises in which his methods are presented. Rather than representing fundamentally different kinds of enterprise – as has sometimes been maintained – I would argue that the Italian dialogues of Bruno's London period, in which he sets out his nova filosofia and the mnemotechnical treatises, are linked both by a common set of metaphysical assumptions and by their diverse but complementary expression of Bruno's search for a technique which could harness both the intellect and the imagination in order to transform man's ethical and intellectual capacities.

Bruno's art of memory, as I have argued elsewhere, was conceived by Bruno as a method of ordering the intellect (a logic), a means of effecting a moral transformation of the subject (an ethical art) and as a form of magic.1

In fact these three aims are seen by Bruno as complementary, and are united in Bruno's overarching project: the perfection of man and the transformation of the self into a state of god-like being. In the theoretical introduction to De umbris idearum — the dialogus praelibatorius apologeticus — Bruno suggests that while his art of memory could be used effectively by the rude and untutored it held particular benefits for those who were versed in the "metaphysics and doctrines of the Platonists."² Practitioners of different intellectual abilities could utilise it according to their capacities ("pro meritorum capacitatisque facultate").³ The end of the "higher and [more] general" form of his art was the "ordering all the operations of the soul" — by which he understood not only the intellectual operations governed by traditional logic, but also appetite (and thus ethics). It was, in fact, seen as "the origin of many methods" which are compared to "various organs" by which one could "explore (or discover) artificial memory".⁴ The dialogus praelibatorius apologeticus is followed by a section entitled the "Thirty intentions of the shadows" (Triginta intentiones umbrarum) in which Bruno outlines what is basically a Neoplatonic theory of knowledge derived from Plotinus (as schematised by Ficino). Essentially, Bruno argues, the original principle of the universe — the One — propagates itself like light, descending through increasingly imperfect forms until it reaches the lowest degree of matter. The universe is subject to a "constant movement from the Light towards the darkness [of matter]" ("demigratio . . . continua a luce ad tenebras").⁵ As the "Light" descends it diversifies, "progressively descending from supersubstantial unity by way of increasing multiplicity into infinite multiplicity."⁶ The forms descend from the One to the many by means of an analogue series of similarities. There is an "order and connection in all things such that inferior bodies follow intermediate bodies,

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³ Bruno, De umbris, 22.
⁵ "unum sit universi entis corpus, unus ordo, una gubernatio, unum principium, unus finis, unum primum, unum extraemum; cumque — ut non ignoraverunt Platonicerorum principes — demigratio detur continua a luce ad tenebras" (Bruno, De umbris, 31).
⁶ "sensim ab unitate illa supersubstantiali decedentia, per crescentem multitudinem, in infinitam multitudinem — ut Pythagoreorum more loquar" (Bruno, De umbris, 28).
and intermediate bodies follow superior bodies."7 This analogous series, the "ladder of nature"8 or "golden chain"9 of resemblances, extends "from the superessential itself to the essences, from the essences to those things which exist, from those to their vestiges, images, simulacra and shadows"10 which can be found in matter — which bears "the final vestige of it from the light which is called the First Act"11 — and in the human mind, where the shadows exist in a superior form, because "something is better apprehended by means of the species which is in the intellect than by means of the species which is in the physical subject, since it is more immaterial."12 By re-ascending along the chain of intermediaries, the soul can raise itself towards superior things: "to the sound of Apollo's harp inferior things are gradually recalled to superior things, and inferior things acquire the nature of superior things through intermediary things."13 The aim of the art is to allow its practitioner to use inferior things to raise the soul upwards towards divinity. "Let us resolutely aim for that [goal]," says Bruno, "like those who, through remarkable operations of the soul, have the ladder of nature before their eyes, let us always strive to proceed from motion and multiplicity, through inward operations, towards stasis and unity."14 It is the cultivation of these "inward operations" which is the primary purpose of Bruno's memory art. It is an instrument designed to help the mind trace the multitudinous species of the universe back towards the unity of the superessential form.

**Spaccio**

It is difficult to read the *Spaccio della bestia trionfante*, presented to Sir Philip Sidney in 1584, without connecting its themes and structure to the mnemotechnical schemes of Bruno's sojourn in Paris. Bruno offers

7. "Cum vero in rebus omnibus ordo sit atque connexio, ut inferiorta mediis et media superioribus succedant corporibus" (Bruno, *De umbris*, 29).
10. "ab ipso superessentiali ad essentias, ab essentiis ad ipsa quae sunt, ab iis ad eorum vestigia, imagines, simulacra, et umbras excursus" (Bruno, *De umbris*, 28-9).
11. "ultimum eius vestigium a luce quae primus actus dictit" (Bruno, *De umbris*, 27).
13. "ad sonum cytharae Apollinis ad superna gradatim revocentur inferna, et inferiora per media superiorum subeant naturam" (Bruno, *De umbris*, 30).
14. "illud obnixe nobis est intendendum, ut pro egregiis animi operationibus naturae schalam ante oculos habentes, semper a motu, et multitudine, ad statum et unitatem per intrinsecas operationes tendere contendamus" (Bruno, *De umbris*, 31).
the English courtier the "numbered and arranged seeds of his moral philosophy, not in order that he know and understand them as something new, but in order that he examine, consider and judge them . . ." Bruno's intention is, he says, to

[treat] moral philosophy according to the internal light that the divine Intellectual Sun has radiated and still radiates within me, first to set forth certain preludes, in the manner of musicians; to sketch certain occult and confused outlines and shadows, like the painters; to weave and straighten out certain threads, like the weavers; and to lay certain deep, profound, and dark foundations, like the great builders.

This he does by "placing in a certain number and order all of the first forms of morality, which are the capital virtues and vices." This orderly arrangement of first forms takes the shape of a Jovian allegory in which a "repented Jove, whose heaven was full to overflowing with as many beasts as vices, according to the forms of forty eight famous images" - that is, with some variations, the constellations as they were known to Ptolemy. In this allegory, the beasts are banished from heaven to "certain regions on earth" and their places re-occupied by the virtues which had been "long banished and undeservedly dispersed."

The images of the Spaccio are placed in an "arena" (campo), set in a "theatre" (teatro) where they are "waiting to be examined, discussed and compared" rather than being set down dogmatically. Although Leo Catana has argued that the astrological figures of the Spaccio are "something more than a purely mnemotechnic device," arguing that they have a "intrinsic meaning" related to the mythological discussions of Hyginus's Poetica astronomica, I would argue that the images - or characters - which inhabit this stage are indeed treated as indifferent.

15. Giordano Bruno, The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast, 1584, trans. Arthur D. Imerti (New Brunswick: Rutger University Press, 1964) 72. All quotations from the English translations of Paul Eugene Memmo and Arthur D. Imerti have been silently adapted where I thought it was appropriate. The Italian original will be provided in the footnotes, as follows: "Oggi presente al Sidneo gli numerati ed ordinati semi delia sua moral filosofia, non perché come cosa nuova le mire, le conosca, le intenda; ma perché le essamine, consedere e giudichi . . ." (Giordano Bruno, Dialoghi Italiani [ed. Giovanni Aquileccia, 2 vols., Florence: Sansoni, 1985 (3rd ed.)] 2: 552).
17. Bruno, Expulsion, 73-4; "bandir quelli dal cielo . . . destinandogli per il più certe regioni in terra . . ." (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 554).
signifiers whose meanings are largely determined by Bruno himself. According to Bruno "Sophia represents Sophia, Saulino acts as Saulino, Jove as Jove, Venus, and other Greeks or Egyptians . . . as what and whichever they are." But – and this is an important stipulation – he says that these self-identical images (or characters) "can be adapted to the condition and nature that they are able to represent." That is to say, they are arbitrarily chosen, freely assigned images that can be utilised to represent whatever one chooses. The images are "worthy of being gazed upon with no ordinary lenses." That is, by the "eye" or "lenses" of the mind.

In conclusion, consider as definite only the order and number of the subjects of moral consideration, together with the foundations of such a philosophy, which you will see therein entirely represented. Moreover let each one gather from this medium the fruits that he can, according to the capacity of his own bowl.

The "final intention" of this narrative, he says, is:

The order, the initiation, the disposition, the index of the method, the tree, the theatre and arena of the virtues and the vices – where afterward one must discuss, inquire, inform oneself, correct oneself, distend oneself, betake oneself, and pitch one's tent on other considerations, when, determining upon everything according to our own light and intention, we shall explain ourselves in numerous other particular dialogues, in which the universal architecture of such a philosophy will be fully completed and in which we shall reason in a more definite manner.

20. Bruno, Expulsion, 74; "puote appropriarsi alla condizion e natura che possono presentare" (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 555).


22. Bruno, Expulsion, 74; "In conclusione, non abbiate altro per definito che l'odine ed il numero de oggetti della considerazion morale, insieme con gli fondamenti di tal filosofia, la qual tutta intieramente vedrete figure in essi. Del resto, in questo mezzo ognuno prenda gli frutti che puô, secondo la capacità del proprio vase . . ." (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 555).

23. Bruno, Expulsion, 74-5; "prendasi per final nostro intento l'ordine, l'intavolatura, la disposizione, l'indice del metodo, l'arbore, il teatro e campo de le virtudi e vizi; dove appresso s'ha discorrere, inquirere, informarsi, addirizzarsi, distendersi, rimenarsi ed accamparsi con altre considerazioni; quando, determinando del tutto secondo il nostro lume e propria intenzione, ne esplicaremosi in altri ed altri particolari dialogi, ne li quali l'universal architettura di cotal filosofia verrà pienamente compita, e dove ragionaremos piú per modo definitivo" (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 555).
What Bruno seems to be suggesting here is that it is the method – the system of representing first forms – which is the important thing. He is providing an instrument that could be used to generate a potentially infinite number of dialogues. This too was the aim of his mnemotechnical systems – methods for image combination which would allow one to consider, compare and arrange the infinite contents of the physical, intellectual and "hyperphysical" or supercelestial universe (that is the structures of the world, the mind, and the cosmos). This is why Bruno insists that his mnemotechnical arts were simultaneously a logic, a physics and a metaphysics.24

In Bruno's allegory Jove is not taken as "a good vicar or lieutenant of the first principle and universal cause," but rather as "something variable." That is the human individual subject to the same "innumerable vicissitudes" (innumerabili vicissitudini) as the rest of material creation, but able to form, alter and modify its component parts.25 In the explanatory epistle Bruno explicitly identifies the allegorical significance of the "heavenly reform" in the Spaccio as being the inner reform of the individual:

That same Jove is made the governor and mover of heaven in order that he gives us to understand how in every man, in each individual, are contemplated a world and a universe where, for governing Jove, is signified Intellectual Light, which dispenses and governs in it, and distributes, in that admirable structure, the orders and seats of the virtues and vices.26

When one considers the function of Bruno's mnemotechnical systems as methods for ordering and organising intelligible species derived from the sensible world and the "shadows of ideas" (images or similitudes) in order to reform and perfect man's ethical nature, to render him "godlike," it seems clear that what Bruno is offering us in the Spaccio is a fabular

25. Bruno, Expulsion, 75; Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 556.
26. Bruno, Expulsion, 78; "Quel medesimo è messo governatore e motor del cielo, per donar ad intendere, come in ogni uomo, in ciascuno individuo si contempla un mondo, un universo; dove per Giove governatore è significato il lume intellettuale che dispensa e governa in esso, e distribuisce in quell mirabile architetto gli ordini e sedie di virtudi e vizii" (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 560).
realisation of this process, a mythological allegory of an intellectual method. While the Spaccio may not be a memory art, it is a representation of how a memory art might function – using images and a spatialized memory (an inner "world," "heaven" or "universe") in order to methodically inculcate virtues and expel vices.

It is not without significance that memory has a key role to play in the reform of the heavens. In the third part of the Second dialogue, the Lyre of Mercury is replaced by "the great Mother Mnemosyne" (la gran madre Mnemosine) and her daughters the nine muses. In Bruno's scheme these are: arithmetic, geometry, music, logic, poetry, astrology, physics, metaphysics and ethics. Jove orders Minerva to fetch "nine boxes containing nine collyria, prescribed to purge the human mind in respect both to its knowledge and to its affections." That is, a reform of man's intellectual and ethical capacities. The dispensation of the collyria to the various muses signifies the various aspects of Bruno's philosophical and mnemotechnical project. Arithmetic, geometry and music are granted the ability to perceive "the harmonious proportion of sensible things." Logic is purged so that it will "serve to regulate the inventive and judicative faculties." Poetry is given over to "enjoyable frenzy and prophecy," while astrology is shown how to "open the eyes of mortals to the contemplation of archetypal and supernal things." Physics was purged so that man's rational faculties could be "reformed (riformalta) in so far as it deals with the contemplation of nature." Metaphysics, meanwhile, is given a draught which "moves the mind to the comprehension of supernatural things as regards their influence on nature." Significantly the "largest, most precious, and most excellent" box is placed in the hands of "the last-born" muse, Ethics, who is deemed "worthier than the others." She is given the ability to "institute religions, ordain cults, give laws and execute judgements, and approve, strengthen

28. Bruno, Expulsion, 182; "nove bussole, le quali contegono nove collirii che son stati ordinati per purgar l'animo umano, e quanto alla cognizione e quanto alla affezione" (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 702).
29. Bruno, Expulsion, 182; "armonica proporzione di cose sensibili" (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 703).
30. Bruno, Expulsion, 183; "per far regolata la faculta inventive e giudicativa" (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 703).
32. Bruno, Expulsion, 183; "riformalta la faculta razionale circa la contemplazion de la natura" (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 703).
and defend all that which is well established, regulated, put forth and executed, by adapting, as much as possible, affects and effects to the cult of the gods and to the society of men.\textsuperscript{33}

Here we find the threefold structure so characteristic of Bruno's philosophy: the reciprocal movement between nature and sensible things, through the intellect and ratiocination, to the "archetypal and supernal things" of the supercelestial realm of Ideas and the One. An understanding of the intellectual realm would also allow one to manipulate and reform the passions and affects – the "disposition" towards good or evil. The muses are presided over by Mnemosine in this allegory, I would argue, because it was the art of memory which Bruno believed would enable man to attain the intellectual and ethical reformation that his new philosophy required; mnemotechnics promised to be the instrument of a universal art whose ultimate aim was to reform and perfect man's nature. Thus Saulino, in the first part of the second dialogue describes the art of "reforming inclinations" as an art of arts, or universal discipline:

\begin{quote}
We cannot conceive a greater end than that which so directs minds and reforms inclinations that from them are produced fruits useful and necessary to human behaviour. For certainly that must be a divine thing, art of arts and discipline of disciplines, through which men must be governed and repressed, men, who among all animals are most distinct in complexion, most varied in customs, and in inclination most divided, in wills most diverse, in impulses most inconstant.\textsuperscript{34}
\end{quote}

This art of arts, which would reform inclinations, allowing man to become a god on earth, this instrument of Bruno's "religion of the mind" (\textit{religion della mente}) was the art of memory.\textsuperscript{35}

It is also the art of memory which Bruno is thinking of in the section of the \textit{Spaccio} which deals with the magical rites of Egypt – a similar connection to the one which he makes in both the \textit{De compositione}

\textsuperscript{33} Bruno, \textit{Expulsion}, 183; "instituir religioni, ordinar gli culti, metter leggi ed esecutar giudicii; ed approvare, confermare, conservar ed eseguir, accomodando quanto si può gli affetti ed effetti al culto de dei e convitto de gli uomini" (Bruno, \textit{Dialoghi}, 2: 703).

\textsuperscript{34} Bruno, \textit{Expulsion}, 145-6; "maggiore [fine] non possiamo comprendere che quello, che talmente indirizza gli animi e riforma gl'ingegni, che da quelli si producano frutti utili e necessari alla conversazione umana; ché certo bisogna che sia cosa divina, arte de le arti e disciplina de le discipline quella per cui hanno da esser retti e reprimuti gli uomini, che tra tutti gli animali son di complessioni più distinti, di costumi più varii, d'inclinazioni più divisi, e di voluntadi più diversi, di appulsi più inconstanti" (Bruno, \textit{Dialoghi}, 2: 654).

imaginum and the De magia. In the second part of the Third Dialogue, Sophia presents an apology for magic, and especially the "magic and divine cult of the Egyptians." Divinity "imparts herself in innumerable ways" in all things and thus needs "innumerable rites". In order to do this we need "that wisdom and judgement, that skill, industry and use of intellectual light that are revealed to the world by the intelligible sun". This "use of intellectual light" is the custom called magic:

which inasmuch as she depends upon supernatural principles, is divine; and, inasmuch as she turns toward the contemplation of nature and to the scrutiny of her secrets, she is natural. And she is said to be intermediate and mathematical, inasmuch as she depends upon the reasons and acts of the soul that is at the horizon between the corporeal and the spiritual, the spiritual and the intellectual.

Sophia's definition of magic also applies to Bruno's mnemotechnics, construed as a method which would allow one to move methodically between the species of nature, the species of rational discourse and the supernal forms, ascending and descending the "scale of nature" and as such participating in both the natural and the divine. In the Third dialogue Jove says that it is the creative and industrious part of man – his ability to create other forms via the use of his intellectual capacities – which renders him god-like: "By forming or being able to form other natures, other forms, other paths, other categories with his intelligence . . . he would succeed in preserving himself as a god of the earth."

Eroici

In the second dialogue of the Spaccio Jove exhorts Diligence: "Render your affect so fervent that you will . . . resist and conquer yourself." In the Degli eroici furori, which represents the fervour of the Brunian philosopher – the furioso – as if they were the intense desires of

38. Bruno, Expulsion, 239; "per quanto versa in principii sopranaturali, è divina; e quanto che versa circa la contemplazion della natura e perscrutazion di suoi secreti, è naturali; ed è detta mezzana e matematica, in quanto che consiste circa le raggioni ed atti de l'anima, che è nell'orizonte del corporale e spirituale, spirituale ed intellettuale" (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 783).
39. Bruno, Expulsion, 205; "formando o possendo formar altre nature, altri corsi, altri ordini con l'ingegno . . . venesse ad serbarsi dio de terra" (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 732).
40. Bruno, Expulsion, 190; "Infervora tanto l'affetto tuo, che . . . resisti e Vinci te stessa . . . " (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 712).
the Petrarchan lover, Bruno suggests the same inextricability of cognition and affect that informs his writings on the art of memory. The *Eroici*, published by John Charlewood in London in 1585 under a false Parisian impress, and dedicated to the "most illustrious knight" Sir Philip Sidney, is – like the *Spaccio* – deeply informed by Bruno's mnemotechnical thinking, and the states of rapture which its sonnets describe are, I would suggest, closely linked to the final stages of the art of memory as Bruno conceived it. That is, the art of memory was designed to lead the practitioner to the point where he "deified" himself (in Bruno's sense of this term), or achieved a beatific state of union with God. In the *Degli eroici furori* we have a poetic representation of the stages through which the soul passes on its journey through the vestiges of nature, into the shadows of ideas toward the ineffable idea of God found within the soul of the *furioso*. Seen in this way the *Eroici* affords a view of how Bruno's art of memory would transform both intellect and soul until man and his idea of God would fuse. The "magic" of the Brunian memory art was thus an *Itinerarium in mentem dei*.

In the second part of the *Eroici* Bruno explicitly identifies the "heroic frenzies" of the *Eroici* with the outcome of the memory art as it is described in the *Triginta sigillorum explicatio*. Comparing the ecstatic transport of his heroic lover with Iamblichus's account of the soul leaving the body during mystical contemplation, Bruno insists that what he is describing is precisely a "contraction" of the kind which he described in the *Sigillum sigillorum*:

> So great is the power of contemplation (as Iamblichus notes) that sometimes the soul . . . actually leaves the body. I do not wish this to be understood in any other way than the various ways which are explained in *Of the Thirty Seals* where all the modes of contraction are presented by which people – some ignominiously, others heroically – cease to fear death or suffer bodily pains.

In a section of the *Sigillum* entitled *De multiplici contractione*, Bruno describes fifteen distinct kinds of transport some heroic (mystical raptures

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of various kinds) and others (which might be considered "ignominious") caused by illness, malnutrition or insanity.  

The connection between the art of memory and "heroical" rapture can be seen from Bruno's description of the stages of contemplation in his De umbris idearum. Bruno envisaged the memory art as a means to "progress through a natural and rational course towards the explication of forms," the final objective of this progress is to trace the analogical series of a "divine and natural order" through the mind. Bruno explains this progress in a nine-stage process adapted from Marsilio Ficino's In Plotini Enneades commentatio. "Plotinus understood," Bruno says,

that the ladder through which we rise to the principle is composed of seven steps (to which we add two further steps); of these the first is the purgation of the soul, the second is attention, the third intention, the fourth contemplation of order, the fifth the proportional comparison [of things] from [that] order, the sixth negation or separation, the seventh prayer, the eighth the transformation of oneself into the thing, the ninth, the transformation of the thing into oneself. 

Bruno does not elaborate what he means by the final two stages of this upward progress, that is, "the transformation of oneself into the thing" and "the transformation of the thing into oneself." If we read the Degli eroici furori, however, we get some idea of what Bruno intended by these final transformations.

In the third dialogue of the first part, Tansillo describes the furori as a kind of memory or remembrance by which the desiring soul seeks to transform itself into the similitude of divinity (the beautiful and the good):

These frenzies of which we speak and which we see put into execution in these dialogues, are not a forgetfulness, but a memory; they are not careless actions but loves and desires of the beautiful and the good by

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44. "ad formarum explicationem, et per naturalem, et rationalem cursum nobis est progresendi" (Bruno, De umbris, 37).
45. "divinum et naturalem ordinem" (Bruno, De umbris, 37).
47. "Septem gradibus – quibus duos addimus – constare intellexit Plotinus schalam qua ascenditur ad principium. Quorum primus est animi purgatio, secundus attentio, tertius intentio, quartus ordinis contemplatio, quintus proportionalis ex ordine collatio, sextus negatio, seu separatio, septimus votum, octavus transformatio sui in rem, nonus transformatio rei in se ipsum" (Bruno, De umbris, 56).
which one seeks to make oneself perfect by transforming oneself into it or making oneself similar to it.\textsuperscript{48}

The philosophical frenzy is directed by a "rational force" (\textit{impeto razionale}) which controls and directs rapture toward positive ends. Just as the lover seeks to become one with his beloved – it is the power of Love to "transform the heart into that other nature to which it aspires"\textsuperscript{49} – so the heroic lover (whose "beloved" is God) seeks to become one with the divinity which he seeks. This form of "love" is an \textit{intellectual} act: "By intellectual contact with that godlike object he becomes a god."\textsuperscript{50} Despite being trapped in the "prison of the flesh," Man is able to contemplate an image of God which is the "highest intelligible species which it is possible to form of divinity."\textsuperscript{51} We see God "as in a shadow or mirror,"\textsuperscript{52} Tansillo explains, but Man is made into a god (\textit{fa un Dio}) when he contemplates this image and the mind "draws the divinity to itself,"\textsuperscript{53} His intelligible image of God is "drawn from the divine beauty's effects," i.e. from nature and from the mind's own forms and activities.\textsuperscript{54} The mind of the \textit{furioso} is reformed when he "conforms his thoughts and acts to the common measure of the law innate in all things."\textsuperscript{55} That is, when he perceives the connections between nature, the mind and the supersensible realm of ideas.

This can be seen clearly in the figure of Actæon the "hunter" who follows the vestiges (or tracks) of divinity immanent in nature (Bruno represents this immanent aspect of divinity – the \textit{deus in rebus} – as Diana). Bruno represents the idea of man's transformation into a god via the allegory of Actæon devoured by his own hounds. "[Actæon] became himself the prey through the operation of his intellect whereby he

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\item \textsuperscript{48} Bruno, \textit{Frenzies}, 108; "Questi furori de quali noi raggioniamo e che veggiamo messi in esecuzione in queste sentenze, non son oblio, ma una memoria; non sono negligenze di se stesso, ma amori e brame del bello e buono con cui si procure farsi perfetto con transformarsi ed assomigliarsi a quello" (Bruno, \textit{Dialoghi}, 2: 987).
\item \textsuperscript{49} Bruno, \textit{Frenzies}, 127; "trasformarlo come in quell'altra natura alla quale aspira." (Bruno, \textit{Dialoghi}, 2: 1010).
\item \textsuperscript{50} Bruno, \textit{Frenzies}, 108; "Doviene un dio dal contatto intellettuale di quell'nume oggetto" (Bruno, \textit{Dialoghi}, 2: 988).
\item \textsuperscript{52} Bruno, \textit{Frenzies}, 115; "come in ombra e specchio" (Bruno, \textit{Dialoghi}, 2: 996).
\item \textsuperscript{53} Bruno, \textit{Frenzies}, 115; "contrae la divinità in se" (Bruno, \textit{Dialoghi}, 2: 996).
\item \textsuperscript{54} Bruno, \textit{Frenzies}, 115; "in questo stato dove veggiamo la divina bellezza in specie intelligibile tolte da gli effetti . . . di quella . . ." (Bruno, \textit{Dialoghi}, 2: 996).
\item \textsuperscript{55} Bruno, \textit{Frenzies}, 109; "concorda gli suoi pensieri e gesti con la simmetria delle legge insita in tutte le cose" (Bruno, \textit{Dialoghi}, 2: 988-9).
\end{itemize}
converted the apprehended objects into himself," Tansillo tells Cicada, because Love "converts and transforms into the thing loved."

The Will follows things in their own shape or form, whereas intellect makes things conform to itself. Actæon is "ravished outside of himself" as he perceives that he is the divine object: "having already tracked down the divinity within himself it was no longer necessary to hunt for it elsewhere." The mind proceeds through species to abstractions and thence to the One — "the source of ideas, the ocean of all truth and good," this is the "metaphysical movement" of the intellect, which proceeds from the "limited thing" (cosa misurata) to that which "has no limit and circumscription" (non ha margine e circonscrizione). The intellect "goes circling through the degrees of perfection to reach their infinite centre which is neither form nor formed."

In the figure of Actæon and Bruno's other furiosi, we can see delineated the nine-stage process described in De umbris — the contemplation of order in natural things, the tracing of analogies between these things in the mind, the derivation of the "intelligible images of God" from his effects in nature, and finally — through an intellectual contact with these intelligible images, the transformation of the self into the divinity which it seeks. When Tansillo explains the "degrees of contemplation" (Li gradi della contemplazione) to Cicada and outlines the "three preparations" (tre preparazioni) of the furioso, what we find is a condensed version of the ladder of Plotinus in the De umbris. The furioso first resolves to "conform himself to a divine similitude," then he "applies himself to the superior species" and lastly he "submits his entire will and affection to God." In addition to these three protocols we also have Bruno's statement that the philosopher-lover must turn himself toward the divinity "by an intellectual act" (volta con atto de l'intelletto) which concurs with the attention and intention stages of the Plotinian scheme. The "progression of contemplation" leads each part of the soul

56. Bruno, Frenzies, 125; "rimase preda [Atteon ...] per l'operazion de l'intelletto con cui converte le cose apprese in sé" (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 1007).
57. Bruno, Frenzies, 125; "lo amore transforma e converte nella cosa amata" (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 1008).
58. Bruno, Frenzies, 125; "perché gia avendola contratta in sé, non era necessario di cercare fuor di sé la divinità" (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 1008).
60. Bruno, Frenzies, 129; "va circuendo per gli gradi della perfezione, per giongere a quell centro infinito, il quale non è formato né forma" (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 1012).
to its "natural place" (*luogo naturale*) allowing it to overcome the regressive movement of the soul away from perfection and towards matter.\(^{63}\) There is thus a clear link between the contemplation of the *furioso* in the *Eroici* and the mnemotechnical tracing of the *scala naturae* which ends up with the transformation of the self into its object. The psychological structure described in the *Eroici* is closely modelled on his mnemotechnical conceptions. According to Tansillo the mind (*la mente*) "maintains (the soul) . . . in rest and identity," while the imagination disturbs it, filling it with "movement and diversity" through its invention of "varied images." The rational faculty (*la facoltà razionale*) is seen as a middle term between rest and movement "in which the one and the many . . . the inferior and the superior concur."\(^{64}\) In the mnemotechnical works the ordering function of the art (its status as a logic) is seen as mediating between the infinite species of nature (in so far as it is a physics) and the supernal or archetypal forms (in so far as it is a metaphysics). In the *De umbris* he describes how "inferior things acquire the nature of superior things through intermediary things,"\(^{65}\) and in the *Eroici*, Bruno describes how there is a cycle (*revoluzione*) of ascent and descent in nature which draws the inferior towards the superior: "There is in nature a revolution and a circle in virtue of which, for the perfection and aid of others, superior things incline toward the inferior, and for their own excellence and felicity inferior things are raised to the superior."\(^{66}\)

That this transformation of inferior beings to a higher level also involves an ethical transformation whereby the affects are transformed by a process of intellection (or contemplation, we might say) is clear both from the description of the lover's frenzies in the *Eroici* and the theoretical parts of Bruno's mnemotechnical treatises.

In the *Sigillum sigillorum*, which deals with the "four rulers" (*quatuor rectoribus*) of the art of memory (love, art, mathesis and magic), Bruno talks about the "personal education of our soul" (*domesticum animi nostri*

\[\text{per mano de l'attenzione, drizzata dal braccio de l'intenzione, I frutti de gli arbore e fiori de l'erbe, che sono nel giardino de l'asinina memoria" (Bruno, *Dialoghi*, 2: 915: "gather with the hand of attention, directed by the arm of intention, the fruits of the trees and the flowers of the plants which are in the garden of asinine memory." My translation).}

\[63. \text{Bruno, *Frenzies*, 202-3; Bruno, *Dialoghi*, 2: 1096-8.}\]
\[64. \text{Bruno, *Frenzies*, Memmo, trans. 121; Bruno, *Dialoghi*, 2: 1003.}\]
\[65. \text{"ad sonum cytharae Apollinis ad superna gradatim revocentur inferna, et inferiora per media superiorum subeam naturam" (Bruno, *De umbris*, 30).}\]
\[66. \text{Bruno, *Frenzies*, Memmo, trans. 120: "Nella natura è una revoluzione ed un circolo per cui, per l'altrui perfezione e soccorso, le cose superiore s'inchinano all'inferiori, e per propria eccellenza e felicitade le cose inferiori s'inalzano alle superiori" (Bruno, *Dialoghi*, 2: 1002).}\]
magisterium instruendi) by means of regulating the passions through imagination and intellection.67 He saw the role of the mnemonic art being to "excite the things which, with the aid of discourse, thought and strong imagination, move the passions," we receive "impressions" from the "species" of the passions and by using memorable forms of these things, it is possible to artificially excite them. The "more vehement and stronger" these forms are the more effectively they motivate the passions.68 The "exercise" (exercitatio) of imprinting memorable forms, "opens the way not just to good and bad morals but also (in so far as it is possible for man) to intellectual and all other forms of human activity."69 If it is possible to turn lust and wrath to divine love and zeal, and the vicious can be made pious, Bruno says, it is because at the root of these opposed moral states there is the "same material principle."70

In the Eroici we find the same insistence on the interdependence of intellection and appetition. In the first dialogue of the second part Maricondo explains to Cesarino that the "double arrow" (doppio strale) of God enters man's heart through two doors: the light of truth enters the "doors of intellectual potency" and the "light of goodness" enters through the "door of the appetitive potency."71 Bruno saw these as connected, because the "innumerable individual objects and species of objects" which "reflect the splendor of the divine beauty" would "kindle the passion for the desired and apprehended good."72 By these means the passions and affects would gradually be deflected from external objects and towards God:


68. "Excitent ergo, quae comitante discursu, cogitatione fortique phantasia movent affectu, quibusque zelantes, contemnentes, amantes, odientes, maerentes, gaudentes, admirantes et ad sensuum trutinam referentes, cum zeli, contemplus, amoris, odii, maeroris, gaudii, admirationis et scrutinii speciebus, cum memorandae rei forma afficimur. Porro fortiores atque vehementiores fortius consequentia quadam atque vehementius imprimit" (Bruno, Jordani Nolani Bruni Opera, 2, 2: 166).

69. "In istis enim exercitatio nedum ad optimos et pessimosque mores viam aperit, sed et ad intelligentiam et (quantum per hominem fieri potest) omnium pro viribus eiusdem activitatem" (Bruno, Jordani Bruni Nolani Opera, 2, 2: 166).

70. "[E]x iisdem intense odientes et amantes apprime impios, aut si se se vertent quo divinus eos agat amat amplius et amantes, apprime religiosos habes, ubi idem materiale principium summam ad virtutem pariter proximum esse atque ad vitium potes agnoscre" (Bruno, Jordani Bruni Nolani Opera, 2, 2: 166).


72. Bruno, Frenzies, 212; "gli innumerali individui e specie de cose, nella quali rileva il splendor della divina beltade . . . ed onde scalda l'affetto del proposto e appreso bene" (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 1107).
When all the affections are completely converted to God, that is, to the idea of ideas, by the light of intelligible things, the mind is exalted to the suprasensual unity, and all is love, all one, and it no longer feels itself solicited and distracted by diverse objects, but becomes one sole wound, in which all the affections gather to become a single affection.\footnote{73. Bruno, Frenzies, 212; "Ma dove l'affetto intiero è tutto convertito a Dio, cioè all'idea de le idée, dal lume de cose intelligibili la mente viene esaltata alla unità superessenziale, è tutta amore, tutta una, non viene ad sentirsi sollecitata da diversi oggetti che la disraano, ma è una sola piaga, nella quale concorre tutto l'affetto, e che viene ad essere la sua medesima affezione" (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 1107).}

Both the affections and the intellect strive to transform themselves into the higher forms which they make contact with through "individual objects and species of objects." The intellection of species leads to change in the affections (away from matter and evil and towards God and the good) and the affections in turn lead to higher forms of intellectual activity. As Liberio says in the third dialogue of the second part: "The cognition moves the affection which in turn moves the cognition."\footnote{74. Bruno, Frenzies, 239; "la cognizione muove l'affetto, ed appresso l'affetto muove la cognizione" (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 1138).} Once the mind, imagination and the affections have been turned towards God, and God has impressed his forms in the soul, it cannot be reversed. Wherever it forms and impresses its own image, Severino says, "no other form can be impressed or sealed."\footnote{75. Bruno, Frenzies, 256; "sopra il quale altro non è che possa essere impresso o sigillato" (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 1163).}

The end-point of the heroic frenzy and Bruno's mnemotechnical practice was, I would argue, deification (\textit{deificatio}), in the sense that the intellect and the affections are both "completely converted" to the love of God. "There is no man, or lover," Tansillo says, "who does not have God within him."\footnote{76. Bruno, Frenzies, 165; "non è uomo che non habbia Dio in se, non è amante che non habbia questo dio" (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 1055).} Once the soul has purged, healed and reformed itself by means of contemplation,\footnote{77. Bruno, Frenzies, 166; "L'anima . . . purgarsi, sanarsi, riformarsi" (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 1056).} it is increasingly compelled to seek divinity not in the external creation but in the mind itself: "Proceeding to the depths of the mind . . . it is necessary to descend more intimately within the self and to consider that God is near, that each one has Him with him and within himself more than he himself can be within himself."\footnote{78. Bruno, Frenzies, Memmo, trans. 193; "procedendo al profondo della mente . . . venir al più intimo di sé, considerando che Dio è vicino, con sé e dentro di sé più ch'egli medesimo esser non si possa" (Bruno, Dialoghi, 2: 1087).}
Paradoxically, however, the mind cannot draw near to this divinity within. The transcendent aspect of Bruno's divinity (signified by Apollo), the archetypal form of divinity, cannot be approached except by means of nature and its multiple forms. Bruno's method – as he describes it in the *Eroici* – is both a "logic" and a mode of "contemplation" which guides one through the "traces and vestiges of nature" to the "essence of all things."79 "It does not seem possible," he says:

for anyone to see the sun, the universal Apollo and absolute light as the supreme and most excellent species; but very possible to see its shadow, its Diana, the world, the universe, the nature which is in things, the light shining through the obscurity of matter and so resplendent in the darkness.80

"To contemplate divine things we must consider them by means of symbols, similitudes and other . . . phantasms."81 Bruno's art of memory offers a practical method for such contemplations by means of similitudes. The allegorical poetry of the *Eroici* and the astrological allegory of the *Spaccio* is another. In the *Eroici*, Bruno describes the *furioso* (in a metaphor which recalls the inner architectural spaces of his Lullian and mnemotechnical writings) as a builder, a *fabricatore*: "With the power of thought," he says, "he builds castles in the air and . . . a tower whose architect is love, whose walls are the amorous fires, and whose builder is himself."82 What truly integrates the "literary" or "philosophical" dialogues of Bruno's English sojourn and his Lullist and mnemotechnical treatises is both a common metaphysical and psychological underpinning and Bruno's emphatic belief in the importance of a *technique* (or technology) of the imagination.

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80. Bruno, *Frenzies*, 225; "Però a nessun pare possibile de vedere il sole, l'universale Apolline e luce absoluta per specie suprema ed eccellentissima; ma si bene la sua ombra, la sua Diana, il mondo, l'universo, la natura che è nell'opacità della materia, cioè quella in quanto splende nelle tenebre" (Bruno, *Dialoghi*, 2: 1123).