ITALIAN PERSPECTIVES 25

Dante and Epicurus

A Dualistic Vision of Secular and Spiritual Fulfilment

George Corbett

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Dante and Epicurus
A Dualistic Vision of Secular and Spiritual Fulfilment

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A Dualistic Vision of Secular and Spiritual Fulfilment

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George Corbett

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G.C., Cambridge, March 2013

EDITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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A. Dante

(1). The *Commedia*

Inf. Inferno, in *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, ed. by Giorgio Petrocchi, 4 vols (Milan: A. Mondadori, 1966–67), II
Purg. Purgatorio, in *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, ed. by Giorgio Petrocchi, 4 vols (Milan: A. Mondadori, 1966–67), III
Par. Paradiso, in *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, ed. by Giorgio Petrocchi, 4 vols (Milan: A. Mondadori, 1966–67), IV

(2). Vernacular works

Conv. Convivio, ed. by Franca Brambilla Ageno, 3 vols (Florence: Le Lettere, 1995)
VN. Vita nuova, ed. by Domenico De Robertis, in Dante Alighieri, *Opere minori*, 3 vols (Milan and Naples: Ricciardi, 1995), I, 3–247
VN. (Gor.) *Vita nova*, ed. by Guglielmo Gorni (Turin: Einaudi, 1996)
Rime. Rime, ed. by Domenico De Robertis, 3 vols (Florence: Le Lettere, 2002)

(3). Latin works

DVE. De vulgari eloquentia, ed. by Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo, in Dante Alighieri, *Opere minori*, 3 vols (Milan and Naples: Ricciardi, 1979), III, 1–237
Mon. Monarchia, ed. by Bruno Nardi, in Dante Alighieri, *Opere minori*, 3 vols
(Milan and Naples: Ricciardi, 1979), III, 239–503
Mon. (Sh.) *Monarchia*, ed. by Prue Shaw (Florence: Le Lettere, 2009)
Questio. Questio de aqua et terra, ed. by Francesco Mazzoni, in Dante Alighieri, *Opere minori*, 3 vols (Milan and Naples: Ricciardi, 1979), III, 691–880
Epist. Epistole, ed. by Arsenio Frugoni and Giorgio Brugnoli, in Dante Alighieri, *Opere minori*, 3 vols (Milan and Naples: Ricciardi, 1979), III, 505–643
Can. Epistola a Cangrande, ed. by Enzo Cecchini (Florence: Giunti, 1995)

B. Commentaries

(1). Commentaries cited according to the *Dartmouth Dante Project*

The following commentaries on the *Commedia* are cited according to the *Dartmouth Dante Project* <http://dante.dartmouth.edu/> [accessed 1 October 2012]. The citation style used is: 'name', gloss to *cantica*, 'canto'. 'line' (e.g. 'Benvenuto da Imola, gloss to *Inf.*, VI. 34–36').

Jacobo Alighieri (1322)
Graziolo Bambaglioli (1324)
Jacopo della Lana (1324–28)
Guido da Pisa (1327–28)
L'Ottimo Commento (1333)

Pietro Alighieri [1] (1340–42)
Pietro Alighieri [3] (1359–64)
Giovanni Boccaccio (1373–75)
Benvenuto da Imola (1375–80)
Francesco da Buti (1385–95)
Cristoforo Landino (1481)
Alessandro Vellutello (1544)
Lodovico Castelvetro (1570)
Niccolò Tommaseo (1873)
G. A. Scartazzini and G. Vandelli (1929)
Natalino Sapegno (1955–57)
Charles S. Singleton (1970–75)
Anna Maria Chiavacci Leonardi (1991–97)
Robert Hollander (2000–07)

(2). Commentaries cited from printed editions below

Barbi, Michele, ed. (updated by Giuseppe Vandelli), *La Divina Commedia* (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1946)
Kay, Richard, trans. and commentary, *Monarchia* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1998)
Kirkpatrick, Robin, ed. and trans., *The Divine Comedy*, 3 vols (London: Penguin, 2006–07)
Romani, Matteo, ed., *Il Convito di Dante* (Reggio Emilia: G. Davolio and Figlio, 1862)
Shaw, Prue, ed. and trans., *Monarchy*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)
——ed. and trans., *Monarchia*, Cambridge Medieval Classics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)
Sinclair, John D., ed. and trans., *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, 3 vols (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961)

C. Online references [accessed 1 October 2012]

Biblical references are to the Vulgate bible, in the *Nova Vulgata* edition available online via the Vatican website: <http://www.vatican.va/latin/latin_bible.html>
References to Thomas Aquinas are to the Leonine edition available online via the *Corpus Thomisticum* <http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/>
References to Augustine of Hippo are to the Latin editions available online via <http://www.augustinus.it/>

D. List of further abbreviations used

Barbi. *La Divina Commedia*, ed. by Michele Barbi, updated by Giuseppe Vandelli (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1946)
ED. Enciclopedia dantesca, ed. by Umberto Bosco, 6 vols (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1970–78)
DE. The Dante Encyclopedia, ed. by Richard Lansing (New York: Garland, 2000)
SD. Studi danteschi
DS. Dante Studies
ST. Summa Theologiae
CG. Summa Contra Gentiles

E. English Translations

The translations of the following works by Dante are adapted from these readily available and literally translated English editions:

Commedia, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, ed. and trans. by Robert M. Durling; introduction and notes by Ronald L. Martinez and Robert M. Durling, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996–2011)

Convivio, *The Banquet*, trans. with intro. and notes by Christopher Ryan (Saratoga, CA: Amma Libri, 1989)

De vulgari eloquentia, *De vulgari eloquentia*, ed. and trans. by Steven Botterill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

Monarchia, Monarchy, ed. and trans. by Prue Shaw, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

For Classical Roman sources, the translations are adapted from the side-by-side English translations found in the Loeb series published by Harvard University Press.

All other translations, except as specifically indicated in the text, are my own. In most instances, a literal translation [in square brackets] follows the original passage. Where the sense of the original passage is clear from the main text, the original passage (in parentheses) follows the paraphrase. Discussion is always with regard to the passage in the original. The translations should only be regarded, therefore, as a potentially useful prop or crib.

INTRODUCTION

❖

Homo [...] est medium duorum emisperiorum

Dante and Epicurus are, in one sense, poles apart. Dante, a committed Christian, believed in the immortality of the soul and depicted in the *Commedia* a vision of the afterlife and God's divine justice. Epicurus, a pagan philosopher, taught that the soul is mortal and sought to liberate mankind from the fear of death and final judgement. Where Dante believed in Christianity as the path to eternal salvation, Epicurus taught that all religion was superstition, invented by the wise to control those uneducated in the use of reason. Where Dante believed in Creation and Divine Providence, Epicurus taught that the world has neither beginning nor end and consists of indivisible atoms which collide arbitrarily in an infinite vacuum. It might seem unsurprising therefore that Dante, amongst the many heresies which he could have chosen, singles out Epicureanism for special treatment in the graveyard of the heretics in the *Inferno*. But, interestingly, the Epicureans named in the *Inferno* are not pagans at all but prominent thirteenth-century magnates whom Dante clearly admired. Moreover Dante extols Epicurean ethics in his prose work the *Convivio*. Alongside the peripatetic and stoic schools of philosophy, the Epicurean school is praised for its education of man's distinctively rational nature. Dante and Epicurus are, in this sense, allies. This book argues that the key to this apparent paradox — that Epicurus is, for Dante, both the quintessential heretic and an ethical ally — lies in the distinctive dualistic theory at the heart of Dante's ethical, political and theological thought.

For Dante, man is unique amongst the animals because he partakes of a corruptible body and an incorruptible soul. Man is the horizon between the hemisphere of materiality, time and contingency and the hemisphere of immateriality, eternity and universality. In virtue of this hybrid nature, Dante argues that man has two independent ethical goals. Man's first goal, as a mortal being, is human nobility — the twofold happiness, practical and theoretical, attainable in the arc of this life. Natural reason and the teaching of the philosophers are sufficient guides to this secular goal. Man's second goal, as an immortal being, is his reunification with God — the beatific vision — which is consummated in the eternal future life. Grace, the theological virtues and divine revelation are necessary guides to this spiritual goal. On the basis of his theory of man's two goals (one earthly and one heavenly), Dante defends his imperial thesis for the independence of Empire and Church. The Empire is divinely ordained with temporal power and responsibility for advancing man's pursuit of his secular felicity. The Church is divinely instituted with spiritual power and the pastoral mission to bring about man's eternal beatitude. The

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potential significance of Epicureanism for Dante's dualism is therefore apparent. The Epicurean category delineates the possibility implied by Dante's dualistic theory: that man may pursue secular fulfilment and yet abandon his spiritual goal because he doubts his immortality. This book examines the implications of this connection. It explores Dante's reception and polemical representation of Epicureanism, and the light this sheds on his dualistic theory of the secular and spiritual hemispheres of human conduct.

Dante's election of Epicureanism as the heresy *par excellence* in the *Commedia* has struck readers, from the early commentators to modern historians of medieval thought, as unorthodox. The prominence Dante gives to Epicureanism, however, has typically been treated in passing by scholars as an interesting peculiarity and, in consequence, its significance for Dante's thought as a whole has not been investigated. Although there are some partial studies of Dante and Epicureanism, including important contributions by Zygmunt G. Barański, Emerson Brown, Kenelm Foster, Valerio Lucchesi, Simone Marchesi, John Marenbon, J. A. Mazzeo and Giorgio Stabile, there is as yet no full-length treatment of the subject.[1] This book therefore addresses a significant gap in Dante scholarship. It provides a systematic account of the potential sources for Dante's reception of Epicurus, and it thereby qualifies the prevalent view in the history of philosophy that the medieval period was unaffected by Epicurean standpoints. It analyses how Dante's representation of Epicurus and his followers developed in his writings. It also illuminates the key relationship between Dante's emphasis on Epicureanism and his unorthodox dualistic theory. I argue that Epicureanism allowed Dante to delineate the central dualism in his thought between man's secular felicity and his spiritual beatitude.

The canto of the Epicureans, *Inferno* X, has received a colossal amount of scholarly attention and, I argue, for good reason.[2] In this canto, Dante confronts Epicurean mortalism, a doctrine incompatible with his Christian faith and with the literal and moral ground of the poem. Furthermore, Dante addresses his autobiographical relationship with Guido Cavalcanti, referred to as his 'primo amico' in the *Vita nuova* and the most important contemporary influence of his early maturity. In contrast to politically orientated studies focused on the figure of Farinata, I highlight the theological dimension of the canto and argue that the dramatic encounter between Dante-character (Christian believer) and Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti (Epicurean disbeliever) is its true thematic as well as its structural (ll. 52–72) centre. I propose a possible critical solution to the Cavalcante episode, which Natalino Sapegno called one of 'the most difficult and discussed passages of the poem'.[3] The hermeneutical key is to realize that Dante, through the precise organization of his historical material, the 'time-long-sightedness' punishment of the Epicureans, and the Russian-doll structure and 'freeze-frame' effect of the canto, suspends the central dialogue in a knowledge gap. While Cavalcante interprets the dialogue as referring to his son Guido's literal destiny, Dante-character — because he is unaware of Cavalcante's blindness to the present — necessarily understands the dialogue to refer to Guido's spiritual destiny. This new critical insight heightens attention to the intentionality of the speakers and to the pivotal distinctions, as between an interpretative mistake and an act of wilful heresy, which mark the

canto. By unknotting much of the critical bewilderment in the commentary tradition, I present afresh the extraordinary narrative episode of *Inferno* X.

Dante's theory that mankind has two autonomous goals, which divinely legitimate the independent authority of Empire and Church, was self-consciously innovative and immediately controversial. Dante commentators and critics have approached this apparent unorthodoxy in different ways. Major twentieth-century scholars, such as Bruno Nardi, Etienne Gilson and Kenelm Foster, did so by limiting Dante's heterodox dualism to his Latin and vernacular prose works (marginalized as 'minor works') and sustaining that, as a phase in his intellectual development, it was entirely left behind by the time he composed the *Commedia*.[4] More recent Dante scholarship, however, has rejected the compositional chronology underlying this view as philologically unsustainable. The *Monarchia* was almost certainly composed after 1316, and probably in the years 1317 and 1318 when most of the *Commedia* was already written.[5] But the implications of this later dating of the *Monarchia* for a reading of the *Commedia* have yet to be adequately explored. Albert Russell Ascoli's recent methodological critique (2008) lays the foundations for such a study.[6] Ascoli aims to overthrow the dominant 'evolutionary interpretation of Dante's literary career and intellectual biography, usually with the *Commedia* as ideal telos' and to prepare for a new reading of the *Commedia* 'beyond the palinode'.[7] This study aligns itself with the new philological evidence and builds on Ascoli's methodological groundwork. It argues that the dualistic theory articulated most polemically in the *Monarchia* also underpins the eschatological structure of the *Commedia*. I highlight fault lines in the dramatic narrative of the *Commedia* where the theological tensions in Dante's dualism surface. In particular, I focus on three liminal, and theologically original, regions in Dante's depiction of the afterlife: the graveyard of the Epicureans, the limbo of the virtuous pagans, and the region of Ante-Purgatory. I argue that Dante uses the historical figure of the virtuous pagan to represent figuratively secular human flourishing (man's earthly nobility) in a poem which nevertheless depicts literally the afterlife. I therefore dispute the identification of man's secular goal with the Earthly Paradise at the summit of Purgatory, and I advance a new way to read the poem as a whole in dualistic terms.[8]

I use the term dualism throughout this book in a restricted way. There are of course many other usages. In the history of Christian thought, for example, dualism may refer to heresies such as Manichaeism and Catharism which taught the existence of self-subsistent principles of good and evil or of form and matter. In the history of modern philosophy, dualism may refer to the Cartesian division of mind and matter. These usages inevitably find their way into Dante scholarship. For example, Christian Moevs contests 'a materialist psychophysical dualism', which he considers 'the implicit world-picture of our time', when he argues for 'non-duality' in Dante.[9] These broader usages of the term 'dualism' are not directly relevant to the subject of this book. Reference to Dante's 'dualism' or 'dualistic thought' indicates, unless otherwise stated, the dualistic anthropology (man's hybrid nature), dualistic moral teleology (man's secular and spiritual felicity), and dualistic political vision (papal-spiritual and imperial-temporal power) which Dante himself outlines. Other aspects of duality perceived in Dante's thought and

works, and the scholarly controversies which surround them, are not the focus of this study.

The book's argument is developed in three parts, each of two chapters. The first part considers Dante's reception of Epicureanism and the implications of Epicureanism for his dualistic theory in comparison and contrast to medieval intellectual and popular traditions. The second part is a focused treatment of Epicureanism in the *Commedia*. The third part, through a close study of the limbo of the virtuous pagans and Ante-Purgatory, highlights the persistence of Dante's dualistic theory in the *Commedia*. As the argument unfolds, the initial close investigation of Dante's reception and rhetorical emphasis on Epicureanism thus opens up a major new perspective on the central dualism in Dante's thought and poetic vision.

Notes to the Introduction

1. For important partial studies of Dante and Epicureanism, see Zygmunt G. Barański, 'The Ethics of Ignorance: Petrarch's Epicurus and Averroës and the Structures of the *De Sui Ipsius et Multorum Ignorantia*', in *Petrarch in Britain: Interpreters, Imitators, and Translators*, ed. by Martin McLaughlin and Letizia Panizza (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 39–59; Emerson Brown, 'Epicurean Secularism in Dante and Boccaccio: Athenian Roots and Florentine Revival', in *Magister Regis: Studies in Honor of Robert Earl Karske*, ed. by A. Groos (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986), pp. 179–93; Kenelm Foster, *The Two Dantes, and Other Studies* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977); Valerio Lucchesi, 'Epicurus and Democritus: The Ciceronian Foundations of Dante's Judgement', *Italian Studies*, 42 (1987), 1–19; Simone Marchesi, '"Epicuri de grege porcus": Ciacco, Epicurus and Isidore of Seville', *DS.*, 117 (1999), 117–31; John Marenbon, *The Hellenistic Schools and Thinking about Pagan Philosophy in the Middle Ages: A Study of Second-Order Influence* (Basel: Schwabe, forthcoming 2013); J. A. Mazzeo, 'Dante and Epicurus: The Making of a Type', in *Medieval Cultural Tradition in Dante's 'Comedy'* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1960), pp. 174–204; Giorgio Stabile, 'Epicurei', *ED.*, II, 697–701. See also André Pézard, 'Un Dante Épicurien?', in *Mélanges offerts a Étienne Gilson*, ed. by Joseph Vrin and Pierre Paulhac (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1959), pp. 499–536; Alfonso de Salvio, *Dante and Heresy* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1975; first pub. 1936). Anna Williams briefly discusses the 'odd appearance among those condemned in Hell for heresy of the "Epicureans"', in A. N. Williams, 'The Theology of the *Comedy*', in *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, ed. by Rachel Jacoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 201–17 (p. 207). I am profoundly indebted to Zygmunt G. Barański and John Marenbon for many discussions of Dante's representation of Epicureanism, and of the wider context of medieval philosophy, over the course of my research.
2. Aside from a rich commentary tradition, the scholarship on *Inferno* X is vast. This study, with its textual focus on the Cavalcante episode, situates its own conclusions in relation to, in particular, the following close studies: Zygmunt G. Barański, 'Guido Cavalcanti tra le "cruces" di *Inferno* IX–XI, ovvero Dante e la storia della ragione', in *Versi controversi, Letture dantesche*, ed. by Domenico Cofano and Sebastiano Valerio (Foggia: Edizioni del Rosone, 2008), pp. 39–112; Letterio Cassata, 'Il disdegno di Guido' (*Inf.*, X. 63), *SD.*, 46 (1969), 5–49; Anthony K. Cassell, 'Dante's Farinata and the Image of the Arca', *Yale Italian Studies*, 1 (1977), 335–70; Robert M. Durling, 'Farinata and the Body of Christ', *Stanford Italian Review*, 2 (1981), 5–35; Robert M. Durling, 'mio figlio ov'è', in *Dante da Firenze all'aldilà*, ed. by Michelangelo Picone (Florence: Cesati, 2000), pp. 303–29; N. Girardi, 'Sulla struttura di *Inferno* X', in *Filologia e critica dantesca: Studi offerti a Aldo Vallone* (Florence: Olschki, 1989), pp. 61–75; Mario Lucidi, 'Ancora sul "disdegno" di Guido', *Cultura neolatina*, 14.2/3 (1954), 203–16; Enrico Malato, 'Il disdegno di Guido', in *Dante e Guido Cavalcanti: Il dissidio per la Vita Nova e il disdegno di Guido* (Rome: Salerno, 2004), pp. 75–109; Joseph Luzzi, 'Echoes of Andromache in *Inferno* X', in *DS.*, 122

(2004), 27–43; Antonino Pagliaro, 'Il disdegno di Guido', in *Saggi di critica semantica* (Florence: D'Anna, 1953), pp. 355–79; Pagliaro, 'Farinata e Cavalcante', in *Ulisse*, 2 vols (Florence: D'Anna, 1967), I, 185–224; Bartolomeo Preziosi, '"Chi, Guido de' Cavalcanti ebbe a disdegno?": Nuova interpretazione del verso 63 del canto X dell'Inferno dantesco' (Naples: A Preziosi, 1972); Charles S. Singleton, '*Inferno* X: Guido's Disdain', *Modern Language Notes*, 77.1, Annual Italian Issue (1962), 49–65; Mirko Tavani, 'Contributo sintattico al "disdegno" di Guido (*Inf.*, X. 61–63)', in *Leggere Dante*, ed. by Lucia Battaglia Ricci (Ravenna: Longo, 2003), pp. 217–40.

3. Sapegno, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 63.
4. Bruno Nardi, *Dal 'Convivio' alla 'Commedia'*, ed. with a new introduction by Ovidio Capitani (Rome: Muratori, 1992), p. 311: 'Nella Commedia non v'è più traccia dei "duo ultima" della Monarchia' [In the *Commedia* there is no further trace of the 'two final ends' of the *Monarchia*]. Nardi was adamant that the *Monarchia* was written in the first decade of the fourteenth century: 'la cui composizione va posta sicuramente fra l'interruzione del *Convivio* e l'inizio del "poema sacro"' [the *Monarchia* was certainly composed between the interruption of the *Convivio* and the beginning of the 'sacred poem'] (p. 87); 'scritta, com'io penso, fra il 1307 e il 1308' [written, as I believe, between 1307 and 1308] (p. 116); see also *Mon.*, I. xii. 6, p. 349, note 6: 'ritengo ancora che la *Monarchia* fu scritta fra il 1307 e il 1308, prima dell'*Epistola* V' [I continue to believe that the *Monarchia* was written between 1307 and 1308, before the fifth epistle]. Etienne Gilson highlights the philosophical unorthodoxy of Dante's dualism in the prose works, but argues that the *Commedia* is 'the work of a poet' and that its subject 'is theological — the final aims of man (ultima regna)'. See Etienne Gilson, *Dante the Philosopher*, trans. by David Moore (London: Sheed and Ward, 1949; repr. Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1967), pp. 277–78. Kenelm Foster similarly underlines the 'fundamental difference' between the dualistic theory of the prose works and the doctrine of the *Commedia*: 'the *Comedy* is quite another matter'. See Kenelm Foster, *The Two Dantes*, pp. 160–64 (p. 160).
5. Prue Shaw's philological research on the manuscript tradition of the *Monarchia*, and her balanced contribution to the sometimes polemical disputes surrounding its date of composition, have been instrumental in consolidating the scholarly consensus around a later date. For a compact summary of the debate, see Dante, *Monarchia*, trans. and ed. by Prue Shaw, Cambridge Medieval Classics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. xxxviii–xli. See also, Dante, *Monarchy*, trans. and ed. by Prue Shaw, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. xxxiii: '[the *Monarchia* was written] certainly no earlier than 1314 and possibly [during] the very last years of its author's life'. Richard Kay gives a useful account of the twentieth-century debate in the introduction to his edition of the *Monarchia*. Through additional historical and contextual arguments, Kay narrows Shaw's dating of the *Monarchia* (1314–21) to 'between early 1316 and Dante's death in September 1321'. Kay also argues convincingly that 'it seems probable to the extreme' that Dante wrote the treatise in response to the papal decretal *De fratrum* in the years 1317–18. See Dante's *Monarchia*, trans. and commentary by Richard Kay (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1998), pp. xx–xxxi. Anthony K. Cassell corroborates Kay's thesis, and argues that Dante, in 1318, wrote the *Monarchia* to defend his patron Can Grande della Scala's right to the Imperial vicariate in defiance of the prohibitions of *De fratrum*. See Anthony K. Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy: An Historical Study with Accompanying Translations of Dante Alighieri's 'Monarchia', Guido Vernani's 'Refutation of the "Monarchia" Composed by Dante', and Pope John XXII's Bull 'Si fratrum'* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004).
6. Albert Russell Ascoli, *Dante and the Making of a Modern Author* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
7. Ascoli, p. 276; p. 274.
8. For a dualistic reading of the *Commedia* which equates Dante's secular goal and felicity with the Earthly Paradise, see John A. Scott, *Dante's Political Purgatory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).
9. Christian Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante's Comedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 10. The title of Moevs's introduction is 'Non-Duality and Self-Knowledge' (p. 3). Moevs's monograph contrasts modern presuppositions of post-Cartesian dualism with what he sees as the 'non-duality' of Dante's thought.

PART I

❖

Dante and Epicurus

CHAPTER 1

❖

Dante's Reception of Epicureanism

Introduction

The first chapter responds to two questions: Which texts in Dante's immediate cultural background may have influenced his understanding of Epicureanism? And how does Dante, in relation to this wider context, represent Epicurus and Epicureans in his works?

There is of course a generic problem with research of this kind. Historical reconstruction of Dante's available reading and potential sources, with regard to whichever subject, will always be, to some extent, conjectural. There are, however, two more specific complicating factors. First, the thirteenth-century reception of Epicurean doctrines is very little documented by historians of philosophy. Second, there is an apparent discrepancy between Dante's reception of Epicurean philosophy in the *Convivio* and in the *Commedia* which has led commentators to argue that there are distinct stages in Dante's understanding of Epicureanism. We must not simply ask 'What did Epicureanism mean to Dante?', but 'What did Epicureanism mean to Dante at specific stages in his intellectual development, as he came to know successively different aspects of Epicurean doctrine?'.

In the first section, I consider four literary fields of influence which may have informed Dante's understanding of Epicureanism during his lifetime: the Roman writers, the medieval encyclopaedias, the patristic and popular traditions of Epicurus, and the scholastic treatment. In the second section, I address Dante's apparently conflicting representations of Epicureanism in the *Convivio* and in the *Commedia*. Scholars have argued heretofore that Dante, in the *Commedia*, retracts his former view. By contrast, I show that Dante's approbation of Epicurean ethics (*Convivio*) and his censure of Epicurean mortalism (*Commedia*) is consistent with a sophisticated strand of the wider medieval reception. Moreover, I argue that Dante's admiration for Epicurean ethics persists in the *Commedia* and that, against first appearances, his criticism of Epicurean mortalism is, in fact, foreshadowed in the *Convivio*. In the third section, I consider Dante's polemical correction of the popular caricature of Epicurus as a pig enslaved to the senses, the 'porcus de grege Epicuri'.

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Dante's Reception of Epicureanism

The medieval period has been considered as an 'interlude' in Epicurean philosophy, a gap between its castigation by early Christian apologists and its pre-modern revival.[1] It is true that the Epicurean renaissance, sparked by the rediscovery and dissemination of primary Epicurean texts, had yet to blossom.[2] We should not infer from this, however, that thirteenth-century intellectuals were ignorant of Epicurean doctrines nor, as in Dante's case, that they were unaware of the implications of those doctrines for established moral, philosophical and theological norms. Research instead suggests that, as Emerson Brown concludes, 'detailed information about Epicurean thought was readily available in thirteenth-century Florence'.[3] Even though such reception was typically second-hand and not infrequently distorted, whether by Roman critics or Christian apologists, this does not negate its potential influence.

Cicero and the Roman sources

The foremost channel for Dante's second-hand reception of Epicurean theses was Cicero. From direct citations, we know that Dante certainly read *De finibus*, the first two books of which are devoted to Epicurean ethics, and *De natura deorum* in which Cicero criticizes at greater length Epicurean natural science.[4] Just these two Ciceronian works would have sufficed to provide Dante with a substantial, if biased, account of Epicurean ethics and natural philosophy.

Cicero underlines five doctrines which set the Epicureans apart from the other schools of philosophy: atomism; the denial of final causes; mortalism; impiety; and materialism. In rejecting three principles of Aristotelian natural science — hylomorphism, the infinite divisibility of matter and the necessity of causation — Epicurus posits that the world has no beginning nor end and consists of indivisible atoms which collide arbitrarily in an infinite vacuum.[5] Even the human soul is therefore corporeal, a mere coagulation of atoms which at death will disintegrate:

> scripsit [Epicurus] enim et multis saepe verbis et breviter aperteque in eo libro quem modo nominavi, 'mortem nihil ad nos pertinere; quod enim dissolutum sit, id esse sine sensu; quod autem sine sensu sit, id nihil ad nos pertinere omnino'.[6]
>
> [For he repeatedly argued at length, and also stated briefly and plainly in the book I have just mentioned, that 'death does not affect us at all; for a thing that has experienced dissolution must be devoid of sensation; and that which is devoid of sensation cannot affect us in any degree whatsoever'.]

The gods, in this account, are completely detached from human affairs and, devoid of vengeful retribution or benevolent care, are entirely impotent.[7] The fear of the gods is dismissed as superstitious while religion, the pious worship of the gods, is presented as utterly vain.[8] Religion, rather, was invented by the wise for the good of the state in order to control those uneducated in the use of human reason:

> 'qui [Epicurei] dixerunt totam de dis immortalibus opinionem fictam esse ab hominibus sapientibus rei publicae causa, ut quos ratio non posset eos ad officium religio duceret, nonne omnem religionem funditus sustulerunt?[9]

> [[the Epicureans] have asserted that the entire notion of the immortal gods is a fiction invented by wise men in the interest of the state, to the end that those whom reason was powerless to control might be led in the path of duty by religion; surely this view was absolutely and entirely destructive of religion.]

Aside from his impiety towards religion, Epicurus dismissed — as little more than childish pursuits — the study of logic, poetry and the liberal arts.[10] Inadequately schooled in the science of logic, Epicurus misplaced epistemological primacy on sensation as the only justifiable criterion, in natural philosophy, for Truth.[11]

Epicurus's materialism is reflected, Cicero suggests, in his theory of ethics, according to which the sensations of pleasure and pain become the criteria for moral judgements of good and evil:

> Extremum et ultimum bonorum [...] Epicurus in voluptate ponit, quod summum bonum esse vult; summumque malum dolorem; idque instituit docere sic: Omne animal, simul atque natum sit, voluptatem appetere, eaque gaudere, ut summo bono; dolorem aspernari, ut summum malum, et, quantum possit, a se repellere.[12]

> [The final and ultimate Good [...] Epicurus finds in pleasure; pleasure he holds to be the Chief Good, pain the Chief Evil. This he sets out to prove as follows: Every animal, as soon as it is born, seeks for pleasure, and delights in it as the Chief Good, while it recoils from pain as the Chief Evil, and so far as possible avoids it.]

Epicurean pleasure does not, however, consist in positive gratification. In Cicero's *De finibus*, Torquatus illustrates the sophistication of the Epicurean notion of *voluptas* with the statue of the stoic Chrysippus. Seated with his hand extended, the statue indicates the delight he took during his life in the syllogism:

> [Crysippus]: 'Numquidnam manus tua, sic affecta quaemadmodum affecta nunc est, desiderat?'
> [Responsum]: 'Nihil sane'
> [Crys.]: 'At si voluptas esset bonum, desideraret'
> [Resp.]: 'Ita credo'
> [Crys.]: 'Non est igitur voluptas bonum'[13]

> [[Crysippus]: 'Does your hand want anything, while it is in its present condition?'
> [Answer]: 'No, nothing'
> [Crys.]: 'But if pleasure were a good, it would want pleasure'
> [Ans.]: 'Yes, I suppose it would.'
> [Crys.]: 'Therefore pleasure is not a good'.]

Although an efficacious Stoic argument against sensual hedonism, this is no argument against Epicurus's definition of *voluptas* as 'doloris omnis privatio' [the complete absence of pain].[14]

Torquatus, Cicero's Epicurean spokesman, delineates the three types of innate desire central to Epicurus's ethical theory: the natural and necessary; the natural but not necessary; and the imagined (neither natural nor necessary).[15] The necessary desires sustain life — such as the desires for food, drink and shelter — and may be satisfied without much work or expense ('necessariae nec opera multa nec impensa

explentur').[16] Although necessary for the species, the natural passions — such as the sexual desire for coitus — are not necessary for the individual life. The imagined desires — as for fame, power, success or glory — are nothing other than diseases of the mind to which fools are slaves and which wise men abjure ('animi autem morbi sunt cupiditates immensae et inanes divitiarum, gloriae, dominationis, libidinosarum etiam voluptatum').[17] The wise man, freed from the illusory fears of death and of the gods and contented with the temperate satisfaction of only the first class of necessary desires, may thereby pursue *voluptas* — a life of tranquillity ('sapiens solus, amputata circumcisaque inanitate omni et errore, naturae finibus contentus sine aegritudine possit et sine metu vivere').[18]

Although Cicero considers the rational justification of Epicurus's ethical theory (as of his natural philosophy) to be fundamentally flawed, he nonetheless represents Epicurus as morally impeccable:

> 'Quis, quaeso, illum negat et bonum virum et comen et humanum fuisse? De ingenio eius in his disputationibus, non de moribus quaeritur'.[19]
>
> [Who pray denies that Epicurus was a good man, and a kind and humane man? In these discussions it is his intellect and not his character that is in question.]

Cicero's emphasis on Epicurus's moral probity is because, in order to reach the goal of tranquillity, Epicurus taught the moral virtues in common with the other main schools of philosophy. In a chiasmus which echoes the doctrine, Torquatus — Epicurus's advocate in the dialogue of *De finibus* — concludes:

> 'Clamat Epicurus, is quem vos nimis voluptatibus esse deditum dicitis, non posse iucunde vivi nisi sapienter, honeste iusteque vivatur, nec sapienter, honeste, iuste nisi iucunde'.[20]
>
> [Epicurus, the man whom you denounce as voluptuary, cries aloud that no one can live pleasantly without living wisely, honourably and justly, and no one wisely, honourably and justly without living pleasantly].

Epicurus is thus, on Cicero's account, a rigorous moral instructor even if he misconstrues theoretically the cardinal virtues as prudential (devoid of intrinsic merit) and pursued for the sake of *voluptas*.[21] In the same way, Seneca — whom Dante names alongside Cicero in the Limbo of the virtuous pagans as 'Seneca morale' — draws heavily upon Epicurus's ethical doctrines: 'ab Epicuro tam multa bene dicta referam potius quam nostrorum' [I quote so many of Epicurus's sermons instead of sermons taken from our own school].[22] Nonetheless Seneca emphasizes that these doctrines come from an alien and inimical school of philosophy: 'soleo enim in aliena castra transire, non tamquam transfuga, sed tamquam explorator' [for I am wont to cross over even into the enemy's camp — not as a deserter, but as a scout'].[23]

The qualified praise of Seneca is indicative of the Roman reception of Epicureanism undistorted by Christian apologetics. Epicurus himself is generally praised for his exceptional individual virtue and several of his moral teachings are similarly approved. Nonetheless, in natural philosophy, Epicurus is vilified for tearing the clothes of Lady Philosophy (as in Boethius), occupying the enemy camp (as in Seneca), and abandoning the true path (as in Cicero).[24] Furthermore, a misinterpretation of the Epicurean doctrine of *voluptas* — to signify merely the

pursuit of positive sensual pleasure — appears to have assailed Epicurean ethics from its inception. Thus, in what was to become a tag for this vulgar misinterpretation, Horace refers ironically to himself in an epistle as a pig from the herd of Epicurus: 'me pinguem et nitidum bene curata cuta vises | cum ridere voles, Epicuri de grege porcum' ['As for me, when you want a laugh, you will find me in fine fettle, fat and sleek, a hog from Epicurus's herd'].[25]

The medieval encyclopaedias

Aside from Roman sources, Dante had access to a variety of medieval works of compilation, which gave more summary historical and philosophical portraits of the philosophers and their schools. Of these, John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* and the derivative compendiums of the Dominican Vincent of Beauvais and the Franciscan John of Wales are examples of literary works influential either directly or indirectly on late thirteenth-century assumptions regarding the life and philosophical views of Epicurus.[26] In common with the Roman writers, these three encyclopaedists highlight Epicurus's philosophical unorthodoxy and all, bar John of Wales, are explicit about Epicurean mortalism and his refutation of Divine Providence in human affairs. Vincent of Beauvais comments that Epicurus erred more than all other philosophers ('Erravit autem in multis plusquam omnes philosophi'), and he delineates three grave errors: that God does not care about human affairs ('putavit Deum res humanas non curare'); that pleasure is the highest good ('voluptatem summum bonum esse'); and that souls perish with the body ('animas cum corporibus interire').[27] This last error, Epicurean mortalism, is distilled in John of Salisbury's compact verse: 'Haec quoque secta docet animam cum carne perire' [This school teaches that the soul perishes with the body].[28]

In terms of Epicurean ethics, however, a highly ambivalent attitude prevails. The encyclopaedists acknowledge that Epicurus's 'pleasures' may have been intellectual rather than sensual. John of Wales, for example, notes that Epicurus did not mean his followers to pursue the pleasure of the body but rather the pleasure of the mind ('non intendebat de voluptate q[uae] est in carnalibus; sed de voluptate me[n]tis').[29] The encyclopaedists emphasize the abstinence and moral rectitude of Epicurus. Vincent of Beauvais, citing Seneca, emphatically distances the 'sobria disputatio' of Epicurus himself from any subsequent reputation for sensual licence:

> *non* potationes, *non* commessationes, *nec* copulæ fæminarum, *nec* copia piscium, & aliorum huiusmodi, que splendido usu parantur convivii, sauvem vitam faciunt, *sed* sobria disputatio.[30]
>
> [*not* luxurious drinks, *not* rich foods, *not* an abundance of women *nor* a great quantity of fish, *nor* any other such things — which are on display at splendid banquets — make life sweet, *but rather* sober discussion.]

Epicurus, although the 'affertor voluptatis', advocated ('quod autem mirandum sit') only the satisfaction of necessary desires and the strict avoidance of sensuality.[31] The school of Epicurus is acclaimed, alongside the Stoic and Peripatetic schools of philosophy, as a pathway towards the blessedness of virtue as the goal of human life:

> Cum ergo virtus sola beatum faciat, ad thronum eius, sumpta occasione ex traditionibus doctiorum, per varios calles ascendere conati sunt. Stoicus enim, ut rerum contemptum doceat, in mortis meditatione versatur; Peripatheticus in inquisitione veri; volutatur in voluptatibus Epicurus; et, licet ad unum tendant, varias sententias quasi vias beatitudinis auditoribus suis aperiunt.[32]
>
> [Since only virtue makes man happy, men have tried to reach virtue's summit by various paths taking their cue from the traditions of the learned. The stoic, indeed, was concerned to meditate on death, that he might teach the contempt of worldly things; the peripatetic sought out truth; the Epicurean was occupied with pleasure. And, although they aim at one goal, they opened their disciples' ears to different teachings as to different paths of happiness.]

In a conceptual scheme to be directly mirrored by Dante in the *Convivio*, criticism of Epicurean natural philosophy is married with approbation of Epicurean ethics.

The encyclopaedists equally recognize, however, that the followers of Epicurus — distorting his teaching to defend a life of sensuality ('plebs que eam sequitur deflexit in voluptates') — have given him a bad name: 'a turpi sequacium grege contraxerit infamiae notam' [due to a herd of base followers he was branded with infamy].[33] Epicurus's disciples are presented as champions of worldly delights and, in this sense, 'Epicurean' becomes a merely derogatory appellation for a sensual hedonism:

> 'Mundus itaque Epicureis plenus est, eo quod in tanta multitudine hominum pauci sunt qui non famulentur libidini, id est corruptae voluntati, sed laboriosae voluntatis nexibus non impliciti aut nulli aut pauciores sunt'.[34]
>
> [The world is therefore full of Epicureans because in such a multitude of men there are few who are not slaves to lust, that is to the corruption of the will; but those who are not enveloped in the bonds of wearisome desire are none or very few.]

The Horatian pig-Epicurean caricature surfaces, therefore, in the medieval encyclopaedias, but it is distinguished from the true teaching of Epicurus. In a telling analogy, John of Salisbury compares the pig-Epicurean (of sensual pleasure) to the sober Epicurus (a paragon of moral virtue) intoxicated by wine.[35]

The patristic and popular traditions

Augustine's rhetorically colourful propaganda against Epicurus's thought is representative of the process by which the Early Church Fathers traduced the reputation of Epicurus to such an extent that, by the medieval period, he became — to the popular imagination — little more than a caricature of carnal excess. Augustine himself was comparatively well-informed.[36] Nonetheless, where Cicero's pejorative account maintains a critical distance and Epicurus's views are represented by the noble statesman Torquatus, Augustine's attacks on Epicurus are impassioned and Epicurus's followers are ultimately dismissed as hogs. The vehemence of Augustine's reaction may be understood in relation to his own spiritual biography. Augustine claims that when, in his youth, he discussed Cicero's *De finibus* with his friends, he was almost persuaded to give the philosopher's palm to Epicurus. Only his conviction in the afterlife and the reward and punishment for a person's acts held

him back:

> Et disputabam cum amicis meis Alypio et Nebridio de finibus bonorum et malorum. Epicurum accepturum fuisse palmam in animo meo, nisi ego credidissem post mortem restare animae vitam et tractus meritorum, quod Epicurus credere noluit. (Augustine, *Confessiones* VI, 16.26).
>
> [And I disputed with my friends Alypius and Nebridius concerning the ends of good and evil. Had I not believed that the life of the soul continues after death (which Epicurus refused to believe), to my mind Epicurus would have won the palm.]

Augustine understood that the Epicurean school aims to eradicate man's fear of God, death and a final judgement: 'quia nec quidquam Deum res humanas curare arbitrantur, et consumpta ista vita nullam credunt futuram' [they believe that God does not care in the slightest about human affairs and that, after this life is finished, there is no future life]. Nonetheless he could not dispel his own fear of death and future judgement which, he claims, ultimately turned him away from a life of sensuality: 'nec me revocabat a profundiore voluptatum carnalium gurgite nisi metus mortis et futuri iudicii tui' [nothing recalled me from an even deeper abyss of carnal pleasures except from the fear of death and of your future judgment].[37]

The fact that, for Augustine, Epicurus's impious philosophy had afforded a licence to sensuality in his youth may have influenced the polemical nature of his biased and hostile account of Epicurus in later life. Augustine does indicate some awareness of the complexity of Epicurus's ethics. However he considers abominable the idea that the virtues should serve man's pleasure, and pure vanity the notion that the Epicurean, even when confronting extreme pain, may still find — through the exercise of the mind — enjoyment.[38] Augustine even goes out of his way to emphasize that Epicurus's counsels on abstinence should not mislead a reader into thinking that Epicurus advocates virtue as the goal of life or that Epicurus's 'voluptas' signified the mental pleasures of contemplation.[39] Rather, the goal of Epicurus's philosophy is ultimately as shameful and deplorable as it appears: the pleasure of the body ('voluptas corporis'). Augustine considers entirely detestable Epicurus's idea that, after death, the soul dissolves before the body (because the soul, in leaving the body, immediately disintegrates whereas the body takes longer to decay).[40] The Epicureans, Augustine claims, corrupt good morals with evil sayings ('illi corrumpentes mores bonos colloquiis malis'), and exhort people to sensual hedonism: 'et dicentes: *Manducemus et bibamus; cras enim moriemur*' [and they say: *Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we will die*].[41] This dictum is the polar opposite of the manifesto of the Christians who, in penitence in this life, expect the consummated union with God in the next: 'Donemus et oremus; cras enim moriemur' [Let us give charitably and pray; for tomorrow we will die].[42] In Augustine's thought, as in his process of conversion, the Christian God-directed life is thus set against the Epicurean worldly and sensuous life. In his exaggerated polemic, Augustine claims that the manifesto of the Epicureans is fit for pigs not for men: 'doluit Apostolus, quosdam e numero Christianorum elegisse sententiam Epicureorum, non hominum, sed porcorum' [the Apostle was sad that some of the Christians had chosen the view of the Epicureans, not men but pigs].[43]

It is this misleading view of Epicureanism which enters into the popular medieval consciousness. Isidore, for his entry on Epicurus in the *Etymologiae* (arguably the most influential compendium in medieval Europe), draws uncritically upon Augustine's authoritative commentary on Psalm LXXIII.[44] Following Augustine, Isidore correctly glosses Epicurus's mortalism, atomism and his denial of Divine Providence: '[Epicurei] adserunt autem Deum nihil agere, omnia constare corporibus, animam nihil aliud esse quam corpus. Unde et dixit "non ero, posteaquam mortuus fuero"' [they assert that God does nothing; everything consists of bodies; the soul is nothing other than the body. Whence also he said, "I will not exist after I have died"].[45] But Isidore misleadingly depicts Epicurus as a lover of vanity, not wisdom, and as solely an advocate of sensual, as opposed to intellectual, pleasure: 'Epicurei dicti ab Epicuro quodam philosopho amatore vanitatis, non sapientiae, quem etiam ipsi philosophi porcum nominaverunt, quasi volutans in caeno carnali, voluptatem corporis summum bonum adserens' [The Epicureans are so called from a certain philosopher Epicurus, a lover of vanity, not of wisdom, whom the philosophers themselves named "the pig", wallowing in carnal filth, as it were, and asserting that bodily pleasure is the highest good].[46] The Epicurus who emerges from a reading of Isidore, influenced by Augustine's partisan condemnation, is — with no qualification — the 'pig-Epicurus' of carnal pleasure.

The case of Augustine and Isidore's *Etymologiae* is representative of the way in which the patristic reception of Epicurus forged the popular misconception of Epicureanism in the medieval period. Theophilus, Clement, Pseudo-Clement, Ambrose, Epiphanius, Peter Chrysologus, and Filastrius, all contributed to the 'colourful array of depravities and perversions' attributed to Epicurus's alleged pursuit of bodily pleasure.[47] Indeed, Howard Jones, in his survey of Epicureanism, highlights that, for the most part, the appellation 'Epicurean' during the medieval period signified a licence to sensuality with little or no serious philosophical commitment to Epicurean doctrines: 'he [Epicurus] is not the proponent of a mechanistic universe or the advocate of a corpuscular theory of matter, but the champion of sensuality, the proprietor of the kitchen, the tavern, and the brothel'.[48] Cicero's definition of Epicurean *voluptas* and Seneca's propagation of Epicurus's gems of moral teaching are entirely left behind as Epicurus is traduced into a glutton, who makes his belly his God, his kitchen his temple:

> Alte clamat Epicurus
> venter satur est securus
> venter deus meus erit
> talem deum gula querit
> cuius templum est coquina
> in qua redolent divina[49]
>
> [Epicurus shouts on high: the sated stomach is secure! the stomach shall be my god! such a god does taste desire whose temple is the kitchen wherein the scent's divine!]

The popular tradition of the pig-Epicurean and the commonplace use of 'Epicurean' as a derogatory term of abuse therefore coexist, during the medieval period, with the more ambivalent attitudes to Epicurean ethics discernible in the encyclopaedists and Roman authors.

The scholastic treatment

A further potential influence on Dante's understanding of Epicureanism emerges from the scholastic commentaries of the thirteenth century. As one might expect, the scholastics appear to have generally held the correct view with regard to Epicurean ethics. The followers of the flesh are humorously nicknamed, as Albert the Great notes, 'gastrimargi' [stomach-madmen]:

> 'a Græco *γαρτηρ* quod est *venter*, et Græco *μαρκω-ω* quod est *insanio, is*: quia semper inanitionem ventris sentientes, insaniunt ad superimpletionem. Tales autem fiunt, qui sunt multum bestiales'. [50]
>
> [from the Greek *γαρτηρ* which means stomach, and the Greek *μαρκω-ω* which means mad: for always feeling an emptiness in their stomach, they eat beyond saturation. Such, however, they become, and are very bestial].

The masses ('populares homines') who are slaves to sensual pleasure ('qui fere omnes ad voluptates declinant') are contrasted, however, with Epicurus's advice to cultivate the virtues lest, by not doing so, one's true intellectual pleasure be impeded.[51] Virtues are the means to a peaceful tranquillity: 'Epicuri, qui voluptatem summum bonum aestimabant, diligenter colebant virtutes, sed tamen propter voluptatem, ne scilicet per contraria vitia eorum, voluptas impediretur' [The Epicureans, who considered pleasure to be the chief good, diligently cultivated the virtues, but only for the sake of pleasure lest — through their opposite vices — pleasure would be impeded].[52] Notably, with regard to the popular misconception of Epicurus (the 'porcus de grege Epicuri'), Aquinas's first example of Epicurean teaching is Epicurus's prudential admonition against gluttony: 'Gula enim per immoderantiam cibi, corporis dolores generat' [Gluttony therefore, through the immoderate consumption of food, leads to bodily pains]. Elsewhere Aquinas highlights, in common with the Epicureans ('sicut etiam Epicuri dicebant'), that 'nimius enim usus ciborum et venereorum est aegrotationis causa et ex hoc etiam usus similium delectationum impedimentum' [too much consumption of food or sexual activity is a cause of illness and, thereby, also an impediment to the practice of similar pleasures].[53] Although archly criticized for his prudential ethical theory (the re-integration of the virtues as subservient to 'voluptas'), Epicurus is defended by Aquinas against the popular misconception of 'voluptas' as sensual pleasure. Similarly Albert, who rationally dismantles Epicurus's theory of the three types of innate passions in his commentary on Aristotle's *Ethics*, nonetheless represents Epicurus as a teacher of the moral virtues.[54]

With regard to Epicurean natural philosophy, however, the reception of the scholastics is more complicated. The central dogmas of atomism, the rejection of final causes, the eternity of the world and the denial of Divine Providence are identified as having been held by Epicurus.[55] However mortalism, which was arguably the most debated and controversial philosophical view of thirteenth-century scholasticism, is by no means universally identified as Epicurus's own philosophical position. Thus Aquinas, in *De articulis fidei*, calls the denial of Divine Providence and atomism errors of the Epicureans:

> Quartus est error Epicureorum ponentium quod Deus non habet providentiam et scientiam de rebus humanis [...] erravit Democritus et Epicurus, ponentes

> quod nec materia mundi nec ipsa mundi compositio est a Deo, sed quod mundus est casu factus per concursum corporum indivisibilium, quae rerum principia aestimabant'.[56]
>
> [The fourth is the error of the Epicureans who posit that God does not have providence and knowledge of human activities [...] Democritus and Epicurus erred, positing that neither the matter of the world nor the ordering of the world is from God, but rather that the world is made randomly through the coalition of indivisible atoms, which they believed to be the principles of all things.]

Mortalism, by contrast, is described as a philosophical error of the Arab commentators (and principally of Averroës):

> sextus articulus pertinet ad ultimum effectum divinitatis, qui est remuneratio bonorum et punitio malorum [...] circa hunc etiam fuerunt multi errores. Quorum primus est dicentium, quod anima moritur cum corpore, sicut Arabs asserit.[57]
>
> [The sixth article pertains to the ultimate effect of the divine, which is the reward of goodness and the punishment of evil [...] about which there were also many errors. Of which the first is that the soul dies with the body, as the Arabs declared.]

Although Aquinas devoted considerable intellectual energy to attempting to prove the individual immortality of the soul against the Averroists, he did not make any connection between its denial and the views of the Epicureans.[58] Rather, for Aquinas, this opinion derives from a misinterpretation of Aristotle and must be resolved internally to Aristotle's natural philosophy.

Albert the Great, however, does make a connection between mortalism and Epicureanism but, as appears unnoticed by scholars, it is manifestly inconsistent. Albert, in *De natura et origine animae* II. xi, ascribes to Epicurus belief in the immortality of the soul and in an afterlife of reward and punishment: 'Ex hac igitur omnium Epicureorum opinione habetur, quod anima immortalis est, et secundum ea quae in corpore gessit, felicitatem vel infelicitatem habebit' [From this is discerned the view of all the Epicureans: that the soul is immortal, and it will receive happiness or unhappiness depending on how it has lived in the body].[59] The three philosophical schools, Albert affirms, all testify to the immortality of the soul: 'tam Peripatetici [...] quam Stoici [...] quam etiam Epicurei, quos ultimo induximus, concorditer ab ipsa coacti veritate animam post dissolutionem corporis immortaliter vivere perpetuo tradiderunt' [the Peripatetics [...] as well as the Stoics [...] as well as even the Epicureans, whom we name last, from this compelling truth taught — as one — that, after the corruption of the body, the immortal soul lives forever].[60] Nonetheless earlier in the same treatise, Albert, confuting the mortalism of Alexander of Aphrodisias ('Alexander [...] Peripateticus Graecus'), writes:

> Hic [Alexander] autem solus ex schola Peripateticorum degenerans pravas intelligentias sequens transit ad Epicurum, optimum hominis et id quod solum in tota natura generabilium divinum est, corporale esse dicens et formam harmonicam corporis cum corporis dissolutione perituram.[61]

> [He [Alexander] alone, however, deviating from the school of the peripatetics and following false ideas, passed over to Epicurus (the best of men), and that which uniquely in all the natural world is divine, he called corporal and — the harmonious form of the body — destined to perish with the corruption of the body.]

In his commentary on *De anima*, the very text which formed the battleground with the Averroists on the individual immortality of the soul, Albert affirms again Epicurean mortalism: 'Et ideo falsum est, quod dixerunt Epicurei, intellectum extingui corpore extincto' [And therefore what the Epicureans say is false — that the intellect with the body will disintegrate].[62] Here Albert rightly asserts that Epicurus believed that the intellect (and therefore the individual intellectual soul) will cease to exist with the corruption of the body. But he also connects this Epicurean view with the false Averroistic interpretation of book III of Aristotle's *De anima*, according to which the continued existence of the individual soul — and thus, by extension, the possibility of individual immortality and of reward and punishment in an afterlife for one's actions on earth — is denied. Apart from these anomalous passages in Albert, there is little evidence, however, that the Averroistic position on the soul was conventionally identified with Epicureanism in the scholastic milieux of the thirteenth century.[63]

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

I have delineated four major intellectual traditions which may have informed Dante's understanding of Epicureanism. Some important general observations emerge. Without exception, we may draw a distinction between the treatment of Epicurus's natural science and the treatment of Epicurean ethics in the various sources. None of the secondary sources offers a positive overall appreciation of Epicurean natural science. For Roman philosophers such as Cicero and Boethius, it is perverse; for the Christian encyclopaedists and the scholastics, at odds with the fundamental principles of the Christian religion. Where the literary sources unite in condemnation of Epicurus's natural philosophy, there is, however, a clearly discernible difference between two pervading accounts of Epicurean ethics. It is as if the Epicurus of philosophically unorthodox (and, in Christian times, heretical) opinions bifurcates into two distinct personalities. We discover a noble-Epicurus, the teacher of morals, who leads man in his pursuit of virtue to a state of intellectual pleasure liberated from temporal anxieties, and yet we also stumble upon a pig-Epicurus, the champion of worldly delights, who advocates limitless sensual indulgence.

Dante's Representation, or Representations, of Epicureanism

Let us now consider the apparent inconsistencies in Dante's own representation, or representations, of Epicureanism in the *Convivio* and in the *Commedia*.[64] Two interrelated inconsistencies raise problems of interpretation. First, in the second book of the *Convivio*, Dante asserts that mortalism is a stupid, vile and damnable opinion and that philosophers have unanimously abjured it (*Conv.*, II. viii. 8–9). In the tenth canto of the *Inferno*, by contrast, Dante defines the Epicurean school of philosophy by its denial of the immortality of the soul (*Inf.*, X. 13–15). Second, in the third and fourth books of the *Convivio*, the Epicureans are depicted as running, in one shared will, with the Stoics and the Peripatetics towards the 'Atene celestiale' of contemplation.[65] The Epicurean school is acclaimed for its contribution to ethics, as one of the three sects of the active life which taught the cultivation of man's most noble part 'la divina bontà' ('*hormen*') and, thereby, set man on the path towards God, 'la beatitudine' (*Conv.*, IV. xxii. 14–18). In the *Inferno*, however, the Epicureans — for pursuing the discordant and heretical view of mortalism — are instead enclosed within a burning graveyard and, exiled from the limbo of the virtuous pagans (*Inf.*, IV), are definitively shut off from the other schools of classical philosophy.

There are two principal ways to interpret these apparent inconsistencies in Dante's treatment. The most obvious exegetical response is in terms of *retractio*: Dante's understanding of Epicurus changed between writing the *Convivio*, in his early forties, and, composing the *Inferno*, in his late forties. Such an interpretation may point to other *retractiones* in the *Commedia*, passages in which Dante, on the basis of new reading or reconsideration, autocorrects an earlier view. Thus, for example, there are inconsistencies between the order of the angels (in *Conv.*, II. v. 6 and *Par.*, VIII. 34–39), and between the different descriptions of the moon spots (in *Conv.*, II. xiii. 9 and *Par.*, II. 46–105). In these instances Dante, through the figures of Charles Martel and Beatrice in the *Paradiso*, retracts errors in the *Convivio.* The retractions are literarily self-conscious and involve factual discrepancies. Although, in the case of Dante's Epicurean reception, there is no meta-poetic retraction (or direct palinode) of the *Convivio* position, critics favouring a *retractio* interpretation can rightly point to the apparent factual difference with regard to Epicurean mortalism.

There are, however, other discrepancies between the *Convivio* and the *Commedia* which do not arise from a change in the facts or from the changed view of the poet, but rather from a shift in authorial emphasis or from the adoption of different judicial criteria. Thus Alexander the Great is praised in the *Convivio* as worthy of universal love for his regal beneficence but, in the *Commedia*, he is engulfed in boiling blood for his tyrannous use of violence (*Conv.*, IV. xi. 14; *Inf.*, XII. 106–08). Bertran de Born, highly commended for his generosity in the *Convivio* and further eulogized in *De vulgari eloquentia* as the poet of arms, is represented by Dante as decapitated in the ninth *bolgia* of Hell for sowing discord between King Henry II of England and his son (*Conv.*, IV. xi. 14; *DVE.*, II. ii. 8–9; *Inf.*, XXVIII. 112–42). Frederick II and his son Manfred are commended in *De vulgari eloquentia* for their

nobility: 'illustres heroes [...] nobilitatem ac rectitudinem suae formae pandentes' [those illustrious heroes [...] knew how to reveal the nobility and integrity that were in their hearts] (*DVE.*, I. xii. 4). In the *Commedia*, Frederick II is condemned to eternal burning in the sepulchres of the heretics (*Inf.*, X. 118–20), while Manfred confesses the awfulness of his sins and ascribes his salvation entirely to the great mercy of God (*Purg.*, III. 121–23). In the case of these individuals, the stark difference of treatment between the *Convivio* and the *Commedia* does not imply a *retractio* on Dante's part. Rather, first, praise from the perspective of man's judgement is shown to be compatible with damnation from the perspective of God's judgement and, second, a man may be recommended as an exemplar in a particular aspect of virtue and yet be considered despicable on account of one specific vice. Men such as Bertran de Born and Brunetto Latini may be honoured as great intellectual statesmen and yet damned eternally for sowing discord and for sodomy respectively. In Christian theology, such damnation meets the requirement of Divine Justice that sins be punished. As only Christ may fulfil Justice for man's sin, men who do not turn to Christ's mercy must face punishment for their sins. From this perspective, it is no coincidence that Dante should voice through Bertran de Born the judicial principle of the *contrapasso*: 'così s'osserva in me lo contrapasso' [Thus you observe in me the counter-suffering] (*Inf.*, XXVIII. 142). Dante's different representations of these figures, therefore, are not necessarily due to an alteration of opinion (*retractio*). Rather, this may be a deliberate strategy (which I label *oppositio*) which creates a very stark dramatic effect by upsetting the expectation of the medieval (or historically aware) reader.

This interruption of reader expectation continues to be valid even if, as probable, Dante's incomplete *Convivio* and *De vulgari eloquentia* achieved no, or only very limited, circulation before, and for a long period after, his death.[66] This is because the personages mentioned in the *Convivio* and re-encountered in the *Inferno* are, in Cacciaguida's words, 'di fame note' [known to fame] (*Par.*, XVII. 138). These are men of literary renown, such as Lancelot (praised in the *Convivio* but damned amongst the lustful in *Inferno* V); of historical renown, such as Alexander the Great; or of more immediate fame in the politics of the Italian peninsula, such as Guido da Montefeltro (lauded, alongside Lancelot, in *Convivio* but damned amongst the false counsellors in *Inferno* XXVII). In each case Dante's immediate audience, even without having read the *Convivio*, would have been familiar — through literature, chronicles or popular tradition — with the souls' earthly renown. It is this earthly renown, and the consequent expectation of praise, which Dante qualifies and disturbs in his depiction of God's judgment of the souls in the afterlife.

Is Dante's treatment of Epicurus and his disciples, in the context of these other instances, to be understood in terms of *retractio* or *oppositio*?

Retractio

Padoan, Mazzeo and Lucchesi consider Dante's representations of Epicurus within the model of *retractio*. They argue that Dante — at the time of writing the *Convivio* — had read only partially a few texts from the Roman and scholastic authors, and was consequently unaware, at that stage, of the Epicurean doctrine of mortalism.

This is just one of the 'numerous self-corrections', Mazzeo suggests, that 'we find as we read through the works of Dante'.[67] Each critic supports his view with philological arguments designed to show that Dante, between the composition of the two works, came across hitherto unknown texts which altered his view of Epicurus.

Padoan highlights first, as grounds for *Convivio* II. viii. 8–9, the scholastic passage in which Epicurus is presented by Albert the Great as affirming the immortality of the soul and an eschatological sphere of *post-mortem* justice.[68] Second, Padoan sustains that Dante, while writing the *Convivio*, had read only the first book of Cicero's *De finibus* in which Torquatus, who undoubtedly embodies a 'noble Epicureanism' (consistent with *Conv.*, III. xiv. 15 and IV. xxii. 14–18), does not explicitly mention Epicurus's mortalism.[69] Only later, Padoan posits, did Dante read the second book of *De finibus* and, therefore, Cicero's transcription of Epicurus's statement: 'mortem nihil ad nos pertinere' [death does not affect us at all].[70] According to Padoan, this passage acted like a 'flash of light' revealing Epicurus's denial of human immortality, which Dante subsequently condemned in *Inferno* X.[71] Montano and A. Ronconi have successfully established, however, that the *Convivio* shows internal evidence of Dante having already read well beyond the second book of *De finibus*.[72] Mazzeo and Lucchesi, accepting Montano and Ronconi's philological conclusion, argue that Dante, without prior knowledge of Epicurean mortalism from another source, still might not have interpreted this passage to imply mortalism.[73] Lucchesi suggests that it was only Dante's subsequent reading of *Tuculanae Disputationes* which led him to reinterpret the passage as evidence of Epicurus's, now indubitable, mortalist convictions.[74] Lucchesi thereby sustains, but with a modified philological argument, Padoan's broad conclusion. Dante's Epicurus changes from the 'orthodox noble Epicurean' (*Convivio*) to the 'heretical noble Epicurean' (*Inferno* X) on account of distinct stages in his reading of Cicero.

Mazzeo, on the other hand, simply divides Dante's reception into 'two entirely different versions of Epicurus': the former, represented in the *Convivio*, is 'Ciceronian and classical'; the latter, represented in *Inferno* X, is 'based on the medieval Christian tradition, best exemplified by Isidore of Seville'. Dante, Mazzeo asserts, 'went from a better understanding of Epicureanism available in Cicero's *De finibus* to the characteristic medieval view, which was less accurate to say the least'.[75] Although Mazzeo's argument accounts for the new identification of Epicureanism with the doctrine of mortalism, the 'pig-Epicurean' caricature of Isidore (the 'porcus de grege Epicuri' stereotype) hardly corresponds to the depiction of the *magnanimi*, addressed with the respectful second person plural, depicted by Dante in *Inferno* X. Indeed Mazzeo, perhaps for this reason, argues that Epicurus, in the *Inferno*, is a 'type' or 'symbol of heresy', playing down the historical accuracy of Dante's narrative portraiture.

Nevertheless, Mazzeo's argument unwittingly creates the stumbling block for all philological hypotheses which suggest that, when he wrote the *Convivio*, Dante was yet to encounter the Epicurean dogma concerning the mortality of the soul. For if, as Mazzeo suggests, the pig-Epicurean caricature was the 'characteristic medieval view' (a proposition which our own survey supports) how could Dante — immersed in the cultural and intellectual life of late thirteenth- and early

fourteenth-century Europe — have come across it only in his mid to late forties? Even if Dante had not directly read Isidore or the church fathers' description of Epicurean mortalism at the time of writing the *Convivio*, it is, as Stabile concludes, unthinkable to attribute to Dante an elevated notion of Epicureanism before his knowledge of the *opinio vulgata*.[76] The Padoan, Lucchesi and Mazzeo hypotheses assume a severe restriction on Dante's reading of Cicero and the Roman authors, a complete lack of acquaintance with medieval works of compilation and a similarly restricted and partial reading of the scholastics. Even setting aside Dante's wider intellectual context, evidence internal to the *Convivio* clearly indicates parallels with the encyclopaedic tradition. We may conclude, therefore, that comprehensive historical and philological counter-evidence strongly suggests that Dante, when writing the *Convivio*, was almost certainly aware of the Epicurean doctrine of mortalism. Padoan, Mazzeo and Lucchesi are nevertheless right to confront a tendency towards over-simplistic systemization which elides the real problem that Dante's apparently diverging representations of Epicurus and his doctrines present.[77] How then may we, taking into account the complexity of the Epicurean reception, the textual references and the scholarship on this issue, respond to these apparent inconsistencies?

Epicurus and mortalism

Let us first scrutinize more closely Dante's immediate follow-up to the 'problem passage' commonly quoted in isolation (which I have italicized below):

> *Però che, se noi rivolgiamo tutte le scritture, sì de' filosofi come delli altri savi scrittori, tutti concordano in questo, che in noi sia parte alcuna perpetuale*. E questo massimamente pare volere Aristotile in quello dell'Anima; questo pare volere massimamente ciascuno Stoico; questo pare volere Tulio, spezialmente in quello libello della Veg[li]ezza; questo pare volere ciascuno poeta che secondo la fede de' gentili hanno parlato; questo vuole ciascuna legge, Giudei, Saracini, e Tartari e qualunque altri vivono secondo alcuna Ragione. (*Conv.*, II. viii. 8–9)
>
> [For if we go through the whole corpus of writings produced either by philosophers or by others endowed with wisdom, we find that all agree on this: there is in us something that endures for ever. This certainly seems to be the view of Aristotle in *On the Soul*; every Stoic appears certain of it; this seems to be Cicero's view, especially in his short book *On Old Age*. This appears to be the view of every poet who has written from the standpoint of pagan belief. Every religious group, Jews, Saracens, Tartars, affirm this, as do all others who live according to some form of law.]

In this *argumentum ex auctoritatibus* for the immortality of the human soul, Dante initially substantiates his opening generalization ('tutte le scritture') with reference to the specific schools of philosophy. Two things are immediately apparent. First, Dante's phrasing ('questo *pare* volere') tellingly indicates some provisionality of judgment: Dante does not claim, in other words, that 'this is the opinion' but rather that 'this appears to be the opinion'. Second, Dante departs from his normative procedure of referring to the views of the three schools of philosophy — the Peripatetics, the Stoics, and the Epicureans — in turn.[78] Dante's omission of the

Academics is of no consequence as Dante considered this school to have been absorbed by the sect of the Peripatetics.[79] With the superlative adverb 'massimamente', Dante shows confidence with regard to Aristotle's view (which he associates specifically with *De anima*) and with regard to the view of every Stoic. Dante omits, however, reference to the Epicurean view. Instead Dante replaces the third school of philosophy with the specific views of the philosopher Cicero. This elision, given the other parallel instances in the *Convivio*, is, I would suggest, deliberate. If Dante were confident that the Epicurean school affirmed the immortality of the soul, it appears to me inexplicable (given his normative procedure) that the Epicureans are not called, as the Peripatetics and the Stoics, to testify to it. This elision leaves two remaining hypotheses: first, that Dante, at this stage, was unsure of the true Epicurean doctrine with regard to the soul; second, that Dante *did* know the true Epicurean view and deliberately omits it.

Let us, in order to address the first hypothesis, sketch Dante's minimum exposure to Epicureanism at the time of his writing the *Convivio*. Dante was undoubtedly familiar with the Ciceronian representation of Epicurean ethics and natural philosophy from *De finibus*, although he may not have read *De natura deorum* or *Tusculanae disputationes* at this stage; he would have been aware of the 'porcus de grege Epicuri' medieval commonplace; he seems (from the internal evidence of the *Convivio*) to have read the double representation of Epicurus characteristic of the medieval encyclopedia; and he may have had some idea of the inconsistent reception of Epicurus in scholastic writings. Given this context, the first thing which unavoidably would have struck Dante is the disjuncture between two incompatible representations of Epicurean ethics: the noble Epicurus embodied by Cicero's Torquatus and the pig-Epicurus of commonplace caricature. Dante's emphasis on the term 'voluptade' and his exegetical clarification of its true Epicurean connotation indicate, in the *Convivio*, an awareness of the possible misinterpretation or misappropriation of Epicurean moral views.[80] Dante, who in many other instances shows himself a not uncritical reader of his sources, would have been alerted thereby to a tendency in certain literary sources and popular beliefs to ascribe to Epicurus — in moral philosophy — views which were not historically true to him or to his school. We may reasonably infer, therefore, that if Dante came across — in natural philosophy — the dogma of Epicurus's mortalism through Isidore or the *opinio vulgata*, he may have questioned its authenticity. As the *opinio vulgata* mistakes Epicurean ethics, could its ascription of 'mortalism' be founded upon a parallel misunderstanding of Epicurean natural philosophy? The Albert source, highlighted by Padoan, would indeed have heightened this uncertainty: here was an authority in philosophy claiming — against the *opinio vulgata* — that Epicurus's true view was that the soul was perpetual. Albert specifically lists the Peripatetics, the Stoics and the Epicureans, to support his *argumentum ex auctoritate* for the immortality of the soul. Dante's omission of the Epicureans to support the same thesis in the *Convivio* may testify, therefore, to an authorial ambivalence as to the true opinion of Epicurus, which is understandable given the unreliable and conflicting accounts of his sources.

The second hypothesis assumes Dante's greater exposure to currents of thought

ascribed to Epicurus. It may be that Dante, even at the point of writing the *Convivio*, had read Ciceronian sources which explicitly address Epicurus's true philosophical views and Albert's commentary to *De anima* which, in contradiction to *De natura et origine animae* II. ii, identifies Epicurus's mortalism. These authoritative sources would have confirmed the otherwise unreliable *opinio vulgata*, which correctly ascribed the doctrine of mortalism to Epicurus but wrongly characterized it as a pretext for a worldly and licentious life. If then Dante did know the Epicurean mortalism doctrine at the time of writing the *Convivio*, why does he omit it? Of his four arguments for the immortality of the soul in *Convivio* II. viii. 7–16, two are based upon human intuition and the experience of dreams: 'La nostra speranza [...] le divinazione de' nostri sogni' [our hope [...] the prophetic perceptions in our dreams]. The other two are *ex auctoritate*. In this vernacular treatise, Dante does not therefore attempt to demonstrate philosophically — *ex ratione* — the immortality of the individual soul.[81] Given the complexity of the scholastic disputes about this issue in the early fourteenth century, this is unsurprising. But it means, crucially, that Dante has to place added weight on the first and fourth arguments from the authorities of pagan philosophy and Christian revelation respectively. His rhetorically emphatic *argumenta ex auctoritatibus*, however, would have been clearly weakened by reference to Epicurus's opposing view. In the context of the vernacular treatise, therefore, it is not far-fetched to infer that Dante, even if cognizant of the true Epicurean view, may have deliberately passed over it. Moreover, this implicit exclusion of Epicurus from 'i filosofi' in *Convivio* II. viii, because of his aberrant view on the soul's immortality, is consistent with Dante's exclusion of Epicurus, ostensibly for the same reason, from 'la filosofica famiglia' in the *Limbus gentilium virtuosum* in *Inferno* IV.

We may respond, therefore, to the first apparent inconsistency between Dante's representation of Epicurus as implicitly denying mortalism in the *Convivio* and as explicitly affirming it in *Inferno* X. The much-quoted passage in *Convivio* II. viii does not necessarily entail, as scholars have concluded heretofore, that Dante believed when writing the *Convivio* that the Epicurean school affirmed the immortality of the soul. On the contrary, the omission of specific reference to the Epicurean view suggests that, given his normative procedure, Dante was either unsure as to Epicurus's view or understood it to be philosophically non-conformist.

Epicurus and the limits of practical ethics

Dante's omission of the Epicureans in *Convivio* II. viii. 8–9 indicates a tacit awareness of the school's potential mortalism, to be explicitly castigated in *Inferno* X. Similarly, Dante's analysis of the limitations of Epicurus's moral teaching in *Convivio* IV. xxii plants the seed, as closer scrutiny of the chapter reveals, for Dante's depiction of the Epicureans in *Inferno* X. The chapter's subject is human happiness and, having already sketched the goal of human life held by the three sects of philosophy — the Peripatetics, the Stoics and the Epicureans — in *Convivio* IV. vi, Dante glosses only the 'true opinion' of Aristotle and the Peripatetics. Dante's initial thesis proceeds in four stages. First, he describes the rational soul's creation *ex nihilo* by God and of its

desire to return to God, its creator (*Conv.*, IV. xxii. 4–10). Second, he distinguishes between the practical (through virtue) and speculative (through the contemplation of God and Nature) exercises of reason which constitute the dual earthly happiness of man, and are the desired fructification of the 'noble seed' implanted in us (IV. xxii. 11). Third, he observes, as in the opening of the treatise, that most seeds (or rational souls) do not come to fruition due to poor cultivation and to insufficient ethical direction (IV. xxii. 11–12).[82] Fourth, he highlights the traditional hierarchy between the active and contemplative lives, the latter 'più pieno di beatitudine che l'altro' [brings happiness more fully than the other] (IV. xxii. 13). In order to substantiate this position with an argument *ex auctoritate Dei*, Dante could have referred back to the commonplace exegetical comparison between Martha (active life) and Mary (contemplative life).[83] Instead, in a long digression (for the remainder of the chapter), he constructs a peculiar allegorical interpretation of Mark 13. 1–7. Although the ostensible purpose is to justify the hierarchical priority of the contemplative life, Dante uses this digression to assesses the achievements and limitations of the three pagan schools of philosophy.

In Dante's reading, the three Marys who arrive at the tomb of Christ on the sabbath (Mark 13. 1–2) allegorically represent the Epicureans, the Stoics and the Peripatetics, who cultivate the rational soul towards its practical earthly goal. The angel symbolizes the human nobility obtained by the philosophers; the tomb represents the knowledge of the present world which they found: '[il] mondo presente che è ricettaculo di corruttibili cose' [the present world, the domain of things which pass away] (*Conv.*, IV. xxii. 15). However, at the limit of 'the present world', the angel directs the three Marys to Galilee. In Dante's allegorical interpretation, the philosophical schools — searching for human happiness but discovering instead human nobility — are directed by the voice of reason to the contemplation of Truth (symbolized by Galilee). This contemplative happiness ('nostra beatitudine'), which exceeds the happiness of virtue, itself then leads to our highest possible bliss ('la *somma* beatitudine') which consists in the vision of Christ who, in the allegorical comparison, precedes the disciples in Galilee (*Conv.*, IV. xxii. 16–18). The teleology is thus clear. The three philosophical schools cultivate the rational soul to its active perfection (human nobility represented by the angel); man must then be directed towards human bliss (the philosophical contemplation of God and Nature symbolized by Galilee), and finally towards the vision of Christ (represented by the privileged encounter of the disciples with Christ in Galilee).[84]

An implicit condemnation of the limited ethical scope of the Epicurean school, to be explicitly damned in *Inferno* X, may be discerned therefore in the *Convivio*. Epicurus, teaching 'voluptade' as man's goal and virtue as its means, arrives — in Dante's allegorical schema — at the tomb of Christ. But, denying the immortality of the soul and the incorruptibility of substances, the Epicureans do not depart to seek Truth (Galilee), itself a pathway towards the vision of Christ. Dogged by the mortalism they profess, the Epicureans remain entrapped within the tomb ('il mondo presente': the receptacle of corruptible things). But this is also, surely, where we find the Epicureans in the *Commedia*. There is indeed, it appears to me, a direct conceptual and imaginative parallel between the empty tomb of *Convivio*

IV. xxii and the tombs of the Epicureans of *Inferno* X. The implication is that the Epicureans, obtaining human nobility (represented by the angel), do not follow the angel's message and thus, implicitly, Christ. The pagan Epicurus and his followers in Christendom are thus *ipso facto* heretics. Their ultimate fate — in the *contrapasso* — is to *remain* in the tomb of this life (the tomb of Christ) because, through philosophical mortalism and materialism, they denied even the possibility of the Resurrection.[85]

We may respond, therefore, to the second manifest discrepancy, between the Epicurus acclaimed in *Convivio* III–IV and the Epicurus castigated in *Inferno* X. Dante's reception of Epicurus must be understood in terms of the clear distinction — characteristic of the Roman, encyclopaedic and scholastic sources — between Epicurus the natural philosopher, and Epicurus the moral philosopher. Dante's indication of the limited scope of Epicurean philosophy (in *Convivio* IV. xxii) and his stark condemnation of Epicurus's mortalism (in *Inferno* X) is consistent, in the wider cultural reception, with the strong approbation of Epicurus as a philosopher of the active life ('de la vita attiva') who leads man to human nobility (*Conv.*, IV. xxii. 14).

Oppositio

Dante's Epicureans, in the *Convivio* and in the *Commedia*, share two characteristics: First, they are *noble* — they pursue the earthly goal of human virtue (the *active* perfection of human nature). Second, they fail to seek, beyond the horizon of a human nobility attained, the eternal and incorruptible things of God nor, in Christian times, the direct vision of God through revelation. There is not therefore a fundamental change — either with regard to mortalism or to ethics — in Dante's attitude to Epicureanism between the *Convivio* and the *Commedia*, as maintained by Padoan, Lucchesi and Mazzeo. Nonetheless, there is undoubtedly a radical shift in emphasis and judicial perspective in the two works. In the *Convivio*, Epicurus is commended, from the perspective of this life, as a teacher of the virtues which lead man to his temporal felicity. In the *Commedia*, Epicurus is condemned, from the perspective of the afterlife, as the heretical proponent of mortalism which deprives man of his eternal beatitude.

The shift in judicial perspective enables rhetorically the narrative effect of calculated surprise — the reversal of reader expectation — which I have labelled *oppositio*. As with Alexander, Bertran de Born, Brunetto Latini, and Guido da Montefeltro, so with the 'followers of Epicurus', we encounter a situation in which men lauded in Dante's earlier prose works (and more widely in chronicles and popular tradition) are, for a particular fault, condemned in Dante's *Inferno*. In the case of the Epicurean Farinata, this reversal of expectation is narratively depicted through Dante-character in the poem. In *Inferno* VI, Dante-character asks Ciacco about the eternal destiny of the Epicurean Farinata who, from his own earthly judgement, was notable for his nobility and brilliance in the active life: 'Farinata e 'l Tegghiaio, *che fuor sì degni* [...] e li altri *ch'a ben far puoser li 'ngegni*' [Farinata and Tegghiaio, who were so worthy, [...] and the others who turned their wits to doing well] (*Inf.*, VI. 79–81). Dante-character learns that, from the perspective of divine

judgement, Farinata is 'tra l'anime più nere' [among the blacker souls] in Hell (*Inf.*, VI. 85). Nonetheless, even in Hell — and this is a key point — Farinata does not lose his nobility or his earthly qualities (he is still a *noble* Epicurean). Rather, from this divine perspective, it is Farinata's mortalist view which takes centre stage: Farinata is damned as a heretic.

Ubi est porcus de grege Epicuri?

But what then of the pig-Epicurus of sensual pleasure? Where, if anywhere, does he reside in Dante's *oeuvre*? If, as I suggested, Dante cannot have been unaware of the 'porcus de grege Epicuri' tradition, why is he so conspicuously absent? Why at no point does Dante, himself such a vehement critic of moral decadence, use the appellation 'Epicurean' to refer to the vulgar life of the senses?

The Florentine glutton Ciacco would seem an obvious candidate for the 'porcus de grege Epicuri'. A characteristic feature of the medieval Epicurean stereotype, epitomized in the Horatian tag, is its association with gluttony. The glutton may stand paradigmatically for the unnatural disorder and inversion of man's nature, characteristic of carnal sinners, whereby reason is enslaved to the lower appetites: 'i peccator carnali | che la ragion sommettono al talento' [the carnal sinners, who subject their reason to their appetite] (*Inf.*, V. 38–39). In scriptural exegesis and medieval art, the gateway to sin and to Hell is frequently represented by the mouth. In the *Inferno*, Cerberus — the three-headed (and three-mouthed) dog: 'il *gran vermo*, | le bocche aperse' [the great worm opened his mouths] (*Inf.*, VI. 22–23) — foreshadows Lucifer — whose three mouths devour Judas, Brutus and Cassius: 'Da ogne bocca dirompea co' denti | un peccatore' [In each of his mouths he was breaking a sinner with his teeth]; '[il] *vermo reo* che 'l mondo fóra' [the evil worm that gnaws the world] (*Inf.*, XXXIV. 55–56; 108). The very title of Dante's ethical treatise — *Il Convivio* [the Banquet] — emphasizes Dante's ethical preoccupation to reclaim the metaphor of nutrition and to reverse the moral disorder embodied by the glutton. Dante seeks to divert his fellow Florentines from a bestial life nourished only on the senses: 'miseri quelli che colle pecore hanno comune cibo!' [pitiful are those who share the food of sheep!]. And he redirects them to the truly human nourishment of reason: 'Oh beati quelli pochi che seggono a quella mensa dove lo pane delli angeli si manuca!' [Blessed indeed are those few who sit at the table where they feed on the bread of angels!] (*Conv.*, I. i 7).[86] Furthermore, the slogan attributed in the patristic and popular traditions to Epicurus and his followers — 'Manducemus et bibamus; cras enim moriemur' —, which emphasizes an irreligious mortalism as a licence to unrestrained gluttony, is directly associated by Dante, albeit in a modified version, with Florentine ethical and linguistic deprivation: 'Locuntur Florentini et dicunt *Manichiamo, introque che noi non facciamo altro*' [When the Florentines speak, they say things like: 'Let's eat, since there's nothing else to do'] (*DVE.*, I. xiii, 2).[87] As his use of the Epicurean slogan suggests, Dante identifies the glutton figure both with the popular medieval caricature of Epicurus and with the moral decadence of his fellow Florentine citizens.

If we turn to the *Commedia*, there are, as Simone Marchesi has explored, specific

resonances and similarities between the language and imagery Dante uses to describe the gluttons in *Inferno* VI and Isidore's definition of the Epicureans:[88]

> Epicurei dicti ab Epicuro quodam philosopho [1] amatore vanitatis, non sapientiae [2] quem etiam ipsi philosophi porcum nominaverunt, [3] quasi volutans [4] in caeno carnali, [5] voluptatem corporis summum bonum adserens; [6] qui etiam dixit nulla divina providentia instructum esse aut regi mundum [...] [7] animam nihil aliud esse quam corpus. Unde et dixit 'non ero, posteaquam mortuus fuero'.[89]
>
> [The Epicureans are so called from a certain philosopher Epicurus, [1] a lover of vanity, not of wisdom, [2] whom the philosophers themselves named 'the pig', [3] wallowing [4] in carnal filth, as it were, [5] and asserting that bodily pleasure is the highest good. [6] He also said that the world was not constructed or regulated by any divine forethought [...] [7] the soul is nothing other than the body. Whence also he said, 'I will not exist after I have died'.]

Isidore provides an even more startlingly accurate gloss on Dante's gluttons than Marchesi's excellent article would suggest. In the following paragraphs, I consider seven main points of correspondence in turn.

Arriving at the third circle of Hell, Dante-character and Virgil trample upon the gluttons whose vanity makes them only appear as persons: 'e ponavam le piante | sovra *lor vanità* che par persona' [and we were placing our soles on their emptiness that seems a human body] (*Inf.*, VI. 35–36). Benvenuto's gloss — 'quia *sapientes* calcant et parvipendunt tales *gulosos vanos*' [because wise men trample upon and little esteem such vain gluttons] — highlights Dante's figurative depiction of Isidore's definition ('amatore *vanitatis*, non *sapientiae*').[90] The vanity of the gluttons has, in Dante's treatment, a literal and a moral meaning. The gluttons, like all shades in the *Commedia*, appear corporeal but, until the resurrection of the body, are in fact literally incorporeal (a point to be finally clarified by Statius in *Purgatorio* XXV. 28–108). Morally, however, the gluttons appear as men ('par persona') but this is vanity ('lor vanità') because, preferring the *panis animalium* ('che colle pecore hanno comune cibo') to the *panis angelorum* of the *sapientes*, they are in reality indistinguishable from beasts: 'sicut porci iacent in lutu' [like pigs they lie in mud].[91] Dante's bestial imagery — the gluttons are like dogs and are represented as pigs wallowing in their own filth — reflects Dante's theoretical concern that a man is only a man *in act* when he uses his reason:

> vivere negli animali è sentire — animali, dico, bruti — , vivere nell'uomo è ragione usare. Dunque, se vivere è l'essere [delli viventi, e vivere nell'uomo è ragione usare, ragione usare è l'essere] dell'uomo, e così da quello uso partire è partire da essere, e così è essere morto [...] è morto [uomo] e rimaso bestia. (*Conv.*, IV. vii. 11–14).[92]
>
> [life for an animal is sensation (I refer here to brute animals) and life for a human being is the use of reason. If, then, this is what the life and very being of man consists in, to renounce the use of reason is to renounce being, and is thus the same as being dead [...] one is dead as a man, but continues to live as a beast.]

A life centred on the senses is therefore by definition sub-human: the gluttons only appear human as *in act* they are no different from beasts.

The very name 'Ciacco', a diminutive form of Giacomo, may also be intended as a derogatory nickname signifying *porcus* or pig/hog: ('*quem* [...] *porcum nominaverunt*'). As Benvenuto comments: 'Et est nomen consequens rei: "Ciacchus" enim dicitur quasi ciens, id est vocans cibos' [It is, therefore, the name signifying the thing: 'Ciacchus' indeed is like 'ciens', that is to say 'he who calls for food'].[93] The standard punctuation of the relevant terzina in Petrocchi's text is dictated, however, by an interpretative choice which resists such an identification:

> 'Voi cittadini mi chiamaste Ciacco:
> per la dannosa colpa de la gola,
> come tu vedi, a la pioggia mi fiacco'. (*Inf.*, VI. 52–54)
>
> [You citizens called me Ciacco; because of the damnable sin of the gullet, as you see, I am broken by the rain]

Petrocchi inserts a colon precisely to mitigate against a direct connection between the name 'Ciacco' and the sin of gluttony, and the majority of critics have read through Petrocchi's interpretative cue.[94] Marchesi convincingly argues, however, for the minority position (sustained by early commentators such as Benvenuto and Boccaccio and picked up by Singleton) which emphasizes *nomen consequens rei*: 'the name, when it is read as consequens rei, can be the "real" name of a person and, at the same time, it can bear a meaning'.[95]

This hypothesis is strengthened, we may add, by the ubiquity in Roman comedy and the Roman grammarians of this literary *topos*.[96] Indeed, the four glutton wits in Plautus's comedies — who fill their bellies like parasites and mice always eating other people's food ('parasitando paverint ventres suos [...] quasi mures semper edere alienum cibum') — provide a further possible intertextual commentary to Dante's representation of Ciacco.[97] Gelasinus, who calls his mother 'hunger', claims that his father named him because of his wit ('quia inde iam a pausillo puero *ridiculus* fui').[98] In his life, Gelasinus uses his wit to feed his hunger: 'logos ridiculos vendo. age licemini. | qui cena poscit? ecqui poscit prandio?' [For sale — some funny stories! Come, make your bids! Who offers a dinner? Anyone offer a lunch?].[99] Similarly Boccaccio reports that Ciacco was infamous in Florence as a 'morditore di parole': Ciacco's wit kept him always in the company of the wealthy men of Florence whose splendid banquets Ciacco — himself lacking in funds — would attend, indulging his vice, whether invited or not.[100] Plautus plays on the real and significative valency of a name when Gelasinus, his jokes used up, complains to the maid Crocotium that he will not be able to earn his next meal:

> Crocotium: Gelasime, salve
> Gelasinus: Non est id nomen mihi
> Cr: Certo mecastor id fuit nomen tibi
> Ge: Fuit disertim: verum id usu perdidi. Nunc miccotrogus nomine ex vero vocor.[101]
>
> [Crocotium: Good morning, Gelasimus.
> Gelasimus: That is no name of mine.
> Cr: Heavens, man, it surely was your name.
> Ge: 'Twas, in good sooth. But I wore it out. Now the name forced on me by the facts of life is Crumb-nibbler.]

Although his name is Gelasinus (meaning 'comedian'), he should be called 'miccotrogus' (meaning 'crumb-nibbler'), as that now more accurately describes his plight. The 'ex vero' clause highlights the grammarians' commonplace that an etymology gives the true reason why a thing is so called, the *consequens rei*.[102]

In *Inferno* VI, the etymological meaning of Ciacco's name thus, in a comic turn, similarly describes who Ciacco is (or what he has become). The double semantic valency of the name is authentically held in the ambiguity of Dante's terzina (an ambiguity eliminated by Petrocchi's reductive punctuation): 'la dannosa colpa de la gula' [the damnable sin of the gullet] may be both the *cause* of Ciacco's infernal punishment ('a la pioggia mi fiacco' [I am broken by the rain]) and the etymological cause — through *consequens rei* — of his naming ('voi cittadini mi chiamaste Ciacco' [you citizens called me Ciacco]). On this reading, therefore, Dante intends first that his description of the glutton Ciacco corresponds to the popular Epicurean caricature, and second that the very name 'Ciacco' is interpreted — in the *consequens rei* tradition — to translate the pig-Epicurean customary tag. Where, in Augustine and Isidore, Epicurus himself is called *porcus* by his fellow philosophers 'quem [Epicurum] ipsi etiam philosophi porcum nominaverunt', in Dante's *Inferno*, the Florentine quintessential glutton (who, like Isidore's Epicurus, placed 'voluptatem corporis' as his 'summum bonum') is called *porcus* by his fellow Florentine citizens: 'voi cittadini mi chiamaste Ciacco'.

As Isidore's Epicureans toss and turn in carnal filth ('quasi volutans in caeno carnali'), so Dante's gluttons are compared to dogs soaked by rain and rolling uncomfortably in the mud: 'Urlar li fa la pioggia come cani [...] volgonsi spesso i miseri profani' [The rain makes them howl like dogs [...] cast out wretches, they turn over frequently] (*Inf.*, VI. 19–21). This infernal *contrapasso* is interpreted convincingly by Boccaccio:

> come essi [i golosi], oziosi e gravi del cibo e del vino, col ventre pieno giacquero in riposo el cibo ingluviosamente preso, così [...] senza levarsi giaccianosi in eterno distesi, col loro spesso volgersi testificando i dolorosi movimenti.[103]
>
> [Just as they [the gluttons], idle and weighed down by food and wine, had lain at rest with a full belly of food greedily eaten, so [...] they eternally lie stretched out, without rising, their constant tossing and turning testifying to their painful movements.]

The terrible smells and the incessant howling of Cerberus further contradistinguish the sweet odours and the sweetness of the songs ('la dolcezza de' canti') which characterized their banquets ('ne' lor conviti usavono'). The putrid infernal discharge raining down upon the gluttons is, in Boccaccio's reading, an undigested mixture of luxurious and excessive foods ('la crudità degl'indigesti cibi') which becomes a kind of amalgamation of vomit and scatological excretion.[104] This reflects Isidore's 'caenum carnale', for 'caenum' signifies not merely mud but all putrid fifth ('variarum sordium collectio, quae fastidium parit').[105] The putrid infernal discharge raining down is anti-manna and represents figuratively the degenerative effects of an overly sumptuous banquet ('convivio') which reduces men to *porci* wallowing in their own filth.[106] The dramatic contrast with the philosophically edifying *Convivio*, which

Dante sets as *panis angelorum* (true manna) before his Florentine contemporaries, is evident. Dante indeed, in that work, directly addresses his fellow Florentines who, living in blindness ('in quanta cecità vivete'), fix their gluttonous eyes ('occhi golosi') on the filth of their own perversity ('tenendoli [gli occhi] fissi nel fango della vostra stoltezza') rather than raising up their eyes to the ineffable wisdom of God's eternal providence ('l'ineffabile sapienza, che cosí ordinasti').[107]

The Florentine glutton Ciacco may indeed personify the greedy city-state of Florence. Ciacco is the overflowing mouthpiece for Florence's cupidity, as suggested by the conjugative form of the verb *traboccare* (*tra-bocca*) and its object 'sacco' (which may denote 'stomach'):[108]

> Ed elli a me: 'La tua città, ch'è piena
> D'invidia sì che già trabocca il sacco,
> seco mi tenne in la vita serena'. (*Inf.*, VI. 49–51)

[And he to me: 'Your city, which is so full of envy that the sack already overflows, kept me with her during my sunny life']

Like a glutton, the city of Florence had expanded to an unnatural degree in fact and in ambition. In less than a century the population had swelled more than threefold from around thirty thousand in 1200 to around one hundred thousand in 1300.[109] Using the metaphor of bodily consumption in *Paradiso* XV–XVII, Dante archly criticizes this expansion as the cause of the city's divisive woes:

> 'Sempre la confusione de le persone
> principio fu del mal de la cittade,
> come del vostro il cibo che s'appone' (*Par.*, XVI. 67–69)

[The mixing together of persons has ever been the beginning of harm to the city, as excessive food is cause of your diseases]

Florence boasted on the walls of the Palazzo del Podestà that it possessed the sea, the earth, the entire world — 'Que mare, que terram, que totum possidet orbem' — an inversion of the phrase Lucan used to describe the providential role of Rome to *distribute* (the etymological root of digestion) the world's material goods amongst the whole body of mankind (the *body-politic*).[110] The condor-like wings of Florence, which spread across the whole world to feed her ever-growing and insatiable appetite, are indeed the antithesis of the eagle's wings of Holy Roman Empire which universally distribute material goods in accordance with Justice.[111] The cupidity (*cupiditas*) which overflows out of Florence is thus set in antithesis to the love (*caritas*) which shines out from Dante's ideal Holy Roman Empire.[112] In the opening of *Inferno* XXVI Dante, parodying Florence's boast, highlights that such insatiable avarice and ambition make Florence truly great in Hell rather than in the world:

> Godi, Fiorenze, poi che se' sì grande
> che per mare e per terra batti l'ali,
> e per lo 'nferno tuo nome si spande! (*Inf.*, XXVI. 1–3).

[Rejoice, Florence, since you are so great that on sea and land you beat your wings, and your name spreads through Hell!]

Ciacco was baptized and educated in Florence, and it is a severe indictment that Florence must claim him as her own: 'la tua città [...] seco mi tenne in la vita serena' [your city [...] kept me with her during my sunny life] (*Inf.*, VI. 51). Where Dante would sign himself 'Florentinus natione *non moribus*' [A Florentine by birth not by morals], the damning inference for Florence is that Ciacco would, and rightly so, refer to himself as 'Florentinus natione *et moribus*' [a Florentine by birth and by morals].[113]

Thus far we have observed five detailed correlations between Isidore's Augustinian definition of the Epicureans and Dante's representation of the Florentine glutton Ciacco. Moreover, we have explored the further identification of Ciacco, the greedy and sick body, with the city of Florence, the greedy and sick *body-politic*. At a moral level, Ciacco clearly corresponds to Isidore's description of the 'pig-Epicurean'. But, even more intriguingly, in *Inferno* VI Dante alludes to the two intellectual dogmas — the denial of Divine Providence and mortalism — which Isidore attributes to Epicurus. Where Epicurus 'dixit nulla providentia instructum esse aut regi mundum', Ciacco is compelled to view (and relate to Dante) future historic events and, thereby, the working out of Divine Providence: 'Ma dimmi, se tu sai, a che verranno | li cittadin de la città partita' [But tell me, if you know, to what will come the citizens of the divided city] (*Inf.*, VI. 60–61). Where according to Isidore's Epicurean there is no afterlife ('non ero postquam mortuus fuero'), Ciacco is asked by Dante to relate the *post-mortem* destiny of a number of prominent Florentines: 'se 'l ciel li addolcia o lo 'nferno li attosca' [if Heaven sweetens or Hell poisons them] (*Inf.*, VI. 84). We may infer that as the forced wallowing in putrid filth is the *contrapasso* for gluttony at a moral level, so the forced contemplation of Divine Providence and the privileged knowledge of the eternal destinies of souls are, at an intellectual level, the *contrapasso* for the sensual materialism which accompanied it.

Dante takes hold of Isidore's definition of the Epicurean and, through a series of precise textual and image-bound correlations (we have enumerated seven), embodies this personality type in the Florentine glutton Ciacco: Isidore's *porcus* corresponds, in everything including his name, to Dante's Ciacco. Dante leaves his medieval, or historically informed, reader in no doubt not only that this parallel is intentional but that the reader is expected to recognize it. Nonetheless, Dante at no point labels Ciacco as an Epicurean: Ciacco is a *porcus* (he is the personality-type defined by Isidore) but he emphatically is not, for Dante, 'de grege Epicuri'. Boccaccio's commentary on *Inferno* X shows that he has understood, in my view correctly, these two fundamental aspects of Dante's representation of Epicureanism. Boccaccio dismisses the widespread but false opinion: 'estiman molti che questo filosofo fosse ghiottissimo uomo; la quale estimazione non è vera, per ciò che nessun altro fu più sobrio di lui [...] e perciò non fu ghiotto, come molti credono' [many considered that this philosopher was a very gluttonous man, a prejudice which is untrue because there has never been a person more sober than him [...] and because he was not at all gluttonous as so many believe].[114] Following Dante, Boccaccio associates the 'pig-Epicurean' caricature with Ciacco 'uomo ghiottissimo'.[115] By contrast, Boccaccio emphasizes to his early fourteenth-century Florentine audience that Epicurus 'fu solennissimo filosofo e molto morale e venerabile uomo' [was the

most solemn philosopher — a very virtuous and venerable man]. It is because of a perverse mortalism which, Boccaccio highlights, still pervades Florentine intellectual life — 'e così ancora più altri filosofi variamente e perversamente dell'anima stimarono' [and so, even now, many other philosophers perversely, and in different ways, consider the soul] — that Epicurus is damned in the sixth circle as a heretic:

> 'egli negò del tutto l'eternità dell'anima e tenne che quella insieme col corpo morisse [...] per queste opinioni, seperate del tutto della verità, si come eretico mostra l'autore lui in questo luogo esser dannato'
>
> [He completely rejected the eternity of the soul and held that the soul died with the body [...] for these views, completely at odds with the truth, the author presents him as a heretic damned in this place.][116]

It is therefore misleading to suggest, as Marchesi concludes, that there are two Epicuri in Dante (in *Inferno* VI and *Inferno* X respectively).[117] Rather Dante, aware of the two traditions of representing Epicurean ethics — the 'porcus de grege Epicuri' and the noble Epicurean —, correctly and, given his immediate context, polemically reserves the appellation 'Epicurean' exclusively for the latter.

Notes to Chapter 1

1. Thus Howard Jones, documenting the history of Epicureanism, tellingly entitles the medieval chapter 'Medieval Interlude'. See Howard Jones, *The Epicurean Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 117–41.
2. Pivotal literary moments for the reappraisal of Epicureanism in Renaissance Europe were the rediscovery and dissemination by Poggio Bracciolini (1417) of Lucretius's *De rerum natura*, the wider circulation of Diogenes Laertius's *Vitae philosophorum* (in the early 1500s) and the humanist recovery, more generally, of Greek thought. Although there is some evidence of the circulation of Lucretius even in the early Middle Ages, the scholarly consensus is that such circulation was limited and of little direct influence. On this question, see M. Reeve, 'Lucretius in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: Transmission and Scholarship', in *The Cambridge Companion to Lucretius*, ed. by S. Gillespie and P. Hardie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 205–13. See also Catherine Wilson, 'Epicureanism in Early Modern Philosophy', in *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism*, ed. by James Warren (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 266–. 86 (p. 267).
3. Brown, 'Epicurean Secularism', in *Magister Regis*, ed. by Groos, pp. 179–93 (p. 187).
4. Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum*, ed. and trans. by H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967); Cicero, *De natura deorum*, ed. and trans. by H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967). For a catalogue of Dante's citations from Cicero, Boethius and Seneca, see Edward Moore, *Studies in Dante, First Series: Scripture and Classical Authors in Dante* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969; first pub. 1896), pp. 353–54; pp. 355–56; pp. 356–57.
5. *De finibus*, I. vi. 17, pp. 18–21: 'Ille atomos quas appelat, id est corpora individua propter soliditatem, censet in infinito inani, in quo nihil nec summum nec infimum nec medium nec intimum nec extremum sit, ita ferri ut concursionibus inter se cohaerescant, ex quo efficiantur ea quae sint quaeque cernatur omnia; eumque motum atomorum nullo a principio sed ex aeterno tempore intellegi convenire' ['He terms "atoms", that is, bodies so solid as to be indivisible, moving about in a vacuum of infinite extent, which has neither top, bottom nor middle, neither centre nor circumference. The motion of these atoms is such that they collide and so cohere together; and from this process result the whole of the things that exist and that we see. Moreover, this movement of the atoms must not be conceived as starting from a beginning, but as having gone on from all eternity'].
6. *De finibus*, II. xxxi. 100, pp. 192–93.

7. *De natura deorum*, I. xvii. 45, pp. 46–47: 'Quod si ita est, vere exposita illa sententia est ab Epicuro, quod beatum aeternumque sit id nec habere ipsum negotii quicquam nec exhibere alteri, itaque neque ira neque gratia teneri quod quae talia essent imbecilla essent omnia' ['If this is so, the famous maxim of Epicurus truthfully enunciates that "that which is blessed and eternal can neither know trouble itself nor cause trouble to another, and accordingly cannot feel either anger or favour, since all such things belong only to the weak" '].
8. *De natura deorum*, I. xlii. 117–18, pp. 112–13: '[sententiae] non modo superstitionem tollunt in qua inest timor inanis deorum, sed etiam religionem quae deorum cultu pio continetur' ['[the doctrines] abolish not only superstition, which implies a groundless fear of the gods, but also religion, which consists in piously worshipping them'].
9. *De natura deorum*, I. xlii. 118, p. 112.
10. *De finibus*, I. xxi. 72, p. 74.
11. *De finibus*, I. vii. 22, pp. 24–25: 'Iudicia rerum in sensibus ponit, quibus si semel aliquid falsi pro vero probatum sit, sublatum esse omne iudicium veri et falsi putat' [The criteria of reality he places in sensation; once let the senses accept as true something that is false, and every possible criterion of truth and falsehood seems to him to be immediately destroyed'].
12. *De finibus*, I. ix. 29–30, pp. 32–33.
13. *De finibus*, I. xi. 39, pp. 42–43.
14. *De finibus*, I. xi. 38, pp. 42–43. See also *De finibus*, I. xi. 37, p. 40: 'Maximam voluptatem illam habemus, quae percipitur omni dolore detracto' [the greatest pleasure according to us is that which is experienced as a result of the complete removal of pain].
15. *De finibus*, I. xiii. 45, pp. 48–49: '[Epicurus] unum genus posuit earum cupiditatum quae essent et naturales et necessariae, alterum, quae naturales essent nec tamen necessariae, tertium, quae nec naturales, nec necessariae' ['One kind he [Epicurus] classified as both natural and necessary, a second as natural without being necessary, and a third as neither natural nor necessary'].
16. *De finibus*, I. xiii. 45, p. 48.
17. *De finibus*, I. xviii. 59, p. 62.
18. *De finibus*, I. xiii. 44–45, p. 48. See also I. xiii. 43, pp. 48–49: 'Sapientia enim est una quae maestitiam pellat ex animis, quae nos exhorrescere metu non sinat; qua praeceptrice in tranquillitate vivi potest, omnium cupiditatum ardore restincto' ['Wisdom alone can banish sorrow from our hearts and protect us from alarm and apprehension; put yourself to school with her, and you may live in peace, and quench the glowing flames of desire'].
19. *De finibus*, II. xxv. 80, pp. 170–71. See also *De finibus*, I. vi–vii. 17–26, pp. 18–28.
20. *De finibus*, I. xviii. 57, p. 60.
21. See *De finibus*, I. xix. 64, p. 68 and V. xxxi. 93, p. 498.
22. *Inf.*, IV. 141: 'Tulio e Lino e Seneca morale'. Seneca, *Epistulae*, vol. I, viii. 8, pp. 40–41. See also Vincent of Beauvais, who lists fifteen 'dicta Epicuri' taken from Seneca, in Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum historiale*, in *Bibliotheca Mundi seu Speculi Maioris Vincentii Burgundi*, 4 vols (Duaci [Douai]: Baltazar Bellerus, 1624), vol. 4, IV. xli: 'De dictis eius moralibus et eiusdem erroribus', p. 128.
23. Seneca, *Epistulae*, vol. I, ii. 5, pp. 8–9.
24. Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, I. iii. 21–27, in Boethius, *The Theological Tractates*, ed. and trans. by H. F. Stewart, E. K. Rand and S. J. Tester (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 142–43: 'Cuius [Socratis] hereditatem cum deinceps Epicureum vulgus ac Stoicum ceterique pro sua quisque parte raptum ire molirentur meque reclamantem renitentemque velut in partem praedae traherent, vestem quam meis textueram manibus, disciderunt abreptisque ab ea panniculis totam me sibi cessisse credentes abiere' ['And after him [Socrates] the crowd of Epicureans and Stoics and the rest strove as far as they could to seize his legacy, carrying me off protesting and struggling, as if I were a part of the booty, tearing my dress, which I wove with my own hands, and then went off with their torn-off shreds, thinking they possessed all of me'].
25. Horace, *Epistle* I. iv, in *Satires*, *Epistles and Ars Poetica*, ed. and trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 276–77.
26. John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, in *Ioannis saresberiensis episcopi carnotensis policrati sive De nugis curialium et vestigiis philosophorum*, *libri* VIII, ed. by Clemens C. I. Webb, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909); John of Salisbury, *Entheticus Maior and Minor*, ed. by Jan van Laarhoven,

3 vols (Leiden, New York, Copenhagen and Cologne: Brill, 1987), I; Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum historiale*; John of Wales, *Compendiloquiuum de vitis illustrium philosophorum*, in *Summa Johannis Valensis de regimine vite humane seu Margarita doctorum ad omne p[ro]positu[m] prout patet in tabula* (Lyon: [n.pub.], 1511).

27. Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum historiale*, IV. xxxix–xli, pp. 127–28 (IV. xl, p. 128).
28. John of Salisbury, *Entheticus Maior*, vv. 571.
29. John of Wales, *Compendiloquium*, VI. v; John of Salisbury, *Entheticus Maior*, ll. 527–38 (l. 527): 'Esse boni summam putat alter gaudia mentis'; John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, II, VIII. viii.'De Convivio philosophico', 738a–d, 275–76.
30. Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum historiale*, IV. xli, p. 128. NB Italics in quotations are always mine except where separately indicated as authorial.
31. Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum historiale*, IV. xl, p. 128: 'quod autem mirandum sit, Epicurus voluptatis affertor omnes libros suos replevit oleribus, & pomis: & vilibus cibis dicens esse vivendum, quia carnes & exquisitæ epulæ ingenti cura, & miseria præparentur, maiorem pænam habent in inquirendo quam voluptatem, in abutendo' [But, which is a marvel, Epicurus — the apparent champion of pleasure — fills all his books with herbs, and fruits, and cheap foods saying that this is how to live because meats and exquisite feasts must be prepared with great expense and misery and cause greater pain in acquiring than pleasure in abusing].
32. John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, II, VII. viii. 'Quod virtus unica via est philosophandi et eundi ad beatitudinem; et de tribus gradibus accedentium, et de tribus sectis philosophorum' [That virtue is the unique path to being a philosopher and to advancing towards happiness; and of the three degrees of aspirants and of the three schools of philosophers], 653c, 122. John of Wales cites and quotes this passage from the *Policraticus*, in *Compendiloquiuum*, VI 'Sexta Pars. De tribus sectis principalibus philosophorum' (VI. i: 'De illis in commune').
33. John of Wales, *Compendiloquiuum*, VI. v; John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, II, VIII. viii. 738. c–d, 276.
34. John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, II, VIII. xxiv, 'Epicureos numquam assequi finem suum' (VIII. xxv. 815. a–b, 412).
35. John of Salisbury *Entheticus Maior*, vv. 563–64: 'Sobrius exaudit leges Epicurus, et idem | ebrius est Veneri subditus atque gulae' [Epicurus, when sober, obeys the laws; the same man drunk is a slave to Venus and to his stomach!].
36. Augustine follows the presentation in Cicero's *De finibus*, at *Epistola* CXVIII, 3. 14–17; 4. 27–31. Augustine cites as his example of the second kind of reading error (where one errs because the author himself errs), a reader of Lucretius who holds as true that the human soul consists of atoms and will dissolve after death (Augustine, *De utilitate credendi*, I. 3.8). The catalogue of philosophical errors and description of Epicurus in *De civitate Dei*, XVIII, 41. 2 follows Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae* X.
37. Augustine, *Sermo*, CCCXLVIII: 'De timore dei', 2. 3; Augustine, *Confessiones*, VI, 16. 26.
38. Augustine, *Sermo*, CCCXLVIII: 'De timore dei', 2. 3: 'Epicurei, qui etiam ipsam iustitiam venalem habent, carnalis pretio voluptatis. Dicunt enim propterea sapientem, iustum esse debere, ut vel acquirat, vel teneat ex corpore voluptatem' [The Epicureans who hold that even justice is up for sale, at the price of carnal pleasure]; see also *ibid*: 'et si quid eis adversitatis in hac ipsa contingit, eo se munitos existimant, quia corporis voluptatem, cum eam in ipso corpore tenere non possunt, possunt tamen animo cogitare, et ea cogitatione sese oblectando, corporalis voluptatis beatitudinem, etiam contra corporalis doloris impetum custodire' [And if any adversity overtakes them in this life, they consider themselves fortified against it in this way, that while they cannot hold onto the pleasures of the body in the body itself, they can nonetheless think about them with the mind, and — in the pleasure of such thought — conserve the bliss of bodily pleasure even against the assaults of bodily pain].
39. Augustine, *De utilitate credendi*, I, 4. 10: 'Tertio generi est illud accommodatum: si quis Epicurum, lecto eius in libris aliquo loco ubi continentiam laudat; in virtute illum summum bonum posuisse asseveret, et ideo non esse culpandum. Huic etiam quid obest error Epicuri, si summum bonum hominis voluptatem ille corporis credit; cum iste non se dederit tam turpi noxiaeque sententiae, neque ob aliam causam ei placeat Epicurus, nisi quod eum sensisse non putat, quod sentiri non oporteat' [An example of the third type of error is if someone, having read a passage in which Epicurus praises continence, asserted that Epicurus held that the chief

good is virtue and is not therefore at fault. For how is that person affected by the error of Epicurus (who actually believed that the chief good of man is the pleasure of the body) when he does not give himself to so base and pernicious a view, and commends Epicurus for no other reason than that he does not consider him to have thought what ought not to be thought].

40. Augustine, *Sermo*, CL: 'De verbis actuum apostolorum', 5. 6: 'Et quod est gravius et detestabilius, prius dicunt animam post mortem dissolvi quam corpus [...] anima mox ut exierit, veluti fumus vento diverberata dissolvitur' [And what is more serious and detestable, they say that the soul corrupts before the body [...] the soul dissolves immediately after leaving the body like smoke in the wind].
41. Augustine, *Sermo*, CL, 5. 6.
42. Augustine, *Sermo*, CL, 6. 7.
43. Augustine, *Sermo*, CL, 5. 6.
44. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, LXXIII. 25: 'Et forte qui dicit: Cum mortuus fuero, postea nihil ero: et litteras didicit, et ab Epicuro didicit hoc, nescio quo deliro philosopho, vel potius amatore vanitatis, non sapientiae; quem ipsi etiam philosophi porcum nominaverunt: qui voluptatem corporis summum bonum dixit, hunc philosophum porcum nominaverunt, volutantem se in coeno carnali. Ab illo forte didicit iste literratus dicere, non ero posteaquam mortuus fuero' [And perhaps he that says 'when I will be dead, then I will be nothing' is a learned man and has learnt this doctrine from Epicurus — a philosopher in some kind of delirium, a lover of vanity not wisdom, whom the philosophers themselves named 'the pig', who said that the chief good is the pleasure of the body. They have called this philosopher a pig wallowing in carnal filth. From him perhaps this learned man had learnt to say 'I will not exist after I have died'].
45. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, VIII. vi. 15–16, in *Isidori Hispaliensis Epicopi Etymologiarum sive originum, libri* XX, ed. by W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), I. For the English translation, see *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. and trans. by Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, Oliver Berghof (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 179.
46. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, I, VIII. vi. 15.
47. Jones, *The Epicurean Tradition*, p. 232.
48. Jones, *The Epicurean Tradition*, p. 98.
49. The medieval song is cited in Jones, *The Epicurean Tradition*, pp. 139–40.
50. Albert the Great, *Ethica*, ed. by Borgnet, in <http://albertusmagnus.uwaterloo.ca> [accessed 1 October 2012], III. iii. v.
51. Aquinas, *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, lib. I, l. 5, n. 3; *ST*., IaIIae. q. 34, a. 1–4.
52. Aquinas, *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, lib. I, l. 5, n.3.
53. Aquinas, *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, lib. I, l. 5, n. 3.
54. Albert the Great, *Etica*, III. iii. v: 'Naturales enim et necessariae sunt delectationes in his sine quibus vita praesens non ducitur. Naturales autem et non necessariae sunt, quarum principium appetitivum est in natura, sed tamen ad vitam in individuo consideratam non necessariae sunt, sicut est delectatio venereorum. Nec naturales nec necessariae sunt, quas Epicurus vocat opinatas' [Pleasures which are both natural and necessary are those without which the present life could not be conducted. Natural but not necessary desires, by contrast, are those which are not necessary for the life of the individual albeit their principle is in nature: such is the pleasure of sex. Neither natural nor necessary are those desires which Epicurus calls imagined or supposed desires].
55. *ST*., Ia. q. 22, a. 2, co: 'quidem totaliter providentiam negaverunt, sicut Democritus et Epicurei, ponentes mundum factum esse casu' [some philosophers, such as Democritus and Epicurus, completely rejected providence. They posited, instead, that the world is made at random]; *CG*., III. cap. 96, n. 16: 'illi qui negabant divinam providentiam omnino, sicut Epicurei' [they who altogether reject divine providence, like the Epicureans]; Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 3, a. 1 co: 'qui [Epicurus] ponebat omnia casu accidere' [who [Epicurus] considered everything to happen by chance]; Aquinas, Commentary on Dionysius, *Super De divinis nominibus*, III: 'ponentes omnia a casu accidere et haec fuit opinio Epicureorum' [they held that everything happens by chance, and this was the view of the Epicureans]; Aquinas, *Sententia libri Metaphysicae*, III. l. 4, n. 7: 'quidem sophistae, ut Aristippus, qui fuit de secta Epicureorum, omnino neglexit

demonstrationes quae sunt per causas finales' [some sophists, such as Aristippus, who was of the school of the Epicureans, completely neglected demonstrations in accordance with final causes]. See also Albert the Great, *Super II Sententiarum*, ed. by Borgnet, in < http://albertus.uwaterloo.ca > [accessed 1 October 2012], II. i. xi: 'Epicurus (ut habetur in historicis) etiam erravit in ponendo aeternitatem mundi [...] Epicurus ponebat inane, at atomos: et non dicebat generationem esse et corruptionem, nisi congregationem et segregationem' [Epicurus (as it is written in histories) also erred by positing the eternity of the world [...] Epicurus posited a void and atoms: and did not say that there is generation and corruption but rather congregation and segregation].

56. Aquinas, *De articulis fidei*, par. 1.
57. Aquinas, *De articulis fidei*, par. 1; See also Aquinas, *SG.*, II. cap. 79, n. 15: 'neque cum corpore moritur, sicut Arabs asserit' [neither does it die with the body, as the Arabs maintain].
58. The only exception is in a work falsely ascribed to St Thomas Aquinas: Jacob of Benevento, *De praeambulis ad judicium*. Jacob of Benevento does cite mortalism as 'the error of the Epicureans': 'quartus est Epicureorum, qui dixerunt animam interire cum corpore' [the fourth is of the Epicureans, who say that the soul disintegrates with the body], in *Corpus Thomisticum*.
59. Albert the Great, *De natura et origine animae*, ed. by Bernard Geyer, II. xi. 5–8, in *Alberti Magni Opera Omnia*, ed. by the Cologne Institute of Albert the Great and supervised by Bernard Geyer and William Kübel (Münster: Aschendorff, 1951–), XII, p. 36.
60. Albert the Great, *De natura et origine animae*, II. xi. 45–52, in *Opera Omnia*, XII, p. 36.
61. Albert the Great, *De natura et origine animae*, II. v. 30–35, in *Opera Omnia*, XII, p. 25.
62. Albert the Great, *De anima*, ed. by Clemens Stroick, I. I. viii, in *Alberti Magni Opera Omnia*, ed. by the Cologne Institute of Albert the Great and supervised by Bernard Geyer and William Kübel (Münster: Aschendorff, 1951–), VII. i, p. 76.
63. Maria Corti suggests that 'il vocabolo "epicureo" è applicabile a qualsiasi posizione filosofica che metta in dubbio l'immortalità dell'anima e, a maggior ragione, all'aristotelismo radicale che ha fra i suoi temi fondamentali quello, averroista in senso stretto, dell'esistenza di un intelletto universale e "perpetuo", "sostanza separata", con la consequente negazione della sopravivenza di un'anima individuale' [the term 'Epicurean' is applicable to any philosophical position that places in doubt the immortality of the soul and, especially, to radical Aristotelianism that has, among its fundamental theses, the doctrine — which is more precisely Averroistic — of the existence of a universal and 'perpetual' intellect, a 'separate substance', with the consequent negation of the survival (after death) of an individual soul]. See Maria Corti, *Dante a un nuovo crocevia* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1982), p. 82. By contrast, Barański highlights that 'no special ties united Epicurus and Averroës in the Middle Ages. It is only Dante, specifically the Dante of the *Commedia*, who suggests that, among the many who have held dubious opinions regarding the individual soul, a privileged kinship marks the speculations of Epicurus and Averroës'. See Barański, 'The Ethics of Ignorance', in *Petrarch in Britain*, ed. by McLaughlin and Panizza, pp. 39–59 (p. 41). The scholastic texts of Albert the Great and Jacob of Benevento do suggest, however, that Barański's further conclusion is in need of some qualification.
64. Giorgio Stabile's excellent entry 'Epicurei', *ED.*, II, 697–701 is an invaluable starting point. Aside from major contributions in the commentaries to the *Convivio* and the *Commedia*, important articles which specifically address the debate are: Mazzeo, 'Dante and Epicurus', in *Medieval Cultural Tradition*, pp. 174–204; Giorgio Padoan, 'Il canto degli Epicurei', *Convivium*, 27 (1959), 12–39; id., 'Storicismo critico e schematismo dogmatico', *Convivium*, 28 (1960), 716–28; Rocco Montano 'Farinata peccatore o eroe?', *Convivium*, 28 (1960), 707–16; Pézard, 'Un Dante Épicurien?'; Lucchesi, 'Epicurus and Democritus'; Marchesi, 'Ciacco, Epicurus and Isidore'; Brown, 'Epicurean Secularism', in *Magister Regis*, ed. by Groos, pp. 179–93; John Marenbon, 'The Hellenistic Schools and Thinking about Pagan Philosophy in the Middle Ages' (unpub.).
65. *Conv.*, III. xiv. 13–15. Dante's use of the term 'concord' in philosophical speculation is, in this context, notable: 'tutti *concordano* in questo' (*Conv.*, II. viii. 8); 'in uno volere *concordevolmente* concorrono' (*Conv.*, III. xiv. 15).
66. The most recent treatment of the reception of the *Convivio* is Simon A. Gilson, 'Reading the *Convivio* from Trecento Florence to Dante's Cinquecento Commentators', *Italian Studies*, 64.2 (2009), 266–95. Gilson finds no positive evidence to suggest that Dante circulated the treatise

during his lifetime, although he notes Claudia Villa as, most recently, sustaining the minority view (p. 268 n. 4). The three thirteenth-century commentators who do make use of the *Convivio* in their commentaries on the *Commedia* (Dante's son Pietro, Andrea Lancia, and the writer of the *Ottimo Commento*) either knew Dante directly or were active in Florence (p. 269). This suggests a limited dissemination of the text in the immediate period after Dante's death. Indeed, as Gilson shows, the work only attained wide circulation beyond Tuscany with the *editio princeps* in 1490. The diffusion and reception of the *De vulgari eloquentia* appears to have been even more limited. Steven Botterill notes 'Dante's treatise on vernacular language and its use in lyric poetry remained largely obscure for several centuries after its composition. Only three medieval manuscripts survive, and even after the first printed edition appeared in 1577, evidence for its circulation is scanty'. See 'de vulgari eloquentia', in *DE*., pp. 291–94 (p. 291).

67. Mazzeo, 'Dante and Epicurus', in *Medieval Cultural Tradition*, pp. 174–75.
68. Padoan, 'Storicismo critico', p. 717; Albert the Great, *De natura et origine animae*, Tract. II. cap. 11.
69. Padoan, 'Il canto degli Epicurei', p. 19: 'Una sola è la spiegazione possibile, ed è sorprendente che finora non sia mai vista: Dante allorché scriveva il *Convivio* conosceva solo il primo libro del *De finibus*, mentre la *Monarchia* attesta che successivamente egli conobbe anche il secondo' [There is only one possible explanation, and it is surprising that it has never been noticed until now: when Dante wrote the *Convivio* he only knew the first book of *De finibus*, while the *Monarchia* shows that — at a later stage — he came to know the second book as well]. See also Padoan, 'Storicismo critico', p. 721.
70. *De finibus*, II. xxxi. 100, p. 192.
71. Padoan, 'Il canto degli Epicurei', p. 20: 'Dopo la lettura del secondo del *De finibus*, Epicuro apparve allora a Dante come "*is qui nobis quasi oraculum ediderit nihil ad nos pertinere post mortem*" [...] egli e i suoi seguaci dunque "l'anima col corpo morta fanno"' [After reading the second book of *De finibus*, Epicurus appeared then to Dante as "*is qui nobis quasi oraculum ediderit nihil ad nos pertinere post mortem*" [...] he and his followers therefore "l'anima col corpo morta fanno"']. See also Lucchesi, 'Epicurus and Democritus', p. 4.
72. Rocco Montano, 'Farinata peccatore o eroe?', pp. 711–12; Alessandro Ronconi, 'Cicerone', *ED*., I, 991–97 (p. 992).
73. Lucchesi, 'Epicurus and Democritus', p. 5; Mazzeo, 'Dante and Epicurus', in *Medieval Cultural Tradition*, p. 194.
74. Lucchesi, 'Epicurus and Democritus', pp. 5–7.
75. Mazzeo, 'Dante and Epicurus', in *Medieval Cultural Tradition*, p. 201.
76. Stabile, 'Epicurei', *ED*., II, 697–701 (p. 698).
77. Mazzeo sets up his argument in a polemic against the Busnelli and Vandelli commentary to the *Convivio*. See Mazzeo, 'Dante and Epicurus', in *Medieval Cultural Tradition*, pp. 181–82: 'I hope to demonstrate that they read back into the *Convivio* what is clearly another of Dante's later corrections of an earlier error'.
78. *Conv*., III. xiv. 15: 'a filosofare a quelle Atene celestiali dove li *Stoici, e Peripatetici, e Epicurî,* per la *luce* della veritade etterna, in uno volere concordevolmente concorrono' [to philosophize in that heavenly Athens towards which, through the dawning of eternal truth, the *Stoics*, the *Peripatetics* and the *Epicureans* hasten together, united in the harmony of a single will]; *Conv*., IV. vi. 10–16: 'la loro setta chiamati furono *Stoici* [...] e di questi, che da Epicuro sono *Epicurei* nominati [...] e tutti quelli, che a questa setta si presero *Peripatetici* sono chiamati' [These philosophers and their followers were called *Stoics* [...] these were called *Epicureans* after their master [...] and all those that followed this school were called *Peripatetics*]; *Conv*., IV. xxii. 4: 'Lasciando dunque stare l'oppinione che di quello ebbe *Epicuro* filosofo, e che di quello ebbe Zenone [*Stoic*], venire intendo sommariamente alla verace oppinione d'Aristotile e degli altri *Peripatetici*' [Leaving aside, then, the views held on this topic by the philosopher *Epicurus*, and by Zeno [*Stoic*], I intend straightaway to put forward the true view, held by Aristotle and the other *Peripatetics*]; *Conv*., IV. xxii. 15: 'Per queste tre donne si possono intendere le tre sette de la vita attiva, cioè *li Epicurî, li Stoici e li Peripatetici*' [These three women may be taken to represent the three schools who made the active life their concern, namely, the *Epicureans*, *Stoics* and *Peripatetics*].
79. *Conv*., IV. vi. 16: 'E però che la perfezione di questa moralitade per Aristotile terminata fue,

lo nome delli Academici si spense, e tutti quelli che a questa setta si presero Peripatetici sono chiamati' [Since it was Aristotle who brought this moral doctrine to its final perfection, the name 'Academics' was eclipsed, and all who adhered to this school of thought were called Peripatetics].

80. *Conv.*, IV. vi. 11–12: 'quelli [Epicurus] disse questo nostro fine essere voluptade (non dico "voluntade", ma scrivola per P), cioè diletto senza dolore. E però [che] tra 'l diletto e lo dolore non ponea mezzo alcuno, dicea che "voluptade" non era altro che "non dolore", sì come pare Tullio recitare nel primo di Fine di Beni' [he [Epicurus] concluded that this end of ours is pleasure ['voluptade'], or delight unmixed with pain (I do not say "voluntade", but I write it with a P). Since he did not allow any middle state between delight and pain, he held that pleasure and the absence of pain were identical].
81. Aquinas refers to an argument, similar to Dante's 'human hope' argument, as a sign of man's immortality at *ST.*, Ia. q. 75, a. 6; for a clear analysis of Dante's arguments, see Stephen Bembrose, 'God so loves the soul: Intellections of Immortality in Dante', *Medium Aevum*, 74 (2005), 86–108; See also Gilson, *Dante the Philosopher*, pp. 123–29.
82. See also *Conv.*, I. i. 2–7.
83. See *Conv.*, IV. xvii. 9–10. The exegetical *locus communis* is Luke 10. 41–42: 'Et respondens, dixit illi Dominus: "Martha, Martha sollicita es, et turbaris erga plurima. Porro unum est necessarium. Maria optimam partem elegit, quae non auferetur ab ea"' [The Lord said to her in reply, 'Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her']. Thus, for example, St Thomas cites St Augustine's use of this comparison at *ST.*, IIa–IIae. q. 182. a. 1 co.: 'vita contemplativa est secundum divina, vita autem activa secundum humana. Unde Augustinus dicit, in libro de verbis Dom., *in principio erat verbum, ecce quod Maria audiebat. Verbum caro factum est, ecce cui Martha ministrabat*' [the contemplative life is according to divine things whereas the active life is according to human things. Therefore Augustine says, in his book *de verbis Dom.*, 'In the beginning was the Word, this is whom Mary was hearing. The Word was made flesh, this is whom Martha was serving'].
84. Such an interpretation is strengthened by the possible subtext of the *Policraticus* in which John of Salisbury argues that, as it is only Christ who shows the path to eternal life, the pagan schools (even if believing in the immortality of the soul) did not know the way, and therefore placed virtue as their goal. John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, II, VII. viii. 653. b–c, pp. 121–22: 'Sed quia veteres, licet ex parte animas crederent immortales, vitae eternae, quae post istam futura est, nondum instructionem acceperant; summum bonum in virtute constituerunt quo plane nichil melius est nisi frui eo qui summe bonus et summum bonum est' [But because the ancients, although they believed for the most part in the immortality of the soul, had not yet received instruction about the eternal life which lies in the future after this one, they founded the chief good upon virtue, than which there clearly is nothing better except the enjoyment of Him who maximally is good and is the chief good].
85. See Michael Erler, 'Epicureanism in the Roman Empire', in *The Cambridge Guide to Epicureanism*, ed. by Warren, pp. 46–64 (p. 63): 'Dante too bans Epicurus, as a philosopher of this world, into the sixth circle of the *Inferno*. Epicurus the practitioner of practical ethics, on the other hand, he reveres in the *Convivio*, together with the Peripatetics and the Academy as one of the three women at Christ's empty grave, who have found not truth, but practical worldly wisdom'.
86. Dante, sitting (metaphorically) at the tables of the wise, gathers up the crumbs of the *panis angelorum* (the bread of the intellect shared with the angels) and distributes in the vernacular what he has learnt to those who otherwise would be left eating only the *panis animalium* (the bread of the body shared with the animal world).
87. See also Augustine, *Sermo*, CL, 5. 6.
88. Marchesi, 'Ciacco, Epicurus and Isidore', pp. 117–31.
89. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, I, VIII. vi. 15–17.
90. Benvenuto, gloss to *Inf.*, VI. 34–36.
91. Benvenuto, gloss to *Inf.*, VI. 34–36.
92. Dante uses Aristotle's analogy between the *potentiae* of man and the sides of a pentagon to illustrate the same point at *Conv.*, IV. vii. 15: 'come levando l'ultimo canto del pentangulo

rimane quadrangulo e non più pentagolo, così levando l'ultima potenza dell'anima, cioè la ragione, non rimane più uomo, ma cosa con anima sensitiva solamente, cioè animale bruto' [just as when we take away the final side of a pentagon what remains is a quadrangle, and not a pentagon, so when we take away the final power of the soul, that is, the reason, what remains is not a man, but something with a sensitive soul only, in other words, a brute animal]. See also Aquinas, *Questio disputata de anima*, a. 2, arg. 8.

93. Benvenuto, gloss to *Inf.*, VI. 52–54.
94. Petrocchi, gloss to *Inf.*, VI. 52: 'non è sicuro che Dante abbia voluto ricordare che l'appellativo *Ciacco* era dovuto alla golosità del personaggio, e quindi, nell'incertezza, è opportuno interpungere a fine verso, in modo da evitare un troppo stretto collegamento tra il v. 52 e il v. 53, e invece avvicinare il v. 53 al v. 54 (due punti alla fine del v. 52 sono preferibili)' [it is not certain that Dante wanted to signify that the name Ciacco was due to the gluttonous character of the individual and, therefore, being unsure on this point, it is appropriate to punctuate at the end of the line so as to avoid a close connection between lines 52 and 53 and, instead, to bring together lines 53 and 54 (a colon at the end of line 52 is thereby preferable)].
95. Giovanni Boccaccio, *Il Decameron*, ed. by Enrico Bianchi, in *Decameron — Filocolo — Ameto — Fiammetta*, ed. by Enrico Bianchi, Carlo Salinari and Natalino Sapegno (Milan and Naples: Ricciardi, 1952), IX. viii. 4, p. 654: 'essendo in Firenze uno da tutti chiamato Ciacco, uomo ghiottissmo' [living in Florence someone called by everyone Ciacco, an extremely gluttonous man]; Singleton, gloss to *Inf.*, VI. 52. Marchesi rehearses the principal positions in the debate over the meaning of Ciacco in Marchesi, 'Ciacco, Epicurus and Isidore', pp. 120–23.
96. Quintilian, *Institutiones*, VI. iii. 57, in *Quintilian The Orator's Education*, ed. with trans. by Donald A. Russell, 5 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), III, 92–93: 'Sed ea [similitudo] non ab hominibus modo petitur, verum etiam ab animalibus, ut nobis pueris Iunius Bassus, homo in primis dicax, "asinus albus" vocabatur, et Sarmentus <Messium Cicirrum equo fero similem dixit, ab inanimis ut> P. Blesius Iulium, hominem nigrum et macrum et pandum, "fibulam ferream" dixit. Quod nunc risus petendi genus frequentissimum est' ['Similitude may be sought in animals as well as in men — when I was a boy, Junius Bassus, who had a biting wit, was called "the white donkey"; and Sarmentus <compared Messius Cicirrus to a wild horse — and also in inanimate objects> as Publius Blessius called Julius, who was dark, thin, and round-shouldered, "the iron-buckle." This is now a very common way of looking for a laugh'].
97. Plautus, *Persa*, I. ii. 56–58, in *Plautus*, ed. with trans. by Paul Nixon, 5 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), III, 420–523 (pp. 426–27): 'nam numquam quisquam meorum maiorum fuit, quin parasitando paverint ventres suos: | pater, avos, proavos, abavos, atavos, tritavos | quasi mures semper edere alienum cibum' ['For never a one of my ancestors was there who didn't provide for his belly as a professional parasite. My father, grandfather, great-grandfather, great-great-grandfather, great-great-great-grandfather, and his grandfather, too, always ate other folks' food, just like mice, and not a soul could beat 'em at edacity']. See also Plautus, *Captivi*, I. i. 77, in *Plautus*, I, 460–567 (pp. 468–69): 'quasi mures semper edimus alienum cibum' ['Like mice we are forever nibbling at someone else's food'] and Plautus, *Stichus*, I. iii. 182, in *Plautus*, V, 1–95 (pp. 26–27): 'sed generi nostro haec redditast benignitas: nulli negare soleo, siquis me essum vocat' [But our family's always been endowed with altruism: I never refuse a living soul that asks me out to eat'].
98. Plautus, *Stichus*, I. iii. 174–75, in *Plautus*, V, pp. 26–27. Gelasimus jokes that his mother (hunger) bore him only ten months, but that he has borne her for the rest of his life. On the meaning of 'ridiculus', see F. Ritschl, Opuscula, II. 411, cited in Robert Maltby, 'The Language of Plautus's Parasites' (Open University, 1999) <http://www2.open.ac.uk/ClassicalStudies/GreekPlays/Conf99/Maltby.htm> [accessed 1 October 2012]: 'ridiculus Plauto non est, qui risum movet invitus, sed qui iocis et facetiis risum dedita opera captat' ['ridiculus' in Plautus is not someone who unwittingly causes laughter, but one who on purpose incites laughter through his jokes and witticisms].
99. Plautus, *Stichus*, I. iii. 221–22, in *Plautus*, V, pp. 28–29.
100. Boccaccio, gloss to *Inf.*, VI. 52; see also *Decameron*, IX. viii. 4, pp. 653–57.
101. Plautus, *Stichus*, I. iii. 238–42, in *Plautus*, V, p. 30. (Paul Nixon translates 'miccotrogus' as Nibble-nubbin, to which I have preferred 'Crumb-nibbler'.)

102. See Horace, *Sermones*, II. 2. 56, in *Q. Horati Flacci Opera*, ed. by D. R. Shackleton Bailey (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1985), p. 212: 'cui "Canis" ex vero ductum cognomen adhaeret' [to whom the name 'Dog', derived from the truth, is attached], a passage itself not without relevance to Dante's gluttons who are similarly compared to dogs 'come cani' (*Inf.*, VI. 19).
103. Boccaccio, gloss to *Inf.*, VI. 94–96; see also *Conv.*, IV. xii. 19: 'così nella nostra vita aviene; lo buono camminatore giugne a termine, e a posa; lo erroneo mai non l'aggiunge, ma con molta fatica del suo animo sempre colli occhi gulosi si mira innanzi' [so, too, in our life. The person who takes the right path reaches his goal and finds rest; the person who makes an error never reaches his goal: his mind wears itself out with effort as he fixes his greedy eyes unceasingly on what lies ahead].
104. Boccaccio, gloss to *Inf.*, VI. 94–96.
105. Marchesi highlights Forcellini's note: 'Coenum differt a luto, quod coenum est, ut diximus, variarum sordium collectio, quae fastidium parit, unde Cic. 4 Tus. 24, 54 *male olere omne coenum*; lutum vero sola aqua et terra constat' [Filth differs from mud, insofar as filth may be termed any amalgamation of sordid stuff (thus Cicero says 'all filth smells terrible'); by contrast, mud consists only of water and earth]. See Marchesi, 'Ciacco, Epicurus and Isidore', p. 125.
106. Exodus 16. 4: 'Ecce ego pluam vobis panes de caelo' [I will now rain down bread from heaven for you].
107. *Conv.*, III. v. 22.
108. The only other occurrence of this term in the *Inferno* (the second of three in the *Commedia*) moreover denotes the heretical stomach of Mohammed: the 'tristo sacco | che merda fa di quel che si trangugia' [the wretched bag that makes shit of what is swallowed] (*Inf.*, XXVIII. 26–27).
109. Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, trans. and ed. by Robin Kirkpatrick, pp. xviii–xx.
110. Robert M. Durling, 'Deceit and Digestion in the Belly of Hell', in *Allegory and Representation*, ed. by Stephen J. Greenblatt (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), pp. 61–93.
111. Dante writes (optimistically) of the Emperor: 'tutto *possedendo* e più desiderare non *possendo*' [all possessing and being unable to desire more] (*Conv.*, IV. iv. 4).
112. *Mon.*, I. xi. 14: 'cupiditas nanque, perseitate hominum spreta, querit alia; karitas vero, spretis aliis omnibus, querit Deum et hominum, et per consequens bonum hominis' [greed, scorning the intrinsic nature of man, seeks other things; whereas love, scorning all other things, seeks God and man, and hence the true good of man].
113. *Epistole*, XIII. 1: 'Dantes Alagherii florentinus natione non moribus' [Dante Alighieri, a Florentine by birth and not by morals].
114. Boccaccio, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 13–15.
115. Boccaccio, *Decameron*, IX. viii. 4, p. 654.
116. Boccaccio, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 13–15.
117. Marchesi, 'Ciacco, Epicurus and Isidore', p. 119.

CHAPTER 2

❖

Dante's Epicureanism and the Emergence of Secular Man

Introduction

The first chapter described how, in the light of his immediate cultural and intellectual contexts, Dante represents Epicurus and the Epicureans. The second chapter poses a further question: to what extent does Dante's use and polemical representation of Epicureanism help delineate what is central and distinctive about his thought? I consider four key points: Dante's use of the Epicurean category to cut out a conceptual space for secular man; the connection between Dante's representation of Epicureanism and his political support for the Imperial cause; the relationship between Dante's understanding of Epicureanism and his view of the two goals and spheres of conduct available to man; and Dante's use of Epicureanism to deflect away from himself allegations of heresy.

Unlikely Allies: Epicurus and a Positive Secularism

In line with Cicero's treatment in *De finibus*, Dante elects the noble Roman Torquatus as the advocate for Epicureanism in his prose works, the *Convivio* and the *Monarchia*. Aside from the pagan Torquatus, Dante identifies four thirteenth-century magnates as 'disciples' of Epicurus in *Inferno* X: the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, the influential Ghibelline Cardinal Ottaviano degli Ubaldini, and the Florentine statesmen Farinata and Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti.[1] To this list we may add Guido Cavalcanti who is indirectly associated with Epicureanism and named in the canto. All five of these thirteenth-century personages appear to have been accused of Epicureanism or of the denial of personal immortality during their lives and, by extension, of irreligion and a sceptical attitude towards Christian revelation.

Pope Gregory IX accused Frederick II of gross impiety: 'He said that the whole world has been taken in by three impostors: Jesus Christ, Moses, and Mohammed'.[2] The Pope's account is borne out by countless anecdotes about Frederick II's religious scepticism.[3] Cardinal Ottaviano was infamous for his Epicurean sympathies: 'fuit tamen epicureus ex gestis et verbis eius' [in his acts and his words, he was an Epicurean]. His doubt of the soul's immortality is illustrated by his self-damning epitaph: 'qui in vita sua pluries usus est hiis verbis: "Si anima est", dubitative loquendo, "iam eam amisi pro parte ghibellina"' [who used to say frequently

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during his life: 'If the soul exists', speaking sceptically, 'I have already lost it for the Ghibelline cause'].[4] Farinata and his wife Adaletta were posthumously condemned for heresy by Salomone da Lucca: 'The sentence [...] held them both guilty, and ordered the separation of their bones from those of the faithful, and the confiscation of their goods'.[5] Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti, or so the early commentaries would have us believe, wholly followed the Epicurean sect and unceasingly persuaded others of his mortalist convictions ('Iste [Cavalcante] omnino tenuit sectam epicureorum, semper credens et suadens aliis, quod anima simul moreretur cum corpore').[6] Guido Cavalcanti, as Dante implies in *Inferno* X, was infected by his father's notorious Epicureanism. Benvenuto suggests that Guido bolstered his intellectual standpoint with the latest philosophical arguments: 'errorem quem pater [Cavalcante] habebat ex ignorantia, ipse [Guido] conabatur defendere per scientiam' [the error which the father [Cavalcante] held through ignorance, he [Guido] tried to defend through philosophy].[7] As has been most fully documented by Bruno Nardi, Guido's arguments seem to imply the Averroist reading of Aristotle on the unicity of the potential intellect, a doctrine which philosophically rules out individual immortality.[8] Emerson Brown speculates that Guido 'was prominent in a group of sophisticated and daring thinkers who toyed with non-Christian philosophy and who liked to think of themselves, at least half seriously, as Epicurean'.[9]

Although Dante castigates the anti-Christian mortalism of these historical personages, he nevertheless defends his 'Epicureans' from the perspective of a this-worldly judgement. Dante's Epicureans may not have believed in the immortality of the individual soul, but this did not entail that they were 'lovers of the flesh', seizing what little time there was on earth to satisfy base appetites. Rather they still had an earthly goal — the pursuit of virtue ('ch'a ben far puoser li 'ngegni' [who turned their wits to doing well] (*Inf.*, VI. 81)) — independent of the eternal goal which, for whatever reasons or motives, they denied. Dante's use of the appellation Epicurean is therefore not restricted to a specific following of Epicurean ethics or natural philosophy. Rather, Dante's Epicureans form an inclusive category of those men who, whether through decidedly Epicurean tenets or otherwise, share two unifying characteristics: first, the ethical pursuit of nobility and, secondly, the heretical affirmation of mortalism.[10]

Dante's Epicurean provides thereby the theoretical basis for what we might call today 'secular man', committed to this world and the attainment of earthly felicity but unconcerned with or indifferent to religion and an afterlife. Emerson Brown defines medieval secularism as:

> living in time, in contrast to living in or with regard to eternity [...] interest in the time-bound things of this world during a period which, at least putatively, differs from the ages before and after it in its widespread concern with the timeless things of eternal existence and only with those things of this world that signify eternity or propel us towards it.[11]

Secular man lives in time 'as we all do, but thrives in time and does not long to escape'.[12] As Christians, however, 'we must seek our ultimate values and the goal of our existence outside the endless flux of our saeculum. Mere travellers, homines viatores all, for us this world should be a temporary road to an eternal

goal'.[13] Our true home is the heavenly city as Sapia reminds Dante-character in the eschatological context of the *Commedia*:

> 'O frate mio, ciascuna è cittadina
> d'una vera città; ma tu vuo' dire
> che vivesse in Italia peregrina'. (*Purg.*, XIII. 94–96)
>
> [O my brother, each of us is citizen of one true city; but you mean to say 'who lived in Italy as a pilgrim']

An Epicurean-inspired secularism implies a human-centred rather than a God-directed life. Edward Moore argues that Dante's Epicureans are 'statesmen or churchmen who, immersed in the pursuit of the pleasures or ambitions of this world, give no thought to another'.[14] Morally, the eschatological and religious purpose of human life is subordinated to more immediate worldly claims; intellectually, pagan humanism and rational speculation displace Christian faith and theology.

In this way Dante's Epicureans, heretics with regard to Christian faith, may be nevertheless potential allies with regard to natural ethics and politics. Dante's noble Epicureans point to a shared ethical goal and natural law which, whether Christian believer or not, all men *qua* men should aspire to. Boccaccio's representation of Guido Cavalcanti in *Decameron* (VI. ix) is, in this sense, a particularly sophisticated and insightful commentary on Dante's use of the Epicurean appellation. In Boccaccio's novella, a group of Florentine signori, given to a life of leisure and banqueting, trap Guido amongst the graves of St Reparata. They ask him what he will do when, following the opinion of Epicurus, he has finally proven that God does not exist. Guido, however, obliquely replies: 'Signori, voi mi potete dire a casa vostra ciò che vi piace' [My lords, you can say to me at your house whatever you like].[15] While the other signori remain puzzled, their leader Betto Bruneschelli understands Guido's meaning. The graves are the houses of the dead. Pursuing a hedonistic lifestyle, the signori are, by comparison with men of science, worse than dead men: 'che noi e gli altri uomini idioti e non litterati siamo, a comparazion di lui e degli altri uomini scienziati, peggio che uomini morti, e per ciò, qui essendo, noi siamo a casa nostra' [because we and the other unlettered and stupid men are, by comparison with him and other learned men, worse than dead men and therefore, being here, we are at home]. While he may not believe that men have life after death, Guido — living the life of reason — is alive *as a man* before death. Whether or not they believe in life after death, these signori — living the life of the senses — are, by contrast, dead *as men (rational animals)* even before their death *as sentient beings*.[16]

As Dante rails against an unthinking and thereby bestial or infantile life in the *Convivio*, so the Epicurean Guido's scorn of the signori in the *Decameron* is a moral statement against 'la maggiore parte delli uomini [che] vivono secondo senso, e non secondo ragione, a guisa di pargoli' [the majority of people [who] act only on the basis of their senses and not of their reason, living at the level of children] (*Conv.*, I. iv. 3). Guido Cavalcanti, a noble Epicurean, may believe that men are no different from animals in death because when the body corrupts so also the soul. But the *signori* in Boccaccio's novella, like pig-Epicureans, live as if there were no difference between men and animals in this life. Dante's correct depiction of Epicureans — as noble but heretical — therefore endorses an autonomous and secular ethical

standard, and testifies to the life of reason as the only kind of life worthy of being called human.

Epicureanism and the Imperial Cause

Dante's partial defence of Epicureanism is striking if we compare his representation of the most historically important of these figures, Frederick II, with other contemporary accounts. Salimbene de Adam, writing in 1280, presents Frederick II as a pig-Epicurean who, desiring to live a life based on the motto 'Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we shall die', sought to prove with the help of his court of philosophers that the soul was mortal: 'Erat enim epycurus et ideo quidquid poterat invenire in divina scriptura per se e per sapientes suos, quod faceret ad ostendendum quod non esset alia vita post mortem, totum inveniebat' [He was in fact an Epicurean, and therefore everything whatsoever that he and his wise men were able to find in divine scripture which served to show that there was not another life after death, he found].[17] Frederick II's intellectual commitment to the mortality of the human soul, Salimbene argues, served merely as a licence to sensual excess: 'qui crediderunt quod non esset alia vita nisi presens, ut liberius carnalitatibus suis et miseriis vacare possent' [who held that there is no other life than the present one so as to give in more freely to miserable carnal pleasures].[18] The Florentine early fourteenth-century chronicler Giovanni Villani describes Frederick II in a similar vein: 'E fue dissoluto in lussuria in più guise, e tenea molte concubine e mammoluchi a guisa de' Saracini: in tutti diletti corporali volle abbondare, e quasi vita epicuria tenne, non faccendo conto che mai fosse altra vita' [He was dissolute in his manifold lusts and, like the Saracens, he kept many concubines and slave-girls: he wanted to abound in all the pleasures of the body, and he led a kind of Epicurean life, not counting on there being another life].[19] Frederick II's illegitimate son Manfred was also the butt of such pig-Epicurean jibes: 'Il detto re Manfredi [....] come il padre, e più, dissoluto in ogni lussuria [...] tutta sua vita fu epicuria, non curando quasi Idio né santi, se non a diletto del corpo. Nimico fu di santa Chiesa e de' cherici e de' religiosi' [The said King Manfred [...] just like his father, and more so, was dissolute in every lust [...] his entire life was Epicurean, caring neither about God nor the saints, but only for the pleasure of the body].[20] Contemporaries of Dante therefore represent Frederick II and Manfred as *porci de grege Epicuri*.

Dante, by contrast, appears to go out of his way to emphasize the nobility of Frederick II and his son Manfred and to extricate them from any accusation of their having led a beastly life of sensual pleasure:[21]

> Siquidem illustres heroes, Fredericus Cesar et benegenitus eius Manfredus, nobilitatem ac rectitudinem sue forme pandentes, donec fortuna permisit, humana secuti sunt, brutalia dedignantes. (*DVE*., I. xii. 4).
>
> [Indeed, those illustrious heroes, the Emperor Frederick and his worthy son Manfred, knew how to reveal the nobility and integrity that were in their hearts; and, as long as fortune allowed, they lived in a manner befitting men, despising the bestial life.]

Dante represents the court of Frederick II as a magnet for the Italian nobility

drawing all men of moral and intellectual excellence to share in its glory:

> Propter quod corde nobiles atque gratiarum dotati inherere tantorum principum maiestati conati sunt, ita ut eorum tempore quicquid excellentes animi Latinorum enitebantur primitus in tantorum coronatorum aula prodibat. (*DVE.*, I. xii. 4)
>
> [On this account, all who were noble of heart and rich in graces strove to attach themselves to the majesty of such worthy princes, so that, in their day, all that the most gifted individuals in Italy brought forth first came to light in the court of these two great monarchs.]

In a series of digressions in the *Convivio*, Dante gives further testimony of his high esteem for Frederick II and for the holy office of the Roman Emperor (IV. iv–v; IV. viii. 11–xi. 17). From a moral and this-worldly perspective, Frederick II is acclaimed. Frederick's intellectual views may nonetheless be opposed, Dante emphasizes, without disparaging his moral character. Indeed, Dante claims that Frederick was noble even though he falsely defined nobility as 'antica possession d'avere | con reggimenti belli' [age-old wealth, together with pleasing manners]. The second part of Frederick II's definition was true of his court where 'cortesia' [courtesy], which Dante etymologically derives to mean 'the manners of the court', was synonymous with 'virtue' even if 'cortesia' would literally mean 'turpezza' [degradation] in the courts of Dante's own time (*Conv.*, II. x. 8). Dante's emphasis upon Frederick II's moral nobility is further confirmed through the poetically rendered voice of Pier della Vigna in *Inferno* XIII. Despite having been reduced to suicide by his imprisonment for alleged treachery, Pier defends the nobility of his lord: '[il] mio segnor, che fu d'onor sì degno' [my lord, who was so worthy of honour] (*Inf.*, XIII. 75).

Dante's eulogy of the Frederician court identifies him politically, ethically and artistically with the imperial cause he was to champion after his exile from Florence. The imperial propaganda and cultural renaissance of Frederick II's court promulgated the ideal of the independent Empire as the mediator of justice. This is precisely the role which Dante ascribes to the Holy Roman Empire (and specifically to the imperial programme of Henry VII) in his prose works, his epistles and the *Commedia*. The power and rigour of Frederick II's imperial programme, at a practical and theoretical level, may be seen in the culture of his era. The 2008 Rimini exhibition, *Exempla: La rinascita dell'antico nell'arte italiana. Da Federico II ad Andrea Pisano*, illustrated Frederick II's self-fashioning through political treatises, visual art, sculpture and architecture. Frederick II presented himself as the descendant of the Roman Emperor Augustus with a God-given role to bring justice and peace to the world and to promote the recuperation of classical models as the legitimate ethical guides to man's temporal goal.[22] Where Guelf and papal propagandists portrayed Frederick II as not only a religious sceptic but as a pig-Epicurean, Dante, although condemning from a theological point of view Frederick II's alleged mortalism, honours his nobility and lauds his pursuit of justice.

In imperial vein, Dante not only defends the virtue of Frederick II against papal propaganda but he openly attacks the papal expansionist territorial policy which, against natural law and against Scriptural revelation, illegitimately appropriates

temporal power to the papacy. In *Purgatorio* XVI, Dante — through the voice of Marco Lombardo — deplores the absence of virtue, or even its pursuit, in the 'blind world': 'Lo mondo è ben così tutto diserto | d'ogne virtute come tu mi sone' [The world is surely as barren of every virtue as you say] (*Purg.*, XVI. 58–59); 'quel valore amai | al quale ha or ciascun disteso l'arco' [I loved that worth toward which everyone now has unstrung his bow] (ll. 47–48); 'lo mondo è cieco' [the world is blind] (l. 66). Dante locates the cause of this moral decadence in the institutional rupture of the balance of power between Empire and Church:

> 'Soleva Roma, che 'l buon mondo feo,
> due soli aver, che l'una e l'altra strada
> facean vedere, e del mondo e di Deo.
> L'un l'altro ha spento; ed è giunta la spada
> col pasturale, e l'un con l'altro insieme
> per viva forza mal convien che vada;
> però che, giunti, l'un l'altro non teme:
> se non mi credi, pon mente a la spiga,
> ch'ogn' erba si conosce per lo seme.
> In sul paese ch'Adice e Po riga,
> solea valore e cortesia trovarsi,
> prima che Federigo avesse briga;
> or può sicuramente indi passarsi
> per qualunque lasciasse, per vergogna,
> di ragionar coi buoni o d'appressarsi'. (*Purg.*, XVI. 106–20)

> [Rome, which made the world good, used to have two suns that made visible the two paths, of the world and of God.
> One sun has extinguished the other, and the sword is joined to the shepherd's staff, and it is ill for those two to be violently forced together,
> for, joined, neither fears the other: if you do not believe me, consider the harvest, for every grass is known by its seed.
> In the land watered by Adige and Po valour and courtesy used to be found, before Frederick found opposition;
> now anyone can pass through confidently who is ashamed to speak with the good or to draw near to them.]

Marco distinguishes the secular hemisphere of human affairs from the spiritual hemisphere: the 'two suns' and the 'two paths' (ll. 106–08). Papal worldly ambition, which confounds the sword with the pastoral staff, is the root cause of the moral and social degeneration of the Italian peninsula (ll. 109–14). In consecutive terzine delineated by the temporal adverb 'or' [now] which switches temporal perspective (ll. 15–17; ll. 18–20), Marco contrasts the human worth and courtesy which in the past prevailed under Frederick II with the present wasteland of northern Italy where any immoral man may safely travel without fear of encountering honest men to rebuke him. Marco commands Dante-character to make known to the world his diagnosis of its present ills:

> 'Dì oggimai che la Chiesa di Roma,
> per confondere in sé due reggimenti,
> cade nel fango, e sé brutta e la soma'.

> [Say then that the Church of Rome, because it has fused together in itself the two authorities, falls in the mud and soils both itself and its burden]

In the narrative, Dante-character unequivocally endorses this imperial thesis: 'O Marco mio', he exclaims, 'bene argomenti' [well do you argue] (l. 30).

Dante's representation of Epicureanism thus has a direct contemporary context and audience in mind: it constitutes part of his polemical defence of Frederick II and the Imperial cause against the Guelf and papal propagandists. Frederick II may have been, as both Dante and papal propaganda allege, an Epicurean. But Dante affirms that Frederick II was not, as papal sources claimed, a *porcus*. Rather, like Epicurus, he despised the bestial life of the senses and, although defiantly secular in ambition and intellectual conviction, he pursued — in the hemisphere of *this life* — nobility and the imperial Right. Dante's partial approbation of the Epicurean supports his imperial political programme: the insistence upon the natural philosopher's authority in natural ethics, the Holy Roman Emperor's absolute sovereignty over *bona temporalia*, and the independence of the political hemisphere.[23] The root cause of the present moral and civic degeneration is not, as papal propaganda purported, the licentiousness and irreligion of an imperial party personified by the historical figure of Frederick II. Rather, it is the systematic intrusion upon the autonomy of state government by the papal court which — as epitomized by Boniface VIII's papal bull *Unam Sanctam* (1302) — sought to congregate all power, temporal and spiritual, under the leadership of the Roman Pontiff (the *plenitudo potestatis*).[24]

Dante's Radical Dualism and the Necessity of the Epicurean Standpoint

In the final chapter of the *Monarchia*, Dante crystallizes the central dualism which theoretically underlies, as explicitly articulated also in *Convivio* IV and *Purgatorio* XVI, his broader ethical, political and theological world view.[25] For Dante, man is both mortal and immortal as the head of a man above water may be seen simultaneously as both in the sea and out of it (*Conv.*, III. vii. 5). Man is unique among the animals as the bridge between corruptible and incorruptible things ('homo solus in entibus tenet medium corruptibilium et incorruptibilium') and the horizon between two hemispheres ('assimilatur orizonti, qui est medium duorum emisperiorum').[26] In virtue of this hybrid nature, man pertains at once to the world of time and contingency (in the earthly hemisphere of this life) and to eternity (in the eschatological hemisphere of the future life) and man has, with regard to these two hemispheres, two ethical goals. The first goal, as a mortal and corruptible being, is the human flourishing attainable in the arc of this life. The second goal, as an immortal being, is the beatific vision of God in the eternal future life. The means to attain these two distinct goals, Dante argues, have been revealed to man by human reason and by supernatural truth. Man's path to his earthly goal is guided by the moral virtues and the teaching of the philosophers. Man's path to his eternal goal is guided by the theological virtues and the deposit of divine revelation: 'quella fede | ch'è principio a la via di salvazione' [that faith which is the beginning of the way of salvation] (*Inf.*, II. 29–30). Two institutions, the Empire and the Church,

are divinely ordained to enable man to follow this twofold goal: the Empire with temporal power and responsibility for man's earthly felicity; the Church with spiritual power and responsibility for man's eternal beatitude (*Mon.*, III. xv. 1–18).

It is important to highlight just how distinctive and radical Dante's dualism is within the context of late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century ethical and political thought. Dante's distinction between man's immanent and transcendent end and between the *lex naturalis* and the *lex divina*, although not ubiquitous in thirteenth-century thought, is a feature in the work of those scholastic authors committed to the recuperation, and relative autonomy, of neo-Aristotelian philosophy. In practical philosophy, the dissemination of Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* in the Latin west provided, for the thirteenth-century schoolmen, a goal for man *qua* man within the arc of this life. Following Aristotle, Dante argues that just as each living thing, from a flower to a horse, has a certain natural perfection (which is its nobility) so man, by nature, tends towards his own perfection. This ultimately resides, through the full flowering of the moral and intellectual virtues, in knowledge (*Conv.*, I. i. 1; IV. xvi. 5).[27] The challenge, however, for the Christian intellectual committed to Aristotle's natural ethics was how to relate this order of nature, for which pagan philosophy and human reason provide sufficient guidance, to the order of supernatural grace and the realm of divine revelation and faith.[28] Thomas Aquinas, equally committed to Aristotelian ethics, integrates and subordinates the order of nature to the order of grace. In Aquinas's synthesis, the moral virtues are endowed with 'an entirely new setting and direction' as they become 'organs of grace': the moral virtues are 'offered to God as a way — as *the* way — of cooperating with his grace'.[29] Dante's strategy, by contrast, stresses distinction and separation rather than integration. There are, in particular, four problematic ethical implications of Dante's dualistic strategy. First, it potentially relegates the function of Christianity solely to man's eternal destiny in the next life.[30] Second, it suggests a 'Christmas-cake' model of Christian faith as an additional layer (the icing) on top of the foundational layer (the fruit cake) of pagan reason.[31] Third, the intrinsic perfectibility of human nature appears to render 'healing grace' (*gratia sanans*) redundant with the implication that only 'elevating grace' (*gratia elevans*) is theoretically necessary for man. Fourth, it establishes a dichotomy and tension between man's pursuit of an earthly goal and his, apparently competing, pursuit of an eternal goal.[32]

The political ramifications of Dante's dualistic strategy are correspondingly extreme.[33] Were one to set up a continuum charting late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century representations of the relationship between temporal and spiritual power, at one extreme there would be the complete rejection of dualism and the direct subordination of the temporal to the spiritual power (as in Giles of Rome's *De ecclesiastica potestate* (1302) and Boniface VIII's *Unam Sanctam* of the same year). At the other extreme would be the absolute autonomy and independent divine authorization of these two powers (as in Dante).[34] Dante rejects the progressive *via media* adopted by other Christian-Aristotelian authors who advocated the indirect submission of temporal to spiritual power or the relative autonomy of these two powers. Thus Thomas Aquinas in *De regno* clearly distinguishes the role of the monarch who, with responsibility for the temporal sphere, leads man to his natural

end from the function of the priest who, with responsibility for the spiritual sphere, guides man to his ultimate end. Nonetheless, for Aquinas there is a clear hierarchy between the natural and the supernatural order with the subordination of the temporal to the spiritual power: the indirect power ('potestas indirecta') of the Pope in temporal matters ('in temporalibus').[35] John of Paris, who goes a step further than Aquinas, argues for the relative autonomy of these two orders and for the strict division of temporal and spiritual power. If the Pope, abusing the spiritual sword ('gladius spiritalis'), usurps temporal power and thereby oversteps his legitimate remit, he becomes an enemy of the public good. According to John of Paris, the temporal monarch in this circumstance may wage war legitimately against the papacy: 'princeps etiam violentiam gladii papae posset repellere per gladium suum cum moderanime, nec ageret contra papam ut papa est, sed contra hostem suum et hostem rei publicae' [The prince, with moderation, may even repel the violence of the papal sword through his own sword, nor would he act against the pope insofar as he is pope, but against his enemy and against the enemy of the public good].[36] Dante, however, takes this relative autonomy and the distinction between *homo naturalis* and *homo Christianus* to its extreme: he argues for the independence of two hemispheres of human conduct institutionally governed by the Empire and the Church. The absolute monarch, counselled by the natural philosopher, upholds a perennial and universal standard of reason and law which all men, with or without faith, must obey: 'ut humanum genus secundum sua comunia, que omnibus competunt, ab eo [the Emperor] regatur et comuni regula gubernetur ad pacem' [that mankind is to be ruled by him [the Emperor] in those matters which are common to all men and of relevance to all, and is to be guided towards peace by a common law] (*Mon*., I. xiv. 7). The imperial law is, for Dante, reason written down ('ragione scritta' (*Conv.*, IV. ix. 8)).[37] Dante's only concession to papal supremacy, which does not include any compromise of temporal power, is his analogy to the respect or reverence that a son owes his father. Dante argues at length that the Empire, independently from the Church, derives its authority directly from God.

Dante's insistence on the strict autonomy (the 'two paths') and independent authority (the 'two suns') of two hemispheres of ethical conduct requires that man, whether living before or after Christ and with or without access to revealed truth, may perfect himself in his temporal goal and yet flounder in his eternal goal. In Dante's dualistic conceptual scheme, man is judged from a twofold perspective in conformity with his hybrid nature. Human justice, according to the criteria of reason, is the arbitrator of man's earthly goal (for which the Holy Roman Emperor is the temporal administrator). Christ in Judgement, according to divine justice and mercy, is the arbitrator of man's eternal goal (for which the Pope, who holds the spiritual keys to heaven, is Christ's first minister on earth). Dante's radical dualism theoretically necessitates, therefore, his conceptual category of the Epicurean. Dante's neo-Epicurean cuts out a space for the morally virtuous man, praiseworthy by the judgement of this world, who nonetheless disregards the spiritual hemisphere and is damnable before the final judgement of God. The neo-Epicurean category is thus a consequence, and constituent, of Dante's radical dualism. It establishes a space for a positive secularism which, governed by universal rational criteria, may

direct and validate human activity within the bounds of man's temporal goal and this-worldly happiness.

Epicureanism and Dante's Deflection of Heresy

As we have shown, Dante's representation of Epicureanism is intimately related to his polemical dualism. On account of this dualism, Dante was posthumously accused of heresy and his *Monarchia* publicly burnt. In 1328 Pope John XXII's papal legate in Italy, Bertrand du Pouget, not only ordered all copies of the *Monarchia* found in Bologna to be publicly burnt but, according to Boccaccio's account, threatened to disinter and incinerate Dante's bodily remains.[38] In 1329, the papal Dominican Guido Vernani refuted as philosophically unsound and theologically heretical the foundations of Dante's dualism.[39] The immediate political and religious motivations for such a vehement papal reaction to Dante are clear. In 1326 Ludwig IV of Bavaria, opposed by Pope John XXII, marched into Italy and, in 1327, he was crowned in Milan as the King of Italy. In 1328, Ludwig IV was crowned in Rome as the Holy Roman Emperor and, by a decree deposing Pope John XXII on grounds of heresy, the spiritual Franciscan Pietro Rainalducci was installed as Antipope Nicholas V. Dante's *Monarchia* was cited by the Imperial forces and Dante's authoritative voice, even from his grave, continued to rally support for the Imperial cause in Italy.[40]

Leaving aside the immediate political context, the rhetorical bombast and the papal bias of Guido Vernani's attack, there are aspects of Vernani's critique which are straightforwardly reasonable.[41] It is difficult to disagree with the tenor of Vernani's dismissal of Dante's arguments for the divine justification of the Roman people's eternal dominance over all other human races. Dante's argument, for example, that the geese waking the Roman garrison at the Capitol Hill provides evidence that God divinely intervened to protect the Roman race is, as Vernani suggests quoting Augustine's authority, 'potius deridenda, quam dissolvenda' [more to be mocked than refuted].[42] Vernani similarly unpicks theologically Dante's strange argument that God's justice for Adam's original sin would not have been fulfilled were the Romans not legitimate and universal governors of the entire human race.[43] More contentiously, however, Vernani highlights two heretical implications of Dante's dualism. First, Vernani interprets Dante's delineation of a distinctive earthly goal for humanity-taken-as-a-whole as implying the Averroist position on the unicity of the potential intellect.[44] Second, Vernani infers that Dante's use of the phrase 'homo hominem generat ex materia, et sol' [man and the sun beget man] entails a materialistic denial of the divine origin *ex nihilo* of the human soul.[45]

In *Monarchia* I. iii, Dante argues that as the end of each part of man differs from the end of man so there is a difference between the goal of an individual man and the goal of mankind-taken-as-a-whole.[46] Citing Averroës, Dante affirms that the goal of mankind is the realization of the total potential of the possible intellect: 'proprium opus humani generis totaliter accepti est actuare semper totam potentiam intellectus possibilis, per prius ad speculandum et secundario propter hoc ad operandum per suam extensionem' [the activity proper to mankind considered as a whole is to actualize constantly the full potential of the possible intellect, primarily through thought and secondarily through action (as a function and

extension of thought)] (*Mon*., I. iv. 1).[47] The obvious interpretation of Dante's text, first highlighted by Vernani and recently sustained in relation to the scholarship on the issue by John Marenbon, is that Dante refers to the single possible intellect of mankind:[48]

> Tertius error est pessimus. Dicit enim in eodem Capitulo, et sequenti, quod intellectus possibilis, non potest actuari, idest perfici, nisi per totum genus humanum: sicut potentia materiae primae non potest totaliter reduci ad actum, et perfectionem nisi per multitudinem rerum naturalium. Et ad hoc adducit auctoritatem Averoys, qui hoc dicit in *Commemoratio* super 3. lib. *de anima*; et hunc dicit, esse finem, et perfectionem non unius singularis hominis, sed totius humani generis simul sumpti; sic autem dicendo, sequitur manifeste, quod in omnibus hominibus est unus solus intellectus, quod quidem dicere, et sentire, est error pessimus, cuius autor, et inventor fuit ille Averoys, quem allegat.[49]
>
> [The third is the worst kind of error. He actually says in the same chapter and the following, that the possible intellect cannot be actualized, that is, it cannot be perfected, except through the whole human race, just as the potentiality of prime matter cannot be brought totally to actuality and perfection, except through a multitude of natural things. And for this he adduces the authority of Averroës, who says as much in his *Commentary* on Book 3 of *On the Soul*; and he affirms that this is the end and perfection not of one individual man, but of all mankind lumped together. By such a statement it clearly follows that there is one single intellect for all mankind; but to say and hear such a thing is to commit the flagrant error of its author and inventor, Averroës, to whom he refers.]

On Vernani's account, Dante's argument is logically valid: Dante's Emperor is justified *ex ratione* by the peace and stability necessary for mankind to achieve a temporal goal different in kind from man's individual goal. However, it is predicated on an apparently heretical premiss: Averroës' view of the unicity of the potential intellect.[50] The Averroist premiss implies, as the one follows from the other, a philosophical denial of the individual immortality of the soul.[51]

The section of Vernani's argument entitled 'anima est a Deo per creationem, non ex traduce' [the soul comes from God through creation, not through transference] highlights the second heretical inference which Vernani deduces from the *Monarchia*.[52] According to Vernani, Dante absurdly and ignorantly ('inepte [...] et etiam ignoranter') derives his premiss that 'humanum genus est filius coeli' [mankind is the offspring of the heavens] from the true proposition of St Paul: 'Imitatores Dei estote sicut filii carissimi' [Be ye therefore followers of God, as most dear children], and justifies it with a passage from Aristotle's *Physics*: 'homo generat hominem ex materia, et sol' [man and the sun beget man].[53] Vernani argues that Dante interprets the Aristotelian passage solely with regard to the body. This would imply, as Vernani emphasizes, a materialistic understanding of the generation and the corruption of human life indistinguishable from that common to all animals. Indeed Aquinas cites this passage from the *Physics* to describe the generation of the sensitive (animal) rather than the rational soul.[54] In the light of this materialistic inference, Vernani ridicules Dante's, to him perverse, re-appropriation of the Pauline passage:

> Et ideo generatio aliorum animalium magis debet attribui Coelo, quam generatio hominum; Et ideo Coelum magis debet dicit Pater canum et porcorum quam hominum.[55]
>
> [And for this reason, the generation of other animals, rather than the generation of man, must be attributed to the heavens. And that is why the heavens should be called 'father of dogs and pigs' rather than of man.]

Vernani argues that Dante theoretically reduces men to the same level as pigs and dogs. In opposition to Dante's alleged position, Vernani contradistinguishes the creation of the human soul from the generation of all animal souls: 'anima, formato iam corpore, creatur et corpori infunditur; animae vero brutorum cum corporibus oriuntur, et cum corporibus esse desinunt' [once the body is formed, the soul is created and infused into it; the souls of brute animals, however, have their origin with the body and die with it].[56] The rational soul ('anima rationalis') does not derive from a material cause ('non educitur de potentia materiae') neither is it through transmutation, nor is it by transference ('per transmutationem, nec est ex traduce'). Rather, the soul is directly created *ex nihilo* by God ('sed est e Deo summo per creationem').[57]

It is difficult to know how Dante might have responded to Vernani's two heretical inferences were he to have lived for a further eight years. Although it is clear from his wider *oeuvre* that Dante considered that there is a 'perpetual' and 'divine' part in the human soul, Dante does not state unequivocally *as philosophically demonstrable* that the potential intellect is created individually *ex nihilo* in every foetus. It may be that Dante's philosophical arguments in the *Monarchia* and the *Convivio* are compatible with the orthodox doctrine on the potential intellect elucidated in *Purgatorio* XXV by Statius. In this case Vernani's two heretical inferences are, according to Dante's authorial intention, false. But it may also be, as Vernani's contemporary criticisms suggest and as Marenbon has most recently sustained, that Dante follows a procedural relativism characteristic of Latin Averroists such as Boethius of Dacia and Siger de Brabant.[58] Boethius of Dacia states that a man who tries to prove supernatural truths ('veritates christianae fidei') — such as the creation of the world, the creation of man and the resurrection of the body — is a fool; he who does not believe them, however, is a heretic: 'et qui his non credit haereticus est. Qui autem ea quaerit per rationem, fatuus est' [and he who does not believe these things is a heretic. Who investigates them through reason, however, is a fool].[59] It may be that Dante, like them, held unorthodox positions on the human soul — implying mortalism — as viable in philosophy (which, for the neo-peripatetics of the Arts Faculties, 'follows the argument wherever it leads') and nonetheless renounced them in the strongest terms theologically on account of the dogma of divine revelation.[60] In other words, Dante certainly believed in the individual immortality of the soul but he may not have considered it rationally demonstrable.

It is in either case unambiguous that Dante considered the technicality of the philosophical question to be at the very limits of human rational enquiry. Philosophical knowledge of the immortal nature of the individual human soul straddles the sciences of Physics and Metaphysics, at the highest echelons of the scholastic canon. In the *Convivio*, Dante emphasizes how difficult the creation of

human life is to understand ('forte ad intendere'); how it appears to him a miracle ('chè a me medesimo pare maraviglia'); and how hard it is to explain in language and particularly in the vernacular ('non è cosa da manifestare a lingua, lingua, dico veramente, volgare').[61] In the *Purgatorio*, Dante highlights that Averroës, one wiser than him, erred in this matter: 'che più savio di te fé già errante' [that led one wiser than you into error] (*Purg.*, XXV. 63).[62] Very few men therefore, in Dante's view, have the power of intellectual sight to see philosophically to the horizon of human life. Nonetheless all men can *believe*, and Christians are shown through divine revelation, that beyond the horizon of this life there is another, and that the individual soul is immortal. Even if from certain advanced philosophical perspectives the status of the human soul's individual immortality may have been placed in doubt and even if, as Marenbon argues, Dante may have sympathized intellectually with these unorthodox philosophical views, this does not lessen for Dante the human, and Christian, imperative to affirm the immortality of the individual human soul.

Whether or not Dante may have held the unicity of the potential intellect and the non *ex nihilo* conception of human life as philosophically viable in the *Monarchia*, Dante deflects, in the *Commedia*, the deduction of mortalism on to the Epicureans 'che l'anima col corpo morta fanno' [who make the soul die with the body] (*Inf.*, X. 15). Dante thereby distances the potentially unorthodox philosophical foundation of his polemical dualism from the wilful affirmation of mortalism which he represents, in his category of the Epicureans, as the heresy *par excellence*. In *Inferno* X, the Epicurean mortalist Farinata thrusts out his breast in disdain for the eschatological sphere of Hell: 'ed el s'ergea col petto e con la fronte | com' avesse l'inferno a gran dispitto' [and he was rising up with his breast and forehead as if he had Hell in great disdain] (*Inf.*, X. 35–36).[63] By contrast Dante-character, in *Purgatorio* XXV, opens his heart (the biblical seat of wisdom) to the three philosophically contentious doctrinal truths about the immortality of the soul which Statius, whom Dante makes a Christian convert, imparts: 'Apri a la verità che viene il petto' [Open your breast to the truth that comes] (*Purg.*, XXV. 67).[64] First, Statius affirms that the potential intellect is a faculty of the individual human soul rather than, as Averroës thought, independent from and shared by all men: 'per sua dottrina fé disgiunto | da l'anima il possibile intelletto' [so that in his teaching he separated the possible intellect from the soul] (ll. 64–65). Second, the individual soul is not 'per transmutationem, nec est ex traduce' [through transmutation, nor is it by transference], but is rather created directly *ex nihilo* by God: 'e spira | spirto nuovo' [and breathes into it a new spirit] (ll. 71–72).[65] Third, the human soul, contrary to the tripartite doctrine taught by Plato, is one and the form of the body: 'un'alma sola' [one single soul] (l. 74). Dante's treatment indicates therefore a distinction between intellectual sympathy for and wilful assent of the heart to philosophical arguments which lead to positions (as mortalism) at variance with the fundamental truths of Divine Revelation.[66] It is the wilful affirmation which Dante condemns as heretical.

If we consider the commentaries of Jacopo della Lana (1324–28) and the 'Ottimo Commento' (1333), the first written before and the second within four years of Vernani's treatise, we may observe that the Averroistic interpretation of Aristotle's

De anima and the materialistic understanding of the generation of human life are ascribed not to Dante himself, as in Vernani, but to Dante's Epicureans: 'qui sono li argomenti che fanno li epicuri' [here are the arguments which the Epicureans use].[67] Following Aquinas's three objections in the article 'Utrum anima humana sit corruptibilis' [Whether the human soul is corruptible] (*ST*., I.a. q. 75, a.6), both commentators outline and confute three arguments whereby a contemporary may have denied the individual immortality of the soul. The 1333 Florentine commentary first explains that the Epicurean mortalist conviction may be concluded from the following syllogism. First premiss: 'la propria oppinione dell'anima si è intendere [the function proper to the soul is understanding]. Second premiss: 'intendere non puote sanza la fantasia, che è organo corporale, come dice Aristotile, libro III de l'Anima [the soul cannot know without the imagination, which is an organ of the body, as Aristotle says in the third book of *De anima*]. Conclusion: 'adunque l'anima non puote permanere partita dal corpo' [therefore the soul cannot remain when separated from the body].[68] As Aquinas registers, this conclusion would seem to imply either that the soul is corruptible (*ST*., Ia. q. 75, a. 6, ob. 3) or that the intellectual principle, as Averroës held, is not united to the body (*ST*., Ia. q.76, a. 1, ob.6) and therefore that there is no *individual* immortality. Second, the 'Ottimo Commento' registers as Epicurean the philosophical position (implied, Vernani infers, by Dante's claim in the *Monarchia* that 'humanum genus est filius coeli') that the generation of human life is no different, in principle, from that of animals:

> Epicurio dicea: quelle cose ch'hanno simile principio, e simile processo, debbono avere simile fine; il principio della creazione delli uomini è quello de' bruti animali; e sì come ch'elli mangiano, beono, spirano, odono, vegono, taciono ec., adunque il fine de' esser cotale delli uomini, quale delli altri animali: e noi vedemo che insiememente muore il bruto tutto; così dee morire l'uomo tutto.
>
> [Epicurus states: those things that have a similar beginning, and a similar development, must have a similar end; the principle of the creation of men is that of brute animals; and just like them, they eat, drink, breathe, smell, move, touch etc., therefore the end of such beings as men is the same as for all other animals: and we see that the brute — as a whole being taken together — dies; so man must die entirely.]

To the first argument, the Florentine commentary responds that, after death, the human soul will find some new way of intellection (similar to the angels) which does not involve the use of corporeal phantasms necessary to the intellectual process on earth in this life ('un altro modo d'intendere simile a quello delle sustanzie angeliche').[69] The response to the second argument mirrors the confutation in Vernani:

> 'li uomini, a li animali hanno simile principio di generazione quanto al corpo ma non quanto a l'anima; però che l'anima de' bruti si produce per virtù del corpo: ma l'anima de l'uomo si produce sanza mezzo alcuno, immantanente da Dio'.[70]
>
> [men have a similar principle of generation to the animals with regard to the body, but not with regard to the soul; because the soul of brute animals is

> generated by virtue of the body, but the soul of man is produced without any medium whatsoever, immediately by God].

These contemporary commentaries thereby outline a series of arguments on the basis of which a person — in spite of philosophical counter-arguments, man's innate 'intellections of immortality' and the dogma of Christian Faith — might become convinced of the mortality of the human soul. But, of course, whereas Vernani attributes these arguments to Dante, the commentators attribute these arguments to Dante's Epicureans.

Dante's category of the 'Epicureans' is not simply, therefore, a necessary constituent and consequence of his dualistic conception of the world. Dante's 'Epicureans' also serve to mitigate and protect his dualistic theory from potential allegations of heresy. Vernani's treatise (1329), a refutation of the *Monarchia*, first highlighted the heretical inference of mortalism deducible from the theoretical foundation of Dante's dualism. But, in the *Commedia*, Dante successfully deflects — as the roughly contemporaneous Jacopo della Lana (*c.* 1324–28) and 'Ottimo' (*c.* 1333) commentaries clearly demonstrate — any heretical inference of mortalism onto his category of the Epicureans.

Conclusion

Dante's conception of the hybrid nature of man sets up his dualistic vision of the two hemispheres of human conduct (a view archly refuted by Guido Vernani). Dante assigns to man, whom he considers the horizon between the corruptible and the incorruptible and between the animals and the angels, two distinct paths. And he defines the Epicurean as secular man whose activity is restricted to the hemisphere of this life and to the virtuous path to earthly felicity. Because the Epicurean wilfully denies the immortality of the soul, he is shut off from the whole hemisphere of Christian faith and the path to man's eternal felicity. For this reason, Epicureanism is represented by Dante as the root of all heresy in *Inferno* X. As Guido da Pisa notes: 'Nam ponere quod anima simul cum corpore mortuo moriatur, istud est quasi via ad omnes alias hereses. De levi nanque, dum homo aliam vitam non credit, in omnem heresim labitur' [Indeed, to hold that the soul dies with the death of the body, this is, in some sense, the path to all other heresies. For as long as a man does not believe in another life, he slips easily into every heresy].[71] By contrast, Dante represents the starting point of the Christian journey as, notwithstanding the philosophical arguments *pro* or *contra*, the faith in and wilful affirmation of the immortality of the soul. In Dante's conceptual scheme, the soul's immortality is the cause and principle of man's eternal goal, the beatific vision. As Kenelm Foster emphasizes, 'Dante saw the Christian religion as the way into eternal life after death and [...] he laid particular emphasis on this aspect of it'.[72] Man is therefore, according to Dante's dualistic theory, at once *homo naturalis* and *homo Christianus*. But where all Christians must abide by the ethical criteria of the *homo naturalis*, not all men are open to the hemisphere of faith, implicit or explicit, in Christ.[73] There are thus some men, negligent of their divine nature and explicitly denying faith in an eternal goal, who nonetheless pursue their ethical goal and secular happiness as *homines naturales*: it is these men for whom Dante reserves the Epicurean appellation.

Notes to Chapter 2

1. Benvenuto da Imola notes that Ottaviano degli Ubaldini's influence was so great that he was referred to simply as the Cardinal *par excellence*. See Benvenuto da Imola, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 120: 'quando dicebatur tunc "Cardinalis dixit sic", "Cardinalis fecit sic", intelligebatur de Cardinali Ottaviano' [When, in that time, it was said 'The Cardinal says such and such' or 'The Cardinal does such and such', it was understood to refer to Cardinal Ottaviano].
2. Cited in Remo Bodei, *I Senza Dio: Figure e momenti dell'ateismo* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2001), p. 47: 'Ha detto che il mondo intero è stato ingannato da tre impostori: Gesù Cristo, Mosè e Maometto'. See also Raoul Manselli, 'Federico', *ED.*, II, 825–28 (p. 827): 'le accuse ripetutamente rivolte a Federico, spesso per motivi propagandistici, di un'ostilità al cristianesimo, anzi a ogni religione, per cui gli fu anche attribuita la paternità dell'idea dei tre impostatori Gesù, Maometto e Mosè, che avrebbero con le loro fedi ingannato l'umanità' [the accusations repeatedly directed to Frederick, often for propaganda purposes, of a hostility to Christianity and, indeed, to every religion, according to which he was even attributed with the paternity of the idea of the three impostors Jesus, Mohammed and Moses who — with their faiths — had deceived mankind].
3. The anecdote about Frederick II, reported by Guido da Pisa, is typical: 'Et dum malefactor ille in morte magna voce clamasset et sic expirasset, ait Imperator [Frederick II] ad circunstantes: "Ecce iste mortuus est. Dicite michi, queso, si anima post mortem vivit, unde de hac vegete sic clausa exivit." Cui unus fidelis catholicus sic respondit: "Per illam enim viam, domine Imperator, exivit de vegete anima, quam non vidimus, per quam exivit vox, quam audivimus" '[And while, dying, the criminal shouted with a loud voice and breathed his last, the Emperor said to the surrounding crowd: 'Look he is dead. Please tell me, if the soul lives after death, where it escaped from this prison-like body'. To whom a faithful Christian responded in this way: 'Through that very way, my lord Emperor, the soul (which we do not see) escaped from the body through which escaped the voice (which we heard)']. (Guido da Pisa, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 119–20).
4. Benvenuto, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 120; Piero d'Alighieri [3], gloss to *Inf.*, X. 118–20. Jacopo della Lana comments that the Cardinal 'ebbe tanta cura di queste mondane cose, che non par ch'elli credesse che altra vita fosse che questa' [he took such care over these earthly things, that it did not seem that he believed that there was another life after this one] (Jacopo della Lana, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 120). See also Augusto Vasina 'Ubaldini, Ottaviano', *ED.*, V, 772: 'Il persistere nell'Ubaldini di atteggiamenti spregiudicati, o quanto meno, inconsueti in un alto prelato [...] dovette essere all'origine dell'accusa di epicureismo che, forse, già peso su Ottaviano negli ultimi anni della sua vita' [Ubaldini's persistence in attitudes which were outlandish or, at the least, inappropriate for a high prelate [...] had to be at the origin of the accusation of Epicureanism which, perhaps, already weighed on Ottaviano during the last years of his life].
5. Antonino Pagliaro, 'Farinata e Cavalcante', in *Ulisse*, I, 91: 'La sentenza [...] li riconobbe ambedue colpevoli, e ordinò la separazione delle loro ossa da quelle dei fedeli e la confisca dei bene'). See also Mario Sansone, 'Farinata', *ED.*, II, 804–09.
6. Benvenuto, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 52–54.
7. Benvenuto, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 61–63.
8. The anglicized terms 'potential intellect' and 'possible intellect' are used interchangeably to translate the Latin 'intellectus possibilis'. On Guido Cavalcanti's Averroism, see Bruno Nardi, 'L'Averroismo del "primo amico" di Dante', *SD.*, 25 (1940), 43–80; id., 'Di un nuovo commento alla Canzone del Cavalcanti sull'amore', *Cultura Neolatina*, 6–7 (1946–47), 122–35; id. 'Notarella polemica sull'averroismo di Guido Cavalcanti', *Rassegna di filosofia*, 3 (1954), 47–71. See also Maria Corti, 'Tre versioni dell'Aristotelismo radicale nella *Commedia*', in *Dante a un nuova crocevia*, pp. 77–101 (p. 78). For a more recent close reading of Guido Cavalcanti's *Donna me prega*, see Eugenio Savona, *Per un commento a 'Donna me prega' di Guido Cavalcanti* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1986). Savona, taking into account the extensive controversy in the scholarship surrounding Guido's Averroism, nonetheless sustains that the poem, and in particular the verses 29–31, must be read as implying the Averroistic doctrine of the possible intellect (referred to at v. 22): 'l'unica interpretazione sostenibile mi sembra quella di Nardi; e

dunque qui Guido afferma che la *vertute che sente*, cioè l'anima sensitiva, si considera *perfezione* dell'uomo, non l'intelletto, che è sostanza separata, universale ed eterna, comune a tutti gli uomini' [in my view Nardi's is the only plausible interpretation: and therefore Guido affirms here that he considers the *vertute che sente*, that is the sensitive soul, the *perfezione* of man, not the intellect which is a separate substance, universal and eternal, and common to all men] (p. 47). See also for a brief commentary on the poem in Averroistic terms, Guido Cavalcanti, *Rime*, ed. by Roberto Rea and Giorgio Inglese (Rome: Carocci, 2011), pp. 147–61 (p. 156). In my view it is incontrovertible that, at the very least, Guido's text may imply an Averroistic reading. Furthermore it seems highly likely, as Savona emphasizes, that — given its immediate context — *Donna me prega* would have been interpreted by Guido's intellectual contemporaries along these lines. This seems now to have become, indeed, the scholarly consensus. As Rachel Jacoff noted at the Guido Cavalcanti conference on the seventh centennial of his death (2000), 'the polemic over Cavalcanti's Averroism appears to have modulated into a general acceptance of the broad outlines of Nardi's position'. See Rachel Jacoff, 'Reading *Donna me prega*', in *Guido Cavalcanti tra i suoi lettori*, ed. by Maria Luisa Ardizzone (Florence: Cadmo, 2003), pp. 75–81 (p. 76). In its place, however, scholarly focus has switched to the relationship, chronological or thematic, between Guido's *Donna me prega* and the *Vita nuova* (*Ibid*, p. 76). My own study does not enter the chronological debate which seems, in any case, philologically unresolvable. See Barański's comments, in Zygmunt G. Barański, 'Guido Cavalcanti and His First Readers', in *Guido Cavalcanti*, ed. by Ardizzone, pp. 149–75 (p. 161, and n. 39). Insofar as I touch on the thematic relationship (or polemical contrast) between the *Vita nuova* and *Donna me prega*, I do so in the context of the broad contrast between Dante's Christian belief (immediately signalled by the overtly Christian resonance of his title, *Vita nuova*) and Guido's apparent disbelief (to which he may have been led by precisely the kind of Averroistic line of reasoning — the understanding of the possible intellect as common to all and the consequent denial of individual immortality — which underlies *Donna me prega*).

9. Brown, 'Epicurean Secularism', in *Magister Regis*, ed. by Groos, pp. 179–93 (p. 187).
10. Dante's category of the Epicureans may include, thereby, the radical Aristotelians foregrounded in Maria Corti's study: 'l'aristotelismo radicale [...] ha fra i suoi temi fondamentali quello, averroista in senso stretto, dell'esistenza di un intelletto universale e "perpetuo", "sostanza separata", con la conseguente negazione della sopravvivenza di un'anima individuale. In più, l'aristotelismo integrale o radicale celebrava la possibilità di una felicità terrena, un *summum bonum* squisitamente intellettuale' [Radical Aristotelianism [...] has, among its fundamental theses, the doctrine — which is more precisely Averroistic — of the existence of a universal and 'perpetual' intellect, a 'separate substance', with the consequent negation of the survival (after death) of an individual soul. Furthermore, fully fledged or radical Aristotelianism celebrated the possibility of an earthly felicity, a chief good which was exquisitely intellectual]. (Corti, *Dante a un nuovo crocevia*, p. 82).
11. Brown, 'Epicurean Secularism', in *Magister Regis*, ed. by Groos, p. 181.
12. Brown, p. 180.
13. Brown, pp. 180–81.
14. Edward Moore, *Studies in Dante*, *Second Series* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 178.
15. Boccaccio, *Decameron*, VI. ix, p. 450.
16. Maria Corti, in a discussion of Guido's radical Aristotelianism, cites Siger de Brabant's exhortation to study: 'vigiles et studeas atque legas, ut ex hoc dubio tibi remanente exciteris ad studendum et legendum, *cum vivere sine litteris mors sit et vilis hominis sepultura*' [Be awake and study and read, that from this remaining doubt you are incited to study and to read, *because to live without letters is death and the worthless grave of a man*]. (*De anima intellectiva*, IX. 112. 21–24), in Maria Corti, *Dante a un nuovo crocevia*, p. 101 (the italics are Corti's).
17. Salimbene de Adam, *Cronica*, ed. by Giuseppe Scalia, 2 vols (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998–99), I, 537–38 [512. 13–16]: 'Quod imperator Fridericus fuit epycurus' [That the Emperor Frederick was an Epicurean].
18. Salimbene de Adam, *Cronica*, I, 538–39 [513. 19–24]: 'Quod Salomon multa dixit in persona carnalium hominum, de quibus aliter fuit opinio sua' [That Solomon said many things in the person of base men, about which his own view was different]. The Epicureans, Salimbene

asserts, place the happiness of man in bodily pleasure ('epicuri in sola corporis voluptate [ponunt felicitatem hominis])' (I, 539 [513. 26–27]).

19. Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, ed. by Giuseppe Porta, 3 vols (Parma: Fondazione Pietro Bembo, 1990), I, VII. i. 27–31.
20. Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, I, VI. xlvi. 17–28.
21. It is true, nonetheless, that both Salimbene de Adam and Giovanni Villani also testify to Frederick II's intellectual and martial prowess. See Salimbene de Adam, *Cronica*, I, 533 [508. 5–9]: 'De bonitatibus Friderici et sufficientiis eius'. See also Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, I, VII. i. 20–27.
22. The catalogue of the exhibition is published as: *Exempla: La rinascita dell'antico nell'arte italiana. Da Federico II ad Andrea Pisano*, ed. by Marco Bona Castellotti and Antonio Giuliano (Pisa: Pacini, 2008).
23. Dante's political ideal is of the Emperor guided by the natural law of the philosopher. See, for example, *Conv.*, IV. vi. 17–20.
24. Giles of Rome may have been a major influence on, or indeed author of, the papal bull *Unam Sanctam* (1302). The views of *Unam Sanctam*, in any case, bear clear resemblance to Giles' *De Regimine Principum* (1277–80) and *De ecclesiastica potestate* (1302). See Giles of Rome, *De ecclesiastica potestate*, ed. and trans. by Arthur P. Monahan (Lewiston, Queenston, and Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 1990) and Giles of Rome, *De renunciatione pape*, ed. and trans. into German by John R. Eastman (Lewiston, Queenston, and Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 1992).
25. Dante, *Monarchy*, ed. by Prue Shaw (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. xxxiii: 'a later dating of the treatise (certainly no earlier than 1314, and possibly the very last years of its author's life) is imposed by the cross-reference in Book I to the *Paradiso*, a cross-reference whose authenticity has been repeatedly called into question, but which there seems no good reason to doubt'.
26. *Mon.*, III. xv. 3–4. Nardi notes the *Liber de causis* as the source for Dante's metaphor of the 'horizon' (Nardi, *Mon.*, note to *Mon.*, III. xv. 3) but Albert's commentary on *De anima* is, arguably, a more probable source. Albert, like Dante (*Mon.*, III. xv. 4), comments on Aristotle's text 'Et solum hoc contingit separari, tanquam perpetuum, a corruptibili' [And only this is it necessary to separate, as the perpetual from the corruptible]. Albert notes: 'habet quasdam potestates vitae in corpore, et quasdam sine corpore anima intellectualis, et est in *horizonte aeternitatis et temporis*, supra naturam existens, et infra intelligentiam' [the intellectual soul has some powers of life in the body and some without the body, and it is in the horizon of eternity and time, existing above nature but below the intelligences] (Albert the Great, *Liber II de anima*, tract. 1, cap. 8).
27. See Foster, *The Two Dantes*, p. 242: 'the whole business of man's achieving "perfection" in this world, as a being endowed with reason and nevertheless mortal (whose optimum state would be at once physical, moral and intellectual, in short a full flowering of natural "virtue") is presented as something to be carried out by means entirely intrinsic to human nature itself'.
28. Foster, 'The Pagans and Grace', in *The Two Dantes*, pp. 220–53.
29. Foster, *The Two Dantes*, p. 254.
30. Foster, *The Two Dantes*, pp. 238–39: 'It was much less easy to find Christianity a place, *consonant with the philosophical model*, within the course of human life on earth; for here philosophy seemed already to provide all the required concepts [...] the influence of divine grace in the human soul and body in the present life — a central issue for Christian ethics — is entirely ignored' (the italics are Foster's).
31. Foster, *The Two Dantes*, p. 157: Dante conceptualizes human nature as a limit which 'had to be crossed — transcended and left behind — in the hero's quest for God'.
32. Foster, *The Two Dantes*, p. 220: 'the idea of human perfectibility to be realized before death and within the limits of human nature; this being distinguished with a quite new precision, from the "new man" of Christian teaching, from our nature as transformed by divine grace'.
33. Foster, *The Two Dantes*, p. 241: 'If *Convivio* IV is a string of reflections on human nature by an Aristotelian poet-moralist of genius, the *Monarchia* is the same man's heroically strenuous effort to see deeply into the actual situation of mankind as he found it, and not just to see that situation, but to change it'.
34. See Bernardo Bayona Aznar, 'Marsílio di Pádua frente a los planteamientos dualistas de Juan

de Paris y Dante favorables a la autonomía de poder temporal, in *Princípios: Revista de Filosofia*', DUAJ Open Access Journals (2005), <http://www.principios.cchla.ufrn.br/17–18P-57–75.pdf> [accessed 1 October, 2012], 57–75.

35. Etienne Gilson argues that Dante writes his *Monarchia* as an anti-thesis to Aquinas's *De regimine Principum*. See Gilson, *Dante the Philosopher*, pp. 191–201.
36. John of Paris, *Tractatus de regia potestate et papali*, in Johnannes Quidort von Paris, *Über königliche und päpstliche Gewalt (De regia potestate et papali)*, ed. and trans. into German by Fritz Bleinstein (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1969), cap. XXII. l. 9–11, p. 196.
37. See Catherine Keen, *Dante and the City* (Stroud: Tempus, 2003), pp. 66–67.
38. Giovanni Boccaccio, *Trattatello in laude di Dante*, in Boccaccio, *Opere in versi — Corbaccio — Trattatello in Laude di Dante — Prose Latine — Epistole*, ed. by Pier Giorgio Ricci (Milan and Naples: Ricciardi, 1965), pp. 638–39: 'Questo libro più anni dopo la morte dell'auttore fu dannato da messer Beltrando cardinale del Poggetto [...] sì come eretiche contenente, dannò al fuoco. E il simigliante si sforzava di fare dell'ossa dell'auttore' [This book, a few years after the death of the author, was damned by the Cardinal Betrand du Pouget [...] as of heretical content, he damned it to the fire. And he tried to do the same to the bones of the author]. See also Adriano Comollo, 'Accuse, condanne, anatemi di autorità religiose e politiche contro Dante: La censura e Dante', in *Il dissenso religioso in Dante* (Florence: Olschki, 1990), pp. 41–53. Cassell's investigation of the wider historical and intellectual context of the *Monarchia* is particularly useful. See Anthony K. Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy*, pp. 3–107 (p. 38).
39. *Contro Dante* (*Contra Dantem) Fr. Guidonis Vernani tractatus 'De reprobatione "Monarchiae" compositae a Dante Alighiero Florentino'*, ed. and trans. into Italian by Jarro (G. Piccini) (Florence, Rome, and Milan: R. Bemporad & figlio, 1906). Cassell provides an English translation of Vernani's treatise, as well as of Pope John XXII's Bull *Si fratrum*, in Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy*, pp. 174–201.
40. See 'L'opera di Dante lodata da Graziolo Bambaglioli', in *Dante e Firenze: Prose antiche*, ed. by Oddone Zenatti (Florence: Sansoni, 1984), pp. 1–3 (p. 1 n. 1): 'Dante, il cui *De Monarchia*, citato in loro sostegno dai partigiani di Lodovico il Bavaro nella lotta contra il Pontefice [...] le ossa dell'esule poeta, che ancora prestava, d'oltre tomba, l'aiuto dei suoi argomenti ai nuovi sostenitori delle idee imperiali in Italia' [Dante, whose *Monarchia*, cited by partisans of Ludwig the Bavarian in his struggle against the Pope [...] the bones of the exiled poet, who still provided, from the grave, the help of his arguments to the new supporters of the Imperial ideals in Italy]. See also 'Preface', in *Vernani*, ed. by Jarro, p. vi: 'Quando nel 1327 discese in Italia Lodovico IV le animosità, l'odio contro Dante per ragione politica, irruppero con iterata violenza. Si arsero le sue opere, promotore il famoso Legato Pontificio Dal Poggetto, si volevano trar dalla tomba e ardere i suoi resti mortali' [When in 1327 Ludwig descended into Italy, the animosity, the hatred against Dante for political motives, broke out with renewed violence. With the support of the famous Pontifical legate du Pouget, they burned his works, and they wanted to drag from the tomb and incinerate his bodily remains]. See Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy*, pp. 34–41 (p. 37): 'Just how deeply Dante's elegant, poetical, and theological *Monarchia*, commandeered by Ludwig's propagandists, influenced these historic charades we can only conjecture, but we do know how it suffered'.
41. As men administer poison through food and drink leading them to physical death so, Vernani claims, Dante's beautiful poetic figures contain venom ('venenum cotinent') leading men to spiritual perdition. Dante is a siren driving men away from the Salvation (*Vernani*, p. 2). Given this condemnation, it is worth noting that the addressee of Vernani's *Reprobatio*, Graziolo Bambaglioli, although himself a Guelf who fled with the cardinal Betrando del Poggetto from Bologna to escape the imperial advance, strenuously defended and praised Dante. See Graziolo Bambaglioli, gloss to *Inf.*, 'Proemio', and 'L'Opera di Dante lodata da Graziolo Bambaglioli', p. 1 n. 1.
42. *Vernani*, p. 20; 'Vernani's *Refutation*', II. 35–36, in Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy*, p. 184: 'De Ansere vero magis ridere debemus, quia aut fantasticum; si fuit verum animal, naturaliter est animal multum vigilans, et si dormit, ad sonum modicum excitatur, et clamat; unde non est pro miraculo, sed pro ridiculo reputandum' [The tale of the goose is even sillier because this goose was either a real, living creature or a fantastic one. If it was a real goose, a creature extremely

alert by nature, and if it was sleeping, it awakened and cackled at the slightest noise; therefore the tale is not to be regarded as miraculous but ridiculous].

43. *Vernani*, p. 28; 'Vernani's *Refutation*', II. 101–02, in Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy*, p. 188. Vernani scorns the theological perversity of Dante's argument: '[Dante] copiosissime deliravit, et ponendo os in Coelum, lingua eius transivit in terra. Quis enim unquam tam turpiter erravit, ut diceret, quod poena debita pro peccato Originali, potestati alicuius terreni Iudicis jubjaceret?' [Here the wretch reached the heights of his delirium: as he raised his mouth to heaven, his tongue lolled along the ground. Who ever made such a disgraceful error as to say that the punishment due for original sin lay in the power of any earthly judge?].
44. *Vernani*, pp. 8–14.
45. *Vernani*, p. 14.
46. *Mon*., I. iii. 2 'finis aliquis ad quem natura producit pollicem, et alius ab hoc ad quem manum totam [...] sic alius est finis ad quem singularem hominem [...] alius ad quem universaliter genus humanum Deus ecternus arte sua, que natura est, in esse producit' [there is a particular purpose for which nature produces the thumb, and a different one for which she produces the whole hand [...] and a purpose different from all of these for which she produces the whole person [...] and finally the purpose for which God Everlasting with his art, which is nature, brings into being the whole of mankind]; *Mon*., I. iii. 4: 'Est ergo aliqua propria operatio humane universitatis, ad quam ipsa universitas hominum in tanta multitudine ordinatur; ad quam quidem operationem nec homo unus, nec domus una, nec una vicinia, nec una civitas, nec regnum particulare pertingere potest' [There is therefore some activity specific to humanity as a whole, for which the whole human race in all its vast number of individual human beings in designed; and no single person, or household, or small community, or city, or individual kingdom can fully achieve it].
47. Prue Shaw translates 'totam potentiam intellectus possibilis' as 'the full intellectual potential of humanity' rather than 'the full potential of the possible intellect'. She expands on her motives for this non-literal translation in her introduction. See Prue Shaw, *Monarchy*, pp. xii–xiii (p. xii): 'mankind considered as a totality has its own function or purpose, a purpose which cannot be fulfilled by any individual, however brilliant, or by any single group or race, however gifted, but only by the whole of humanity considered precisely as a whole. That purpose is to realize human intellectual potential, *simul* (all at once) and *semper* (all the time)'. Shaw appears to conflate, however, man's individual nature with mankind's collective goal: 'It is man's unique hybrid status in the created world — the combination in him, and in him alone, of mind and body — which defines his essential nature and identifies humanity's purpose, whose fulfilment is a collective enterprise' (p. xii).
48. Marenbon surveys the Dante criticism on this issue and gives the full arguments for his own view in 'Dante's Averroism', in *Poetry and Philosophy in the Middle Ages: A Festschrift for Peter Dronke*, ed. by John Marenbon (Leiden, Boston and Cologne: Brill, 2001), pp. 349–74 (pp. 357–66). This provides the background to his conclusions in his article 'Dante' in *Medieval Philosophy, An Historical and Philosophical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 331–33: 'the most obvious way to read this passage is an adoption of the Averroist position, to which Dante gives a political twist. There is a single potential intellect which we, as a species, must aim to actualize — something which requires the devotion to learning and science of multitudes of people the world over, and will never be achieved without universal peace. [...] [Dante] was arguably one of the most serious and thorough-going of all the Latin Averroists. [...] Averroism became the basis for political action designed to secure the ultimate earthly happiness of all mankind'. Marenbon accepts, however, that 'almost all Dantists have denied it'. The majority position in current Dante scholarship continues to sustain that Dante's text, although citing Averroës' commentary, does not affirm the unicity of the potential intellect. Catherine Keen, in this tradition, interprets Dante's goal for mankind as 'the sum of each individual's intellectual activity as exercised in theoretical speculation and/or in practical doing and making' (Keen, *Dante and the City*, pp. 56–57). Charles Till Davis affirms 'Dante certainly did not accept Averroes' view of only one possible intellect for the whole human race with its consequent denial of individual immortality. For Dante, as for Aquinas, there were as many such intellects as there were people' (Charles Till Davis, 'Dante and the Empire', in *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, ed. by Rachel Jacoff,

2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 257–69 (p. 265)). A fuller defence of this position is given in Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy*, pp. 55–60. Richard Kay, like Cassell, falls back specifically on *Purgatorio* XXV. 61–66 and, more generally, on the obvious fact that Dante wrote an eschatological poem in order to refute the Averroist reading of the *Monarchia*: 'it would be incredible that the author of the *Commedia* was a monopsychist, because the personal immortality of individual souls is the fundamental premise of his poem' (Richard Kay, *Dante's Monarchia*, p. 21). These objections, however, are clearly anticipated and refuted by Marenbon's arguments with which none of these scholars appears to be familiar. Christian Moevs is, therefore, atypical amongst recent Dante scholars in noting Marenbon's contrasting view. Nonetheless, he fails to engage with Marenbon's arguments. Instead he simply states: 'An analogous principle underlies Dante's Averroistically inflected observation, in *Monarchia* I.3.7–8, that the possible intellect is continuously and fully actualized only by humanity collectively, a remark that in no way implies that human intellects are not individual; on this point Dante never wavers' (Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante's Comedy*, pp. 76–77. See also, p. 212 n. 43).

49. *Vernani*, p. 10; 'Vernani's *Refutation*', I. 33–35, in Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy*, p. 178.
50. *ST*., Ia. q.76, a.2.
51. Guido Vernani also attacks Dante's temporal goal for mankind for two further reasons: first, there can be no separate beatitude in this life ('in ista mortali vita beatitudo haberi non potest') because beatitude consists in the vision of God: 'est in visione Dei' (*Vernani*, p. 6). Second, Vernani confutes Dante's *argumentum de diversitate partium*: whereas a human eye, Vernani asserts, has an end (sight) distinct from the ultimate end of man, the end of each individual man is not, as Dante claims, different in species from the end of mankind. See *Vernani*, p. 8; 'Vernani's *Refutation*', I. 23–24, in Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy*, p. 177: 'Argumentum autem de diversitate partium nihil valet, quia partes hominis sunt ab invicem specie differentes, sicut manus a pede, et oculos ab aure. Non sic autem differt homo ab homine. Unde ultimus finis unius hominis non differt ab ultimo fine alterius hominis, nec ab ultimo fine totius humani generis' [The argument, however, concerning the differences among parts has no validity at all, because the parts of the individual are different from one another in kind, such as the hand from the foot and the eye from the ear. An individual man, however, does not differ in this way from other men. Therefore the final goal of one individual man does not differ from the final goal of another man, nor from the final goal of the whole human race].
52. *Mon*., I. ix. 1–3. The *Monarchia* passage in question may be read productively alongside the parallel passages in the *Convivio* (*Conv*., IV. xx. 9–11; xxi. 4–6).
53. *Vernani*, p. 14; 'Vernani's *Refutation*', I. 65–68, in Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy*, pp. 180–81.
54. *ST*., 1a. q. 118, a.1, ad 3: 'Et quia in huiusmodi spiritu concurrit virtu animae cum virtute caelesti, dicitur quod homo generat hominem et sol' [And because in a spirit of this kind the power of the soul is concurrent with the power of a celestial power, it is said that 'man and the sun generate man']; see also *ST*., Ia. q. 79, a. 1.
55. *Vernani*, p. 14; 'Vernani's *Refutation*', I. 72, in Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy*, p. 181.
56. *Vernani*, p. 14; 'Vernani's *Refutation*', I. 70, in Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy*, p. 181.
57. *Vernani*, p. 14; 'Vernani's *Refutation*', I. 69, in Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy*, p. 181.
58. Marenbon, 'Dante' in *Medieval Philosophy*, p. 332: 'When working in terms of natural reason, the Latin Averroists accept an Averroist interpretation of Aristotle's theory of the intellect; when working in terms of faith, they reject it. The first book of the *Monarchia* is strictly based on non-revealed premisses and supposedly demonstrative reasoning'. See also Etienne Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* (New York and London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939), pp. 59–60: 'there is no reason whatever to suppose that Siger of Brabant and Boëthius of Dacia for instance, both of them Averroists in philosophy, were not also perfectly sincere in their religious faith. Such, at least, was the personal conviction of Dante concerning Siger, for had he entertained the least suspicion about the sincerity of Siger's faith, he would not have put him in the fourth heaven of the Sun, together with Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas'.
59. Boethius of Dacia, 'De mundi aeternitate', in Aemilius Springhetti, *Latinitas Fontium Philosophiae Scholasticae* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Altioris Latinitatis, 1967), pp. 260–69 (p. 266).
60. Plato, *The Republic*, ed. with trans. by Paul Shorey (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press,

1963), III. vii (394d): 'but whithersoever the wind, as it were, of the argument blows, there lies our course'. See also Marenbon, 'Dante's Averroism', p. 371: 'It seems very probable that Dante held the Averroist position on the single possible intellect as the right position within philosophical discussion. It would be quite wrong, however, to conclude that he held this position to be the right one to take in theological argument, where revealed truths are taken into account'.

61. *Conv.*, IV. xxi. 6; see also *Mon.*, II. viii. 10.
62. See also Boethius of Dacia, 'De mundi aeternitate', in *Latinitas*, ed. by Springhetti, p. 263.
63. Guido da Pisa, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 36: 'Vere omnis homo peccator, et maxime hereticus, qui mortuo corpore animam mortuam confitetur, aliam vitam ubi anime perpetuo vivant esse non credit. Idcirco huiusmodi homines nec Paradisum diligunt, nec illud, propter aliqua bona que faciant, habere se credunt. Similiter nec penas Inferni timent, nec propter aliqua scelera que committant ad illas penas ire formidant. Ideo figurative loquitur autor de isto heretico Farinata, quod fronte se in sepulcro et pectore erigebat, tanquam si pro nichilo haberet Infernum' [Truly every sinful man and especially the heretic — who believes that the soul dies with the death of the body — does not believe in another life where souls live perpetually. Therefore such people neither delight in Paradise, neither do they believe that they will have it because of the good which they do. Similarly they do not fear the sufferings of Hell, neither do they dread to go to those sufferings because of the wicked acts which they commit. Therefore the author speaks figuratively of this heretic Farinata, that in the grave he thrusts out with his breast and forehead, as if Hell meant nothing to him].
64. Benvenuto glosses 'petto' as signifying the 'heart'. See Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.*, XXV. 67–72: 'Apri il petto, id est cor tuum' [Open your breast, that is your heart].
65. As Benvenuto comments, the creation *ex nihilo* [from nothing] is described by Statius as an *opus Dei* [work of God] rather than as an *opus naturae* [work of Nature]: it is 'sopra tant'arte di natura' [beyond the art of Nature]. Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.*, XXV. 67–72: 'lo motor primo, scilicet, Deus, si volge lieto a lui, super illum foetum sic perfectum, sopra tant'arte di natura; vere ibi est mirabilis opera naturae [...] sed opus Dei est mirabilius; unde dicit: e spira spirito [...] quia vere sermo est de re mirabili' ['the first mover', that is, God, 'turned with delight to him' (above that so perfect foetus), 'beyond such art of nature'; and truly there is marvellous work of nature [...] but the work of God is more marvellous; therefore he says: 'and breathes spirit' [...] because truly this discourse is of a miraculous thing].
66. See Gilson, *Reason and Revelation*, pp. 60–63: Gilson postulates that there were two groups of Latin Averroists. The first group followed the procedural relativism of Boethius of Dacia and Siger of Brabant and held, in good faith, the superior truth of Christian revelation. The second group 'were equally convinced that the philosophy of Averroës was the absolute truth, but felt no difficulty in reconciling it with their religious beliefs, because they had none [...]. Seen from without, the members of this second group were saying identically the same things as the members of the first one, but their tone was different and, cautious as they had to be, they usually found the way to make themselves understood'.
67. L'Ottimo Commento, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 10–15; Jacopo della Lana, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 13–15.
68. L'Ottimo Commento, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 10–15.
69. L'Ottimo Commento, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 10–15. Aquinas argues that although to understand with the imagination is the proper operation of the soul insofar as it is united to the body ('intellegere cum phantasmate est propria operatio animae secundum quod corpori est unita') (*ST.*, Ia. q. 75, a. 6, ad 3), the soul — separated from the body and having an aptitude and inclination towards union of the body ('habens aptitudinem et inclinationem naturalem ad corporis unionem') (*ST.*, Ia. q. 76, a. 1, ad 6) — will have another mode of understanding similar to those substances which are separate from the body ('habebit alium modum intelligendi similem aliis substantiis a corpore separatis') (*ST.*, Ia. q. 75, a. 6, ad 3). See also Aquinas, *SG.*, II. cap. 76–77.
70. L'Ottimo Commento, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 10–15. See also Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Purg.*, XXV. 61–108: 'quidam alii ut heretici dixerunt quod venit a semine virili dicta anima, ponentes ipsam animam creari ex preiacenti materia, idest ex anima generantis, et nasci cum corpore' [some others, like heretics, held that the said soul comes from a man's seed, holding this soul to be created from pre-existing matter, that is from the soul of the parent, and to be made with the body].

71. Guido da Pisa, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 36.
72. Foster, *The Two Dantes*, p. 12.
73. *ST.*, Ia. q.1, a.2, arg.1: 'sacra doctrina procedit ex articulis fidei, qui non sunt per se noti, cum non ab omnibus concedantur, *non enim omnium est fides*, ut dicitur II Thessalon. III' [sacred doctrine proceeds from the articles of faith, which are not known through reason, given that they may not be admitted by everyone, for indeed 'not all men have faith', as is indicated in II Thessalonians 3. 2].

PART II

The Epicurean Axis of *Inferno* X

CHAPTER 3

❖

The Secular and Spiritual Hemispheres of *Inferno* X

Introduction

The doctrine singled out as defining the Epicureans in *Inferno* X — 'che l'anima col corpo morta fanno' [who make the soul die with the body] (*Inf.*, X. 15) — challenges the antinomy of man's nature which is the foundation of Dante's mature ethical, political and theological thought. Concerned only with the secular hemisphere of this world and man's earthly felicity, Dante's Epicureans deny man's incorruptible nature. They thereby reject altogether the eschatological hemisphere of the future life and man's spiritual journey to his eternal goal. Epicureanism is, in this sense, the root of all heresy and, incompatible with Christian faith, it entails explicit unbelief. Dante refers, Edward Moore suggests, 'not so much to what we understand by "heresy" as to open and professed infidelity, and this particularly in its aspect of Materialism'. The Epicureans are, Kenelm Foster concludes, 'not even, theologically speaking, heretics at all but unbelievers; for in strict theology a heretic is still a sort of Christian'.[1]

The Epicurean doctrine undermines the subject, and the literal and moral sense, of Dante's *Commedia*:

> Est ergo subiectum totius operis, litteraliter tantum accepti, status animarum post mortem simpliciter sumptus; nam de illo et circa illum totius operis versatur processus. Si vero accipiatur opus allegorice, subiectum est homo prout merendo et demerendo per arbitrii libertatem iustitie premiandi et puniendi obnoxius est. (*Epist.*, XIII. 8)[2]
>
> [The subject, then, of the whole work, taken in the literal sense only, is the state of souls after death, pure and simple. For on and about that the argument of the whole work turns. If, however, the work be regarded from the allegorical point of view, the subject is man according as by his merits or demerits in the exercise of his free will he is deserving of reward or punishment by justice.]

The literal subject of the *Commedia* is the state of human souls after death. For the Epicureans, however, there is no afterlife. The moral subject is man who may elect good or evil in this life through the exercise of his free will and, notwithstanding the vicissitudes and injustices encountered on earth, will thereby be rewarded or punished by God for the eternity of the next life. The Epicurean canto, which is

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set in a graveyard, is clearly intended as a *memento mori*. Ironically, however, it was precisely the fear of death and of God's final judgement from which Epicurean philosophy sought to liberate mankind.

This chapter considers *Inferno* X as the horizon between the temporal and the spiritual hemispheres of man's existence. The temporal hemisphere (of this life, of human history, and subject to time and contingency) is the only hemisphere that exists for the Epicurean. The spiritual hemisphere (of the future life, Divine Providence, and Final Judgement) is, for the Christian, the ultimate destination of each immortal soul. The chapter falls into two principal sections. The first section considers the political dimension of the canto, and analyses Dante's interpolation of three overarching structural and thematic devices into *Inferno* X. The first is the mechanism of time-long-sightedness by virtue of which the Epicurean damned may see events in the distant but not near future. The second is the protagonists' relative knowledge of past, present and future events at the point in historical time (Good Friday 1300) at which the dialogues, within the fictional narrative journey of Dante-character through Hell, are staged. The third is the formal organization of the canto which structures the central dialogue between Dante-character and Cavalcante in a knowledge gap. The second section highlights the spiritual dimension of the canto. First, it explores Dante's emphasis on the Resurrection of the Body in response to the Epicurean heresy in *Inferno* X, and the Scriptural precedent in St Paul's dialogue with the Epicureans in Athens. Second, it foregrounds the theological significance of the canto in the eschatological structure of Dante's Hell and in the narrative of the first ten cantos of the *cantica*. Third, it explores the thematic connections between *Inferno* X, *Purgatorio* X, and *Paradiso* X and how this vertical axis of reference serves to further underline the spiritual dimension of the Epicurean canto.

This third chapter sets out in a systematic way Dante's authorial strategy in *Inferno* X; it is thereby preparatory to the close reading and interpretation of the canto in Chapter 4. The author asks his reader's patience for the precise treatment of the historical material and the technical nature of its presentation. It is necessary for the reading I propose in Chapter 4 to present unambiguously, even at the risk of pedantry, each of the protagonists' relative knowledge of certain political events, in the past and future with regard to the present of the poem, at the moment of their respective encounters. The emphasis on the theological dimension of the canto, meanwhile, prepares for the reading of the canto through a spiritual lens. This appeared particularly essential given the tendency in Dante scholarship to focus on the more obvious political aspect of the canto.[3]

The Temporal Hemisphere and the Mortal Arc of This Life

Dante wrote the *Commedia* between 1306, at the earliest, and his death in 1321. However, the poet sets the fictional journey through Hell, Purgatory and Paradise (which the *Commedia* narrates) at a precise point in human history and in his own autobiographical past: the Jubilee year of 1300. The journey begins on the morning of Good Friday 1300 and, at dusk, Dante-character begins his descent into Hell. Dante-author, therefore, may anticipate events in the future with regard

to Dante-character on Good Friday 1300 but in the historical past with regard to himself writing at a later point in the fourteenth century. Thus, by the time Dante-character arrives at the burning graveyard of *Inferno* X, he already has privileged knowledge — through Ciacco's prophecies (in *Inferno* VI) — of events in the future. However, in *Inferno* X, Dante-author further complicates the situation through the Epicureans' time-long-sightedness. The Epicureans have no knowledge of the past between their respective deaths and Dante-character's present (Good Friday 1300); they do not see events in the present or in the near future; but they do see events in the more distant future. The protagonists of *Inferno* X refer to specific events or people, in the past, present and future. The key to interpreting the episode is to establish the protagonists' relative knowledge of these events at the moment of their respective encounters on the basis of the interpolation of these authorial devices.

With regard to Dante-character, we must consider, first, his knowledge of historical events (in the past with respect to the present of the poem) and, second, his privileged knowledge of forthcoming events (in the future with regard to the present of the poem). Dante-character encounters, in *Inferno* X, Farinata and Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti, who had been leaders of the Ghibelline and Guelf factions in Florence.[4] Dante-character enters into a polemical dialogue with Farinata which concerns the internecine conflicts for power between the Ghibellines and the Guelfs during the period of 1248 to 1266. On Farinata's prompting, Dante-character reveals his Guelf ancestors and Farinata responds:

> [...] 'Fieramente furo avversi
> a me e a miei primi e a mia parte,
> sì che per due fïate li dispersi'. (ll. 46–48)

> [Fiercely were they opposed to me and to my ancestors and to my party, so that twice I scattered them.]

Dante instantly replies:

> 'S'ei fur cacciati, ei tornar d'ogne parte'
> [...] 'l'una e l'altra fïata;
> ma i vostri non appreser ben quell' arte'. (ll. 49–51)

> [If they were driven out, they returned from every side [...] the first time and the second; but your people did not learn that art well.]

Farinata, who was head of the Uberti dynasty and the Ghibelline faction in Florence from 1239 until his death in 1264, boasts that twice he defeated Dante's Guelf ancestors (l. 48). The first occasion is the exile of prominent Guelfs from Florence in 1248; the second is the decisive battle of Montaperti in 1260 in which the Italian Ghibelline faction, with the aid of Manfred, routed the Guelfs.[5] Dante-character responds, however, that both times his ancestors returned to power, referring to the years 1258 (the exile of the Ghibelline faction from Florence) and 1266 (the catastrophic defeat of the Ghibellines at Benevento).[6] Dante-character furthermore alludes to the failure of Farinata's 'parte' to regain power, perhaps specifically referring to the battle of Campaldino in 1289 (at which Dante fought), which saw off any immediate possibility of a return of the Uberti to Florence.

Dante-author organizes his historical material such that before chronicling, in *Inferno* X, the past factionalism between Florentine Guelfs and Ghibellines (and specifically the events between 1248 and 1266), he narrates — through the prophecies of the Florentine Ciacco (in *Inferno* VI) — the future factionalism of the victorious Guelfs between the so-called Whites and Blacks. Ciacco, recognizing Dante, describes how the historical span of their respective lives had intercrossed. Dante's birth (his making) was before Ciacco's death (his unmaking): 'tu [Dante] fosti, prima ch'io [Ciacco] disfatto, fatto' [you were made before I was unmade] (*Inf.*, VI. 42). Dante-character asks Ciacco if he knows what is to happen in the future to Florence and her citizens: 'ma dimmi, se tu sai, a che veranno | li cittadin della città partita' [but tell me, if you know, to what will come the citizens of the divided city] (ll. 60–61). And Ciacco foretells three forthcoming events:

> [...] 'Dopo lunga tencione
> veranno al sangue, e la parte selvaggia
> caccerà l'altra con molta offensione.
> Poi appresso convien che questa caggia
> infra tre soli, e che l'altra sormonti
> con la forza di tal che testé piaggia.
> Alte terrà lungo tempo le fronti,
> tenendo l'altra sotto gravi pesi,
> come che di ciò pianga o che n'aonti'. (ll. 64–72)

> [After much quarrelling they will come to blood, and the party from the woods will drive out the other with much harm.
> Then later this party must fall within three suns and the other rise, with the power of one who now hugs the shore.
> Long will they hold high their brows, keeping the others down under heavy weights, no matter how they weep or are shamed.]

In May 1300, the two factions (the Whites and the Blacks) fought in the piazza of Santa Trinita in Florence, as Ciacco prophesies ('veranno al sangue' (l. 65)). In June 1300, when Dante was one of the seven priors of Florence, select leaders from the two factions — including Guido Cavalcanti (White) and Corso Donati (Black) — were exiled temporarily from Florence. In June 1301, with the White faction in the ascendancy, many prominent Blacks were exiled to the limits of Florentine regions by the Whites: 'la parte selvaggia [the Whites] | caccerà l'altra [the Blacks] con molta offensione' (ll. 65–66). Within three years of the date of the poem ('infra tre soli' (l. 68)), however, the Blacks — allied with the French army of Charles of Valois and with the complicity of the then Pope Boniface VIII (l. 69) — had re-entered Florence victorious. The Blacks consolidated their power, exiling the Whites (including, *in abstentia*, Dante) and confiscating their property. Ciacco alludes, finally, to a long time (l. 70) thereafter when the Blacks will hold the Whites under heavy penalties (l. 71).

Let us now consider Farinata and Cavalcante's knowledge of past, present and future events at the point of their respective encounters with Dante-character in *Inferno* X. The Epicurean damned are time-long-sighted as Dante-character, in the course of *Inferno* X, discovers. Dante-character posits to Farinata:

> 'El par che voi veggiate, se ben odo,
> dinanzi quel che 'l tempo seco adduce,
> e nel presente tenete altro modo'. (*Inf.*, X. 97–99)

[It seems that you see beforehand, if I hear well, what time will bring, but in the present have a different mode]

to which Farinata responds:

> 'Noi veggiam, come quei c'ha mala luce,
> le cose' [...] 'che ne son lontano;
> cotanto ancor ne splende il sommo duce.
> Quando s'appressano o son, tutto è vano
> nostro intelletto; e s'altri non ci apporta,
> nulla sapem di vostro stato umano'. (ll. 100–05)

[We see, as does one in bad light, the things [...] that are distant from us: so much the highest Leader still shines for us.

When they approach or are present, our intellect is utterly empty; and if another does not bring news, we know nothing of your human state.]

In short-sight, due to an overly powerful lens or overly curved cornea, the power of the eye is too great. As the image of distant objects is formed in front of the retina, far objects appear blurred. In long-sight, by contrast, the eye is not powerful enough. As the image of near objects is formed behind the retina, near objects appear blurred. In Dante's metaphor, the objects of the eye are events in the future moving through time to the present of the observer. As, at the far distant horizon, one could see a man walking into one's field of vision and then ever closer towards one's location in space, so distant events in the future move ever closer through time towards one's temporal location in the present. The Epicurean damned are able to see future events but as these events move through time, closer to the present, their vision of them becomes blurred.

In virtue of their time-long-sightedness, we know that the Epicureans have no knowledge of history from their respective deaths to the present (Good Friday 1300) and from the present to some point in the future. The four Epicureans named in the course of the canto are Farinata (*c.* 1210–64), Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti (*c.* 1210–80), Frederick II, the Holy Roman Emperor (1194–1250), and the Ghibelline Cardinal, Ottaviano degli Ubaldini (*c.* 1210–73). Farinata, who died in 1264, does not know (until Dante-character informs him) about the defeat of the Ghibellines at the battle of Benevento in 1266 and the subsequent exile and fall of Farinata's Uberti dynasty: 'ciò mi tormenta più che questo letto' [that torments me more than this bed] (*Inf.*, X. 78). Farinata does have foresight (as Dante-character does not), however, of the failed attempts of the White faction to return to Florence in 1304:

> 'Ma non cinquanta volte fia raccesa
> la faccia de la donna che qui regge,
> che tu saprai quanto quell' arte pesa' (*Inf.*, X. 79–81).

[But not fifty times will be rekindled the face of the lady who reigns here, before you will know how much that art weighs]

By June 1304, Dante-character will know the difficulty of returning to his *patria* from experience of enforced exile. In addition, we learn that Cavalcante does not know of his son's life, or the manner of his death, from 1280 up until the proximate future of August 1300 (the date of Guido's death). The closest event to the present, in the future, which the Epicurean souls foresee occurs in 1304. The most economical hypothesis, therefore, is to suppose that the starting point of the Epicurean souls' foreknowledge is common to all, and lies about four years ahead of the current date on earth. In this case, given that the current date is Good Friday 1300, the Epicurean souls' foreknowledge starts from 1304. The timespan of Farinata's and Cavalcante's ignorance of past, present, and future events is thus: Farinata (1264–*c.* 1304) and Cavalcante (1280–*c.* 1304).

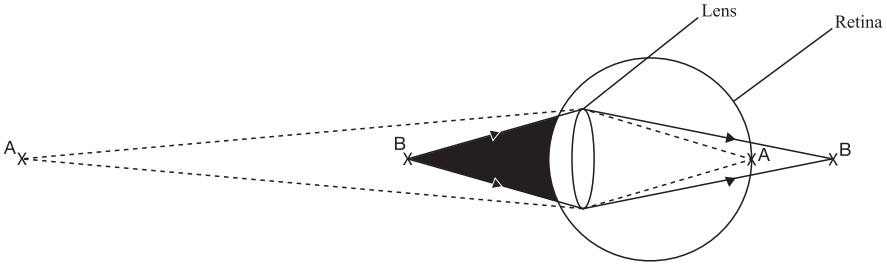


Fig. 1a. Time-long-sightedness of the Epicureans (*Inferno* X), who see events in the distant (A) but not the near (B) future

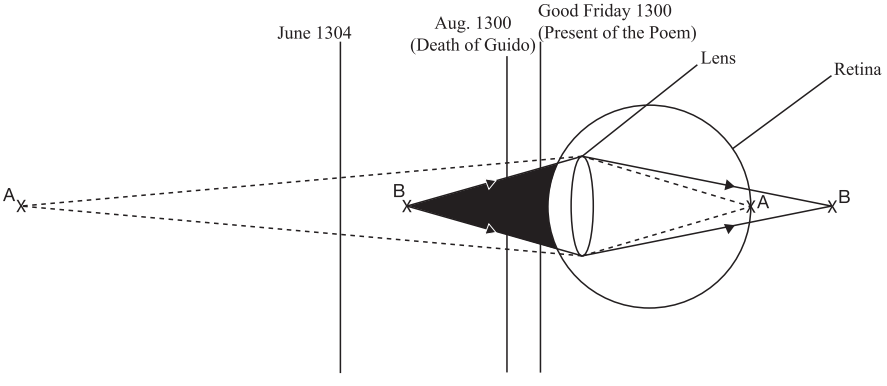


Fig. 1b. Time-long-sightedness of Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti (*Inf.* X, 52–72)

The first diagram of the eye (Fig. 1a) shows how Dante uses the mechanics of sight as a metaphor for the time-long-sightedness of the Epicureans. The second diagram of the eye (Fig. 1b) shows how the time-long-sightedness of Cavalcante prevents him from seeing his son's death (in August 1300) which is in the near future relative to Good Friday 1300, the date of the poem. It also shows how he can foresee events from around 1304 onwards.

Dante complicates, however, the situation one step further in *Inferno* X. Dante structures the canto, and organizes the stages in the protagonists' knowledge of

the historical events, in such a way that the central dialogue of the canto occurs in a knowledge gap. In *Inferno* X, four protagonists participate in the dialogues: Dante-character, Virgil, Farinata and Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti. The dialogues are structured like a Russian babushka doll: the prologue and epilogue are a dialogue between Dante-character and Virgil (ll. 1–39; 121–36); within this there is a dialogue between Dante-character and Farinata (ll. 40–51; 73–120); and within this the central dialogue between Dante-character and Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti (ll. 52–72). This central dialogue, composed of seven terzine, concerns the temporal and eternal destiny of Guido Cavalcanti who is named, by Dante-character, in the fourth and central terzina: 'Guido vostro' (ll. 61–63).

If we look a little more closely at the context of this central dialogue (ll. 52–72), we discover that Dante creates the literary effect of a freeze-frame in film. In a full terzina, Farinata is presented as absolutely motionless for the duration of Dante-character's dialogue with Cavalcante:

> Ma quell' altro magnanimo, a cui posta
> restato m'era, non mutò aspetto,
> né mosse collo, né piegò sua costa; (ll. 73–75)
>
> [But that other great-souled one, at whose request I had stopped, did not change his expression, nor move his neck, nor bend his side]

Dante-author emphasizes that the dialogue between Dante-character and Farinata (ll. 40–51; 73–120) is paused, as if in a freeze-frame, only to resume exactly from where it left off: 'e sé continüando al primo detto' [but, resuming his earlier speech] (l. 76). Farinata literally picks up Dante-character's last word to him before the freeze-frame: 'ma i vostri *non appreser ben* quell' *arte*' [but your people did not learn that art well] (l. 51); '"S'elli han quell' *arte*", disse, "*male appresa*"' [If they have learned that art badly] (l. 77).

Dante-author metaphorically hits 'freeze-frame' at the precise point when Farinata, with his very next phrase or even word ('*S*'elli han quell' arte...' (l. 78)), will reveal to Dante-character that he was ignorant of the Guelfs' second return to power after the battle of Montaperti in 1260 and, therefore, of the subsequent failure of his 'parte' to regain power. Dante-character, at *this* point in the narrative, thus discovers Farinata's area of ignorance (from 1264–1304) and consequently the strange *contrapasso* of the Epicurean souls. The dialogue between Dante-character and Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti, because of the 'Russian doll' structure of the canto and narrative 'freeze-frame' effect, is poised in a knowledge gap. During the dialogue with Cavalcante, Dante-character is entirely unaware of the *contrapasso* in virtue of which Cavalcante is ignorant of events from 1280 to around 1304.

Inferno X is undeniably, from one perspective, a political canto. In an attempt to resolve factional discord between the Florentine Ghibellines and Guelfs, Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti's son Guido married Farinata's daughter Bice degli Uberti in 1267, three years after Farinata's death. As Dante's organization of his historical material in the *Inferno* emphasizes, Guido's own generation itself divided into two further factions, the Whites and the Blacks, whose battles for supremacy (narrated in *Inferno* VI) directly parallel the internecine conflict of Guido's fathers' generation (related

in *Inferno* X).[7] Cavalcante (father) and Farinata (father-in-law) were false political models for Guido, whose ultimate exile and death (referred to in this canto) is contextualized within the endemic political factionalism of the Florence of his fathers' generation. At a spiritual level, the time-long-sightedness of the Epicureans highlights the *habitus mentis* of the Epicurean. As the Epicureans believed only in the *here and now* of the present, so they are blind to the present in Hell. As the Epicureans misused their intellects and believed solely in human reason: 'altezza d'ingegno' [height of intellect] (l. 59), so in Hell — as future events come closer to the present — their intellects are rendered vain: 'quando [le cose] s'appressano o son, tutto è vano | nostro intelletto' [when they [the things] are present, our intellect is utterly empty] (ll. 103–04). As the Epicureans were closed to an eschatological realm of eternity beyond the earthly world of contingent events in this life so, in Hell, they will have no knowledge after the end of time:

> 'Però comprender puoi che tutta morta
> fia nostra conoscenza da quel punto
> che del futuro fia chiusa la porta' (ll. 106–08).
>
> [Thus you can comprehend that our knowledge will be entirely dead
> from that point when the door of the future will be closed]

Until the Final Judgement, the Epicurean souls are forced to contemplate the working of Divine Providence (in their foresight of future contingent events) in which, on earth, they did not believe. Aside from the moral and spiritual lessons highlighted, however, the most important factor of this preparatory study for the close reading of *Inferno* X is, as we shall see, how Dante organizes his historical material, the long-sightedness of the Epicureans and the freeze-frame device so as to suspend the Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti dialogue in a knowledge gap. The diagram in Figure 2 'The Protagonists' State of Knowledge at the Start of *Inferno* X' (p. 75) distils and summarizes this preparatory work.

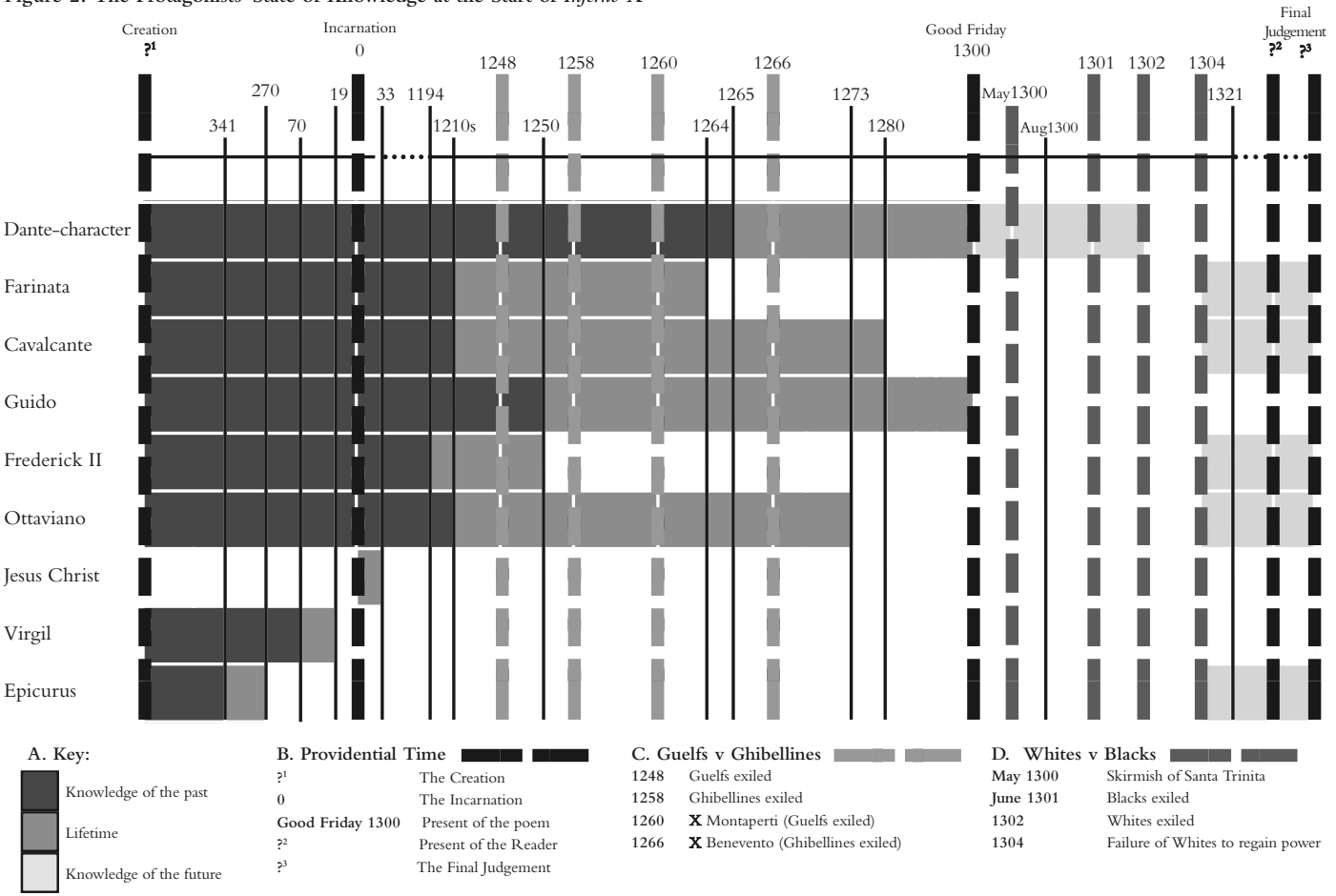
The diagram in Figure 2 represents the protagonists' knowledge of events (in the past, present and future) on the night of Good Friday 1300, just before Dante-character's encounter with Farinata in *Inferno* X. The horizontal axis along the top shows the continuum of time. Down the left side, there is a vertical list of the protagonists, explicit or implicit, of *Inferno* X: Dante-character, Farinata, Cavalcante (dei Cavalcanti), Guido (Cavalcanti), Frederick II, Ottaviano (degli Ubaldini), Jesus Christ, Virgil and Epicurus. At the bottom left of the diagram, the table 'A: Key' shows the shading differentiation made between the protagonists' knowledge of historical events before their births; their respective lifetimes; and their privileged knowledge of the future. Running along the bottom of the diagram are three further tables which highlight the significant events in time delineated by the diagram. The table 'B. Providential Time' references the Creation ($?^1$: the beginning of time); the Incarnation (0); Good Friday 1300 (the present of the poem); the present of the poem's reader ($?^2$); the Final Judgement ($?^3$: the end of time). The table 'C. Guelfs v Ghibellines' references the four reversals of power between Florentine Guelfs and Ghibellines (1248–66): the Guelfs exiled (1248); the Ghibellines exiled (1258); the Guelfs exiled after the Battle of Montaperti (1260); the Ghibellines exiled after

the Battle of Benevento (1266). The table 'D' references the parallel four struggles for power between Florentine Whites and Blacks (1300–04): the Skirmish of Santa Trinita (May 1300); the Blacks exiled (June 1301); the Whites exiled (1302); the Failure of the Whites to regain power (1304). The three kinds of dates highlighted by the three tables (B, C and D) are distinguished in the main diagram by thick, differently patterned, vertical lines. The other dates, which represent the dates of birth and death of the protagonists, are represented by thin vertical lines.

Hence the diagram as a whole shows that Dante-character has foreknowledge of events up to 1302 (due to Ciacco's prophecy in *Inferno* VI), but not yet to 1304 (as he will by the end of the dialogue with Farinata). It demonstrates that Farinata, who dies in 1264, has no knowledge of the battle of Benevento in 1266 and the subsequent exile of the Ghibellines (as he will do after his dialogue with Dante-character), but that he does have foreknowledge of events from 1304 onwards, including the failure of the Whites (Dante's faction) to regain power. It highlights that Cavalcante has no knowledge of his son, Guido, from the moment of his own death in 1280 until 1304. It illustrates that Guido is alive at the poem's present (Good Friday 1300) but will die shortly thereafter (in August 1300). The diagram indicates that the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II and the Cardinal Ottaviano degli Ubaldani, the other two Epicureans named in the canto, belong to the same generation as Farinata and Cavalcanti. Given the anomalous case of Jesus Christ, the diagram only shows the historical timespan of Jesus's life (0–33). But this serves to further emphasis the fate of Virgil who died just nineteen years before the birth of Jesus Christ and, unlike the neo-Epicureans of the thirteenth century, therefore lived without access to the fruits of the Incarnation. Finally, the diagram shows how Epicurus, like all his followers, must share in the *contrapasso* of time-long-sightedness. On Good Friday 1300, he must have some distant future knowledge from 1304 onwards, but remain otherwise ignorant of events from his death to 1304.

The diagram thus visually illustrates — and thereby aims to clarify — Dante's technical artistry and precision in the organization of the protagonists' knowledge in *Inferno* X. But before this technical understanding is put into practice in a reading of the canto, I will explore, in the second part of this preparatory study, the spiritual dimension of the canto.

Figure 2: The Protagonists' State of Knowledge at the Start of *Inferno* X



The diagram shows the protagonists' knowledge of events (in the past, present and future) on the night of Good Friday, 1300 just before Dante-character's encounter with Farinata in *Inferno* X

The Spiritual Hemisphere and the 'Vita Nuova' of Faith

'Toccando un poco la vita futura': the resurrection of the body and unbelief

At a political level, the future factionalism between Whites and Blacks prophesied in *Inferno* VI mirrors, across the present of the poem, the past factionalism between Ghibellines and Guelfs chronicled in *Inferno* X. At a moral level, the pig-Epicurean Ciacco of *Inferno* VI (who conforms precisely to Isidore's stereotype) contradistinguishes the noble Epicureans of *Inferno* X. At a spiritual level, Dante connects the two episodes through the references to the 'future life' and to the Resurrection of the Body. Directly after Ciacco's prophecy about the proximate future of Florence (up until some point in 1302), Dante-character asks Ciacco about the eternal destiny of Farinata and of four other Florentine souls who, in this life, pursued the good (*Inf.*, VI. 77–87). Ciacco reveals that although, unlike him, they were apparently noble in this life, they are damned for graver sins than his for eternity (ll. 85–87).

Farinata is the first of these souls whom Dante-character encounters in Hell. With heavy irony, Farinata is amongst the Epicureans who, in this life, denied the very existence of an eternal destiny to which Dante-character's question, in *Inferno* VI, refers. In the closing section of *Inferno* VI, Virgil refers to the Resurrection of the Body and the Final Judgement:

> E 'l duca disse a me: 'Più non si desta
> di qua dal suon de l'angelica tromba,
> quando verrà la nimica podèsta:
> ciascun rivederà la trista tomba,
> ripiglierà sua carne e sua figura,
> udirà quel ch'in etterno rimbomba'.
> Sì trapassammo per sozza mistura
> de l'ombre e de la pioggia, a passi lenti,
> toccando un poco la vita futura; (*Inf.*, VI. 94–102)

> [And my leader said to me: 'Never again will he arise this side of the angelic trumpet, when he will see the enemy governor:
> each will see again his sad tomb, will take again his flesh and his shape, will hear what resounds eternally.'
> Thus we passed through a filthy mixture of shades and rain, with slow steps, touching somewhat on the future life.]

In the opening of *Inferno* X, Dante-character's two questions, or desires, connect the episode to come with the episode, in *Inferno* VI, which foreshadows it:

> 'La gente che per li sepolcri giace
> potrebbesi veder? già son levati
> tutt' i coperchi, e nessun guardia face'.
> E quelli a me: 'Tutti saran serrati
> quando di Iosafàt qui torneranno
> coi corpi che là sù hanno lasciati'. (*Inf.*, X. 7–12)

> ['The people who are lying in the sepulchres, could they be seen? for all the covers are lifted, and no one is standing guard.'

> And he to me: 'All will be closed when from Jehoshaphat they return with the bodies they left up there'.]

Virgil first explains that at the Final Judgement the damned heretics will return with their resurrected bodies, and their open graves will be finally closed up; he then alludes not only to Dante-character's stated desire to see the Epicureans but to his tacit question, signposted in *Inferno* VI, as to whether he will see Farinata amongst them: 'e al disio ancor che tu mi taci' [and also the desire you leave unspoken] (*Inf.*, X. 18). In connecting these two episodes, Dante appears to emphasize the Resurrection of the Body as the theological argument against both the pig-Epicureanism caricatured in Ciacco (where mortalism is a licence to the sensual life) and against the noble-Epicureanism represented in *Inferno* X (which excludes, for philosophical reasons, the afterlife). This would explain Dante's apparent appropriation of Augustine's description of the Epicurean unbeliever in this episode, even though he rejected Augustine's representation of Epicurean ethics. Augustine's commentary on St Paul's debate with the Athenian Epicureans, and his imagined dialogue between the Christian believer and the Epicurean unbeliever, provide indeed a theological precedent for Dante's staging of the confrontation between Christian faith and Epicurean disbelief in *Inferno* X.

In the Acts of the Apostles, St Paul, the theologian of the Church — 'lo Vas d'elezïone' [the chosen Vessel] (*Inf.*, II. 28) — is led to Athens, the cradle of pagan philosophy ('patria magnorum philosophorum').[8] As philosophy and Christian faith are motivated by the same goal — man's beatitude — there is one great question which each party in the Athenian debate must address: 'tota igitur quaestio est, quid faciat beatam vitam?' [the whole question is, therefore, what makes a life happy].[9] The Epicureans, for whom the body and the soul are mortal, place beatitude solely in the tranquillity of the body; the Stoics place beatitude solely in the virtue of the soul. These two sects illustrate the pursuit of a self-sufficient beatitude, in accordance with each side of man's composite nature (body and soul).[10] The Christian, in contrast to the vanity of these pagan philosophers, places his hope of ultimate beatitude, not in himself or in his own nature, but in God from whom all goods, whether virtues or pleasures, come.[11] Where the Epicureans do not believe in a future life, and the Stoics do not account for man's composite nature (body and soul) in the afterlife, St Paul's primary message — 'Iudaeis quidem scandulum, Gentibus stultitiam' [scandal to the Jews, foolishness to the pagans] — is Jesus' crucifixion and bodily resurrection from the dead:

> Quidam autem Epicurei et Stoici philosophi disserebant cum eo et quidam dicebant 'Quid vult seminiverbius hic dicere?' Alii vero: 'Novorum daemoniorum videtur annuntiator esse; quia Jesum et resurrectionem annuntiabat eis' (Acts 17. 18).
>
> [Even some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers engaged him in discussion. Some asked, 'What is this scavenger trying to say?' Others said, 'He sounds like a promoter of foreign deities,' because he was preaching 'Jesus' and 'Resurrection.']

St Paul's evangelization of Jesus's resurrection is the point of faith or unbelief for the philosophers gathered around him: some scorn this doctrine ('quidam quidem

irridebant' (Acts 17. 32)) while others are led to belief in Christ ('Quidam vero viri adhaerentes ei crediderunt' (Acts 17. 34)).[12] As Augustine notes: 'qui irridet, cadit; qui credit, stat, qui dubitat, fluctuat' [who scorns, falls; who believes, stays upright; who doubts, sways].[13] Augustine further comments that not only a pagan, a Jew, or a heretic, but even a supposedly Catholic brother sometimes grimaces when the general resurrection of the body is evangelized ('aliquando frater ipse catholicus torquet os, quando promissa Dei praedicantur, quando futura resurrectio praenuntiatur').[14] Just as some of the pagan philosophers in Athens scorned St Paul's preaching of the resurrection of Christ, so Augustine reports that he has been mocked not only by pagans but even by baptized, yet false, Christians. As the Jews mocked Jesus when he walked amongst them, so these false Christians mock and reject Jesus Christ when he sits in glory at the right hand of God in Heaven.[15]

Augustine, having established the Resurrection of the Body as the site of Christian belief, imagines a dialogue between himself and an Epicurean unbeliever. The parallels with *Inferno* X, at this spiritual level, are striking. Augustine's unbeliever cries: 'Et quis huc resurrexit? [...] Non audivi patrem meum de sepulcro loquentem, ex quo eum sepelivi' [And who has returned from the dead? [...] I have never heard my father speaking from the grave in which I buried him].[16] Within the irony of *Inferno* X, the father and father-in-law of Guido Cavalcanti both *do* speak from the tomb but he, as an implied unbeliever, is not there with Dante to hear them. Although the unbeliever demands 'Ubi est Deus tuus?' [Where is your God?] and insults the Christian, Augustine emphasizes that he cannot make God visible.[17] The heart that only believes what it sees with its physical eyes is unclean and inept for faith ('immundum autem cor nec ad fidem idoneum'), and it is a fool who says in his heart that 'there is no God' ('stultus dicit in corde suo: "Non est Deus" ').[18] Augustine contrasts the prudent soul who, with Christian faith, sees into the distance, with the materialist disbeliever who only sees what falls beneath his feet ('si prudens porro videns, fide videtur porro; nam oculis vix ante pedes videtur tota die').[19] In *Inferno* X, Dante imaginatively reverses the short-sightedness of the *infideles*, described by Augustine, through the mechanism of the *contrapasso*.

Dante encapsulates the theological juxtaposition of Christian belief in the resurrection of the body with Epicurean materialism in the visual tableau of Farinata, risen from his tomb and visible from the waist up (*Inf.*, X. 31–36). Farinata's disdain of his eternal punishment — 'com' avesse l'inferno a gran dispitto' [as if he had Hell in great disdain] (l. 36) — and his heroic indifference to his fire-consumed sepulchre — for he is little tormented by 'questo letto' [this bed] (l. 78) — may allude to the paradigmatically Epicurean *dictum* recorded by Cicero in *Disputationes Tusculanae*:

> Adfirmat [Epicurus] quodam loco, si uratur sapiens, si crucietur [...] in Phalaridis tauro si erit, dicet: "Quam suave est, quam hoc non curo!" [...] Ille dixerit sane idem in Phalaridis tauro, quod, si esset in lectulo.
>
> [In one passage he [Epicurus] asserts that if the wise man be burnt, if he be tortured [...] if the wise man finds himself inside Phalaris' bull, he will say: "How sweet; how indifferent I am to this!" [...] He says the same inside the bull of Phalaris as he would have said had he been in his own bed.][20]

But the depiction of the Epicurean Farinata is also, with great dramatic irony, a visual allusion to the familiar representation of Jesus Christ triumphing over death at his Resurrection ('the Man of Sorrows').[21] In Dante's tableau, therefore, Farinata at once projects the most extreme and defiant Epicureanism — the *Epicurus de tauro Phalaridis* — and is forced (as part of the *contrapasso*) to echo visually Jesus's resurrection from the dead — the *Imago pietatis*. To a medieval or historically informed reader, Dante's thematic emphasis on the theological antithesis between the Resurrection of the Body and Epicurean materialism prepares them, therefore, to read the confrontation between Dante-character and Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti, located at the very heart of the canto, in spiritual terms. The tableau of Farinata (*Epicurus de tauro Phalaridis* and the *Imago pietatis*) is, literally, the visual backdrop to their dialogue.

The Epicurean graveyard in the eschatological structure of Dante's hell

Beyond the specific connections between *Inferno* VI and *Inferno* X, we may observe that the tenth canto of the Epicurean heretics comes, in the macro-structure of the *Inferno*, at a crucial juncture in the poem's narrative. Let us from a theological perspective, therefore, briefly situate *Inferno* X in the narrative context of the first ten cantos of the *Commedia*.

Up until the episode of the Epicurean heretics, positive belief in Christ has remained unchallenged by the damned souls whom Dante-character encounters. The apathetic on the border-line of Hell (*Inf.*, III. 22–69) 'never really lived' (l. 64) in the moral sense, in applying their will to good or evil in this life, and in the spiritual sense, as never fully committing with their will to, or dissenting from, Christ. Early and modern commentators highlight the theological unorthodoxy of Dante's invention of the third order of angels and of the neutral souls.[22] Through this peculiar eschatological category, Dante emphasizes the *pusillanimitas* (weak-spiritedness) of the souls which is particularly despicable because it entails the abject failure to use free will, the greatest gift of God to man, in the election and pursuit of good or evil.[23] The morally apathetic and spiritually agnostic, pursuing neither good nor evil, neither God nor the Devil, are despised by God and Satan alike. The virtuous pagans and the unbaptized children whom Dante-character meets in Limbo, the first circle of Hell (*Inf.*, IV), are punished for negative unbelief. In the macro-time-sphere of providential history, the virtuous pagans lived before the age of Christ. In the micro-time-sphere of an individual life, the unbaptized infants — deprived of Faith on their behalf by baptismal sponsors — died before they were able to assent to faith or seek baptism for themselves. Dante implies, furthermore, that the philosophers Averroës and Avicenna lived outside Christianity and did not have access to Christ. Consequently they could not have positively disbelieved in Him.[24]

The incontinent sinners, meanwhile, whom Dante-character encounters in the circles of upper-Hell (*Inf.*, V–IX), have rejected the very power of reason through which man may assent to positive belief or to positive disbelief: 'che la ragion sommettono al talento' [who subject their reason to their appetite] (*Inf.*, V. 39).

They fail quite simply in virtue (as the pagans in Limbo do not) and are in Hell as on earth consumed by — itself an unending punishment — their own destructive desires. The various incontinent sinners whom Dante-character meets provoke various responses in him (pity, disgust, puzzled bewilderment), but they do not challenge, from a theological perspective, the Christian belief on which his journey is founded.

Arriving at the circle of the Epicurean heretics in *Inferno* X, by contrast, Dante-character confronts souls who, although morally upright, positively disbelieved in Christ. Epicurus persevered, even after Aristotle's correction of Democritean atomism in *De anima*, in a mortalism which ruled out any implicit faith in the eternal beatitude of an afterlife.[25] The neo-Epicureans, living after the Incarnation, positively disbelieve in Christ as the path to eternal salvation. The Epicureanism of the protagonists Farinata, Cavalcante, Frederick II, Cardinal Ottaviano degli Ubaldini and 'più di mille [altri]' [more than a thousand others] challenges Dante-character's belief in his journey. At a meta-fictional level, Epicureanism challenges the theoretical foundations of the poem. The tenth canto is the only point in the *cantica* in which Dante-author does not simply organize human evil in relation to his theological and philosophical framework (he does categorize Epicureanism as a branch of heresy) but in which the evil itself (the wilful affirmation, against philosophical and Scriptural authority, of the mortality of the soul) calls into question the scheme which condemns it. The classification of evil set out in the following, and philosophically self-conscious, canto (*Inf.*, XI. 16–111) derives from the philosophical texts of Aristotle rather than from a recourse to Scripture: 'Non ti rimembra di quelle parole | con le quai *la tua Etica* pertratta' [Do you not remember the words with which your *Ethics* treats so fully] (*Inf.*, XI. 79–80); 'e se tu ben *la tua Fisica* note' [and if you take good note of your *Physics*] (*Inf.*, XI. 101).[26] Heresy, by contrast, 'is a peculiarly Christian sin, unknown to the pagans Aristotle and Cicero, who provide Dante with the basis for the moral order of the *Inferno*'.[27] Within this anomalous circle of heresy, furthermore, Epicureanism is itself an anomaly because the Epicureans may be seen not only as heretics (within Christian theology) but also as unbelievers (outside theological categorization). Epicureanism, although classed as a heresy, also stands outside and poses a challenge to the Christian theology, and Dante's Christian poem, which censures it.

The vertical axis: Inferno X, Purgatorio X, and Paradiso X

Dante's principal theological emphasis against the materialism of the Epicureans is, as foreshadowed in *Inferno* VI, the Final Judgement and the universal Resurrection of the Body: 'da quel punto | che del futuro fia chiusa la porta' [from that point when the door of the future will be closed] (*Inf.*, X. 107–08). Notably, Dante-author describes the Creation (the beginning of time) in *Paradiso* X and the Incarnation (the entry of God into time) in *Purgatorio* X. This creates a suggestive vertical axis of reference with the Resurrection of the Body (the end of time) in *Inferno* X. I shall not attempt to justify a vertical approach to exegesis in relation to other parts of the poem (it is, of course, standard to read *Inferno* VI, *Purgatorio* VI and *Paradiso*

VI in this way). But, through an analogy with scriptural exegesis and Christian art, I would like to show the way in which I consider that *Purgatorio* X and *Paradiso* X may inform a close reading of *Inferno* X.

In medieval Scriptural exegesis, the three spiritual senses are built upon the historical-literal sense. The allegorical sense is the historical event as foreshadowed in the past; the moral sense is the historical event as relating to the present of the reader; the anagogical sense is the historical event as foreshadowing the future life. In a visual, or poetic, analogy to this biblical exegesis we may be invited to look, or read, both horizontally, corresponding to the historical sense, and vertically, corresponding to the spiritual senses. Thus, in the baptistery of Florence so beloved by Dante, sixty mosaicked scenes of biblical stories tell, in four terraces, four biblical narratives: the Creation and the Fall of man; Joseph's betrayal by his brothers and final return to his father in glory; the Incarnation; and the life of John the Baptist. These frescoes may be read both historically, with the eye horizontally following the narrative of each terrace of fifteen scriptural scenes, and, in visual allegory, vertically as each scene from the Old and New Testaments prefigures or relates to the one above and below it. In like manner, we may read *Inferno* X both in relation to the horizontal developing narrative of the *cantica* and in its vertical relationship with cantos X of *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*. The Creation of the world and time, the entry into the heaven of the sun, and the celebration of Christian Wisdom (*Par.*, X) are set against the end of time at the Final Judgement, the entry into the City of Dis, and the burning graveyard of the Epicurean unbelievers (*Inf.*, X). Lodged between these two poles of time (its beginning and end) and the two poles of Christian belief (its celebration and rejection) is the Incarnation, the entry into Purgatory proper, and the pathway for everyman to 'new life' through faith in Christ (*Purg.*, X). I therefore consider the vertical axis of interpretation in terms of these three thematic parallels: first, theological time; second, structural importance; and third, the symbolism of Christian faith.

In the opening two terzine of *Paradiso* X, Dante-author describes the beginning of time: God's creation of all things visible ('per loco') and invisible ('per mente'):

> Guardando nel suo Figlio con l'Amore
> che l'uno e l'altro etternalmente spira,
> lo primo e ineffabile Valore
> quanto per mente e per loco si gira
> con tant' ordine fé, ch'esser non puote
> sanza gustar di lui chi ciò rimira.(*Par.*, X. 1–6)

> [Gazing at his son with the Love that both eternally breathe, the first, ineffable Power
> made all that turns in the mind or through space with so much order that one who contemplates it cannot be without a taste of him]

In an address to the reader, Dante-author tells him to gaze upon the order and beauty of creation for, in so doing, man cannot but have some knowledge, or taste, of the Creator (ll. 4–6). The point of creation is set, theologically, in the context of the eternal — outside time — dynamism of the Trinity (highlighted by the sweeping

opening gerund 'guardando') and it is set, in textual mimesis, mid-line and mid-terzina (with the past historic 'fé' (l. 5)). In *Purgatorio* X, Dante-character, on his entry into Purgatory, sees inscribed onto the cliff the scene of the Annunciation: the point at which God (outside time) became man (entering into time and human history) through His Incarnation in the Virgin Mary:

> L'angel che venne in terra col decreto
> de la molt' anni lacrimata pace,
> ch'aperse il ciel del suo lungo divieto,
> dinanzi a noi pareva sì verace
> quivi intagliato in un atto soave,
> che non sembiava imagine che tace.
> Giurato si saria ch'el dicesse '*Ave!*';
> perché iv' era imaginata quella
> ch'ad aprir l'alto amor volse la chiave;
> e avea in atto impressa esta favella
> '*Ecce ancilla Deï*', propriamente
> come figura in cera si suggella. (*Purg.*, X. 34–45)

> [The angel who came to earth with the decree of peace, for many years bewailed with tears, which opened Heaven after its long prohibition,
> appeared before us so truly, carved there in his gentle bearing, that he did not seem a silent image.
> One would have sworn that he was saying, '*Ave!*' for imaged there was she who turned the key to open the high Love,
> and in her bearing was stamped this speech: '*Ecce ancilla Dei*,' exactly as a figure is sealed in wax.]

After the Creation of all things good (*Par.*, X), man's Fall brought sin and death into the world precluding him from Paradise: 'Per hoc peccatum praecludebatur homini aditus regni coelestis [...] ante passionem Christi nullus intrare poterat regnum coeleste, adipiscendo scilicet beatitudinem aeternam, quae consistit in plena Dei fruitione' [For this sin, man was precluded from entry to the heavenly realm [...] before Christ's passion, no one was able to enter heaven, obtaining — that is — eternal beatitude, which consists in the full fruition of God].[28] Virgil highlights that, before the Incarnation, no souls were saved: 'E vo' che sappi che, dinanzi ad essi, | spiriti umani non eran salvati' [And I would have you know that before them no human spirits were saved] (*Inf.*, IV. 62–63).[29] Only by virtue of the Incarnation could man, saved through Christ's atonement, be made worthy of the heavenly bliss for which he was originally made. In *Purgatorio* X, Dante-author denotes the archangel Gabriel by the decree (l. 34) which restored the union between God and man (l. 35). Mary's assent at the Annunciation is described as the key which opens up Divine Love (ll. 41–42): the Incarnation opens up the future blessed life for mankind (l. 36). The vertical axis therefore sets into relief God's creation of (*Par.*, X), entry into (*Purg.*, X), and consummation of (*Inf.*, X) the history of mankind.

The vertical axis also highlights the structural importance of the tenth canto in each of the three *cantiche*. *Inferno* X is the first canto in the *City of Dis* and the Epicureans are the first souls whom Dante-character encounters in lower Hell.

Purgatorio X is the first canto of Purgatory proper, which represents allegorically the reunification of repentant sinners with the Body of Christ (the Church). After the sacrament of Confession in the gateway of Purgatory (*Purg.*, IX), the Christian community undergoes purgation and expiation in Purgatory's seven terraces. *Paradiso* X is the first canto in the heaven of the sun. The sun demarcates literally, in geocentric astronomy, the three lower planetary spheres shadowed by the earth (the Moon, Mercury, and Venus) from the three higher planetary spheres beyond the earth's shadow (Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn). At a spiritual level, the heaven of Christian wisdom demarcates the blessed souls whose faith, hope, and charity, have been compromised (or shadowed) by temporal desires or fears (*Par.*, II–IX) from those blessed souls in whom the theological virtues are unblemished (*Par.*, X). Traditionally the 'heart of the cosmos', the heaven of the sun contradistinguishes the Epicurean graveyard, located in the human breast or heart of Hell.[30] Through the structuring principle of the heart, the illumination of the Christian faith is contrasted with the spiritual blindness of the heretics.[31] The Christological significance, and border-line dimension, of the tenth cantos of the three *cantiche* is suggestively held even by the Roman numeral X. Standing for the Greek letter *Chi* and as a visual cross, it was used in Christian iconography and scripture as an abbreviation for Christ (*Χριστός*). Christ is indeed the mediator between the vertical — God, divinity, perfection, eternity — and the horizontal — man, humanity, the fallen world, human history — and this is signified spiritually by the two beams of his cross at the Crucifixion.

The vertical axis, finally, throws into relief the symbolism of Christian faith running through the three cantos. The sun is, for Dante, the symbol *par excellence* for God and it is thus fitting that the heaven of the sun should represent, in *Paradiso* X, the heaven of Christian wisdom. This symbolic association is confirmed textually with the first spoken words of *Paradiso* X: Beatrice commands Dante-character to thank God, the sun of the angels: 'Ringrazia, | ringrazia, il Sol de li angeli' [Give thanks, give thanks to the Sun of the angels] (*Par.*, X. 55). The symbolic function of the 'sun' to signify God was, of course, a commonplace of the medieval imagination. Every church in the medieval period, except in exceptional circumstances, was orientated with the main altar (the symbol of the tomb of Christ and the table of the Lord) facing east. As the sun rises every morning from the east after the dark of night, so Christ rose from his tomb on the third day conquering sin and death. A particularly potent symbol for Christ's resurrection, the physical state of being 'in the sun' or 'in the shadow' is, in scriptural exegesis, a *topos* for the spiritual state of faith or disbelief in God. As Aquinas states:

> Deus hoc modo se habet ad nos ut lux ad homines. Lux autem ubique diffunditur sole existente super terram. Et licet lux sit cum hominibus, non tamen omnes sunt in luce solis, sed tantum eam videntes. Sic ergo cum Deus sit ubique, est cum omnibus qui sunt ubicumque; sed tamen non omnes sunt cum Deo, nisi qui ei coniunguntur per fidem et dilectionem.[32]
>
> [God manifests himself to us in the same way as light to men. Light, indeed, is diffused everywhere (the sun being above the earth). And although the light is with men, not everyone is in the light of the sun, but only those who see

> it. In the same way, therefore, since God is everywhere, he is with everybody everywhere; but, nonetheless, not all men are with God, unless they are joined to him through faith and love.]

Dante, in the *Convivio*, highlights the distinction between the corporeal sun and the spiritual sun (God) to illustrate the literal and spiritual ways of reading his philosophical poems:

> Qui è da sapere che, sì come trattando di insensibile cosa per cosa sensibile si tratta convenevolmente, così di cosa [non] intelligibile per cosa intelligibile trattare si conviene. E però, sì come nella letterale si parlava cominciando dal sole corporale e sensibile, così ora è da ragionar[n]e per lo sole spirituale e intelligibile, che è Iddio. Nullo sensibile in tutto lo mondo è più degno di farsi esemplo di Dio che 'l sole. Lo quale di sensibile luce sé prima e poi tutte le corpora celestiali e [le] elementali allumina: così Dio prima sé con luce intellettuale allumina, e poi le [creature] celestiali e gli altri intelligibili. (*Conv.*, III. xii. 6–7).
>
> [It should be explained here that just as one necessarily treats of what lies beyond the sense by reference to what is sensible, so one must treat of what lies beyond our intellect by reference to what is intelligible. Therefore, just as in the literal account I began by speaking of the physical and sensible sun, so now my discussion must be concerned with the spiritual and intelligible sun, that is, God. No sense object in the entire universe is more worthy of acting as a symbol of God than the sun: it illuminates with sensible light first itself, then all the heavenly bodies and the bodies formed from the elements; God likewise illuminates with intellectual light first Himself, then the heavenly creatures and the other intelligible creatures.]

Ubiquitous in scriptural exegesis, Dante further accentuates the symbolic function of the sun to signify God. In a spiritual reading of Dante's text, therefore, man's relative position to the sun may symbolize man's relationship in faith to God. When, in *Inferno* X therefore, Cavalcante refers to the sun ('non fiere li occhi suoi lo dolce lome?' [Does not the sweet light strike his eyes?] (*Inf.*, X. 69)) on the dark night of Good Friday (of Christ's passion and entombment) a vertical upwards glance (from *Inferno* X to *Paradiso* X) highlights that the sun may both be, literally, a physical object but also, allegorically, a spiritual object (God: 'il sol de li angeli' [the sun of the angels] (*Par.*, X. 55)).

The Annunciation, depicted in *Purgatorio* X, is a symbolic paradigm for Christian Faith. As Mary conceived God in her flesh (He became incarnate in her), so all those who believe, conceive Christ in spirit: 'sicut beata virgo corporaliter Christum concepit, ita quaelibet sancta anima concipit ipsum spiritualiter, unde apostolus dicit, Galat. IV, filioli mei, quos iterum parturio, donec formetur Christus in vobis' [just as the blessed virgin conceived Christ corporeally, so every holy soul conceives him spiritually, therefore the apostle says, in Galatians 4, 'my children, for whom I am again in labour until Christ be formed in you'].[33] Disbelief in Christ is at once disbelief in the historical event of the Incarnation (that Mary was 'vergine madre' — a virgin and a mother) and spiritual sterility: the failure to conceive Christ spiritually in the self as the seed of salvation. Augustine emphasizes fear of God, piety, and humility of the heart as the first steps on the Christian journey to

perfection, and he contrasts this with the stubborn pride of the pagan philosophers, and foremost amongst them the Epicureans.[34] The first terrace of Dante's Purgatory is of humility. Mary's Annunciation embodies the humility through which she, in spirit and in flesh, and man, in spirit, may receive Christ and enter the path to salvation and the new life in Christ.[35] As the sun is both literally a physical reality and allegorically a spiritual reality (God), so life and death may be understood allegorically to refer to the spiritual realities of the path to salvation (the 'new life' of faith in Christ) and damnation (the rejection of Christ). Birth, the beginning of this mortal life, is counterpoised with Baptism, the 'rebirth' or 'vita nuova' in Christ. When, in *Inferno* X, Cavalcante asks whether his son is still alive ('non viv' elli ancora?' (l. 68)), the vertical axis with *Purgatorio* X therefore sets in relief the ambiguity of his words which may be interpreted according to a literal sense (physically alive) and a spiritual sense (alive in faith).

Conclusion

Inferno X is clearly a canto about this life, the history of Florence, and the plague of civic divisiveness. *Inferno* X is also — and this has attracted less attention from Dante scholars given the emphasis on the political arena in the canto — about the future life and about Christian belief as the pathway towards the eternal beatitude of heaven. This chapter has prepared for a reappraisal of the canto in spiritual terms. I have underlined the theological significance of the graveyard of the Epicureans in the structure of Hell, highlighted the vertical axis of *Purgatorio* X and *Paradiso* X, and shown how Dante foregrounds in *Inferno* X the theme of the Resurrection of the Body. I have also shown how the two macro-horizons — of this life (a reality for Epicurean and Christian alike) and the next life (the point of Epicurean disbelief and of Christian faith) — may be poetically poised in a visual tableau (Farinata risen from his fiery tomb) or in a textual ambiguity (Cavalcante's words 'sun' and 'life' which may be interpreted literally or spiritually). The chapter has also, as I explored in the first section, provided the technical apparatus for a close reading of *Inferno* X. This apparatus is distilled in, and illustrated by, the two figures. Figure 1 shows the mechanism of time-long-sightedness by virtue of which Cavalcante may see distant future events but is unable to see either the forthcoming death of his son (in August 1300) or that his son is, on Good Friday 1300, alive. Figure 2 summarizes the cumulative effect of three different authorial devices: Dante's meticulous organization of his historical material; his use of the 'time-long-sightedness' of the Epicureans; and the Russian-doll structure and 'freeze-frame effect' of the narrative. It shows the protagonists' state of knowledge of a series of historical events (in the past, present and future relative to the night of Good Friday 1300) at the start of *Inferno* X.

Notes to Chapter 3

1. Moore, *Studies in Dante, second series*, p. 178; Foster, *The Two Dantes*, p. 11. In similar vein, Anna Williams comments 'Strictly speaking, heresy is a deviation from Christian belief and, as such, no pagan philosophy could count as one' (A. N. Williams, 'The Theology of the *Comedy*',

p. 207). Moore's, Foster's and Williams's definition of the 'heretic' nonetheless needs some qualification. Thus, according to Aquinas who explicitly cites the Stoics and the Epicureans in his example, he who errs as to the goal of life, just as he who errs with regard to revealed dogma of the Christian faith is a heretic: 'Si vero erraret circa ea quae sunt ad finem vitae humane, semper est haereticus. Et dico finem vitae humanae, quia apud antiquos erant sectae ponentes diversum finem, ut patet de Stoicis et Epicureis' [If, however, he were to err about those things which pertain to the goal of human life, he would always be a heretic. And I say the goal of human life because, as is apparent from the Stoics and the Epicureans, there were sects amongst the ancients which postulated a different goal.] (Aquinas, *Super Epistolam Beati Pauli ad Titum lectura*, cap. 3, l. 2). Augustine similarly cites the Epicurean and Stoic schools as heresies: see Augustine, *Contra Cresconium grammaticum donatistam*, I. 12. 15 and *Epistola* LXXXV. 10.

2. In this book, I treat the *Cangrande* epistle, in its entirety, as written by Dante. However, in part because of the controversy surrounding the epistle's (or sections of the epistle's) authenticity, my arguments which draw on the epistle are also made on their own terms. I appeal to the epistle for further confirmation and clarification, but the arguments I propose are not dependent upon the epistle's authenticity as for a definitive authorial seal of approval. This notwithstanding, I would agree, first, with Hollander's assessment that 'the burden of proof rather falls on those who would deny genuineness' and, second, with his conclusion that 'the cases made against authenticity are not, on their own terms, as convincing as they would have to be in order to turn the argument in their favour'. See Robert Hollander, *Dante's Epistle to Cangrande* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), pp. 1–101 (p. 4; pp. 1–2). Hollander's important study of this significant controversy critically re-examines some key arguments against authenticity as well as contributing new evidence for authenticity from the early commentaries. It also includes (pp. 103–10) a useful bibliography on the debate. Enzo Cecchini, in his critical edition of the text, also provides a re-appraisal of the controversy. Like Hollander, he argues that the evidence balances in favour of authenticity. See Dante Alighieri, *Epistola a Cangrande*, ed. by Enzo Cecchini (Florence: Giunti, 1995), pp. viii–xxv (p. xxv).
3. Zygmunt Barański's study, which shifts the critical emphasis from Farinata to Cavalcante, similarly seeks to combat an over-emphasis on the political. See Zygmunt G. Barański, 'Guido Cavalcanti tra le "cruces" di *Inferno* IX–XI', in *Versi controversi*, pp. 39–112 (p. 46): 'relegando Cavalcante ad un ruolo secondario, modo di leggere che non sembra essere nelle ipotesi dell'Alighieri, si è forse alquanto esagerata l'importanza di "quell'altro magnanimo" (v. 73), e sbilanciato l'equilibrio di *Inf.* X, che troppo spesso è letto riduttivamente come il "canto di Farinata", e preponderantemente in chiave politica' [relegating Cavalcante to a role of secondary importance, a way of reading that does not appear to be Dante's intention, has somewhat exaggerated the importance of 'that other great-souled one' (v. 73) and upset the balance of *Inf.* X, which too often is read reductively as the 'canto of Farinata', and predominantly through a political lens].
4. The Ghibellines were aligned historically with the Hohenstaufen Imperial cause and, most significantly in these battles, with Manfred (1232–1266), the legitimized bastard son of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II (1194–1250). The Guelfs were aligned, against the Imperial cause, with the Papacy and, in 1266 at Benevento, with its then French champion Charles, Count of Anjou. The historical references are taken, except where otherwise noted, from the relevant entries in the *Enciclopedia dantesca* and the *Dante Encyclopedia*.
5. G. Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, VII. lxxviii–lxxix, pp. 376–83
6. G. Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, VIII. ix–xv, pp. 420–38.
7. In adopting the locution 'Guido's fathers' generation', I realize that, first, Guido Cavalcanti never knew Farinata as a 'father-in-law' (because Guido married Bice degli Uberti three years after Farinata died) and, second, that there is no reason at all to believe that Guido entertained any family feeling, let alone posthumous filial devotion, towards Farinata (the marriage being one of political expediency). Nonetheless Dante, in bringing these three protagonists together in the canto, does seem to underline the formal relationships between Guido, his father (Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti) and father-in-law (Farinata). The locution 'Guido's fathers' generation' therefore serves to highlight the way in which Guido's own career parallels and repeats — across a generation — the follies, political and spiritual, of his father and father-in-law.

8. Acts 17. 15; Augustine, *Sermo*, CL: 'De verbis actuum apostolorum', 1. 2. See also Augustine, *Sermo*, CL, 4. 5: 'Constituite nunc ante oculos vestros Epicureos, Stoicos, et Apostolom [...] Interrogamus prius Epicureos, quae res faciat vitam beatam' [Imagine now to have before your eyes the Epicureans, the Stoics, and the Apostle [...] Let us ask the Epicureans first what makes a life happy]. On St Paul and Epicureanism, see Erler, 'Epicureanism in the Roman Empire', in *The Cambridge Companion to Epicurus*, ed. by Warren, pp. 46–64.
9. Augustine, *Sermo*, CL, 4. 5.
10. See Augustine, *Sermo*, CL, 4. 5: 'Epicureorum et Stoicorum opinio de beata vita' [The opinion of the Epicureans and the Stoics on what makes a life happy].
11. Augustine describes St Paul as a light which must dispel the clouds of smoke which, raised by the Epicureans and the Stoics, obscure the true path to spiritual beatitude. Augustine, *Sermo*, CCCXLVIII: 'De timore dei' [On the fear of God], 2. 3: 'Nam istae duae sectae Epicureorum et Stoicorum sicut in Apostolorum Actibus legimus, adversus lumen Pauli nostri fumos suos ausae sunt iactitate' [Indeed, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, these two schools of philosophy — the Epicureans and the Stoics — dared to raise up their clouds against the light of our apostle Paul].
12. As Augustine comments: 'audita illi resurrectione mortuorum, quae praecipua fides est Christianorum' [having heard about the resurrection of the dead, which is a fundamental truth of the Christian faith] (Aug., *Sermo*, CL, 1. 2).
13. Augustine, *Sermo*, CL, 1. 2.
14. Augustine, *Sermo*, LXXIII, 25.
15. Augustine, *Sermo*, LXXIII, 25: '[Christus] venturus praenuntiabatur; venit, et contemptus est a Iudaies ambulans in terra; contemnitur a falsis christianis sedens in coelo' [Christ to come was prophesied; he came and, walking on earth, he was scorned by the Jews; now, seated in Heaven, he is scorned by false Christians]
16. Augustine, *Sermo*, LXXIII, 25.
17. To confute this narrowness of sight, Augustine uses the example of man's soul. The soul cannot be seen and yet it is intelligible as the act of the body it causes to move. Likewise God, the Creator, is known through Creation, His handiwork: 'ex operibus corporis agnosco viventem; ex operibus creaturae non potes agnoscere Creatorem!' [From the activities of the body I know the soul; from the works of creation cannot you know the Creator!] (Augustine, *Sermo*, LXXIII, 25).
18. Augustine, *Sermo*, LXXIII, 25.
19. Augustine, *Sermo*, LXXIII, 25.
20. The tyrant Phalaris tortured and executed his enemies in a bull constructed of bronze. Entombed within, the victim was burned alive and his screams were converted, in the bronze chamber, into the melodious roar of the bull. Epicurus purportedly claimed that the wise man would feel no different in the scorching bronze bull than in his own bed. See Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, ed. with trans. by J. E. King (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), II. vii. 17–18, pp. 162–65. See also Augustine who, following Cicero, similarly mocks Epicurus's boast about the bull of Phalaris in *Epistola*, CLXXXV1. 1.2. Dante refers more explicitly to the story of the bull of Phalaris in *Inferno* XXVII. 1–15. Dante draws an apt simile between the punishment for the counsellors of fraud, entombed within a flame from which their speech emerges as 'un confuso suon' [a confused sound] (*Inf.*, XXVII. 6), and the fate of the sculptor Perillus who was the first victim to howl from the bronze bull which he had constructed on the orders of Phalaris.
21. See Anthony K. Cassell, 'Dante's Farinata and the Image of the Arca', *Yale Italian Studies*, 1 (1977), 335–70. See also Robert M. Durling, 'Farinata and the Body of Christ', *Stanford Italian Review*, 2 (1981), 5–35.
22. See Guido da Pisa, gloss to *Inf.*, III. 34–42: 'Et quamvis hoc sit contra fidem catholicam, quia Christus in Evangelio ait: "Qui non est mecum, contra me est", sustinendus est iste poeta et non damnandus, quia poetice et non theologice loquitur in hac parte' [And although this is against the catholic faith, because Christ in the gospel says 'Who is not with me, is against me', the poet is to be upheld and not condemned, because he is speaking poetically and not theologically in this section]. Foster notes that Dante's 'very characteristic contempt for the neutrals, for the inert "who never were alive", [...] led to three lines (37–39) of rather queer theology' (Foster,

The Two Dantes, p. 4). Maritain suggests that '[Dante's] poetry was able freely to play even with its tenets, and to fancy, without deceiving anybody, that condition of the "neither rebellious nor faithful" rejected both by heaven and by hell, which theology does not know' (Jacques Maritain, 'The Three Epiphanies of Creative Intuition', in *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953), pp. 354–405 (p. 380)).

23. The *pusillanimitas* of the neutrals finds its counterpart, in my view, in the *magnanimitas* of the virtuous pagans (*Inf.*, IV) and the Epicureans (*Inf.*, X) whose strength of will is evident in their industrious practical or theoretical activity. See, for a summary of the different views on the question of the 'pusillanimitas' of the neutrals, Francesco Forti, 'Appendice: Pusillamini e Superbi', in *Magnanimitade, Studi su un tema dantesco* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1977), pp. 207–26.
24. The negative unbelief of the virtuous pagans may be, as Kenelm Foster argues, more complex. See Foster, *The Two Dantes*, pp. 156–89 (p. 175).
25. Dante's contrasting treatment of Epicurus, a heretic in *Inf.*, X, and Democritus, a virtuous pagan in *Inf.*, IV, presents an interpretative problem. For various hypotheses, see Lucchesi, 'Epicurus and Democritus', pp. 14–19. In my view, the most convincing reason is that Dante considered Democritus to have been guilty of a technical error in philosophy but innocent of a moral fault. Aristotle, in *De anima*, sets forth and confutes Democritus's atomistic view of the human soul. Democritus's view thereby constitutes a stage towards the true doctrine enunciated by Aristotle. By contrast Epicurus, despite Aristotle's thesis correcting Democritus's erroneous view, wilfully persevered in the wrong position of Democritean atomism, and used it as the theoretical basis for his mortalist doctrine on the soul.
26. The one direct reference to Scripture is to Genesis (*Inf.*, X. 107), and it serves to confirm the natural ethics of Aristotle rather than to offer *scienza nuova* beyond the remit of natural reason. On the Ciceronian influence on Dante's categorization of sins in the *Inferno*, see W. H. V. Reade, *The Moral System of Inferno* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909).
27. John. A. Scott, 'Heretics', *DE.*, 484–86 (p. 484).
28. *ST.*, III. q. 49, a.5, co; see also *ST.*, III. q. 49, a.5, ad. 1.
29. Virgil speaks with reference to the faithful Jews, who believed in Christ to come and whom, therefore, Christ harrowed from Hell.
30. Robert M. Durling 'Heresy', *DE.*, pp. 481–84 (p. 483): the heart is 'named in countless biblical texts as the seat of wisdom and faith'.
31. Durling emphasizes the structural connection between the sphere of the heretics and the sphere of the Christian philosophers. See Durling, 'mio figlio ov'è' (*Inf.*, X. 60), in *Dante da Firenze all'aldilá*, ed. by Michelangelo Picone (Florence: Cesati, 2000), pp. 303–29 (p. 321): 'i canti del Sole siano un correlato del canto degli eretici, la cui cecità di cuore viene sostituita dagli illuminati teologi, rappresentanti dell'*apex mentis*, tradizionalmente collocato nel cuore dell'uomo (e siamo nel tradizionale cuore del cosmo, il Sole)' [the 'Sun cantos' are correlated to the canto of the heretics, whose blindness of heart is contrasted with the enlightened theologians, representatives of the *apex mentis*, traditionally located in the heart of man (and we are in what is traditionally the heart of the cosmos, the Sun)].
32. Aquinas, *Super Ioannem*, cap.17, l. 6. Cited in Simon A. Gilson, *Medieval Optics and Theories of Light in the Works of Dante* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 2000), pp. 231–32.
33. *ST.*, IIIa. q.30, a.1, arg. 3.
34. Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*, II. vii. 9–11.
35. The vertical axis with *Inferno* X therefore highlights a clear contrast between the 'disdegno' and *magnanimitas* of the Epicureans Farinata and Cavalcante (*Inf.*, X) and the 'humility' and *magnanimitas* of Mary (*Purg.*, X). Where the *magnanimi* amplify themselves — they are great souls on account of their own merit and prowess, the soul of Mary (and the souls of Christians in imitation of her) magnify God: 'magnificat anima mea dominum'.

CHAPTER 4

❖

Epicurean Mortalism and Christian Faith

Introduction

Inferno X challenges its reader. The canto poses interrogatives which demand answers, from thematic and theological issues to problems of interpretation.[1] Kenelm Foster asks 'why then Epicurus? why the special stress, implied in the poet's deliberately choosing to cross the circle of heresy at precisely *that* point, on the evil of denying the soul's survival of bodily death?'. Sapegno comments on the extreme interpretative difficulty of the dialogue with Cavalcante: it is 'amongst the most discussed and difficult of the poem'.[2]

The problem of interpretation in *Inferno* X is shared by the reader and the protagonists alike and it reflects the canto's central theme of heresy. Where schism offends primarily against charity, heresy destroys faith, and every aspect of the canto is shrouded in secrecy, confusion and doubt. The graveyard is reached 'per un secreto calle' [along a secret path] (l. 1) because, as Guido da Pisa comments, 'mos est omnium hereticorum suos errores et fallacias occultare [...] eorum secreta opera, nisi per secreta ingenia et secretas vias, cognosci non possunt' [the custom of all heretics is to hide their errors and lies [...] their secret works cannot be understood except by secret devices and secret ways].[3] The damned souls are hidden, only to rise in turn from their tombs. Hearing Farinata's disembodied voice, Dante-character attempts to conceal himself ('però m'accostai' [therefore I hid myself] (l. 29)) and, at the close of their interrupted dialogue, Farinata hides himself again in telling symmetry ('Indi s'ascose' [Then he hid himself] (l. 121)). Each dialogue-layer of the canto is characterized by questions seeking to uncover a secret or unlock the unknown. The first speech of the canto is an extended question (ll. 4–9), which is immediately complicated by Virgil's inference of Dante's further hidden question (ll. 16–18). Virgil's final speech responds to Dante's silent confusion: 'Perché se' tu sì smarrito?' [Why are you so lost?] (l. 124). The dialogue with Farinata, who had eavesdropped on Dante's dialogue with Virgil, is dominated by a series of questions (ll. 31; 42; 84; 99), of revelation and counter-revelation. Cavalcante's two speeches, in two terzine at the centre of the canto, consist entirely of interrogatives: he asks six questions in all (ll. 58–60; ll. 67–69).

The present interpretation of the canto attempts to engage fully, at a literary level, with the questions and difficulties of the protagonists themselves. The text, it

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must be remembered, is a script which narrates a dramatic scene: to understand the meaning of the speakers thus involves more than an analysis of the spoken words. As contemporary scholastic exegesis of a biblical episode such as the *Annunciation* (the dialogue between the Archangel Gabriel and Mary) involved a precise analysis of each word, gesture and symbol — stretching into pages of commentary — so we should approach this Dantean episode with a similar attention to detail and narrative subtlety. The first section of this chapter shows how the disparity between literal and spiritual interpretations of the same object (the sun) illustrates, in this canto, the incommensurable psychological states of Epicurean unbelief and Christian belief. The heightened attention of Dante-character, and the reader with him, to the intentionality of the speakers highlights, as is explored in the second section, an important didactic lesson about hermeneutics and heresy: in the ambiguity of the double-sense (the intended/the inferred), and thus in an act of exegesis, Dante-author distinguishes an interpretative mistake from an act of wilful heresy. The third section considers the causes of Dante-character's disorientation following his encounter with the Epicureans Farinata and Cavalcante in *Inferno* X. A parallel is drawn between the Epicurean heresy and the autobiographical 'error' repudiated by Beatrice in *Purgatorio* XXX–XXXI. Finally, the Epicurean episode is reconsidered in the light of Beatrice's response, through Cacciaguida in the central canto of the *Paradiso*, to Dante-character's spiritual bewilderment (a response promised at the close of *Inferno* X).

'Come dicesti?': Dante's Encounter with the Epicurean Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti

To many Dante scholars, it might appear a quixotic task to return again to the dialogue between Dante-character and Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti in *Inferno X* (ll. 52–72). Not only articles but extended polemics have arisen over the interpretation of single lines and even single words (especially, from the mid-twentieth century to the present, with regard to Dante-character's speech (ll. 61–63) and his use of the pronoun 'cui').[4] There are, nonetheless, two principal justifications for a further reappraisal of this passage. First, the concentration of scholarly attention upon and fascination with this episode is no accident. In this passage, Dante confronts Epicurean mortalism, a doctrine entirely incompatible with his Christian faith and with the literal and moral ground of the *Commedia*. Furthermore, Dante addresses his autobiographical relationship with Guido Cavalcanti, referred to as his 'primo amico' in the *Vita nuova* and the most important contemporary intellectual and poetic influence of his early maturity. Second, the analysis of Dante's authorial strategy, outlined in Chapter 3, opens up a new perspective on this central dialogue. The Russian-doll structure and narrative freeze-frame effect of *Inferno* X locate the central dialogue between Dante-character and Cavalcante in a knowledge gap. The analysis of *Inferno* X as the horizon between two hemispheres (of this life and of the next life) highlights the theological dimension and vertical axis of the canto and, thereby, the potential ambiguity of literal and Christological-symbolic interpretations of objects and their linguistic referents. Informed by the cumulative effect of these authorial structural devices (summarized in Figure 2), I consider

each stage of the Cavalcante dialogue according to the possible intention of the speaker and to the possible inference of the interlocutor. Dante-author structures the dialogue such that, although the words spoken are ambiguous, he fixes (or at the least delimits) the possible intended meanings of each of the protagonists. In addition, he also fixes the possible inferences each protagonist could reasonably draw from the other interlocutor's speech. A dichotomy is thereby established between the intended sense of the speaker and the inferred sense of the interlocutor. The dialogue is thus constructed, as this close reading demonstrates, as an ambivalent semantic horizon: Cavalcante (in the literal semantic hemisphere) and Dante (in the allegorical semantic hemisphere) interpret the same words (at the horizon) but according to two different (literal and spiritual) senses.

External and internal framing (ll. 52–54; 67; 72)

In the Russian-doll structure of the canto, the dialogue between Dante-character and Cavalcante (ll. 52–72) is entombed within the dialogue with Farinata (ll. 40–51; 73–120), itself encased within the dialogue with Virgil (ll. 1–39; 121–36). The central dialogue is internally framed, dramaturgically, by the appearance and disappearance of Cavalcante from his tomb. The three gestural movements and positions of Cavalcante further structure the dialogue and carry literal and symbolic meanings. The first terzina describes Cavalcante's appearance into view from the same sepulchre as Farinata:

> Allor surse a la vista scoperchiata
> un'ombra, lungo questa, infino al mento:
> credo che s'era in ginocchie levata. (ll. 52–54)
>
> [Then a shade rose up, discovered to sight as far as the chin, alongside the first one; I think it had risen to its knees.]

Where Farinata is visible from the waist up, Cavalcante's shade is, at first, only visible from the chin. Dante-character infers from this that Cavalcante is resting on his knees, in the position thereby of prayer, supplication and penitence (l. 54). But Dante-character could be mistaken. Cavalcante equally could not be kneeling at all but rather crouching, as if hiding and peering from the tomb. The second hypothesis is strengthened by Cavalcante's subsequent movement: 'Di sùbito drizzato' [Of a sudden risen to his feet] (l. 67). Were Cavalcante to have been kneeling, it would have been difficult for him to rise, or spring up, so quickly. The second posture of Cavalcante is, literally, unambiguous (he adopts the same posture as Farinata) but symbolically ambivalent: it potentially signifies, as with Farinata, the *Epicurus de tauro Phalaridis* and the *Imago pietatis*. In the final terzina, Cavalcante disappears from view:

> Quando s'accorse d'alcuna dimora
> ch'io facëa dinanzi a la risposta,
> supin ricadde e più non parve fora. (ll. 70–72)
>
> [When he perceived a certain delay I made before replying, he fell back supine and appeared no more outside.]

Cavalcante's final movement is literally and symbolically unambiguous. As Guido da Pisa highlights with a series of scriptural examples, to prostrate oneself forwards ('cadere in faciem') symbolizes the humility of man before God; to fall backwards ('cadere retrorsum'), by contrast, paradigmatically symbolizes sin, damnation and the turning away of man from God.[5] These three, symbolically charged, visual tableaux thereby structure the dialogue between Dante-character and Cavalcante.

Cavalcante's first speech (ll. 55–60)

When Cavalcante raises his chin above the rim of the sepulchre, he knows nothing about the past from his death in 1280 to the present, Good Friday 1300; he cannot see the proximate future (from 1300 to 1304); but he can see the more distant future (from 1304 onwards). This is illustrated, as we have seen, by Figures 1 and 2. Let us consider, therefore, what Cavalcante knows about Guido before he questions Dante-character. Looking into the future (from 1304), Cavalcante does not see his son, and he must therefore presume that Guido dies prematurely (as dead by 1304). Blind to the proximate future, Cavalcante cannot see that, in fact, Guido will die in August 1300. Thus, according to Cavalcante's current knowledge, Guido could have died, or could die, at any point between 1280 and 1304. Let us now consider Cavalcante's actions and questions to Dante-character when he rises from the tomb:

> Dintorno mi guardò, come talento
> avesse di veder s'altri era meco;
> e poi che 'l sospecciar fu tutto spento,
> piangendo disse: 'Se per questo cieco
> carcere vai per altezza d'ingegno,
> mio figlio ov' è? e perché non è teco?' (ll. 55–60)

> [He looked around me, as anxious to see whether another were with me, and after his doubting glance was entirely spent,
> weeping he said: 'If through this blind prison you are going because of the height of your intellect, where is my son? and why is he not with you?']

Cavalcante posits, wrongly, that Dante-character is on this journey by virtue of his great intellect (l. 59). As Guido was of renowned intellectual prowess and Dante's Florentine contemporary, Cavalcante cannot understand why Guido, if he were alive, would not be with Dante on this journey. Arising from his tomb, Cavalcante does not see Guido with Dante as he had hoped (ll. 55–57). He naturally suspects and fears therefore that his son is already dead. Literally unable to *see* his son in the recent past (from 1280), the present and the future, and not seeing him in Hell with Dante, Cavalcante wants — literally — to confirm where his son actually is ('mio figlio ov' è?' [where is my son?]) and thus whether he might still be alive. Cavalcante is thus anxious to discover Guido's earthly destiny.[6]

Although Cavalcante speaks literally, the potential ambiguity between man's mortal and eternal destiny and between this life and the next life is invited by the Virgilian subtext of Andromache's encounter with Aeneas (*Aen.* III):

> 'verane te facies, verus mihi nuntius adfers,
> nate dea? vivisne? aut si lux alma recessit,

> Hector ubi est?' dixit lacrimasque effudit et omnem
> implevit clamore locum. (*Aeneid*, III. 310–13) [7]
>
> ['Are you a real form, a real messenger, coming to me, goddess-born? Are you alive? Or if the light of life has left you, where is Hector?' She spoke, and shedding a flood of tears filled all the place with her cries.]

Andromache (alive) is unsure whether Aeneas is also alive or a shade like Hector: 'vivisne?' If Aeneas is dead (he is not), she asks, why is Hector (whom Andromache knows to be dead) not with him: 'Hector ubi est?' This oscillation between the realms of the living and the dead is inverted in Dante's literary echo: Cavalcante (dead) asks Dante-character (alive) why his son Guido (if alive) is not with him: 'mio figlio ov' è?' Perturbed by Guido's absence, Cavalcante (in the next life) fears that Guido is dead.[8]

Dante-character's speech (ll. 61–66)

Dante-character could have assuaged Cavalcante's fear by responding that Guido is physically alive and well in Florence. Dante-character is, however, unaware of the *contrapasso* at this stage of the narrative. He has no reason to believe that Cavalcante may not see the present. Just as a person, Patrick, seeing another person, Mary, across the table would rightly assume that she could see the apple on the table (not having any reason to think she was blind), so Dante-character would rightly assume that Cavalcante must see for himself that Guido is, in the present of Good Friday 1300, alive and well (not having any reason to suppose that Cavalcante is blind to the present).

Assuming that Cavalcante *can* see the present and knows — as a self-evident fact — that Guido, aged fifty, is literally alive, Dante-character must consequently understand Cavalcante's question to refer to the intellectual and spiritual state of Guido:[9]

> 'If you [Dante] pass through this blind prison in virtue of the greatness of your intellect, where — [in what science or belief] — is the great intellect of Guido. Why is he not with you, does he not too live — [in this science or belief] — like you'.

Dante-character thus interprets Cavalcante's question to refer solely to the spiritual and intellectual state of Guido, in the present life. Dante-character could reasonably infer that Cavalcante, eternally damned as an Epicurean disbeliever, is anxious about his son's notorious Epicureanism and eternal destiny. In the biblical parable of salvation, the prodigal son, who has sinned and fed amongst pigs (a nickname for Epicureans), returns to the grace of his father's house: 'quia hic filius meus mortuus erat et revixit, perierat et inventus est' [because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found] (Luke 15. 24). In a spiritual reading, the son represents the sinner — outside the grace of God and spiritually dead — who is returned to life through God's forgiveness.[10] Cavalcante's weeping ('piangendo disse') could indicate his remorse that, in an inversion of the biblical parable of salvation, he has led his son Guido to spiritual perdition by his scandalous

example as an Epicurean. Dante-character has already inferred that Cavalcante is kneeling (in the posture of prayer); he moreover interprets Cavalcante's wandering gaze to display a desire ('talento') and even hope ('sospeccio') which is then extinguished. Could Cavalcante hope — Dante-character might infer — for the salvation of Guido from the heresy of Epicureanism?

It is at this spiritual level of meaning that Dante-character responds to Cavalcante:

> E io a lui: 'Da me stesso non vegno:
> colui ch'attende là, per qui mi mena
> forse cui Guido vostro ebbe a disdegno'.
> Le sue parole e 'l modo de la pena
> m'avean di costui già letto il nome;
> però fu la risposta così piena. (ll. 61–66)

> [And I to him: 'I do not come on my own: he who is waiting there through here leads me perhaps whom [to one whom/who] your Guido had in disdain'.
> His words and the manner of his punishment had already read to me his name; therefore was my reply so full.]

Dante-character first emphasizes his own dependency (l. 61) and he thereby corrects Cavalcante's false supposition. Neither Dante's great intellect, nor Guido's, could be the cause of such a journey. Dante-character then points to that which Guido held in disdain 'ebbe a disdegno' at that moment (in the past) when Dante-character began his journey (the morning of Good Friday 1300). This disdain prohibited Guido from accompanying Dante-character on his journey through Hell.[11] At a meta-fictional level, Dante-author may refer to Guido Cavalcante's intellectual disdain in the past which has prohibited him, as thereby intellectually and spiritually unequipped, from undertaking the authorial project of the *Commedia*.[12] Although of great intellectual potential ('altezza d'ingegno'), Guido, because of his disdain, will be surpassed by Dante who wins, through the *Commedia*, the ultimate poetic crown. According to Jacopo della Lana, Cavalcante's second question (l. 60) may be glossed: 'Guido mio figliuolo come non fa comedia anch'elli?' [How is it that my son Guido does not also create a comedy?] and Dante's response (ll. 61–63) 'mostra che trasse da Virgilio questa comedia, e che Guido preditto non seppe Virgilio, e però non la può fare' [shows that he drew this comedy from Virgil, and that the aforementioned Guido did not know Virgil, and therefore was unable to write it].[13] Jacopo della Lana's interpretation is strengthened, of course, by the fact that — at the meta-poetical level — Dante-author builds the dialogue between Dante-character and Cavalcante (within the narrative) upon Virgil's dialogue between Aeneas and Andromache in the *Aeneid*. Dante-character thus seeks to convey to Cavalcante Guido's spiritual state (in contradistinction to his own), and thus why Guido could not, in a literal sense, have accompanied him on this journey through Hell or, in a meta-fictional sense, shared in the authorial glory of the *Commedia*.

For the first six hundred years of the commentary tradition, Virgil was unanimously understood to be the referent of the pronoun 'cui' (l. 63) and the object thereby of Guido's disdain. Twentieth-century critics, however, have challenged

the Virgil referent. The subsequent intense concentration of scholarly criticism on this terzina led Singleton to joke that Dante's pronoun 'cui' has become the 'most tortured relative pronoun known to literary exegesis'.[14] Although I am sympathetic to the scholarship surrounding Dante's 'cui', and I remain ambivalent as to whether this is the 'torture' of extrinsic critical over-ingenuity or a deliberate exegetical crux sown by Dante into the tapestry of *Inferno* X, I believe that the tremendous focus of critical attention on the pronoun 'cui' and its terzina (ll. 61–63), whether justified or not, has distorted the overall exegesis of this episode. Whichever way the pronoun 'cui' is interpreted — whether the intended object of Guido's disdain is Virgil (*quem* [whom]), Beatrice (*ad eam quam* [to her whom]), or God (*ad eum quem* [to him whom]), or whether Guido is disdained by Beatrice (*ad eam quae* [to her who]) or by God (*ad eum qui* [to him who]) — Dante-character's intention is to refer to Guido's intellectual and spiritual life.[15] As a series of coloured rays split through a prism derive from one ray of light, so these different interpretations (held in the potential ambiguity of 'cui') all indicate that Guido had been intellectually ill-disposed to Dante-character's spiritual journey and to Dante's authorial project.

Cavalcante's misapprehension and second speech (ll. 67–69)

Cavalcante, however, simply understands Dante's use of the past historic 'ebbe' to imply that Guido is, as he had feared, literally (rather than spiritually) dead.[16] It is easy to see — as Dante-character himself does too late (l. 109) — how Cavalcante could mistake Dante-character's words to signify Guido's literal death. Dante-author so constructs the episode, however, that Cavalcante's inference could not possibly have been Dante-character's intention. Dante-character could not have pretended to Cavalcante that Guido is not alive (he *is* alive) unless Dante-character knew that Cavalcante was blind to the present, just as Patrick could not pretend to Mary, sitting opposite him, that there is not an apple on the table (there *is*) unless he knew that she was blind. Cavalcante's interpretation of 'ebbe' thus could not have been Dante-character's intention.[17] Rather, Dante-character and Cavalcante are speaking at cross-purposes, on two semantic dimensions.[18] Dante-character assumes the discussion must be about Guido's spiritual state and destiny (as an Epicurean in danger of eternal damnation), while Cavalcante is concerned for the literal state and life of his son (whether he is actually alive).

These two semantic dimensions meet in the ambiguity of a specific act of textual interpretation in the terzina which Dante-author locates in the exact centre of the canto (ll. 67–69). Cavalcante, confused by the — to him — unnecessarily complex speech of Dante-character, demands clarification and asks twice, with two different locutions for emphasis, if his son is alive:

> Di sùbito drizzato gridò: 'Come
> dicesti "elli ebbe"? non viv' elli ancora?
> non fiere li occhi suoi lo dolce lome?'. (ll. 67–69)

> [Of a sudden risen to his feet, he cried: 'How did you say? "he had"?
> Is he no longer alive? Does not the sweet light strike his eyes?]

Cavalcante, concerned solely for Guido's mortal destiny, is speaking literally. He

simply asks: 'Is he [Guido] not alive still? does not the sweet light [the sun] strike his eyes?'.

Dante's silence (ll. 67–71)

However, in the great irony of the episode, Cavalcante's speech could equally lead Dante-character — necessarily oblivious to Cavalcante's concern about his son's literal mortal life and destiny — to continue to interpret his words according to their possible, but unintended, spiritual sense. Cavalcante's first question 'Come | dicesti?' appears to register not — as Cavalcante intended — his specific puzzlement about Dante's use of the past historic 'ebbe' but rather an appreciation of the valency of language.[19] Cavalcante — Dante-character would assume — must still be referring to his son's spiritual life. If Guido (in the past) held Virgil/Beatrice/God in disdain (or was held by Beatrice or by God in disdain) is he still spiritually dead now? Is his soul, as against the *new life* and salvation through Christ (highlighted by the vertical axis with *Purgatorio* X), dead: 'non viv' elli ancora?' In seeking to emphasize his literal question with a further circumlocution ('does not the sweet light [the sun] shine upon him?') Cavalcante ironically uses the very physical object most commonly understood spiritually (as we have seen with regard to the vertical axis with *Paradiso* X) to refer to God, 'il sol de li angeli' (*Par.*, X. 53). Dante-character would thus naturally interpret 'non fiere li occhi suoi lo dolce lome' [does not the sweet light strike his eyes] to refer to Guido's intellectual scepticism and alleged Epicureanism (the clouds of wilful disbelief) which prevent him from seeing God.[20]

As the regional and poetic form 'il dolce *lome*' (which fits the rhyme) indicates that different people may pronounce and write the same word in two different ways (*lome* as opposed to *lume*) but with reference to one identical object (the sun), so people may use the same word ('lome') but with reference to two different objects: the sun (literal interpretation) and God (spiritual interpretation).[21] Cavalcante thinks that Guido actually cannot see 'il dolce lome' (the sun) because he is — literally — dead. Dante-character, by contrast, interprets Cavalcante's words to imply that Guido cannot see 'il dolce lome' (God) because he is — spiritually — dead. In this context, we may understand Dante-character's delay and silence ('alcuna dimora') in response to Cavalcante's speech. Dante's silence may indicate, on the one hand, a reticence to pronounce definitely on the current spiritual state of Guido (even in his speech, Dante-character says '*forse* [perhaps] cui Guido vostro ebbe a disdegno'); on the other hand, his silence and manner may be intended to imply Guido's spiritual death.[22]

Cavalcante's fall (ll. 70–72)

Cavalcante, of course, is oblivious to this spiritual dimension and he naturally understands Dante-character's silence to imply that his son is, literally, dead:

> Quando s'accorse d'alcuna dimora
> ch'io facëa dinanzi a la risposta,
> supin ricadde e più non parve fora. (ll. 70–72)

> [When he perceived a certain delay I made before replying, he fell back supine and appeared no more outside.]

Cavalcante's earthly love for, and pride in, his son breathes through the dialogue. But, tragically, Cavalcante is exclusively concerned with his son's mortal destiny, a destiny which — as Cavalcante already knows his son to be dead by 1304 — could consist of a few more years of earthly life at most. This demonstrates — from Dante's Christian perspective — a terrible failure of pastoral responsibility. Instead of directing his son's spiritual life to his eternal beatitude (as his 'father in the faith'), Cavalcante has been, *and is still*, concerned only with his son's mortal destiny and intellectual renown. Dante-character believed that Cavalcante was kneeling when he rose from his tomb and that Cavalcante, in remorse, asked about his son's spiritual destiny. Cavalcante reveals himself, however, as a defiant Epicurean in death as in life. He is shut off from Christian faith and, in the dialogue, from the Christological-symbolic valency of his speech. Dante-author's description of Cavalcante falling backwards ('supin ricadde') therefore fittingly symbolizes Cavalcante's rejection of God and consequent eternal damnation.

Epilogue: Dante's open judgement on the fate of Guido Cavalcanti

The central dialogue (ll. 52–72) is focused on the individual Guido Cavalcanti whose own political and spiritual life is understood in the context of the political and intellectual dispositions of his father Cavalcante and father-in-law Farinata. At the present of the fictional narrative (Good Friday 1300) Guido was still alive. But, in this episode, Dante-author — writing at some point after Guido's death (in August 1300) — is clearly meditating on both the earthly and spiritual destiny of one who, in his early maturity, had been his 'primo amico' (*VN.*, III. 14). Dante-author clearly implies that the Epicureanism of the fathers has infected the intellectual scepticism of their son. As Benvenuto suggests: 'errorem quem pater [Cavalcante] habebat ex ignorantia, ipse [Guido] conabatur defendere per scientiam' [the error which the father [Cavalcante] held through ignorance, he [Guido] tried to defend through philosophy].[23] Dante-author may even intend the portraits of Farinata and Cavalcante to represent or reflect a composite portrait of Guido himself. The account of Guido's disdain, and the naming of Guido at the centre of this canto, strongly indicate that, in Dante's view, Guido was — at the historical present of the narrative — spiritually dead and liable to find his final resting place in Hell amongst the graves of the Epicurean heretics.

Nonetheless Dante, by setting the poem on Good Friday 1300, leaves open the possibility of Guido's conversion and return to Christian faith before his death in August of that year. Guido's twin adversities of exile (in June 1300) and subsequent grave illness present paradigmatic sites for conversion. It would be natural therefore to consider the period following the date of the poem's journey as the perfect opening and opportunity for Guido's conversion from the Epicureanism implicitly condemned in the poem to a renewed faith in Christ.

In this context it is notable that Guido is named again, amongst the proud, in *Purgatorio* XI:

Così ha tolto l'uno a l'altro Guido
la gloria della lingua; e forse è nato
chi l'uno e l'altro caccerà del nido. (*Purg.*, XI. 97–99)

[Just so, one Guido has taken from the other the glory of our language, and perhaps he is born who will drive both of them from the nest.]

In *Inferno* X, Dante-character reports that Guido — on the morning of Good Friday 1300 — disdained Virgil, Beatrice, or God. Dante-author alludes — outside the fictional journey of the poem — to Guido's past intellectual disdain whether for Virgil's *oeuvre* or for divine Scripture, which has made him unable to undertake the authorial odyssey of the *Commedia*. In *Purgatorio* XI, the meta-fictional dimension of the passage is made more explicit: Dante-author implies how, through the writing of the *Commedia*, he will steal from Guido the glory of the vernacular ('la gloria de la lingua' (l. 98)).[24]

In *Purgatorio* XI, nonetheless, Guido and Dante-character are linked in the narrative context of penitent conversion from pride ('vana gloria' [vain glory] (*Purg.*, XI. 91)) to the humble love of God. The invocation to Christians at the close of *Purgatorio* X (especially as read in the vertical axis with *Inferno* X) is directed precisely at those whose over-preoccupation with, and pride in, the achievements of this life blinds them to their eternal destiny:

O superbi cristian, miseri lassi,
che, de la vista de la mente infermi,
fidanza avete ne' retrosi passi,
non v'accorgete voi che noi siam vermi
nati a formar l'angelica farfalla,
che vola a la giustizia sanza schermi?
Di che l'animo vostro in alto galla,
poi siete quasi antomata in difetto,
sì come vermo in cui formazion falla? (*Purg.*, X. 121–29)

[O proud Christians, weary wretches, who, weak in mental vision, put your faith in backward steps,
do you not perceive that we are worms born to form the angelic butterfly that flies to justice without a shield?
Why is it that your spirit floats on high, since you are like defective insects, like worms in whom formation is lacking?]

Dante makes his own Augustine's Christian adaptation of the butterfly as the symbol for the immortal soul returning back to the creator: 'Omnes homines de carne nascentes, quid sunt nisi vermes? Et de vermibus [Deus] Angelos facit' [All men born from flesh, what are they except worms? And God from these worms makes angels].[25] The proud Oderisi d'Aggobio highlights the possibility of late repentance and conversion. Before naming Guido, Oderisi explains that, were it not that in his last days — 'possendo peccar' — he turned to God, he would not be saved on the terrace of pride:

Di tal superbia qui paga il fio
e ancor non sarei qui, se non fosse
che possendo peccar mi volsi a Dio.

> [Here we pay the toll for such pride: and I would not be here yet,
> were it not that while still able to sin I turned to God.]

In *Inferno* X, Dante-author emphasizes the expectation that Guido, like his father and father-in-law, will continue in the proud Epicureanism entombed in the graveyard of the heretics in Hell (*Inferno* X). Nonetheless, he leaves open the possibility of conversion. Guido — in the mortal life left to him (a few months) — may re-awaken his spiritual life and thereby find himself — at his death in August 1300 — on the first terrace of Purgatory (*Purgatorio* X). If this were the case, he would be joined — as Dante-character leaves no room to doubt (*Purg.*, XIII. 136–38) — by his former first friend in due course!

'Pensava | già nell'error che m'avete soluto': Hermeneutics and Heresy

Misinterpretation of the spiritual sense

Dante structures the cocooned dialogue (ll. 52–72) such that Dante-character makes an exegetical error: he infers a spiritual meaning (of 'life' and the 'sun') where only a literal meaning was intended by Cavalcante. In his subsequent prose treatise, the *Monarchia*, Dante discusses this kind of exegetical error as part of a systematic refutation of an allegorical interpretation of the two great lights in the book of Genesis. Dante's analysis of this argument, and the exposition of his theory of interpretation, provide a useful gloss for interpreting the exegetical errors of Dante-character and Cavalcante represented in the narrative episode of *Inferno* X.

In *Monarchia* III. iv, Dante describes how some exegetes, to support the theocratic claims of the Papacy, argue that just as the moon receives its light from the sun, so the temporal power (signified by the moon) is subordinated to the spiritual power (signified by the sun). Dante argues that this inference could not have been the intention of God for two exegetical reasons. First, Dante asserts that the Empire (the temporal power) and the Church (the spiritual power) are accidents of the subject man. But, according to the literal sense of Genesis, man is created on the sixth day whereas the two great lights are created on the fourth day. Second, the two institutions of Empire and Church are created to remedy the fault of sin and to direct man to his temporal and spiritual goals. But not only was man not created on the fourth day but he had not yet sinned. As it would be absurd for God to create an accident before its subject, and as it would be equally absurd for God to create a remedy before a sickness, Dante concludes that the two great lights cannot be intended to refer allegorically to the temporal power and the spiritual power. On Dante's reading, the papal exegetes therefore infer a spiritual meaning where it was not intended by the author. They sin not against Moses (whom Dante considered the human scribe of the book of Genesis) but against the Holy Spirit (through whom Moses transcribed the dictation of God).

Prompted by this exegetical error, Dante makes reference to Augustine's teaching on the allegorical sense in *De civitate Dei* and in *De doctrina Christiana*:

> Hoc viso, ad meliorem huius et aliarum inferius factarum solutionum evidentiam advertendum quod circa sensum misticum dupliciter errare contingit:

> aut querendo ipsum ubi non est, aut accipiendo aliter quam accipi debeat. (*Mon.*, III. iv. 6).
>
> [Once this has been grasped, then to reach a better understanding of the refutation of this point and those which follow, it must be borne in mind that one can make two kinds of error when dealing with the mystical sense: either looking for it where it does not exist, or taking it in some inadmissible way.]

There are two general ways by which an exegete may err with regard to the mystical sense. First, to read a spiritual meaning where it was not intended: 'Propter primum dicit Augustinus in *Civitate Dei*: "Non omnia que gesta narrantur etiam significare aliquid putanda sunt" ' [À propos of the first of these Augustine says in the *De civitate Dei*: 'It must not be thought that every reported event has a further meaning'] (*Mon.*, III. iv. 7). Second, to fail to understand the text according to the speaker's intention: 'loquens de illo aliud in Scripturis sentire quam ille qui scripsit eas dicit' [speaking of one who detects some other meaning in the scriptures than the man who wrote them] (*Mon.*, III. iv. 8). Dante argues that the specific allegorical inference of Genesis favoured by papal exegetes is wrong for both these reasons: first, it postulates an allegorical meaning where only a literal meaning was intended; second, it does not understand the passage according to the ultimate author's (God's) intention. In like manner Dante-character, in the fictional context of *Inferno* X, errs in his interpretation of Cavalcante's speech in both these senses: first, he infers a spiritual meaning (of 'sun'/'life') where only a literal meaning was intended; second, he does not understand the words according to Cavalcante's intention.

The culpability of the exegete who errs

Augustine excuses the exegete who reads Scripture in order to love God but, erring as to the meaning of a passage initially, accepts correction from authority.[26] Highlighting that this is his own view, Dante similarly pronounces on the relative culpability of the exegete in making an interpretative error. He emphasizes that if an error is committed in ignorance, it is to be pardoned:

> 'Ego autem dico quod si talia fiunt de ignorantia, correctione diligenter adhibita ignoscendum est sicut ignoscendum esset illi qui leonem in nubibus formidaret'. (*Mon.*, III. iv. 10)
>
> [I therefore say that if such things are done out of ignorance, the mistake should be carefully pointed out and then excused, just as one would excuse someone who feared a lion in the clouds.]

If, however, a person wilfully persists in an error then he is to be punished for his 'supreme wickedness' ('summum facinus') like a tyrant with, it is implied, death:

> 'si vero industria, non aliter cum sic errantibus est agendum, quam cum tyrampnis, qui publica iura non ad comunem utilitatem secuntur, sed ad propriam retorquere conantur'. (*Mon.*, III. iv. 10–11)
>
> [but if such things are done deliberately, those who make this mistake should be treated no differently from tyrants who do not observe public rights for the common welfare, but seek to turn them to their own advantage.]

Dante thereby highlights the two key features of medieval heresy. First, heresy (which etymologically means 'election') is located in a hermeneutical error. Second, 'medieval society's attempts to deal with the problem of heresy were based on the belief that "to err is human, to persevere is diabolical" '.[27] Thus Aquinas notes 'haereticus, id est, electivus, quasi pertinaciter adhaerens sectae alicuius, quam eligit' [a heretic, that is, 'he who elects', stubbornly adhering to a sect, which he chooses].[28] The adverb 'pertinaciter' highlights that heresy involves both error ('ex parte materia') and pertinacity — the perseverance in error despite correction by authority ('ex parte electionis'). It is for this reason that 'omnis haereticus est errans, et non e converso' [every heretic is in error but not everyone in error is a heretic].[29]

Inferno X is structured in such a way that Dante-character makes an exegetical error out of ignorance ('ignorantia') thereby setting up a contrast with the heretic who deliberately (out of 'industria') perseveres, against Scriptural authority, in blind error. From the opening word of the canto 'Ora' [Now], Dante-author meticulously inserts prominent temporal adverbs to clarify the distinct stages in Dante-character's knowledge. The dialogue with Cavalcante opens with the adverb 'Allor' [Then] (l. 52) which interrupts Dante-character's dialogue with Farinata and sets up the effect of the 'freeze-frame' and knowledge gap. Only after this dialogue (ll. 52–72) does Dante-character discover, first, that Farinata had no knowledge of the battle of Benevento in 1266 (ll. 77–78) and, second, that he does have knowledge of the failure of the Whites in 1304 to return to power in Florence (ll. 79–81). Farinata then explains to Dante-character the *contrapasso* of time-long-sightedness suffered by the Epicureans (ll. 94–108). Only at *that moment* — the precise chronological point of awareness signposted by the same temporal adverb 'Allor' which opens the terzina (ll. 109–11) — does it strike Dante-character that Cavalcante, subject to the same *contrapasso* as Farinata, is blind to the present and thus literally does not know that his son Guido is alive. Only *then* does Dante-character understand that — in the earlier dialogue — Cavalcante must have been speaking literally and not, as he could not have thought otherwise (due to his own ignorance of the *contrapasso* at that stage in the narrative), spiritually. In consequence, Dante *then* realizes that Cavalcante must have interpreted his own silence to indicate the literal death of his son:

> *Allor*, come di mia colpa compunto,
> dissi: '*Or* direte dunque a quel caduto
> che 'l suo nato è co' vivi ancor congiunto;
> e s'i' fui, *dianzi*, a la risposta muto,
> fate i saper che 'l fei perché pensava
> *già* ne l'error che m'avete soluto'. (ll. 109–14)

> [*Then*, as if repentant of my fault, I said '*Now* will you tell that fallen one his son is still joined with the living;
> and if, *earlier*, I was silent before replying, make him know that I did it because I was *already* thinking in the error that you have untied for me']

When ('allor' (l. 109)) he understands that he has made an exegetical error, Dante-character immediately and diligently corrects himself: 'Or direte dunque' (l. 110).

Dante-character asks Farinata to speak to 'quel caduto': literally, to Cavalcante who has fallen backwards; spiritually to Cavalcante, the stubborn sinner, who has fallen away from God. Dante-character chooses two locutions which indicate unambiguously that now ('Or') he is not referring (as before) to Guido's life of faith in Christ (the 'vita nuova') but, rather, to his literal life. Guido is referred to as Cavalcante's son ('che 'l suo nato' (l. 111)) and is described as conjoined with the living ('co' vivi ancor congiunto' (l. 111)). Dante-character proceeds to explain and excuse his silence (l. 70) which had misled Cavalcante. Dante-character emphasizes that he was — during the earlier dialogue — ignorant of the *contrapasso* (ll. 112–14). Dante-character therefore errs through ignorance ('de ignorantia') and, accepting correction ('correctione diligenter adhibita'), he immediately attempts to make amends and correct the exegetical error which had led Cavalcante to suppose that his son was literally dead. According to the criteria and distinctions set out by Dante in the *Monarchia*, Dante-character is thus worthy of pardon: 'ignoscendum est' (*Mon*., III. iv. 10).

Heretical interpretation destroys faith

Where an interpretative mistake committed through ignorance is excusable if the exegete makes amends through correction, heresy implies the obstinate application of the will to a doctrine recognized as anathema to the teaching of the Christian faith. The quintessential cause of such obstinacy is intellectual pride. In *De doctrina Cristiana*, Augustine notes that a person who interprets one passage of Scripture incorrectly (against God's authorial intention) will necessarily see it in conflict with other passages of Scripture. Instead of recognizing his own initial opinion as false, he is then inclined to cleave to it and thereby disdain the authority of Scripture itself ('ut amando sententiam suam Scripturae incipiat offensior esse quam sibi').[30] Misinterpretation of one passage, against authorial intention, thus may destroy faith in Scripture as a whole. But to doubt Scripture is to doubt God (its author). Misinterpretation thus destroys man's love of God: 'Nam si a fide quisque ceciderit, a caritate etiam necesse est cadat. Non enim potest diligere quod esse non credit' [For if man has fallen from faith, it is necessary that he falls from love: man cannot love what he does not believe to exist].[31] Without faith in the truth of Scripture, man cannot hope that in the afterlife he will attain God who is the object of his love. The pertinacious adhesion to false exegesis, the characteristic of heresy, thereby entirely undermines man's spiritual journey towards God. Dante, synthesizing the conclusion of Augustine's argument, writes: 'Deinde [Augustine] innuit causam quare cavendum sit hoc in Scripturis, dicens: "Titubabit fides, si *Divinarum Scriptuarum* vacillat autoritas" ' [And he [Augustine] goes on to indicate why this is to be avoided when dealing with the Scriptures, saying: 'Faith will waver if the authority of the Holy Scriptures is shaken'] (*Mon*., III. iv. 9–10).

Cavalcante appears to have been led to Epicureanism through just the kind of obstinate misinterpretation of Scripture which Augustine (and Dante, citing Augustine) describes. The early Dante commentators concur in attributing to Cavalcante an interpretation of a passage of Scripture (a saying of Solomon) which he used to support his mortalist beliefs and to dismiss the authority of Scripture as a whole:

> Iste [Cavalcante] omnino tenuit sectam epicureorum, semper credens et suadens aliis, quod anima simul moreretur cum corpore: unde saepe habebat in ore istud dictum Salomonis: *Unus est interitus hominis et iumentorum, et aequa utriusque conditio*.[32]
>
> [He wholly followed the sect of the Epicureans, always believing and persuading others that the soul would die together with the body: therefore he often had on the tip of his tongue this saying of Solomon: 'For the dissolution of man and of beast is one, and their condition the same'.]

A cause of contemporary polemic, the saying of Solomon (Eccles. 3. 19) is the first objection which Thomas Aquinas cites in support of the corruptibility of the soul.[33] But Aquinas counters that this interpretation, apparently followed by Cavalcante, mistakes Solomon's intention (and thus, ultimately, the intention of God). The statement is not Solomon's own belief but rather Solomon introduces this false reasoning in the person of the foolish ('inducit rationem illam ex persona insipientium'). Although the generation of animals is similar with regard to the body it is not similar with regard to the soul, as other passages from Scripture explicitly reveal.[34] Cavalcante, holding pertinaciously to this false interpretation of Solomon's saying and the consequent false dogma of mortalism, separated himself from the truth of Scripture as a whole and thus from God (its author).[35]

In *Inferno* X, Cavalcante's lack of concern for the spiritual destiny of his son displays the persistent *habitus mentalis* of the Epicurean heretic. Dante-author constructs the dialogue such that Cavalcante, due to the *contrapasso*, shows a continued blindness — in Hell as on earth — to Christ. This is textually located in Cavalcante's inability to see that his words could be understood not only literally (as he intended) but also spiritually (as Dante-character inferred). In consequence of this blindness, Cavalcante mistakes the intention of Dante-character's speech and silence: he also therefore makes an exegetical error. Dante-character corrects his interpretive mistake after Farinata's explanation of the *contrapasso*. By contrast, even were Cavalcante to be informed by Farinata — as Dante-character demands (ll. 109–14) — that Guido is still alive and that the cause of Dante's error lay in his ignorance of the *contrapasso*, there is no indication that Cavalcante would then register the spiritual valency of the preceding dialogue and, thereby, his own exegetical mistake. Through the exegetical errors of Dante-character and Cavalcante, Dante-author therefore illustrates the difference between an error of ignorance which, when corrected, is to be pardoned and the wilful pursuit of a false and heretical opinion which, when tenaciously held against correction, merits death and damnation.

'Da lei saprai di tua vita il vïaggio': Spiritual Perdition and Christian Faith

Virgil. 'Perchè se' tu sì smarrito?'

In the *Monarchia*, Dante compares the heretic to a tyrant (*Mon.*, III. iv. 10). In the *Paradiso*, Dante represents the Christian faith through the analogy of an uncorrupted coin: 'Assai bene è trascorsa | d'esta moneta già la lega e 'l peso' [we have gone over the alloy and the weight of this coin well] (*Par.*, XXIV. 83–84). As tyranny destroys

innocent human life, so heresy destroys man's faith. As it is evil to falsify money which supports temporal life, so it is a grave evil to corrupt — through heretical interpretation — the Christian faith which supports man's spiritual life and brings eternal salvation to the soul.[36] In *Inferno* X, Farinata foretells Dante-character's failed attempt at repatriation which imperils his temporal life; Cavalcante's persistent Epicurean disbelief meanwhile attacks Dante-character's spiritual life.

In the immediate aftermath of his dialogues with Farinata and Cavalcante, Dante-character is described by Virgil as in a state of profound spiritual disorientation:

> Indi s'ascose; ed io inver' l'antico
> poeta volsi i passi, ripensando
> a quel parlar che mi parea nemico.
> Elli si mosse; e poi, così andando,
> mi disse: 'Perchè se' tu sì smarrito?'.
> E io li sodisfeci al suo dimando. (*Inf.*, X. 121–26)

> [Then he hid himself; and I turned my steps towards the ancient poet, thinking back on that speech which seemed hostile to me.
> He moved on; and then, walking, he said 'Why are you so lost?'
> And I answered his question fully.]

Although Dante-author does not explicitly identify the reasons for Dante-character's disorientation (he notes only that Dante-character responded fully to Virgil's question (l. 126)), commentators on this passage have unanimously identified a single cause: Farinata's prophecy. This traditional interpretation is unsatisfactory, however, for two principal reasons: first, with regard to his political destiny, the novel content of Farinata's prophecy would seem insufficient to account for Dante-character's profound disorientation; second, with regard to his spiritual destiny, this ignores the real threat which heresy implies for an individual's Christian faith and, thereby, eternal salvation.

At the political level, Farinata's prophecy is the second of four prophecies in the *Inferno* regarding Dante-character's future. Ciacco has already foretold the exile of the Whites in 1302 and the long time thereafter when the Blacks will hold the Whites under severe duress (*Inf.*, VI. 64–75). Farinata's prophecy (*Inf.*, X. 76–84) does not refer — as the commentators (until the sixteenth-century) unanimously affirmed — to Dante-character's initial exile in January 1302 (*within* fifty months) but to his failed repatriation in June 1304 (*in* fifty months).[37] The novelty of Farinata's prophecy is therefore not Dante-character's exile but rather the allusion to the failed diplomatic and military attempts of the Whites to return to Florence in 1304. Although a further cause of sorrow, this does not seem a sufficient cause — as Dante-character's responses to the two further prophecies of *Inferno* corroborate — for his spiritual disorientation. In response to Brunetto Latini's description of his future trials (*Inf.*, XV. 61–78), Dante-character assures his master 'ch'a la Fortuna, come vuol, son presto' [I am ready for Fortune, whatever she will] (l. 93). The prophecy of Vanni Fucci (*Inf.*, XXIV. 142–51) may distress Dante-character, but it does not distract him from his course.

At the spiritual level, Dante-author indicates that the Epicurean heresy has infected a great swathe of people, misdirecting them from the true path and

leading them to their spiritual perdition. On Dante-character's prompting, Farinata declares 'Qui con più di mille giaccio' [Here with more than a thousand I lie] (*Inf.*, X. 118). As the largest number of Dante's day, Farinata's 'mille' — which literally means 'one thousand' — nonetheless corresponds to its modern derivative 'million': 'questo "mille", è lo maggiore numero, e più crescere non si può se non questo multiplicando' [The number 'a thousand' signifies the process involved in increase, for the highest figure for which there is a specific word is a thousand, and no further increase is possible except by multiplying this number] (*Conv.*, II. xiv. 4). Benvenuto da Imola comments that Dante gives a vague number because the Epicureans are innumerable, and 'a thousand' may indicate 'many thousands' or even 'a thousand thousands' ('ponit numerum incertum, quia isti epicurei tales sunt innumerabiles; unde poterat ita dicere cum pluribus centum millibus, immo mille millibus').[38] Boccaccio adds that Dante seemingly wanted to give an infinite number ('quasi voglia dire con infiniti').[39] The potentially infinite number of Epicurean damned, suggested by Dante's 'mille', highlights the medieval commonplace that heresy is a contagion which may infect the whole body of mankind when left unchecked. The heretic is, in St Jerome's metaphor, like decayed flesh or an infected sheep which must be cut off lest the whole body or the entire flock be corrupted and die. The heretic is a flame which, if not extinguished immediately, will — like Arius in Alexandria — scorch the earth.[40]

Dante-author was sympathetic to the political valour and the intellectual aspirations of the thirteenth-century 'Epicureans'. However, in the concluding passage of the canto (ll. 115–36), he may well be reflecting on the detrimental effect of Epicurean convictions on the course of his own spiritual life. The early commentators, and with them modern critics such as Foster, Pagliaro and Porena, consider that, in *Purgatorio* XXX–XXXI, Beatrice admonishes Dante for a period of intellectual indifference to sacred Scripture and theology: 'quia ad philosophicam, ad poetriam, imo quasi omnia gustare voluisti prius quam sacram scientiam' [because you turned to philosophy and to poetry: indeed it was as if you wanted to taste every science before the sacred science].[41] Dante's purported disinterest in sacred theology during that stage of his life, although not implying a loss of Christian faith, could only have been exacerbated by an Epicurean heresy which entirely rejected revealed truth. Pagliaro comments: 'Dante, as Beatrice states in her explanations to the "merciful substances", had not answered — except belatedly — the recall to theological studies, which liberate the spirit from involvement in earthly things and direct it the beatitude of the vision of the God'.[42] Porena, as Pagliaro notes, goes further still: 'Dante's intellectual sin must have been Epicureanism, or a grave danger of falling into Epicureanism'.[43] In the closing episode of *Inferno* X, Dante-character's profound disorientation is caused not only, as commonly noted, by the prophecy of his failed repatriation but, more significantly, by the grave threat which the Epicurean heresy presents to his spiritual journey.

Beatrice. 'Quando sarai dinanzi al dolce raggio | di quella'

After his encounter with the Epicurean heretics, Dante-character is in a similar state of spiritual bewilderment ('*sì smarrito*' [so lost] (*Inf.*, X. 125)) as at the opening of his journey: 'mi ritrovai per una selva oscura, | ché la diritta via era *smarrita*' [I came to myself in a dark wood, for the straight way was lost] (*Inf.*, I. 3). At that crisis point, Beatrice — fearing that Dante was so lost ('*sì smarrito*' (*Inf.*, II. 64)) that her aid might come too late — was forced to ask the pagan Virgil to rescue him:

> 'e temo che non sia già sì smarrito
> ch'io mi sia tardi al soccorso levata,
> per quel ch'i' ho di lui nel cielo udito'. (*Inf.*, II. 64–66)

> [and I am afraid that he may be already so lost that I have risen too late to help him, according to what I have heard of him in Heaven]

As Beatrice later reports (*Purg.*, XXX. 130–41), Dante had turned away from the straight path ('la diritta via') of loving God: 'Deum, ad quod theologia ducit hominem' [God, to which theology leads men].[44] He had become indifferent to Beatrice: 'quella donna ch'a Dio mi menava' [that lady who was leading me to God] (*Par.*, XVIII. 4). Jacopo della Lana concludes that Dante, with diminished Christian faith, sought only human knowledge *ex ratione* and abandoned the science of theology which, necessarily, derives its principles *ex fide atque auctoritate*: 'diventò di teologo filosofo, abbandonando teologia e ogni argomento ab auctoritate' [he became a philosopher instead of a theologian, abandoning theology and every argument from authority].[45] The only path still available to Dante, 'errando per sylvam' and indifferent to the arguments of faith, was the path of reason.[46] Dante is therefore shown by the pagan Virgil the misery of the people who have lost God: 'le perdute genti' [the lost people] (*Purg.*, XXX. 138); 'c'hanno perduto il ben de l'intelletto' [who have lost the good of the intellect] (*Inf.*, III. 17–18):

> 'Tanto giù cadde, che tutti argomenti
> a la salute sua eran già corti,
> fuor che mostrarli le perdute genti'. (*Purg.*, XXX. 136–38)

> [He fell so low that all means for his salvation had already fallen short, except to show him the lost people]

There are evident parallels therefore between Dante's infidelity to Beatrice — represented by the crisis at the beginning of his journey (*Inf.*, I–II) and by Beatrice's admonition in the Earthly Paradise (*Purg.*, XXX) — and the infidelity of the Epicureans in *Inferno* X.

Such a connection is highlighted by the possible subtextual influence of John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*. In the last chapter of the final book ('in calce libri quasi in fine viae'), John of Salisbury readdresses the problem of the Epicureans.[47] Noting the widespread profusion of Epicureanism ('Epicurei sint plurimi'), John comments upon their secrecy and accuses them of duplicitous ostentation: 'nomen hoc pauci profiteantur. Erubescant enim dici quod sunt et propriam turpitudinem occultare nituntur nomine alieno dum non tam boni esse cupiunt quam videri' [few profess

this name. For they are embarrassed to be called what they are and they endeavour to conceal their own private wickedness with another name, in so far as they desire to seem rather than to be good].[48] Nonetheless John acclaims the Epicureans' definition of beatitude: 'Sententiae tamen non struo calumpniam quae beatitudinem esse diffinit laetum semper et quietum tranquillae vitae statum' [I do not heap slander upon that judgement which defines happiness to be the always joyful and calm condition of a tranquil life]. He condemns therefore the misinterpretation of Epicurean tenets rather than Epicurus himself: 'sed interpretatione sinistra et vitiosa executione arbitror infamatam' [I believe it is defamed by evil interpretation and vicious application]. And yet the Epicureans, although misjudged in this way, do err as to the ultimate goal of human life. John of Salisbury concludes that the way out of the error of the Epicureans is the tree of knowledge and the tree of life.[49] Citing the *Aeneid*, John of Salisbury argues that only the Sibyl — 'sapientia Dei' [the wisdom of God] — could lead Aeneas — the human soul tied to the body — to the Elysian Fields.[50] And he asserts, moreover, that the tree of knowledge is now planted in the midst of the Church ('in medio Ecclesiae'). It is this which leads the pilgrim, lost in sin, to the beatitude he seeks: 'Ecce habes viam verissimam et fidelissimam, assequendum statum quem desiderat Epicurus; et si eam tenueris, beatus es et bene tibi erit' [Behold that you possess the truest and most faithful path and have achieved the state which is desired by Epicurus; and if you keep to it, 'You are blessed and things will be well with you'].[51]

John of Salisbury's description of the multitude, the secrecy, and the 'sinistra interpretatio' of the Epicureans is mirrored in the imaginative landscape of *Inferno* X in which Dante-character and Virgil, amongst the mass of graves, discover the Epicureans hiding in the tombs, and turn towards the left ('a man sinistra' (l. 133)). As John invokes the wisdom of the Church to resolve the error of the Epicureans and to show the true path to man's beatitude, so Dante's Virgil invokes, in *Inferno* X as in *Inferno* I–II, the epistemological promise of Beatrice. It is Beatrice, Virgil assures Dante-character, who will enable him to understand his earthly destiny and who will confound the troubling disbelief exhibited by the Epicureans:

> 'La mente tua conservi quel ch'udito
> hai contra te', mi comandò quel saggio;
> 'e ora attendi qui', e drizzò 'l dito:
> 'quando sarai dinanzi al dolce raggio
> di quella il cui bell' occhio tutto vede,
> da lei saprai di tua vita il vïaggio'. (*Inf.*, X. 127–32)
>
> ['Let your memory preserve what you have heard against you,' that sage commanded me; 'and now pay attention here,' and he raised his finger:
> 'when you are before her sweet ray whose lovely eye sees all, from her you will know the journey of your life.']

If only in an allegorical sense, therefore, Dante's Beatrice corresponds to John of Salisbury's Divine Science.[52] Beatrice's eye 'which sees all' may refer to the demonstrations of Sacred Theology which permit knowledge beyond the survey of the human sciences.[53] But, in a metaphor superimposed on to the basic allegory,

Beatrice is also a star full of light: the sweet rays refer to the texts of Theology.[54] Allegorically, Dante-character must therefore wait for the texts ('i raggi della stella' [the rays of the star]) and demonstrations ('li occhi di questa donna' [the eyes of this woman]) of Theology. Literally, instead of receiving a direct response, Dante-character — like a good pilgrim — must keep faith that he will finally encounter Beatrice. He must also cultivate hope that — at some later stage on his journey — he will attain an understanding of his temporal and spiritual destiny.

Cacciaguida. 'Tutta tua visïon fa manifesta'

It is a further indication of the thematic and structural importance of *Inferno* X that Beatrice's response to Dante-character's political and spiritual destiny should ultimately come in the central cantos of *Paradiso*. At this point in the poem, Dante-author distils and poeticizes the complex doctrine of God's foreknowledge of future contingencies (*Par.*, XVII.13–18; 37–45). The blessed souls see all historical time (the past, the present and the future) in an eternal present: 'mirando il punto | a cui tutti li tempi son presenti' [gazing at the point to which all times are present] (*Par.*, XVII. 17–18). The time-long-sightedness of the damned Epicureans of *Inferno* X — who are able to see distant but not proximate events — is thereby understood as a perverted distortion of the perfect vision, shared by all the blessed in Heaven, of all historical events in an eternal present.[55] In three sweeping cantos (*Par.*, XV–XVII), Cacciaguida presents an overarching vision of Florentine history, from the idealized social harmony into which Cacciaguida was born (*Par.*, XV. 96–135) to the decadence and corruption of Florentine customs (*Par.*, XVI. 34–154) and to the alleged origin of the Guelf–Ghibelline civic strife in Florence (*Par.*, XVI. 136–47). In this episode, the factionalism between Blacks and Whites and between Guelfs and Ghibellines (narrated in *Inferno* VI and *Inferno* X) is therefore contextualized within the greater perspective of Florentine history. The whole of Florentine history is set, in its turn, within the panorama of all historical time from the Creation to the Final Judgement.

Beatrice now responds — as Virgil had promised (*Inf.*, X. 127–32) — to Dante-character's justifiable fears for the micro-narrative of his own life.[56] Beatrice commands Dante-character to send forth his desire ('Manda[r] fuor la vampa | del tuo disio' (*Par.*, XVII. 7–8)) and Dante-character emphasizes that it is in accordance with Beatrice's will that he questions Cacciaguida ('come volle | Beatrice, fu la mia voglia confessa' (*Par.*, XVII. 29–30)). The ominous four temporal prophecies which Dante-character elicits during his descent into Hell — from Ciacco (*Inf.*, VI. 64–75); Farinata (*Inf.*, X. 79–81); Brunetto Latini (*Inf.*, XV. 55–78); and Vanni Fucci (*Inf.*, XXIV. 143–51) — and the further four prophecies which he hears in Ante-Purgatory and Purgatory — from Curado Malaspina (*Purg.*, VIII. 133–39); Oderisi (*Purg.*, XI. 97–99; 139–41); Bonagiunta (*Purg.*, XXIV. 37–48); and Forese (*Purg.*, XXIV. 82–90) — are therefore placed, on Beatrice's prompting, before Cacciaguida. He, like all the blessed in Heaven, sees all historical contingencies in the present of God's Divine Providence:

> 'mentre ch'io era a Virgilio congiunto
> su per lo monte che l'anime cura
> e discendendo nel mondo defunto,
> dette mi fuor di mia vita futura
> parole gravi [...] (*Par.*, XVII. 19–23)

> [while I was together with Virgil, up along the mountain that restores souls and going down into the dead world,
> heavy words were said to me about my future life]

Dante-character echoes the Ciceronian dictum that the anticipation of future evils, in preparing the soul, mitigates their detrimental effect.[57] At the same time, however, Dante-character emphasizes to Cacciaguida, as to Brunetto Latini (*Inf.*, XV. 91–96), that Fortune's wheel cannot affect his moral virtue or set him off course:

> [...] avegna ch'io mi senta
> ben tetragono ai colpi di ventura;
> per che la voglia mia saria contenta
> d'intender qual fortuna mi s'appressa:
> ché saetta previsa vien più lenta' (*Par.*, XVII. 23–27)

> [[...] although I feel solid and foursquare against the blows of events;
> therefore my desire would be contented to understand what fortune is approaching me: for an arrow foreseen comes more slowly.]

As in *Inferno* VI (l. 69) so in *Paradiso* XVII (ll. 49–51), Dante-author berates the complicity of Boniface VIII in the exile of the White faction from Florence. As Farinata foretells in *Inferno* X (ll. 79–81) so Cacciaguida prophesies in *Paradiso* XVII (ll. 61–69) the failure of the diplomatic and military attempts of Dante's fellow exiles at repatriation. Cacciaguida dwells on the suffering and humiliation of Dante-character's exile (*Par.*, XVII. 46–60), the full extent of which Dante-author would only have experienced in the years between the composition of *Inferno* VI (in which Dante-character's exile is first prophesied (*Inf.*, VI. 67–72)) and the composition of *Paradiso* XVII. In addition, Cacciaguida prophesies the failed imperial mission of Henry VII in Italy (1310–13) due to the perfidy of Pope Clement V (*Par.*, XVII. 82); he acclaims Bartolomeo della Scala ('il gran Lombardo' (l. 71)) in whose hospitality Dante-character will find refuge (ll. 70–75); and he eulogizes Cangrande ('questa stella forte' (l. 77)) in whom, after Henry VII's defeat, Dante placed the hope of the imperial cause and to whom he would dedicate the *Paradiso* (ll. 76–93).[58]

In Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, which provides the literary model for this phase of the Cacciaguida episode, Scipio Africanus represents to his descendant Scipio Aemilianus a panorama of his future life.[59] Transported to the stars, Scipio Aemilianus sees the earth as literally minuscule, and he re-envisages his own temporal life as, by comparison with the eternal glory of the just and virtuous souls, little more than death: 'vestra vero, quae dicitur, vita mors est' [but that life of yours, which men so call, is really death].[60] As the first words of Africanus indicate, the purpose of the dream is to inspire Scipio Aemilianus with the necessary courage to fulfil his destiny: '"Ades" inquit "animo et omitte timorem, Scipio, et, quae dicam, trade memoriae"' ['Courage, Scipio, have no fear, but imprint my words upon your memory'].[61] In the corresponding episode in *Paradiso*

XVII, Dante-character is caught between two fears. First, he fears for his life: in writing a poem which attacks unjust men from all political camps, he may lose all hope of refuge following his future exile from Florence (*Par.*, XVII. 109–11). Second, he fears for his literary fame: if he does not write the *Commedia*, he will not live *apud posteros* (his future readers): 'temo di perder viver tra coloro | che questo tempo chiameranno antico' [I fear I will lose life among those who will call this time ancient] (ll. 119–20). Cacciaguida, viewing his descendant's exile and suffering within the eternal perspective of Divine Providence, commands Dante not to be deterred by fear but rather to fulfil his moral and literary destiny (ll. 124–42). Cacciaguida commands: 'tutta tua visïon fa manifesta' [make manifest all your vision] for, in God's Providence, Dante's poem will provide 'vital nodrimento' [vital nourishment] for his contemporary and posthumous readers, and secure for Dante lasting honour 'che s'infutura la tua vita' [since your life enfutures itself] (ll. 128; 131; 98). Over and above a full account of Dante-character's future years of exile, Beatrice therefore heralds, through Cacciaguida, Dante-character's poetic mission and future earthly fame (*Par.*, XVII. 97–99; 124–42). Dante-character, who had lost the way (*Inf.*, I–II) and was further bewildered after his encounter with the Epicureans (*Inf.*, X), is finally shown — in the central canto of *Paradiso* — the true path and purpose of his earthly life.

Cacciaguida. 'Venni dal martiro a questa pace'

Why must Dante-character — disorientated in *Inferno* X — wait until this point in his eschatological journey to learn the course and purpose of his future life: 'da lei saprai di tua vita il vïaggio' [from her you will know the journey of your life] (*Inf.*, X. 132)? The answer, in my view, is that Dante's future earthly life is here understood in the Christological context of Cacciaguida's martyrdom. The crusader-martyrs, who witnessed to the Christian faith even unto death and placed their spiritual life in Christ above their earthly life, provide the powerful argument of human testimony against the heresy of Epicurean mortalism. Where the Christian philosophers, in the heaven of the sun, have illuminated the faith and combatted heresy with their doctrine and treatises ('illuminaverunt fidem doctrina et scriptura'), the crusaders have fought for the Christian faith with their own blood ('pugnaverunt pro fide Christi cum effusione proprii sanguinis').[62] The souls of the Christian crusaders in the Heaven of Mars are bright white stars (white the colour of the martyrs' blood washed in Christ) and, forming the sign of the cross, they become the image of Christ (whose name is repeated thrice in rhyme position):

> Qui vince la memoria mia lo 'ngegno;
> chè quella croce lampeggiava Cristo,
> sì ch'io non so trovare essempro degno;
> ma chi prende sua croce e segue Cristo,
> ancor mi scuserà di quel ch'io lasso,
> vedendo in quell' albor balenar Cristo. (*Par.*, XIV. 103–08)

> [Here my memory outstrips my intellect, for that cross flashed forth Christ, and I cannot find a worthy comparison,
> but whoever takes up his cross and follows Christ, will yet excuse

> me for what I must leave out, seeing in that whiteness the blazing forth of Christ.]

As Christ chose the humiliation of death upon the cross because of his love for mankind, so the crusader-martyrs, in imitation, chose to sacrifice their own lives for Christ ('omnes tales exposuerunt se morti pro illo Domino, qui voluit ferre mortem in cruce ad salvationem humani generis').[63] The scene, preceded by Solomon's account of the Resurrection of the Body and ablaze with Christ's crucifixion and glorious Resurrection — 'Risurgi e Vinci' —, could not present a starker contrast with the burning graveyard of the Epicurean heretics. Even the movement of the blessed souls, compared to the tiny dust particles in a ray of sunlight, may allude to Epicurean atomism: Democritus uses the analogy of particles in a ray of light to describe the indivisible and invisible atoms which he considered the primordial elements of matter, a view confuted in Aristotle's *De anima* but sustained by Epicurus as the basis of his mortalist doctrine.[64] Where Dante-character is spiritually lost when confronted by the Epicureans in *Inferno* X, at this later point in his journey he is transported in love and inspired to make a sacrifice of his whole mind and heart to God:

> 'Con tutto 'l core e con quella favella
> ch'è una in tutti, a Dio feci olocausto'
> qual conveniesi a la grazia novella. (*Par.*, XIV. 88–89).

> [With all my heart and with that speech which is the same in all of us, I made such a holocaust to God as befitted this new grace.]

Dante-character invokes God in a neologism which combines Jesus's final cry on the cross 'Eli' (my God) with the Greek word for the sun 'Helios' (Dante's favoured symbol for God): 'O Elïòs' (*Par.*, XIV. 96).

It is thus the confirmation of his Christian faith through Cacciaguida's crusading martyrdom and the acceptance of his own cross of exile ('chi prende sua croce e seque Cristo' [whoever takes up his cross and follows Christ] (*Par.*, XIV. 106)) which finally console Dante-character and inspire him to embrace his future exile and poetic destiny.[65] Theoretically at least, the crusader of Dante's time was a pilgrim, who left his goods and belongings and vowed to serve the crusade ordered by the authority of the Pope.[66] The crusade was an act of penitence: the acceptance of chosen exile from home and family and of the hardships and the dangers of war to fight for Christ. On Dante's account, Cacciaguida renounced Florence ('così dolce ostello' [so sweet a dwelling] (*Par.*, XV. 132)) and ultimately gave this life in penitential suffering for his belief in Christ and the next life. The exiled Dante-character — 'tu lascerai ogni cosa diletta | più caramente' [you will leave behind everything beloved most dearly] (*Par.*, XVII. 55–56) — takes as his paternal model, therefore, the soldier-martyr Cacciaguida: 'Voi siete il padre mio' [You are my father] (*Par.*, XVI. 16).

In this context, it is significant that Beatrice should highlight Dante-character's use of the honorific 'voi', a form of address afforded to only three other Florentines in the *Commedia*. In *Inferno* XV, Dante addresses with this form his fallen paternal master Brunetto Latini: 'la cara e buona imagine paterna | di voi' [the dear, kind

paternal image of you] (*Inf.*, XV. 83–84). In *Inferno* X, Dante similarly addresses Cavalcante and Farinata with the second person plural. That Dante-character should finally understand a response to Farinata's disturbing prophecy and to Cavalcante's troubling disbelief through Cacciaguida thus implicitly sets up a contrast between the ultimately damaging Epicurean father-figures (*Inferno* X) whom Guido appears to have followed, and the Christian crusader-martyr whom Dante elects as his ancestral father-figure. The internecine conflicts in Florence's recent past (narrated in *Inferno* VI and *Inferno* X) and also the noble political ideals of the Florentine *magnanimi* of Brunetto Latini's generation are thus ultimately viewed in the theological context of Cacciaguida's renunciation of the political arena for the crusading cross of Christ and the eternal peace of martyrdom in the next life:

> Quivi fu'io da quella gente turpa
> disviluppato dal mondo fallace,
> lo cui amor molt' anime deturpa;
> venni dal martiro a questa pace. (*Par.*, XV. 145–48)

> [There by that base folk I was disentangled from the deceiving world, the love of which defaces many souls,
> and I came from martyrdom to this peace.]

Conclusion

The present chapter's reappraisal of Dante-character's dialogue with Cavalcante (*Inf.*, X. 52–72), his hermeneutical error (*Inf.*, X. 114), and his spiritual disorientation (*Inf.*, X. 125) were made possible by the precise analysis, in Chapter 3, of Dante's authorial strategy in this canto. Dante's meticulous organization of his historical material in the *Inferno*, the time-long-sightedness of the Epicureans, and the Russian-doll structure and 'freeze-frame' effect of the canto, create subtle distinctions, as between intention and inference and between interpretative error and heresy, central to the understanding, as I have shown, of *Inferno* X. The third chapter also highlighted the theological theme of the Resurrection of the Body, it contextualized the Epicurean graveyard within the eschatological journey through Hell in *Inferno* I–X, and it considered *Inferno* X in the vertical axis with *Purgatorio* X and *Paradiso* X. In contrast to politically orientated studies focused on the figure of Farinata, this preparatory work opened up the spiritual dimension of the canto and placed Cavalcante and his son Guido at the thematic, as well as the structural (ll. 52–72), centre of the canto.

The interpretative preoccupation of modern scholarship with the ambiguity of the pronoun 'cui' (l. 63) has distorted, I argued, the overall analysis of the Cavalcante episode. Whichever way the pronoun is interpreted, Dante-character refers to Guido's spiritual and intellectual life. The hermeneutical key to the episode is to realize that Dante-author suspends the dialogue between Dante-character and Cavalcante in a knowledge gap. During the dialogue, Dante-character does not know that Cavalcante is blind to the present and cannot therefore see (as a self-evident fact) that his son Guido is alive. The entire dialogue about Guido is, in virtue of this, an ambivalent semantic horizon. While Cavalcante interprets the

dialogue to refer to Guido's literal life, Dante-character interprets the dialogue to refer to Guido's spiritual life. In response to Cavalante's speech in the central terzina (ll. 67–69) of the canto (ll. 1–136), there are two answers: Guido, able to see the sun, is literally alive, but, unwilling to see God, he is spiritually dead. During the dialogue, Dante-character interprets Cavalcante's question spiritually, and his paused silence (ll. 70–72) either reflects a reticence to pronounce definitively on Guido's Christian faith or it implies his spiritual death. After the dialogue, Dante-character interprets Cavalcante's question literally: informed by Farinata about the time-long-sightedness of the Epicureans (ll. 73–108), he realizes his mistake (l. 114) and, in unambiguous language, he asks Farinata to tell Cavalcante that Guido is literally alive (ll. 109–14). Dante structures the narrative such that Dante-character's error is, necessarily, due to ignorance ('ignorantia') rather than wilful obstinacy ('industria'). Dante thereby highlights the contrast between a pardonable hermeneutical mistake and the damnable persistence in error characteristic of heresy.

Following the theological precedent of St Paul's dialogue with the Epicureans in Athens, Dante foregrounds the theme of Jesus's bodily resurrection as the site of Christian faith in *Inferno* X. The tableau of Farinata risen from his burning tomb (the *Epicurus de tauro Phalaridis* and the *Imago pietatis*) provides the visual backdrop to the encounter between Cavalcante (Epicurean disbeliever) and Dante-character (Christian believer). The dialogue encapsulates, through a contrast between literal and spiritual interpretations, the contrasting dispositions of the Epicurean and the Christian. In Augustine's imagined dialogue between the believer and the unbeliever, he comments that the person who sees God does not see Him materially, as one might do the sun or the moon, but rather with the intellect or with the heart:

> Videat qui potest, credat qui non potest, esse Deum. Etsi videt qui potest, numquid oculis videt? Intellectu videt, corde videt. Non enim solem et lunam volebat ostendere, qui dicebat: 'Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt.'[67]
>
> [Who is capable may see that God exists; who cannot may believe it. But even he who is able to see God, is it possible that he does so with his eyes? It is, instead, with the intellect or with the heart that he sees. Indeed, he who said 'Blessed be the pure of heart, for they will see God' did not want to point out the sun or the moon!]

As Cavalcante, the Epicurean unbeliever, does not *see* God so, in the dialogue, he does not recognize the possible spiritual sense of the sun to signify God ('lo dolce lome' [the sweet light] (l. 69)). Dante-character, by contrast, is open to the spiritual and the temporal hemispheres of man's existence and to the spiritual and literal senses of the dialogue. At two distinct stages in the canto, Dante-character responds to the spiritual state (ll. 70–72) and to the literal state (ll. 109–14) of Guido Cavalcanti. *Inferno* X thus dramatizes, through literal and spiritual senses, the mortalist disposition (which believes that there is only the temporal hemisphere of this life) and the Christian disposition (which, in addition, believes in the spiritual hemisphere of the next life).

Inferno X is clearly concerned with the evil of civic divisiveness within the

temporal hemisphere. Over and above the problem of political factionalism, however, *Inferno* X addresses the Epicurean heresy which destroys Christian faith and divides the Christian faithful (the spiritual hemisphere). This is the key, I argued, to Dante-character's profound disorientation at the close of the canto (l. 125). Farinata prophesies Dante's failed return from exile and *not* his exile itself, which is already foretold by Ciacco. Farinata's prophecy, given Dante-character's reactions to the further prophecies of Brunetto Latini and Vanni Fucci, is therefore a seemingly insufficient cause. Rather, the Epicureans, unlike all the other souls in Hell, are punished for an evil (the heresy of mortalism) which explicitly challenges Dante-character's journey, his Christian belief and the very existence of Hell or an afterlife at all. Dante-character learns that the conviction of Epicurean mortalism was shared not only by the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, the Cardinal Ottaviano degli Ubaldini and by noble Florentine leaders of both political factions (Ghibelline and Guelf) but also by literally innumerable others (l. 118). Included amongst these convinced Epicurean disbelievers is, at least on Good Friday 1300, Dante-character's former 'primo amico' Guido Cavalcanti. Such apparently widespread positive disbelief, especially as shared by Dante's foremost Florentine intellectual contemporary, is, I argued, the greater cause of Dante-character's spiritual confusion.

The Epicureans Farinata and Cavalcante were false paternal models, in the political and spiritual hemispheres, for Guido. Guido, on Good Friday 1300, was soon to be exiled (by Dante as one of the seven priors of Florence) for his prominent role in the political factionalism between Whites and Blacks. In addition, as the canto implies, Guido is in severe spiritual danger of dying (in August 1300) as an Epicurean disbeliever. By contrast, Dante elects the Christian crusader Cacciaguida, who left the 'dolce ostello' of Florence to fight for Christendom and sacrificed this life for Christ, as his own ancestral model. Cacciaguida inspires Dante-character with the courage to take up his own cross of exile and to write his great poem which, castigating personages of all political factions, will further imperil his life. Cacciaguida's testimony of Christian belief even unto martyrdom is, for Dante, a powerful witness to Christian faith against the Epicurean materialism of his contemporaries.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. My focus on the difficulties which Dante's text presents as a starting point for interpretation is deeply indebted to the approaches of Kenelm Foster and Robin Kirkpatrick. See, especially, Foster, *The Two Dantes*, and Robin Kirkpatrick, *Dante's 'Inferno': Difficulty and Dead Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
2. Foster, *The Two Dantes*, p. 11; Sapegno, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 63 from p. 89: 'tra i piú discussi e difficili del poema'.
3. Guido da Pisa, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 1–2.
4. For a recent re-assessment of this 'crux dantesca' and the history of its varying interpretation, see Barański, 'Guido Cavalcanti tra le *cruces*', in *Versi controversi*, pp. 39–112. Preziosi systematically presents the main candidates in Preziosi, '"Chi, Guido de' Cavalcanti ebbe a disdegno?"'. For some key further close studies of this episode, see also Cassata, 'Il disdegno di Guido' (*Inf.*, X. 63), 5–49; Durling, 'mio figlio ov'è', in *Dante da Firenze all'aldilà*, pp. 303–29; Girardi, 'Sulla

struttura di *Inferno* X', in *Filologia e critica dantesca*, pp. 61–75; Lucidi, 'Ancora sul "disdegno" di Guido', 203–16; Malato, 'Il disdegno di Guido', in *Dante e Guido Cavalcanti*, pp. 75–109; Pagliaro, 'Il disdegno di Guido', in *Saggi*, pp. 355–79; id., 'Farinata e Cavalcante', in *Ulisse*, I, 185–224; Charles S. Singleton, '*Inferno* X: Guido's Disdain', 49–65; Mirko Tavani, 'Contributo sintattico al "disdegno" di Guido (*Inf.*, X. 61–63)', in *Leggere Dante*, pp. 217–40.

5. Guido da Pisa, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 72.
6. Singleton similarly posits that — even at this stage — Cavalcante suspects his son may be dead. Singleton, '*Inferno* X: Guido's Disdain', p. 54.
7. Virgil, *Aeneid I–VI*, in *Virgil*, ed. with trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), I, 262–597 (pp. 392–93).
8. For a detailed treatment of the implications of this literary echo in the canto as a whole, see Joseph Luzzi, 'Echoes of Andromache in *Inferno* X', in *DS.*, 122 (2004), 27–43.
9. Guido Cavalcanti's date of birth is not known with any degree of accuracy. The *Enciclopedia Dantesca* posits Guido's birth as circa 1255, which would make him, at the date of the poem's journey, about forty-five years old (*ED.*, I. 891). The *DE* suggests that Guido 'was born between 1250 and 1255', in which case — on Good Friday 1300 — he could be any age between forty-five and fifty years old (*DE.*, p. 459). As, in the use of the time diagram (Figure 2), it was necessary to posit one date, I have opted for the earliest birth date (1250). I opted for 1250, therefore, not on the basis of more precise philological or historical evidence but rather because it seemed to me at least as plausible as any other date within the possible band. Nonetheless, even were Guido's birth as late as 1260 (which seems much less plausible), this would not alter the argument presented here.
10. Malato and Preziosi have suggested the possible spiritual interpretation of Cavalcante's questions. Neither, however, establishes the crucial distinction between Cavalcante's intention (the literal meaning) and Dante-character's mistaken inference (the spiritual meaning) both of which meanings are contained in Cavalcanti's speech. See Malato, 'Il disdegno di Guido', p. 101 and Preziosi, 'Chi, Guido de' Cavalcanti ebbe a disdegno?', p. 27.
11. Singleton understands 'ebbe' to refer to the start of Dante-character's descent into Hell — the evening (sunset) of Good Friday — rather than including the morning of Dante-character's failed attempt to ascend the mountain. See Singleton, '*Inferno* X: Guido's disdain', pp. 57–60.
12. Corti, *Dante a un nuova crocevia*, pp. 79–80: 'Guido Cavalcanti non era fatto per tali itinerari: loico e laico, sublimemente aristocratico e ironico, cioè rispondente in pieno all'ideale di *nobilitas animi* dei nuovi filosofi, attratto dalla filosofia naturale che lo sollecitava verso lo scetticismo, dovette ad un certo momento apparire a Dante su un'altra sponda, anche se entrambi avevano fatto parte del gruppo di intellettuali e artisti bolognesi-toscani d'avanguardia nel favoloso ultimo decennio del Duecento' [Guido Cavalcanti was not made for such journeys: logical and secular, sublimely aristocratic and ironic — that is conforming in full to the ideal of a noble soul perpetrated by the new philosophers — attracted by the natural philosophy that was drawing him towards scepticism, he must have appeared to Dante at a certain point as on a different shore, even if both of them had been part of a group of avant-garde Bolognese-Tuscan intellectuals and artists in the extraordinary last decade of the thirteenth century].
13. Jacopo della Lana, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 58–63.
14. Singleton, '*Inferno* X: Guido's disdain', p. 60.
15. See Preziosi, 'Chi, Guido de' Cavalcanti ebbe a disdegno?', pp. 7–34. Even Preziosi's further interpretation that Guido held Hell in disdain ('per *qui* [Inferno] mi mena forse cui [questo luogo] Guido vostro ebbe in disdegno') leads to the same spiritual conclusion of Guido's disbelief: 'a non credere nell'Inferno' [to not believe in Hell] (p. 34).
16. As Barański notes, Cavalcante, in this exegetical act, becomes emblematic of the heretic: 'Cavalcante, che rappresenta la disperazione a cui inesorabilmente porta l'esegesi sbagliata, funziona da emblema dell'eretico' [Cavalcanti, who represents the desperation to which erroneous exegesis inevitably leads, functions as the emblem of a heretic] (Barański, 'Guido Cavalcanti tra le *cruces* di *Inferno* IX–XI' (p. 47)).
17. If Dante-character, as some commentators have suggested, simply makes a grammatical error this could not be, as some continue to suggest, with the intention to mislead. A pretence relies on the ignorance — with regard to a fact (in this case, Guido being alive in the present) — of

the interlocutor, but Dante-character believes at this stage in the narrative (as he is unaware of the *contrapasso*) that Cavalcante has knowledge of this fact.

18. Lucidi, in his review of Pagliaro's essay, reads the passage in the light of the *contrapasso* and Dante-character's ignorance of Cavalcante's blindness to the present. He highlights the resultant psychological ambiguity this creates but locates it (as does Singleton) solely in the use of the past historic 'ebbe' and not in terms of the textual ambiguity of the episode. See Pagliaro, 'Il disdegno di Guido', pp. 355–79 and Lucidi, 'Ancora sul "disdegno" di Guido', pp. 203–16. See also Singleton, 'Inferno X: Guido's Disdain', p. 63.
19. Guido da Pisa translates the interrogative: 'Quomodo dixisti habuit?' (Guido da Pisa, gloss to *Inf.*, X. [note 2]).
20. Augustine, *Sermo*, CCCXLVIII: 'De timore dei', 2. 3: 'Nam istae duae sectae Epicureorum et Stoicorum sicut in Apostolorum Actibus legimus, adversus lumen Pauli nostri fumos suos ausae sunt iactitate' [Indeed, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, these two schools of philosophy — the Epicureans and the Stoics — dared to raise up their clouds against the light of our apostle Paul].
21. Petrocchi first recognizes, citing Contini, Dante's possibly deliberate use of 'lome' as an echo of Guido's rhyme in *Donna me prega*. Second, he acknowledges that 'lome' is the obvious rhyme with 'come' and 'nome'. Nonetheless, he follows his general rule (discussed in his introduction) to convert 'lome' to the abnormal rhyme, but more standard Tuscan form, 'lume'. See Petrocchi, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 69. For the two reasons Petrocchi ultimately rejects, I have kept the form 'lome' — the more common form in the manuscripts and commentaries before Petrocchi's interpretive alteration. In particular, given the narrative context of Cavalcante's question about his son Guido, it seems to me convincing that Dante, at a meta-fictional level, should allude to Guido's famous philosophical — and Averroistically inflected — text on the nature of love.
22. See 1 Kings 8. 39: 'quia tu [Deus] nosti solus cor omnium filiorum hominum' [Because only you [God] know the heart of all children of men]. See also Robert M. Durling, 'Boccaccio on Interpretation: Guido's Escape (*Decameron* VI. 9)', in *Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Studies in the Italian Trecento in Honor of Charles S. Singleton*, ed. by Aldo S. Bernardo and Anthony L. Pellegrini, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 22 (Binghamton, New York: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, SUNY, 1983), pp. 273–304 (p. 284). Durling convincingly interprets Boccaccio's reading of this episode, and argues that Dante withholds judgement on the eternal fate of his 'primo amico': 'If Guido is still literally alive in April, 1300, he may still be spiritually alive [...] In fact, the figure of Guido's father enables Dante to project onto someone else his own agonizing fears about his implication in Guido's death and to cling to a hopeful interpretation of Guido's death. One can go so far as to say that Dante *must not* pretend to know the state of Guido's soul after death'.
23. Benvenuto, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 61–63.
24. Durling, who similarly links this passage with *Inferno* X, corroborates the scholarly consensus which implicitly identifies Dante as he 'chi l'una e l'altro caccerà del nido' [who will drive both of them from the nest]: 'Che la seconda di queste terzine alluda alla vittoria di Dante nella rivalità poetica sia con Guido Guinizelli sia con Guido Cavalcanti è comune opinone e mi sembra giusta' [The common view, which seems to me correct, is that the second of these terzinas alludes to Dante's victory in his poetic rivalry with both Guido Guinizelli and Guido Cavalcanti] (Durling, 'mio figlio ov'è', in *Dante da Firenze all'aldilá*, ed. by Picone, pp. 303–29 (p. 320)). Furthermore, as Durling adds, 'il nome di *Guido* [...] evoca sempre l'ombra del Cavalcanti' [the name of Guido [...] always evokes the shade of Cavalcanti], confirming his conclusion that the three poets are Guinizelli, Cavalcanti (the two Guidos), and Dante himself (p. 320 n. 44).
25. Augustine, *In Evangelium Ioannis tractatus centum viginti quatuor*, I. 13. Cited in Barbi, gloss to *Purg.*, X. 121–26, p. 389.
26. Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*, I. xxxvi. par. 40.
27. Scott, 'Heretics', *DE.*, 484–86 (p. 484). See also Barański, 'Guido Cavalcanti tra le "cruces" di *Inferno* IX–XI', in *Versi Controversi*, ed. by Cofano and Valerio, p. 44: 'nel Medioevo, l'eresia fu considerata essenzialmente un fallo ermeneutico' [In the Middle Ages, heresy was considered as, essentially, a hermeneutical mistake].

28. Aquinas, *Super Epistolam Beati Pauli ad Titum lectura*, cap. 3, l. 2.
29. Ibid.
30. Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*, I. xxxvii. par. 41.
31. Ibid.
32. Benvenuto da Imola, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 52–54.
33. Salimbene de Adam, in his *Cronica*, claims that passages of Solomon (including the one cited above) were similarly used by Frederick II and his court to support, on the basis of Scripture, their philosophical doctrine of mortalism. See Salimbene de Adam, *Cronica*, II, pp. 538–39 [513. 19–24]: 'Quod Salomon multa dixit in persona carnalium hominum, de quibus aliter fuit opinio sua' [That Solomon said many things in the person of slavish men, about which his own view was different].
34. *ST.*, Ia. q. 75, a. 6 'utrum anima humana sit incorruptibilis' [whether the human soul is incorruptible].
35. See *ST.*, IIaIIae, q. 11, a. 1–4: 'de haeresi'.
36. See *ST.*, IIaIIae, q.11, a. 3, co.: 'Multo enim gravius est corrumpere fidem, per quam est animae vita, quam falsare pecuniam, per quam temporali vitae subvenitur' [It is indeed much worse to corrupt the faith which gives life to the soul, than to falsify money which supports temporal life].
37. Cristoforo Landino (1481), following Boccaccio and the early commentaries, writes: 'Adunque intende che non passeranno cinquanta mesi che lui sarà cacciato. Il che, secondo Giovanni Boccaccio adivenne innanzi che passassino due anni o pocho più' [he means, therefore, that fifty months will not pass before he will be expelled. According to Boccaccio, this came about before two years or a little longer had passed] (Cristoforo Landino, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 79–81). But Lodovico Castelveltro (1570) comments, and with him the majority of post sixteenth-century commentators: 'e tu doppo quattro anni e due mesi, essendo cacciato di Firenze, il saprai per esperienza, non trovando mai la via da rientrarri' [and you, after four years and two months, being expelled from Florence, will know it from experience, never finding the way to return] (Castelveltro, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 79–81). See also Boccaccio, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 79–81.
38. Benvenuto da Imola, gloss to *Inf.*, X.118.
39. Giovanni Boccaccio, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 118.
40. See *ST.*, IIaIIae, q.11, a.3, co.: '*resecandae sunt putridae carnes, et scabiosa ovis a caulis repellenda, ne tota domus, massa, corpus et pecora, ardeat, corrumpatur, putrescat, intereat. Arius in Alexandria una scintilla fuit, sed quoniam non statim oppressus est, totum orbem eius flamma populata est*' [decayed flesh is to be cut off; the mangy sheep removed from the fold, lest the whole house, mass, body and flock may burn, perish, decay, die. Arius was but one spark in Alexandria, but because that spark was not immediately put out, the whole earth is laid waste by its flame].
41. Benvenuto da Imola, gloss to *Purg.*, XXX. 58–66.
42. Pagliaro, 'Farinata e Cavalcante', in *Ulisse*, I, 209: 'Dante, come dichiara Beatrice nelle spiegazioni date alle "sustanze pie", non aveva risposto se non tardivamente al richiamo degli studi teologici, che liberano lo spirito dall'impegno con le cose terrene e avviano alla beatitudine della visione di Dio'.
43. Manfredi Porena, 'Le colpe rimproverate da Beatrice a Dante nel Paradiso Terrestre', *Atti della Accademia d'Italia* (Florence: Accademia d'Italia, 1944), 485–501 (p. 485): 'Il peccato intellettuale di Dante dovesse essere proprio l'epicureismo, o un grave pericolo di cadere nell'epicureismo'; cited by Pagliaro, 'Farinata e Cavalcante', in *Ulisse*, I, 209.
44. Benvenuto da Imola, gloss to *Purg.*, XXXI. 22–30.
45. Jacobo della Lana, gloss to *Purg.*, XXX. 124–26.
46. Benvenuto da Imola, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 133–41.
47. John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, II, VIII. xxv. 818. d, 418.
48. John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, II, VIII. xxv. 818. c, 418.
49. John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, II, VIII. xxv. 819. c, 420.
50. John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, II, VIII. xxv. 817. a, 415.
51. John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, II, VIII. xxv. 821. c, 423; see also *Policraticus*, II, VIII. xxv. 820. c–d, 421–22.
52. In this section, and in the book as a whole, I have considered directly only the allegorical significance of Beatrice in the *Commedia*. Beatrice's specific historicity — as, most plausibly,

Beatrice Portinari (1266–1290), the daughter of Folco Portinari and the wife of Simone dei Bardi, — and its potential significance for a reading of the poem are not explored. This is for two principal reasons. First, I have reservations about the current scholarly consensus that Beatrice, at a literal level, is identifiable with Beatrice Portinari. Given the evidence available, I do not think that this identification can be made with the level of certainty that the current consensus would suggest. Second, for the reading of the *Commedia* which I develop in this book, the literal identification with Beatrice Portinari (even were it true) is not of great hermeneutic import. Because of these reservations, I leave the historical identification open. As the commentary tradition and scholarship on the poem demonstrate, in interpreting Beatrice's allegorical function in the *Commedia* — as 'she who beatifies', a figure for Christ, a symbol of Divine Wisdom or Revealed Theology, et al. — one may or may not affirm her particular historical reality. The arguments which I present are valid, therefore, whether or not Dante intended Beatrice to refer literally to a specific woman. It would be a distraction from the book's main arguments, moreover, to enter more deeply into the vast scholarship surrounding the reception of Beatrice in the critical tradition. My concern in this note is simply to register my ambivalence with regard to the Beatrice Portinari identification, and my motive for focusing exclusively on the allegorical significance of Beatrice in the poem. For a useful synoptic account of the interpretation of Beatrice in the commentary and scholarship tradition from the fourteenth century until *c.* 1970 and a preliminary bibliography, see Aldo Vallone, 'Beatrice', in *ED.*, I, 542–51 (pp. 546–51). Vallone concludes that the scholarly consensus by 1970 is that Beatrice is a specific woman (Beatrice Portinari) who comes to signify, in Dante's poetry, theology or the divine science (p. 550). This view, which insists on Beatrice's historicity and allegorical significance, continues to be reflected by Joan M. Ferrante's brief description at the turn of the century (2000), in 'Beatrice', *ED.*, pp. 89–95.

53. Thus Dante, in the *Convivio*, elucidates with regard to 'la donna gentile' (Lady Philosophy): 'li occhi di questa donna sono le sue dimostrazioni, le quali, dritte negli occhi dello 'ntelletto, innamorano l'anima liberata nelle [sue] condizioni' [the eyes of this woman are her explanations, which, when directed into the eyes of the intellect, inflame with love any soul that is freed from the limitations of its present condition] (*Conv.*, II. xv. 4). See also Benvenuto da Imola, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 127–32: Benvenuto glosses 'tutto vede' with reference to the survey of sacred scripture which knows the human and the divine ('cuius [sacrae scripturae] speculatio cognoscit humana et divina').
54. As, in the allegory of the sciences in the *Convivio*, Dante explains: 'Dico che per cielo io intendo la scienza [...] si può la scienza "cielo" chiamare' [By 'heaven' I mean knowledge [...] the term 'heaven' may be used to signify knowledge] (*Conv.*, II. xiii. 2; 6); 'in ciascuna scienza la scrittura è stella piena di luce, la quale quella scienza dimostra' [in every discipline the works written on it are a star full of light, explaining the content of that discipline] (*Conv.*, II. xv. 1); the scholar studies 'colli raggi della stella loro, la quale è la scrittura di quella' [through the rays of their star, that is, through the works written about her] (*Conv.*, II. xv. 1).
55. The episode thus unfolds a further meaning of Virgil's reference to Beatrice in *Inferno* X: 'il cui bell' occhio tutto vede' [whose lovely eye sees all]. As Guido da Pisa, highlighting that the saints in Heaven are replete with the divine science, exclaims: 'Quid est quod non videant qui videntem omnia vident' [What is it that they may not see who see Him who sees all'] (Guido da Pisa, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 130–31). All the saints thus, as Boccaccio comments, participate in the direct vision of God and see, like Beatrice, the past, the present and the future: 'tutto vede, cioè il preterito e 'l presente e 'l futuro' (Giovanni Boccaccio, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 127–32).
56. Some scholars have considered problematic the fact that the response is given indirectly by Beatrice (Beatrice invites Dante-character to ask Cacciaguida to respond to his question). As Manfredi Porena suggests, could this mean that Dante — during the composition of the poem — changed his mind: while writing *Inferno* X Dante-author planned that Beatrice would directly respond to Dante-character's questions and, only subsequently on writing the *Paradiso*, he changed his mind and substituted Cacciaguida for Beatrice? (Manfredi Porena, *Inf.*, X. 130–32: 'Dante poi cambiò idea'). I do not find this line of argument convincing (although there is now a substantial scholarly literature which has explored it), because I concur with Benvenuto da Imola's view (and warning) that the premiss to this line of argument — there

being a necessary contradiction — is apparent but not actual (see Benvenuto da Imola, gloss to *Inf.*, X. 127–32). Dante-author makes it clear — through the stage-managing of the encounter — that Dante-character hears the response, in Benvenuto's words, 'a praedicto [Cacciaguida] mediante Beatrice': Beatrice is the cause of, and the intermediary for, Cacciaguida's response. Furthermore, in my view, the poetically self-conscious parallels between *Inferno* X and *Paradiso* XVII make an authorial mistake or 'change of mind' implausible. Marguerite Mills Chiarenza's study, which highlights the subtextual parallel between Helenus-Sibyl-Anchises in the *Aeneid* (*Aen.* III. 458–60; *Aen.* VI. 756–886) and Virgil-Beatrice-Cacciaguida in the *Commedia* is, in this sense, instructive as it emphasizes that Dante's authorial strategy is deliberate: 'it is hardly thinkable that in a canto of such great structural and thematic importance Dante would have been so careless'. See Marguerite Mills Chiarenza, 'Time and Eternity in the Myths of *Paradiso* XVII', in *Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio: Studies in the Italian Trecento in Honor of Charles S. Singleton*, ed. by Aldo. S. Bernardo and Anthony L. Pellegrini (New York: Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies, SUNY, 1983), pp. 133–50 (p. 134). However, Chiarenza unnecessarily hearkens back to the premiss of 'contradiction' as if Dante deliberately (rather than mistakenly) contradicts himself: 'we need look no further than the *Aeneid* to realize that, though we have an inconsistency, it is an intentional one' (p. 134). As both the Sibyl and Beatrice are the clear causes of, and intermediaries for, the revelations by Anchises and Cacciaguida respectively, it is unnecessary to postulate contradiction in either the *Commedia* or its Virgilian subtext.

57. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, III. xiv. 30, pp. 262–63: 'omnia, quae mala putentur, sint improvisa graviora' ['everything which is thought evil is more grievous if it comes unexpectedly'].
58. *Epistole*, XIII. i: 'Magnifico atque victorioso domino domino Cani Grandi de la Scala sacratissimi Cesarei Principatus in urbe Verona et civitate Vicentie Vicario generali, devotissimus suus Dantes Alighierii, florentinus natione non moribus, vitam orat per tempora diuturna felicem et gloriosi nominis perpetuum incrementum' [To the magnificent and most victorious Lord, the Lord Can Grande della Scala, Vicar-General of the most holy principality of Caesar in the city of Verona, and town of Vincenza, his most devoted servant, Dante Alighieri, a Florentine by birth, not by disposition, prayeth long and happy life, and perpetual increase of the glory of his name]; *Epistole*, XIII. iii. 11: 'Neque ipsi preheminentie vestre congruum magis comperi quam Comedie sublimem canticam que decoratur titulo Paradisi; et illam sub presenti epistola tamquam sub epigrammate proprio dedicatam, vobis ascribo, vobis offero, vobis denique recommendo' [And I have found nothing more suitable even for your exalted station than the sublime cantica of the *Comedy* which is adorned with the title of *Paradise*; this, then, dedicated to yourself, with the present letter to serve as its superscription, I inscribe, offer, and in fine commend to you]. On the controversy surrounding the epistle's authenticity, see Chapter 3, n. 2.
59. Guy Raffa considers the Cacciaguida episode to be precisely modelled, even at the level of numerology, on Cicero's *De somnio Scipionis*. See Guy Raffa, 'Enigmatic 56s: Cicero's Scipio and Dante's Cacciaguida', *DS*, 110 (1992), 121–34.
60. Cicero, 'Somnium Scipionis', in Cicero, *De re publica*, ed. and trans. by Clinton Walker Keyes (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), VI, pp. 260–83 (VI. xiv. 14, pp. 266–67).
61. Cicero, *De re publica*, VI. x. 10, pp. 262–63.
62. Benvenuto da Imola, gloss to *Par.*, XIV. 82–84.
63. Benvenuto da Imola, gloss to *Par.*, XIV. 91–96.
64. See Aquinas, *Sententia libri de anima*, I. l. 3, n. 6.
65. See Paolo Brezzi, 'Dalle sofferenze dell'esilio alla missione "a pro del mondo che mal vive"', in *Letture dantesche di argomento storico-politico* (Naples: Ferraro, 1983), pp. 79–101. Brezzi argues that Dante works out, in this canto, his own autobiographical return to God ('la teopoiesi'): 'rimane il dato di fatto che la redenzione, che dopo l'avvento del Salvatore è già stata concessa e realizzata, deve ancora essere conquistata e fatta propria da ciascun essere vivente nella storia' [the fact remains that the redemption — which after the coming of the Saviour has already been granted and realized — must still be acquired and made one's own by every living being in history] (p. 98).
66. For a reappraisal of the medieval perception of the crusader, and the Catholic doctrine of the crusades in the medieval period, see Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A Short History*

(London: Yale University Press, 1987) and *The First Crusaders, 1095–1131* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

67. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, LXXIII. 25.

PART III

❖

Ante-Purgatory and Dante's Dualism

CHAPTER 5

❖

The Virtuous Pagans

Introduction

In the intellectual context of early-fourteenth-century Europe, Dante's representation of the virtuous pagans, like his emphasis on the Epicureans, is surprising and peculiar. The unorthodoxy of these passages in the *Commedia* — as the puzzled, elaborate and hostile responses of his first readers indicate — presented a serious challenge to his contemporary audience. Guido da Pisa simply states that the *Limbus gentilium virtuosum* is against 'our faith' and argues, in consequence, that Dante must be speaking only 'poetically' and not 'theologically' in this part of the poem. Dante's 'strange new fiction' of Cato in Ante-Purgatory similarly strikes another fourteenth-century reader with the disquieting taste of heresy ('quae videtur sapere haeresim').[1] In this chapter, I argue that these instances of theological unorthodoxy in the *Commedia* derive from Dante's controversial dualism. The Roman pagans Cato and Virgil, and the two regions of the *Limbus gentilium virtuosum* and the *Vallis Principium lacrimarumque*, demarcate the horizon, in Dante's theory, between the two autonomous hemispheres of conduct and the two independent goals of mankind.

The first section of the chapter considers the *Limbus gentilium virtuosum* (*Inf.*, IV). Dante appropriates Bonaventure's theological hypothesis for the unbaptized infants in order to represent the eternal destiny of the virtuous pagans. This sets him at odds with Augustinian and scholastic theological traditions. Underlying Dante's radically original stance is his dualistic theory. At an allegorical level, the limbo of the virtuous pagans defends the moral legitimacy of the temporal sphere as capable of sustaining a path, guided by natural philosophy, to earthly felicity. It also highlights the primacy of Christian faith for individual salvation. The second section explores Cato's surprising presence as the gatekeeper of Ante-Purgatory. Alongside the pagan occupants of limbo, Cato embodies Dante's ethical and political ideal for the temporal sphere. His presence at the border of Ante-Purgatory testifies to Dante's deep conviction, as his prose works confirm, that God miraculously worked his 'special grace' through exceptional Romans in human history. In Dante's dualistic political argument, Cato is indeed a sign that God divinely ordained the Roman Empire and Roman law as the perennial institution and universal moral guide for the temporal sphere. The third section explores how, through the liminal region of Ante-Purgatory, Dante dramatizes the dichotomy between the political imperative to maintain the imperial law against civic disorder, and the spiritual imperative of man's pilgrimage to his eternal goal. The tension is held paradigmatically in

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the figure of Virgil, at once an impeccable ethical and poetical guide within the temporal hemisphere and, as foregrounded in the narrative drama of Ante-Purgatory, painfully aware of his, apparently inculpable, deprivation of beatitude. The fourth section opens with a comparison between the *Limbus gentilium virtuosum* and the *Vallis Principium lacrimarumque*. As Dante's limbo of the virtuous pagans, although an image of temporal felicity, is a state of permanent exile from the vision of God, so the singing of the *Salve Regina* in the valley of the Princes qualifies the image of temporal perfection represented in the beautiful landscape. The noble souls, some of whom were kings in their own earthly realms, must learn to re-envisage the whole temporal hemisphere as a state of spiritual exile and, as common exiles and pilgrims, direct their desires to the heavenly city, their eternal home.

The *Limbus Gentilium Virtuosum*

The limbo of the virtuous pagans literally represents the eternal destiny of the virtuous pagans and figuratively represents the temporal goal of man and the canon of philosophy and literature which may guide him to it. In the *Monarchia*, Dante sets out the secular path to man's temporal goal: 'ad primam per phylosophica documenta venimus, dummodo illa sequamur secundum virtutes morales et intellectuales operando' [for we attain the first through the teachings of philosophy, provided that we follow them putting into practice the moral and intellectual virtues] (*Mon.*, III. xv. 8). The seven walls of Dante's Limbo are interpreted allegorically by most commentators to refer to the seven liberal arts.[2] Through these seven intellectual disciplines, the human soul liberates itself from the sensual appetite and is trained towards the rational dispositions necessary to enter the noble castle of Philosophy. Within the castle's walls, Dante-character enters a beautiful landscape ('in prato di fresca verdura' [a meadow of fresh green] (*Inf.*, IV. 111)) reminiscent of Virgil's Elysian fields, and he encounters exemplars of the moral and intellectual virtues.[3] Electra, the first noble pagan named, is the mythical founder of Troy and the root of the Trojan and Roman race which, for Dante, historically instantiates the true flower of human nobility.[4] Amongst the 'spiriti magni' [great spirits] (l. 119) of the 'filosofica familia' [philosophical company] (l. 132), Aristotle — *the* philosopher and the exemplar of human intellectual perfection — holds reign: 'il maestro di color che sanno' [the master of those who know] (l. 131). Through the limbo of the virtuous pagans, Dante therefore represents the natural goal and perfection attainable by man within the hemisphere of this life: 'beatitudinem scilicet huius vite, que in operatione proprie virtutis consistit et per terrestrem paradisum figuratur' [happiness in this life, which consists in the exercise of our own powers and is figured in the earthly paradise] (*Mon.*, III. xv. 7). He carves into the eschatological landscape of the *Commedia* a region of moral impunity for pagan adults and explicitly defends, in this way, not only the pagans but also the authority of exemplary pagan texts as free from moral or intellectual fault.[5]

Dante's justification for the rational autonomy of the temporal sphere, from the perspective of God's final judgement, nonetheless has implications which set him at odds with all the existing theological traditions about the status of the virtuous

pagans in the afterlife.[6] Augustine explicitly rules out a limbo, equivalent to the *limbus infantium*, for the virtuous pagans:

> An forte et istis qui exhibuerunt terrenae patriae Babilonicam dilectionem, et virtute civili, non vera, sed veri simili daemonibus vel humanae gloriae servierunt, Fabriciis, et Regulis, et Fabiis, et Scipionibus, et Camillis, ceterisque talibus, sicut infantibus qui sine baptismate moriuntur, provisuri estis aliquem locum inter damnationem regnumque caelorum; ubi non sint in miseria, sed in beatitudine sempiterna, qui Deo non placuerunt cui sine fide placere impossibile est, quam nec in operibus, nec in cordibus habuerunt? Non opinor perditionem vestram usque ad istam posse impudentiam prosilire.[7]
>
> [But perhaps for all these who have shown a profane love to the earthly patria, and with a civic virtue (not true but similar to true virtue) have served human glory or the devil — Fabricius, Regulus, Fabius, Scipio, Camillo and all the others — you will prepare, as for the infants who die without baptism, a place between damnation and heaven where they are not in misery but in everlasting beatitude; who did not please God whom it is impossible to please without faith — a faith they did not have either in their works or in their hearts? I cannot believe that your mistaken blundering would stretch to such shameless presumption!]

For Augustine, human nature 'is only the historical remains of a divine order corrupted by sin' and pagan virtues are contaminated and not 'true virtues' since they are misdirected, as to pleasure (the Epicureans) or to self-glory (the Stoics), rather than ordered towards God: 'absit autem ut virtutes verae cuiquam serviant, nisi illi vel propter illum cui dicimus: Deus virtutum, converte nos' [it is absurd that true virtues could serve anyone except him or for the sake of him, to whom we say: 'God of the virtues, clothe us'].[8] In contrast to Augustine, Dante highlights the exceptional, and even miraculous, nature of the exemplary pagans' moral virtue. In the *Commedia* and the prose works, he acclaims Fabricius, for example, as a paradigm of moral integrity (*Purg.*, XX. 25–27; *Mon.*, II. v. 11). He does not claim like Augustine's adversary Pelagius, moreover, that the pagans could achieve a state of spiritual beatitude without grace. Rather, Dante's limbo of the virtuous pagans is located in Hell (not between Hell and Heaven) and consists only of a natural, and spiritually incomplete, beatitude.

More controversially, however, Dante also rejects the *via media* which Aquinas represents as the orthodox position on the virtuous pagans. Aquinas locates the 'catholic view' between the opposed heresies of Manichaeism — which holds that man sins of necessity — and Pelagianism — which, seeking to defend free will, sustains that man can evade sin without grace: 'fides autem catholica media via incedit; ita libertatem arbitrii salvans, quod necessitatem gratiae non excludit' [the catholic faith holds a middle path; saving the freedom of the will in such a way that does not exclude the necessity of grace].[9] For Aquinas, human nature 'is a metaphysically indestructible essence whose intrinsic necessity resists even the corruption of original sin'.[10] The cardinal virtues of the pagans are true virtues even if, as not directed appropriately to God, they are not meritorious of salvation. Although Aquinas defends pagan virtue, he affirms that a man who has come to the age of discretion may not avoid personal sin without God's healing grace ('non

est possibile aliquem adultum esse in solo peccato originali absque gratia').[11] If the converse were true, Aquinas argues, it would be possible for a man to die at the horizon between salvation and corporeal damnation:

> 'Si enim possibile est aliquem adultum in solo peccato originali esse; si in ipso instanti contingat eum mori, erit medius inter beatos et eos qui poena sensibili puniuntur; ad quod inconveniens praedicta ratio ducit'.[12]
>
> [If indeed it is possible for an adult to be only in original sin; if in that instant it befell him to die, he will be in an intermediate state between the blessed and those who are punished with corporal pain; to which unsuitable position the aforementioned argument leads.]

Dante, however, adopts this horizon state — rendered impossible and explicitly rejected by Aquinas — as the moral situation of the virtuous pagans whom he represents in the *Commedia*.

Dante freely appropriates, furthermore, Bonaventure's theological basis for the horizon state of the *limbus infantium* — 'decedentes enim in solo originali quasi medium tenent inter habentes gratiam et culpam actualem' [dying with only original sin, they hold a kind of horizon state between those with grace and those with personal sin] — as a paradigm for the eschatological condition of the virtuous pagans.[13] According to Bonaventure's thesis, the unbaptized infants, like the blessed in heaven, do not suffer interior or exterior pain but they do experience, in common with the damned, the lack of the vision of God: 'in medio constituti [...] nec laetentur nec tristentur' [fixed in the middle [...] they are neither happy nor sad].[14] Against Bonaventure's intention, Dante adopts this paradigm for the virtuous pagans. But the parallel is not exact. Bonaventure stresses that, although the desire of the infants is never fulfilled, they are entirely content with their situation: 'eis sufficiat status suus; nec elevant oculos ad opes, quas habere non possunt' [they are satisfied with their state; they do not raise they eyes to riches which they cannot have].[15] Virgil's description of the anguish of the limbo dwellers ('L'angoscia de le genti' (*Inf.*, IV. 19)) which fills him with pity ('nel viso mi dipigne | quella pietà' (ll. 20–21)) does not correspond to the consoled contentment of the *infantes* in Bonaventure's theory.[16] Instead, with a theological licence which Bonaventure's treatment of the infants may have unintentionally invited, Dante marshals heterodox sources to suit his radically original creation of the *Limbus gentilium virtuosum*.[17]

Dante proceeds to re-apply the theological problem concerning the moral justification of the unbaptized infants' deprivation of beatitude (which Bonaventure attempts to resolve) to the parallel need for justification, in his eschatological scheme, for the apparently unmerited deprivation experienced by the virtuous pagans. Virgil presents the incomprehension of reason at the divine judgement of the virtuous pagans:

> Lo buon maestro a me: 'Tu non dimandi
> che spiriti son questi che tu vedi?
> Or vo' che sappi, innanzi che più andi,
> ch'ei non peccaro; e s'elli hanno mercedi,
> non basta, perché non ebber battesmo,
> ch'è porta de la fede che tu credi;

> E s'e' furon dinanzi al cristianesmo,
> non adorar debitamente a Dio:
> e di questi cotai son io medesmo.
> Per tai difetti, non per altro rio
> semo perduti, e sol di tanto offesi
> che sanza speme vivemo in disio'. (*Inf.*, IV. 31–42)

> [My good master to me: 'You do not ask what spirits are these you see? Now I wish you to know, before you walk further,
> that they did not sin; and if they have merits, it is not enough, because they did not receive baptism, which is the gateway to the faith that you believe.
> And if they lived before Christianity, they did not adore God as was needful: and of this kind am I myself.
> Because of such defects, not for any other wickedness, we are lost, and only so far harmed that without hope we live in desire'.]

The virtuous pagans are without individual sin (l. 34; l. 40). Nonetheless, unwashed by the sacrament of Christian baptism — the gateway to faith (l. 36) — they are literally trapped within the border of Limbo. In a passage of the *Monarchia* which may act as a further commentary on this region, Dante returns to and restates the troubling situation of the virtuous pagans:

> nemo, quantumcumque moralibus et intellectualibus virtutibus et secundum habitum et secundum operationem perfectus, absque fide salvari potest, dato quod nunquam aliquid de Cristo audiverit. (*Mon.*, II. vii. 4)

> [no one can be saved without faith (assuming that he has never heard anything of Christ), no matter how perfectly endowed he might be in the moral and intellectual virtues in respect both of his character and his behaviour.]

Virtuous actions only merit salvation if they are sacrificed to Christ, who is the gateway to the eternal conclave ('hostium conclavis ecterni' (*Mon.*, II. vii. 6)). As, for Dante, the pagans are without individual sin, their only moral fault is negative unbelief. But if they had no access to Christ — as Dante reiterates in *Paradiso* XIX. 67–78 — where is the justice which deprives them of eternal beatitude?

In the *Commedia*, as in the *Monarchia*, Dante underlines that the justification for the eternal destiny of the virtuous pagans cannot be understood through human reason. In the Heaven of Jupiter, Beatrice finally administers the celestial food (the articles of Faith) which may nourish where earthly food (the precepts of reason) may not, satiating Dante-character's long intellectual fast:

> 'solvetemi, spirando, il gran digiuno
> che lungamente m'ha tenuto in fame,
> non trovandoli in terra cibo alcuno' (*Par.*, XIX. 25–27)

> [satisfy, breathing on me, the great lack that has kept me hungering for so long, not finding any food for it on earth.]

In the *Monarchia*, he reaffirms: 'Nam hoc ratio humana per se iustum intuiri non potest, fide tamen adiuta potest' [For human reason cannot see this to be just by its own powers, but with the aid of faith it can] (*Mon.*, II. vii. 5). Dante's response to man's incredulity at the apparent injustice of God's judgement is to compare

the smallness of man's knowledge with the depths of God's hidden wisdom (*Par.*, XX. 58–63; 79–90). He emphasizes, moreover, that God's special grace works over and above the precepts not only of natural but of Scriptural law: 'Occultum vero est iudicium Dei ad quod humana ratio nec lege naturae nec lege Scripturae, sed de gratia speciali quandoque pertingit' [But that judgement of God is hidden which human reason arrives at neither through the law of nature, nor the law of the scriptures, but occasionally by special grace] (*Mon.*, II. vii. 7). In the *Paradiso*, the theological quiddity of the question (*Par.*, XX. 88–93) is finally resolved: the divine will necessarily condemns the pagan because he is without faith; nonetheless the divine will may itself be won over, through some 'special grace', by love and a living hope:

> *Regnum celorum* vïolenza pate
> da caldo amore e da viva speranza,
> che vince la divina volontate:
> non a guisa che l'omo a l'om sobranza,
> ma vince lei perché vuole esser vinta,
> e, vinta, vince con sua beninanza. (*Par.*, XX. 94–99)

> [*Regnum celorum* suffers the violence of burning love and lively hope that overcome God's will:
> not as one man defeats another, but they conquer it because it wishes to be conquered and, conquered, conquers with its good will.]

As a man may convince another with reason, so the divine will is surpassed with love and hope which are, nevertheless, fruits of God's own beneficence. God's just law is defeated by God's mercy and love. Theologically, the virtuous pagan is therefore salvable through the miraculous grace of God.

It would offend against the precepts of free will and Christian theology to presume to know, outside an ecclesial tradition of miracle (as with Trajan (*Par.*, XX. 106–17)) or a supposed miracle (as with Ripheus (*Par.*, XX. 118–29)), the disposition of the virtuous pagans to faith at their death. Dante nonetheless signposts — in his narrative depiction of his own pity at Virgil's fate in Limbo ('gran duol mi prese al cor' [great sorrow seized my heart] (*Inf.*, IV. 43)) — the potential parallel with the theological tradition of Gregory and Trajan (*Purg.*, X. 73–93; *Par.*, XX. 43–48). As Benvenuto comments:

> 'Et sic non miror, lector, si superius Virgilius paganus palluit, et Dante cristianus nunc doluit ex compassione istorum valentium. Nonne beatus Gregorius compassus est animae Trajani?'[18]

> [And therefore do not marvel, reader, if above the pagan Virgil grew pale, and now the Christian Dante is saddened because of compassion for those noble men. Did not Blessed Gregory have compassion for the soul of Trajan?]

In representing the virtuous pagans in Limbo as 'sospesi' [suspended] (*Inf.*, IV. 45), Dante foregrounds the moral problem which the potential damnation of a virtuous pagan presents to man's innate sense of Justice while, at the same time, he leaves open the possibility of salvation, as with Trajan and Ripheus, through God's 'special grace'.

Dante's emphasis on the eternal destiny of the virtuous pagans in the *Commedia* is, however, in my view ancillary to his primary allegorical and moral purposes. In his epistle to Cangrande, Dante explains that the subject of the poem is twofold: the literal subject is the state of the souls after death; the allegorical subject is man who, through the use of his free will, merits reward or punishment (*Epist*., XIII. viii. 24–25). Dante's poem is written 'in pro del mondo che mal vive' [for the good of the world that lives ill] (*Purg*., XXXII. 103), not in order to save virtuous pagans, who are in the hands of God and whose ultimate fate, as Dante-character eventually discovers, only God may fathom (*Par*., XIX. 58–63; 85–90). Rather, through the region of the virtuous pagans in limbo and the heightened emphasis on their eternal destiny in the course of the poem, Dante emphasizes the requirement of faith in order for man *now* to hope for eternal beatitude. No amount of virtue or human goodness may suffice. The condition of the virtuous pagans, at an allegorical level, historically instantiates the state of any non-believer before or after Christ

> chi è stato sanza speranza in questa vita, sia ancora sanza essa tormentato dal desiderio nell'altra. Ogni infedele in questa vita è sanza speranza: imperò che le fede genera speranza; e però chi non à la vera fede non à la vera speranza; e questo ancora si verifica per l'infedeli del mondo, che vivono in continuo desiderio di beatitudine e non ne possono avere vera speranza, perchè non ànno vera fede.[19]
>
> [who was without faith in this life, is still — without it — tormented by desire in the other. Every unbeliever in this life is without hope. Since faith generates hope, he who does not have the true faith does not have true hope. And the unbelievers of the world still give testimony to this — who live in continual desire for beatitude and yet cannot have true hope for it because they do not have true faith.]

Through the virtuous pagans' fate, Dante makes the didactic point that if a person, before or after Christ, lives without hope he already lives in hell, which is the absence of God. For, as Aquinas shows, the act of hope itself attains God: 'Inquantum igitur speramus aliquid ut possibile nobis per divinum auxilium, spes nostra attingit ad ipsum Deum, cuius auxilio innititur' [Indeed, insofar as we hope for something as possible for us through divine help, our hope attains God Himself, on whose help it leans].[20] An unusual verbal emphasis, in the terzina following Virgil's outline of the harrowing of Hell, further supports the connection between the fate of the virtuous pagans and of unbelievers in this life:

> '[...] e altri molti, e feceli beati.
> E vo' che sappi che, dinanzi ad essi,
> *spiriti* umani non eran *salvati*'.
> Non lasciavam l'andar perch' ei dicessi,
> ma passavam la *selva* tuttavia,
> la *selva*, dico, di *spiriti spessi*. (*Inf*., IV. 61–66)

['[...] and many others, and he made them blessed. And I would have you know that before them no human spirits were saved.'
We did not cease walking because he spoke, but kept on passing through the wood, the wood, I say of crowding spirits.]

The authorial reiteration of 'selva' ('la selva *dico*' (l. 66)) recalls, of course, the opening 'selva oscura' (*Inf.*, I. 2) of the poem (the pilgrim lost on his journey to God), but it also verbally echoes the previous terzina 'non eran *salva*ti' (l. 63). Where Dante is a pilgrim from the 'selva oscura' to beatitude and the 'spiriti [...] salvati' (l. 63), those without faith — like the 'spiriti spessi' (l. 66) — are suspended ('sospesi' (l. 45)). These 'lost souls', crowded tightly together, form an eternal metaphorical wood ('selva' (l. 66)) which, just like the literal wood of the poem's opening, symbolizes spiritual alienation from God.

The key moral and allegorical lesson of the virtuous pagans is therefore twofold. Dante upholds, within the temporal hemisphere, the pagan standards of philosophy and virtue as flawless. Pagan philosophy (which culminates in Aristotle's *corpus* of philosophy) and the cardinal virtues (which the Roman law inscribes) provide the self-sufficient guides towards man's temporal felicity. Within the spiritual hemisphere, Dante upholds the exclusive primacy of Christian faith: a man, pagan or otherwise, even if perfect in the disposition and operation of the moral and intellectual virtues, cannot be saved without Christian faith.

Cato

In the unfolding narrative of Dante-character's journey, the presence of Cato on the shore of Purgatory challenges in a dramatic way the apparently fixed border, established in Limbo, between the virtuous pagans and the saved Christian souls. Cato, a 'horizon' figure, embodies Dante's equivocal reception of the classical model as, from the perspective of the pagan world, a perennial standard of moral excellence in imitation of which man may reach his temporal goal and, from the perspective of Christ-revealed, a sign of God's 'special grace' in Providential history.

Dante, following the panegyrics to Cato's incorruptible virtue in the canonical Roman authors, depicts Cato as historically instantiating the universal (in all times and for all peoples) ethical goal for man.[21] In the *Convivio*, Cato exemplifies the virtues proper to each age of a man's life: 'Nel nome di cui [Cato] è bello terminare ciò che delli segni de la nobilitade ragionare si convenia, però che in lui essa nobilitade tutti li dimostra per tutte etadi' [The mention of his name is a happy note on which to end the required discussion of the signs of nobility, since in him nobility displays all these throughout every stage of life] (*Conv.*, IV. xxviii. 19). Speaking in the person of the elder Cato (*Conv.*, IV. xxi. 9), Dante concludes that, were the corporeal conditions ideally disposed to receive the incorruptible seed of human nobility, another 'incarnate God' would be born (*Conv.*, IV. xxi. 10). Cato of Utica, he implies, most closely incarnates this ideal and is thereby most worthy to represent God: 'E quale uomo terreno più degno fu di signficare Dio che Catone? Certo nullo' [What person on earth was more worthy than Cato to represent God? Without a shadow of a doubt, no one] (*Conv.*, IV. xxviii. 15). The implication of Dante's allegorical interpretation of Cato and Marzia to represent God and the noble soul is that an individual soul which marries itself (in imitation) to the figure of Cato brings to perfect fruition the divine seed implanted by God.

The opening of the *Purgatorio* similarly establishes Cato as the ethical model *par excellence*. A quasi-pagan scene is transposed onto the shore of Ante-Purgatory as Dante carefully choreographs a figurative eulogy to Cato. Venus — 'Lo bel pianeto che d'amar conforta' [the lovely planet that strengthens us to love] (*Purg.*, I. 19) and whose love ennobles her son Aeneas — re-ignites Dante-character's soul with the love for virtue.[22] Turning to face the South Pole, he sees the four stars which allegorically represent the four cardinal virtues (ll. 22–27). When he turns back towards the north, the rays of these four stars are so resplendent in the person, as yet unnamed, of Cato that it appears to Dante-character as if the very sun were before him (ll. 28–39). As Seneca advises his reader to elect Cato as his ethical model ('elige itaque Catonem'), so Dante-character genuflects in deferential silence before Cato who is worthy of more reverence than ever a son owed his father (ll. 31–33).[23]

As Dante represents Cato as an ethical guide, so he foregrounds, in the narrative dialogue of Ante-Purgatory, Cato's political *caritas*.[24] Cato believed that he was born to serve the world.[25] He also dies, Dante affirms, for the liberty of his earthly *patria*:

> 'Or ti piaccia gradir la sua venuta:
> libertà va cercando, ch'è sì cara,
> come sa chi per lei vita rifiuta.
> Tu 'l sai, ché non ti fu per lei amara
> in Utica la morte, ove lasciasti
> la vesta ch' al gran dì sarà sì chiara.' (*Purg.*, I. 70–75)[26]

> [Now may it please you to favour his coming: he seeks freedom, which is so precious, as one knows who rejects life for her sake.
> You know it; for to you, because of her, death was not bitter in Utica, where you left the raiment that will be so bright on the great day.]

In contrast to Augustine's negative interpretation, Dante represents Cato's death as sacrifice: it is literally made holy (*sacrum facere*).[27] Indeed, as Virgil describes Cato's death in the narrative (ll. 70–75), so the subtext of Virgil's *Aeneid* informs, more decisively than Christian influences, the representation of Cato in Ante-Purgatory:

> [...] hinc procul addit
> Tartareas etiam sedes, alta ostia Ditis,
> et scelerum poenas, et te, Catilina, minaci
> pendentem scopulo Furiarumque ora trementem,
> secretosque pios, his dantem iura Catonem.
> (Virgil, *Aeneid*, VIII. 666–70)[28]

> [[...] At a distance from these he adds also the abodes of Hell, the high gates of Dis, the penalties of sin, and you, Catiline, hanging on a frowning cliff, and trembling at the sight of the Furies; and, far apart, the good, with Cato giving them laws'.]

Virgil contrasts Cato, who lived in accordance with the divine laws and gave his life for the common good of Rome, with the quintessential self-serving infidel Catiline, who sought to overcome the Roman senate for personal gain. As Brunetto

Latini's speech in *Inferno* implies (*Inf.*, XV. 61–78), Dante considered the thirteenth-century Florentines as moral and genetic descendants of both the 'semanta santa' of noble Romans such as Cato (ll. 76–78) and of the Catiline party 'quello ingrato popolo maligno | che discese di Fiesole ab antico' [that ungrateful, malicious people who came down from Fiesole of old] (ll. 61–62).[29] The eulogy of the pagan Cato is thus connected with the imperial and civic dimensions of Dante's political thought. Dante sought to impose, through the intervention of the Holy Roman Emperor Henry VII, the imperial law on the false and destructive 'libertatis affectum' of his Florentine degenerate compatriots (*Epist.*, VI. v. 23). Catiline embodies the false liberty (*Epist.*, VI. iii. 13), which is nothing other than blind cupidity (*Epist.*, VI. v. 22), of the 'extremely wicked' Florentines who exiled Dante (*Epist.*, VI. i. 1). Cato, by contrast, exemplifies the submission of the individual to the sacred laws (the image of natural justice) which, as free and joyful, is the true height of liberty (*Epist.*, VI. v. 22–23). Cato, who died for the liberty of his earthly *patria*, exemplifies the service of the common good, irrespective of individual advantage, which should govern the conduct of a man's political life.

In Virgil's *Aeneid* as in Lucan's *Pharsalia*, Cato governs the virtuous souls in the Elysium.[30] In Dante's *Commedia*, however, Cato does not preside, as one would expect, over the virtuous pagans at the highest rim of Hell (*Inf.*, IV). Rather, Cato is stationed at the lowest point, the shore, of mount Purgatory (*Purg.*, I–II). Cato both reached the very limit of human excellence (represented in the *Limbus gentilium virtuosum*) and, by his position in Ante-Purgatory, appears to overstep the border into the Christian hemisphere. Dante underpins this potentially heretical position ('quae videtur sapere haeresim') with his deeply held conviction that God intervened with his 'special grace' in Roman history.[31] As God prepared for Christ and the establishment of his Church through his chosen race of the Jews so, Dante believed, God divinely established the Roman Empire through his providential election of the Roman race.[32] Dante emphasizes that the pagan moral excellence of Cato is itself a miraculous sign of the working of God's grace in the pre-Christian world:

> Certo e manifesto esser dee, rimembrando la vita di costoro e delli altri divini cittadini, non sanza alcuna luce della divina bontade, aggiunta sovra la loro buona natura, essere tante mirabili operazioni state; e manifesto essere dee, questi eccellentissimi essere stati strumenti colli quali procedette la divina provedenza nello romano imperio, dove più volte parve esse braccia di Dio essere presenti. (*Conv.*, IV. v. 17)
>
> [It ought to be clear beyond doubt, when one recalls the lives of these and other divine citizens, that so many wonderful actions did not occur without the natural goodness of these men being enhanced in some measure by light from the divine goodness. It must be clear, too, that these thoroughly excellent men were instruments whereby divine providence favoured the growth of the Roman empire, in which God is often seen to have intervened powerfully.]

If, as Dante argues, God divinely ordained the Roman Empire to its temporal goal, the Romans who worked to fulfil this goal show implicit belief in, and cooperation with, God's Providence. Dante expands thereby the remit of implicit belief as

articulated by Aquinas:

> multis gentilium facta fuit revelatio de Christo [...] Sibylla etiam praenuntiavit quaedam de Christo [...] invenitur etiam in historiis Romanorum [...] quia etsi non habuerunt fidem explicitam, habuerunt tamen fidem implicitam in divina providentia, credentes Deum esse liberatorem hominum.[33]
>
> [the revelation of Christ was made to many peoples [...] the Sybil, indeed, foretold some things about Christ [...] it is found also in the history of the Romans [...] for even though they did not have explicit faith, they had nonetheless implicit faith in divine providence, believing God to be the saviour of men.]

Dante's representation of Cato's death as performative testimony of his belief in a better life to come reaffirms, furthermore, the connection established in the canto of the Epicureans between belief in the immortality of the soul and an openness to Christian faith.[34] Cato is, in Foster's argument, 'a kind of pagan analogue to the implicit faith of the pious Jews'.[35] With reference, as in *Inferno* X, to the Final Judgement and the Resurrection of the Body, Dante leaves little doubt as to the ultimate beatitude of Cato at the Final Judgement: 'ove lasciasti | la vesta ch' al gran dì sarà sì chiara' [where you left the raiment that will be so bright on the great day] (*Purg.*, I. 74–75).[36] The prominent place of the pagan Cato as the gatekeeper of Ante-Purgatory ('li tuoi sette regni' [your seven realms] (*Purg.*, I. 82)) does not simply reaffirm Dante's commitment to a pagan ideal in the sphere of natural ethics. It also indicates Dante's belief in the providential role played by the pagans in the history of Christian salvation.

Cato, the law maker, has surpassed — through some special grace — the divine law.[37] In the narrative 'mirror-effect' of *Purgatorio* I, the perplexed Cato (whose own salvation is baffling for the reader) demands that Dante-character and Virgil explain their presence in Ante-Purgatory:

> 'Chi siete voi che contro al cieco fiume
> fuggita avete la pregione eterna?'
> diss' el, movendo quelle oneste piume.
> 'Chi v'ha guidati, o che vi fu lucerna,
> uscendo fuor de la profonda notte
> che sempre nera fa la valle inferna?
> Son le leggi d'abisso così rotte?
> o è mutato in ciel novo consiglio,
> che, dannati, venite a le mie grotte?' (*Purg.*, I. 40–48)

['Who are you that up the blind river have fled the eternal prison?' he said, moving those reverend plumes.

'Who has guided you, or what has been your lantern, coming forth from the deep night that makes the valley of hell forever black?

Can the laws of the abyss be broken, then? or has some new counsel been adopted in Heaven, that although damned you come to my cliffs?']

Dante-character (ll. 56–63) has transgressed the border between the living and the dead. Virgil (ll. 76–81) has overstepped, albeit temporarily, the horizon between the spiritually dead (the virtuous pagans deprived of the vision of God in Hell) and the spiritually living (the Christians in an ever-growing relationship with God in

the realm of Purgatory). The rigidity of the laws of the afterlife may be overcome nonetheless, as Virgil's and Cato's respective speeches emphasize, by God's special grace (*Purg.*, I. 52–54; 91–93). But such exceptional 'grace', which saves Dante-character (a fallen man directed away from sin) and Cato (a pagan released from limbo), only serves to underline the normative eternal fate of the other virtuous pagans. At this juncture in the narrative, Dante appears to reconsider the situation of Virgil and the virtuous pagans through the story of Cato and Marzia:

> 'ma son del cerchio ove son li occhi casti
> di Marzia tua, che 'n vista ancor ti priega,
> o santo petto, che per tua la tegni:
> per lo suo amore adunque a noi ti piega'. (*Purg.*, I. 78–81)

> [for I am from the circle that holds the chaste eyes
> of your Marcia, who still seems to beg you, O holy breast, to consider her your own: for love of her, then, incline towards us.]

The literal reading is clear: as Marzia turned to Cato in this life so she, literally, longs to be with him in the next life.[38] Marzia, allegorically the noble soul in the *Convivio*, may also stand for the noble souls in the *Limbus gentilium virtuosum* who yearn in desire for unification with God (for which Cato is the first figure, and gateway, in Purgatory). Cato, however, responds:

> 'Marzïa piacque tanto a li occhi miei
> mentre ch'i' fu' di là [...]
> che quante grazie volse da me, fei.
> Or che di là dal mal fiume dimora,
> più muover non mi può, per quella legge
> che fatta fu quando me n'usci' fora'. (*Purg.*, I. 85–90)

> [Marcia so pleased my eyes when I was back there [...] that whatever kindness she wished from me, I did.
> Now that she dwells beyond the evil river, she can move me no longer, according to the law that was made when I came forth from there.]

There are two possible meanings. The spatial adverb 'là' [there] (l. 86) may refer to Cato's earthly life, and the law ('la legge' (l. 89)) may denote the marriage contract with Marzia which ceased to bind him when he left this world at his literal death: 'quando me n'usci' fora' [when I came forth from there] (l. 90).[39] Alternatively 'mentre ch'i' fu' di là' [when I was back there] (l. 86) could refer to Cato's time in Limbo.[40] After the harrowing of Hell — the point of Cato's spiritual salvation (l. 90) — the new law (l. 89) determines that there is no hope of salvation for the occupants of Limbo (as there was for the Jews before Christ's death). Cato highlights that the noble souls, after death and after the Harrowing of Hell, are beyond salvation as beyond the river of Acheron in Hell. They must therefore live perpetually without hope. At the same time, however, Cato's own story of salvation indicates that God may bring about the exceptional salvation of pagans, over and above His laws, through some 'special grace'.

Virgil

In the liminal region of Ante-Purgatory, Dante dramatizes the tension between the necessity of the pagan standard for the conduct of the political hemisphere, and the parallel requirement of ecclesial communion with Christ within the spiritual hemisphere. Where, indeed, the virtuous souls in Limbo burn with the innate desire to see God but without the hope of its consummation, the sinners who repent *in extremis* (represented in *Purgatorio* V–VI) burn with this desire for God and, with access to salvation through Christ's passion, die in the act of conversion. The souls thereby cross into the hemisphere of faith with the hope of attaining the vision of God: che *con la speme* vivono in disio [who *with hope* live in desire]. The *postmortem* repentant souls — awaiting purgation in Ante-Purgatory — now desire ecclesial intercession from the living in order to advance their spiritual progress towards God.

Dante-character is, for the souls of Ante-Purgatory, the point of connection between the living and the dead (*Purg.*, V. 22–63; *Purg.*, VI. 1–24). As Manfred first observes: 'qui [in Ante-Purgatory] per quei di là [on Earth] molto s'avanza' [for here we gain much from those back there] (*Purg.*, III. 145).[41] Iacopo del Cassero, Buonconte da Montefelto and Pia de' Tolomei, whose violent deaths reflect the three pivotal stages of Christ's passion — the *Agonia*, the *Crucifixio* and the *Mors* — appeal for the prayers of their region (*Purg.*, V. 64–136), of their family (ll. 85–90) and of Dante-character himself (l. 133).[42] Their dramatic monologues emerge from the swarm of souls who, as quick as lightning (ll. 37–40) and, like a troop of horses which have broken their reins (ll. 41–42), rush towards Dante (l. 29) to plead with him to hold back (l. 48) and intercede for them (ll. 49–50): 'deh, perché vai? deh, perché non t'arresti?' [Ah, why are you walking? Ah, why do you not stop?] (l. 51). The overwhelming urgency of the souls' demand for intercession spills, in structural mimesis, across consecutive cantos as Dante continues to be confronted, from all sides, with pleas for intercession (*Purg.*, VI. 1–24). Dante intercedes for his fellow Christians because of the same desire for God which motivates him on his journey, in this life, from this world to the expiation of Purgatory:

> 'voi dite, e io farò per quella pace
> che dietro a' piedi di sì fatta guida
> di mondo in mondo cercar mi face' (*Purg.*, V. 61–63)
>
> [tell me, and I will do it, by that peace which, following the feet of this guide, from world to world makes me seek itself.]

The goal of their shared desire is the peace of Christ whom the pagan schools of philosophy, like the three Marys at the tomb, sought in vain (*Conv.*, IV. xxii. 14–18).

The more the souls press upon Dante-character for intercession, however, the more conspicuous appears the isolation of Virgil. The simile of the game 'Il gioco de la zara' [the game of hazard] implicitly highlights the fate of Virgil (*Purg.*, VI. 1). For it would seem a matter of luck that Dante, born in the Christian era, should be the intercessor and thronged by the souls of Purgatory — 'con l'altro se ne va tutta la gente' [with the winner all the people go off] (*Purg.*, VI. 4) — while his

companion Virgil, the loser through an accident of birth, is left apart: 'colui che perde si riman dolente' [the one who has lost stays behind grieving] (l. 2). As the virtuous pagans in Limbo are excluded from the hope and prayer of the Christian souls, so Virgil — of their number ('quivi sto io' [there I dwell] (*Purg.*, VII. 34) — is represented in Ante-Purgatory as outside the ecclesial community of intercession.

At this juncture in the narrative, Dante-author constructs a theological and meta-literary reflection on the nature of Christian hope which crystallizes the distinction between the pagan and the Christian hemispheres:

> io cominciai: 'El par che tu mi nieghi,
> o luce mia, espresso in alcun testo
> che decreto del cielo orazion pieghi;
> e questa gente prega pur di questo:
> sarebbe dunque loro speme vana,
> o non m'è 'l detto tuo ben manifesto?' (*Purg.*, VI. 28–33)

> [I began: 'It seems, O my light, that in a certain text you expressly deny that prayer can bend the decree of Heaven;
> and these people pray for just that: would their hope, then, be in vain, or is your saying not fully manifest to me?']

Dante-character concludes that either the hope of the souls in Ante-Purgatory must be in vain or Virgil, in the *Aeneid*, must have been wrong about the efficacy of human prayer. Sibyl says to Palinarus: 'unde haec, o Palinure, tibi tam dira cupido? [...] desine fata deum flecti sperare precando' ['Whence, Palinurus, comes this wild longing of yours? [...] Cease to dream that heaven's decrees may be turned aside by prayer'].[43] Dante-author, however, allows Virgil *in* the *Commedia* to justify his point about prayer in the *Aeneid* VI which, although false when applied to the Christian world-picture of the *Commedia*, is still true in its radically conditioned position in pagan history:

> Ed elli a me: 'La mia scrittura è piana;
> e la speranza di costor non falla,
> se ben si guarda con la mente sana;
> ché cima di giudicio non s'avvalla
> perché foco d'amor compia in un punto
> ciò che de' sodisfar chi qui s' astalla;
> e là dov' io fermai cotesto punto,
> non s'ammendava, per pregar, difetto,
> perché 'l priego da Dio era disgiunto'. (*Purg.*, VI. 34–42)

> [And he to me: 'My writing is plain, and their hope is not deceived, if one looks well with sound mind,
> for the summit of justice is not lowered though the fire of love fulfil in an instant what those who are stationed here must satisfy;
> and where I fixed this point, defect was not amended by praying, because prayer was disjoined from God.]

If Dante-character looks 'con la mente sana' (l. 36) — Sapegno insightfully glosses 'sana' as 'sgombra di pregiudizi' — there is no inconsistency: the hope of the souls in Ante-Purgatory and Virgil's own statements about prayer are not mutually exclusive.[44] Dante-character, however, thrusting Virgil's point about prayer into a

Christian context, had used it to answer a question the pre-revelation text could not have envisaged. Virgil therefore requests Dante to see his text in its own terms, with a mind free of the prejudices of Christian revelation. Virgil contrasts a moment ('un punto' (l. 38)) of prayer with a point about prayer ('cotesto punto' (l. 40)) in the *Aeneid*. The prayer in the *Aeneid* had no access to God because it was pre-Christian: 'perché 'l priego da Dio era disgiunto' (l. 42). The difference between the two usages of the word 'punto' highlights the pathos of Virgil's position: a point ('punto') of prayer is utterly different before and after the Christian era. Only by examining Virgil's passage as both a point about prayer (l. 40) and as circumscribed within a point of time (l. 38) can it be both true (in pre-Christian time) and in need of modification (post-Revelation) when prayers may be answered.[45]

Dante's relationship to paganism is arguably distilled in the exegetical commentary on the pagan text of the *Aeneid* which he weaves into the narrative drama of Ante-Purgatory. As, at a literary level, Dante affirms the integrity of the pagan text (Virgil's point about prayer is correct within its pagan context), so Dante affirms the integrity of pagan ethics and philosophy as the guides to man's temporal goal. With the advent of Christianity, pagan ethics do not cease to be valid just as Virgil's point about prayer does not cease to be true. Nonetheless, both become radically circumscribed. The recognition of a superior law altogether — through Christ — opens up the possibility of the humanist hemisphere being extrinsically surpassed, but not internally corrected, by the hemisphere of man's Christian path to his eternal beatitude.

It is thus significant, in the unfolding narrative of Ante-Purgatory, that just as Dante-character — newly inspired by the repentant souls' urgent desire for God — seeks direction for his spiritual ascent of Mount Purgatory to Beatrice, the pilgrims should encounter Sordello who, refusing to respond to Virgil's request on Dante-character's behalf, switches the perspective back to the temporal sphere and the retrospective love of the souls for this world:

> Pur Virgilio si trasse a lei, pregando
> che ne mostrasse la miglior salita;
> e quella non rispuose al suo dimando,
> ma di nostro paese e de la vita
> ci 'nchiese; e 'l dolce duca incominciava
> 'Mantova', e l'ombra, tutta in sé romita,
> surse ver' lui del loco ove pria stava,
> dicendo: 'O Mantovano, io son Sordello
> de la tua terra!'; e l'un l'altro abbraciava. (*Purg.*, VI. 67–75)
>
> [Still Virgil drew near to it, begging that it show us the best upward path; and it did not reply to his question,
> but asked us of our city and our life; and my sweet leader began: 'Mantua...' and the shade, all gathered in itself,
> rose toward him from the place where it had been, saying, 'O Mantuan, I am Sordello from your city!' and each embraced the other.]

Where Casella and Dante-character (*Purg.*, II. 79–81), and Virgil and Statius (*Purg.*, XXI. 130–36), may not embrace because the souls of Purgatory are bodiless, the

power of Sordello's and Virgil's love of *patria*, which draws these two men — otherwise personally unknown to each other — together ('sol per lo dolce suon de la sua terra' [merely for the sweet sound of his city] (l. 80)), appears temporarily to break this law of Purgatory. The physical embrace between Sordello and Virgil, reiterated across two cantos (*Purg.*, VI. 75; *Purg.*, VII. 1–2), sets up a structural parenthesis for Dante's own this-worldly reflection on the corruption and decadence of Europe and his own *patria* (*Purg.*, VI. 76–151). Dante-author, through the voice of Sordello-protagonist, rewrites Sordello's *Compianto in morte di Ser Blacas* which upbraids the nobles of Sordello's time (the early thirteenth century) for their failure to live up to the pagan standards of virtue (*Purg.*, VII. 92–136). Sordello's literary embrace of Virgil — as ethical and poetical model — thereby provides the precedent for Dante-author's recuperation of the classical model as a light to the moral corruption of his own generation (at the turn of the fourteenth century).[46] Dante contrasts the perennial laws of Athens and Sparta which help the citizen population to flourish (*Purg.*, VI. 139–44) with the usury and exploitative laws of the morally corrupt and cupidinous Florence of his time. He emphasizes, moreover, that the laws of Justinian are rendered vain because the seat of the Emperor is vacant and there is no power to implement them (*Purg.*, VI. 88–96).

The oscillation between the recuperation of the classical model and its undeniable limitation in terms of man's ultimate goal is crystallized in the verbal juxtaposition of the adjective 'degno' [worthy]. Virgil is 'gloria d'i Latin', who has realized the full potential of the Latin language: 'per cui | mostrò ciò che potea la lingua nostra' [through whom our language showed its power] (*Purg.*, VII. 16–17). As linguistic and ethical model, he is worthy of the highest reverence. Dante-character exclaims on recognizing Virgil in the wood: 'O de li altri poeti onore e lume' [O honour and light of the other poets] (*Inf.*, I. 82). In the parallel recognition scene in Ante-Purgatory, Sordello humbly asks whether he is worthy even to hear the words of Virgil: 'S'io son d'udir le tue parole *degno*' [If I am worthy to hear your words] (*Purg.*, VII. 20). Dante and Sordello are humble and barely worthy disciples of Virgil, their *maestro* in poetics and ethics. Since they are born in the Christian era they are nonetheless, unlike Virgil, worthy to rise to God ('*anime degne* di salire a Dio') (*Purg.*, VII. 5).[47]

As in the canto of Cato (*Purg.*, I) so in the canto of Virgil (*Purg.*, VII), Dante-character remains uncharacteristically silent. Virgil speaks directly to Sordello, in the first person singular, of his eternal destiny. Denying any culpability of individual will, Virgil reaffirms the temporal arbitrariness of his fate: 'Anzi che [...] fur l'ossa mie per Ottavian sepolte' [Before [...] my bones were buried by Octavian] (*Purg.*, VII. 4–6); 'l'alto Sol [...] che fu tardi per me conosciuto' [the high sun [...] that I knew too late] (ll. 26–27). His lack of faith was, Virgil concludes, a necessarily negative fault: 'per null' altro rio | lo ciel perdei che per non aver fé' [for no other crime did I lose Heaven than for not having faith] (ll. 7–8); 'non per far, ma per non fare' [not for doing, but for not doing] (l. 25). Virgil represents himself as perfect in virtue (and the four cardinal virtues necessary for man's happiness in this life), but ignorant of the three theological virtues by which man journeys to his eternal goal:

> 'quivi sto io con quei che le tre sante
> virtù non si vestiro, e sanza vizio
> conobber l'altre e sequir tutte quante' (*Purg.*, VII. 34–36).
>
> [there I dwell with those who were not clothed with the three holy virtues, but without vice knew the others and followed all of them.]

In his own person, Virgil thus dramatizes the horizon between the temporal ideal (represented by the *Limbus gentilium virtuosum*) and the Christian journey (represented in the terraces of Purgatory, through which the soul becomes *worthy* of rising to God).[48]

The *Vallis Principium Lacrimarumque*

Virgil, on Sordello's specific request — 'dimmi se vien d'inferno, e di qual chiostra' [tell me if you come from Hell, and from what cloister] (*Purg.*, VII. 21) — informs his fellow poet that he has come from the limbo of the virtuous pagans (ll. 28–36). Unable to pursue their journey further at sunset (ll. 40–60) and, at an allegorical level, unable to ascend Mount Purgatory without the divine grace of God ('l'alto sol' [the high Sun] (l. 26)), Vigil and Dante-character are then guided by Sordello to a beautiful valley (ll. 70–81) which — in its imagery — evokes Virgil's 'chiostra' (*Inf.*, IV. 106–20). As Benvenuto comments: 'et quia descripserat locum illustrium paganorum IIII capitolo Inferni herbosum et clarum sub divo, nunc maiori arte describit locum illustrium christianorum modernorum sub tecto montis' [and because, in the fourth canto of the *Inferno*, he described the region of the illustrious pagans as verdant, bright and in the open, so now he describes, with greater art, the region of the illustrious modern Christians under the shelter of the mountain].[49] In the invited parallel, the virtuous pagans of Limbo find their counterparts in the illustrious Christian nobles who populate the Valley of the Princes. As Brunetto Latini's *Tresor* describes the greatest of human virtues with the most beautiful of princely jewels so, allegorically, Dante's picturesque landscape represents the nobles' virtues; the wondrous odour reflects their earthly fame; the splendour of the jewels mirrors their glory.[50]

The communal singing of the *Salve Regina*, however, radically qualifies this image of temporal perfection. The *Vallis Principium* [Valley of the Princes] is, in this context, both literally and spiritually the 'vallis lacrimarum' [valley of tears] of the hymn. The souls, 'gementes et flentes in hac lacrimarum valle' [mourning and weeping in this valley of tears], beat their breasts (*Purg.*, VII. 106) and are pierced with grief (l. 111).[51] Forced to contemplate the tragic state of Christendom devastated by war, the individual prowess of the rulers is reconsidered in a negative light. Peter of Aragon may have been the archetype of princely virtue — 'd'ogni valor portò cinta la corda' [was girt with the belt of all knightly worth] (l. 114) — but he is paired with Charles of Anjou who, although implicitly sharing in this accolade (l. 113), was his temporal adversary. Distracted by temporal glory, the noble princes have waged war against each other rather than collectively establishing the peace necessary to secure, in Dante's political theory, mankind's earthly felicity. The Emperor Rudolph, castigated in *Purgatorio* VI for leaving Italy desolate because of

his cupidity and greed (*Purg.*, VI. 104), is again berated for his failure to enforce the imperial right and to heal thereby the wounds of Italy, the garden of Empire: 'che potea | sanar le piaghe c'hanno Italia morta' [who could have healed the wounds that have killed Italy] (*Purg.*, VII. 94–95). Through negligence, the princely rulers have allowed Europe to degenerate into a pig-Epicurean garden of sensuality — a literal vale of tears — in which mankind is distracted by worldly delights or obstructed by factional warfare from its true ethical goal and happiness.[52] Even the perfect ordering of the temporal hemisphere — as the exemplary beauty of the valley symbolically represents — is, however, from the perspective of the Heavenly Kingdom, a spiritual vale of tears. Where temporal misery is immediately apparent, those consumed with the pursuit of earthly treasure, fame, glory, or pleasures may live their entire lives blind to their alienation from God. As Benvenuto exclaims: 'Quid ergo de muliere nati laetantur et gloriantur regnis in exilio huius vitae?' [What, though born of woman, they rejoice and boast about kingdoms in the exile of this life?].[53] The communal chanting of the *Salve Regina* teaches the souls ('gementes et flentes') to re-envisage the temporal hemisphere as spiritual exile.

Dante emphasizes, in this episode, that human nobility does not derive from a person's genealogy but rather from God. Dante's thesis on nobility is, in his immediate context, polemical. In the fourth book of the *Convivio*, Dante combats Frederick II's widely diffused definition of nobility as residing in pleasing manners and ancient wealth: 'Di retro da costui van tutti quelli | che fan gentile per ischiatta altrui' [They all follow in his steps who count a man noble if he comes of a family that has been rich for a considerable time]; 'ed è tanto durata | la così falsa oppinïon tra nui' [so entrenched has this quite false opinion become in our society] (*Conv.*, IV, Canzone, III. 21–24; 29–30; 32–33). Dante argues, however, that neither the possession of temporal possessions nor genealogical descent may constitute man's nobility. Rather, the true principle or seed of nobility is God 'solo Iddio all'anima la dona' [God alone bestows it on the soul] (Canzone, III. 116).[54] In the narrative of Ante-Purgatory, Dante exemplifies this thesis. The Emperor Rudolf and Ottocar of Bohemia are forced to reflect on the lust and sloth of their son-in-law and son Wenceslaus II: 'cui lussuria e ozio pasce' [whom lust and idleness feed] (*Purg.*, VII. 102). Philip III and Charles of Valois, meanwhile, observe the vile life of their son and brother Philip IV, the 'mal di Francia' [the plague of France]: 'la vita sua viziata e lorda' [his vicious, filthy life] (l. 110). Dante juxtaposes one family line where the offspring is worse than the seed — 'è del seme suo minor la pianta' [the plant is inferior to its seed] (ll. 127–28)) — with another line where better issue flowers forth from an enfeebled shoot — 'questi ha ne' rami suoi migliore uscita' [he has better issue in his branches] (l. 132). The arbitrary distribution of nobility, foregrounded in the narrative in Ante-Purgatory, is desired and willed by God precisely so that man may turn to Him and not, in misplaced pride, to his lineage:

> 'Rade volte risurge per li rami
> l'umana probitate; e questo vole
> quei che la dà, perché da lui si chiami'. (*Purg.*, VII. 121–23)

> [Seldom does human probity rise up through the branches, and this is willed by him who gives it, that it may be attributed to him.]

The soul's origin and goal is God, as St Paul highlights 'dum sumus in corpore perigrinamur a Domino' [while we are in the body we journey to God] and as, within the narrative, Marco Lombardo's speech, in *Purgatorio* XVI, reaffirms (II Corinthians 5. 6; *Purg.*, XVI. 85–90). Only by re-conceiving human life as directly created by God may a man's earthly predicament (however temporally miserable or felicitous) be understood as a state of exile.[55] Chanting the *Salve Regina*, the souls recognize themselves as exiles ('exsules filii Evae') who nonetheless, through Mary, are given hope as common pilgrims towards the heavenly kingdom.[56]

The Marian perspective of the 'vale of tears', which literally *overtones* the landscape of the Valley of the Princes, is thus spiritually productive and establishes the fundamental contrast with the limbo of the virtuous pagans. Pagan ethics may give the false impression of a sufficient earthly felicity. This ignores, however, the innate desire of man, as created by God, to return to his Creator. The experience of the desire for God without the hope of its consummation is indeed the spiritual *contrapasso* of the Limbo of the virtuous pagans. In the Valley of the Princes, by contrast, the renewed consciousness of alienation from God directs the souls towards Mary as their point of hope ('spes nostra') through whose intercession they may come to know Christ: 'Et Iesum benedictum fructum ventris tui, | nobis, post hoc exsilium, ostende' [and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus].[57] In the episode that follows, the enactment of the spiritual drama of the *Salve Regina* develops into the nocturnal scene of the two angels, who come from the bosom of Mary to protect the valley from the serpent (*Purg.*, VIII. 19–42; 94–108). The scene, like the singing of the *Salve Regina*, serves to remind the souls of the scriptural history and Christian reality of man's fall and redemption. As children of Eve (Eva) who succumbed to the snake's temptation, they are exiles from God's kingdom but, as children of Mary whose 'Ave' re-opened the way back to God, they must seize their vocation to turn away from earthly temptations (symbolized by the snake) and journey back to the lost Eden. Where Virgil defines the state of the *Limbus gentilium virtuosum* as the perfection of natural virtue and the deprivation of the spiritual virtues (*Purg.*, VII. 34–36), the noble souls, in the corresponding Valley of the Princes, are specifically directed towards the three pilgrim virtues — faith, hope and love — represented by the three stars (*Purg.*, VIII. 85–93). The Valley of Princes is thus a border, or horizon, of conversion. The limit of temporal felicity is re-viewed as spiritual exile and a vale of tears. At the same time, the souls learn — through chanting the *Salve Regina* — the pilgrim virtue of hope. They believe thereby that their desire for Christ will be consummated, after the journey of penitence depicted on the terraces of Purgatory, in the Heavenly City.

Conclusion

The 'horizon' eschatological condition of the virtuous pagans, highlighted in the course of the *Commedia* by the persistent presence of Virgil, poses the problem of justification for their, apparently inculpable, deprivation of beatitude. The reverence and piety of Dante-character and Sordello towards Virgil present him as the most worthy ('degno' (*Purg.*, VII. 20)) guide in the temporal sphere. Nonetheless Virgil,

unlike the pilgrims in Ante-Purgatory — '*anime degne* di salire a Dio' [souls worthy to rise to God] (*Purg.*, VII. 5) —, is not worthy of salvation and must defer to Beatrice: 'anima fia a ciò più di me *degna*' [there will be a soul more worthy of that than I] (*Inf.*, I. 122). The problem of the virtuous pagans becomes, indeed, a spur for Dante-character on his journey, and a fictional device of narrative suspense and expectation, as pilgrim and reader must wait until the Heaven of Jupiter for the spiritual food of Christian faith which may satiate, where reason fails, the theological quiddity of the question.[58] The ultimate response to Dante-character's perception of the apparent injustice of God further underlines the poet's conceptual dualism: God transcends natural law and Scriptural law and may therefore save, through miracle, a pagan.[59] Notably, the two examples of pagan salvation, Ripheus and Trajan, and the two horizon pagans, Virgil and Cato, all contributed to Dante's political ideal of the Roman imperium. As, according to Dante, God directly ordained the Roman Empire with temporal power, so Dante shows how God may work directly, over and above the spiritual sphere of the Church, to bring about the salvation of worthy pagans.[60]

I argued, however, that the final destiny of the virtuous pagans is not Dante's primary concern. Rather, in defending the virtuous pagans as without moral or intellectual fault, Dante first affirms the standards of pagan ethics and philosophy as legitimate guides to man's felicity within the temporal hemisphere. Second, through the suspended state of the virtuous pagans, Dante underlines the primacy of Christian faith. Dante's representation of the virtuous pagans is primarily directed, therefore, at men in this life: 'in pro del mondo che mal vive' (*Purg.*, XXXII. 24–25). The error of the Epicureans is to believe in the self-sufficiency of the temporal hemisphere and to pursue, thereby, a felicity which excludes, explicitly through mortalism, the spiritual dimension of man's hybrid nature. The eschatological condition of the virtuous pagans — 'L'angoscia de le genti' [the suffering of the peoples] (*Inf.*, IV. 19) — highlights, by contrast, man's immortal desire which may only be quietened through the vision of God. The moral lesson is that any man who, in this life, is without Christian faith is already in Hell, because the primary condition of Hell, as exemplified by the limbo of the virtuous pagans, is *carentia Dei* [the absence of God]. The noble souls in the *Vallis Principium lacrimarumque*, some of whom were kings in their own temporal realms, must undergo a process of inner conversion whereby they recognize, within the spiritual hemisphere, their distance from and lack of God. As common pilgrims at the horizon of Purgatory, they await their journey of spiritual purgation towards their final re-unification with God, their maker.

Notes to Chapter 5

1. Guido da Pisa, gloss to *Inf.*, IV. 82–84: 'Sed nostra fides non tenet quod ibi sint nisi parvuli innocentes [...] iste autem poeta in hac parte [...] loquitur non theologice sed poetice' [But our faith does not hold that in Limbo there are any souls except innocent children [...] the poet, however, in this part [...] is not speaking theologically but rather poetically]; Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.*, I. 28–33: 'Et quia hic videtur error satis enormis, rogo te, lector, ut vires animi parum colligas ad considerandum quid poeta noster intendat sub ista mirabili nova fictione, quae videtur

sapere haeresim; nimis enim videtur absurdum quod ponat Catonem custodem purgatorii, quem debuisset ponere in inferno, tum quia fuit paganus infidelis, tum quia interfecit se ipsum; unde debebat melius reponi inter violentos contra se ipsos' [And because here appears a rather enormous error, I beg you, reader, that you draw your powers of mind together to consider what our poet means under this strange new fiction, which seems to have the flavour of heresy; it seems indeed too absurd that he places Cato as the custodian of Purgatory, whom he should have placed in Hell, both because he was a pagan infidel, and because he killed himself (whence he should have been better placed in the region of the suicides)].

2. See Jacopo Alighieri, gloss to *Inf.*, IV. 106–08: 'le sette mura le sette liberali arti significano, le quali di necessità essere convengono circostante al filosofo e poetico intelletto' [the seven walls signify the seven liberal arts which, of necessity, come to surround the philosophical and poetical intellect]. See also Graziolo Bambaglioli, gloss to *Inf.*, IV. 106–07: 'pro castro illo intelligit ipsam scientiam et genus scientiae, per istos VII muros, intelligit VII artes scientias liberales' [for that castle, understand philosophy and the branches of philosophy; for those seven walls, understand the seven liberal arts]. Although later commentators have suggested other readings, the consensus view of his first readers is that Dante allegorically represents the pathway of philosophy.
3. See Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI. 637–39, in *Virgil*, I, 576: 'His demum exactis, perfecto munere divae, | devenere locos laetos et amoena virecta | Fortunatorum Nemorum sedesque beatas' [This at length performed and the task of the goddess performed, they came to a land of joy, the pleasant lawns and happy seats of the Blissful Groves].
4. See Virgil, *Aeneid*, VIII. 134–37, in *Virgil*, ed. and trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), II, 2–367 (p. 68), and *Mon.*, II. iii. 11–17. See also Benvenuto da Imola, gloss to *Inf.*, IV. 121: 'ipsa [Electra] fuit radix nobilissimae plantae, scilicet trojani et romani generis; ideo autor, volens commendare nobilitatem utriusque gentis, incipit ab ista tamquam ab antiquo principio nobilitatis' [she [Electra] was the root of the most noble plant: that is of the Trojan and Roman race. Therefore Dante, wanting to commend the nobility of both races, begins from her as from the ancient principle of nobility].
5. See Benvenuto, gloss to *Inf.*, IV. 40–45: 'in mundo isto et scripta et gesta istorum damnantur solum ex carentia fidei' [in this world, the writings and actions of them are censured only because of the absence of faith].
6. See Giorgio Padoan, 'Il Limbo dantesco', in *Il Pio Enea, L'empio Ulisse, Tradizione classica e intendimento medievale in Dante* (Ravenna: Longo, 1977), pp. 103–24 (p. 105): 'il poeta [...] si oppone però drasticamente a *tutta* la tradizione teologica del suo tempo (ed anche successiva) [...] la novità è grossa, anzi staordinaria' [the poet [...] sets himself completely against the whole theological tradition of his time and of successive periods [...] the novelty is huge, indeed extraordinary] (the italics are Padoan's). For a useful survey of the theological tradition of Limbo, see Marcia Colish, 'The Virtuous Pagan: Dante and the Christian Tradition', in *The Unbounded Community: Papers in Christian Ecumenism in Honor of Jaroslav Pelikan* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996), pp. 43–91.
7. Augustine, *Contra Iulianum haeresis Pelagiannae defensorem*, IV. 3. 26.
8. Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine*, trans. by L. E. M. Lynch (London: Victor Gollancz, 1961), p. 239; Augustine, *Contra Iulianum*, IV. 3. 21.
9. Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 24, a. 12, co.
10. Gilson, *Saint Augustine*, p. 239.
11. Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 24, a. 12, ad 2. Through his free will, man may avoid sin in individual instances but, without grace, he cannot avoid — at some point — falling into sin ('nisi per gratiam a peccato liberetur, in aliquod peccatum mortale quandoque incidet)' (q. 24, a. 12, ad. 21). See also Foster, *The Two Dantes*, pp. 156–89 (especially p. 172).
12. Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 24, a. 12, ad. 2.
13. Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros sententiarum magisti Petri Lombardi*, *Tomus II in secundum librum Sententiarum*, Dist. XXXIII. a. 3, q. 2, co., in *Opera omnia*, ed. by PP. Colleggi a S. Bonaventura, 11 vols (Florence, 1882–1902), II (1885), 797. Mazzoni argues that Dante must have had this passage of Bonaventure in mind, in Francesco Mazzoni, 'Saggio di un nuovo commento alla *Commedia*: Il canto IV dell'*Inferno*', *SD.*, 42 (1965), 29–206 (pp. 75–76).

14. Bonaventure, II *Sententiarum*, Dist. XXXIII. a. 3, q. 2, co., p. 797.
15. Bonaventure, II *Sententiarum*, Dist. XXXIII. a. 3, q. 2, ad. 2, p. 797.
16. Mazzoni's conclusion is thus in need of qualification: 'gli elementi concettuali relativi alla pena dei pargoli e alla loro condizione di *sospesi* [...] contenuti nel testo bonaventuriano [...] sono indubbiamente quelli che hanno fornito a Dante la falsariga per la pena di tutti i limbicoli' [the conceptual elements which relate to the pain of the infants and to their condition of being suspended [...] contained in Bonaventure's writings [...] are undoubtedly those that furnished Dante with the model for the pain of all the limbo dwellers] (*Mazzoni*, 'Il canto IV dell'*Inferno*', p. 75).
17. Bonaventure, II *Sententiarum*, Dist. XXXIII. a. 3, q. 2, co., p. 796: 'quia super hac questione nec expresse loquitur Scriptura, nec expresse eam Sancti determinant; ideo theologiae hic opinantur contraria' [because Scripture does not explicitly speak about this question, neither do saints explicitly determine it, theologians hold different views].
18. Benvenuto, gloss to *Inf.*, IV. 43–45.
19. Francesco da Buti, gloss to *Inf.*, IV. 25–42.
20. *ST.*, IIaIIae, q. 17, a. 1 co.
21. See, for example, Cicero, *De finibus*, IV. xvi. 44–45, p. 348: '"Optime," inquam: "quid enim mihi potest esse optatius quam cum Catone, omnium virtutum auctore, de virtutibus disputare?"' ['"Excellent," I rejoined; "for what could I desire better than to discuss the subject of virtue with that pattern of all the virtues Cato"']. See Seneca, *Epistulae*, I, XI. 8–10, pp. 62–65: 'Aliquis vir bonus nobis eligendus est ac semper ante oculos habendus, ut sic tanquam illo spectante vivamus et omnia tamquam illo vidente faciamus. [...] Elige itaque Catonem' [Cherish some man of high character, and keep him ever before your eyes, living as if he were watching you, and ordering all your actions as if he beheld them [...] Choose therefore Cato]. See also Lucan, *Pharsalia* [*The Civil War*], ed. and trans. by J. D. Juff (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), II. 389–90, pp. 84–87: 'Iustitiae cultor, rigidi servator honesti, | In comune bonus' [he worshipped justice and practised uncompromising virtue; he reserved his kindness for the whole people].
22. For Dante's description of the effects of the planet Venus, see *Conv.*, II. v. 14: 'di quello cielo [di Venere], pieno d'amore; dal quale prende la forma del detto cielo uno ardore virtuoso, per lo quale le anime di qua giuso s'accendono ad amore' [From this love the form of that heaven takes on a powerful ardour through which it enkindles love in souls here below].
23. See Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.*, I. 28–33: 'Dantes ingressurus viam virtutis moralis sequitur consilium Senecae, et eligit Catonem rigidum' [Dante, starting off on the path of moral virtue, follows the counsel of Seneca, and elects the stoic Cato]. Benvenuto adds: 'sicut ego elegi ipsum Dantem' [just as I chose Dante himself].
24. See Charles T. Davis, *Dante's Italy and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), p. 202.
25. See Lucan, *Pharsalia*, II. 383, pp. 84–85: 'Nec sibi sed toti genitum se credere mundo' [to believe that he was born to serve the whole world and not himself]; see also *Conv.*, IV. xxvii. 3–4: 'si legge di Catone che non a sè, ma alla patria e a tutto il mondo nato essere credea' [one reads about Cato that he believed himself to be born not for himself, but for his country and for all the world].
26. See also *Mon.*, II. v. 15: 'illud inenarrabile sacrifitium severissimi vere libertatis tutoris Marci Catonis' [that sacrifice (words cannot express it) of the most stern guardian of liberty, Marcus Cato]; and Lucan, *Phars.*, II. 302–03, pp. 78–79: 'tuumque | Nomen, Libertas, et inanem prosequar umbram' [and I will follow to the grave the mere name and empty ghost of Freedom]. Auerbach, by contrast, mixes the temporal and spiritual realms and suggests that Cato, who died for 'political and earthly freedom', is transformed, in Ante-Purgatory, into 'a *figura* for the eternal freedom of the children of God, in behalf of which all earthly things are to be despised, for the liberation of the soul from the servitude of sin'; in Erich Auerbach, 'Figura', in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (New York: Meridian, 1959), pp. 11–76 (p. 66).
27. See *Mon.*, II. v. 17: 'Catoni vero cum incredibilem natura tribuisset gravitatem, eamque perpetua constantia roborasset, semperque in proposito susceptoque consilio permansisset, moriendum ei potius quam tyrampni vultus aspiciendus fuit' [But since nature had bestowed

on Cato an austerity beyond belief, and he had strengthened it with unfailing constancy, and had always persisted in any resolve or plan he had undertaken, it was fitting that he should die rather than set eyes on the face of the tyrant]. Dante's interpretation of Cato's death contradicts Augustine's negative presentation. See Augustine, *De civitate Dei* I. 22–24 (23): 'De cuius facto quid potissimum dicam, nisi quod amici eius etiam docti quidam viri, qui hoc fieri prudentius dissuadebant, imbecillioris quam fortioris animi facinus esse censuerunt, quo demonstraretur non honestas turpia praecavens, sed infirmitas adversa non sustinens?' [What more may I say of his action than that his friends — also learned men — more prudently dissuaded him from it and judged the act suitable to a more feeble rather than a stronger soul: not showing virtue avoiding disgrace but rather weakness failing to confront hardship?]. Aquinas gives one exception to his strict condemnation of suicide: 'nisi forte divino instinctu fiat, ad exemplum fortitudinis ostendendum, ut mors contemnatur' [except that it may perhaps be done by divine instinct, to show an example of courage, that death might be disdained] (*ST.*, *Supplementum*, q. 96 a. 6, ad 6). For a fuller discussion of the theological problem of Cato's suicide, see John A. Scott, 'Cato, A Pagan Suicide in Purgatory', in *Dante's Political Purgatory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), pp. 69–84.

28. Virgil, *Aeneid*, VIII. 666–70, in *Virgil*, ed. and trans. by Fairclough, II, 106–07.
29. Inflamed by pride, envy, and avarice the Florentines seek individual advantage against the common good and this is, as Ciacco affirms, the cause of the unrelenting factionalism in Florence (*Inf.*, VI. 73–75).
30. See Virgil, *Aeneid*, VIII. 666–70, in *Virgil*, II, p. 106. See also Lucan, *Pharsalia*, IX. 554–57, pp. 546–47: 'Nam cui crediderim superos arcana daturos | Dicturosque magis quam sancto vera Catoni? | Certe vita tibi semper directa supernas | Ad leges, sequerisque deum' [I cannot believe that Heaven would reveal mysteries and proclaim truth to any man more than to the pure and holy Cato. Assuredly you have ever ruled your life in accordance with divine law, and you are a follower after God].
31. Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.*, I. 28–33: 'Licet enim possibile sit quod suspendens se laqueo habeat contritionem et salvetur, tamen non possumus nec debemus judicare nisi de damnatione eius' [Although it is indeed possible that suspending himself in the noose he may feel contrition and will be saved, we nonetheless neither can nor should adjudicate anything other than his damnation].
32. See *Conv.*, IV. iv. 10–11: 'quello popolo santo nel quale l'alto sangue troiano era mischiato, cioè Roma, Dio quello elesse a quello officio [...] Onde non da forza fu principalmente preso per la romana gente, ma da divina provedenza, che è sopra ogni ragione. Ed in ciò s'acorda Virgilio nel primo dello Eneida, quando dice, in persona di Dio parlando: "A costoro — cioè alli Romani — né termine di cose né di tempo pongo; a loro hoe dato imperio sanza fine" ' [that holy people whose blood is mingled with the noble blood of Troy, namely, the Romans, God chose this people for that office [...] This office, then, was obtained by the Roman people not principally by means of force, but by divine providence, which is the ultimate ground of all reason. Such is Virgil's view in the *Aeneid*, when he portrays God as declaring: 'To their rule [the Romans'] I set no limit, whether of place or time; to them have I given empire without end]. See also *Mon.*, II. i. 2–3; and *Mon.*, II. iv. 4–5: 'romanum Imperium ad sui perfectionem miraculorum suffragio est adiutum; ergo a Deo volitum; et per consequens de iure fuit et est. Quod autem pro romano Imperio perficiendo miracula Deus portenderit, illustrium autorum testimoniis comprobatur' [the Roman Empire was aided by the help of miracles to achieve supremacy; therefore it was willed by God; and consequently it was and is founded on right. That God performed miracles so that the Roman Empire might be supreme is confirmed by the testimony of illustrious authors].
33. *ST.*, IIaIIae. q. 2, a. 7, ad 3.
34. See Paget Toynbee, 'Catone', in *Concise Dante Dictionary: A Dictionary of Proper Names and Notable Matters in the Works of Dante* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 157: 'he [Cato] therefore put an end to his own life, after spending the greater part of the night in reading Plato's *Phaedo* on the immortality of the soul'.
35. Foster, *The Two Dantes*, p. 177. On the theological grounds for Cato's implicit faith, see also Scott, *Dante's Political Purgatory*, pp. 76–78.

36. Foster, *The Two Dantes*, p. 177: 'As for Cato, the majestic guardian of Purgatory though a pagan and a suicide, it seems almost certain that his eventual destiny is Heaven'.
37. See Pietro Alighieri (1), gloss to *Purg.*, I. 85–90: 'Christus eum [Cato] liberavit a limbo, idest ab obscuritate verae salutis [...] Deum, qui fecit eum tantum virtuosum, inspirasse ei credulitatem Christi filii venturi, et contritum decessisse, et sic salvatum' [Christ liberated him [Cato] from limbo, that is from ignorance of the true salvation [...] God — who made him so virtuous — inspired in him the belief in Christ to come, and he died contrite and, therefore, saved]. Benvenuto similarly posits Christ's harrowing of Cato from Hell: 'poeta fingit quod Cato fuerit abstractus de limbo per Christum, et translatus ad custodiam huius purgatorii' [The poet invents that Cato was taken from Limbo by Christ, and transferred to be the custodian of Purgatory] (Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.*, I. 85–90).
38. See, for example, Pietro Alighieri (1), gloss to *Purg.*, I. 85–90; and Pietro Alighieri (2), gloss to *Purg.*, I. 85–136.
39. See Matthew 22. 30: 'In resurrectione enim, neque nubent, neque nubentur: sed erunt sicut angeli Dei in caelo' [At the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like the angels in heaven].
40. See, for example, Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.*, I. 85–90.
41. See also *Purg.*, V. 31–36.
42. The lake of Iacopo's blood (*Purg.*, V. 83–84) echoes Christ's sweat which, like blood, covers the earth (Luke 22. 44); Buonconte's final sign of the cross is broken by the river's current such that, his arms stretched out, he takes on the posture of the Crucifixion (*Purg.*, V. 124–29); Pia de' Tolomei's 'ricorditi di me' echoes the penitent thief's 'memento mei' in response to which Christ, just before His own death, opens up the gates of Paradise to the penitent sinner: 'Hodie mecum eris in Paradiso' (Luke 23. 42–43).
43. Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI. 373–76, in *Virgil*, I, 558–59.
44. Sapegno, gloss to *Purg.*, VI. 36.
45. On Dante's use of the word 'punto', see Eric Griffiths, 'Introduction', in *Dante in English*, ed. by Eric Griffiths and Matthew Reynolds with an Introduction by Eric Griffiths (London: Penguin, 2005), pp. xix–cxxiv (pp. xcii–xciii). See also Christian Moevs's detailed discussions of Dante's varied usages of the word 'punto', all of which are listed in the index to Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante's Commedia*, p. 304.
46. Dante argues that the imitation of the classical poets is the rule for eloquent vernacular poetry. See, for example, *DVE.*, II. iv. 3: 'Idcirco accidit ut, quantum illos proximius imitemur, tantum rectius poetemur. Unde nos doctrine operi intendentes doctrinatas eorum poetrias emulari oportet' [Thus it comes about that, the more closely we try to imitate the great poets, the more correctly we write poetry. So, since I am trying to write a theoretical work about poetry, it behoves me to emulate their learned works of poetic doctrine]. See also *DVE.*, II. vi. 7: 'utilissimum foret ad illam habituandam regulatos vidisse poetas, Virgilium videlicet, Ovidium Metamorfoseos, Staium atque Lucanum [...] et multo alios quos amica sollicitudo nos visitare invitat' [it would be most useful, in order to make the practice of such constructions habitual, to read the poets who respect the rules, namely Virgil, the Ovid of the *Metamorphoses*, Statius, and Lucan [...] and many others whom an affectionate interest invites us to consult].
47. See also *Inf.*, I. 121–23.
48. See *Purg.*, I. 4–6: 'E canterò di quel secondo regno | dove l'umano spirito si purga | e di salire al ciel diventa degno' [and I will sing of that second realm where the human spirit purges itself and becomes worthy to ascend to Heaven]. See also Foster, *The Two Dantes*, p. 3: 'Virgil, symbol of the soul of man poised in a perfect yet limited equilibrium between animality transcended and divine grace not yet received'.
49. Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.*, VII. 73–81.
50. See Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*, ed. and trans. by Pietro G. Beltrami, Paolo Squillacioti, Plinio Torri, and Sergio Vatteroni (Turin: Einaudi, 2007), II. i, pp. 330–32: 'la premiere est prudence, qui est senefiee por le carboncle qui alumine la nuit [...] la seconde est atemprance, qui est senefiee por le saphir qui porte celestial color [...] la tierce est force qui est senefiee por le diamant qui est si fort que il rompe et perce toutes pierres et tos metaus [...] la quarte vertu est justise, qui est senefiee por l'esmeraude, qui est la plus usee vertus et la plus belle chose que oil d'ome peust

veoir' [the first is prudence, which is represented by the ruby that lights up the night [...] the second is temperance, which is represented by the sapphire that is of celestial colour [...] the third is fortitude, which is represented by the diamond that is so strong that it breaks and pierces all other stones and metals [...] the fourth virtue is justice which is represented by the emerald which is the most green and the most beautiful thing that man may behold]. See also Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.*, VII. 73–81: 'allegorice per istam viriditatem florum et suavitatem odorum poeta dat intelligi viriditatem florentium operum, et odorem bonae famae et splendorem inclitae gloriae istorum' [the poet intends that the vitality of the flowers and the pleasantness of their fragrance may be understood allegorically to refer to the scent of their good fame and the splendour of their renowned glory].

51. 'Salve, Regina', in 'Common Prayers', in *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2006), p. 181.
52. In *Policraticus*, John of Salisbury contrasts the four rivers of the cardinal virtues with the four rivers of vice which spring from a pig-Epicurean sensuality, and he directly identifies the garden of the pig-Epicureans with the Marian vale of tears. See *Policraticus*, VIII. xvi. 776a–b: 'E diverso et Epicureorum ortus fontem suum habet libidinem, qui et ipse parturit flumina quae irrigant universam hanc vallem lacrimarum et miseriae, in quam eiectus est exul qui quod libuit quam quod licuit facere praeelegit [...] unus rivus est amor habendi [...] alter vero luxuriae lenocinia diffundit et defluit in varias voluptates [...] tertius vires colligit [...] prosilit in odibilem tirannidis venam [...] quartus ab appetitu celebritatis et reverentiae, dum eminentiam quaerit, fallaciter intumescit' [By contrast, the fount of the Epicureans has as its source lust, which brings forth rivers that irrigate the whole valley of tears and miseries, into which is hurled the exile who prefers what is pleasing rather than what it is lawful to do [...] one river is the love of possessions [...] another river pours out the enticements of luxury and flows down into various pleasures [...] the third river, acquiring strength [...], bursts forth into the hateful stream of tyranny [...] the fourth river swells up deceptively from the desire for renown and respect, in so far as it seeks eminence].
53. Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.*, VII. 82–84.
54. See *Conv.*, IV. xx. 5: 'Chè 'l divino seme non cade in ischiatta, cioè in istirpe, ma cade ne le singulari persone [...] la stirpe non fa le singulari persone nobili, ma le singulari persone fanno nobile la stirpe' [for the divine seed does not descend into a stock or family-line; it descends, rather, into individual people [...] it is not a family-line that makes individuals noble, but individuals who ennoble a family-line]. See also *Conv.*, IV. xx. 7: 'Dio solo porge questa grazia a l'anima di quelli cui vede stare perfettamente ne la sua persona, acconcio e disposto a questo divino atto ricevere' [God alone infuses this grace into the soul which he sees to be subsisting perfectly in its body, ready and disposed to receive this divine act].
55. See Gerhart B. Ladner, '*Homo Viator*: Medieval Ideas on Alienation and Order', *Speculum*, 42 (1967), 233–59 (p. 256): 'the medieval conception of Homo Viator, of the wayfarer in a strange world who is also a pilgrim towards a divine order'. The starting point of Dante-character's journey is, in this sense, also a moment of self-realization and conversion: 'the *selva oscura*, the dark wood, that old symbol of alienation, in which, *nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*, he had lost the straight path, *la diritta via*, that old symbol of order' (p. 251).
56. 'Salve, Regina', in *Compendium*, p. 181.
57. 'Salve, Regina', in *Compendium*, p. 181.
58. Dante-character's desire for justice indeed leads him, literally, to Paradise: 'beati, qui esuriunt et sitiunt justitiam: quoniam ipsi saturabuntur [...] quoniam ipsorum est regnum caelorum' [blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice: for they will be satisfied [...] for theirs is the kingdom of heaven] (Matthew 5. 6; Matthew 5. 10).
59. As Jesus prays to his father in the garden of Gethsemane: 'Abba pater, omnia tibi possibilia sunt' [Abba, Father, all things are possible to you] (Mark 14. 36).
60. See, for example, *Mon.*, III. xii. 1–2: 'romani Principatus auctoritatem [...] inmediate dependere a culmine totius entis ostendero, qui Deus est' [Roman sovereign authority [...] derives directly from the summit of all being, that is from God].

CHAPTER 6

❖

The Horizon between Pagan Reason and Christian Faith

Introduction

Dante's theory of man's temporal and spiritual goals is central not only to his Latin and vernacular prose works but also to the eschatological structure of the *Commedia*. Dante's Epicurean category represents, as I showed in Chapters 3 and 4, a pursuit of temporal felicity to the explicit exclusion of the spiritual hemisphere of man's eternal life. In Chapter 5, I considered Dante's representation of the horizon condition of the virtuous pagans Cato and Virgil in Ante-Purgatory, and I argued that Dante's *Limbus gentilium virtuosum* corresponds to the temporal goal of mankind (the *paradisus terrestris*) delineated in the *Monarchia*. The present chapter explores how the liminal condition of the Christian souls in Ante-Purgatory (saved but awaiting spiritual purgation) dramatizes the tension in Dante's dualistic theory between reason and faith, nature and grace, man's temporal felicity and his eternal salvation.

However, the argument of this chapter and its comparative methodology dispute two major traditions in Dante scholarship. There have been, indeed, two tendencies which have made Dante critics ill-disposed to read the *Commedia* in dualistic terms or to suggest a direct parallel between the *Limbus gentilium virtuosum* and the 'beatitudo huius vitae' delineated in the *Monarchia* (III. xv. 7). The first tendency is to emphasize the difference between Dante's *Commedia* and his prose works. Nardi, Gilson and Foster, whose seminal studies highlighted the question of Dante's dualism in the twentieth century, worked — at least initially — on the basis of the incorrect assumption that both the *Convivio* and the *Monarchia* preceded the composition of the *Commedia*. Nardi's thesis of Dante's evolving intellectual trajectory depends upon this compositional chronology. Nardi contrasts the dualism in *Convivio* IV and, more radically in the *Monarchia*, with the subsequent prophetic vision of the *Commedia*: 'In the *Commedia* there is no more trace of the 'two final ends' of the *Monarchia*'.[1] Gilson, who analyses the philosophical unorthodoxy of Dante's dualism in the prose works, emphasizes that the *Commedia* is 'the work of a poet' and that its subject 'is theological — the final aims of man (*ultima regna*)'.[2] Kenelm Foster, following Nardi, underlines the 'fundamental difference' between the prose works and the *Commedia*: 'the *Comedy* is quite another matter'.[3] Foster argues that the thesis in the *Monarchia* 'of the *two* "final ends" (*duo ultima*) of human

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life, one in time, the other in eternity [...] grows naturally [...] out of ideas already adumbrated in the *Convivio*. In this sense the two works are continuous. But neither, in *this* respect, is continuous with the *Comedy*'.[4] The emphasis which these three authoritative twentieth-century scholars of medieval thought placed upon the difference and discontinuity between the prose works and the *Commedia* has been, and remains, deeply influential.

Prue Shaw has argued convincingly, however, that there 'seems no good reason to doubt' the authenticity of 'the cross-reference in Book I to the *Paradiso*' and, therefore, that the *Monarchia* was written 'certainly no earlier than 1314 and possibly [during] the very last years of its author's life'.[5] Countering the weight of Nardi's influence, Shaw argues that the earlier dating 'is urged only by scholars — but there are many of them — who for other reasons are unwilling to countenance a late date'.[6] For Nardi, as Shaw indicates, the *Monarchia* represented 'an intermediate stage between the *Convivio* and the *Comedy* — a stage where Dante sees a split between reason and faith, the earthly and the spiritual, rather than the subordination of the first to the second'.[7] It is no longer sustainable to group together the *Convivio* and the *Monarchia* as two formative stages in Dante's intellectual development. Further historical and contextual arguments, as provided by Richard Kay and Anthony K. Cassell, have corroborated Prue Shaw's thesis and narrowed the dating of the *Monarchia* to after 1316 and, most probably, to the years 1317–18.[8] In line with the modern philological evidence, I argue that Dante's dualism persisted to the final years of his life and, at the least, until the bulk of the *Commedia* had already been written. But I also go one step further: I argue that the tension in the prose works 'between reason and faith, the earthly and the spiritual' — which is underlined by Nardi, Gilson and Foster and reiterated by Shaw — is, in fact, also present in the *Commedia* and, especially, in the narrative of Ante-Purgatory.

The later dating of the *Monarchia* has given renewed encouragement to those scholars who seek to read the *Commedia* in the light of, rather than in contra-distinction to, Dante's prose works and his dualistic vision. There is, however, amongst these Dante scholars a second tendency — from which I must also distinguish my own argument — simply to equate the Earthly Paradise in the *Monarchia* with the Earthly Paradise at the summit of Purgatory. Scott, as part of this tradition, correctly combats the first tendency: 'All too often, Dante's poem has been regarded exclusively as a spiritual ascent to God, thus ignoring the totality of the poet's message, which is bent on leading humanity to both its goals, the one set firmly in this world (Virgil/Emperor → Earthly Paradise) and the other providing salvation and eternal beatitude'.[9] Scott asks the right questions: 'Is there an Earthly Paradise in the *Comedy*? Where is it located? Is someone led there; and, if so, who guides that person?' However, without consideration of the other possibilities (such as the *Limbus gentilium virtuosum*), Scott immediately responds, as to a self-evident fact: 'The answers, obvious as they are, need to be stated: yes, the Earthly Paradise is indeed to be found there, situated above Purgatory proper, and it is Virgil, the Aristotelianized poet of imperial Rome, who guides Dante there'.[10] These 'obvious answers' established, Scott reads a series of episodes in *Purgatorio* as confirming his thesis. For example, in contrast with a scholarly consensus which he nonetheless

disputes ('the *Enciclopedia Dantesca* [...] still reports that "*All the commentators, both ancient and modern, are agreed in recognizing Jesus Christ in the griffin*..." '), Scott reads the Griffin as representing 'the person of the ideal Roman Prince [...] the image of Christ on earth, human but also divine'.[11] Scott comments: 'It would surely have been strange if, in that very same Earthly Paradise, which for Dante reflected the happiness attainable through Justice and the teachings of philosophy, the poet had placed no signifier of the imperial office and its divinely appointed mission to guide the human race, *humana civitas*, to the *beatitudo huius vitae* (*Mon*., III. xv. 10)'.[12] It is not at all strange, however, if the Earthly Paradise at the summit of *Purgatory* is *not* the 'very same Earthly Paradise' depicted in the *Monarchia*. Dante's dualism is at once 'obvious' and yet requires, on Scott's part, an interpretation of Dante's Earthly Paradise which is at odds both with the wider medieval context and with the commentary tradition on the *Purgatorio*.[13]

In contrast to the two countervailing tendencies in Dante scholarship, the argument of this chapter demonstrates the persistence of Dante's dualistic theory in the *Commedia*, and it does not require a forced reading of Dante's Purgatory in strictly political terms. The seven walls and the noble castle of the virtuous pagans, rather than the seven terraces of Purgatory and the Earthly Paradise, correspond more accurately to the journey to man's temporal felicity outlined in the *Monarchia*. The ascent through Purgatory represents the journey of the soul, modelled upon Mary *mater ecclesiae*, towards the recovery of the state of grace lost by Adam and represented in the Earthly Paradise at the summit of Purgatory. The eternal goal and reward ('beatitudo vite ecterne') for the soul's spiritual journey — the 'paradisus caelestis' — is the vision of God ('que consistit in fruitione divini aspectus' (*Mon*., III. xv. 7)) represented in the celestial spheres of *Paradiso*. The liminal region of Ante-Purgatory lies between Limbo (the highest circle of Hell) and the first terrace of Purgatory. Dante's Ante-Purgatory is thus poised, I argue, between man's earthly goal and the journey towards man's spiritual goal.

This chapter is in three sections. In the first, I address the intertextuality of *Purgatorio* II in which Dante, for the first time in the *Commedia*, juxtaposes a Scriptural psalm of spiritual redemption (sung by the souls arriving on the shore of Mount Purgatory) with his own philosophical canzone (sung by his old Florentine companion Casella). In the second, I set the episode of Dante-character's solitary shadow (*Purg*., III) within the context of Dante's discussions of the horizon between reason and faith in the prose works. I thereby restore to Virgil's speech (*Purg*., III. 22–44) its contemporary polemic. The episode, which culminates in Dante-character's encounter with the Epicurean excommunicate Manfred, represents the epistemological transition from philosophical wonder to belief in miracle, as the foundation of Christian faith in the divine authority of Scripture. The third section analyses Dante's incorporation of an astronomical lecture and ethical lesson from the *Convivio* into the narrative dialogue of Virgil and Dante-character in *Purgatorio* IV. The two figures of Virgil and Belacqua set into relief the tension between the order of nature and the order of grace. Although Belacqua, the very embodiment of sloth, is deplorable from the perspective of man's temporal goal, he is nonetheless saved from the perspective of man's spiritual goal. Virgil, his antithesis, is by

contrast a virtuous pagan (perfect in virtue and knowledge) and yet eternally damned (without the hope of the vision of God).

Philosophy and Theology: 'Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona' and 'In exitu Isräel de Aegypto'

There are two arrivals to Ante-Purgatory which may represent the two perspectives, from each side of the horizon, of the pagan and the Christian hemispheres. The first arrival (canto I) is at night, just before dawn, a solitary scene of two pagans and Dante in a darkness lit only by the stars. The darkness may represent the pagan world: the long night which awaits, looking out to the horizon, the dawn of Christ. The stars, likewise, represent the natural virtues which illuminate Cato, the embodiment of pagan virtue. In the closing two terzine of the canto, the implicit allusion to Ulysses' failed attempt to arrive at Mount Purgatory further accentuates the sense — highlighted by the dialogue between Virgil and Cato — of the pagan pushing towards but failing to reach the horizon of Christian faith.[14] Maria Corti, indeed, suggests that Ulysses' journey represents the flawed pursuit of pagan truth independent of Christian faith.[15] The second arrival (canto II) at dawn itself, by contrast, is miraculously conducted by an angel of God so clothed in light that Dante cannot hold his glance: 'per che l'occhio da presso nol sostenne' [so that my eyes could not sustain it up close] (*Purg.*, II. 39). Where Cato represents the height of moral perfection through human powers, the divine minister scorns human instruments: 'Vedi che sdegna li argomenti umani' [See how he disdains all human means] (l. 31). The angel has no need of oars or reins (signifying art and intelligence) and his eternal wings (signs of Supernatural grace) contradistinguish human corruptible organs and instruments: 'che non si mutan come mortal pelo' [that do not change like mortal hairs] (l. 36).[16] In contrast to the cries of Charon (*Inf.*, III. 82–96), the rhetoric of Ulysses (*Inf.*, XXVI. 90–142) and the interrogatives of Cato (*Purg.*, I. 40–48), the celestial oarsman disdains human speech. Instead he seals each of the hundred-score of souls with the simple sign of the cross. Where, in the first canto, Dante-character is confronted with the moral and natural excellence of Cato, in the second canto, Christ crucified and risen — through a flock of Christian penitents — is proclaimed. The Christian hemisphere sets, as light does dark, the pagan attainments of man in a radically different context: the dawn of canto II marks, for Dante-character, a new beginning, a 'vita nuova'.

In the context of the juxtaposition of the pagan and the Christian, it is highly significant that Dante weaves a Scriptural and a philosophical text into the narrative drama of *Purgatorio* II. The two texts, both extensively commented upon by Dante in his prose works and letters, crystallize the dichotomy in Dante's theoretical dualism between the Christian and the pagan hemispheres and between the two goals of man. The first text is the psalm 'In exitu Isräel de Aegypto'. In the *Convivio* and in the epistle to Can Grande, Dante uses the exodus of Israel from the land of Egypt to explain the three spiritual senses of Scripture (*Conv.*, II. i. 7; *Epist.*, XIII. 7). In Dante's gloss, the psalm literally narrates God's deliverance of the Jews, guided by Moses, from Egypt to the promised land of Israel; allegorically it signifies

mankind's rendition through Christ; morally the conversion of the soul from the misery of sin to the state of grace; and anagogically the departure of the holy soul from the servitude of this-worldly corruption to the liberty of eternal glory. The psalm encapsulates for Dante the whole Christian journey, in the hemisphere of faith, from the soul's beginning in sin to its goal in Paradise. The second text is Dante's great hymn to Philosophy, 'Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona'. Dante cites this poem, in *De vulgari eloquentia*, as an exemplum of his most elevated style of poetry reserved for the love of the noble intellect (the mind freed from servitude to the sensible appetite) for the Truth (*DVE.*, II. vi. 6). The canzone is addressed to free souls (figured as 'donne gentili') in whom Reason holds court. These are distinguished from incontinent souls (figured as 'ancelle') in whom the rational nature is enslaved by the sensual appetite.[17] In his commentary to the canzone, Dante figuratively reworks Aristotle's ethical thought into the vernacular. He outlines the different natures — the simple body, mineral, vegetative, sensitive, and rational — which come together in the human soul. And he describes human happiness as twofold: consisting in virtue (a secondary happiness) and the contemplation of Truth (the primary happiness).[18] The human soul will be judged noble insofar as it imitates Lady Philosophy, the 'donna gentile' *par excellence*. The canzone ethically directs its reader to friendship with Lady Philosophy and thus to the human soul's temporal goal.

The potential tension in the noble soul between its temporal and spiritual goals is represented in 'Voi che 'ntendendo il terzo ciel movete', the first canzone of the *Convivio*. Dante's gloss on 'In exitu Isräel de Aegypto' serves as a hermeneutical introduction to the canzone. Under the figure of two ladies (Beatrice and the 'donna gentile'), Dante represents allegorically the contest in his soul between his love for Theology (*Conv.*, II. vii. 5–6) and his love for Philosophy: 'la filosofia [...] fatta come una donna gentile' [philosophy [...] having the form of a noble lady] (*Conv.*, II. xii. 5–6).[19] As, to use Dante's analogy, a political party may hold government in a city, so Beatrice had held the governance of Dante's soul.[20] But as another party may attempt to usurp power, so Dante's soul had been assailed by a new 'spiritel d'amor gentile' (*Conv.*, II. *Canzone*, I. 42) which drew his intellect away from Beatrice to the 'donna gentile':

> dove dice 'uno spiritel d'amore', s'intende uno pensiero che nasce del mio studio. Onde è da sapere che per amore, in questa allegoria, sempre s'intende esso studio, lo quale è applicazione dell'animo innamorato della cosa a quella cosa. (*Conv.*, II. xv. 10).
>
> [In the fourth stanza the words a 'fresh spirit of love' refer to a thought which springs from my study. Here it should be explained that in this allegory the word love always refers to this study, which is the devotion of the mind in love to the object of its love.]

Dante's overly exclusive love for philosophy destroyed every other thought: 'Cominciai tanto a sentire della sua dolcezza, che il suo amore cacciava e distruggeva ogni altro pensiero' [I began to experience so profoundly the sweetness she brings that love of her drove out and destroyed all thought of anything else] (*Conv.*, II. xii. 7).

Purgatorio II re-presents at both an intertextual level — through Dante's self-referential literary signposting — and at a narrative level — in the episode with Casella — the intellectual drama between the temporal and the spiritual hemispheres. Before coming aground on Mount Purgatory, the souls sing the psalm 'In exitu Isräel de Aegypto' in full: 'con quanto di quel salmo è poscia scripto' [with as much of that psalm as is written thereafter] (*Purg.*, II. 48). However, amazed by the bodily presence of Dante-character, the souls turn back from the spiritual journey which the pilgrimage psalm impels: 'quasi oblïando d'ire a farsi belle' [almost forgetting to go to make themselves beautiful] (*Purg.*, II. 75). In the psalm's place, Dante-character asks his old Florentine friend Casella to sing one of the love songs which used to quieten his desires in their earthly life together. Casella chooses Dante's canzone 'Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona' [Love that discourses with me in my mind]. All the souls, listening enraptured, are so contented that they become oblivious to all other concerns (ll. 116–17):

> E io: 'Se nuova legge non ti toglie
> memoria o uso a l'amoroso canto
> che mi solea quetar tutte mie doglie,
> di ciò ti piaccia consolare alquanto
> l'anima mia, che, con la mia persona
> venendo qui, è affannata tanto!'
> '*Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona*'
> cominciò elli allor sì dolcemente,
> che la dolcezza ancor dentro mi suona.
> Lo mio maestro e io e quella gente
> ch'eran con lui parevan sì contenti,
> come a nessun toccasse altro la mente. (*Purg.*, II. 106–17)

> [And I: 'If a new law has not taken from you the memory or habit of the amorous singing that used to quiet all my desires,
> let it please you to console my soul a little in that way, for, coming here with its body, it is so wearied!'
> '*Love that discourses with me in my mind*,' he began then, so sweetly that the sweetness still sounds within me.
> My master and I and those people that were with him seemed as contented as if nothing else touched anyone's mind.]

The souls, distracted on the shore of Purgatory, are all implicated in the procrastination of their spiritual conversion. The episode exemplifies dramatically how a soul — not only in its mortal life but even in Ante-Purgatory — may be diverted from its spiritual journey by some earthly delight. The passage appears to imply that just as Casella was held back, in the course of his life, by an excessive delight in music so Dante had been constrained, in periods of his life, by an overly exclusive love for Philosophy.[21] The outward sensual sweetness ('dolcezza') of the music is indeed in counterpoint with the inner intellectual 'dolcezza' of the philosophical canzone: the one quietening the senses, the other the intellect. As Orpheus calmed the beasts with his lyre, so music stills the unstable passions of the human soul.[22] Similarly, through the act of contemplation, the intellect moves from potential to act with regard to knowledge thereby reaching the perfection, or quietude, it desires:

'in quella si quieta ogni suo desiderio' [by attaining that its every desire is stilled] (*Conv.*, III. vi. 7). Dante's description of the effect of philosophical contemplation in the *Convivio* — 'della sua dolcezza, che lo suo amore cacciava e distruggeva ogni altro pensiero' [the sweetness she [philosophy] brings, that love of her drove out and destroyed thought of anything else] (II. xii. 7) — is reflected in Casella's singing of the philosophical canzone. Through the adverb 'dolcemente' (l. 113) and the noun 'dolcezza' (l. 114), Dante emphasizes its sweetness and observes its exclusive hold on the mind: 'come a nessun toccasse altro la mente' [as if nothing else touched anyone's mind] (l. 117).[23]

However Cato, to whom the path of Christian beatitude was not open in his earthly life, upbraids the flock of Christians: 'Che è ciò, spiriti lenti? | qual negligenza, quale stare è questo' [What is this, lagard spirits? What negligence, what standing still is this?] (ll. 120–21). The philosophical canzone may now be considered as bait ('l'esca' (l. 128)) which undermines the power and moral urgency of the psalm (God's self-revelation). It may trap men during their earthly lives when they should, like birds in fright who leave their lowly pasture, take flight and follow the 'maggior cura' [greater care] (l. 129). Only through spiritual purgation of their sin may the souls come to see God: 'Correte al monte a spogliarvi lo scoglio | ch'esser non lascia a voi Dio manifesto' [Run to the mountain to shed the slough that keeps God from being manifest to you] (ll. 122–23). Freccero convincingly argues that Dante's use of the verb 'consolare' (l. 109) and the metaphor of bait 'esca' (l. 128) is an ironical allusion to Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*: 'Boethius' point is that philosophy is the means to satisfy the natural desire for happiness [...] In the *Purgatorio*, however, the goal is *supernatural* happiness, for which philosophy is definitely not sufficient. Just as Boethius' *Philosophia* had cast out the Muses of secular poetry, so she in turn is "cast out" in Dante's text by Cato's rebuke'.[24]

Through the textual antithesis between the psalm and his own philosophical canzone, Dante thereby narratively embodies a tension between man's two goals and hemispheres of conduct. Any earthly delectation, such as Casella's music, may divert man from his spiritual journey. However, the canzone — which describes the love for Philosophy — delimits the perfection and thus the horizon of man's earthly delight. The psalm 'In exitu Isräel de Aegypto' which, in the narrative, is sealed by the sign of the cross represents, instead, the fulfilment of the Old Law in Christ. This is the spiritual path which the Christian, like a penitent soul in Ante-Purgatory, is commanded to follow.

Reason and Faith: 'Matto è chi spera...'

The souls that arrive on the shore of mount Purgatory ask Dante-character and Virgil for guidance (*Purg.*, II. 59–60). Virgil replies, however: 'Voi credete | forse che siamo esperti d'esto loco; | ma noi siam peregrin come voi siete' [You believe perhaps that we know this place, but we are strangers here, as you are] (ll. 61–63). Although still Dante's guide, Virgil underlines that in Ante-Purgatory he is not an expert on the journey as he was in Hell. Rather, he is a pilgrim who, like them, is unsure of the way. The panicked flight following Cato's rebuke — which is highlighted, at a structural level, across consecutive cantos (*Purg.*, III. 1) — emphasizes the disorientation ('com' om che va, né sa dove rïesca' [as one who goes without knowing where he will arrive] (*Purg.*, II. 132)), acute shame ('né la nostra partita fu men tosta' [nor was our departure less sudden] (*Purg.*, II. 133)), and remorse experienced even by Virgil ('come t'è picciol fallo amaro morso!' [how bitter a bite to you is even a little fault!] (*Purg.*, III. 9)). Benvenuto comments how indecorous their behaviour appears: 'velocitas enim est magis negotiatorum et mercatorum, quam philosophorum et poetarum' [speed is, indeed, more appropriate to bankers and merchants than to philosophers and poets], and suggests that seeing Virgil running blindly across the plain would have moved even the rigid Cato to smile.[25] The strange mix of fear (the imagery of a flight from battle) and humour (the peculiar scene of the great-souled Virgil running in his toga) foreshadow the epistemological transition, in the ensuing episode, from the comfortable boundary of reason to the hemisphere of faith.

It is indeed at this moment in the journey that Dante-character discovers for the first time that while he casts a shadow, all the other souls — being bodiless — do not:

> Lo sol, che dietro fiammeggiava roggio,
> rotto m'era dinanzi a la figura,
> ch'avëa in me de' suoi raggi l'appoggio.
> Io mi volsi dallato con paura
> d'essere abbandonato, quando' io vidi
> solo dinanzi a me la terra oscura;
> e 'l mio conforto: 'Perché pur diffidi?',
> a dir mi cominciò tutto rivolto;
> 'non credi tu me teco e ch'io ti guidi?
> Vespero è già colà dov' è sepolto
> lo corpo dentro al quale io facea ombra;
> Napoli l'ha, e da Brandizio è tolto.
> Ora, se innanzi a me nulla s'aombra,
> non ti maravigliar più che d'i cieli
> che l'uno a l'altro raggio non ingombra.
> A sofferir tormenti, caldi e geli
> simili corpi la Virtù dispone
> che, come fa, non vuol ch'a noi si sveli'. (*Purg.*, III. 16–33)

[The sun, flaming ruddy behind us, was broken before me in the shape of its rays' resting on me.

I turned to the side, afraid that I had been abandoned, when I saw the ground darkened only in front of me:
and my strength: 'Why do you distrust?' he began to say, turned fully toward me. 'Do you not believe that I am with you and guiding you?
It is already vespers there at the tomb of the body within which I cast a shadow; Naples has it, from Brindisi it has been taken.
Now if in front of me no shadow falls, do not marvel more than at the heavens, which give no obstacle to each other's rays.
Such bodies are disposed to suffer torments, heat, and freezings by the Power that does not wish its ways to be unveiled to us.]

The bodiless state of the souls in the afterlife raises — as Virgil's response to Dante-character's bewilderment indicates — the key problem of the *postmortem* existence of the souls. As we saw in Chapter 2, this is central to 'Epicurean' arguments for mortalism. If the soul cannot understand without phantasms (which are corporeal) how may it exist individually in an afterlife? If a soul is without a body in the afterlife, how may it suffer torments as punishment (l. 31), or bliss as reward, for its actions on earth?

At this crucial juncture in the poem, Virgil emphasizes the need for faith: 'Perché pur diffidi? (l. 22); 'non credi tu' (l. 24)? There is an epistemological shift from wonder to belief. Wonder is, according to Aristotle, the seed of philosophical knowledge. Belief is, as St Anselm's maxim encapsulates, the seed of Christian knowledge ('credo ut intelligam').[26] In philosophy, our wonder at an effect leads us, through reason, to discover its cause. However the causes of this particular effect — the souls' bodiless-but-experiential existence — cannot be discovered through natural reason. Rather, as Virgil explains to Dante-character, it is a matter of faith and theological speculation: 'che, come fa, non vuol ch'a noi si sveli' (l. 33). Only on the sixth terrace of Purgatory does Statius reveal to Dante-character — opening up thereby 'la veduta etterna' [the eternal view] (*Purg.*, XXV. 31) — the theological cause which makes him wonder: 'e quest'è la cagion di che tu miri' [this is the cause of what you wonder at] (*Purg.*, XXV. 79–108 (108)). Virgil therefore first points out — as a matter of fact — that his body is already buried on earth (ll. 25–27). He then emphasizes that Dante-character must believe in his real but bodiless existence rather than being struck with wonder ('non ti maravigliar più' (l. 29)).[27] When the souls — mirroring Dante-character's own bemusement — see his shadow, Virgil commands: 'Non vi maravigliate, ma credete' [Do not marvel, but believe] (*Purg.*, III. 97).

The condition of the souls in the afterlife, explicitly raised in the liminal region of Ante-Purgatory, highlights the horizon between the hemisphere of pagan reason and the hemisphere of revealed truth. Virgil, a pagan, lambasts the intellectual madness which stems from the false hope that man's reason may cross this horizon and understand the mysteries of God:

'Matto è chi spera che nostra ragione
possa trascorrer la infinita via
che tiene una sustanza in tre persone'. (*Purg.*, III. 34–36)

[He is mad who hopes that reason can traverse the infinite way taken by one Substance in three Persons.]

In this passage, Dante may have two kinds of 'mad' opponents in mind. The first are those who, in their foolishness or presumption ('a multa stultitia vel a multa praesumptione'), seek to understand — within the hemisphere of philosophy — truths which may only be understood through faith in God's self-revelation.[28] In the late scholastic text *Questio de aqua et terra*, Dante berates with similar rhetorical emphasis the intellectual tendency to overstep the limits of rational inquiry:

> Desinant ergo, desinant homines querere que supra eos sunt [...] Audiant [...] Ysaim dicentem 'Quem distant caeli a terra, tantum distant viae meae a viis vestris' loquebatur equidem in persona Dei ad hominem. (*Questio*, xxii. 77).
>
> [men must stop, therefore, they must stop searching for things which are above them [...] they must listen [...] to Isaiah saying 'my ways are as far apart from your ways as the heavens from the earth'; he was speaking to man, indeed, in the persona of God.]

In the *Convivio*, Dante argues that through the study of philosophy a man may come to the knowledge of truths (and affirm them with intellectual certainty) which are, at the limit of his horizon, beyond the power of his human nature to see. Dante's examples are 'eternity', 'God', 'primary matter'. Nonetheless he emphasizes that this limit cannot be passed, through human reason, except in error (*Conv.*, III. xv. 6; 9):

> 'li antichi la veritade non videro [...] ma noi semo di ciò amaestrati [...] dallo Imperadore dell'universo, che è Cristo [...] e disse a noi la veritade di quelle cose che noi sapere sanza Lui non potevamo, né vedere veramente'. (*Conv.*, II. v. 2–3).
>
> [the ancients did not perceive the truth [...] we, however, have been instructed [...] by the Emperor of the universe, Christ himself [...] he taught us the truth about things which, without his help, we should not have been able to know or perceive truly.]

The first folly therefore consists in a failure to understand the limit of reason and the circumscribed scope of philosophy. It is mad to seek to understand certain divine truths, such as the triune nature of God, without recourse to divine scripture because these truths are above the survey of unaided human reason.

The second of Dante's 'mad' opponents are those who consider the truths of revelation to be false because they may not be understood through reason:

> Sicut igitur maximae amentiae esset idiota qui ea quae a philosopho proponuntur falsa esse assereret propter hoc quod ea capere non potest, ita, et multo amplius, nimiae stultitiae est homo si ea quae divinitus Angelorum ministerio revelantur falsa esse suspicatur ex hoc quod ratione investigari non possunt.[29]
>
> [As therefore it would be the height of madness in an uneducated man to declare a philosopher's propositions false because he could not understand them, so and much more would it be absolute foolishness in a learned man to suspect the truths revealed by the ministry of angels to be false simply because they cannot be investigated through reason.]

In *Convivio* IV, Dante similarly castigates this intellectual madness:

> 'Oh stoltissime e vilissime bestiuole che a guisa d'uomo voi pascete, che presummete contro nostra Fede parlare e volete sapere, filando e zappando,

> ciò che Iddio con tanta prudenza hae ordinato! Maledetti siate voi, e la vostra presunzione, e chi a voi crede!' (*Conv.*, IV. v. 9).
>
> [O most stupid and base of beasts pasturing in the guise of human beings, who are so arrogant as to speak against our faith; with your fine-spun theorizing and laboured investigations you wish to find cause for what God has determined with such wisdom! A curse on you and your arrogance, and on all who pay you heed.]

Dante entitles, indeed, his poem on human nobility — man's temporal goal — 'Contra-li-erranti' in deference to Aquinas's *Summa Contra Gentiles* which defends the Christian faith — and man's spiritual goal — against unbelievers:

> Questo 'Contra-li-erranti' è tutto una parola, ed è nome d'esta canzone, tolto per essemplo dal buono frate Tommaso d'Aquino, che a un suo libro, che fece a confusione di tutti quelli che disviano da nostra Fede, puose nome 'Contra li Gentili'. (*Conv.*, IV. xxx. 3)
>
> [The phrase 'against-the-erring' is all one word, and is the title of this canzone. I model myself here on the good friar Thomas Aquinas, who entitled one of his works, written to refute the arguments of all those who deviate from our faith, *Against the Gentiles*.]

The second folly, therefore, is to deny all divine truths simply because they are unknowable through reason alone.

Through Virgil's admonition to Dante-character in *Purgatorio* III, Dante appears to attack both the indifference towards, and the rejection of, the Christian faith which he considered widespread amongst his contemporaries: 'di tutti quelli che disviano da nostra Fede' [of all those who deviate from our faith] (*Conv.*, IV. xxx. 3). The implication of a contemporary polemic is underscored by Dante's renewed signposting of the eternal fate of the pagan philosophers in Limbo and by his use of the scholastic term 'quia' which, in this context, denotes an *argumentum ex auctoritate fidei*. If man's desire for truth could be attained through reason, the desire of Aristotle and Plato in Limbo ('vivemo in disio' [we live in desire] (*Inf.*, IV. 42)) would be quietened. God, who created human reason, entered into human history incarnate in Mary and manifested Himself to mankind — 'Ego sum via, veritas, et lux. Nemo venit ad Patrem, nisi per me' [I am the way, the truth, and the light. No one comes to the Father, except through me] (John 14. 6) — as the revealed truth which is entirely beyond the scope of philosophy:

> State contenti, umana gente, al *quia*;
> ché, se potuto aveste veder tutto,
> mestier non era parturir Maria;
> e disïar vedeste sanza frutto
> tai che sarebbe lor disio quetato,
> ch'etternalmente è dato lor per lutto:
> io dico d'Aristotile e di Plato
> e di molt' altri'; e qui chinò la fronte,
> e più non disse, e rimase turbato. (*Purg.*, III. 37–45)
>
> [Be content, human people, with the *quia*; for if you had been able to see everything, there was no need for Mary to give birth;

> and you have seen those yearning fruitlessly whose desire would be stilled, which is given them eternally for their grief:
> I speak of Aristotle and Plato and many others'; and here he bent his brow and said no more, and remained troubled.]

Virgil's exasperated tone juxtaposes the presumption of mankind in Christian times — unwilling to accept the divine authority of Scripture (l. 37) — with the tragic fate of the pagan philosophers (l. 42) — whose human desire for God, unsatisfied in their earthly life (without God's self-revelation), remains, in the *contrapasso* of the *carentia Dei*, perpetually unsatisfied in the *Limbus gentilium virtuosum*.

Virgil's speech thus highlights two key aspects of Dante's conception of philosophy. First, for those Epicurean *infideles* of his time, philosophy is a permanent miracle and thus serves as *praeambulo fidei*.[30] Dante affirms, in the *Convivio*, that there are many 'obstinate people' who do not believe in the Christian miracles: 'molti siano sì ostinati che di quelli miracoli per alcuna nebbia siano dubbiosi, e non possono credere miracolo sanza visibilemente avere di ciò esperienza' [many people have become so obstinate that they are doubtful about those miracles because their minds are somewhat clouded, and are unable to believe in any miracle unless they have visible experience of it] (III. vii. 16). As, however, Lady Philosophy is a visibly miraculous being ('una cosa visibilmente miracolosa'), so she makes the other miracles potentially credible to us ('da uno faccia possibili gli altri' (III. vii. 16)): 'per Lei [Philosophy] si crede ogni miracolo in più alto intelletto pote[r] avere ragione, e per consequente pote[r] essere. Onde la nostra buona fede ha sua origine' [through her we believe that every miracle can have a cause in an intellect higher than our own, and consequently can exist. From this our precious faith takes its origin] (*Conv.*, III. xiv. 14). The very study of philosophy — the first visible miracle — should dispose the sceptic to be open at least to the possibility of the miracles of Christian faith. As Dante emphasizes, the gospel miracles are the foundation of Christian faith: 'principalissimo fondamento della fede nostra siano [li] miracoli per colui che fu crucifisso' [the most basic foundation of our faith is the miracles performed by Him who was crucified for us] (*Conv.*, III. vii. 16). The miracles reveal that Jesus is the son of God and, thereby, that Scripture is God's self-revelation. This divine origin alone justifies man's submission to the authority of Scripture and the arguments of theology *ex auctoritate fidei*: 'State contenti, umana gente, al *quia*' (l. 37).[31] Second, philosophy is therefore a limit which must be crossed. The tragic fate of the greatest philosophers who populate the *Limbus gentilium virtuosum* ('ch'etternalmente è dato lor per lutto' (l. 45)) highlights the need for Christian faith, whether a man lived before or after the Incarnation, in order to attain the vision of God. The faith is that through which we escape eternal death and acquire eternal life ('quella per la quale compiamo da etternale morte e acquistiamo etternale vita' (*Conv.*, III. vii. 15)).

The horizon between the limit of rational inquiry (the hemisphere of pagan reason represented by Aristotle and Plato in the castle of Limbo) and the necessary belief in Jesus's miracles (as the starting point of the Christian pilgrimage in the hemisphere of faith) is dramatized in the unfolding scene and projected onto the physical landscape. Virgil's melancholy — accentuated by the heavy and internal

rhymes of his speech ('quetato' (l. 41); 'dato' (l. 42); 'Plato' (l. 43); 'turbato' (l. 45)) and his bent brow ('tenendo 'l viso basso' (l. 55)) — reflects his inability to understand the way. Virgil realizes that the mount of Purgatory cannot be climbed on foot (through reason): 'che 'ndarno vi sarien le gambe pronte' [in vain would legs be agile on it] (l. 48). The Christian Dante-character, echoing the psalmic cry to lift up one's eyes to the Lord, underlines to the pagan Virgil that counsel must be sought beyond the remit of human reason in faith:

> 'Leva' diss' io 'maestro, li occhi tuoi:
> ecco di qua chi ne darà consiglio,
> se tu da te medesmo aver non puoi'. (*Purg.*, III. 61–63)
>
> ['Lift up' I said 'master, your eyes: behold over here those who will give us counsel, if you cannot have it from yourself.']

In tragic irony, Virgil commends to Dante-character precisely the Christian virtue of hope which Virgil himself eternally lacks: 'e tu ferma la speme, dolce figlio' [and you, bolster your hope, dear son] (l. 66).

Dante-character, marvelling, sees a group of souls who were excommunicates shut off, like the heretics of *Inferno* X, from communion with the Catholic church. The souls come 'da man sinistra' [on the left hand] (l. 58) just as, in the canto of the Epicureans, Dante-character and Virgil had turned 'a man sinistra' [toward the left] (*Inf.*, X. 133). The correct way up the mountain is therefore, literally, to the right and, allegorically, towards Christ's church — as the souls, moving so slowly that they appear static (*Purg.*, III. 58–60), discovered at the last moments of their lives. The souls are indeed represented as Christ's flock ('come le pecorelle' (l. 79)), called one by one at the last into His pen (*Purg.*, III. 79–87). At this moment in the narrative, Dante — in a poetical *coup de théâtre* — casts himself as doubting Thomas while presenting the converted Epicurean and excommunicate Manfred as the resurrected Christ. Dante-character's doubt (which precipitated Virgil's doctrinal explanation of the limit of reason) derived from the bodiless-but-experiential condition of the souls. Here Manfred 'sorridendo' [smiling] (l. 112), although *without a body*, tells the doubting Dante-character to look at his *wound*: '"Or vedi"; | e mostrommi una piaga a sommo 'l petto' ['Now see,' and showed me a wound high on his breast] (ll. 110–11). In the parallel gospel passage, Thomas would not believe the other disciples' testimony about Jesus's miraculous resurrection from the dead. Jesus tells Thomas to see and touch his wounds and therefore to believe in Him: 'Infer digitum tuum huc, et vide manus meas; et affer manum tuam; et mitte in latus meum; et noli esse incredulus, sed fidelis' [Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and be not incredulous, but believe] (John 20. 27). The thematic parallel with the Epicurean *infideles* of *Inferno* X is therefore clear. In the graveyard of the heretics in Hell, the Epicurean Farinata — who did not believe in the immortality of the soul let alone the resurrection of the body — appeared rising from his tomb as, ironically, an allegorical figure for Christ-resurrected (the *imago pietatis*). Amongst the excommunicates in Ante-Purgatory, the Epicurean Manfred — whose father Frederick II is named by Farinata in *Inferno* X — takes on the role of the risen Christ who quells his disciple Thomas's doubt about the resurrection.

Manfred is, for Dante-character, the site of miracle and of his own transition from doubt to Christian faith.

Through Manfred, the converted Epicurean, Dante may therefore highlight his polemic against those of his 'Epicurean' intellectual contemporaries who refused to believe in the gospel miracles, the divine authority of Scripture, and the eternal life which Christ promised: 'Haec autem scripta sunt ut credatis quia Jesus est Christus, Filius Dei, et ut credentes, vitam habeatis in nomine eius' [But these things are written so you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that — through this belief — you may have life in his name] (John 20. 31). In this episode, Dante exemplifies how even Manfred, excommunicated from the church and whose whole life was Epicurean ('tutta la sua vita fu epicuria'), has hope of eternal salvation:[32]

> Per lor maladizion sì non si perde,
> che non possa tornar l'etterno amore,
> mentre che la speranza ha fior del verde. (*Purg.*, III. 133–35).
>
> [By their curse no one so loses the eternal love that it cannot be regained, as long as hope has any touch of green.]

The Epicurean excommunicate Manfred highlights — as its extreme paradigm — the theological truth that to the very last moment of a person's earthly life, there is the possibility of eternal salvation through hope and belief in Christ who pardons all those who turn to him.

In the opening of the fourth canto, Dante-character realizes that, intent with wonder on listening to Manfred's story, his soul was so absorbed by the sense of hearing that he had been completely oblivious to the passing of time — the movement of the sun fifty degrees across its daily arc (*Purg.*, IV. 13–16). This gives him true experience ('esperïenza vera' (l. 13)) of the unicity of the individual soul against 'quello error che crede | ch'un'anima sovr' altra in noi s'accenda' [the error that believes one soul is kindled over another in us] (ll. 5–6).[33] Most early commentators argue that Dante refers here to Plato's error on the plurality of souls. However, as a Florentine fourteenth-century commentator suggests, it may be that Dante also alludes to Averroës' error on the separate intellect.[34] Averroës held that the rational, the sensitive and the nutritive are all *potentiae* (capacities/powers) of the one soul and not, as in Plato, separate souls. However, he also controversially held that above these *potentiae* of the individual soul is the separate universal intellect. Only the separate intellect which is one for all mankind is perpetual and there is consequently no individual immortality. Plato's doctrine on the soul is explicitly confuted, at least in its literal sense, in the first sphere of Paradise (*Par.*, IV. 21–63). Averroës' error is confuted in the terrace of gluttony (*Purg.*, XXV. 63–66). The key point is that it is the correct doctrine on the soul — rather than the two errors of Plato and Averroës — which poses the specific problem of the soul's *bodiless* existence in the afterlife. For Plato the individual soul is only accidentally tied to the body and so its bodiless existence is unproblematic; for Averroës, the separate intellect is universal and so there is no individual immortality of the soul or of the body. But the correct view of the soul, which Dante alludes to here, demonstrates its apparent dependency on the body. Every person has an individual rational soul

which is the form of the body. As even the soul's distinctively rational activity depends for its substrate on the body (the receiving of material forms in the corporeal imagination), it is not apparent how the soul will persist separated from it. The kind of continued existence of the individual human soul in the afterlife is, therefore, a mystery and a matter for faith. As Aquinas emphasizes, there must be another manner — unknown to man in this life — by which the immortal individual soul exists in the afterlife before the resurrection of the body.[35] Dante-character's observation in *Purgatorio* IV therefore serves as an epilogue to his doubt, in the previous canto, as to the *postmortem* bodiless-but-experiential condition of the souls in the afterlife.[36]

Nature and Grace: Virgil and Belacqua

In *Purgatorio* IV, Dante reworks a passage of his didactic commentary to 'Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona' in which he contrasts the bliss of philosophical speculation with the bestial life of the senses. In the philosophical context of the *Convivio*, Dante's noble Epicureans are potential allies as they scorn the bestial life of the senses and pursue man's practical goal (virtue) and theoretical goal (knowledge) which constitute temporal felicity. In the Ante-Purgatory, however, this perfection of the order of nature is contrasted with the order of grace. Belacqua is the embodiment of the deplorable sloth castigated by Dante in the *Convivio*. Nonetheless, although Belacqua is ironically indifferent to man's temporal goal, he prayed and did penance at the last stage of his earthly life and thereby merited the eternal life of Christ. The high ethical demands of the rational pursuit of natural perfection (nobility) are contrasted, therefore, with the reliance on grace, prayer and humble submission of the will to God which open up the spiritual hemisphere to all men of faith. The polemical message for the noble 'Epicureans' amongst Dante's contemporaries who deny the afterlife is that all their human achievements are as nothing (*vanitas vanitatum*) compared with the eternal bliss which, through Christian faith, would otherwise have awaited them. The episode in Ante-Purgatory — as the comparative analysis with the *Convivio* highlights — first dramatizes the intellectual and moral goals (shared by the Christian philosopher and the Epicurean sceptic alike) and then sets these aspirations in the spiritual context of the salvation of Belacqua.

In the *Convivio*, Dante — the consummate pedagogue — explains the accidental and proper movements of the sun around the earth and along the ecliptic (*Conv.*, III. v. 8–17). A swift outline of Dante's exposition is necessary at this point, because Dante incorporates this astronomical lesson into the narrative drama and poetic effect of *Purgatorio* IV. Dante first asks his reader to imagine a city at the North Pole ('Maria') and a city at the South Pole ('Lucia'), and in between them the celestial equator. Second, he describes the ecliptic which intersects the celestial equator at the two equinoxes (the principle of Aries and the principle of Libra). Third, he describes the diurnal spinning of the *primum mobile* which causes the accidental daily movement of the sun from east to west. Fourth, he describes the proper movement of the sun from west to east, and north and south, along the ecliptic over the course of year: from the principle of Aries, it rises towards the North Pole ('Maria') until it reaches the tropic of Cancer (23° north); it then descends, past the equator (and

the principle of Libra), towards the South Pole ('Lucia') until it reaches the tropic of Capricorn (23° degrees south); it then returns north to the equator. Finally, Dante states that if, at the equinox, a man were in Maria (at the North Pole) and facing the sun, the sun would always move, on its daily course, to his right until it disappeared from view; at that point, if a man were to look at the sun from Lucia (at the South Pole), the sun would always move to his left:

> E se uno uomo fosse dritto in Maria e sempre al sole volgesse lo viso, vedrebbesi quello andare ver lo braccio destro [...] E se uno uomo fosse in Lucia dritto, sempre che volgesse la faccia in ver lo sole, vedrebbe quello andarsi nello braccio sinistro. (*Conv.*, III. v. 16–17)
>
> [And if anyone were to be standing at Mary with his face always turned to the sun, he would see it moving towards his right [...] And if anyone were standing at Lucy with his face always turned towards the sun, he would see it moving towards his left.]

Dante concludes by juxtaposing an apostrophe to wisdom with a ruthless diatribe against intellectual sloth. He invokes, in wonder, the ineffable wisdom ('O ineffabile sapienza') which so divinely ordered the cosmos that the sun shines, although in different daily distributions, for an equal amount of time during the year over each part of the earth. But people are so subject to the base appetites, and afflicted by sloth, that they refuse to apply themselves even to mastering the rudiments of natural astronomy: 'E voi a cui utilitade e diletto io scrivo, in quanta cechitade vivete, non levando li occhi suso a queste cose, tenendoli fissi nel fango della vostra stoltezza!' [And you, for whose benefit and delight I am writing, in what blindness you live, not raising your eyes to such things, but keeping them fixed in the mire of your own stupidity!] (*Conv.*, III. v. 22).

In Ante-Purgatory, Dante-character is actually *in* the southern hemisphere and, seeing the sun moving to the left rather than to the right (as in the northern hemisphere), he is initially amazed:

> Li occhi prima drizzai ai bassi liti;
> poscia li alzai al sole, e ammirava
> che da sinistra n'eravam feriti.
> Ben s'avvide il poeta ch'ïo stava
> stupido tutto al carro de la luce,
> ove tra noi e Aquilone intrava. (*Purg.*, IV. 55–60)
>
> [First I directed my eyes to the low shores; then I raised them to the sun, and I was amazed that it struck us from the left.
> The poet well saw that I was lost in wonder at the chariot of the sun, where it came between us and Aquilon.]

Virgil now explains to Dante-character — as the author explains to his reader in the *Convivio* — the two different perspectives but, instead of describing two cities (Maria and Lucia) at the north and south poles, Virgil asks Dante-character to imagine the Mount of Jerusalem and Mount Purgatory at the antipodes:

> 'Come ciò sia, se 'l vuoi poter pensare,
> dentro raccolto, imagina Sïòn
> con questo monte in su la terra stare

sì, ch'amendue hanno un solo orizzòn
e diversi emisperi; onde la strada
che mal non seppe carreggiar Fetòn,
vedrai come a costui convien che vada
da l'un, quando a colui da l'altro fianco,
se lo 'ntelletto tuo ben chiaro bada'. (*Purg.*, IV. 67–75)

[How that can be, if you want to be able to conceive it, turning inward imagine that Zion and this mountain stand on the earth
in such a way that the two have a single horizon and different hemispheres; thus the road along which Phaëthon could not drive the chariot, to his hurt,
you will see must go first on one side and then on the other side of that horizon, if your intellect pays clear attention.]

Dante-character instantly recognizes the cause of his initial puzzlement and, in language which directly reflects his scholastic training (from the latinate 'unquanco' (l. 76) to his allusion to the liberal art of astronomy (l. 80)), he responds to his 'master':

'Certo, maestro mio', diss'io, 'unquanco
non vid' io chiaro sì com' io discerno
là dove mio ingegno parea manco,
che 'l mezzo cerchio del moto superno,
che si chiama Equatore in alcun' arte,
e che sempre riman tra 'l sole e 'l verno,
per la ragion che di', quinci si parte
verso settentrïon, quanto li Ebrei
vedevan lui verso la calda parte'. (*Purg.*, IV. 76–84)

['Certainly, my master,' said I, 'never have I seen so clearly as I now discern, there where my wit had seemed lacking,
that the middle circle of the daily rotation, which is called Equator in science, and which always stands between the sun and winter,
for the reason you give is as far from here toward the north, as the Hebrews saw it toward the hot region.']

The shared delight in the rational apprehension of the world, characteristic of scholastic philosophy, is evident even in the delightful metonymic way with which Dante refers to the equator (l. 81). The equator is always between the sun and winter because, when the sun moves towards one hemisphere, it is winter in the other. The protagonists' journey began in spring (in the northern hemisphere) and it is now autumn (in the southern hemisphere). The sun is moving, therefore, on its annual course along the ecliptic towards the north. Thus, although the equator is equidistant between Mount Purgatory (in the southern hemisphere) and Jerusalem (in the northern hemisphere), since the sun is in the northern hemisphere (on its annual cycle), the Jews see the equator from 'la calda parte' (l. 84).

As in the corresponding stage in the argument of *Convivio* III, Virgil's pedagogical discourse now shifts from astronomy to a lesson in ethics. In *Convivio* III. viii, Dante argues that philosophical contemplation has an ethical dimension: the eyes (demonstrations) and mouth (persuasions) of Lady Philosophy — as the

demonstrations of natural astronomy illustrate (*Conv.*, III. v) — may direct man, desiring this intellectual food, away from the base appetites and towards the pursuit of virtue (*Conv.*, III. viii. 4–16). Dante then argues that, through ethical training and inspired by the love for truth, a man may learn to live virtuously without strain ['senza fatica'] as his bad habits are destroyed:

> Altri sono vizi consuetudinarii [...] e questi vizii si fuggono e si vincono per buona consuetudine, e fassi l'uomo per essa virtuouso senza fatica avere nella sua moderazione [...] le consuetudinarie per buona consuetudine del tutto vanno via, però che lo principio loro, cioè la mala consuetudine, per lo suo contrario si corrompe. (*Conv.*, III. viii. 17–18)
>
> [Other vices are habitual [...] these vices are avoided and overcome by good habits, through which a person becomes virtuous, finding no strain in exercising moderation [...] habitual passions disappear completely through the exercise of good habits, since their source, bad habits, is done away with by its contrary.]

In the corresponding episode in Ante-Purgatory, Dante-character — after Virgil's lesson in astronomy (*Purg.*, IV. 52–84) — is eager to pursue his journey up the mount of Purgatory and this prompts Virgil's parallel lesson on ethics:

> 'Ma se a te piace, volontier saprei
> quanto avemo ad andar; ché 'l poggio sale
> più che salir non posson li occhi miei'.
> Ed elli a me 'Questa montagna è tale,
> che sempre al cominciar di sotto è grave;
> e quant' om più va sù, e men fa male.
> Però, quand' ella ti parrà soave
> tanto, che sù andar ti fia leggero
> com' a seconda giù andar per nave,
> allor sarai al fin d'esto sentiero;
> quivi di riposar l'affanno aspetta.
> Più non rispondo, e questo so per vero'. (*Purg.*, IV. 85–96)
>
> ['But if it pleases you, I would gladly know how far we have to go; for the mountain rises farther than my eyes can.'
> And he to me: 'This mountain is such that it is always more difficult at the bottom, at the beginning; and the further up one goes, the less it gives pain.
> Thus, when it shall seem so easy to you that going up will be like floating downstream in a boat,
> then you will be at the end of this path; wait to rest your weariness there. I answer no further, but this I know for truth.']

Virgil highlights how the perception of the same virtuous action (the arduous path ahead) is transformed by the disposition of the agent. Although at the beginning the soul is still hindered by vices and bad habits, once the soul is trained in virtue what had seemed hard ('grave' (l. 89)) will become sweet ('soave' (l. 91)); the seemingly insurmountable path ('esto sentiero' (l. 96)) will become light ('leggero' (l. 94)); and the well-disposed soul naturally, like a ship following the current ('com' a seconda giù andar per nave' (l. 93)), will choose the good with delight.

In this narrative episode, Virgil therefore directs Dante-character towards his

contemplative goal (the rational comprehension of the natural world) and his active goal (the attainment of virtue). At this juncture in the narrative, however, Dante splices in the discordant voice of Belacqua. As Dante-character observes to Virgil, Belacqua is more negligent than if laziness were his sister ('che mostra sé più negligente | che se pigrizia fosse sua serocchia' (ll. 110–11)). Where Virgil's ethical lecture has spurred Dante-character on his journey, Belacqua first laconically suggests: 'forse | che di sedere in pria avrai distretta!' [perhaps you will be obliged to sit before then!] (ll. 98–99).[37] Second, undeterred by Dante-character's apparent scorn (ll. 109–11), Belacqua patronizingly pokes fun at Dante-character's pursuit of virtue: 'Or va tu sù, che se' valente!' [Now you go on up, how clever you are!] (l. 114). A Florentine fourteenth-century commentator remarks that 'queste sono dirittamente parole che usono i pigri' [these are exactly the words that the lazy use]; the sarcastic tone, and colloquial register, almost approximate to: 'aren't *you* a good boy!'[38] Third, Belacqua makes light of Dante-character's astronomical study: 'Hai ben veduto come 'l sole | da l'omero sinistro il carro mena?' [Have you seen clearly how the sun drives his chariot over our left shoulder] (ll. 119–20). The implication is 'what's the point?'; as the Florentine glosses: 'che hai guadagnato?' [what have you gained?].[39] Benvenuto comments: 'iste piger damnavit laborem Dantis circa opus virtutis, nunc iterum damnat laborem eius circa studium scientiae' [this slob scorned Dante's labours in virtue, now again he scorns his labours in the study of philosophy].[40] In the context of their barbed comments and humorous familiarity in Ante-Purgatory, a witty anecdote reported by the Florentine commentator about Dante and Belacqua seems, therefore, plausible:

> Ora l'Auttore fu forte suo dimestico: molto il riprendea di questa sua nigligenzia; onde un dì, riprendendolo, Belacqua rispose colle parole d'Aristotile: '*Sedendo et quiescendo anima efficitur sapiens*'; di che l'Auttore gli rispose: 'Per certo, se per sedere si diventa savio, niuno fu mai più savio di te'.[41]
>
> [Now the author was his close neighbour and much reprehended him for this sloth of his. Wherefore it came about that one day Belaqua, being reprehended thus, responded with the words of Aristotle: '*Sedendo et quiescendo anima efficitur sapiens*' [By sitting and being at rest, the soul makes itself wise]. Dante responded: 'Certainly, if by sitting one becomes wise, no one has ever been wiser than you'.]

Where Aristotle's dictum referred to the contemplative peace necessary for a man to pursue wisdom, Belacqua, in unrelenting slothfulness, applied it simply to a life of inactivity. Like a pig-Epicurean, he does not develop his rational nature and — leading a less-than-fully-human life — he fails to pursue his temporal felicity.

Nonetheless, in the context of Ante-Purgatory, the slothful figure of Belacqua also qualifies the twofold quest for nobility and knowledge. Where Dante-character believes that Belacqua has simply taken up his old ways ('lo modo usato t'ha' ripreso'), Belacqua's speech indicates the redemptive purpose and moral lesson of his condition:

> Ed elli: 'O frate, andar in sù che porta?
> ché non mi lascerebbe ire a' martìri
> l'angel di Dio che siede in su la porta.

> Prima convien che tanto il ciel m'aggiri
> di fuor da essa, quanto fece in vita
> per ch'io 'ndugiai al fine i buon sospiri,
> se orazïon in prima non m'aita
> che surge sù di cuor che in grazia viva;
> l'altra che val, che 'n ciel non è udita?' (*Purg.*, IV. 127–35)

> [And he: 'O brother, what good would climbing do? for the angel of God sitting on the threshold would not let me go in to the torments.
> First it is necessary for the heavens to turn around me outside here as long as they did in my life, since I delayed my good sighs until the end.
> unless prayer help me first, which must rise up from a heart that lives in grace: what good is any other, since it is not heard in Heaven?']

Belacqua reminds Dante-character of the divine law which rules this region. With a pun on 'porta', he highlights that it is useless for him to go up ('andar in sù che porta?' (l. 127)) when the angel of God will not let him through the door 'la porta' (l. 129) of Purgatory. Belacqua is temporarily debarred from Purgatory because he held off, through slothful neglect of his spiritual life, 'i buon sospiri' of Christian prayer and penitence until the very end of his life. His ironic indifference to Virgil's ethical and astronomical lessons is thus based on a spiritual reality: for him, only the prayers of those who live in grace (ll. 133–35) are of import. No amount of virtue or philosophy may help Belacqua to enter the spiritual hemisphere of Purgatory. This reminds Dante-character — as, we might add, it should remind Dante's reader — that the journey to the Earthly Paradise is *not* towards earthly nobility or philosophical knowledge. The starting point of the journey of Purgatory is grace and penitence, as Dante-character discovers when he arrives at the entrance to Purgatory. After mounting the three steps of contrition, confession, and satisfaction, Dante-character receives the seven Ps of penitence on his brow and, through God's grace, enters on a journey of Christian moral purgation (*Purg.*, IX. 73–145).

Although only faith and grace may open up the gate of Purgatory, Virgil's speech in the concluding terzina of canto IV highlights the necessary cooperation of the order of nature. Interrupting the dialogue with Belacqua, whose rhetorical question is left hanging (*Purg.*, IV. 130–35), Virgil reminds Dante-character that they must continue on their arduous spiritual journey. Furthermore Virgil, with a defensive allusion to his earlier astronomical lesson, reminds Dante-character that it is already noon (the sun is at the meridian) and that in Morocco the sun has just set:

> E già il poeta innanzi mi saliva,
> e dicea: 'Vienne omai; vedi ch'è tocco
> meridïan dal sole, e a la riva
> cuopre la notte già col piè Morocco'. (*Purg.*, IV. 136–39)

> [And already the poet was climbing ahead of me and saying: 'Come along now: see, the meridian is touched by the sun, and on the shore of ocean
> night already covers Morocco with its foot.']

In comical contrast, the negligent souls realize that Dante-character casts a shadow only after he and Virgil have moved on and after, in poetic mimesis, Dante opens a new canto (*Purg.*, V. 1–9). This enables Virgil to reaffirm his moral lesson of the previous canto. Tellingly, he adopts the very image Dante uses in the *Convivio* to describe unassailable human virtue: 'la diritta torre' [the upright tower] (*Conv.*, IV. *canz.*, III. 54)). Virgil commands Dante-character: 'sta come torre ferma, che non crolla, | già mai la cima per soffiar di venti' [be like a strong tower whose top never falls, however hard the winds may blow] (*Purg.*, V. 14–15).[42]

In this episode of *Purgatorio* IV, Dante emphasizes the gratuitous nature of God's love by means of which even Belacqua, the most slothful of men, may be welcomed into the hemisphere of faith. Furthermore, through the presence of Virgil, he highlights that even the greatest virtue or knowledge, if without faith, does not merit salvation. But Dante also shows, as in the *Convivio*, how the natural order may support the order of grace. In the Ante-Purgatory, Virgil's lessons demonstrate how the rational wonder at the cosmos through intellectual study may lead man to belief in miracle as the foundation of faith, and may inspire the pursuit of virtue. This virtue and perfection of reason is then put to the service of Dante-character's pilgrimage towards his spiritual goal. Belacqua, the sibling of sloth, desired peace and quietude, and yet such peace is not to be found in inactivity but rather in God who, in scholastic terminology, is pure act. The spiritual journey to God requires, as Virgil's persistent counsels suggest, strenuous ethical application. Thus, in canto III, Virgil first addresses the souls who through faith are, unlike him, already saved: 'O ben finiti, o già spiriti eletti' [O happy dead, O spirits already chosen] (*Purg.*, III. 73). He then asks them for guidance by that peace which they seek 'per quella pace | ch'i' credo che per voi tutti s'aspetti' [for the sake of that peace which I believe you all await] (ll. 74–75). Finally, he applies his own virtuous impulse to lose no time in guiding Dante-character towards this end: 'ché perder tempo a chi più sa più spiace' [for losing time displeases most those who know most] (l. 78).

Conclusion

This close reading of three episodes of the Ante-Purgatory reveals how the dualistic theoretical concerns of Dante's prose works simmer under, and occasionally even spill out into, the dramatic tension of the narrative. Indeed, Dante especially invites a contextual and comparative approach to the Ante-Purgatory by weaving into the narrative Scriptural and philosophical texts, contemporary controversies, or particular astronomical and ethical lessons, which have an independent life outside their function in the poem. But 'an allusion to a former work' does not have to be, as Freccero sustains with regard to Casella, 'palinodic'.[43] Freccero's interpretation of the Casella episode as authorial 'self-critique' is founded upon his belief in the 'linear evolution' of Dante's thought: 'it is especially true of Dante, whose whole poetic career was a continual *askesis* in preparation for his last work'.[44] Rather, Dante reworks dramatically in *Purgatorio* II the experience of intellectual strife which he describes in his commentary to 'Voi che 'ntendendo il terzo ciel movete' in *Convivio* II. Through the juxtaposition of the Scriptural psalm and his own philosophical

canzone, Dante foregrounds the same tension — implied by his dualism — between the direct love of God through revelation and an over-exclusive and dominating love for natural philosophy.

The next episode of Dante-character's solitary shadow raises the highly controversial problem of the existence of the individual soul after death. This issue polarized medieval debate and, as we have seen, led to some of Dante's contemporaries advocating an Epicurean mortalism incompatible with Christian faith. Dante, indeed, makes reference to an 'error' on the soul which could allude both to Plato's doctrine of the tripartite soul and to Averroës' doctrine of the separate intellect. But it is the correct and orthodox view on the soul — as the form of the body — which leads to the specific problem of the soul's bodiless-but-experiential *postmortem* existence. Virgil's speech in *Purgatorio* III indicates that this question is beyond the survey of human reason, and Virgil admonishes Dante-character that he must not 'wonder' and search for a rational cause but rather 'believe'. In a poetical *coup de théâtre*, Dante-character's own act of belief is represented through the converted-Epicurean-excommunicate Manfred who tells Dante-character, as the risen Christ tells the disbelieving and doubting disciple Thomas, to look at his wounds.

In *Purgatorio* IV, the antithetical figures of Virgil and Belacqua dramatize the tension between the order of nature and the order of grace. Virgil's lectures on astronomy and ethics in Ante-Purgatory clearly derive from the parallel lectures in the *Convivio*. Dante advocates knowledge and virtue and castigates those of his contemporaries who, through intellectual sloth and vice, fail to pursue ethical nobility and their temporal felicity. Where Virgil, the virtuous pagan, embodies the perfection of human nobility within the temporal hemisphere, Belacqua merits, simply through Christian faith and prayer at the end of his life, eternal salvation within the spiritual hemisphere. The two figures thereby encapsulate the two key implications of Dante's mature dualistic world view. First, Dante upholds, in the poem as in the prose works, the requirement of pagan natural philosophy and ethics as the means towards earthly felicity. Second, he emphasizes the primacy of Christian faith for human salvation such that even Belacqua, the most slothful of men, may be joined to union with God through grace, whereas Virgil, cut off from Christian faith, remains suspended at the horizon of human nobility.

Notes to Chapter 6

1. Bruno Nardi, *Dal 'Convivio' alla 'Commedia'*, ed. with a new introduction by Ovidio Capitani (Rome: Muratori, 1992), p. 311: 'Nella *Commedia* non v'è più traccia dei "duo ultima" della *Monarchia*'. Nardi was adamant that the *Monarchia* was written in the first decade of the fourteenth century: 'la cui composizione va posta sicuramente fra l'interruzione del *Convivio* e l'inizio del "poema sacro" ' [the *Monarchia* was certainly composed between the interruption of the *Convivio* and the beginning of the 'sacred poem'] (p. 87); 'scritta, com'io penso, fra il 1307 e il 1308' [written, as I believe, between 1307 and 1308] (p. 116); see also *Mon.*, I. xii. 6, p. 349, note 6: 'ritengo ancora che la *Monarchia* fu scritta fra il 1307 e il 1308, prima dell'*Epistola* V' [I continue to believe that the *Monarchia* was written between 1307 and 1308, before the fifth epistle].
2. Gilson, *Dante the Philosopher*, pp. 277–78. Gilson's law — that '*a character in the* Divine Comedy *conserves only as much of its historical reality as the representative function that Dante assigns to it requires*' [the italics are Gilson's] — is contentious to say the least (p. 267). On the basis of this dubious

law, however, Gilson permits himself to interpret freely Dante's supposed function for each character.

3. Foster, *The Two Dantes*, p. 160.
4. Foster, *The Two Dantes*, pp. 161–62 (the italics are Foster's). The *Commedia*, according to Foster, is marked out 'with a *new* humility, a *new* sense of personal insufficiency and unworthiness, a *new* and continual recourse to supernatural assistance [...] it is this factor that compels one to read the *Comedy* as the effect of a personal crisis, a "conversion"' (p. 164; the italics are mine). This conversion, Foster argues, was precipitated by a 'personal crisis, a conversion [from] his past self as a "philosopher" [towards] his present self as a neophyte in the school of Christian wisdom' (p. 166). Although Foster, unlike Nardi, eventually accepted the changed academic consensus on the dating of the *Monarchia*, it seems that his interpretation of Dante's intellectual trajectory was fixed in his mind: 'From the point of view I am adopting, the *Monarchia* belongs with *Convivio* IV, though I am aware of the chronological difficulty involved in thus contrasting the two prose treatises with the poem; for the manuscript evidence rather favours dating the Latin work to the last years of Dante's life, after the bulk of the *Comedy* had been written' (p. 161); 'This was written when I was still inclined to date the *Monarchia* before the *Comedy*: yet I would still maintain that there is a fundamental difference — such as I have tried to indicate above — between the *Comedy* and the two other works taken together' (pp. 164–65).
5. Dante, *Monarchy*, trans. and ed. by Prue Shaw, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. xxxiii.
6. Dante, *Monarchia*, trans. and ed. by Prue Shaw, Cambridge Medieval Classics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. xxxix.
7. Prue Shaw, ed., *Monarchia*, Cambridge Medieval Classics, p. xxxix.
8. See Dante's *Monarchia*, trans. and commentary by Richard Kay, pp. xx–xxxi. See also Anthony K. Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy*, pp. 3–49.
9. Scott, *Dante's Political Purgatory*, p. 53.
10. Scott, *Dante's Political Purgatory*, p. 64. When Foster asks this same question, in *The Two Dantes*, he recognizes the possibility of 'two answers, each pointing to a distinct region of Dante's afterworld. If we prescind from grace there is only one symbol standing for this-worldly perfection in the poem, and that is Limbo [...] at the summit of Mount Purgatory, we meet another great image of human perfection in time [...] only now envisaged as a state of grace' (Foster, *The Two Dantes*, p. 195). Foster argues that the former, nevertheless, is merely a 'phase' on Dante's quest (p. 197). The writing of the *Commedia* indicates a conversion of what he calls 'the humanistic tendency' in the *Convivio* and the *Monarchia*: 'Dante has changed the meaning of the Earthly Paradise (considered as a symbol) in passing from the *Monarchia* to the *Comedy*. [...] in the *Monarchia* the whole meaning of the "earthly paradise" is humanistic — is coterminous with something attainable by human power alone — whereas in the *Comedy*, if my interpretation (and that of most critics) is correct, this image retains its traditional Christian sense' (p. 196). Scott, however, seeks to simply equate the Earthly Paradise in *Monarchia* with the Earthly Paradise in *Purgatorio*. According to my interpretation, Dante's dualism is consistent: the two earthly paradises, at the highest circle the Hell (*Inf.*, IV) and the summit of Purgatory (*Purg.*, XXVIII–XXXIII), represent the two goals, temporal and spiritual, of man in this life.
11. Scott, *Dante's Political Purgagtory*, pp. 188–89. See also Peter Armour, *Dante's Griffin and the History of the World: A Study of the Earthly Paradise (Purgatorio, cantos xxix–xxxiii)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). Armour similarly rejects the traditional interpretation of the griffin as Christ (ibid, pp. 46–73). He interprets the griffin in the light of his conviction that the earthly paradise depicts 'the first of mankind's two God-given goals — that happiness in this life which, as every reader of Dante knows, is not in his opinion in any way within the sphere of competence of the Church' (p. 67). The griffin represents the 'supreme temporal guide of mankind on earth [...] the Empire alone, the Empire of Rome' (pp. 69–70).
12. Scott, *Dante's Political Purgatory*, p. 189.
13. With regard to the medieval context, Scott revealingly claims that '*no one before Dante* had thought of setting up a figural link between the happiness attainable through good government [...] and the Earthly Paradise lost through original sin'; 'Dante does not hesitate *to subvert* the myth of Eden'; the myth of Eden was '*seized* upon and *transformed* by Dante's political vision'

(Scott, *Dante's Political Purgatory*, pp. 66–67). With regard to the commentary tradition on Dante's Earthly Paradise in Purgatory, Scott observes '*All too often*, the pageant described in *Purgatorio* XXIX has been seen solely as a representation of Holy Writ and a static vision of the ideal church' (p. 187).

14. The formula 'come altrui piacque' with the rhyme on *acque*, especially given the context, recalls Ulysses' vision of mount Purgatory in the closing terzine of *Inferno* XXVI (ll. 127–42).
15. Corti, *Dante a un nuovo crocevia*, pp. 85–97. Corti suggests that Ulysses signifies, at a symbolic level, those philosophers who separate the scientific conscience from the ethical and religious one (p. 96).
16. See Benvenuto da Imola, gloss to *Purg.*, II. 31–36: 'homo reperit arte et ingenio, qualia sunt vela, remi, temo, funes' [man discovers with art and intellect, which are sails, oars, poles, rigging]; and Codice cassinese, gloss to *Purg.*, II. 31: 'rationes humanae non sunt sufficientes ad celestia investiganda' [human arguments are not sufficient to investigate heavenly things]; see also Corti, *Dante a un nuovo crocevia*, p. 93.
17. *Conv.*, III. xiv. 9–10: 'Per donna gentile s'intende la nobile anima d'ingegno, e libera nella sua propria potestate, che è ragione. Onde l'altre anime dire non si possono donne, ma ancille, però che non per loro sono ma per altrui' [By noble lady is meant the noble soul which possesses intelligence and is free in virtue of its proper power, the reason. That is why the other souls cannot be called ladies but servants, since they exist not for their own sakes but for that of something else].
18. *Conv.*, III. iii. 1–11 (11): 'la quinta e ultima natura, cioè vera umana o, meglio dicendo, angelica, cioè razionale, ha l'uomo amore alla veritade e alla vertude; e da questo amore nasce la vera e perfetta amistà' [Through the fifth and final nature — the nature which is truly human, or, to use a better word, angelic, that is, rational — man has a love for truth and virtue; and from this love is born true and perfect friendship]. See also *Conv.*, III. xi. 14: 'E sì come fine dell'amistade vera è la buona dile[tta]zione che procede dal convivere secondo l'umanitade propiamente, cioè secondo ragione, sì come pare sentire Aristotile nel nono dell'Etica; così fine della Filosofia è quella eccellentissima dile[tta]zione che non pate alcuna intermissione o vero difetto, cioè vera felicitade che per contemplazione della veritade s'acquista' [and just as the goal of true friendship is worthy pleasure, which issues from living together according to what is specifically human, that is, according to reason (as Aristotle clearly holds), so the goal of philosophy is that most excellent pleasure which does not suffer from any interruption or flaw, that is, true happiness, which is attained by contemplation of the truth]. See also *Conv.*, III. xv. 11–12: 'Dove è da sapere che la moralitade è bellezza della Filosofia [...] e quinci nasce quella felicitade la quale diffinisce Aristotle nel primo dell'Etica, dicendo che è operazione secondo vertù in vita perfetta' [Here it should be explained that morality is the beauty of Philosophy [...] And thus arises that happiness which Aristotle defines in the first book of the *Ethics*, where he says that it consists in activity in accordance with virtue, in a life that is perfect].
19. This allegorical interpretation of Beatrice in the *Convivio* is, of course, highly disputed in modern Dante scholarship. It is not possible to enter the debate in this book. My current view, however, is that the *Convivio*, and in particular the *Vita nuova*, require reappraisal and new, sufficiently historically informed, allegorical readings to qualify the kind of dismissal meted out by Etienne Gilson, in *Dante the Philosopher*, to the allegorical reading in Father Mandonnet's study *Dante le Théologien*. The various literal interpretations of the figure of Beatrice in the *Convivio*, including Gilson's, do not appear convincing to me. With regard to Dante's competing loves for Beatrice and the 'donna gentile' in *Convivio* II, I find more convincing the allegorical reading espoused, for example, by Matteo Romani's nineteenth-century gloss to the canzone: 'finora è stata mia consolazione pensare al cielo, ovvero studiare la Scienza divina; e dilettavami soprattutto nella contemplazione della Sapienza di Dio; onde mi veniva voglia di partire da questo cieco mondo, e andare lassù cogli Angeli a contemplare la Sapienza di Dio [...] Ma ora apparisce un pensiero nuovo che fa fuggire quello di Beatrice per un' altra donna; ora nasce il desiderio della Scienza umana; e un tale desiderio non mi dispiace per sè, ma mi dispiace in tanto, in quanto mi accorgo che spegne in me a poco a poco il desiderio della Scienza divina' [Up until now my consolation has been thinking of the heavens, that is studying the Divine science; and I delighted especially in the contemplation of the wisdom of God; whence I experienced the desire to leave this blind

world and soar upwards with the angels to contemplate the wisdom of God [...] but now a new thought appears that makes that thought of Beatrice disappear because of another lady; now is born the desire for rational philosophy; and such a desire does not displease me in itself, but it does upset me insofar as I realize that it destroys, little by little, my desire for the Divine science]. See *Il Convito di Dante*, ed. by Matteo Romani (Reggio Emilia: G. Davolio and Figlio, 1862), p. 70.

20. See *Conv.*, II. vi. 7–8: 'E a pieno intendimento di queste parole, dico che questo [spirito] non è altro che uno frequente pensiero a questa nuova donna commendare ed abellire; e questa anima non è altro che un altro pensiero, accompagnato di consentimento, che, repugnando a questo, commenda ed abellisce la memoria di quella gloriosa Beatrice. Ma però che ancora l'ultima sentenza della mente, cioè lo [con]sentimento, si tenea per questo pensiero che la memoria aiutava, chiamo io lui 'anima' e l'altro 'spirito': si come chiamare solemo la cittade quelli che la tengono, e non coloro che la combattono, avegna che l'uno e l'altro sia cittadino' [To convey the full meaning of these words I should explain that 'spirit' here refers specifically to a recurrent thought whose aim is to commend this new lady and show how attractive she is; 'soul' here refers specifically to another thought coupled with consent which, in opposition to the first thought, commends the memory of that glorious lady Beatrice and shows how attractive she is. It is because the final judgement of the mind, that is, consent, was still in the possession of the thought that worked on behalf of the memory, that I speak of it as *soul*, and of the other as *spirit*, just as we customarily speak of a city in terms of those who are in possession of it and not of those who are attacking it, even though both parties are made up of its citizens].
21. See Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.*, II. *Proemio*: 'Et primo in isto capitolo tractat de prima specie eorum qui tardaverunt suam conversionem usque in finem abstracti aliqua magna delectatione tam naturali quam artificiali, qualis est illa quae consistit in musica, puta cantu vel sono' [And first of all in this canto, he treats the first group of souls who held off their conversion until the end of their lives, distracted by some major delight whether natural or artificial, as is that delight which consists in music, that is in a song or sound].
22. See *Conv.*, II. xiii. 24: 'la Musica trae a sé li spiriti umani, che quasi sono principalmente vapori del cuore, sì che quasi cessano da ogni operazione' [Music draws to itself the various spirits in a person (which may be said to consist mainly of vapours of the heart) to the extent that they almost cease to carry out any of their functions].
23. See *Conv.*, II. xv. 1: 'Boezio e Tulio, li quali colla dolcezza di loro sermone inviarono me, come detto è di sopra, nello amore, cioè nello studio, di questa donna gentilissima Filosofia' [Boethius and Cicero, who, through the sweetness of their writings, set my steps on the path of love, or study, of this lady, most noble Philosophy]. See also *Conv.*, II. xv. 3: 'questa donna è Filosofia; la quale veramente è donna piena di dolcezza' [this woman is Philosophy, who truly is a woman full of sweetness].
24. Freccero, 'Casella's Song: *Purgatorio* II, 112', in *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion*, ed. by Rachel Jacoff (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 186–94 (p. 190); see also Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, III. ii. 22–25, p. 238.
25. Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.*, III. 10–15: 'et vere videre Virgilium currere per illam planitiem, et Dantem post eum cum sua ampla toga, debebat praestare materiam risus etiam illi rigido Catoni' [and, truly, seeing Virgil running across that plain, and Dante after him, with his large toga, must have led even the rigid Cato to smile].
26. *Questio*, xx. 61–62: 'unde propter admirari cepere phylosophari — , viam inquisitionis in naturalibus oportet esse ab effectibus ad causas' [therefore because of wonder did philosophizing begin — , the way of investigation in the natural world must be from effects to causes]; see also *Questio*, pp. 853–55, notes to ll. 8–18.
27. It is noticeable, in this context, that Brunetto Latini — the lay philosopher and statesman famed in medieval Europe for his encyclopaedic treatise, the *Tresor* — should respond to Dante-character's appearance in Hell with the words 'Qual maraviglia!' (*Inf.*, XV. 24). He inappropriately uses, that is, the language of philosophical wonder rather than of Christian miracle.
28. *Questio*, xxi. 75: 'consimiles questiones vel a multa stultitia vel a multa presumptione procedunt, propterea quod sunt supra intellectum nostrum' [such questions proceed either from much foolishness or presumption, because they are about things which are above our intellect].

29. *CG.*, I. cap. 3 n. 5; see also *Conv.*, IV. xv. 11–17.
30. See Gilson, *Dante the Philosopher*, pp. 118–20. Gilson points out the theological unorthodoxy of Dante's conception of Philosophy as 'miracle': 'To suggest that the miracles of Christ in the Gospel become *possibili* when one sees how divinely miraculous are the splendour of philosophical knowledge and the efficacy of the philosophical ethic, is to make the credibility of the miracle dependent on the beauty of the natural order, itself conceived as a miracle' (p. 119).
31. See *ST.*, Ia. q.1, a. 2, arg. 1: 'sacra doctrina procedit ex articulis fidei, qui non sunt per se noti, cum non ab omnibus concedantur, *non enim omnium est fides*' [sacred doctrine proceeds from the articles of faith, which are not known self-evidently through rational inquiry, *for not all men have faith*]. Arguments *ex auctoritate* are, in philosophy, the weakest because founded upon man, and not on rationally discernible truth. In Theology, however, they are the strongest because founded upon God who created, and entirely surpasses, man's reason ('principia huius doctrinae per revelationem habentur, et sic oportet quod credatur autoritati eorum quibus revelatio facta est. Nec hoc derogat dignitati huius doctrinae, nam licet locus ab auctoritate quae fundatur super ratione humana, sit infirmissimus; locus tamen ab auctoritate quae fundatur super revelatione divina, est efficacissimus') (*ST.*, Ia. q.1, a.8, ad 2).
32. Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, I, VI. xlvi. 17–28.
33. See *ST.*, IaIIae, q. 37, a. 1. co: 'quia omnes potentiae animae in una essentia animae radicantur, necesse est quod, quando intentio animae vehementer trahitur ad operationem unius potentiae, retrahatur ab operatione alterius, unius enim animae non potest esse nisi una intentio' [Since all the powers of the soul are rooted in the one essence of the soul, it is necessary that when the intention of the soul is strongly drawn to the operation of one power, it is withdrawn from the operation of another power: because the soul, being one, can only have one intention].
34. Anonimo Fiorentino, gloss to *Purg.*, IV. 5–6: 'Ora questo errore d'Averrois riprova per falso l'Auttore colle ragioni dette di sopra; et ancora con questa ragione, che, se l'uomo avesse due anime, ciò è l'anima razionale per sè, e lo 'ntelletto per sè, che per l'operazione che facesse l'uno, l'altro non lascerebbe la sua operazione; ma però che in sè provò il contrario, ch'era l'anima sua tanto fissa a pensare a una cosa, che di veruna altra s'avvidde in quello mezzo, è segno che solo un'anima era in lui: e così regolarmente in ciascuno uomo' [Now the author (with the arguments spoken of above) refutes as false this error of Averroes: and also with this further argument: if man had two souls — that is the rational soul in itself and the intellect in itself — then through the activity produced by the first, the other would not leave its own operation. But what happens proves the opposite: his soul was so focused on thinking about one thing that it did not see anything else, and this is a sign that he has only one soul, and so it is the case with every man]. See also *CG.*, II. cap. 58–61. Aquinas confutes, in chapter 58, 'quod natura, sensitiva, et intellectiva non sunt in homine tres animae' [that, in man, the natural, sensitive and intellective are not three souls] in chapter 59, 'quod intellectus possibilis non est substantia separata' [that the possible intellect is not a separate substance].
35. Aquinas argues as follows: to know with the imagination is the proper activity of the soul when it is united to the body ('intellegere cum phantasmate est propria operatio animae secundum quod corpori est unita'); the soul, separated from the body, has an aptitude and natural desire to be unified with the body ('habens aptitudinem et inclinationem naturalem ad corporis unionem'). It will find, therefore, some other way of knowing similar to that of other substances which are without a body ('habebit alium modum intelligendi similem aliis substantiis a corpore separatis'). (*ST.*, Ia. q. 75, a. 6, ad 3; Ia. q. 76, a. 1, ad 6; Ia. q. 75, a. 6, ad 3). See also Aquinas, *CG.*, II. cap. 76–77.
36. Dante's *Commedia* presents, in a literal sense, a theological hypothesis as to how human souls might exist after death but before the resurrection of the body. Theological speculation about this topic was heightened in the early fourteenth century by Pope John XXII's heterodox personal view — which he subsequently withdrew and which was condemned as heretical by the papal bull issued by his successor Benedict XII, *Benedictus Deus* (1336) — that the souls of the faithful departed do not receive the beatific vision until after the general resurrection of the body.
37. Sapegno suggests that Belacqua's voice appears to arise out of the conscience of the poet, expressing as it does the needs and desires of the fragile body, which are set in antithesis to the

high demands of virtue (Sapegno, gloss to *Purg.*, IV. 98). See also Vincenzo Mazzei, 'Belacqua (*Purg.*, IV)', *Dante e i suoi amici nella Divina Commedia* (Milan: Nuovi Autori, 1987), pp. 49–57. Mazzei's interpretation of Belacqua is, similarly, sympathetic: Belacqua's intervention is 'un richiamo alla realtà del faticoso cammino' [a recall to the reality of the tiring journey] (p. 53).

38. Anonimo Fiorentino, gloss to *Purg.*, IV. 114.
39. Anoninmo Fiorentino, gloss to *Purg.*, IV. 119–20.
40. Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.*, IV. 115–20.
41. Anonimo Fiorentino, gloss to *Purg.*, IV. 123–26.
42. See also *Conv.*, IV. xiii. 15–17.
43. Freccero, 'Casella's Song', in *Dante The Poetics of Conversion*, ed. by Jacoff, p. 186.
44. Ibid.

CONCLUSION

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Dante's dualistic vision is radical and — as early reception of his works indicates — open to charges of heresy. In part because of this, much of twentieth-century Dante scholarship has been concerned to distance the *Commedia* from the heterodox dualism foregrounded in the *Convivio* and the *Monarchia*. But the modern philological evidence gives no reason to doubt that the dualistic theory enunciated most forcefully in the *Monarchia* represents Dante's mature thought and *not* a temporary phase in his intellectual trajectory. This evidence invites a twenty-first-century reappraisal of the *Commedia* in dualistic terms. It also prompts a recovery of the prose works as interpretative keys to the *Commedia* — works that have long been sidelined on the questionable grounds that Dante, aside from retracting particular theological positions (for instance the hierarchy of the angels in the *Convivio*), moves away from the whole intellectual attitude of the prose works by the time of the poem's composition. This book has reappraised Dante's dualism in two main ways. The first part addressed Dante's reception and representation of Epicureanism and its implications for his theoretical dualism. The second and third parts argued that Dante's theologically unorthodox representation of the Epicureans, the virtuous pagans, and the liminal region of Ante-Purgatory highlights the persistence of his dualistic theory in the eschatological structure of the *Commedia*.

Dante polemically corrects the widespread but false medieval caricature of Epicurus as a pig enslaved to the senses. A narrowly secular life does not imply depraved sensuality. The mantra 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die' is foolish because such a life is, to use Dante's metaphors, a living death, a sleep, or an animal life. Man is uniquely a *rational* animal and he thus only lives as a man insofar as he lives in accordance with reason. Dante's partial defence of Epicureanism is therefore also a defence of the noble secular unbeliever. Aside from the question of the destiny of the individual human soul after death, man has a practical and theoretical purpose within the span of his earthly life: to order his acts in accordance with reason and to understand the natural world and its causes. It is this fruition of reason which elevates and ennobles mankind above all other natural species. Dante nonetheless emphasizes that a man may achieve earthly felicity in accordance with the teachings of natural philosophy, and yet reject Christian faith and his spiritual destiny because he is convinced of the human soul's mortality. In this way, Dante's dualistic strategy of two autonomous hemispheres necessitates the theoretical space for a proto-secularism. Because he understood the Epicurean school to teach virtue and the doctrine of mortalism, Dante labels this secularist category 'Epicurean'.

The otherwise peculiar prominence of Epicureanism in the *Commedia* is therefore understandable. The Epicurean doctrine of mortalism refutes the spiritual

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dimension of man's hybrid nature and thus the very foundation of Dante's dualistic theory. Moreover, mortalism explicitly undermines Dante's Christian belief and the very existence of Hell or an afterlife at all. Dante's condemnation of four renowned magnates of the thirteenth century and 'innumerable others' as Epicurean heretics, his implicit indictment of his former 'primo amico' Guido Cavalcanti, and his autobiographically inflected representation of spiritual disorientation at the close of *Inferno* X all testify to the contagious and destructive power of religious disbelief. In a further indication of the significance of Epicureanism, Dante marshals his highest poetical and theatrical craft in *Inferno* X. The thematic and structural centre of the canto of the Epicureans is, as we have seen, the extraordinarily sophisticated dialogue with Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti which Dante stage-manages so as to crystallize in linguistic ambiguity an epistemological horizon between Christian faith and Epicurean disbelief.

The Epicureans are punished with time-long-sightedness for their short-sighted pursuit of secular felicity in this life and with an eternal burning tomb for their wilful blindness to their true immortal destiny. By contrast, the virtuous pagans in limbo continue to enjoy in the afterlife the secular felicity which they pursued successfully on earth. The perspective of eternity nevertheless intensifies the pagans' agonizing consciousness of the limit of this secular felicity (intended as man's corruptible goal) and, consequently, of their now frustrated desire for God (man's eternal goal). They are perpetually 'suspended' at the horizon between a secular nobility attained and a Christian beatitude denied. Initially it may seem strange — and scholars have been reluctant to suppose — that Dante should locate in Hell an image of secular happiness corresponding to the *paradisus terrestris* delineated in the *Monarchia*. This book has therefore emphasized that the virtuous pagans occupy a luminous, open and verdant plain at Hell's summit and that their only suffering, the loss of hope for union with God, is also shared by unbelievers in this life who may like them attain secular felicity. Where scholars have previously focused on the literal problem of the virtuous pagans' apparently unjustified deprivation of beatitude, I have argued that the pagans' destiny serves a more urgent allegorical purpose. The innovative creation of the region of the virtuous pagans in the *Commedia* underlines two polemical implications of Dante's dualistic theory. First, with regard to the secular hemisphere, Dante's persistent emphasis on virtuous *pagans* and *pagan* philosophers in the poem serves to defend *natural* ethics and *natural* reason as sufficient to guide temporal affairs independently of the *supernatural* faith of the *Christian* Church. Second, the suffering of the virtuous pagans highlights man's immortal longing for God which, irrespective of natural virtue or wisdom, may only be fulfilled through the mediation of Christian faith.

The tension in Dante's dualistic theory between man's secular and eternal goals is worked out dramatically in the third liminal region analysed in this book. Ante-Purgatory is poised between the limbo of the virtuous pagans at the uppermost rim of hell and the first terrace of Purgatory, which depicts the beginning of man's spiritual journey to his eternal goal. This study, following Ascoli's call to read the *Commedia* 'beyond the palinode', does not read Dante's literary cross-references and self-borrowings in the Ante-Purgatory in terms of authorial retraction. Rather, I

argue that Dante consciously reworks in Ante-Purgatory the dualistic theoretical concerns underlined by critics of the prose works. The antechamber of Purgatory re-envisages from an eternal perspective the whole temporal hemisphere as a state of spiritual exile from the vision of God. The apparent image of temporal perfection represented by the beautiful Valley of Princes is re-considered, with the singing of the *Salve Regina*, as a valley of tears. The noble souls, some of whom were kings in their earthly realms, rediscover their true spiritual identity as common pilgrims travelling to the heavenly city. In the balance of Christian faith, even Virgil's consummate ethical and poetic virtue is seen as tragically insufficient to make him worthy of spiritual salvation. But there is no indication that Dante devalues philosophy in this way, or undermines the intellectual pursuits embodied in the *Convivio*. On the contrary, in Ante-Purgatory Virgil ventriloquizes the *Convivio*'s parallel lectures on astronomy and ethics, and the reader is exhorted to deplore, with Virgil and Dante-character, the intellectual and moral sloth of Belacqua. What the Ante-Purgatory conveys is the central duality in Dante's thought between the need to uphold, on the one hand, natural ethics and philosophy as guides to man's secular felicity and, on the other, Christian faith as necessary for eternal salvation. Dante's poetic creation of an antechamber to Purgatory, where the souls are forced to wait for their longed-for spiritual purification, highlights a danger characteristic of this world, where souls may be distracted by secular concerns so that they choose to delay their spiritual pilgrimage to reunion with God.

My analysis of the graveyard of the Epicureans, the limbo of the virtuous pagans, and the region of Ante-Purgatory strongly supports this new dualistic reading of the *Commedia*. These three borderline regions of the *Commedia* are fault-lines which put pressure on Dante's thought and poetic vision and serve to accentuate the distinctive dualism which underpins it. This reading challenges the position of scholars who, following Nardi, assert that there is no trace of dualism in Dante's poem, and also the position of scholars such as Scott who have equated the *paradisus terrestris* in the *Monarchia* with the Earthly Paradise at the summit of mount Purgatory. My own reading will therefore reopen and stimulate debate about this central issue. As well as advancing understanding through this debate, my study lays the ground for a fuller development of this dualistic argument on its own terms. At the least, this would include a detailed discussion of the Earthly Paradise in *Purgatorio*, and preferably also of other liminal regions such as the heaven of Venus — the last of the heavens shadowed by the earth — in which Dante contextualizes the first canzone of the *Convivio* 'Voi che 'ntendendo il terzo ciel movete'.

To give full measure to the critical scope of this new dualistic reading of the *Commedia*, major sections of the poem beyond the liminal regions demand reinterpretation. A dualistic reading of the circles of Hell would investigate how the highest secular values embodied in the Limbo of the virtuous pagans are traduced by the human beings, whether pagan or Christian, whose tragic narratives are told and whose moral failures are explained in the *cantica*. For, although the primary and universal condition of the souls in Hell is the loss of God, all the souls except those in Limbo have distorted some natural good and are assigned an appropriate punishment in Hell by Minos according to the gravity of their evil. As Dante

considered that philosophy must guide the Emperor in temporal affairs, so — in his creation of the *Inferno* — he uses the philosophical principles of Aristotle (the master of ethics) to administer, from the perspective of the afterlife, the justice which he saw unfilled in his own time with the seat of the Emperor vacant. Through the depiction of the Roman heroes who populate the verdant lawns of Limbo and the 'filosofica famiglia' surrounding Aristotle, Dante presents an image of the secular felicity proper to man's earthly life (the *beatitudo huius vitae*).

Such an interpretation of the *Inferno* in terms of natural ethics would liberate the *Purgatorio* from a forced political or an overly secular reading. I have argued that the Earthly Paradise is not, as Scott would have it, the secular happiness 'attainable through Justice and the teachings of philosophy'. Rather, Purgatory is liturgical and sacramental and represents man's spiritual journey to recover the state of grace lost by Adam. The guide is revelation, the virtues emphasized at the threshold of Purgatory are the theological virtues of faith, hope and love, and the ethical model *par excellence* is not Virgil but Mary. Indeed, Virgil is a guide only in a restricted sense in the *Purgatorio*: divine revelation leads and reason responds in this *cantica*. The seven terraces of Purgatory are not structured, as Scott argues, according to 'philosophical principles', but rather according to the seven capital vices and their corresponding Christian virtues. A new dualistic reading of Purgatory would therefore reappraise the region in terms of the complex tradition of the seven vices in Christian moral psychology. The Earthly Paradise at the summit of Purgatory represents man's restoration to grace and friendship with God after due confession and penance. The celestial spheres of Paradise represent, in grades, man's fruition of the vision of God for which in grace he was originally created.

As this Conclusion indicates, therefore, the book aims to be a departure point for a more sustained twenty-first-century reappraisal of the *Commedia*. This study opens a new way for readers, whether specialist or lay, to read and interpret Dante's poetic masterpiece as underpinned by his dualistic vision of secular and spiritual fulfilment.

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