The Dante Journal of Singapore

Produced by the undergraduates of

YALE-NUS COLLEGE

Volume I * 2017

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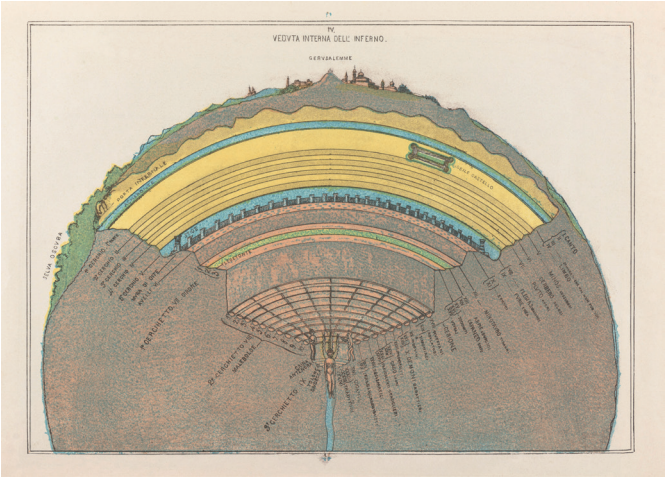

Michelangelo Caetani. *La materia della Divina commedia di Dante Alighieri dichiarata in VI tavole* Montecassino: Monaci benedettini di Montecassino, 1855. Plate IV (Public Domain)

These essays are revisions of the final student projects in the literature seminar YHU2230 Dante and the European Middle Ages, taught in Semester I of the 2015-2016 Academic Year

Faculty Editor: Andrew Hui
Student Editors: Carmen Denia (2017) and Thu Truong (2018)

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FACULTY EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Reading Dante's *Divine Comedy* for the first time is a confounding and exhilarating experience for anyone. Confounding because there's just so much stuff that you need to know to understand the poem; exhilarating because Dante presents to you the sublime and terrifying grandeur of his cosmic vision. The only prerequisite for reading is an experience of the human condition. So anyone can pick up the poem and get something out of it.

In the first semester of the 2015-2016 academic year—the third in Yale-NUS's young life—I taught a course on the *Commedia*. It was my first time teaching my own seminar, the first time Dante was taught at the College, and, to my knowledge, the first time in Singapore.

I was, as it were, the Virgil to a group of ten Dantes. For three months, for three hours a week, we read, carefully and intensely and philologically, every single word of the *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*. We paid special attention to the historical, intellectual and social world of the European Middle Ages and the fraught legacy of the classical tradition (we also read the entirety of Virgil's *Aeneid*, chunks of Ovid and the Bible along the way). We discussed theology and revelation, the state of souls in the afterlife, the primacy of poetry as an intellectual and spiritual activity, the nature of art and beauty, the relationship between pagan myths and Christian mysteries, and the medieval encyclopaedia of classical learning and medieval religious doctrine.

The six essays here represent the students' travelogue, by now a two-year journey. Whereas most final papers in class are quickly written and then summarily hidden away, we worked on them, refined them, and made them exponentially better. The goal of this publication is to build an "authentic learning experience" (in the current buzzwords of pedagogy). The contributors learn the process of journal submission, revision, and peer review; the student editors learn the process of running a journal. These are essential skills not only for the students who wish to go on to graduate school, but also for any professional field involving writing.

Now, thanks to a grant from the College's Teaching and Learning Centre, we are able to make this into an online and print journal. Thus I am honored and delighted to present to the reader six essays of the highest caliber. These are all pieces of undergraduate research that make a real contribution to the 700-year old tradition of Dante

scholarship.

The first three essays form a cluster that explores the nature of artistic representation and its relationship to divine truth. Christopher Tee's "Dante's Addresses to the Reader: A New Way of Seeing and Reading," probes the poet's invocation to the reader as a way for him to think about the veracity and truth claims of his text. Ritika Biswas in "How To Become A Scribe: Art And Humility In *The Divine Comedy*" does a vertical reading of Cantos 10 across the three canticles and see them as Dante's "meditation on the ineffable relation between the art and humility of a poet and scribe." Thu Truong's "LA DIVINA MIMESIS: Art in the Terrace of Pride in *Divina Commedia*" is likewise interested in the nature of artistic representations in Canto 10 of *Purgatorio*, and argues that unlike another artist, Arachne, "Dante's art aspires to be not fraud, but guidance; not trickery, but truth."

Carmen Denia's "Divine Hunger in Dante's *Purgatorio*" is perhaps the most theologically attuned of the essays, and proposes the gryphon in Canto 31 to "represent the Eucharistic Christ, the highest object of divine hunger." "The Middle of the Journey: Dante's Reversal of Phaethon and Lucifer in Canto 17 in *The Divine Comedy*" by Rebecka Lindeberg harnesses the tools of reception studies to argue that the pilgrim seeks to transcend the tragic falls of the mythological son of Apollo and the biblical fallen archangel. The last essay is on the afterlife of the poem. In "Every Tongue Would Surely Fail— The Visual and the Verbal in Illustrations of the *Inferno*," Benson Pang traces the responses of three artists—Botticelli, Gustav Doré, and Rico Lebrun—to think about the perennial *agon* between the poetic and pictorial arts.

In conclusion, I wish to thank every member of our class (including Amanda Lee, Rachel Hau, Karen Ho), all the contributors, Bryan Penprase, the former director of CTL and Nancy Gleason, its current director for believing in this project. Finally I am grateful to the student editors, Carmen Denia and Truong Ha Thu for making this publication a success.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Hui
Assistant Professor of Humanities

STUDENT EDITORS' FOREWORD

A course on Dante's *Divina Commedia* would seem to be easy at the start. How hard can studying a single poem across four months be, asks the student who has read so many more texts in a semester for the Common Curriculum. Yet, the wonder of the *Commedia* is that it has something to say about everything — and one soon learns that digesting this encyclopedia in verse form is the work of many lifetimes.

Given the density of the poem, Professor Hui helped us individually identify our interests early in the semester. These became anchors for class discussion: key ideas we could look out for as we read and worked towards writing our final essays. We were encouraged to keep a commonplace book, where we would note down bits of inspiration, themes, or unusual phrases. We analysed our observations in weekly blog posts, instead of a midterm essay. These regular, bite-sized pieces of work became physical translations of our internal journey through Dante's vision of hell, purgatory and heaven.

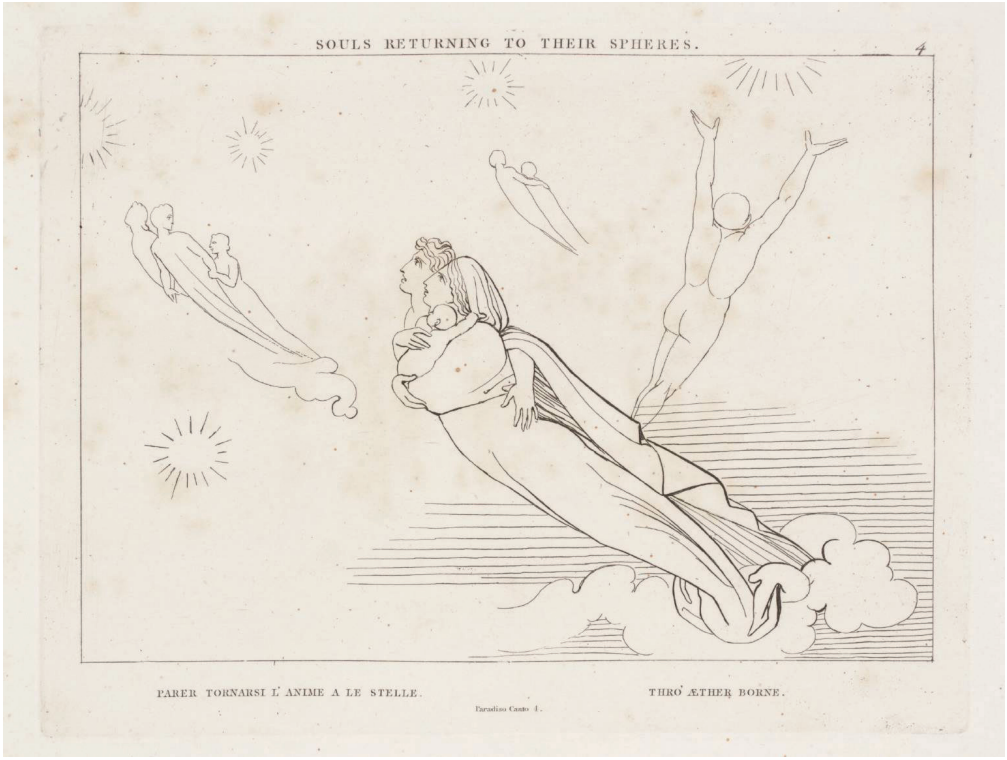
Looking back, we see clearly now how the class taught us to slow down, and to appreciate what a single line of verse in a masterpiece could accomplish. This is not to say that seminars were slow. Every class was overflowing with observations and questions. To see the stars, with which Dante ends each canticle, takes an agile mind — one we found in our passionate professor, who guided us every step of the way.

Our great privilege during the making of this journal is that we participated both as contributors and as student editors. The experience was deeply transformative. As contributors, we learned to situate ourselves in a lineage of thoughts — thoughts of those who have come before us, in the secondary literature, and of those who did this with us: our professor and peers. To do independent research amidst all those voices is to balance what we learned from others with what we have learned by ourselves. Above all, we sought to bring to you, our reader, the immensely rich tradition of Dantean studies, and to put in our own words why this divine poem still rings true. Like the *terza rima*, which looks to the past and anticipates the future, while converging in the present, this journal also wishes to connect past scholarship with future audience, starting with the readers who are currently holding it in their hands.

The sense of being in conversation was even more distinct during our editing process, when we had the pleasure and honor of reviewing our classmates' work. If our independent research allowed us to craft a pathway for our thoughts to come forward,

editing taught us to step back and absorb the thoughts of others. It is important, we learned, not to make every essay sound the same. To that end, we followed only one guideline: to see how the writing could best help us understand the person behind it. If from within the *Commedia* shines forth a light — and there is indeed such a light — then each Dantean work is a stained-glass window that lets the light pass through changed. We hope you would find the essays here just as colorful and luminous.

Thu Truong ('18) and Carmen Denia ('17)



A Note on Citation

All translations of Dante are from the edition of Robert M. Durling and Ronald L. Martinez in their *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, 2004, and 2013).

The illustrations that accompany the essays are from "The Divine Poem of Dante Alighieri," after John Flaxman (1755–1826). Etching on paper. Image released under Creative Commons CC-BY-NC-ND, courtesy of Tate Britain.

E VIDI SPENTA
OGNI VEDUTA, FUOR CHE DE LA FIERA.

ON EITHER HAND RETIRD THE FLAMING WASTE.

Inferno Canto 17.

Dante's Addresses to the Reader: A New Way of Seeing and Reading

Christopher Tee

Dante's *Commedia* features twenty-one addresses to the reader spread across one hundred canti, with seven appearing in each canticle. These twenty-one addresses are unique and clearly marked breaks in the narrative of epic. They invite readers to pause and reflect on what they have previously read, and how they should extract meaning from the text. The pages below will demonstrate that these addresses facilitate a different kind of reading, and hence, a different kind of seeing in the text. Indeed, the motif of vision is manipulated by Dante to achieve various forms of seeing. For example, empirical sight or literal vision allows Dante the pilgrim to see the damned punished in *Inferno*; memory allows Dante the poet to record what he saw in *Purgatorio*; and lastly, Dante's ability to see the light of divine truth in *Paradiso* involves the illumination of the mind, where seeing becomes both a metaphor and the faculty for one to perceive the divine truth.

The addresses create a new kind of vision – a way of seeing that is specifically targeted at the reader. As Teodolinda Barolini argues, the *Commedia* "is informed by a poetics of the new, a poetics of time, its narrative structure structured like a voyage in which the traveller is continuously waylaid by the new things that cross his path."[1] Rather than exploring a new poetics of time, this essay will explore a poetics of vision through examining how the addresses create a new way of seeing which, consequently, invites readers to engage the *Commedia* in a new way. How do Dante's addresses create a new form of vision that is specific to the reader of the *Commedia*? The first half of this essay will examine the stylistic form of the addresses, exploring its structure and chronotope, while the second half of this essay will briefly look at medieval optical theory, and then the subject matter of the addresses related to sight, and how they create a "passive" and "active" form of vision for readers to engage with.

As a formal literary device, the addresses seem to adhere to a basic tripartite structure. The three components of an address are: an imperative or verb, an address to the reader itself, and a meta-fictive issue reflecting the poet's concerns of how readers should

engage his poem, or the status of his poem as art or artifice. The following three addresses are examples reflecting Dante's concern with the way his readers engage the *Commedia*. The table below illustrates how the address can be divided into its three constituent elements:

	Imperative / Verb	Address	Meta-Fictive Issue of Vision
Inf. 9.61-63	gaze on the teaching	O you who have sound intellects,	that is hidden beneath the veil of the strange verses.
Pur. 8.19-21	Sharpen here,	reader,	your eyes to the truth, for the veil is now surely so fine that passing within it is easy.
Pur. 9.70-72	you see well	Reader,	how I am elevating my matter, and therefore do not marvel if with more art I bolster it.

The imperative or verb commands a reader's attention because the dialogue of the narrative has been suddenly directed away from the speaker(s) of the poem – for instance, between Dante the pilgrim and Virgil his guide – to the reader, commanding him or her to draw their attention more closely to the salient metafictive issue that Dante the poet highlights. The *Commedia* constantly oscillates between two personae of Dante: the pilgrim who embarks on this epic journey in the middle of his life, and the poet who then chronicles all he has seen in the afterlife. This oscillation, however, is the very conceit of the text. Readers should believe that Dante the poet is transcribing a historical account of his journey in the afterlife, while remembering that this journey is purely poetic. The metafictive issues of vision are thus crucial in differentiating between types of seeing or reading. The three examples cited demonstrate how Dante the poet, and not the pilgrim, is speaking to the reader. The actual address itself such as "O you who have sound intellects" (*Inf*. 9.61) or "Sharpen here, reader" (Pur. 8.19) exhibits a high degree of directness to a specific individual and intimacy in the potential audience of the address; Dante speaks to no one else except the person holding his *Commedia*. In these addresses, Dante the poet underscores the importance of the correct way of seeing and reading, for both Dante the pilgrim in what he sees on his journey, and for us,

the reader, in the truth that we can extract from the poem.

The metafictive issue raised above tackle the same issue of vision. Simply stated, there is more than one way to read and understand the *Commedia*. Specifically, there is a superficial way of reading that stops at the veil of art, and another way that penetrates through the artifice of the work. In other words, the superficial level of seeing allows a viewer to see what an artwork is depicting, but to penetrate that veil allows the viewer to decipher the work's meaning. The unique tripartite structure of the addresses signals a break from the stichic narrative of the *Commedia*, forcing the reader to pause and read the poem in a new and different way. This rhetorical device invites the reader to step outside the narrative world of the *Commedia*, albeit momentarily, to allow Dante to emphasise how his poem should be read and remind readers that his poem is artifice.

The addresses to the reader elicit a different and new form of reading because the address itself was a new literary trope or philological phenomenon in medieval literature. The Russian formalist Victor Shklovsky argues in "Art as Technique" against the maxim that "art is thinking in images". Instead, he re-defines "*art [as] a way of experiencing the artfulness of the object; the object itself is not important.*"[2] This new definition places a premium on the technique and tropes of depiction rather than the subject matter of what is depicted. "Art removes objects from the automatism of perception" and hence a reader engaging in the *Commedia*, and specifically the twenty-one addresses, must slow down and experience art through a process of defamiliarisation.[3] In applying Shklovsky's arguments to the *Commedia*, the addresses would thus "create a special perception of the object – *it creates a 'vision' of the object instead of serving as a means for knowing it.*"[4] This "vision" requires a different way of reading in comparison to the rest of the poem. The reader is defamiliarised when encountering the addresses, and must switch to an alternative from of reading to decipher what is "hidden beneath the veil" (*Inf.* 9.63).

Leo Spitzer in his important "The Addresses to the Reader in the "Commedia"" argues that this rhetorical device is an innovative narrative technique in medieval literature. Following the work of Hermann Gmelin, he writes that the "addresses to the reader, contrary to the invocation of the Muses, has no true classical antecedents."[5] Spitzer then cites Gmelin in stating that Dante's addresses are "a new conquest for literature in general, the manifestation of a new relationship between poet and reader," one that pierces through the veil and arrives at a larger truth.[6]

Erich Auerbach also believes that Dante's addresses have no precedent in ancient poetry. The closest counterpart in classical literature is an apostrophe, but Auerbach clearly differentiates the two literary devices: apostrophes have a much wider potential audience "since it may be directed to persons present (i.e. audience members), or to the gods, to the illustrious dead, to allegorical personifications". The *Commedia*'s addresses, in contrast to an apostrophe, are directed at the person reading the poem and not an unspecified larger audience. They thus create a new experience of vision for readers, becoming precisely a new technique to engage and "experience the artfulness of the object" or the *Commedia* itself.[7]

Now that we have discussed the structure of the addresses as a novel literary device, we can now ask how they operate outside narrative time. Dante's addresses create a new vision specifically for the reader because they take place in a chronotope of the reader that is beyond the *Commedia*. In "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel," Bakhtin defines a chronotope as "(literally, 'time space') to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature."[8] According to Bakhtin, the time and space where events happen in literature are inseparable, and hence, the "image of man (in literature) is always intrinsically chronotopic."[9] Typically, time in literature "thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space, becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history."[10] The chronotope of Dante's addresses, however, creates a new vision specific to the reader by going beyond Bakhtin's definition, perhaps even defying it. Dante's twenty-one addresses are clearly marked breaks in the poem, since the attention suddenly shifts away from the speaker of the poem and focuses on the reader through a highly personal and intimate address. In the chronotope of the addresses, time does not "thicken (and) take on flesh" by slowing down the narrative or pace of the poem. Instead, time for the reader stops, and ruptures, and thus, the chronotope enters a time that is intrinsically linked to the reader who holds the *Commedia* in their hands, wholly outside the narrative time of the events taking place in the poem itself. What is perhaps paradoxical about the addresses is that these ruptures in time still occur within the strict *terza rima* of the epic.

Spatially, the chronotope of the apostrophe also takes place outside the narrative space of the poem. The twenty-one addresses occur across the depths of Inferno, the mountain of *Purgatorio*, and the celestial realms of *Paradiso*. There does not seem to be an inherent pattern of when and where they should occur. For instance, as evening descends on Dante and Virgil in *Purgatorio* 8, Dante the poet addresses the reader

just before the angels descend in Ante-Purgatory. "Sharpen here, reader, your eyes to the truth, for the veil is now surely so fine that passing within is easy" (*Pur*. 8.19-21). Dante's word "here" (*Pur*. 8.19), however, does not refer to the physical space of Ante-Purgatory where Virgil and pilgrim talk to Sordello about the appearance of the two angels. Rather, "here" refers to the chronotope of the address and the space of the reader, which is marked by a lack of physical narrative space rather than defined by it. "Here" is used meta-fictively to reference this very moment in *Purgatorio* where the reader should stop and pay attention. In other words, the address as a form of the chronotope marks a liminal, in-between space between Dante the poet and the reader. As such Dante negotiates and discovers "a new auctorial relationship with the reader [as a] consequence of the nature of his vision in which the presence of the reader for whom it is told is required."[11]

The chronotopes of the addresses are time spaces that defy Bakhtin's definition by rupturing time and occurring outside narrative space, and their rupture results in breaking the "fourth wall" of the poem. Paradoxically, the addresses both affirm and subvert the status of the *Commedia* as art since the addresses transport the reader to a chronotope outside the poem, acknowledging the poem's status as art by the very act of standing outside it to comment on its artifice.

Medieval Optics

Suzanne Akbari's *Seeing Through the Veil: Optical Theory and Medieval Allegory* explores the connection between optical theory in the middle ages and their commonalities with allegory. Akbari presents a survey of the different medieval theories on optics before underscoring two dominant and oppositional ones, highlighting whether the eye has agency or not in perception. They are "extramission," the Platonic theory that light, as a sentient instrument of vision, emanates from the eye; and "intromission," the Aristotelian notion that the eye is a passive recipient of external forms activated by light and colour. Regardless of which model one subscribes to, allegory and optical theory are deeply intertwined in medieval epistemology.

Following Akbari's presentation of two models of optics, there are two types of vision that Dante's apostrophes can create for the reader. The first, based on Aristotle's theory of "intromission" is a more "passive" form of seeing where the reader uses literal or empirical sight to read and see what Dante experienced in his journey in the afterlife.

An extension to literal sight would be imagination since a reader sees what Dante the pilgrim saw, and it is Dante the poet's task to conjure scenes of the afterlife in the mind of his reader since the reader obviously has not yet traversed the unknown realm of the afterlife. The second type of sight follows Plato's "extramission," where the eye/I becomes an active agent to perceive and understand the world. This second type of intellectual vision requires the reader to go beyond empirical sight and penetrate the veil of art, and engage in the *Commedia* in the correct way that Dante alludes to in some of his addresses. Hence, the critical difference between "passive" and "active" sight is that the latter form of vision is meaning making.

The first form of vision that readers engage with in the addresses requires them to be in the place of Dante the pilgrim as he relives his journey from memory. In order for the reader to experience the afterlife, Dante must give his readers a vision, and thus, Dante the pilgrim functions as a proxy for his readers, a pair of lenses, as it were, to help the reader imagine what the afterlife looks like. For instance, Dante's address to the reader at the gates of Dis re-creates the pilgrim's ardent fear of having "more than a thousand that had rained down from Heaven, who were saying angrily: 'Who is he there, that without death goes through the kingdom of the dead?'" (*Inf.* 8.84-85) by appealing to the reader's imagination. "Think, reader, if I became weak at the sound of those cursed words, for I did not believe I would ever return here" (*Inf.* 8.94-96). The intimate space created between poet and reader is exploited as a testament of human limitations and frailty. What the reader is asked to see is fear and the intimidation of the thousands of damned souls surrounding the one living pilgrim.

The last address in *Inferno* also invites the reader to witness the limits of Dante, although it illuminates a different kind of human limit. As Virgil and Dante descend into Judecca and meet Lucifer himself, Dante becomes acutely aware of the limits of his poetry, thus gesturing to the topos of ineffability. "How then I became frozen and feeble, do not ask, reader, for I do not write it, and all speech would be insufficient. I did not die and I did not remain alive: think now for yourself, if you have wit at all, what I became, deprived of both" (*Inf.* 34.22-27). As Robert Durling and Ronald Martinez note, the lack that Dante exhibits here is a reflection of the lack that characterises Satan since "evil is not a positive quality but a defect, a lack of a good, thus of being."[12] In this address, Dante invites the reader not only to imagine and see his own lack or limits, but also to occupy the liminal space that the pilgrim now occupies, where "I did not die and I did not remain alive". In other words, the poem depicts the liminal space when Christ descended into hell, and the pilgrim's symbolic death to sin.

Although the two types of medieval visions are "passive" and "active," there are no negative or pejorative labels to this first type. Spitzer posits that medieval literature was more concerned with humanity in general rather than with the individual.[13] The voice of the individual poet was thus the voice of all of society. The "medieval public saw in the 'poetic I' a representative of mankind, that it was interested only in this representative role of the poet."[14] The passive empirical seeing and imagination that the reader does in the addresses thus connects them with Dante the poet, since Dante's "I" represents all of mankind. The addresses thus become a crucial device to connect individuals to a larger collective human experience. Spitzer thus concludes that one of the functions of the addresses is to connect with "isolated individual readers behind their respective *banchi* (desks) out of whom he must, by his art, make companions and create a community."[15] This imagined community of believers is the very project that Dante pursues when he famously begins his poem with: "In the middle of the journey of our life" (*Inf*. 1.1). The use of the collective pronoun "our" emphasizes the shared experience of the faithful, rather than an individual's own experience. The first form of passive seeing and imagination brings Dante and the readers of the *Commedia* into the same community – a communion of believers who wish to attain salvation and divine truth through journeying to God.

The second form of vision that readers engage in with the addresses is a more "active" form of vision in which readers go beyond empirical sight and see intellectually. This second form of vision is also concerned with the metafictive issue of how readers are supposed to read the Commedia in the correct way as spelt out by Dante. The seeing that Dante wants his readers to perform is one that requires them to see using their mind: "O you who have sound intellects, gaze on the teaching that is hidden beneath the veil of the strange verses" (*Inf*. 9.61-63) is an appeal to the reader to penetrate the veil of art or "the strange verses" of his poetry. Similarly, in another address where he appeals to: "Sharpen here, reader, your eyes to the truth, for the veil is now surely so fine that passing within is easy" (*Pur*. 8.19-21). The task for the reader is the same, to fix their vision and "eyes to the truth," but now it become more difficult since the veil is so thin "that passing within is easy." This address is ironic because one would assume that a thin veil would be easy to penetrate, but here Dante warns the reader against the temptation to marvel (*maraviglia*) at the realism of his art.

A reader's struggle between marvelling as a form of "passive" sight and intellectual reading as a form of "active" sight is literalised in the figure of Geryon. Two metafictive issues of vision are tackled in this episode of the *Inferno*: first, the beast itself personi-

fies the very concept of fraud; and second, the address that prefaces Geryon's appearance serves as an ardent reminder that this encounter is ultimately a fiction.

Canto 17 of the *Inferno* opens with an ekphrastic description of Geryon literalizes Dante's notion of fraud. "And that filthy image of fraud came over and beached its head and chest . . . Its face was that of a just man, so kindly seemed its outer skin, and the rest of its torso was that of a serpent" (*Inf.* 17.7-12). Fraud is a "filthy image" that attempts to trick someone, or the reader, into thinking that a falsehood can be passed off as truth. The verb "seemed" speaks of the very act of trickery that fraud aims to achieve, which is to create an appearance that differs from reality. In other words, Geryon's face appears to be "that of a just man" based on his "outer skin" of appearances. The reality of the situation, however, reveals a figure that has the face of a man but a body composed of multiple animals (*Inf.* 17.10-15). Dante's ekphrasis of Geryon, which highlights the features of his body, exposes how fraud operates through personification.

Interestingly, Dante also alludes to Arachne's talent for weaving, which highlights another meta-fictive issue of vision, for her mythological prowess of producing tapestries creates a parallel between her craft and Dante's. The word "text" comes from the Latin *textus* which means to weave, and thus both Arachne and Dante produce vivid images through their acts of weaving. In Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, Arachne boasted that she could weave a tapestry better than Pallas, while refusing to acknowledge that her talent at weaving was a gift from the gods. Her tapestry portrayed the gods insultingly but was so beautiful that in the "work of hers Pallas could find, / Envy could find, no fault" (Ovid 125). The expert weaver was punished for her transgression of challenging the gods, and Pallas destroyed her tapestry and transformed her into a spider (125). Dante, thoroughly aware of Arachne's fatal flaw and punishment for her arrogance, uses the address as an intervention. Readers are exposed to the artifice of his text, and the poet appeals to them to switch from "passive" to "active" vision, effectively unmasking the "fraud" of his text: "Always to that truth which has the face of falsehood one should close one's lips as long as one can, for without any guilt it brings shame; but here I cannot conceal it, and by the notes of this comedy, reader, I swear to you, so may they not fail to find long favour . . ." (*Inf.* 16.124-129). Readers must go beyond merely enjoying the realism of Dante's poem, or "the face of falsehood," since that would only engage "passive" sight where the reader would stop at the veil. This address is the first time Dante consciously refers to his own work, and meta-fictively exposes the logic behind his fiction since he "cannot conceal it." Although the figure of Geryon could be said to chastise fraud and those who commit it, Dante also acknowledges that fraud is a

technique that he manipulates to reveal "always to that truth." Fiction is thus "a face of falsehood" that points to a larger truth when a reader is willing or able to switch from "passive" to "active" sight. Unlike Arachne, however, Dante ultimately acknowledges that his *Commedia* is a fictional creation that portrays a larger truth.

The vividness and verisimilitude of the *Commedia*'s images, however, still present a significant challenge to the reader. Intellectual sight is an "active" form of viewing because it presents a challenge to the reader to overcome a visual trap, which is the default mode of seeing in which vision stops at the surface of the veil. It is perhaps doubly ironic that Dante himself sets up this very trap of verisimilitude, making it difficult for any reader to penetrate the veil because of how vivid his poem appears to be. As Spitzer remarks, the *Commedia* presented Dante's "vision of the Beyond [so] credibl[y] to a degree matched by no predecessor . . . because he presented the Beyond with a logically coherent precision of detail, anticipating the realism of Defoe who similarly chose to elaborate descriptions of detail in order to make plausible his fantastic tale."[16] Peter Hawkins makes a similar argument in the powerful influence sight has in relation to truth. He claims that Dante "is preoccupied with assertions of truth [and the poet] stakes his claims on his own firsthand vision."[17] Dante's artistic vision is so compelling and so real that his poem, as artifice and art object, is merely an extension of such truth. For the reader, the all too tempting trap to fall into is that "seeing . . . is the ultimate validation of believing"[18] and hence it is constantly challenging for the reader to see intellectually beyond what "the strange verses" (*Inf.* 9.63) present, since "Dante [effortlessly] makes himself not only heard, but also believed."[19] The second form of vision created by the addresses is thus a constant appeal by Dante to his readers to engage the *Commedia* in the correct way, warning them to go beyond the realism of art in order to arrive at the divine truth.

This "active" form of vision created by Dante's addresses is specific to the reader because it can be used to teach and save the reader. Warren Ginsburg explains how humans derive truth: "interpretation is dialectical; it occurs when we participate authentically in making the meaning of the world we are given. Dante poeticizes this dialectic by having the souls he meets reveal attitudes that take part in shaping their place in pit, mount, or heaven; at the same time Dante addresses readers in such a way that their engagement with his text becomes a part of its facticity.[20] Indeed, Dante's addresses to the reader form a crucial mechanism for the reader to derive truth from the *Commedia*. They are a pedagogical tool for readers to engage dialectically in order to achieve intellectual vision.

This being so, Dante is neither merely the everyman pilgrim who sees what happens in the afterlife, nor the poet who only joins all the individual readers into an imagined community of Christians, Dante also plays the role of teacher and guide to the reader who now becomes the pilgrim. The addresses in the *Commedia* serve as a constant reminder of that relationship between poet and reader in creating and maintaining an intellectual vision specific to the reader to help them penetrate the veil. The reader, with all his or her limits and frailties, is by default vulnerable to the trap of realism of the statues in the terrace of pride where "one of my two senses say: 'No,' the other: 'Yes, they are singing.' Just so the smoke of the incense imaged there made eyes and nose discordant as to yes and no" (*Pur*. 10.59-63). At this point, Dante the pilgrim's senses are marvelling at the realism of the statues and his sense of hearing and smell perceive empirical data that runs incongruous to what he sees. If Dante the everyman is vulnerable to such traps, then so is every reader in engaging the *Commedia*. Medieval optical theory, according to Akbari, is always concerned with error and misapprehension, for the medium of transmission is prone to distorting effects. The address to the reader becomes a solution to such illusions, since the correct interpretation can overcome these distortions. Dante, however, goes beyond optical theory, since what is at stake in the poem is the reader's access to divine truth and hence salvation.

Dante's addresses to the reader in the *Commedia* thus create a new kind of vision. As we have discussed, on the level of form, the addresses are a historically novel literary device that had no classical precedents. They follow a tripartite structure that shifts the focus of the poem to the reader directly in dealing with a meta-fictive issue and exist in a chronotope that is outside the poem's narrative time space, creating ruptures that affirm and subvert the poem's status as art and artifice. We have also examined how the addresses demand the reader to engage in "passive" or "active" seeing. The former brings isolated readers and Dante into the same imagined community of believers where the poetic "I" represents everyman. The latter suggests an intellectual vision where readers are constantly reminded to penetrate the veil of art's realism. Of course, the division of the addresses into the seemingly binary categories of "passive" versus "active" is not the only way to categorise the addresses. Spitzer proposes two other methods: by what kind of event precedes the address in each canticle or by common theme,[21] although both are problematic because not every address can be classified so easily, and some addresses might fit into two or more categories. In any case, Dante invites us, his readers, to be careful in what we think we see and read, and how we should actually read and think.

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1. Teodolinda Barolini, *The Undivine Comedy: Detheologizing Dante* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 22.
2. Victor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, trans. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (Lincoln, NE: The University of Nebraska Press, 1965), 12, author's emphasis.
3. Ibid., 13.
4. Ibid., 18, author's emphasis.
5. Leo Spitzer, "The Addresses to the Reader in the "Commedia"," *Italica* 32, no.3 (1955): 143.
6. Ibid., 144.
7. Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," 12.
8. Mikhail Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope In The Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson (Austin, TX: The University of Texas Press, 1982), 84.
9. Ibid., 85.
10. Ibid., 84.
11. Spitzer, "The Addresses to the Reader in the Commedia," 160.
12. Robert Durling and Ronald Martinez, notes to *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Inferno*, trans. Robert M. Durling, Vol. 1 (Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996), 543.
13. Leo Spitzer, "Note on the Poetic and Empirical 'I' in Medieval Authors," *Traditio* 4, no volume no. (1946): 415, accessed November 29, 2015. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27830113.
14. Ibid., 416.
15. Spitzer, "The Addresses to the Reader in the "Commedia"," 159.
16. Ibid., 152-153.
17. Peter Hawkins, "All Smiles: Poetry and Theology in Dante's *Commedia*," in *Dante's Commedia: Theology as Poetry*, ed. Vittorio Montemaggi and Matthew Treherne (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 39.
18. Ibid., 42.
19. Peter Hawkins, "Self-Authenticating Artifact," in *Dante's Testaments: Essays in Scriptural Imagination* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 72.
20. Ibid., 114.
21. Spitzer, "The Addresses to the Reader in the "Commedia"," 143-144 and 146-157.

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Appendix – List of Addresses in Dante's *Commedia*

The twenty-one addresses from "The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri" have been replicated here, in prose, preserving the format that can be found in the 1996 Durling and Martinez translation of the poem.

Inferno

8.94-96	Think, reader, if I became weak at the sound of those cursed words, for I did not believe I would ever return here.
9.61-63	O you who have sound intellects, gaze on the teaching that is hidden beneath the veil of the strange verses.
16.127-130	. . . but here I cannot conceal it, and by the notes of this comedy, reader, I swear to you, so may they not fail to find long favor, that I saw, through that thick dark air . . .
20.19-22	So may God permit you, reader, to take profit from your reading, now think for yourself how I could keep dry eyes, when from close by I saw our image so twisted . . .

22.118 O you who read, you will hear strange sport: each of them turned his eyes toward the other bank, and he first who had been most unwilling.

25.46-48 If now, reader, you are slow to believe what I say, that will be no marvel, for I, who saw it, hardly allow it.

34.22-27 How then I became frozen and feeble, do not ask, reader, for I do not write it, and all speech would be insufficient. I did not die and did not remain alive: think now for yourself, if you have wit at all, what I became, deprived of both.

Purgatorio

8.19-21 Sharpen here, reader, your eyes to the truth, for the veil is now surely so fine that passing within is easy.

9.70-72 Reader, you see well how I am elevating my matter, and therefore do not marvel if with more art I bolster it.

10.106-111 But I do not wish you, reader, to be dismayed in your good intention, when you hear how God wills that debt to be paid. Do not regard the form of the suffering: think what follows it, think that at worst it cannot go beyond the great judgement.

17.1-9 Remember, reader, if ever in the mountains a fog caught you through which you saw no otherwise than a mole does through its skin, how, when the moist, thick vapours begin to thin out, the sphere of the sun shines weakly through them, and your imagination will easily come to see how I first saw the sun again, which was already setting.

29.97-105 To describe their shapes I scatter no more rhymes, reader, for another outlay constrains me so that I cannot be liberal with this one; but read Ezekiel, who depicts them as he saw them coming from the cold region with wind and cloud and fire, and as you find them in his pages, such were they there, except that as to the feathers John is with me, and departs from him.

31.124-126 Think, reader, if I marvelled when I saw that the thing in itself remained unchanged, but in its eidolon transmuted itself!

33.136-141 If, reader, I had more space to write, I would continue to sing in part the sweet drink that could never satiate me, but because all the pages are filled that have been laid out for this second canticle, the bridle of art permits me to go no further.

Paradiso

2.1-9 O you who in little barks, desirous of listening, have followed after my ship that sails onward singing: turn back to see your shores again, do not put out on the deep sea, for perhaps, losing me, you would be lost; the waters that I enter have never before been crossed; Minerva inspires and Apollo leads me, and nine Muses point out to me the Bears.

2.10-18 You other few, who stretched out your necks early on for the bread of the angels, which one lives on here though never sated by it: you can well set your course over the salt deep, staying within my wake before the water returns level again; those glorious ones who sailed to Colchos did not so marvel as you will do, when they saw Jason become a plowman.

5.109-114 Think, reader, how deprived you would feel, how anxious to know more, if what begins here did not proceed, and you will see by your example how much I desired to hear from them their condition, as soon as they were manifest to my eyes.

10.7-27 Lift therefore your gaze to the high wheels with me, reader, straight to that place where the one and the other motion strike each other, and there begin to marvel at the art of that Master who within himself loves it so much that he never moves his eye away from it. See branching off from there the oblique circle that carries the planets, so as to satisfy the world that calls for them: for if their path were not twisted, much of the power in the heavens would be in vain, and dead almost every potentiality down here, and if its departure from the straight were greater or smaller, much would be lacking, both below and above, in the order of the world. Now stay there, reader, on your bench, thinking back on your foretaste here, if you wish to rejoice long before you tire; I have set before you: now feed yourself, for all my care is claimed by that matter of which I have become the scribe.

13.1-21 Let whoever wishes to grasp well what I now saw, imagine (and hold well the image, as I speak, like an immovable rock) fifteen stars that in the various quarters of the sky shine with a clarity that overcomes every destiny of air: imagine that Wain for which the bosom of our sky suffices both night and day, never too narrow for the turning of the shaft, imagine the mouth of the horn that begins at the point of the axis in which the first rotation turns, and that all these had made two figures in the sky like the one made by the daughter of Minos when she felt the chill of death, and let one have its rays in the other, both revolving in such a way that one begins and the other follows: and he will have almost the shadow of the true constellation and the double dance that was circling about where I was, . . .

22.106-111 So may I return, reader, to that devout triumph on whose account I ever weep for my sins and beat my breast: you would not any sooner have withdrawn your finger from the fire and put it in, than I saw the sign that follows the Bull and was within it.

23.64-69 But whoever thinks of the ponderous theme and the mortal shoulder that has taken it on, will not blame it for trembling beneath the burden: it is no voyage for a little bark, the one my daring prow goes cutting, nor for a helmsman who spares himself.

ANDAVAN SOTTO 'L PONDO. SUCH LOAD THEY BORE.

Purgatorio Canto 11.

How To Become A Scribe: Art And Humility in *The Divine Comedy*

Ritika Biswas

In the *Divine Comedy* Dante and his guide Virgil descend the nine realms of Hell to emerge into Purgatory, and finally embark on a vertical ascent through its realms to enter the spheres of Paradise. Complimenting the *Comedy*'s axis of topographic verticality is a horizontal one — the temporality of the poem dictated by its form — the *terza rima*. Dante's genius lies in the duality of the *Comedy*'s poetic form. While the poem itself is structurally vertical, the *terza rima* juxtaposes this verticality with a horizontal temporality which, as John Freccero argues, both recalls the past and anticipates the future.[1] Dante employs the *terza rima*'s unique rhyme scheme to create a poem that "falls back" on itself while alluding to an inevitable conclusion. This then gives the poem a geometric structure that is as wonderfully complex as the metaphor Dante unravels across this journey. Through such literary and formal intricacy, we, along with Dante the poet and traveler, can begin to contemplate the relation between art and humility. According to Bakhtin, Dante, with "the consistency and force of genius," stretches out the historical world along a vertical axis, a world, he says, "structured according to a pure verticality' with 'horizontal time-saturated branches at right angles to the extratemporal vertical of the Dantesque world."[2] This juxtaposition then unfolds a complex path, which eventually leads to a deeper understanding of the inadequacy and humility of human art that aspires to illustrate divine greatness, and hence, the ineffable. In this paper, a vertical reading of canto 10 in each canticle will provide a trajectory to analyze the intersection between art and transcendence in the poem.

This paper will attempt to trace how Dante's achieves spiritual freedom through artistic humility across the three canti. We will see how humility not only helps Dante to *ascend* to the realm of paradise, but also in the process *transforms* his soul. This vertical reading, which will mimic the forward-looking nature of the *terza rima* across canto 10 of *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*, will be viewed through several lenses, all of which inextricably ties into the narrative of the soul attempting to transcend the limitations of the self. We will examine the progression of sensory perception and language, the nature of human and divine art, and the failings of pride portrayed by the

characters Dante encounters.

Across the three canticles, we see how Dante grapples with a confused multitude of sensory perception. His language and description are constantly morphing and evolving. In all tenth canti across the three canticles, we see him struggling to grapple with his sensory experiences and his literary ability to translate them into a verbal form. In the *Inferno*, Dante has but a mercurial comprehension of his experiences; in the *Purgatorio*, there is an escalating confusion of the senses and judgment; in the *Paradiso*, he realizes with clarity the short-comings of human perception and language. This progression marks the trajectory of why the *Comedy* is a comedy at all. Dante's "Letter to Cangrande" states "Tragedy and comedy are distinguished firstly by the course of their action, which, in tragedy, progresses from a noble and quiet beginning to a terrible conclusion, and, in comedy, inversely from a bitter beginning to a happy conclusion."[3] In calling it a "comedy," Dante has perhaps already signified a "happy conclusion." But he has pushed this definition of a "comedy" beyond its norm by the use of the *terza rima* which challenges the conventional literary arc. And this transforms the *Comedy* into something far greater — a meditation on the ineffable relation between the art and humility of a poet and scribe.

In *Inferno* 10, there is a strong emphasis on the physical human form: Farinata's breast and forehead are emphasized, he raises his brows in disdain, stoically, he only bows and shakes his head once (*Inf.* 10.35, 10.73, 10.88). Cavalcante is also denoted by strong motion; "Then a shade rose up…I think it had risen to its knees. It looked around me…" (*Inf.* 10.52-57), and he falls back 'supine.' Moreover, Dante can perceive Cavalcante's "words and the manner of his punishment" with such an acuteness that he is able to "already read" his identity (*Inf.* 10.64-65). The use of this verb "read" adds to the notion that both Dante's vision and judgement here are quite closely interrelated. He uses the word "read" almost as a substitute for comprehension. The allusion to the stench of Hell across space ("whose stench was displeasing even up there" *Inf.* 10.136) fortifies our belief that Dante is still relying on his sensory perception to divine his environment and interactions.

Dante's judgment in the *Inferno* is not quite certain; he refers to the entrance to this circle as a "secret path", and follows Virgil because he has not yet been able to independently navigate the mysterious realm of the unearthly landscape (*Inf.* 10.1-3). Furthermore, he is clearly clouded in his judgment when he beseeches Farinata to "untie the knot that has entangled my judgment here" (*Inf.* 10.95-96) because he cannot

comprehend Farinata's implication that distant events are clear whereas the present or near future is not. As Robert Durling and Ronald Martinez observes, this "inversion in the pattern of memory" is inconceivable to Dante, since his intellect cannot yet grapple with such notions that warp the human perception of the chronological because he is still highly connected to his mortal and thus limited senses. Durling and Martinez's observation of this "inversion" is a pertinent, for it shows us how Dante the poet is initially creating a realm possessing a reality with which Dante the traveler is uncertain. In this first realm, he is incapable of comprehending such an inversion of knowledge. This represents Dante's struggle with many concurrent dualities — sense and perception, being a poet and a traveller, an artist and a scribe — across the three canticles until he ascends to Paradiso and is able to reconcile them. The reference to the "bad light" that is "distant from us" is the symbolic light of God, the "highest Leader" (*Inf*. 10.100-102) which has not dawned upon Dante's mind yet, and muddles his mental eye. But Virgil indicates the clarity to which Beatrice will introduce Dante in the future (*Inf*. 10.130-132).

The Dawning Light of *Purgatorio*

In *Purgatorio*'s Terrace of Pride, the relation between Dante's sensory and intellectual perception begins to change and his judgment seems to become clearer, as his senses begin to confuse him. *Purgatorio* 10 also begins with an entrance into another level of Purgatory, akin to the crossing of a threshold into a new circle in *Inferno* 10, onto a path which the "human souls' evil love, which makes the twisted way seem straight" (1-3). From the very beginning, the realm of Purgatory is encountered with more intellectual and sensorial clarity than in Hell. Dante is aware of the deception that distorts the shape of the path leading to the Terrace. There remains a residual uncertainty and unfamiliarity with the non-mortal sphere since both Virgil and Dante are "uncertain of the path" (*Purg*. 10.19). Here, it is not only Dante who is unsure, but Virgil as well, and Dante's recognition of this uncertainty in itself indicates a clearer self-judgment. The "bad light" of *Inferno* 10 has now dawned into a new day, about an hour after sunrise, thus symbolizing the dawning of clarity and the light of divine logos or human logic.[5] But the topography of the Terrace is difficult to navigate and requires the use of more "art" (or "skill"). Art or skill requires not only a technical sort of knowledge but also a clarity of vision and comprehension. Thus it is not merely a mimetic art that Dante is referring to here, but rather the ability to decipher the best method to resolve a dilemma. This path, twisting and untwisting, is akin to the cohesion of Dante's

mental state here. The emphasis on their motion when traversing this path recalls the emphasis on the Farinata's and Cavalcante's looming, stony physicality in *Inferno* 10. This vertical mountain-face which bears the divine sculptures establishes the importance of the images of humility as the commanding visual object while the pride of the hunched sinners is physically and symbolically laid low. However, this dominating divine landscape in *Purgatorio* 11 is not meant to merely represent an oppressive force but rather show the futility of human pride, in the face of its overwhelming verticality and magnitude.

Dante has a keen sense of perception at the beginning of this *canto*; he is keenly attuned to the loud resounding sound at the closing of the gates (*Purg*. 11.4). But upon viewing the carvings in the Terrace of Pride, his sensory perception is confounded by the sheer craft and verisimilitude of the life-like sculptures. The carved choruses "made one of my two senses say: "No," and the other: "Yes, they are singing." Just so the smoke of the incense imaged there made eyes and nose discordant as to yes and no." (*Purg*. 10.58-62). Dante also has to view the sculptures from different angles because his intellect and senses cannot perceive them in their entirety from a single position. This dissonance in sensory perception is vital in comprehending the impact of perceiving God's art through human senses. The perfect imitation of Nature is the veil that the senses and intellect must pierce through in order to truly realize this art. But if this realization does not occur, the verisimilitude perplexes the senses. The carved smoke is an intermediate between the "bad light" of *Inferno* 10 and the overwhelming light of *Paradiso* 10 — a shroud that is the very crux of *Purgatorio*.

This blurring is apt given the metapoetic nature of this canto itself — Dante is struggling to simultaneously convey to us the awe of experiencing an ineffable art while recognising the humility of attempting to describe it in a mortal tongue. This divine art, according to Allen Mandelbaum:

> cannot be considered a sculpture in any strict sense, but neither is it merely an epic description. Rather, it is an attempt by Dante to present, in words, the miracle of a divine art, one that concentrates on a given moment even while, within the unity of a work of plastic art, suggesting psychological states that precede and follow.[4]

Here we see the form of *terza rima* mirrored again — the paradox of one artistic depiction capturing the present moment while simultaneously suggesting "states that preceded and follow."[5] But this is all bound by the fact that Dante himself has created

this journey and conjured these scenes through human imagination. The sculptures do not "seem a silent image," but in "her [the Virgin Mary's sculpture] bearing was stamped this speech…as a figure sealed in wax."(*Purg*. 10. 38, 10.43-45). As Robert Hollander observes in his commentary, Dante's description of the details of this *intaglio* show that he is "fully capable of producing the scene in pictures…but which he has invented, he reports only the 'visible speech' wrought by what he saw, that is, the words induced by the carving rather than the carving itself." The beginning of a newfound artistic humility is established here for Dante implies that his poetry and perception were not a product of his intellect but, rather, a mere translation of the divine image he experienced.

However, the difficulty of reconciling the duality of Dante the humbled traveller and Dante the great creator remains. In the Middle Ages, the word "figure" meant sentence or word, and here Dante the pilgrim appears to be overawed by divine art that puts even Nature herself "to scorn" because the sculptures seem to be living art.[6] In truth, Dante the poet here is the very author of these sculptures by stamping his own "figure" into wax — the *Divine Comedy* itself. Hence the metapoetics of the *Comedy* shows itself in full form in this *canto* and is one of the most self-conscious moments when point Dante is keenly aware of the two-fold nature of his work. The very physicality of the "figure" alludes to a human realm — a tangible object that the artist himself has created, rather than an ephemeral, divine notion. He appears to desire his own art when he writes that his "eyes, content to gaze in order to see new things, which they desire, were not slow in turning towards him." (*Purg*. 10.103-105). Given the metapoetics of this literary work, the verisimilitude of these sculptures is simultaneously fictional and real. Dante obfuscates the division between fiction and truth in claiming that his *ekphrasis* in *Purgatorio* 10 is in fact divine art, and thus, a divine truth.

Keeping in mind the main argument of this paper that impresses the transformation of Dante's soul as a result of gained artistic humility, it is imperative to note that we first encounter the human experience of perceiving divine art in the Terrace of Pride. Dante realises the inadequacy of human sensory perception and artistic capability, yet at the same time begins to be aware of their true function and meaning: the power of fiction to inscribe the divine truth. But he is continually aware of its ineffability by positing the notion of divine art as a perfection of form which the mortal can never fully comprehend. Moreover, as Mandelbaum argues, the meditation of divine art is a method to transform the human soul from one that is inherently egoistic, to one that realizes humility. He argues that "Pride is the first of the seven deadly sins because it forms

the foundation of all the others: its ultimate source is the soul's rebellion against God; for this reason Pride has no place to itself in Hell but is intermingled among all the other sins."[7] Dante's proclivities for pride is revealed in *Purgatorio* 13: "Much greater is the fear that holds my soul in suspense for the torment below, and already the burden down there weighs on me." (13.136-138). We clearly see Dante's realization of his own pride, and thus his empathy for the prideful sinners in the Terrace of Pride. Therefore, both his meditation of divine art as well as his meditation on the human souls in the first Terrace are one and the same indispensable step in the journey of Dante's spiritual transformation. The idea of this transformation through such meditation is conveyed in the simile of the "worms in whom formation is lacking" (*Purg*. 10.127-129). The sinners are presently such worms, and it is only through continued repentance that purgation is achieved, and through this they can be transformed into butterflies. In short, this process is the very transcendence of the human soul toward Paradise.

All the same, when Dante is meditating on the sinners in Purgatorio 12, sensory perception remains important. They appear stony and still, a perverse imitation of the lifelike divine sculptures encountered previously. At first, his senses are confused when shifting from viewing divine art to the image of the sinners — "Master, what I see moving toward us do not seem to be persons, and I know not what, my sight is so confused." (*Purg*. 12.112-114). But it is only when Dante "gazes fixedly" and "entangles with your [his] eyes what comes under those stones" (*Purg*. 12.118-120) that he can perceive the beating of their breasts, the indication of their humanness. Even though the human senses and language are increasingly inadequate across *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* 10, there is a growing realization that it is only through senses and language that the mortal can perceive and convey divine experiences. This notion is manifested at the beginning of *Paradiso* 4: "for it takes from sense perception alone what later makes it worthy of intellection" (40-42). This implies that the creation of such a work as *The Divine Comedy* is not merely a failure to encapsulate the experience of perceiving the divine, but rather, an immanent description of a sensory journey through which we can begin to excavate the divine truth that lies buried within the work, and consequently, beyond it. Thus we see that the experience of contemplating the divine does not result in a realization of the insufficiency of the senses, but the understanding that the senses are crucial to comprehending the divine, and it is only through sensual perception that the mortal can meditate on the divine.

In order to begin contemplating the divine truth in the *Comedy*, it is imperative to grapple with one's artistic and human ego. In *Inferno* 10, we recall the importance

placed on human lineage and the politics of the time, and this desire of transcending mortal limitations becomes all the more evident. In the circle of heresy, the Epicureans believe the soul dies with the senses of the body, and hence is not immortal. The emphasis on the mortal self is revealed in Farinata's and Cavalcante's obsession with living in posterity through human politics and fractions between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines. The fact that Dante does not interact with any specific human souls in the Terrace of Pride, but only the "images of many humilities" is an indication of the realization of humility which finally culminates in meeting the theologians and experiencing divine light in *Paradiso* 10. Dante brands Farinata as a heretic for his Epicurean belief, but still treats him with utmost respect — using the formal voi, calling him "great-souled" (*Inf*. 10.73), and immediately acquiescing to Farinata's haughty inquiry about his lineage. Dante has not begun to quite realize the failing of human pride. This is indicated in his response of "If they (Dante's forebears) were driven out, they returned from every side…your people did not learn that art well."(*Inf*. 10.49-51). Art here implies a social skill, perhaps the ability to strongly impose one's public standing and enforce "correct" communal mores. Dante, in a sense, admonishes Farinata's pride, but responds with pride himself in the resilience of his own forefathers, the Guelphs. As Auerbach argues, "this self-fulfillment, which comprises the individual's entire past-objectively as well as in memory-involves ontogenetic history, the history of an individual's personal growth; the resultant of that growth, it is true, lies before us as a finished product."[8] In other words, we only see the dawning of humility and omission of specific human pride and history in the first Terrace in *Purgatorio*.

In the portrayal of humility in the divine sculptures, only Michal is "gazing out like a disdainful, wicked woman." (*Purg*. 10.67-69) Here, the pointed judgment of disdain and pride as "wicked" shows Dante's increasing clarity in conceiving human pride as unworthy of being in the presence of humility. The three panels provide a concatenation of images that culminate in the ultimate portrayal of humility by Trajan. As Hollander notes, "Mary is humble before her superior, God; David before his equals, the priests; and Trajan before his inferior, the widow." The first two are prime examples of Dante's beliefs regarding the Mary's perfect purity (doctrine of the Immaculate Conception) and David's transcendence of kingly pride by dancing which made him "more and less than king" (*Purg*. 10.66). But it is in the third panel that we see the perfect amalgam of the spiritual and political and an overcoming of the human ego in the political sphere; the very failing for which Farinata refuses to repent.

In *Paradiso* 10, we enter a new realm: that of the Sun. In this canto, there is an increas-

ingly conspicuous link between form and matter. Recalling the resurgence of "dead poetry" (*Purg*. 1.7) upon leaving Hell and entering Purgatory, Dante reveals to us the association between his poetic, linguistic form and the subject or realm. In *Inferno*, the raw sensory description of his interactions gives rise to more "poetic" language and form in Purgatory when Dante tells us the subject will be "the realm where the human spirit purges itself" (*Purg*. 1.4-5), and finally culminating in the lofty poetry in *Paradiso* when describing God's art in canto 10, while his earlier warning in *Paradiso* I still resounds (the Pauline apophatic "I have seen things that…cannot remember and cannot utter," *Par*. 1.3-5). As Auerbach comments "Benvenuto's temperament cuts right through the thicket of didactic theory: this book, he says, contains every kind of writing just as it does every kind of knowledge; and if its author called it a comedy because its style is low and popular, he was right in a literal sense, but in its way it is a sublime and great style."[9] This points to the fact that the elevated poetic style of *Paradiso* might mimic the awesome subject upon which it is dwelling, but this does not disregard the importance of the more low style of the Comedy in *Inferno* or *Purgatorio*. In fact, this only serves to mimic the dawning of Dante's comprehension that in order to become a divine scribe, he must first realise his own humility. The poetic subject and poetic form thus change in tandem with the nature of the comedy which progresses "from a bitter beginning to a happy conclusion."[10]

In sum, the interrelation between subject and form in the tenth canti of the first two canticles show a progression of Dante's journey as a poet navigating his transformation into that of a scribe. But this is only instigated by his recognising the importance of humility when contemplating the form of the divine. His journey thus far sets the stage for *Paradiso* when he finally interacts with the divine and draws us back to the initial relation between the sensual and the intellectual in a more complex way, as we are now truly in the divine presence. *Paradiso* 10 brings us to a realm that embodies the paradox of Paradise given that it both culminates in the perfect conclusion to this relation but also transcends the logical flow of this relation, as it does the physical laws of the mortal realm. This keeps in the *Comedy*'s vision of presenting a multitude of paradoxes: from the relations between truth and fiction, to the mortal scribe describing divine art as his own creation, to artistic creation and humility, and finally, sensory perception and the intellectual reckoning of the divine. These all belong to the central theme of transcending the boundaries that separate these elements and notions. The emphasis on the physicality and senses, when referring to the divine, is seen in "the first, ineffable Power" (God), "breathing" Love into all beings, but this breathing is "eternal" — the paradox of an action that is time-bound being rendered timeless

(*Par*. 10.1-2). This recalls Statius' speech about the creation of the human soul and the power of God's Love to "move" within a soul. The reference to "taste" and "gaze" serves to strengthen this emphasis (*Par*. 10.6-7). Dante addresses the reader to perform a Trinitarian threefold visual process: to first lift, then gaze, and finally perceive or "marvel" (7-15). This evocation of senses is completed in and extends to the second part of the address in lines 22-25, when Dante refers to the "foretaste", but cautions against simply observing God's light, instead of "feeding" oneself with studied contemplation. Thus we see here that Dante has mastered the method of experiencing God's art, in progressing from the simple observation of *Purgatorio* 10, to emphasizing the need for true meditation, in *Paradiso* 10.

In truth, it is Dante's declaration of becoming a mere "scribe" (*Par*. 1.27) that the journey of realizing humility is complete. Dante no longer indulges in the human artistic pride of being an author, but one who simply relays his experiences and observations since he does not have the authority to construe and interpret the "greatest minister of Nature" (*Par*. 10.28). The "stamp" of "the greatest minister of Nature" is almost a tangible force, which reiterates the importance of the senses since that is the only channel through which the human "scribe" can translate. The paradox of measuring "time to us with its light" asserts the transcendence of the laws of the physical world. But herein lies the deeper paradox: just as the "Master" who loves his own art so much that "he never moves his eye away from it." (*Par*. 10.11-12), Dante too is contemplating his own creation, the *Comedy*. As Hollander asserts, "Dante's claim here, to be merely the "scribe" of God, in Bonaventure's scheme the least of writers, is at once part of the topos of modesty and a shattering denial of it, since Dante's "mere scribal" activity lifts him to the level of the authors of Scripture." This embodies the self-reflexivity of the *Divine Comedy*. But despite this paradox, it is in this realm that the perfect harmony is achieved; indeed, the crossing of motions and precise angle of the celestial bodies iterates their importance, since without these elements, "much of the power in the heaven would be in vain" (*Par*. 10.16-17). In the heaven of the Sun, Dante is able to perceive perfectly the "twisted" path (*Par*. 10.16) of these bodies, reflecting back on the "twisted path" of *Purgatorio* 10. Durling and Martinez note that "The parallels between the human motions (in Dante's address) and the celestial motion draw us to the perfect intermingling of the intellectual, sensual, and spiritual in this realm."[11]

The importance of light in this *canto* is crucial ("How bright in itself had to be whatever was within the sun, where I entered, not by colour but by manifest light!" *Par*. 10.40-42). This light is not only time, as mentioned before, but is also manifest in the

"song of those lights" (*Par*. 10.73), the souls of the theologians. Hence, light serves as a unifying force for the senses and all perception in this realm but, in a characteristic paradox, also paralyzes and overwhelms. Even though Dante's judgment and navigation in this realm is not perfectly acute ("…but I did not perceive the ascent, except as one perceives a first thought before it comes," *Par*. 10.34-35), his acknowledgment of this human shortcoming is the true realization. This acknowledgment leads to the culmination of the relation traced thus far between sensual perception, language, form and matter in lines 43-48. Dante reiterates that although he will attempt to employ his "wit and art and practice, I could never tell it so that it could be imagined," implying that no amount of description or artistic skill could do justice to experiencing the light of God, since "no eye has ever seen intensity beyond the sun's" and this shortcoming of human ability and experience renders such depiction impossible. And this is when faith comes into the fray: "but it can be believed, and let the sight of it be yearned" (*Par*. 10.43-48).

Dante prepares our senses at the beginning of the *canto* only to make us realize their inadequacy when attempting to perceive the light of God. However, it is only through the senses that even a "shadow" or semblance of this experience can be conveyed to the reader, recalling Dante's prayer in *Paradiso* 1 — "O divine power. If you lend so much of yourself to me that I may make manifest the shadow of the blessed kingdom that is stamped within my head" (22-24). St. Thomas assures Dante that he will once again be able to ascend to this realm after his mortal death, "since the ray of grace, by which true love is kindled and then grows by loving, so shines, multiplied in you." This "multiplying" of God's light may appear to be a paradox since this light is inherently the ultimate whole, but it is here that we see the transformation of the base human desire into spiritual love, a force that allows us to reach the closest form of light in the mortal realm which then enables the ascent to Heaven.

The use of the polysemous word *arte* across these three *canti* mimics the trajectory we have been tracing thus far. According to K. P. Clarke, in *Inferno* 10, the word refers to "the art of politics and politicking" in Farinata's speech. But it is also the *arte* of ending one's exile and, "the word, used in this sense, will ricochet in Farinata's mouth when he reveals that the inability of his descendants to learn the art of return torments him more than Hell itself and hints darkly that Dante, too, will know the pain of this failure." [12] In *Purgatorio* 10, *arte* refers to both the skill of navigation and artistic skill that Dante must employ in order to comprehend divine art and begin the realization of humility. It is only in *Paradiso* 10 that *arte* refers to art in the most common sense

of the word, but it refers not to human art, but rather divine art synonymous with celestial and spiritual harmony. This is the conclusion of Dante's journey across the three realms.

We have examined the association between subject and form, sensual and intellectual perception, and artistic humility and transcendence of the human soul across the three *canti*. It is only in contemplating the limitations of human capability and senses that we can employ them in striving to achieve the highest form of art of which human beings are capable, and this is impossible without the realization of humility. In Dante's *Comedy*, one cannot create great art if one cannot transcend pride. ❉

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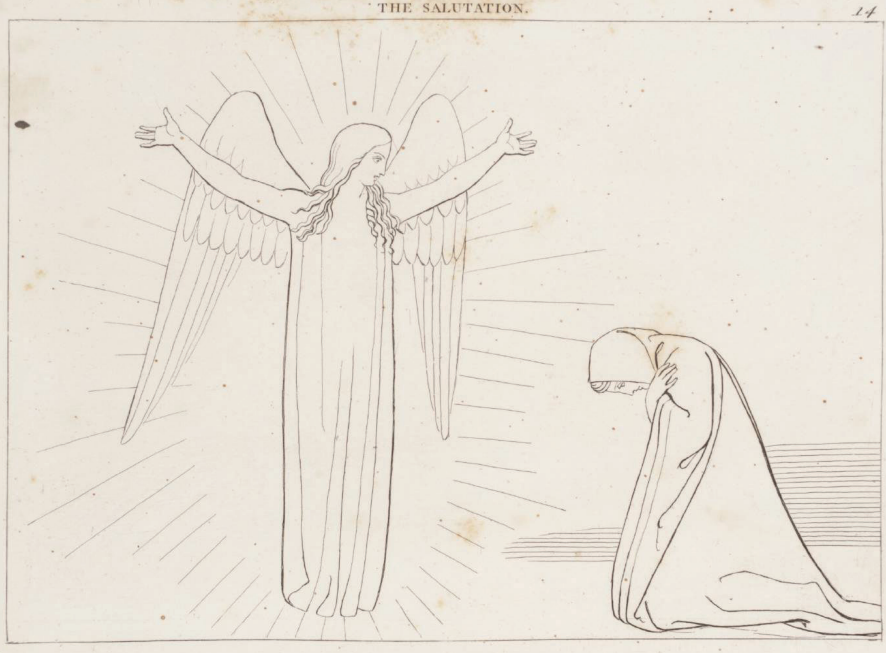

EI DICESSE AVE; HAIL!

Purgatorio Canto 10.

LA DIVINA MIMESIS: Art in the Terrace of Pride in *Divina Commedia*

Thu Truong

"Art hides within its own artifice," Ovid declares in his *Metamorphoses* (10.252).[1] Dante must have thought of those words as he composed *Purgatorio* 10, where the nature of mimesis is called into question. Introducing both the divine artworks and the poet's attempt at representing them, the terrace of Pride problematizes the relation between God the author and Dante the artist by seeming to invert their roles. On the one hand, the reader witnesses God the author taking on the conceit of the artist; on the other hand, Dante the artist also lays claim to a sort of *auctoritas* as he reproduces the holy creations within the terrace. The three canti in the terrace of Pride thus raise questions crucial to the poem as a whole: What does it mean to be an author? Where does recreation stop and creation begin? As Dante navigates these complications and tries to reconcile the author and artist within himself, he will, as this paper seeks to show, learn of the didactic nature of divine art.

The inversion of roles that we will be dealing with implies an analogy between the divine and the human artist. God is portrayed as the ultimate artist and Dante slowly assumes the posture of an author. There is, however, a remarkable parallel in the artworks they produce, especially when we consider the multiform nature of art as both presentation and representation. The first part of this paper will look at "Truth as Art," addressing God's status as the Artist and how things we otherwise regard as 'real' are in fact artistic creations. The second part will turn to "Art as Truth," tracking Dante's progress of making his 'art' transcend even reality. Finally, the third part will present a way to reconcile those two trajectories, and discuss the didactic function of divine art in the *Commedia*.

Truth as Art

The status of God as the ultimate artist is most conspicuous in the terrace of Pride, even though Dante makes several allusions to it in *Inferno*. Most important in *Pur-*

gatorio 10 is the introduction of God's visual art for the first time in the *Commedia*, and furthermore, the introduction of an art that violates the principle of mimesis as Teodolinda Barolini puts it.[2] Instead of the human art that mimics Nature and stays within the boundary of representation, Dante strives to re-produce art that already goes beyond the capacity of "verisimilitude" to become the *ver* — the divine art that would put even Nature to scorn (*Purg*.10.33). Such transcendence is possible because the creator of divine art is the ultimate author *and* artist, whose creations are perfection, to the point where it is impossible to draw the line between art and life.

As Dante and Vergil emerge from the gate of Purgatorio and look at the *relievo* on the marble walls, Dante is overwhelmed by a synesthetic experience: the figures that are shown to him in a visual medium slowly evoke his other senses, and, eventually, overcome them. The sensorial confusion increases as Dante travels along the engraved scenes; from the Annunciation, where he only has the perception of hearing, to the Ark of the Covenant, where his eyes and his nose communicate different impressions of burning incense. Finally, even his sight succumbs to the magic of God's art, as he witnesses the *visibile parlare* ("visible speech") between Trajan and the widow:

> The wretched woman, among all these, *seemed to be saying*: "Lord, avenge my son who has been killed, so that I am broken-hearted!" —
>
> and he *to be replying*: "Now wait until I return" — and she: "My lord," as a person speaks in whom sorrow is urgent,
>
> "if you do not return?" — and he: "Whoever will be in my place will do it for you" — and she: "What will another's good be to you, if you forget your own?" —
>
> then he: "Now be comforted; for it is fitting that I fulfill my duty before I move: justice demands it and compassion holds me here." (*Purg*. 10.82-93; emphasis mine)

The overcoming of the senses is the hallmark of realism, when the audience has to employ not only one, but multiple means to interact with the work of art. In other words, God's sculpture is not a mere display that one finds in the museum, to be marveled at by sight; rather, it is the re-installation of one's living experience with full engagement of the senses and the intellect. To enjoy God's art, then, is to be immersed in it. As Bar-

olini suggests, as God creates a "visual medium that is endowed with a verbal medium," bringing figures to the verge of coming to life, one cannot help but notice the similarity between the creation of art and the creation of humans.[3] Dante himself provides an account of the human birth in *Purgatorio* 25, where human beings are born from the union of the body and the soul. What separates them from animals is the rational spirit gifted by God, which unites the vegetative and appetitive parts into one single soul with one conscious ruling. And if, as Aristotle argues in the *Politics*, the ability to think begets the ability to speak (1253a5-15), then humans are also the sculptures of God imbued with a verbal medium.

The idea that humans are the artistic creation of God becomes the dominant topos running though the terrace of Pride. The sensorial confusion that Dante experiences does not stop at the three engravings. Rather, it lasts until the end of the canto. Whereas this aporia of the senses begins with art that reflects real life, it ends with life that reflects art: it is reality — the human penitents — that is compared to art and described in artistic terms: "As to support a ceiling or a roof we sometimes see for corbel a figure that touches knees to breast, . . . so I saw them to be, when I looked carefully" (*Purg*. 10.130-135). It is worth noting that the human figures seem sculptural and not vice versa. These figures provide a beautiful contrast against the engravings which previously seem very much alive — human, that is, when imbued with visible speech. Together, they epitomize the relationship between reality and art in the canto, in which it is impossible to tell apart the two. The principle of mimesis is again violated; art is no longer 'lifelike' but has become the point of reference for life. The line between presentation and re-presentation is blurred, the seeming and the being merged into one, because both are the creation of God and capable of perfection.

The heart of God's realism, however, lies within the last four lines of the canto, when amidst the height of confusion the pilgrim nevertheless finds clarity in his vision:

> *It is true* that they were more and less
> compressed according as they had more and less
> upon their backs, and he whose bearing showed
> the most patience
> weeping seemed to say: "I can bear no more."
> (*Purg*. 10.136-139; emphasis mine)

Far more than a simple statement of what is and what is not, "it is true" marks the cul-

mination of Dante's journey thus far; it has the weight of the pilgrim's dawning realization as he beholds the truthfulness in divine art. A short detour back to *Inferno* could help us see the significance of this statement. The terrace of Pride, geographically, is the first proper realm Dante enters after *Inferno* where the greatest art is the greatest lie. The pilgrim surely remembers his encounter with Geryon, the "filthy image of fraud" (*Inf.* 17.7), who nevertheless with his face of truth could trick the pilgrim, even if for only a moment:

> . . . by the notes of
> this comedy, reader, *I swear to you*, so may they not
> fail to find long favor,
> that I saw . . . [Geryon] come swimming upward.
> (*Inf.* 16.127-131; emphasis mine)

Any astute reader of the *Commedia* must have experienced some unease reading these two tercets. How should we believe in Dante's words when he stakes the truthfulness of his whole poem on this emblem of fraud? Yet we are to be reminded that the pilgrim, at any point, is still a fallible human; the self-authenticating "I swear to you," though full of personal conviction, speaks nothing of the objective truth. Geryon may trick the guileless Dante, but he holds no power over the worldly Vergil who, with his speech, shows the pilgrim the true nature of the beast: "Behold the one that makes the whole world stink!" (*Inf.* 17.3) In the terrace of Pride, however, Dante needs no such correction. His conviction is strengthened, his language firm — when he says "it is true," he is speaking the tongue of the absolute. The fraud of Geryon becomes the testament of truth in divine art, as the pilgrim's faith will otherwise seem unwarranted has he not gone through the most dangerous trial. In other words, the greatest of doubt must necessarily precede the greatest of faith. In order to show readers the perfect truthful art, Dante must first show the perfect lying art that he himself has overcome.[4]

As we approach the thinning distinction between art and reality, the language of mimesis also takes on a double meaning to show God's identity as the artist. The acrostic *segno* ("image") appears most prominently in *Purgatorio* 12, *Paradiso* 6 and *Paradiso* 19, and as the poem progresses, it moves from graphic representation to historical presentation. In *Purgatorio* 12, *segno* remains a likeness, something created after the original:

> Rehoboam, your *image* there no longer seems
> menacing but full of terror: a chariot carries it off
> without anyone pursuing. (*Purg.* 12.46-48; emphasis

mine)

By contrast, the *segno* that appears in the heaven of Providential history is no longer an artistic creation; rather than an image, it becomes part of the historical events themselves. Posing as the imperial eagle ("the sacrosanct emblem" [*Par*. 6.32]), the *segno* is God's messenger with great deeds that humans fail to emulate. The sign as an eagle is given an agency, capable of making presentation instead of re-presentation. Finally, in the heaven of Justice, as the *segno* is completely transformed into the sign of life, reality and art become one once more in the skywriting of God:

> They *showed themselves*, then, in five times
> seven vowels and consonants, and I noted the
> parts as they were dictated to me.
> "*DILIGITE IUSTITIAM*" were the first verb
> and noun of the whole depiction,
> "*QUI IUDICATIS TERRAM*" were the last.
> Then they remained arranged in the *M* of the
> fifth word, so that Jove appeared there silver
> adorned with gold. (*Par*. 18.88-95)

These are the letters made by human souls. *Segno*, quite literally, is still a sign of art, but this is art created from life — the collective artwork made from none other than the blessed spirits of *Paradiso*. They have been art in life and art after death; they are the messengers and also the message, or, as Barolini puts it, "When God chooses to write, the signs he uses are humans."[5] This is also the final destination for, and transformation of, the penitents in *Purgatorio* 10. At the same time, the journey from the terrace of Pride to the heaven of Justice is no mere linear progression. The truth about God's realism is already fully conveyed in *Purgatorio* 12, when Dante professes: "one who saw the true event did not see better than I" (*Purg*. 12.67-69). The carvings in the terrace of Pride are not likened to reality; they *are* reality, and by taking part in witnessing them, Dante also makes himself a part of history.

God, however, hardly limits his artistic expression to humans. If we were to say that reality is God's art, then Nature is no exception. The concept of Nature as God's art is prevalent in classical tradition, and Dante himself alludes to it prior to his depiction of divine art in *Purgatorio* 10. In *Inferno* 11, Dante introduces the principle of mimesis that he would engage with, and even challenge, in later canti, through the genealogy of human art, Nature, and God: "Nature takes its course from the divine intellect and art;

. . . [and] your art follows Nature as much as it can, . . . so that your art is almost God's grandchild" (*Inf.* 11.97-105). In other words, the imitator cannot surpass the imitated. Human art follows Nature "as much as it can," and Nature, despite being the origin of human art, cannot surpass the divine art which it "takes its course" from. The argument leaves us with the implication that Nature itself is imperfect, and Dante, eventually, affirms the idea (see *Par.* 13.76-78).[6] The *Commedia* follows the cosmology of Aristotle's *De Caelo*, in that the Earth, composed of the heaviest element, is static and situated in the center of the universe, surrounded by whirling spheres of aether. Anything in the sublunar realm for Aristotle — that is, the terrestrial world — is imperfect for its lack of circular motions (269a-269b15).[7] The Earth, in that sense, is the imperfect wax in which God places his seal, and the Nature that is born from her also suffers from defects. Just as all men are "children of God" but none has the perfection of Christ, earthly Nature, too, cannot claim the perfection that was once given to Eden.

The true divine art, though, is not subject to such limits. With the perfect wax, God can create something that surpasses Nature, for he is the imitator of none and Nature is but one of his creations. Such an art is put on glorious display in the very beginning of *Purgatorio* 10, to which Nature can only pale in comparison:

> I saw that the inner bank, which, rising straight up,
> permitted no ascent,
> was of white marble and adorned with such
> carvings that not only Polyclitus but even Nature
> would be put to scorn there. (*Purg.* 10.29-33)

Art, *artificio*, it seems, is not always an imperfect conceit, something lacking substance. Through God, we find a kind of art that *is* perfection, which shows that art is perfectible in itself. The nature of the artist decides the value of his creation, and unlike the Lord, fallible humans cannot produce the art that transcends. As the imperfect wax renders the imperfect imprint, human art, failing to find its perfect form in the human artist, remains the imitation and never the imitated.

Art as Truth

As God assumes the identity of the artist, Dante the poet takes a similar direction: from the human imitator, he slowly establishes himself also as the *creator*. When the

line between God's art and reality is blurred, it is also increasingly hard to distinguish his art from the human art that represents it. In other words, as Dante re-produces God's art, he in fact goes beyond the limits of an imitator and creates an art on the verge of becoming reality. In *Purgatorio* 10, Dante professes to be a teller of truth and not a maker of art, whose words bear the *auctoritas* of the author:

> *It is true* that they were more and less
> compressed according as they had more and less
> upon their backs, and he whose bearing showed
> the most patience
> weeping seemed to say: "I can bear no more." (*Purg.* 10.136-139)

The conviction in the three words "it is true" compels many readings. First, as we have discussed, it testifies to the unparalleled realism of God's art. Second, it speaks of the supposed veracity of Dante's creation — which we will address in due course. Third, and perhaps most apparent, it complicates the relationship between God's art and Dante's own, to the point where the two authors are almost interchangeable. Readers are reminded that it is Dante who delivers God's art in its entirety, who, with the *Commedia*, replicates the divine artwork with all its visual allure. This is the perfect mimesis that *is*, or even goes beyond, reality in our earthly senses. If the pilgrim is confronted with sensorial confusion only once, the readers are confounded twice — with God's artistic realism and with Dante's rendering of it. In that rendering, Dante brings his authorship closer to that of God. As divine and human artifice is ingenuously interwoven in the poem; the divine art becomes strangely textual while Dante's becomes more and more visual, as though his art is *visibile parlare* itself. For instance, the story of Trajan and the widow is not a mere overcoming of sight, for it is clear that Dante does not focus on the actions as they unfurl. Rather, he directs our attention to the speech that *seems* to be, one that can be seen by the eyes. From a story originally inscribed in marbles, the tale of Trajan becomes as much a verbal representation as it is visual.

There is another kind of story that Dante, posed as the author, wishes to tell — the verbal history that, with his words, is turned into visual art. The thirteen examples of pride in *Purgatorio* 12 are in fact less of God's carving than of Dante's historical and mythological narrative. And that account is graphically displayed more than told: of the thirteen tercets, four begin with 'V,' four with 'O,' and four with 'M,' together creating the VOM that is 'human' (*Purg.* 12.25—63). The history of human pride *appears*

before the readers' eyes just as the carvings are *seen* by the pilgrim; that in itself is a work of art engraved in textual stones. In other words, Dante the poet is giving us exactly what God gives Dante the pilgrim: an account full of authenticity that evokes all our senses. To go further still, the V-O-M pattern is visual not only in form but also in content. *Vedeva* and *mostrava*, one standing for vision and the other for representation, remind readers that Dante is indeed *showing* the history of human. At this point, Dante is no longer just the human imitator who re-creates God's art. He has assumed an authorship while trying to build his own *artificio*.

Dante's authorship, however, lacks one thing still: the authority of the divine word. This is where the three words "it is true" return with their full resonance. As mentioned, they speak of the veracity in Dante's work — such a claim requires readers to believe in not only what Dante sees, but also what he says. The ontological difference between the pilgrim's experience and the words rendering it on page creates tension within the *Commedia*, and the only way for readers to resolve that tension is to willingly accept the poet's words as the truth. It is, however, not an easy acceptance. Language, much like human art, has the potential for perfection, but too often finds itself in the imperfect wax: while the Annunciation, in Giuseppe Mazzotta's words, "bridges the gap between Heaven and Earth," the tongues of Babel, failing to bridge the same gap, dissolve only into chaos and confusion.[8] If that is the case, what makes Dante's poetry closer to truth than the words of Nimrod? Dante himself must have had this question in mind at the start of the poem when he carefully delineates the language he will speak — that is, the language of the divine. The first invocation of the poem is dedicated to the Muses, a tribute to the classical epic tradition; at the same time, it is also the acknowledgement that his story needs both divine inspiration and the human "high wit" (*Inf.* 2.7). The poet can produce the form, but the substance, the breath of life, must come from God. As Simon Marchesi notes: Dante in *De vulgari eloquentia* states that *fictio rhetorica musicaque poita* (2.iv.2) — poetry is 'the fiction arranged through rhetoric and music,' but the 'fiction' here is not one of fabricated lies.[9] The 'fiction' of poetry is, instead, a *composition* of dual forces (*fictio* from *fictum*, 'to have been composed'), an unity of truth and art, of the divine and the human. Conceived in this way, Dante's *Commedia* becomes the closest approximation to truth, and the poet could finally speak with the authority of a creator and not imitator.

We have arrived at the point where it is surprisingly, and perhaps dangerously, hard to separate Dante the author and God the Artist, and Dante himself playfully treads that thin line. This he resolves by building a dual authorship with the Lord. The greatest —

and grandest — visible speech Dante has produced is not the story of Trajan nor the visual account of human history, but the whole *Commedia* itself. Each cantica has its own visible speech: the inscription on the gate of *Inferno*, divine art in *Purgatorio*, and the skywriting of *Paradiso* where the souls form the letters of God (*Inf*. 3.10-12, *Purg*. 10.82-95, *Par*. 18.88-95).[10] It is as though each realm is a sculpture of God just like each cantica is a sculpture of Dante, and the poem is at once a work of art and reality. But even though Dante is the author of the *Commedia*'s poetic world, he does not try to distance himself from the *auctoritas* of God at all. His choice is reflected in their mutual medium of art — sculpture. Unlike paintings which are created, sculptures are only the removal of excess. It is the closest kind of art to truth, one that is not a mimesis but a presentation. When the artist sculpts, he does not only invent; he also aims to only reveal the truth that already exists, which means the reality that Dante delivers is also the reality that God creates in the beginning. Albert Russell Ascoli observes that Dante also gains his own *auctoritas*, which allows his text to transcend imitation and exceed the limit of historical contingency.[11]

Now a paradox emerges: Dante becomes a great human creator by being a great emulator. Even though he is deeply aware of his own creation, he yields to God and turns himself into a spokesperson, or, in other words, a *scribe*:

> Now stay there, reader, on your bench,
> thinking back on your foretaste here, if your wish
> to rejoice long before you tire;
> I have set before you: now feed yourself, for
> all my care is claimed by *that matter of which I*
> *have become the scribe*. (*Par*. 10.22-27; emphasis mine)

Whereas in *Purgatorio* he was still walking on the tightrope between authority and deference, in *Paradiso*, Dante the author has become Dante the scribe. His artistic expression is not only sanctioned by God, but also is the literal *transcript* of the divine message. Dante is now the godly instrument that tells readers the truth as it is. As Ascoli argues, his text is the Scripture made by him, the human scribe, and by God, the ultimate Author not only of the text, but also of Dante and of the entire universe.[12] The *Commedia* is both a Scripture written anew an a reincarnation of the original — Dante is able to infer from the sculptures of *Purgatorio* 10 only because he is well-acquainted with the stories behind them.[13] What he shows readers, thus, is neither his imagination nor an event that he witnesses first-hand. It is a story retold which evokes

the final *auctoritas* of God. For this imitation — and not creation — Dante enjoys a prestige that no other artist can lay claim to. As he re-presents the supreme art that equals reality, Dante also attempts to achieve a perfect realism in which human art can surpass even Nature. The potential contradiction here (not to say hubris) is that the celebration of God's art leads to the celebration of his own mimesis. As he exalts divine art, the human artist, who perfectly imitates it, becomes the greatest of poets only by being a scribe.

In the same way, Dante surpasses all other artists, including Vergil, whose only preoccupation is the re-presentation of Nature. Even though Dante inherits from the classical tradition — and he would later include himself in that canon — he is, ultimately, going a step further.[14] In one step he has transcended Vergil, leaving behind the classical tradition, and moving inexorably toward the summit of the divine creation. That is because Vergil, though virtuous, lacks the vision of God, and his pagan art is inadequate to express this sublime reality. This is also the crucial point which foreshadows Vergil's disappearance at the end of *Purgatorio*. Though he is Dante's beloved and indispensable guide in *Inferno*, as they come closer to God in their ascent, Vergil's authority over Dante is slowly washed away. Enrico Mestica likewise emphasizes that Vergil's art is a tableau, but Dante's is a *relievo*: "Vergil paints descriptively, employing ample display of images and colors; Dante sculpts, using speech made visible."[15] Living art — *visibile parlare* — is beyond what the pagan poet could ever accomplish. And as Dante seeks an expression that goes beyond human capacity, he has to move past Vergil, who, while nudging Dante forward, can only, and tragically, remain in one place.

Author, Scribe, Messenger

Yet there remains a danger in Dante's presumption as the divine scribe. Dante himself is aware of such danger, as his reference to Arachne suggests: as he treads the fine line between being author and being imitator, one misstep is enough for him to become the second humanoid spider. That leads us to the didactic function of art, and the reason divine art appears, for the first time in the *Commedia*, in the terrace of Pride. God's art is placed in the terrace of Pride because that is the one vice Dante might be guilty of, once the pull from the fire of Ulysses becomes too great to resist. There is nothing to guarantee that the human artist, capable of creating art that rivals reality, would not want to create for himself his own world. Such was the tragedy that befell Ulysses, who in his mad flight to find the *nova terra* did not realize his transgression.[16] The

sculptures in *Purgatorio*, then, are a teaching and a warning — to teach the penitents the grace of humility and to warn the artist about his human limit. It is no coincidence that to look at the examples of pride, penitents have to walk with their eyes cast down; they have to assume a humble posture before learning about the fallen proud. This also reiterates the high moral position that Dante ascribes to divine art.[17] Art, as we have discussed, has no inherent moral value; it only takes on the character of the artist. And divine art, whose artist is God, indeed has the supreme nature needed for such guidance. Just as Minerva tries to warn her emulator by her handiwork, God inscribes his didactic warning in stone, lest the human sculptor falls prey to Arachnean pride.[18] Yet despite their similarities, Dante would not become the second Arachne. The figures of Arachne and Ulysses serve as the constant reminder for Dante, who, having witnessed their *folle volo*, is able to gain his mental vision. The poet is aware of his Ulyssean language and aim, but that awareness keeps him inside the boundary that should not be crossed. Arachne falls because she did not have the goddess in her vision, whereas Dante, in his creation, is always conscious of the real Author. The ship that brings Ulysses to his demise in *Inferno* 26 returns in *Purgatorio* 12, but this time with a positive ending: with its wings and oars, Dante will fly.[19] That is because, freed from pride, Dante has transformed into the angelic butterfly who "flies to justice without a shield" (*Purg*. 10.124-126); he was walking out of the terrace of Pride with a straight posture but a humble mind. This is the flight that will eventually take him to God, unlike Icarus, whose flight to the Sun ends in failure.

The placement of divine art in the terrace of pride also shows Dante's *officio commesso* — his duty as the enlightened one to provide guidance to others. As one who blurs the line between art and reality, author and imitator, Dante now assumes the role of learner and teacher as well. In his own acrostic there is a lesson. As Ascoli notes, the "V" in "VOM" — human — has both the peaks of the blessed and the abyssal depth of the fallen; it indicates both the perfectibility of human soul and our tendency to stray from the right path.[20] The collective of poets and artists in *Purgatorio* is the proof for that. With their eyes fixated on "supremacy" instead of God, they all suffer from the harm of pride despite their otherwise perfectible art and soul. The spiritual path after death, it seems, is not pre-destined. Rather, as Dante has stated in his *Epistle to Cangrande*, "in exercise of his free will [man] is deserving of reward or punishment by justice."[21] As Dante's greatest art, the *Commedia* is also his greatest didactic sculpture — Dante is teaching his readers what he has learned from God. As the pilgrim undertakes a journey that would eventually lead to salvation, he is also showing the correct path to take, or in other words, how to attain the state of the blessed souls.

Ultimately, this *officio commesso* is what separates Dante from Arachne. Arachne's artistic vision is fraught with ills, and her craft, though flawless, in the end is nothing more than the deceits she chooses to capture. She celebrates nothing other than her own virtuosity. Dante's art, however, aspires to be not fraud, but guidance; not trickery, but truth. By submitting to the highest moral good of God's creation, the poet wishes moral transcendence for himself. It is in this deference to God that Dante endeavors to resolve the tension between the human author and the divine artist, and in the process creates a mimesis that, though borne of a human, is in nature divine.

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1. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ed. R. J. Tarrant (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); my translation. Latin: *ars adeo latet arte sua*.
2. Teodolinda Barolini, "Re-presenting what God presented: The Arachnean art in the terrace of Pride," in *The Undivine Comedy: Detheoligizing Dante*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992) 122.
3. Barolini, "Re-presenting what God presented," 124.
4. Hollander, "*Commedia*," in *Dante: A Life in Works* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) 95 provides another take on Geryon: that this emblem of fraud is Dante's acknowledgement of his status as a "lying poet," and that Dante does not necessarily ask the reader to believe in what he sees, but in what he says.
5. Barolini, "Re-presenting what God presented," 129.
6. Dante Alighieri, "Paradiso," *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, trans. R. M. Durling & R. L. Martinez (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). Nature can only render the "imperfect wax," like an artist who falls short because of a "trembling hand."
7. Aristotle, "On the Heavens," *The Complete Works of Aristotle: Volume 1*, ed. J. Barnes, trans. J. L. Stocks (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). For more discussion on the static Earth and moving heavens, see *De Caelo* Book II.3-13.
8. Giuseppe Mazzotta, "Rhetoric and History," *Dante Poet of the Desert: History and Allegory in the Divine Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979) 73. Mazzotta refers to Virgin Mary's words, "Ecce ancilla Dei," when she accepts Gabriel's message that she would become the mother of Jesus.
9. Simone Marchesi, "Poetics," *Dante & Augustine: Linguistics, Poetics, Hermeneutics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011) 81.
10. The materials on which these speeches are inscribed are also a matter of great import. In her book *Christian Materiality*, Caroline Walker Bynum makes the astute observation that the materials of medieval images are neither incidental to their form nor merely functional; instead, they carry within themselves multiple meanings that directly affect the work of art (28). The matter employed, in other words, has to be a conscious choice on the part of the artist. Dante is no exception, poet as he is, and his careful depictions of the physical aspect of the poem demand our attention. For example, the ethereal sky not only stands in sharp contrast with the "dark color" on the gate of Hell, but also glorifies the human souls embedded in the literal quintessence of Heaven. The parallel between text and reality also invites other interpretations. When Dante carves the visible speeches from his *Commedia* onto Hell, Purgatory and Heaven, part of the poem becomes immortalized with these everlasting worlds. The structure of the poem, then, is not simply the artistic fancy of someone who wishes to emulate the creation of God. By entrusting the *Commedia* to materials that will not perish, Dante is making a statement about the status of his poem—that as long as Heaven lasts, his poem will also endures the test of time. For more on medieval materiality, see Caroline Walker Bynum,

Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe (New York: Zone Books, 2011), and Howard Williams, Joanne Kirton and Meggen Gondek (eds.), *Early Medieval Stone Monuments: Materiality, Biography, Landscape* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2015).

11. Albert Russell Ascoli, "The author in history," *Dante and the Making of a Modern Author* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 7.
12. Ibid.
13. James A. W. Heffernan, "A Genealogy of Ekphrasis," *Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993) 44.
14. Peter S. Hawkins, "Self-Authenticating Artifact: Poetry and Theology in *Paradiso* 25," *Christianity and Literature*, 41, no. 4 (1992): 388.
15. Enrico Mestica, *Commentary to Inferno, III*. 82-99, trans. Robert Hollander (Firenze: R. Bemporad & figlio, 1921—22), http://dantelab.dartmouth.edu.
16. Dante, "Inferno," 26.124-137.
17. Janos Kelemen, "Canto XII: Eyes Down," in *Lectura Dantis: Purgatorio*, ed. Allen Mandelbaum, Anthony Oldcorn and Charles Ross (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 2008) 127.
18. Barolini, "Re-presenting what God presented," 131.
19. Dante, "Purgatorio," 12.4-6.
20. Albert Russell Ascoli, "The author of the *Commedia*," *Dante and the Making of a Modern Author* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 395.
21. Dante Alighieri, "Epistle to Cangrande," in *Critical Essays on Dante*, trans. Giuseppe Mazzotta (London: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1991) 7.

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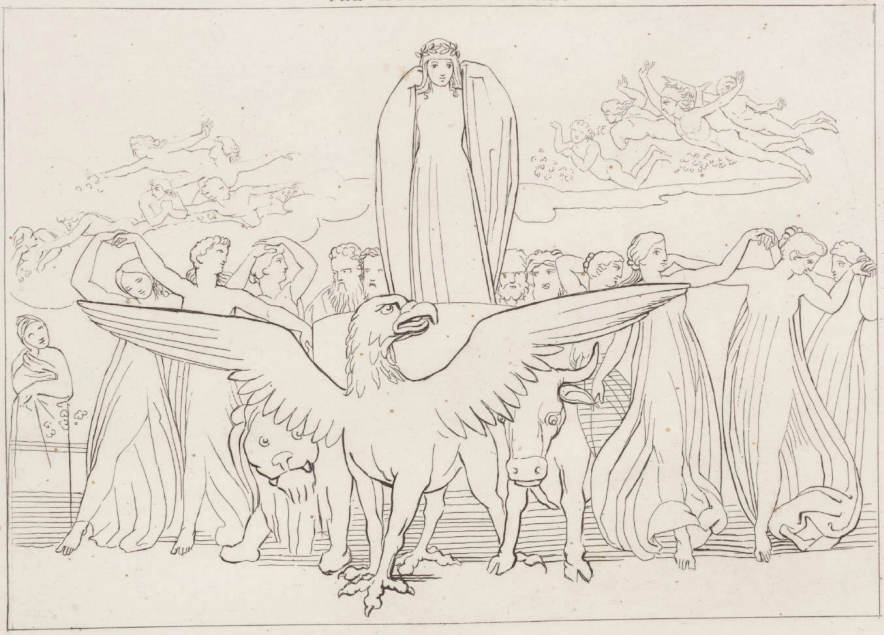

VIDER BEATRICE. MINE EYES THE MAID'S ETHERIAL SHAPE BEHELD.

Purgatorio Canto 31.

Divine Hunger in Dante's *Purgatorio*

Carmen Denia

At the glorious summit of Mount Purgatory, amidst angels singing, Dante is reunited at long last with his beloved. There are few pleasures greater that one could imagine for the pilgrim-poet than the sight of Beatrice. The readers feel a sense of fulfilment too for, from the moment Dante met Virgil and we learnt that a chain of blessed ladies had sent him to Dante's aid (*Inf.* 2.94-105), we have been anticipating Dante's eventual encounter with Beatrice.

Throughout Dante's journey, Beatrice has been the pilgrim's impetus and his incentive. When fear gets the better of the pilgrim at the wall of fire in the Terrace of Lust, Virgil convinces Dante to press on by reminding him that Beatrice is waiting on the other side (*Purg.* 27.34-6). The poet even layers upon their meeting the deep cry of longing from the Canticle of Canticles: "Veni, sponsa, de Libano!" (*Purg.* 30.11). Beatrice finally appears in "a cloud of flowers that from the / hands of the angels was rising and falling back / within and without" (*Purg.* 30.19-21). As when a groom expects his bride, it seems that this is the moment we have been waiting for. Yet the poem suddenly shifts our attention to the gryphon drawing Beatrice's chariot. Beatrice's eyes are "fixed / unmoving on" (*Purg.* 31.119-20) the gryphon as if in adoration. As much as Beatrice might be important to the pilgrim, her actions in Eden suggest that the endpoint of the canticle lies with someone else.

Traditionally, the gryphon has been seen as a Christ-figure because the poet describes him as "one person in two / natures" (*Purg.* 31.81-82). Scholars usually take this to refer to how Christ is both fully human and fully divine. In this paper, I strengthen this association between Christ and the gryphon by taking into consideration a particularly unusual and underappreciated feature of the gryphon: the language of consumption and hunger employed in its description. This feature of the text is not noted in the Robert Hollander, Charles S. Singleton, and *Lectura Dantis* commentaries, or the entry even on the "Griffin" in *The Dante Encyclopedia*. Only Robert Durling and Ronald Martinez observe without further elaboration that "the vision of God has the quality

of increasing desires rather than satiating it."[1] I argue that the gryphon, representing the Eucharistic Christ, is the highest object of divine hunger in *Purgatorio*. Hunger for the gryphon is the final link in a chain of divine hungers within the text. These divine hungers operate as metaphors linguistically and narratively in order to draw the pilgrim to heaven. To demonstrate this, I first discuss the nature of hunger in the classical tradition, in scripture, and in Dante scholarship. I then discuss alimentary metaphors as David Gibbons analysed them in *Paradiso* and I explain how they function in *Purgatorio*. Finally, I explain how this discussion addresses our initial inquiry into the gryphon and how it directs attention away from Beatrice.

Hunger before Dante

To understand Dante's novel use of hunger in the *Commedia*, it is helpful to situate the poet in his philosophical context. The idea of divine hunger contributing to one's spiritual ascent, as I argue is the case for the pilgrim, would have been peculiar in the classical tradition. In *De Anima*, Aristotle states that "hunger and thirst are forms of wanting" different kinds of nourishment, which the body needs to survive (414b).[2] They form part of the appetitive part of the soul and their sole purpose is to drive one towards sources of food or drink. However, the deliberative faculty of the soul controls its base appetites and may choose to "resist on account of the future" hunger or thirst (433b).[3] Reason can evaluate the quality, quantity, or appropriateness of the available nutrition before deciding for the entire soul whether or not it should feed itself. Moreover, Aristotle notes that those who are virtuous always obey their deliberative faculty instead of mindlessly indulging their desires (433a).[4] The intellect is inherently superior to one's hungers. Plainly, within the classical model, hunger would not be contributing to the moral formation of the soul.

Christianity differs from this view, offering a layered approach that not only adds a spiritual dimension to hunger, but also raises the lowly status of physical hunger. These layers could be summarised in Christ's encounter with the devil in the wilderness.

> Then Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry. And the tempter coming said to him: If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. Who answered and said: It is written, "Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:1-4)

The lowest level of hunger presented is the nutritive appetite. The devil, asking the starving Christ to turn stones into bread, may be mocking Christ's hunger. However, the devil's taunts also acknowledge God's position as a miracle provider of nourishment throughout scripture. From the story of Noah to Joseph, from Ruth to the feeding of the five thousand, God has been the source of food for his people. Following in that vein, shortly after Christ's encounter with the devil in the desert, God feeds Christ through his angels (Matt. 4:11).

Unlike in the classical tradition, literal hunger in scripture is not limited to a base appetite. It is a natural need that strengthens one's dependence on God. Christ himself teaches the faithful in the *Pater Noster* to ask God to grant their daily bread (Matt. 6:11). The particular line regarding bread in this prayer recollects the experience of the Israelites in the barren desert who relied on God for *manna* in the morning and quail every night for forty years until they entered the Promised Land (Ex. 16). Dante himself emphasises this connection between the *Pater Noster* and the Israelites at the beginning of *Purg*. 11. He distinctly chooses the word *manna* in his rewriting of the prayer (*Purg*. 11.13), instead of *pane*, which is closer to *panem*, the word for bread in the standard Latin formulation of the prayer. Asking for food daily in a manner that invokes historical precedent teaches the faithful that food is not the product of one's labour, but a gift from God, the true source of all provision. Hunger, thus, is elevated from a base desire to a natural link between God and his people who depend on him.

Christ's response to the devil's taunts in the desert also points to a second level of spiritual hunger and nourishment: Scripture as the Word from God that feeds the soul. The language of consumption in this gospel story is neither unique nor accidental. The psalmist identifies the Word as God's commands (Ps. 119:101-102), which are "sweet" like "honey" (Ps. 119:103). Christ himself states that his "meal is to do the will of him that sent" him (John 4:34). Scripture consistently suggests that to live by God's word is to nourish with delectable pleasure the spiritual hunger of the soul.

The third level of hunger from Christ's encounter with the devil sees God feeding the highest hunger of humankind with himself. In patristic exegesis of the scene in the desert, the first two levels of physical and spiritual hunger are simultaneously fed in the Eucharist — the bread and wine, which in the Mass becomes really, truly, and substantially the Body and Blood of Christ. St. Irenaeus of Lyons writes:

> When, therefore, the mingled cup and the manufactured bread receives the *Word of God*, and the Eucharist of *the blood and the body of Christ* is made, from which things the substance of our flesh is increased and supported, how can they affirm that the flesh is incapable of receiving the gift of God, which is life eternal, which [flesh] is nourished from the body and blood of the Lord, and is a member of Him? (*Against Heresies* 5:2:2-3; emphasis mine)[5]

The Eucharist, which mysteriously transubstantiates from fine flour and sacramental wine into the body of Christ, is uniquely able to feed the human body and soul since it appears as bread and wine, but contains Christ who is the Word of God (John 1:1-2). Moreover, through the Eucharist, the communicant receives the gift of God by partaking in his Body and Blood, which is present in the consecrated elements.

Divine Hunger with Dante

Hunger in *Purgatorio*, as in scripture, is complicated by slippage between the different ways the poet uses it. Similar to the classical tradition, hunger for Dante can mean the specifically nutritive appetite among one's physical desires. It can sometimes mean a physical but non-nutritive desire, such as the desire for sex. It can also refer to non-physical desires such as the desire for truth or wisdom. All these senses are deployed in the *Purgatorio* for the purpose of drawing the pilgrim up the mountain and closer to God.

The use of hunger and other alimentary images to express divine desires in the *Commedia* can be traced to biblical and traditional sources. David Gibbons gives the example of the psalmist who invites his listeners to "taste, and see that the Lord is sweet" (Psalm 33:9). The metaphor implies not only that God can be known as intimately as honey on the tongue is tasted, but also that the experience is naturally pleasurable. Similar metaphors are found throughout the writings of the church fathers and later mediaeval monastic writers, including William of Saint-Thierry who builds upon Psalm 33 when he writes that the soul which tastes God will become sweet with God's sweetness.[6] The rightful end of internalisation, as such, is the complete union between the consumer and the consumed.

Presumably taste and hunger for God or his Word are to be taken metaphorically. With the exception of the Eucharistic tradition, one would not otherwise conceive of

literally eating God or an actual page of scripture. The prevalence of metaphors involving taste or hunger, however, points to the classical tradition Dante inherited, where *sapientia*, wisdom, is etymologically linked to *sapere*, the verb of tasting. To savour a passage of scripture is to absorb its wisdom into one's being, which is a process that moves beyond reading words off the page or even merely comprehending the text. When the soul learns to take pleasure in this knowledge of God, scripture, or other lesser spiritual goods, the soul reinforces its spiritual hunger for such goods.

Although Gibbons locates these alimentary metaphors in *Paradiso*, Dante employs images of literal hunger or consumption in as early as *Purgatorio* to point to more elevated longings.

> As when, gleaning oats or tares, doves have gathered to feed quietly, without showing their usual pride,
>
> If something appears that they fear, they suddenly abandon the food, because assailed by a greater care:
>
> so I saw that fresh band leave the singing and flee towards the cliffs, as one does who goes without knowing where he will arrive;
>
> nor was our own departure less sudden. (*Purg*. 2.124-133)

Here the poet compares the penitents enjoying the "sweetness" of Casella's song to doves "gleaning oats or tares." He uses the physically pleasurable experience of satiating one's hunger to convey the communal fulfilment provided by Casella's music. The simile is particularly effective in expressing the poet's spiritual enjoyment of Casella's singing to readers who may not have had a similar experience previously, but could colour it with the more familiar pleasure of physical hunger satiated by a good meal. Within a single simile, a simpler hunger gestures towards a higher one.

The incident as a whole also gestures to an even higher hunger: cleansing one's soul. After Cato rebukes the pilgrims for delaying their journey up the mountain, the penitents "flee towards the cliffs" like doves that "suddenly abandon the food, because [they are] assailed by a / greater care." This greater care is the process of purgation represented by climbing the mountain that "sheds the slough that keeps God / from being

manifest" (*Purg*. 2.121-123). The pilgrim and the reader are reminded simultaneously by Cato of the superiority of hungering for purgation over music — not that enjoyment of music is inherently evil, but above music, spiritual cleansing is a higher good to be desired.[7] Thus, the hunger for music functions like a metaphor since the situation as a whole gestures to a higher hunger.

Another interesting example of divine hunger in the text is the child's hunger for an apple on the Terrace of Lust. Dante describes Virgil thus:

> And he shook his head and said: "Well? Do we want to stay on this side?" Then he smiled as one does at a little boy who is won over by an apple." (*Purg*. 27.43-45)

Prior to this simile, Virgil spurs the pilgrim to brave the final torment before Eden by revealing that Beatrice is waiting on the other side. The simplest interpretation of this tercet parallels Virgil's smile to that of an adult amused by the ease with which a child is convinced by a sweet treat. Naturally, Dante is the "little boy", and Beatrice the "apple" he desires (*Purg*. 27.45). As in the example of the doves, the poet uses simple, literal hunger as a metaphor for a non-nutritive desire, which in this case is the *eros* Dante has for Beatrice. The familiar experience of being amused at a hungry child won over by something sweet neatly conveys to readers both the naturalness of the pilgrim's anticipation of Beatrice and Virgil's rightful approval of Dante's desire.

Virgil's approval challenges our established hierarchy of hungers. *Eros* in medieval culture was often perceived as sinful.[8] Moreover, *eros* in the classical tradition was regularly at odds with the hero's mission, as is the case in the *Odyssey*, the *Iliad*, and the *Argonautica*. Perhaps the most famous classical example of *eros* in competition with the hero's journey would be the story of Dido and Aeneas, with their intense romantic relationship in Carthage delaying Aeneas on his destiny to found the city of Rome. Would not Beatrice simply distract Dante as well on his epic journey to his heavenly kingdom?[9]

Furthermore, the simile of the apple is coloured by its associations with the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 3, Adam and Eve cause the Fall of Man by eating the fruit which God specifically prohibited (Aquinas ST II-II Q163). *Malum*, being the same word for both apple and evil in Latin, led to apples being used in popular depictions of the Fall or, more generally, sin.[10] One might suggest that in comparing

Beatrice to an apple, Dante links her to sweetness, seduction, and temptation. This puts into question Virgil's approval of Dante's desire. Could not Beatrice, having such great influence over Dante because of his great desire for her, cause Dante to disobey God?

Beatrice herself points out that this is not the case. The fundamental difference between sinful *eros* elsewhere in the *Commedia* and Dante's desire for her is that she ultimately can lead Dante to God.

> Therefore she to me: "Within your desires for me, which were leading you to love the Good beyond which there is nothing one can aspire to, what ditches across your way, or what chains did you find, that you should so strip yourself of the hope of passing beyond them? (*Purg*. 31.22-27)

The pilgrim was intended, in life and death, to desire Beatrice for through her, he was being drawn to the "Good beyond which there is nothing one can aspire to" (*Purg*. 31.23-24). Beatrice takes great offense at Dante's wandering affections after her death precisely because no other woman or good could have been more beautiful than her, except God himself, yet Dante strayed into "ditches" and "chains" (*Purg*. 31.25).[11] As with the simile of the feeding doves, it is not that these other desires were necessarily sinful hungers, but that the hierarchy of hungers demands that Dante prioritises his hunger for greater goods over lesser ones. Fed by the beauty of Beatrice during her lifetime, Dante ought to have sought satisfaction only in God after Beatrice's death (*Purg*. 31.46-54).

It is by its new relationship with the supreme hunger for God that *eros* is rendered divine. As with an adult smiling at a child won over by an apple, Virgil can approve of Dante's desire for Beatrice in *Purgatorio* because it convinces Dante to cross the final fire of purgation, and continue on his journey to God. Both the desire for an apple and *eros* are not sinful hungers if they direct the individual to a higher purpose - the bidding of the adult, in the case of the apple, and to God himself, in the case of *eros*.

Thus we see that a truly divine hunger is not as easily identified by its object as by whether it direct one to further and superior hungers. Dante employs ordinary images to explain elevated hungers, not only because they concretise unfamiliar ideas, but because divine hungers are inherently metaphorical. By metaphorical, I mean that they

gesture either through their construction (e.g. the hunger of the doves signifying the hunger for music) or their character (e.g. the figure of Beatrice looking at the gryphon) to another hunger more divine. They are never ends in themselves, but guide the pilgrim as he climbs up the mountain with his body and up the chain of divine hungers with his spirit.

The Gryphon

This paper began with the question of how the gryphon overtakes Beatrice in satisfying the chief hunger of the purified soul. In this last section, I read this shift as Dante reaching the highest divine hunger within *Purgatorio*: the desire for the Eucharistic Christ. This Eucharistic quality is evident in the language of consumption and hunger employed in the gryphon's description:

> Think, reader, if I marveled when I saw that the
> thing in itself remained unchanged, but in its
> *eidolon* transmuted itself!
>
> While, full of awe and joyful, my soul tasted that
> food which, by satisfying, makes one thirst for it, (*Purg.*
> 31.124-129)

Eidolon stands out in the text as one of the rare expressions that is not in Italian. It is Greek for a representation of an ideal form. The poet claims that though the Gryphon "in itself remained unchanged" (*Purg*. 31.125), inside its *eidolon* has "transmuted itself" (*Purg*. 31.126). The language recalls the Catholic understanding of transubstantiation, or how sacramental bread and wine in the Mass retains the outward form, but in truth, becomes the Body and Blood of Christ (Aquinas III Q75).

Dante also claims that in seeing the gryphon, his "soul tasted that / food which, by satisfying, makes one thirst for it" (*Purg*. 31.128-129). Unlike the other divine desires, the Gryphon does not point to a higher hunger, but calls the soul to feed on the sight of him. The pilgrim's spirit is nourished by adoring the gryphon, just as the faithful on earth might be spiritually filled by the sight of the Eucharist.

Of all the divine desires in *Purgatorio*, the Gryphon is unique because it is a fantastic

being, and yet a metaphor for something ostensibly more prosaic — flour mixed with water and water mixed with wine. The pattern runs counter to our previous examples of divine desire, where ordinary experience is used to express elevated hungers, and each hunger points to yet another one that is more sublime. Yet perhaps this is a matter of perception that Dante wishes to correct in those who see only bread and wine at the Mass. Such a person would fail to understand that even the pilgrim's entirely unusual and intense hunger for a fantastic creature can only gesture to the depth of desire that should be directed to the miracle of the Eucharist.

The shift from Beatrice to the Gryphon may be abrupt, but from what we have discussed, it is only right for in the presence of greater hungers, all others pale in comparison. Indeed, Beatrice's role is to point Dante to the only good greater than her, which is God himself. As such, it is understandable that Beatrice herself would fix her eyes "unmoving on the gryphon." (*Purg*. 31.120) As the metaphor for the Eucharistic Christ in *Purgatorio*, the Gryphon deserves the worship of all who are present.

While this paper cannot provide a comprehensive chain of all divine hungers in the *Commedia* (there are almost a hundred references to hunger of all kinds in *Purgatorio* alone), it has shown part of the mechanism of divine hungers on the mountain of purgatory. Divine hungers are expressed through everyday hungers to make them more tangible. They also work as metaphors on two levels, with hungers gesturing to higher hungers within the structure of a single metaphor and within the larger plot. Through these linked divine hungers, Dante spiritually ascends the mountain until he reaches the Gryphon, the literary representation of the Eucharistic Christ. Like Christ as the Bread of Life in scripture, the Gryphon in the text fulfils the deepest hungers of the human person.

A curious development in this process is that not only the pilgrim, but the very notion of hunger is transformed. Whereas the classical model sees hunger as base, we see that Dante built upon the biblical model of layers of hunger to create his own hierarchy, rich in detail and carefully woven into a process that enables the pilgrim's spiritual ascent. Dante's ascent to Eden allegorises a reversal of Adam's condition after the fall and a return to the peak of earthly happiness and purity — not only for souls such as Dante's, but for the very concept of hunger as well. ❋

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1. Dante Alighieri, *Purgatorio*, trans. and ed. Robert M. Durling and Ronald L. Martinez (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004), 545.
2. J.L. Ackrill, ed., *A New Aristotle Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) 170.
3. J.L. Ackrill, *A New Aristotle Reader*, 203.
4. Ibid., 202.
5. Irenaeus of Lyons, "Against Heresies," in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe (New York: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), accessed April 14, 2017, http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103.htm.
6. David Gibbons, "Alimentary Metaphors in Dante's 'Paradiso,'" *The Modern Language Review*, 96 (2001): 694.
7. For an additional layer of metatextual interpretation that links Casella's song to consuming philosophy (i.e. the *Convivio*) and discusses its inferiority to consuming supernatural wisdom (i.e. *Purgatorio*), see Freccero 186-194.
8. Ruth Mazo Karras. "Sex and the Middle Ages." in *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2005), 1.
9. For a thorough and beautiful treatment of the subject, please see Peter Hawkins's analysis in "Dido, Beatrice, and the Signs of Ancient Love" of Dante's transformation of Vergil's *adgnosco veteris vestigia flammae* (Aen. 4.23).
10. Ryan D. Giles, "The Apple that Fell from Aristotle's Hand: Fruits of Love and Death in the *Libro de buen amor*," *Hispanic Review* 80 (2012): 12. Also Glauco Cambon, "Canto XXVII: At the Threshold of Freedom," in *Lectura Dantis Purgatorio* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 309.
11. Peter Hawkins. "Dido, Beatrice, and the Signs of Ancient Love," in *Dante's Testaments: Essays in Scriptural Imagination* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 133

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VEDEA COLUI; CHE FÚ NOBIL CREATO
PIÚ D'ALTRA CREATURA; GIÚ DAL CIELO
FOLGOREGGIANDO SCENDER DA UN LATO.

Purgatorio Canto. 12.

THERE I BEHELD THE HEAVENLY REBEL HURL'D
LIKE FLAMING THUNDERBOLT.

The Middle of the Journey: Dante's Reversal of Phaethon and Lucifer in Canto 17 of the *Divine Comedy*

Rebecka Lindeberg

The first line in Dante's *Inferno* famously starts in the "middle of the journey" of the pilgrim's life, which, of course, highlights the importance of the journey in the *Divine Comedy*. In the middle of each cantiche (Canto 17 of the *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*), Dante compares his journey to that of Phaethon in Ovid *Metamorphoses* (2.1-399). While Dante descends to hell in order to ascend to heaven, Phaethon ascends to heaven only to descend to his death. As such the simile surprisingly compares the comedic Dante to a tragic figure. Critics such as Ronald Martinez and Kevin Brownlee have noted the similarities between Phaethon's and Dante's respective journeys, but the resemblance between Phaethon and Lucifer has been neglected. So too the relation between Dante and Lucifer. This essay will redress this neglect. While it can be argued that the epic simile suggests that Dante exhibits a prideful desire to journey through hell to heaven, I will argue that Dante's reluctance to transcend the divine differentiates him from both Phaethon and Lucifer. Dante reverses the journey of the both the Ovidian Phaethon and the biblical Lucifer by following the advice of his leader — Virgil — showing that despite attempting to surpass his predecessors, Dante does not exhibit pride. Unlike Phaethon and Lucifer, Dante stays in the middle of the journey and successfully ascends to heaven.

In both Dante's *Divine Comedy* and the classical traditions which it transcends, the journey constitutes an important theme. The entire comedy begins in the "middle of the journey," which not only positions the poem as a physical journey from deepest hell to highest heaven, but also as a spiritual journey. In telling a story of his journey, Dante draws on classical authors such as Homer and Virgil. From the *Odyssey* to the *Aeneid*, the chronotope of the outward journey relates to the inward journey of the self. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus returns home to his rightful role in Ithaca, and in the *Aeneid*, Aeneas leaves Troy to ultimately become the ancestor of the Romans. Like Odysseus and Aeneas, Dante sets out on a journey that changes him, and at the same time instills the all-important chronotope of the journey in the classical tradition into his work.

While Dante most commonly alludes to Virgil's *Aeneid*, he also alludes to other classical authors and figures, including Phaethon in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In Canto 17 in all of the cantiche, Dante the poet compares Dante the pilgrim to Phaethon. Both Phaethon and Dante go through a journey where they have to depend on a guide to lead them through the "middle of the journey" and therefore, it seems fitting that the simile appears in the middle of each cantiche. Before seizing his father's chariot to travel across the sky, Phaethon receives advice from his father, the sun god, that "the middle way is the safest" (*Met*. 2.39). Phaethon fails to follow this advice, which causes him to lose control of his chariot, burn the Earth and ultimately kill himself. That the simile appears in the middle of each cantiche relates back to Dante's own journey while alluding to Phaethon's failed journey that strayed from the middle. So: why does Dante repeatedly compare himself to a classical character that ends in ruin? Why would a "comedic" protagonist compare himself to a tragic character?

The question as to why Dante would compare himself to Phaethon becomes even more pressing if one notices the parallels that Dante constructs between Phaethon and Lucifer. Both Phaethon and Lucifer exhibit pride that causes their downfall. They desire to the authority whom gave them birth — Phaethon to his father the Sun, and Lucifer to his creator God himself. Phaethon asks Phoebus to ride his chariot, aspiring for "more than the gods can share" and Lucifer desires to "ascend into heaven … exalt his throne above the stars of God" and "be like the most high" (Isa. 14:13-4), showing not only what unruly human desire, but more importantly, pride. In the *Metamorphoses*, Phaethon starts the ascent of his father's chariot "standing proudly" (2.151). Although the section that describes Lucifer's desire to ascend above God does not explicitly use the word pride, Lucifer's wish to be "the most High" exhibits an exaggerated belief in his own abilities (Isa. 14:14).

Although Phaethon realises that he "would prefer never to have touched his father's horses," his incapacity to control the chariot causes Jove bring Phaethon down to his fall and death. Similarly, Lucifer is "brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit" (Isa 14:15). Neither Phaethon nor Lucifer can control their pride even after they realise its implications. Both Phaethon and Lucifer threaten to destroy the Earth below them: Phaethon sees "the earth aflame on every hand" and Lucifer makes "the earth to tremble [and] shake the kingdoms" (Isa 14:16). And yet they fail to change their course. Instead, external factors influence their respective journeys, causing their respective descents to death and hell.

In *Inferno* 17, Dante compares himself to Phaethon as he descends down the beast Geryon. There are, however, as many similarities between Dante and Phaethon as there are differences. Dante says:

> I believe there was no greater fear when Phaethon
> abandoned his reins, so that the sky was scorched, as
> still appears …
> than was mine, when I saw that I was in the air
> on every side, and every sight put out save that of
> the beast (*Inf.* 17.106-14)

While Phaethon starts to fear during his journey, as evidenced by how he suddenly "abandoned his reins" and consequently scorched the sky and the Earth, Dante's simile draws attention to how he does not fear, unlike Phaethon.

In both Phaethon's and Dante's journeys, a scorpion-like beast appears. In the *Metamorphoses*, Phaethon, upon seeing the Scorpio "with his tail and curving arms stretched out on both sides" drops the reins to his father's chariot. Dante, however, uses the scorpion tail of Geryon to advance his journey. Brownlee demonstrates the textual parallels between the two monsters in Ovid and Dante—both are scorpions stretched out to cover the sights of everything else.[1] Like Phaethon, Dante fears the beast, but unlike Phaethon, he does not lose control. This difference might be attributed to the their respective guides. While Phoebus warns Phaethon that even if he follows the middle way, he will have to avoid the scorpion's pincers on his own, Virgil physically positions himself between Dante and Geryon's scorpion tail. While critics such as Brownlee have commented that Dante's success in navigating the inferno is attributed to Virgil's presence, and Phaethon's catastrophe due to his father's absence, this disregards a small but fundamental difference between Phaethon and Dante. Dante does not, like Phaethon, disregard the advice given to him. Instead of falsely believing in his own abilities, Dante relies on Virgil's support for help.

The second direct comparison between Dante and Phaethon appears in Canto 17 in *Paradiso*, where Dante approaches Cacciaguida to inquire about his future:

> As to Clymene, in order to verify what he had
> heard against himself, he came who still makes
> fathers cautious toward their sons:
> such was I, and so I was perceived … (*Par.*17.1-4)

Interestingly, the second comparison is a reversal of Ovid's Phaethon. While both Phaethon and Dante "set forth the blazing of [their] desires" to ask their forefathers questions, Dante wants to know the future of his family rather than his ancestral past. This difference serves to contrast Dante from Phaethon. Unlike Phaethon, Dante asks his forefather about his ancestors after his flight on Geryon's back. Phaethon asked about his ancestry before his flight. The plots are thus reversed, where the fall of Phaethon becomes the beginning of Dante's journey, while the beginning of Phaethon becomes the end of Dante's journey.

While both Phaethon and Dante exhibit a blazing desire to knowledge, the fundamental differences comes from how the characters exhibit this desire. While in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, this desire stems from Phaethon's vainglorious wish, the desire in the *Divine Comedy* comes from Dante's anxiety about the future. Jeffrey Schnapp argues that while the Phaethon comparison seems to suggest that Dante will suffer a similar fate, in truth it instead shows how Dante may "rightfully lay claim to the heavens" since he reverses Phaethon's trajectory.[2] Once again, Dante differs from Phaethon despite their similarities.

Although there are no direct comparisons between Phaethon and Dante in *Purgatorio* 17, there are possible allusions. Brownlee notes that there is an implicit comparison when Dante the pilgrim yet again expresses a desire similar to that of Phaethon.[3] Dante sees an angel whom he desires to transfix his eyes, just as Phaethon wishes to gaze directly at his father. Dante's power to watch the light "as if as the sun," fails, while Phaethon is "unable to bear his [father's] light too close" (*Purg*.17.52). While this parallel is quite clear, Brownlee goes so far as to claim that Virgil's following description of the angel in Purgatorio refers to Phoebus — he is a divine spirit who "directs us to the way" while hiding "himself within his own light", similar to how Phoebus drives his own chariot across the sky (*Purg*. 17.55-7). Virgil advises against Dante asking to see the angel, which differentiates him from Phaethon, who kept on insisting to see his father. In this way, the reversal of Phaethon's journey in Dante's the *Divine Comedy* is complete.

If Dante differs from Phaethon, he becomes a corrected Phaethon — a journey made right. While Phaethon starts with an ascent and ends with a descent, Dante starts with a descent and ends with an ascent to the heavens. Dante clearly and literally inverses Phaethon's journey. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, there are other

minor, but vital differences between Phaethon and Dante. Unlike Phaethon, Dante also pays attention to his guide, and Virgil remains with him throughout his journey down Geryon's back. While Phaethon neglects Phoebus' advice, Dante follows Virgil's lead. The presence of an active guide for Brownlee and Martinez is the key to Dante's reversal of Phaethon's journey.

If Phaethon is similar to Lucifer, Dante's reversal of Phaethon's journey ultimately differentiates him from Lucifer too; however, Dante adds yet another layer to the Ovidian simile. The Christian poet does not only transcend the Ovidian narrative, but also transforms Phaethon into a Christian figure. Schnapp argues that Dante becomes a "Christian charioteer" reaching the heavens.[4]

Schnapp's argument becomes even clearer if one understands the importance of the addition of Lucifer to the comparison between Phaethon and Dante. If Dante reverses Phaethon to something Christian, then Dante inevitably also becomes a reversal of Lucifer, since both Phaethon and Lucifer desire to ascend above the divine that gave birth to them — Phaethon to his father, and Lucifer to his creator. Dante's reversal of such failed ascendances radically underscores how different he is from them. He remains under the guidance of Virgil, and finally under his ultimate father and creator — God.

The biblical scholar Hermann Gunkel points out the narrative similarities between Phaethon's fall and Lucifer's (90). As such, we can assert that if Phaethon is so similar to Lucifer, Dante draws on the classical and biblical figures as exemplars of the worst sin of all — pride. Lucifer is the son of morning — his name translates to the morning star, he desires to ascend to the "throne above the stars of God" (Isa 14:13). Phaethon, as the son of Phoebus, is the son of the god of the sun, and he desires to travel in the sun chariot over which only Phoebus can have control. Gunkel claims that Phaethon is the morning star, identical to Lucifer. The son of morning has a single fate, namely to reach for the heavens without ever reaching the highest point — "the beams of the sun make [the morning star] turn pale."[5] The wish to ascend higher than the divine leads to a descent because it exhibits excessive desire and belief in one's abilities — of pride. Lucifer, like Phaethon, was blinded by his pride and wished to be higher than God, but ultimately ended up removed from the heavens. As such, the light seems to represent an excessive desire — even in the *Divine Comedy*, Dante exhibits a "blazing" desire to learn more from Cacciaguida (*Par*. 17.7). Although Dante is, as Martinez notes, a child of the sun like every other man, he does not exhibit this excessive desire

— instead, he controls it. He realises that the brightness of God becomes too much, and repeatedly in *Paradiso* looks away from it, while Phaethon and Lucifer want to go beyond and above it. Dante, on the other hand, listens and submits to his father, and therefore, his ascent is successful. He surpasses not only his predecessors, but also his excessive desire.

As such, it seems as though the Phaethon simile does not only attempt to transcend Ovid and transform Phaethon to a Christian figure, but it also seems to have a deeper teaching of the sin of pride. If Dante's journey into the heavens is a reversal of the Ovidian Phaethon and the biblical Lucifer, Dante's journey shows how Phaethon's and Lucifer's excessive desire for light misleads them. The prideful desire to become divine prevents Phaethon and Lucifer from reaching the heaven that Dante eventually reaches. Since Dante's control over his desire differs from these figures, Dante is allowed to ascend on his journey, while the pride of Phaethon and Lucifer bring them their descent. Therefore, the Phaethon comparison in the *Divine Comedy* seems to be a reversal not only of a journey, but also of pride and desire.

In conclusion, the journey is one of the most important chronotopes in Dante's *Divine Comedy* — and it is a journey of eventual ascent repeatedly compared to that of Phaethon and, indirectly, Lucifer. Although there are many similarities between the three figures, there are fundamental differences that highlight the pride and excessive desire of Phaethon and Lucifer. Phaethon's resemblance to Lucifer suggests that the Ovidian simile can become a Christian teaching against the sin of pride, which means that Dante also reverses Lucifer's descent. Even though Dante throughout the *Divine Comedy* attempts to surpass his predecessors, his ascent into the heavens shows that his pride does not lead him to heaven. Instead, his willingness to follow advice leads Dante to heaven. Consequently, the simile shows that a prideful attempt to transcend the divine only causes descent. Therefore, that Dante surpasses both Phaethon and Lucifer shows that, indeed, Dante's reluctance to position himself above his creator differentiates his fate from that of Phaethon and Lucifer. Dante stays "in the middle of the journey," outside of excessive desire and, most importantly, pride, and thus manages to ascend to heaven.

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1. Kevin Brownlee, "Phaeton's Fall and Dante's Ascent," *Dante Studies* 102 (1984): 136.
2. Jeffrey T. Schnapp, "Dante's Ovidian Self-Correction in *Paradiso* 17," in *The Poetry of Allusion: Virgil and Ovid in Dante's Commedia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991). 219.
3. Brownlee, "Phaeton's Fall and Dante's Ascent," 138
4. Schnapp, "Dante's Ovidian Self-Correction in *Paradiso* 17," 219.
5. Gunkel, Hermann, and Heinrich Zimmern. *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton: A Religio-Historical Study of Genesis 1 and Revelation 12* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), 90.

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Every Tongue Would Surely Fail: The Visual and the Verbal in the Illustrations of the *Inferno*

Benson Pang

This essay discusses Dante's *Inferno* and the artwork it inspired. Through examining the works of three artists that represent pivotal moments in *Inferno*'s visual genealogy — Sandro Botticelli, Gustave Doré and Rico Lebrun — I see this artistic tradition as an inward-bound journey that progresses from outward corporeal horror into inward psychological despair. As such, the visual illustrations of Dante's poem is a tradition of response that includes supplementing, complementing and subsuming the poem, an ever-perennial attempt for visual artists to grapple with the psychological reality of the *Inferno*.

In the interactions between Dante's poem and the artists who seek to depict it, the visual attempt to outdo its rival art is of course an act of troubled negotiation. In this paper I will first examine the impasses that complicate the visual depiction of Dante's imagination. In visually depicting a mental reality that exists in a realm parallel to but disjointed from the physical world, artists must collapse the mental world into the physical, imbuing it with an embodied form that contradicts its nature as abstract thought. Second, visual renderings of *Inferno* inevitably cleave away from their poetic origin. Once the artwork becomes a self-sustaining piece, its independence from the text necessitates a refusal to borrow the poem's force, denying itself the potency that comes with being complementary to *Inferno*. Finally, artistic renditions of *Inferno* must negotiate problems of scale, as neither macroscopic nor microscopic interpretations of the poem can sufficiently capture its appeal to both cosmic vastness and the individual soul. Hence, the visual conquest of Dante's *Inferno* is a troubled endeavour that constantly negotiates a dependency with its source text, each artist must ceaselessly balance between accepting his debt from the *Inferno* for validation and making a claim for his own creative autonomy.

This is the question at the heart of the visual conquest of poetry: how does textual semiosis create an aesthetic experience, and can the semiosis of images do this better? I will lay the groundwork for this discussion by contrasting how text and images create

meaning with respect to semiosis, temporality, spatiality and depictions of psychological worlds.

A text is a complementary semiotic system because its meaning is only consummated when furnished by information outside itself. Words, of course, are the basic units of meaning that make up *Inferno*. Individual words form meanings larger than the sum of their parts when Dante arranges them into phrases that present relationships between the nouns, verbs and their descriptive qualities. Yet, printed letters are not inherently meaningful, but become so by indexing concepts beyond the text. For instance, Dante's description of the forest of suicides as being fraught with "unhealthy branches, gnarled and warped and tangled / [that] bore poison thorns" (*Inf.* 13:5) obviously does not inherently contain poisonous thorns or embody dense undergrowth. Instead, these phrases create meaning by evoking concepts within the reader's mind. Dante's description of the suicide forest indexes the sensory qualities of darkness and twistedness, prompting the reader's synthesis of these concepts into the experience described by the text. This is, as Wolfgang Iser points out in *The Implied Reader*, an emergent phenomenon where the literary aesthetic experience is a result of the reader's mental store of experience meeting the stimulus within the text.[1]

Pictures, on the other hand, comprise elements such as line, shape, mass, colour and texture. Unlike text, which creates meaning by indexing entities beyond itself, an image can potentially reproduce the reality it wishes to depict. Gustave Doré's woodcut of the suicide forest (Fig. 1) does not need to point outside of itself to illustrate the "gnarled and warped and tangled" (*Inf.* 13:5) woods because Doré presents the scene as he wishes it to be seen. He depicts the textural transformation from muscle to knotted wood while contours and shadows establish the forest's oppressive darkness, creating an aesthetic experience that affects the viewer by provoking their visual and tactile sensibilities. Visual art hence has a direct path into the audience's physical senses that text can only approach with the help of its reader's imagination. Since the visual medium can stand on its own merit, visual art is an aspiration towards creating a hermetically sealed aesthetic world. Of course, one might question whether Doré's pictorial elements are sufficient for a full portrayal of his world: his lack of colour conceivably raises suspicions about whether the viewer needs to supplement his work with imagined colour. In this aspect, perhaps the verbal's invitation for the reader to substantiate its scaffold imaginatively might triumph over its visual rival since the poem is not bounded by an aspiration towards semiotic self-sufficiency.

While the visual might triumph over the verbal in terms of presenting a more fully realized depiction of its world, it lags behind in its ability to portray temporality. If we consider time a linear process moving from a narrative's beginning to end, a static image can only occupy a point on this line. The seemingly banal fact that images are pigments on a motionless sheet constrains what the visual world can achieve: images can only hint at temporality by balancing its subjects on the node between action and stillness. As Gotthold Ephraim Lessing argues in his foundational essay on ekphrasis, "the painter can only employ . . . one single moment of the action . . . which is at once expressive of the past, and pregnant with the future"[2]. Consider Doré's depiction of the thieves in Canto 24 (Fig. 2), which the poem describes as follows:

> One of the damned came racing round a boulder,
> and as he passed us, a great snake shot up
> and bit him where the neck joins with the shoulder.
> No mortal pen — however fast it flash
> over the page — could write down "o" or "i"
> as quickly as he flamed and fell in ash; (*Inf.* 24:97-102)

Even though the text describes a sinner "racing round a boulder" and a "snake [shooting] up", Doré can only hint at the scene's kinetic element by suggesting physical force, contouring muscles such that they suggest movement despite their stillness. Yet, his hell-dwellers remain frozen in the static image. In the visual world, temporality can only be portrayed through spatiality, by collapsing the continuous nature of an action into a *tableau* that implies motion in spite of its absence.

Text, on the other hand, freely expresses temporality. Unlike the visual medium's dictation of exactly how it wishes to be contemplated, the page provides the reader with a set of parameters within which the mind may incorporate animation. As we read the passage from *Inferno* 24 above, we are free to imagine the snake wrestling with the man in any way we wish as long as the event occurs within the parameters defined by the poem. "Racing" (*Inf.* 24:97) and "shot" (*Inf.* 24:98) indicate explosive motion, scaffolding the drama's scheme of events: the reader's mind may improvise within this structure as long as the product stays within the kinetic quality delineated by the poem. Unlike its rival, poetic semiosis is not compelled to strive towards self-sufficiency.

Finally, both text and image strive towards depicting the psyche, although the poem seems to hold an advantage in this domain. Text operates on the tacit agreement be-

tween work and reader to take the narrator's mind as the focal point through which we process reality. Dante's senses and thoughts become uncannily discernible through the device of first-person narration, establishing an agreement between text and reader that legitimises omniscient narrative exposition. When Dante describes his experience in the dark wood before meeting Virgil, the poem exploits its ability to shift between multiple layers of textual reality, overlaying his literal description of his position at "the far end of that valley of evil" (*Inf.* 1:13) with the metaphorical force of a man escaping a storm (*Inf.* 1:22-24). Visual art, on the other hand, would be hard pressed to articulate the way Dante weaves thoughts into the physical world. To Doré's credit, his rendition of Dante and Virgil in the dark wood (Fig. 3) overlaps the psychological and physical worlds by playing with composition and perspective. By dwarfing Dante and Virgil amidst towering trees and shadows, Doré illustrates the protagonist's desolation at finding himself lost in "the far end of that valley of evil" (*Inf.* 1:13). That is to say, Doré dislocates the characters from visual significance, placing them off centre and shrinking them to a mediocre size such that the dark negative space surrounding them becomes a more prominent area of attention. Yet, images cannot easily encapsulate the specificity that comes so naturally to text because the artist's eye must remain firmly fixed within the physical realm. As evidenced by the lack of oceanic imagery in his work, Doré sacrifices metaphor for the real, merely hinting at the terror of "[floundering] ashore from perilous seas" (*Inf.* 1:23) through his depiction of literal spatiality. It seems like visual interpretations must accept some loss in translation from linguistic to painterly meaning-making.

Now that I have established the main tensions undergirding the visual-verbal struggle, I will identify key ideological shifts across *Inferno* illustrations, particularly the progressions from macroscopic to microscopic illustrations and from physical to psychological reality.

Separated from Dante (1265-1321) by just slightly more than a century, Sandro Botticelli (1445-1510) exemplifies the earliest attitudes towards visual representations of Inferno. Botticelli's Dante illustrations form two distinct families: his paintings, which I shall discuss first, portray suffering as limitless cosmic anguish. Two of Botticelli's paintings, *Mappa dell'Inferno* (Fig. 4), and *La Carte de l'Enfer* (Fig. 5), translated as "Map of Hell" and "Chart of Hell" respectively, reveal his prioritisation of cartography over individuality. Botticelli opts against imbuing each hell-dweller's face with a distinct personality. Instead, they bear some modicum of an essentialised human likeness, but even these details are lost amidst the swathes of tortured bodies. Botticelli paints

humans in excess, in the vast "swarm" that ran "naked and without hope" (*Inf.* 24:91-92). With bodies piling up against each other towards the sides of the frame, it seems as though the geography of Botticelli's hell is made of flesh. Also, Botticelli's intense use of colour in conjunction with dense spatial composition deprives the viewer of an anchor for visual focus such that their first reaction to the painting is that of being overwhelmed by its immense spectacle. In *Mappa dell'Inferno* (Fig. 4) the viewer might focus on the row of red caskets bisecting the image, or to the circles surrounding Satan, but one cannot distinguish a single focal point that draws primary attention. Here, the viewer is affected by the painting's scale, experiencing *Inferno*'s cosmic spectacle through Botticelli's visual overload.

Botticelli's other body of work, his drawings on paper, presents a remarkably different take on *Inferno*. These pieces shift the onus of producing aesthetic experience onto the viewer by providing only the simplest indicators of meaning. As Iser puts it, "the unwritten [or undrawn in this case] aspects . . . lead [the viewer] to shade in the many outlines suggested by the given situations, so that these take on a reality of their own"[3]. Interestingly, Botticelli's drawings fulfil Iser's theory in an extremely literal sense: the omission of visual cues such as depth, colour and volume makes it the viewer's duty to unflatten the world by filling in all that Botticelli omits. In Botticelli's drawing of the dark wood in Canto 1 (Fig. 6), a deliberate omission of depth and contouring prevents the picture from mimetically representing the "rank" and "arduous" woods that are more bitter than death (*Inf.* 1:5-7). Instead, the drawing now serves as a signifier for sensory information that the viewer must supplement themselves, compelling them to take on a more active role in producing the aesthetic experience. Within the mind, what is actually an outline of trees on parchment combines with sensory experience to produce a menacing expanse of trees. The one-dimensional outline requires the viewer's imaginative insertion of texture and depth in order to become the horrific woods of the poem. This relegation of responsibility onto the audience, and of acknowledging the poem's authority by invoking it as an explanatory accompaniment to the ambiguously realised picture, is precisely what Doré will seek to address.

Moving away from Botticelli's depictions of suffering through broad statements of agony, Doré's nineteenth-century Romanticism articulates torture through detailed depictions within closer range of the artistic eye. While Botticelli's drawings also address specific scenes from the poem, their unfinished quality requires substantial investment on the viewer's part. Doré, on the other hand, gives his work a greater propensity for self-sufficiency by giving them a more thoroughly illustrated quality. *Inferno* 24 (Fig.

2) features men in agonised positions as their muscles, contoured with anatomical precision, bulge against the serpents' coils. *Inferno* 13 (Fig. 1) displays a similar twisted agony in the way the suicide-committer's arms bend contrary to the way his joints are hinged, situating punishment within the sinner's body. Doré makes suffering relatable by embodying it in realistic depictions that evoke sympathetic reactions of fatigue and desperation. His depictions of agony can affect their viewer much more immediately than a perplexingly sparse Botticelli sketch. Hence, his aspiration towards making self-sufficient art necessitates a refusal to allow his work to lean on the reinforcing power of the poem. In stating its independence — in saying that these woodcuts can convey the story of *Inferno* on its own merit without borrowing the poem's authority — Doré's corpus attempts to surpass the text's primacy.

Additionally, Doré's work recaptures a spiritual quality that Botticelli's crowded paintings and sparse drawings obscured. *Inferno* must dwarf its reader, reminding them of their place against the backdrop of creation. One should be like Dante, looking upon his surroundings like "a swimmer, who with his last breath / flounders ashore from perilous seas" (*Inf.* 1:22-23) as he contemplates his cosmic inconsequentiality. Botticelli's drawing of Canto 1 (Fig. 6) has limited success in conveying this sentiment with its lack of a visual centre; everything is equally important in that colourless and flat world. His paintings are similarly inhibited because their crowdedness overwhelms the viewer, leaving the eye with little space for contemplation. Doré's work improves on these aspects by zooming into scenes of manageable sizes, filling his woodcuts with rich textures that create potent emotional qualities. One might see how Doré, through his visualisation of existential contemplation, strives to position his art, and not the poem, as the centre of the *Inferno* experience by articulating these psychological tensions through his images. Doré portrays desolation by inverting Botticelli's colour scheme: while Botticelli uses black lines to denote substance and white for space, Doré's illustrations use black to denote space and white for substance, creating an unusual chiaroscuro that foregrounds the literal and figurative darkness of the poem. In addition, Doré enshrouds Dante and Virgil within huge shadows, evoking a sense of futility as they become spatially inconsequential when compared to the dark negative space engulfing them (Fig. 3). One might see Doré's work as an exploration of existential fear in which human characters are brought uncomfortably close to the realisation that they live within forces so vast and incomprehensible that they can only be depicted through darkness.

Additionally, through his mastery of the engraving technique, Doré uses *chiaroscuro* to

highlight the poem's mystical quality. Doré's illustration of Canto 2 (Fig. 7) captures *Inferno*'s cosmic transcendence by depicting how "the light was departing" (*Inf.* 2:1) as day transitioned into night, awarding visual prominence to the stars and moon by scattering them across otherwise dark empty space. This piece inspires contemplative awe that even Botticelli's paintings and drawings could not achieve. Hence, Doré's engravings move away from the incompleteness of Botticelli's drawings by appealing to the visual capacity for shadow, depth and composition, through which he captures *Inferno*'s emotional relevance. His work is one more step into the poetic realm, internalising literary narration within itself.

Doré occupies a crucial node in the history of *Inferno* illustrations, marking a transition from physical to psychological worlds and between macroscopic and microscopic views of hell. In their attempt to assert their prominence within the visual world while furthering the visual conquest into verbal territory, artists following Doré have directed their illustrations towards capturing *Inferno*'s psychology. Now I consider how Rico Lebrun moves further inwards, analysing the hell-dwellers through magnifying lenses that breach the physical-psychological divide.

John Ciardi, one of the *Comedy*'s most respected translators, considers Lebrun to be *Inferno*'s quintessential illustrator. In Ciardi's words, Lebrun captures how Dante's hell "is not a place but a state of being . . . the projection of the total inwardness of all the damned. Hell is what they emanate by being what they are."[4] While Doré assumes a source of suffering extrinsic to the human being, Lebrun relocates suffering within the body and brings the poem's inner psychological reality out onto the surface of the flesh.

Lebrun's illustrations represent the terminal point of the Dantean tradition's progression from the macroscopic to the microscopic. While Botticelli painted geographies and Doré illustrated scenes, Lebrun locates hell within the individual by situating the body as a site of psychological horror. Firstly, Lebrun uses a *chiaroscuro* technique similar to Doré's, in which white matter is obscured by black negative space that threatens to envelop the subject, establishing a mood of anxiety amidst uncertainty. In addition to suspending these bodies within a dreadful psychic space, Lebrun terrifies the mind by defiling the personal and intimate body that houses it, creating a powerful association that equates body horror with psychological uncertainty. Lebrun's suicide victim from Canto 13 (Fig. 8) is trapped in a revulsive form that reminds them of what they used to be in the face of what they have become. The tree-person takes up the entire canvas, and its pasty grey-white flesh provokes the viewer's imagined sense of touch

through a hideously disproportionate form and repulsive texture. For Lebrun, the physical body functions as a vehicle for the exploration of anxieties. The psychological fear of a corrupted sense of self is equated with the visceral fear of physical revulsion, and both reinforce each other within the body as a site of horror.

By the time the visual tradition reaches Lebrun, progressing from Botticelli's census-like depictions of hell to Doré's intersection between the physical and astral worlds, it has departed from its origin in depicting the literal aspect of *Inferno*. Illustrations are now deeply personal, concerned with uncomfortably intimate renditions of individual suffering. By this point, we can interpret the visual advance into mental territory as an endeavour to claim textuality for itself in two ways. Firstly, the visual tradition's propensity for capturing psychological qualities suggests an attempt to outdo the verbal at its ability to peer into minds omnisciently. As evidenced by Doré's move from realistic to abstract representation, the visual tradition has become concerned with exploring the subjects' mental states instead of focusing merely on depicting their physical conditions in a realistic manner, which is an attempt at exploring how visual art might create narrative exposition that focuses on psychology instead of the physical world.

As we have mentioned, poetry's existence in the interstice between the physical and mental worlds licenses the interweaving of literal portrayals with abstract thought without the need to represent the latter in physical means. Painting, unfortunately, does not benefit from such an agreement. Because the visual eye situates itself within the realm of substance, Botticelli, Doré and Lebrun can only hint at *Inferno*'s psychological immensity by expressing it through their depictions of physical reality, dampening the subject's psychological power by condensing it into a physical form. Such a compromise comes to the forefront when we consider Canto 28, which is noted for its use of the ineffability *topos*:

> Who could describe, even in words set free
> of metric and rhyme and a thousand times retold,
> the blood and wounds that now were shown to me!
> At grief so deep the tongue must wag in vain,
> the language of our sense and memory
> lacks the vocabulary of such pain. (*Inf.* 28:1-6)

In his attempt to express the horrific immensity before him, Dante challenges his readers to imagine a horror so potent that it can only be indexed by its inability to

be indexed. How can visual semiosis, which comprehensively illustrates that which it wishes to depict, portray a horror so vast that it cannot be portrayed? Lebrun gets commendably close to the poem's cerebral reality by imbuing his illustrations of bodies with a deeply psychological quality. In his illustration of discord sowers from Canto 28 (Fig. 9 and 10), Lebrun's impressionistic swathes of mass and shape capture ephemeral and abstract psychological qualities instead of precise physical details. Thus the suffering of the body is not an end in itself but a vehicle for the artist to depict mental anguish. One might interpret Lebrun's choice of illustrative technique, in which he emphasises impressions over specificity, as a painterly method of conveying "grief so deep the tongue must wag in vain" (*Inf.* 28:4), grief that can only be gestured at in broad strokes because its immensity exceeds the limits of ink and paper. Botticelli, too, deserves credit for some success at addressing the ineffable. His drawing of Canto 28 (Fig. 11) subverts the visual aspiration towards internally complete portrayal by presenting an image devoid of colour and depth. Just as Dante was unable to explain what he saw without first prefacing his work as plagued by uncertainty at how he could describe this circle of hell (*Inf.* 28:1-6), Botticelli creates a visual world that is sparse and dense at once, eliciting visual uncertainty by depriving the viewer of a centre of gravity that anchors visual attention. Furthermore, the image's lack of visual cues beyond line and shape implies awareness that artistic genius cannot fully depict this level of hell, and that this sketch is as incomplete as anything more fully fleshed out can be. Botticelli uses the language of drawing to express how "the language of our sense and memory / lacks the vocabulary of such pain" (*Inf.* 28:5-6).

Our survey of Botticelli, Doré and Lebrun reveals a narrowing progression in terms of scale. Botticelli produced census, Doré produced scenes, and Lebrun produced individual bodies. They focused on what they considered the primary source of hell's horror, whether it be its vastness or relatability to the mind. Yet, the visual quest for self-sufficiency demands specificity at the expense of comprehensiveness. As discussed before, visuality necessitates a choice between the literal and the figurative, and between the outer material world and inner world of the mind. Likewise, artists must make a choice when it comes to scale: they cannot produce work that is microscopic and macroscopic at the same time. Unfortunately, *Inferno* is simultaneously both. Once again, the visual encounters another obstacle because of its inability to exist simultaneously on both ends of the spectrum of scale.

Dante scholarship has long understood *Inferno*'s union of form and content across all levels of the text. John Freccero identifies how *Inferno* comprises "a series of retrospec-

tives that range from the minute to the cosmic," arguing that each of the poem's structural and thematic components echo each other by exhibiting similar traits, generating an uncanny unity that binds the work with extraordinary cohesion.[5] On the smallest scale, the poem's *terza rima* rhyme scheme produces forward motion while generating resonances of the past. *Terza rima* follows the structure ABABCBCDC… creating a chain rhyme that loops back on itself before moving onwards. Even in syntax, one of the most basic levels of linguistic meaning, *Inferno* moves forwards with a retrospective gaze, creating a spiralling vortex of poetry — it "incorporates . . . a recall to the past and a promise of the future that seem to meet in the now of the central rhyme"[6]. The poem's fixation with triplet structure moves beyond syntax, finding its way into the structure of the *Comedy* as a whole, which comprises three books that each contain 33 canti (plus the *Inferno*'s introductory canto). Hence, *Inferno* is bound by a syntactic congruence that permeates all levels of its structure.

One must not, however, take the influence of the spiral to be a purely syntactic choice. Instead, Dante uses the architecture of threes and spirals to create unity between his poem's literary structure and content. *Inferno*'s content is also deeply concerned with spiraling. Minos, the judge who sentences the damned, decides the level to which the sinner is banished by "[wrapping] his twitching tail about himself / one coil for each degree it must descend" (*Inf.* 5:11-12). Thieves are punished by suffocation as snakes "coiled [themselves] about the wretch's neck / as if it were saying: 'you shall not go on!'" (*Inf.* 25:4-5), characterising sin as a struggle between bodily autonomy and crushing circles of sin. Hell's geography is also fraught with rings of horror, like when Geryon, the beast of fraud, gives Dante an inter-circle ride in a "down-spiral to the horrors / that rose to us from all sides of the pit" (*Inf.* 16:119-120). Finally, hell itself is a tightening spiral that leads down to the apex of an inverted cone: Lucifer created a cone-shaped crater in his fall from heaven and pushed the corresponding mass of earth out on the other side of the world to form Mount Purgatory (*Inf.* 34:124-129). Dante unifies form and content in order to characterise the human condition as a spiralling movement forwards, looking back at the past while moving into the present. From syntax to geography, every aspect of the poem reinforces each other by repeating the same spiralling motion. We can characterise Dante's triumph as the union of two previously dichotomous layers of poetic reality: Dante synthesises the syntax of the words printed on the material page with the structure of the fictional world it indexes in order to communicate a profound spiritual truth. The journey to salvation is as such: the pilgrim has one eye gazing backward at a sinful past while the other eye looks forward at the light that peers down from the mountain of purification.

Once again, the poem's structure complicates visual interpretation: how can visual semiosis produce work that resonates at the same frequency across every structural layer? The visual medium lacks the advantage of being a double-layered entity: unlike the poem, which comprises both the words on the page as well as an abstract fictional world, the painting is a single layer that must represent its fiction within itself. It cannot generate synergy between its material reality and its aesthetic reality because its material reality is it aesthetic reality. Artists have responded to this challenge by creating bodies of work that share a unifying visual signature. Doré's and Lebrun's work successfully create stylistic coherence within themselves, as noted by their monochromatic *chiaroscuro*, Doré's aestheticisation of suffering, and Lebrun's abstraction of the text. In addition, Botticelli was successful in representing, at least in part, the double-ended scope of Dante's hell. *Mappa dell'Inferno* (Fig. 4) creates a spectacle of hellish excess. Such an effort implies an awareness that a comprehensive illustration of *Inferno* must address both the universality of the condemned as well as its relevance to the individual souls within.

As much as it might be argued that images resist verbal encapsulation, the long legacy of the *Inferno* and its visual corpus exemplifies how text resists visual conquest as well. Even though each artist has made small steps into the verbal realm, visual art as a whole has yet to conquer the poem for itself. *Inferno* defends itself from the visual effort because the enablements of poetic semiosis — what the poem can do that makes the work distinctly literary — are be the disenablements of visual art. Nonetheless, the visual medium does not seem to be ending its efforts any time soon.

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1. Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 276.
2. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*, trans. Edward Calvert Beasley (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1853), 152.
3. Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 276.
4. John Ciardi, *Drawings for Dante's Inferno by Rico Lebrun* (Los Angeles: Kanthos Press, 1963), 2-4.
5. John Freccero, *The Poetics of Conversion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 263.
6. Ibid., 262.

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Fig. 1, Gustave Doré, Canto 13, date unknown, etching.

Fig. 2, Gustave Doré, Canto 24, date unknown, etching.

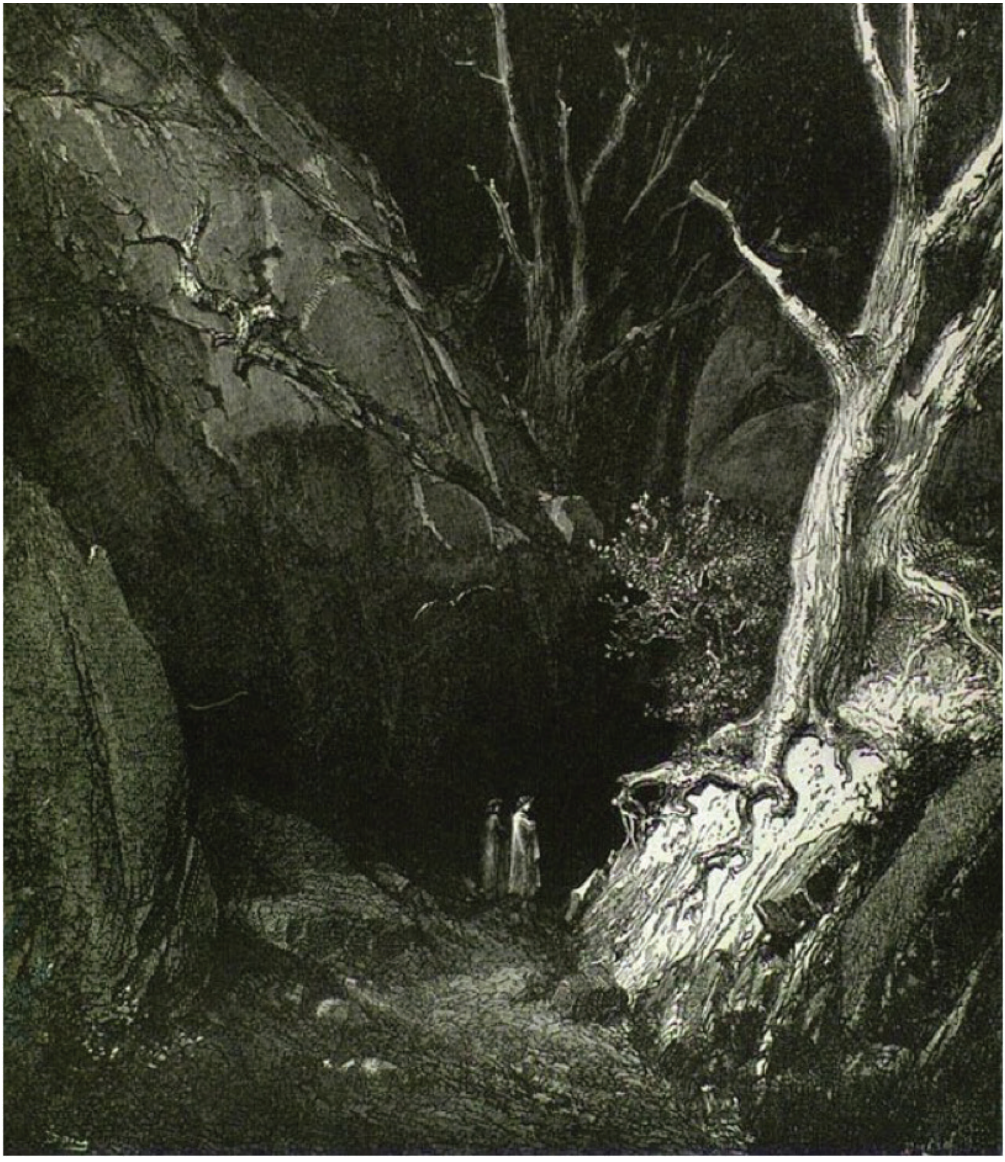

Fig. 3, Gustave Doré, Canto 1, date unknown, etching.

Fig. 4, Sandro Botticelli, *Mappa dell'Inferno*, date unknown, parchment.

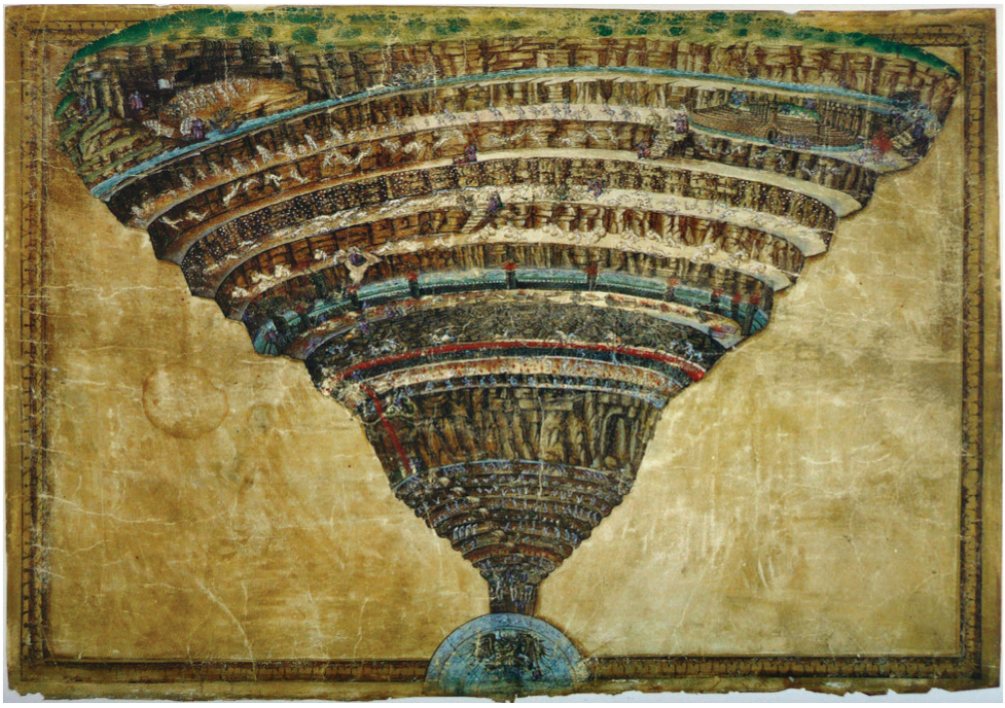

Fig. 5, Sandro Botticelli, *La Carte de l'Enfer*, date unknown, parchment.

Fig. 6, Sandro Botticelli, Canto 1, date unknown, drawing.

Fig. 7, Gustave Doré, Canto 2, date unknown, drawing.

Fig. 8, Rico Lebrun, Canto XIII, 1963, ink wash, *Drawings for Dante's Inferno*.

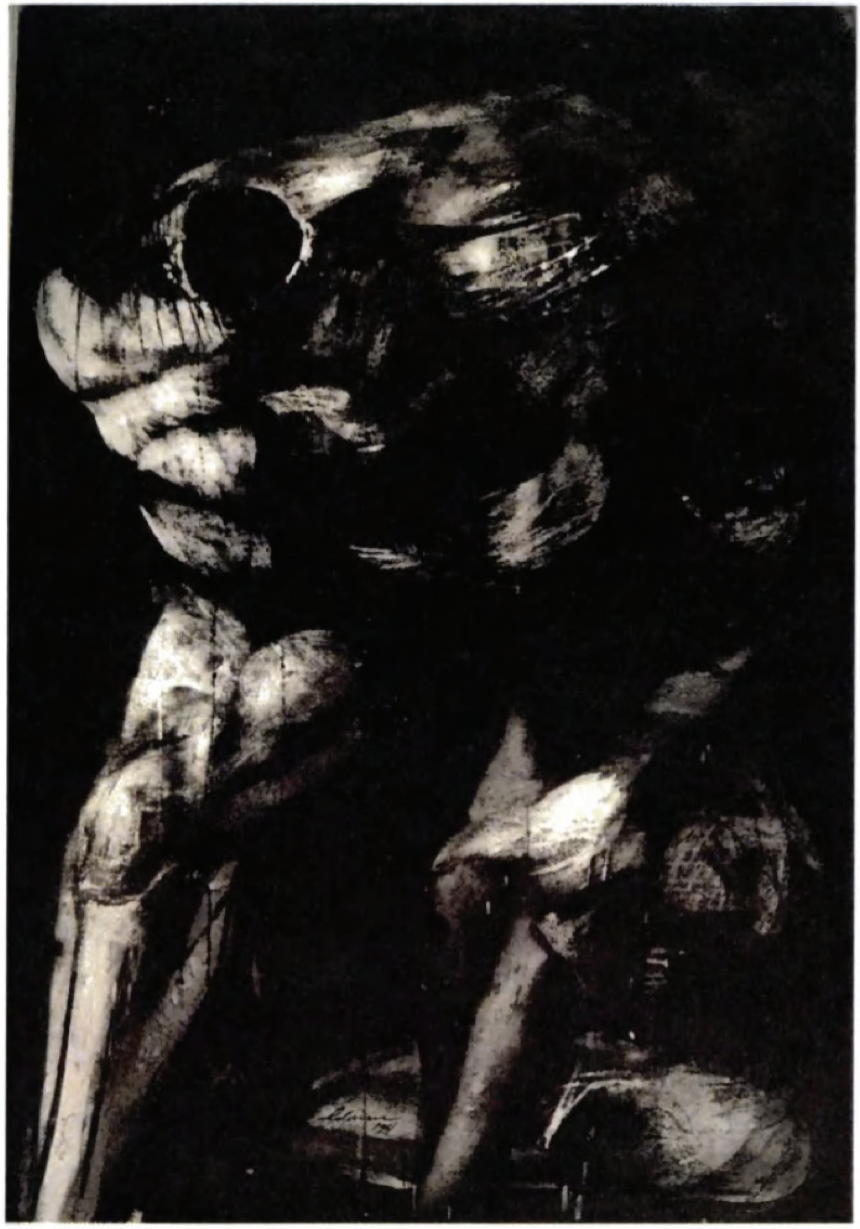

Fig. 9, Rico Lebrun, Canto XVIII, 1963, ink wash, *Drawings for Dante's Inferno*.

Fig. 10, Rico Lebrun, Canto XVIII, 1963, ink wash, *Drawings for Dante's Inferno*.

Fig. 11, Sandro Botticelli, Canto XIII, date unknown, drawing.

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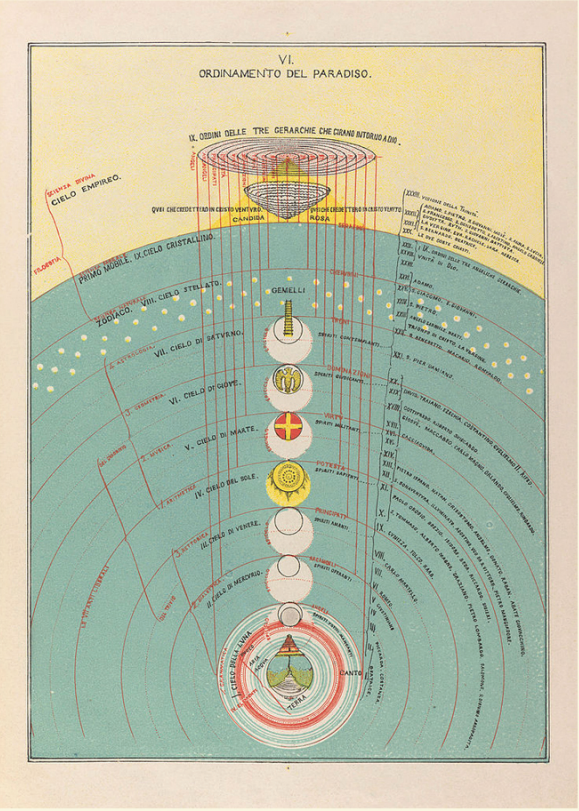

Michelangelo Caetani. *La materia della Divina commedia di Dante Alighieri dichiarata in VI tavole*. Montecassino: Monaci benedettini di Montecassino, 1855. Plate IV (Public Commons)

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