CHAPTER 2

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Dante's Epicureanism and the Emergence of Secular Man

Introduction

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

Unlikely Allies: Epicurus and a Positive Secularism

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Epicureanism and the Imperial Cause

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Epicureanism and Dante's Deflection of Heresy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusion

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

Notes to Chapter 2

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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