PART II

The Epicurean Axis of *Inferno* X

CHAPTER 3

❖

The Secular and Spiritual Hemispheres of *Inferno* X

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Temporal Hemisphere and the Mortal Arc of This Life

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

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

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

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

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

Dante instantly replies:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

to which Farinata responds:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

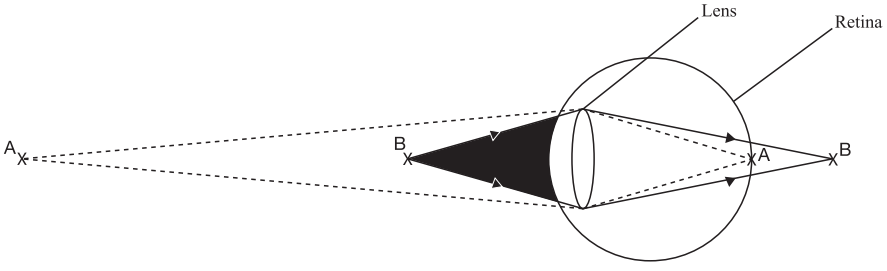


Fig. 1a. Time-long-sightedness of the Epicureans (*Inferno* X), who see events in the distant (A) but not the near (B) future

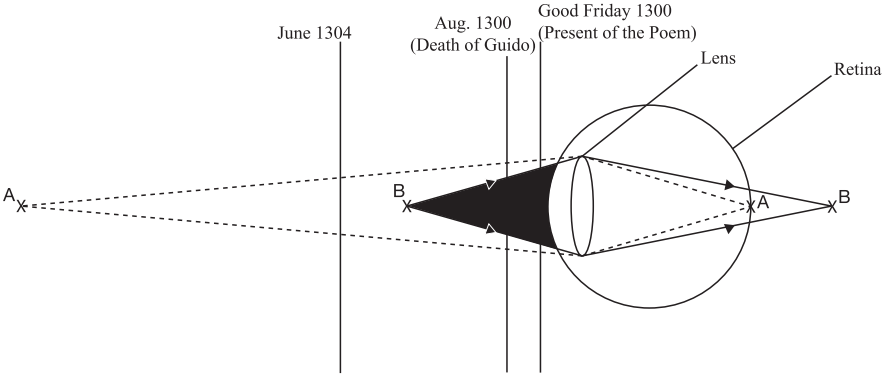


Fig. 1b. Time-long-sightedness of Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti (*Inf.* X, 52–72)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

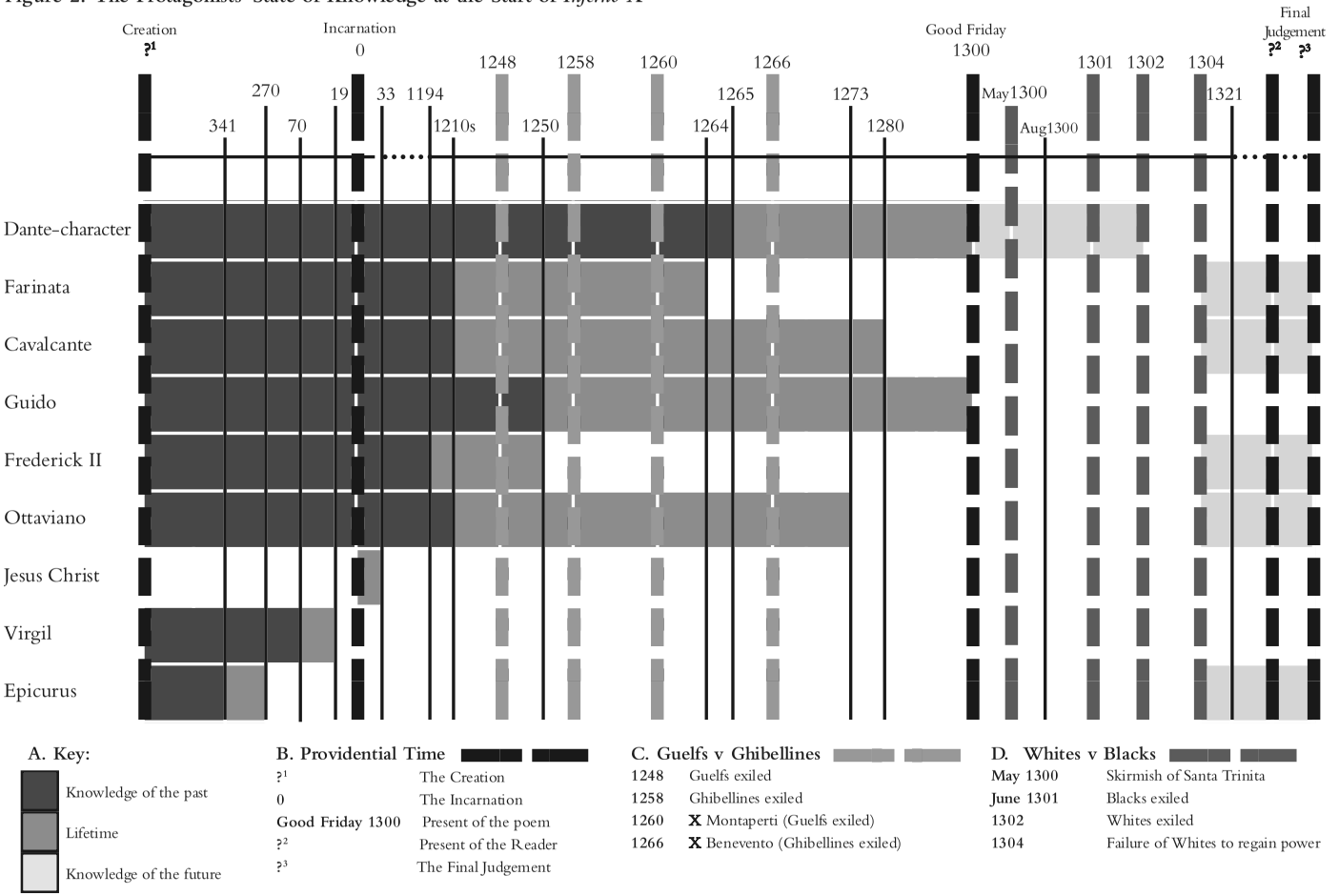
The diagram in Figure 2 represents the protagonists' knowledge of events (in the past, present and future) on the night of Good Friday 1300, just before Dante-character's encounter with Farinata in *Inferno* X. The horizontal axis along the top shows the continuum of time. Down the left side, there is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

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

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

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

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



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

The Spiritual Hemisphere and the 'Vita Nuova' of Faith

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusion

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

Notes to Chapter 3

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

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

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

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

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

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