CHAPTER 6

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The Horizon between Pagan Reason and Christian Faith

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

> 'Leva' diss' io 'maestro, li occhi tuoi:
> ecco di qua chi ne darà consiglio,
> se tu da te medesmo aver non puoi'. (*Purg.*, III. 61–63)

['Lift up' I said 'master, your eyes: behold over here those who will give us counsel, if you cannot have it from yourself.']

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nature and Grace: Virgil and Belacqua

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

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

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

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

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

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

> Li occhi prima drizzai ai bassi liti;
> poscia li alzai al sole, e ammirava
> che da sinistra n'eravam feriti.
> Ben s'avvide il poeta ch'ïo stava
> stupido tutto al carro de la luce,
> ove tra noi e Aquilone intrava. (*Purg.*, IV. 55–60)

> [First I directed my eyes to the low shores; then I raised them to the sun, and I was amazed that it struck us from the left.
> The poet well saw that I was lost in wonder at the chariot of the sun, where it came between us and Aquilon.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusion

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

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

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

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

Notes to Chapter 6

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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