

we do not find is a concerted attempt to direct people in the living of their everyday lives, or to provide an anatomy of morals, as Giraut does within the limits of the chivalric code and Guittone does within a much larger Christian and civic scheme. The category of poet of rectitude is in fact not available to the lyric poets of the *Comedy*; rather, they may aspire to a poetics of erotic conversion, like Folquet. The two lyric poets in Dante's lexicon who require such a category, Giraut and Guittone, are rejected out of hand, their authority as precursors denied, their presence in the *Comedy* entirely negative. Within this general picture, however, we find one possible textual echo with some suggestive implications. The *Comedy's* first invocation to the Muses—"O Muse, o alto ingegno, or m'aiutate; / o mente che scrivesti ciò ch'io vidi, / qui si parrà la tua nobilitate" ("O Muses, o high genius, help me now; o memory that wrote down what I saw, here will your nobility appear" [*Inf.* II, 7-9])—recalls the incipit of Guittone's great conversion poem, "Ora parrà s'eo saverò cantare" ("Now it will appear if I know how to sing"). Dante's verses pick up and recombine two specific textual elements: Guittone's first word, "Ora," reappears in the injunction to the Muses, "or m'aiutate," with the same purpose of marking a new poetic beginning; Guittone's second word, the striking verb "parrà," reappears in "qui si parrà la tua nobilitate" (the only time this form of the verb *parere* appears in the *Inferno*), bearing the same semantic weight of a newly achieved poetic destiny articulated in the moment of its first manifestation.⁴⁴ Both passages are the markers of a moment of textual revelation; both are concerned with letting it be known that "I know how to sing." Thus, at the *Comedy's* beginning, as he effects the most sensational of transitions, Dante echoes

feriremmo vedere in Folchetto e nella sua conversione una 'figura' dell'evoluzione dall' 'Amor' alla 'Charitas,' dall'amore profano all'amore sacro, cioè un'ulteriore espressione del 'superamento' della poesia amorosa" ("Le Rime della 'rettitudine' nella coscienza poetica di Dante," p. 93).

⁴⁴ *Parrà* appears in the *Comedy* only five times: *Inf.* II, 9; *Purg.* II, 66; *Purg.* IV, 91; *Par.* V, 25; *Par.* XVI, 77. Interestingly, in *Paradiso* V Dante comes very close to imitating Guittone: "Or ti parrà, se tu quinci argomenti."

the verse of a lesser forebear, as he effects his own lesser transition.⁴⁵ The passage from love poetry to moral poetry is a crucial one, with a direct bearing on the *Comedy*; as the initiator of that passage, the launcher of that transition, Guittone is here implicitly recognized—as the only one of Dante's lyric precursors who could actively imagine, if not the *Comedy* itself, at least the space that the *Comedy* would later fill.

Fathers and Sons: Guinizzelli and Cavalcanti

If, in the *Comedy*, Guittone is a presence, repeatedly vilified, Cavalcanti is an absence, just as systematically denied his due. We have already touched on Cavalcanti's pivotal role as Dante's early mentor, his first freely chosen vernacular poetic *auctoritas*. Cavalcanti's importance is overtly acknowledged in a poem like the *plazer* "Guido, i' vorrei che tu e Lapo ed io," where his privileged position as head of the group of young poets is reflected by his emphatic initial position in the verse. Guido is the fourth character to be introduced into the *Vita Nuova*, after Dante, Beatrice, and Amor; he makes his first appearance in chapter III, where Dante is discussing the response to the *libello's* first sonnet:

A questo sonetto fue risposto da molti e di diverse sentenzie; tra li quali fue risponditore quelli cui io chiamo primo de li miei amici, e disse allora uno sonetto, lo quale comincia: *Vedeste, al mio parere, onne valore*. E questo fue quasi lo principio de l'amistà tra lui e me, quando elli seppe che io era quelli che li avea ciò mandato.

To this sonnet many replied with differing points of view; among these respondents was the one I call the first of my

⁴⁵ Another Guittonian echo at the beginning of the *Comedy* is posited by Aino Anna-Maria Paasonen, "Dante's 'Firm Foot' and Guittone d'Arezzo," *Romance Philology*, 33 (1979), 312-317, who believes that the famous crux of *Inferno* I, 30, "sì che 'l piè fermo sempre era 'l più basso," echoes a passage from Guittone's letters.

friends, and at the time he composed a sonnet, which begins: "Vedeste, al mio parere, onne valore." And this may be said to mark the beginning of the friendship between him and me, when he learned that I was the one who had sent him this.

(*Vita Nuova*, III, 14)

The seemingly casual citation of Guido's sonnet in this passage is noteworthy; the incipit is in fact the only fragment of vernacular poetry to be incorporated into the text of the *Vita Nuova*, and is thus implicitly placed on a par with the classical Latin verses that are cited in chapter XXV. Also, in chapter III Guido is named with the periphrasis, "primo de li miei amici," which will mark all his subsequent entrances into the *libello*: in chapter XXIV he is "questo primo mio amico," as again in chapters XXV and XXX. In XXV Guido and Dante are united in a common poetic front against those modern poets who "compose foolishly" (the expression "rimano stoltamente" would seem to anticipate the "stolti" of *Purgatorio* XXVI); in XXX, where Guido is mentioned for the penultimate time, Dante considers his friend an indispensable supporter of his project to write in the vernacular, and dedicates the book to him: "questo mio primo amico a cui io ciò scrivo" ("this my first friend, to whom I write this" [XXX, 3]).

Cavalcanti is thus the only contemporary vernacular poet to be overtly cited in the *Vita Nuova* and to have an active role in the narrative. The text to which we next turn in charting the developing attitude of Dante toward his first friend is the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*. Here we find Guido in his accustomed place as the leader of the *stilnovisti*; the group referred to earlier in the incipit of "Guido, i' vorrei che tu e Lapo ed io" is transposed, in the same order, into the treatise's "Guido, Lapo and one other [Dante], Florentines, and Cino of Pistoia" (I, xiii, 4).⁴⁶

⁴⁶ On the status of the sonnet "Guido, i' vorrei che tu e Lapo ed io," its reflection of the *stil novo* as a group and its relation to the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, see Guglielmo Gorni, "'Guido, i' vorrei che tu e Lippo ed io' (sul canone del Dolce Stil Novo)," *Studi di filologia italiana*, 36 (1978), 21-37, and also the

In the long list of II, vi, Cavalcanti is in his correct position, after Guinizzelli and before Cino and Dante. "Donna me prega," Guido's most famous canzone, is cited twice in the treatise; considering how few canzoni Guido wrote (two full ones and an isolated stanza), he would therefore seem to be well represented. We note, however, that "Donna me prega" is not cited among the "illustres cantiones" of II, vi; Dante prefers to cite instead the incomplete canzone, "Poi che di doglia cor conven ch'i' porti," saving "Donna me prega" for the technical sections at the end of Book II. Most notably, the addition of a fourth name to the list of names inherited from "Guido, i' vorrei," the name of Cino da Pistoia, signals the radical shift in perspective wrought by the treatise, whereby Cavalcanti's place as "first friend" is taken over by Cino.⁴⁷ Throughout the treatise, Cino's name is coupled with Dante's, most frequently in the formula through which Dante avoids using his own name by referring to himself as Cino's friend. Thus, the expression "amicus eius" takes the place of "primo amico." When Dante announces that the Italian vernacular is supreme in the lyric mode, "Cino and his friend" are introduced as those poets who have composed most sweetly and subtly in it (I, x, 2). Only Cino and Dante are specifically named as poets who have demonstrated the *vulgare illustre* in their poetry (I, xvii, 3). Cino—not Cavalcanti—is the Italian poet of love, the companion to Dante, Italian poet of rectitude. Cino is included in the shorter list of II, v, devoted to canzoni that begin with hendecasyllables, whereas Cavalcanti is not. Thus, although Guido's nominal position as the oldest and hence leading member of *stilnovisti* is

reply of Domenico De Robertis, "Amore e Guido ed io . . . (relazioni poetiche e associazioni di testi)," *Studi di filologia italiana*, 36 (1978), 39-65. Gorni's article is reprinted in his *Il nodo della lingua e il verbo d'amore: Studi su Dante e altri duecentisti* (Florence: Olschki, 1981), pp. 99-124.

⁴⁷ Mengaldo and Marti both discuss the fact that Cino takes Guido's place as part of the subtle anti-Cavalcantian polemic of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*; see Mengaldo, Introduction, *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, p. XCIII; Marti, "Con Dante fra i poeti del suo tempo," pp. 106-112.

respected, he is never singled out in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* as he is in the *Vita Nuova*.

Dante's attitude in the treatise forecasts the severer silence of the *Comedy*, where Guido is the great nonpresence among the poets. First of all, Guido is the only love poet in the *Comedy* to be named and discussed in Hell, a negative privilege whose repercussions still affect our critical stance. What has perhaps gone unappreciated is the intentionality of Dante's decisions with respect to his first friend. In the same way that there is no love poetry in the *Inferno*, a canticle that accommodates only misquotations, so there can be no love poets; by definition any love poet, no matter how plebeian, belongs to the *Purgatorio*. In keeping with this implicit structural principle, no love poet ever appears in the first canticle: Francesca is a reader, not a practitioner; Pier della Vigna is the textual representative of the prose style of the Federician chancellery, not of the *scuola siciliana*; Bertran de Born functions according to the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, as a poet of arms.⁴⁸ In this context, Guido's solitary status as the only love poet even to be discussed in the *Inferno* is the more noteworthy. The discussion belongs, of course, to *Inferno X*, where Dante meets the heretical bedfellows Farinata degli Uberti and Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti, Guido's father. We remember the celebrated exchange between father and friend, in which Cavalcanti senior insists divisively—or, in the canto's terms, "heretically"—on poetry as a form of competition, a way of determining "altezza d'ingegno." Assuming that the

⁴⁸ Contini says of Francesca that she is "un'usufruttuaria delle lettere, quel che si dice una lettrice, non una produttrice in proprio" ("Dante come personaggio-poeta della *Commedia*," p. 42). Leo Spitzer, "Speech and Language in *Inferno XIII*," *Italica*, 19 (1942), 81-104 (repr. in *Dante: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. John Freccero, pp. 78-101), and Ettore Paratore, "Analisi 'retorica' del canto di Pier della Vigna," *Studi danteschi*, 42 (1965), 281-336, discuss Piero's prose writings as the antecedents for the style of *Inferno XIII*. An analysis of *Inferno XIII* as an intertextual parody of Piero's *Eulogy*, an encomiastic piece written for Frederick II, is provided by William A. Stephany, "Pier della Vigna's Self-Fulfilling Prophecies: The *Eulogy* of Frederick II and *Inferno 13*," *Traditio*, 38 (1982), 193-212. Bertran de Born will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

journey through Hell is undertaken on the basis of intellectual superiority, he wants to know where Guido is; piqued that his son has been denied a privilege accorded to Dante (the irony being that Guido is assigned through this very conversation the negative privilege of a position in Hell), he asks "Why isn't he with you?" with its implication that "you are no better than he." The relationship between Dante and his first friend is thus cast in a competitive light, which recurs in the only other episode in which Guido is mentioned, that of *Purgatorio XI*.

The dialectical tribute of *Inferno X*—Guido is, after all, unique in being accorded even an implied intellectual parity with Dante—is more fully articulated in *Purgatorio XI*. Here the original complimentary expression, "altezza d'ingegno," is replaced by a more specific poetic accolade, regarding "la gloria de la lingua," as Guido is inserted into a progressive continuum of cultural history:

Credette Cimabue ne la pittura
tener lo campo, e ora ha Giotto il grido,
sì che la fama di colui è scura.
Così ha tolto l'uno a l'altro Guido
la gloria de la lingua; e forse è nato
chi l'uno e l'altro caccerà del nido.

Cimabue thought to hold the field in painting, and now Giotto has the cry, so that his [Cimabue's] fame is dark. Thus one Guido has taken from the other the glory of our tongue, and perhaps he is born who will chase the one and the other from the nest.

(94-99)

In the poetic hierarchy established here, Guido Cavalcanti takes the linguistic palm from the first Guido, Guinizelli, to lose it in his turn to a third poet, who can only be Dante himself.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ The commentary tradition as recorded by Guido Biagi (including the early commentators Jacopo della Lana, the Ottimo, Pietro di Dante, Benvenuto, Francesco da Buti, and the Anonimo Fiorentino) is unanimously in favor of Guinizelli and Cavalcanti as the two Guidos of *Purgatorio XI* (see *La Divina Com-*

The tribute to Cavalcanti is real, for the sentence structure associates "la gloria de la lingua" with him, but it is also immediately undercut, by the menacing presence of the unnamed third. It is thus a mistake to concentrate on the presumed humility inherent in Dante's not naming himself, or on the rhythmic and impersonal passing of fame from one artistic peak to the next, which is the final burden of Oderisi's speech: "La vostra nominanza è color d'erba, / che viene e va" ("Your renown is

media nella figurazione artistica e nel secolare commento, vol. II, pp. 202-204); the tradition is somewhat less firm in the identification of the unnamed third. Although the consensus is for Dante (Jacopo, the Ottimo, Benvenuto, Francesco), there are early murmurings on the implications of such a statement; thus the Anonimo Fiorentino is uncertain as to whether the third poet is Dante, because although Dante is in fact the greatest poet of his day, for him to say so would be an act of pride, "e ragionevolmente non può esser ripreso l'A[utore] di superbia" (p. 204). An amusing solution is provided by Alessandro Vellutello (1544), who suggests that "mosso da profetico spirito," Dante is here referring to Petrarch (p. 205). More to the point is Antonio Cesari (1824-1826), who comments: "Addio D[ante], a bel rivederci qua col sasso in collo, con gli altri superbi . . . !" (p. 205). In fact, the articulation of Dante's own pride on the terrace of pride is surely intentional, a key to the dialectical workings of this cornice, as the pilgrim himself confirms when shortly thereafter, in an unusually explicit moment, he confesses his penchant for *superbia* (*Purg.* XIII, 136-138). Returning to the question of the two Guidos, in "L'uno e l'altro Guido," *Ausonia* 23, nos. 2-3 (1968), 9-13, Guido Di Pino argues that they are Guittone and Guinizelli, rather than Cavalcanti and Guinizelli; his suggestion, although rejected by Marti on linguistic grounds (*Storia dello Stil nuovo*, vol. I, p. 57), has found some supporters (e.g. Picone, *Vita Nuova e tradizione romanza*, p. 32; Cicuto, "Dante e Bonagiunta," p. 390). In my opinion, Dante's attitude toward Guittone is such as to preclude the possibility that he would ever associate the Aretine—however briefly—with "la gloria de la lingua." But Guittone is not therefore entirely absent from this terrace, which deals so exhaustively with art and poetry; as Sapegno has noticed, Provenzan Salvani's words, "Più non dirò, e scuro so che parlo" ("I will speak no more, and I know that I speak obscurely" [*Purg.* XI, 139]), echo Guittone's "Scuro sacco che par lo / mio detto, ma' che parlo / a chi s'entend' ed ame" ("I know that my discourse seems obscure, but I speak to those who understand and love" [Tutor, s'eo veglio o dormo," 61-63]). Far from viewing this Guittonian allusion as "proof" that the first Guido is Guittone (see Cicuto, p. 390), I would read it as an oblique statement on Guittonian poetics: by means of this textual echo Dante locates Guittone's poetic pride in his willful obscurity.

the color of grass, which comes and goes" [*Purg.* XI, 115-116]). In the *terzina* devoted to the poets, Dante does not speak of an impersonal coming and going, but of a highly personal wresting away; the verbs he chooses are active, and even violent: one Guido "has taken" from the other, the third "will chase" both from the nest. Particularly suggestive is this last verse, "chi l'uno e l'altro caccerà del nido," especially when we consider that Cavalcanti is *in fact* driven from the nest, by being denied his rightful place in the *Comedy* as an acknowledged major shaper of Dante's poetic growth.

One possible rightful place for Cavalcanti would be *Purgatorio* XXVI, where instead he is present, if at all, only among the anonymous poetic "betters" invoked by Dante while paying tribute to his "father," Guinizelli. As Cino takes Cavalcanti's place in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, so Guinizelli takes his place in the *Comedy*; one might say that the order of usurpation established in *Purgatorio* XI, where Cavalcanti "takes" from Guinizelli, is reversed in *Purgatorio* XXVI. The tribute of canto XXVI culminates a long history in Dante's texts for the Bolognese poet, who is first referred to as the "saggio" of the sonnet in *Vita Nuova* XX: "Amore e 'l cor gentil sono una cosa, / sì come il saggio in suo dittare pone" ("Love and the noble heart are one thing, as the wise man claims in his verse"). The reference to Guinizelli and his canzone at this point in the *Vita Nuova's* narrative is, of course, far from casual. As first the *Vita Nuova* depicts the transition from Dante's early Guittonianism to his Cavalcantian stage, it then depicts the transition from his Cavalcantianism to the moment when, in "Donne ch'avete," he finds his own voice.⁵⁰ We might restate this by saying that, just as Cavalcanti first frees Dante from subjection to a Guittonian mode, so Guinizelli later frees him from sub-

⁵⁰ The *Vita Nuova* reflects the transitions of Dante's lyric production as a whole. Thus, referring to their edition, Foster and Boyde assign poems 1-6 to the Tuscan manner, whereas number 7, "Tutti li miei penser parlan d'Amore," they consider a transitional poem, "indebted almost equally to the old models and the new" (*Commentary*, p. 77); poems 8-10 they place squarely in the Cavalcantian mode.

jection to a Cavalcantian mode. However, since this second transition occurs at a more advanced stage of Dante's development, and since Dante never takes on Guinizzelli's voice to the extent that he had earlier taken on Cavalcanti's (both because Dante is now too mature to be so influenced, and because he is deliberately engaging a poet, Guinizzelli, whose voice is less pronounced), it would be more accurate to say that at this juncture Dante uses Guinizzelli—in order to break Cavalcanti's hold and thus move in a direction more compatible with his own ultimate goals. Such use of Guinizzelli is apparent in "Donne ch'avete," whose radically hyperbolic discourse is built on the optimistic foundation of love as an ennobling force put forth by Guinizzelli in "Al cor gentil," and is therefore punctually acknowledged in the poem immediately following "Donne ch'avete," namely the sonnet of *Vita Nuova* XX, with its tribute to the new *auctoritas*: the "saggio," Guinizzelli.

Guinizzelli is treated in the *Vita Nuova* as an important but distant precursor; he is referred to deferentially but with none of the enthusiasm, the respect at close quarters, accorded Cavalcanti. Cavalcanti, however, pays the price for his prominence in the *libello* by suffering a demotion in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, where he is replaced by Cino as Dante's poetic ally and confidant. Guinizzelli reaps the benefits of being only a remote *saggio* in the *Vita Nuova*, continuing unscathed into the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, where his status is enhanced. He is the first Italian poet to be named in the treatise, accompanying Giraut de Bornelh and Thibaut de Champagne as the representative poets in their respective languages and poetic cultures in I, ix. "Al cor gentil" is cited in the list of II, v, and another canzone, "Tegno de folle 'mpres', a lo ver dire," in the list of II, vi. As the leader of the Bolognese school of poets, Guinizzelli is called "maximus Guido" in I, xv, 6. He is mentioned for the last time in II, xii, where "Di fermo sofferire" is given as an example of a poem in the high style beginning with a *settenario*. All in all, Guinizzelli makes five appearances in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, one less than Cino and one more than Cavalcanti; even more interesting, however, is that he appears where neither Cino nor

Cavalcanti does, namely in the *Convivio*, one of only three contemporary poets to be mentioned in that predominantly classical text. Thus, Guinizzelli can be seen to move through Dante's texts in a crescendo of increasing importance. In the *Convivio*, "Al cor gentil" is again responsible for his prominence, as it was in *Vita Nuova* XX; the context is a discussion on the nature of true nobility, where Dante buttresses his argument by referring to "quel nobile Guido Guinizzelli" and his canzone (IV, xx, 7). The epithets that adorn Guinizzelli's name bear witness to the status quo he manages to preserve in Dante's esteem over the years; if he is not "saggio" he is "maximus," and if he is not "maximus" he is "quel nobile Guido Guinizzelli." And, although being in the *Convivio* does not guarantee success in the *Comedy* (it does not benefit Bertran de Born nor Giraut, the other contemporary poets so honored), in the case of Guinizzelli there is no backsliding.⁵¹ Only in the *Comedy* is his position finally altered, and for the better: from an adjective he becomes a substantive; from a wise man he becomes a father.

Dante's purgatorial recognition of Guinizzelli does not in itself violate the truth. Guinizzelli's insistence that nobility is derived from internal worth rather than external status is of capital importance, as we have seen, not only in the lyric Dante but also in the social and political discourses of the *Convivio*'s last book; and, although the idea had been succinctly stated by Guittone ("Non ver lignaggio fa sangue, ma core, / ni vero pregio poder, ma vertute" "Blood does not make true nobility, but heart, nor does power make true worth, but virtue" ["Comune perta fa comun dolore," 49-50]), who in this respect as in so many others is the first articulator of the "bourgeois" perspective, it was associated with Guinizzelli. Guinizzelli's most notable stylistic feature, his analogies, were highly successful in entrenching an abstract social concept as a lyric tenet; later, when Dante in the *Convivio* wants to argue that the imperfectly

⁵¹ Mengaldo comments that Guinizzelli's eminent position is an unusual constant in Dante's texts (Introduction, *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, p. XCIV). See also Raffaele Spongano, "La gloria del primo Guido," *Dante e Bologna nei tempi di Dante*, pp. 3-12.

disposed soul is not capable of receiving the divine infusion of nobility, he has recourse to paraphrasing one of the analogies from "Al cor gentil": "sì come se una pietra margarita è male disposta, o vero imperfetta, la virtù celestiale ricever non può" ("as when if a precious stone is badly disposed, or indeed imperfect, it cannot receive celestial influence" [IV, xx, 7]). Guinizelli supplies the program of praise adopted in the *Vita Nuova* as a means of breaking with the reflexivity of the traditional lyric format; the paradigm for a poetics based on "quelle parole che lodano la donna mia" is Guinizelli's sonnet "Io voglio del ver la mia donna laudare," whose basic principle is reelaborated immediately in the first stanza of "Donne ch'avete" (2-3), and later in the sonnet presented as a consummate example of "lo stilo de la sua loda" (XXVI, 4), namely "Tanto gentile e tanto onesta pare." Finally, as the last stanza of "Al cor gentil" brilliantly testifies (a stanza whose self-consciousness is the key to Guinizelli's newness), Guinizelli's similes prepare the way for Dante's metaphors. By placing the blame for his analogies on the original Writer, God, Who in His book of the universe makes ladies so like angels ("Tenne d'angel sembianza" "She had the semblance of an angel" [58]), Guinizelli seems to forecast a new kind of writing, in which ladies are literally angelic, conductors to the divine.⁵²

The use of Guinizelli to inaugurate the praise-style in the *Vita Nuova* has the double-edged result of breaking not only with the tradition but specifically with Cavalcanti, a poet whose lexicon does not admit *laudare*.⁵³ However, such a break, which occurs at the level of content—to praise or not to praise—should not be exaggerated; Cavalcanti remains, throughout the *Vita*

⁵² In the face of Dante's accolade, scholars have assiduously debated the true extent of Guinizelli's innovations. For a résumé of the *querelle*, see Marti, *Storia dello Stil nuovo*, vol. I, pp. 60-62 and vol. II, pp. 351-376; see also the recent contribution of Guglielmo Gorni, "Guido Guinizelli e la nuova 'mainera,'" in the centennial volume *Per Guido Guinizelli* (Padova: Antenore, 1980), pp. 37-52, repr. in *Il nodo della lingua e il verbo d'amore*, pp. 23-45.

⁵³ This point is made by Contini, "Cavalcanti in Dante," orig. 1968, repr. in *Un'idea di Dante*, p. 147.

Nuova, the indisputable source of Dante's style. It is Cavalcanti who initiates the Florentine mode in which Dante follows, and who is responsible for the anti-Guittonian program of linguistic simplification that Dante will adopt.⁵⁴ Thus, whereas Guinizelli sent Guittone a reverential sonnet addressing him as "[O] caro padre meo," Cavalcanti was always resolute in distinguishing himself from the old school as represented by the Aretine (the yoking of a Guittonian exterior to the Aristotelian content of "Donna me prega" is intended to be, and is, subversive). He attacks Guittone in the sonnet "Da più a uno face un sollegismo," accusing him of being both philosophically and poeti-

⁵⁴ Contini states that "se l'esperimento stilnovistico deve ridursi a un' iniziativa e a un nome, questo non può essere che quello del Cavalcanti," and that "lo Stil Novo nel senso proprio, cioè fiorentino, . . . legittimamente potrebbe chiamarsi la scuola del Cavalcanti" (*Poeti del Duecento*, vol. II, pp. 445, 488). Another critic who emphasizes Cavalcanti's critical importance for Dante is De Robertis, especially in *Il libro della Vita Nuova*. Most associated with Cavalcanti's cause is Guido Favati, who points out that Dante is not the sole articulator of stilnovist poetics, but rather that he is preceded in this by Guido; see his "Contributo alla determinazione del problema dello Stil Nuovo," *Studi medievali e volgari*, 4 (1956), 57-70. In fact, Favati's book, *Inchiesta sul Dolce Stil Nuovo*, which is known for its rejection of the *stil novo* as a group phenomenon, could be seen less as an attack on the group than as a manifesto for Cavalcanti: "Dunque, non una 'scuola,' ma un singolo maestro, il Cavalcanti, e, per un tempo più o meno lungo, uno scolaro, l'Alighieri . . ." (p. 90). Even more peremptorily, Favati insists that there exists neither a common poetic project, nor a group of friends, but only "una isolata e prepotente personalità: quella di Guido Cavalcanti, che nessuno ritiene di poter accomunare ad altri" (p. 105). Although I sympathize with Favati's position, I fear that he reckons without Dante: the notion of a school, as presented in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* and the *Comedy*, is a vehicle that Dante develops precisely in order to cancel any earlier overriding personality, such as Cavalcanti's; by concentrating on the fraternity, Dante ultimately highlights the member of the fraternity who baptizes it and brings it into being, namely himself. For, no matter how many caveats we may utter, as long as we use the expression *dolce stil novo*—Dante's expression—we mentally place Dante at the center of the poetic configuration. It is to this determinism that I believe Favati is reacting, his solution being to deny that Dante testifies to the existence of a group of poets. In my opinion, however, there is little doubt that Dante wants to create the image of a group; the questions (to the extent that this image exceeds the reality) are why, and to what end.

cally deficient; in the first quatrain he concentrates on Guittone's logical ineptitude, his inability to construct syllogisms, moving in the second quatrain to his rhetorical and expressive faults:

Nel profferer, che cade 'n barbarismo,
difetto di saver ti dà cagione;
e come far poteresti un sofismo
per silabate carte, fra Guittone?

Regarding your expression, which is often incorrect, your lack of knowledge accuses you; and how could you compose—in verse—even a sophism, fra Guittone?

(5-8)

In the sextet Cavalcanti continues to disparage his Tuscan precursor, drawing careful attention to his specific weaknesses: his inability to create a "figura," a word most likely to be interpreted not as a rhetorical figure but in the larger Cavalcantian sense as a fully objectified psychological reality ("Per te non fu giammai una figura" "No figure ever came to life through you" [9]); the harshness of his speech ("induri quanto più disci" "you grow harder the more you learn" [11]); and his didacticism ("e pon' cura, / ché 'ntes' ho che compon' d'insegnamento / volume" "and be careful, for I've heard that you are composing a volume of teachings" [11-13]).⁵⁵ Cavalcanti, like Dante after him, finds particularly infuriating Guittone's pretensions to moral authority, his audacious claim to "insegnamento," and he ends his sonnet by categorically dismissing Guittone's ability to discharge such a function: "Fa' ch'om non rida il tuo proponimento!" ("Make sure that your proposal is not ridiculed!" [14]).

Dante inherits from Cavalcanti a language of refined eroticism which, by virtue of being stripped of the burdensome ornamentation of the preceding schools, is now capable of probing

⁵⁵ For a reading of this sonnet that concentrates on Cavalcanti's accusations as expressions of his poetic principles, see Marcello Ciccuto, "Il sonetto cavalcantiano: Da più a uno face un sollegismo," *Critica letteraria*, 6 (1978), 305-330.

and articulating even the intricacies of the *figura*; as Cavalcanti says to Guido Orlandi in the sonnet "Di vil materia mi conven parlare," his language is "sottile e piano" (10), subtle and at the same time clear. It is hardly surprising therefore that Dante should inherit from Cavalcanti also his contempt for Guittone, considering that the new Cavalcantian style articulates its basic ideological premises precisely by means of an anti-Guittonian polemic. Dante's indictment of Guittone is derived, in this respect, from Cavalcanti, and is one more eloquent testimony to the profound impact of his Florentine mentor. Indeed, from this perspective we could view the anti-Guittonian outburst of *Purgatorio* XXVI as an indicator of Cavalcanti's stubbornly subterranean presence, even in the moment of his most manifest absence. Nonetheless, whatever we may want to read between the lines of canto XXVI, the fact remains that Cavalcanti is not present, that he is denied any overt recognition. And, whereas Dante's tribute to the first Guido does not in itself fly in the face of available evidence, his essential exclusion of the second Guido does.⁵⁶ Cavalcanti cannot be excluded from any group of contemporary lyric poets who have influenced Dante if that group is to reflect reality. Taking together the fact of the *Comedy's* great glowing tribute to Guinizzelli and the fact of its almost total silence on Cavalcanti, it is difficult not to come to the conclusion that Dante deliberately suppresses Cavalcanti and tries to redress the imbalance by paying disproportionate attention to Guinizzelli. Cino's disappearance is less problematic: because in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* he is essentially a stopgap used to fill the space left by Cavalcanti, his presence in the treatise does not foreshadow his presence in the poem. He is not significant enough to be included in the *Comedy's* poetic itinerary, precisely because he is too good a friend; poetically, Cino is Dante's mirror image, an elegiac version of Dante in

⁵⁶ Although technically Cavalcanti could not be made to appear in the *Comedy*, since he was still alive in the spring of 1300, Dante could certainly have manipulated the *Comedy's* textual reality to pay him a greater tribute, if he chose, as he manipulates it to condemn Boniface for instance.

his sweetest mode.⁵⁷ Rather than exerting influence, Cino absorbed it, thereby guaranteeing his exclusion from the *Comedy*.

But Cavalcanti is in fact present, precisely where we would expect him to be—at the level of language, the arena in which he could not be suppressed. His importance for Dante is finally reflected by his intertextual prominence in the *Comedy*, greater than that of any other lyric poet, including Guinizelli.⁵⁸ There is, I submit, a Cavalcantian “story” encoded into the *Comedy*; but to tell this story correctly, we should first return to the Cavalcantian moments of the *Vita Nuova*. Cavalcanti’s most overt textual presence in the *Vita Nuova* is generally said to extend from chapter XIV through XVI, concentrated in the three sonnets that belong to the sequence of the *gabbo* and its aftermath, sonnets that are replete with anxious *spiriti*, trembling souls, and internal earthquakes, and in which death is a constant presence, most fully articulated in the spectral crying of the stones in the middle sonnet: “le pietre par che gridin: ‘Moia, moia’ ” (“the stones seem to cry out: ‘Die! Die!’ ” [8]). We could extend his presence back to the ninth chapter, which contains the sonnet “Cavalcando l’altr’ier per un cammino,” arguing that the poems of chapters IX and XII (X and XI contain

⁵⁷ Referring to the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, Mengaldo comments that “Cino sta principalmente come metafora dello stilnovismo dantesco” (Introduction, *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, p. XCIV). On Cino, see: Maria Corti, “Il linguaggio poetico di Cino da Pistoia,” *Cultura neolatina*, 12 (1952), 185-223; the various studies by De Robertis: “Cino e le ‘imitazioni’ dalle rime di Dante,” *Studi danteschi*, 19 (1950), 103-177, “Cino e i poeti bolognesi,” *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 128 (1951), 273-312, “Cino e Cavalcanti o le due rive della poesia,” *Studi medievali*, 18 (1952), 55-107, “Cino da Pistoia e la crisi del linguaggio poetico,” *Convivium*, raccolta nuova, 1 (1952), 1-35; and Guglielmo Gorni, “Cino ‘vil ladro’: parola data e parola rubata,” *Il nodo della lingua e il verbo d’amore*, pp. 125-139.

⁵⁸ With respect to the Cavalcantian echoes in the *Comedy*, Contini comments as follows: “Simili rilievi ricevono senso pieno solo dalla parchezza con cui risuonano nella *Commedia* testi volgari non danteschi” (“Cavalcanti in Dante,” p. 156). I do not find convincing Vincent Moleta’s arguments for a strong Guinizellian presence in the *Comedy*; see his “Come l’ausello in selva a la verdura,” in *Guinizelli in Dante*, in which he traces many of the *Comedy*’s bird similes to the second verse of “Al cor gentil.”

no poetry) also betray a Cavalcantian presence, indeed in their first words.⁵⁹ In chapter IX the poet meets Love while he is, according to the incipit, “riding along a road,” and learns that his love-service is being reassigned to a “*novio piacere*,” that is to the second screen lady. Because of his overly zealous attention to this lady, Beatrice withdraws her greeting in chapter X, and the narrator sends her, again at Love’s bidding, the poem of chapter XII in which he declares his steadfast love and pleads for forgiveness. The poem entrusted with this mission is “Ballata, i’ vò che tu ritrovi Amore.” In my opinion, the first words of each composition—“Cavalcando” and “Ballata”—are intended to refer to Cavalcanti, one directly to his name (“Cavalcando” is a *hapax* in the *Vita Nuova* and Dante’s lyric production in general, and is especially striking in its initial capitalized position), and the other to his favorite genre, the *ballata*.⁶⁰

On the basis of this episode, we could say that the disfavor

⁵⁹ The poem in chapter XIII, immediately preceding the *gabbo* sequence, is “Tutti li miei penser parlan d’Amore,” labeled transitional by Foster and Boyde since it combines traditional elements like “*amorosa erranza*” (11) with Cavalcantian ones like “*tremando di paura*” (8). However, in that the thoughts of the sonnet’s incipit fail to achieve the harmony (“*accordanza*” [12]) desired by the poet, the sonnet in fact prefigures the radical fragmentation that dominates its three successors in chapters XIV-XVI and that is typical of the Cavalcantian mode.

⁶⁰ Ignazio Baldelli, in the article “ballata” of the *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, vol. I, pp. 502-503, compares the frequency with which Cavalcanti uses this form (eleven poems, amounting to one-fifth of his *canzoniere*, are *ballate*) to its marginal status in Dante’s lyric production (six *ballate* in all, and only one, the one of the *Vita Nuova*, is written for Beatrice). Dante’s exclusion of the *ballata* from his *stil novo* is noted by De Robertis, who comments that “La grande ballata lirica muore con Guido” (“Le rime di Dante,” p. 307, n. 1). The significance of “Ballata, i’ vò che tu ritrovi Amore” within the economy of the *Vita Nuova* is noted by Vincent Moleta, “The *Vita Nuova* as a Lyric Narrative,” *Forum Italicum*, 12 (1978), 369-390, who not only considers the *ballata* to be an indicator of Cavalcanti’s presence, but demonstrates that the three poetic phases of *Vita Nuova* I-XIX are organized in a crescendo by genre: (1) the Guittonian phase is marked by the use of the double sonnet, a form generally eschewed by the *stilnovisti*, in chapters VII and VIII; (2) the Cavalcantian phase is marked by the *ballata* of chapter XII; and (3) the Dantesque phase is marked by the canzone in chapter XIX, “Donne ch’avete.”

into which Cavalcanti falls in the *Comedy* is already apparent in the *Vita Nuova*. Cavalcanti's radical negativity, which he expounds in its theoretical dress in "Donna me prega," manifests itself in his apparently lighter pieces through his insistent recourse to mediation; the lady, whom he elsewhere proclaims to be unknowable, is in the sonnets and *ballate* simply rendered unknowable by the use of various other creatures, the "giovane donna di Tolosa" and the "foresette nove," who displace her. Although these presences are in themselves beneficent, their effect is to further distance the possibility of *canoscenza*; indeed, the *ballata* "Era in penser d'amor quand' i' trovai" presents us with "due foresette nove" who mediate "la Mandetta," who in turn mediates (according to the preceding sonnet, "Una giovane donna di Tolosa") the original lady, thus putting the poet at two removes from the original catalyst of desire. In the sonnet of *Vita Nuova* IX, whose first word "Cavalcando" declares its relation not only to Cavalcanti but also to the *pastorela*, the genre invoked by Cavalcanti in his *ballate*, Love instructs the poet to turn to a "novo piacere," much as to the "foresette nove."⁶¹ The result is the loss of Beatrice's greeting. Cavalcantian mediation fails again in chapter XII, where the narrator sends his lady a poem that identifies itself as a *ballata* in its first word, the only *ballata* of the *Vita Nuova*, and receives no reply. The response to proceeding along this Cavalcantian path is thus a negative one, an analysis with which Guido himself would doubtless agree; more problematic, from his point of view, would be the fact that the *Vita Nuova* then supplies another path. That Cavalcanti is put into perspective in the *Vita Nuova* is evidenced finally by the episode of chapter XXIV, whose ambiguous resonance anticipates the episodes of *Inferno* X and *Purgatorio* XI. In chapter XXIV we learn that the *senhal* belonging to Guido's lady Giovanna, "Primavera," may be interpreted as "prima verrà" ("she will come first"), to indicate

⁶¹ On the relation of Dante's sonnet to the troubadour *pastorela* and to Cavalcanti's version thereof, especially with respect to "Era in penser d'amor," see Picone, *Vita Nuova e tradizione romanza*, chap. III, "Dalla *Pastorella* alle donne dello schermo."

that she precedes Dante's lady, Beatrice, as John the Baptist precedes Christ. We must infer that Guido precedes Dante in the same way; as John the Baptist prepares the way for Christ, so Guido prepares the way for the one who will surpass him, the one who will chase him from the nest.

Turning to the *Comedy*, we find that its Cavalcantian echoes embrace the three lyric forms in which the poet worked: the sonnet, the *ballata*, and the canzone. The sonnet represented is the praise poem, "Biltà di donna e di saccette core," Cavalcanti's variant of Guinizzelli's "Io voglio del ver la mia donna laudare"; the sonnet's octave consists of a catalogue of natural wonders, beginning with the incipit's "Beauty of woman and of a knowing heart," while the sextet informs us that none of the above can equal the beauty of the poet's lady: "ciò passa la beltate e la valenza / de la mia donna" ("the beauty and worth of my lady surpass all this" [9-10]). Both of the verses that find their way into the *Comedy* belong to the second quatrain:

aria serena quand' apar l'albore
e bianca neve scender senza venti;
rivera d'acqua e prato d'ogni fiore;
oro, argento, azzuro 'n ornamenti

serene air when the dawn appears and white snow falling
without wind, water's bank and field of every flower, gold,
silver, azure in ornaments

(5-8)

Line 6, "e bianca neve scender senza venti," reappears in *Inferno* XIV, 30, "come di neve in alpe senza vento" ("as snow in the mountains without wind"); line 8, "oro, argento, azzuro 'n ornamenti," resurfaces in *Purgatorio* VII, 73, "Oro e argento fine, cocco e biacca" ("Gold and fine silver, cochineal and white lead").⁶² As we shall see, both verses are placed in contexts that

⁶² Both echoes from "Biltà di donna" are noted by Contini, "Cavalcanti in Dante," p. 145. A further textual analogue between "Biltà di donna" and the passage in *Purgatorio* VII may be found in the comparisons with which both conclude: Cavalcanti's "e tanto più d'ogn' altr' ha canoscenza, / quanto lo

ultimately address themselves to Cavalcanti's rationalist philosophy. The first belongs to the description of the burning sand in the third ring of Hell's seventh circle, housing the violent against God; this image of a desert whose ardor is continually reinforced by falling flakes of fire exemplifies Dante's technique of using violently natural or "anti-natural" images in the circle of violence (as compared to the circle of fraud, where the surroundings are described in terms of man-made, rather than natural, correlatives):

Sovra tutto 'l sabbion, d'un cader lento,
piovean di foco dilatate falde,
come di neve in alpe senza vento.

Over all the sand swollen flakes of fire were slowly raining
down, like snow in the mountains without wind.

(*Inf.* XIV, 28-30)

The hushed and timeless quality of Cavalcanti's windless snow is thus used to evoke the horror of a truly timeless downpour that is not snow, but its opposite, not raining water but raining fire.

If the perfect earthly beauty of "Biltà di donna" gives way to the violated transvestite beauty of *Inferno* XIV on the one hand, on the other it is transformed into the super-natural beauty of the valley of the princes in *Purgatorio* VII:

Oro e argento fine, cocco e biacca,
indaco, legno lucido e sereno,
fresco smeraldo in l'ora che si fiacca,
da l'erba e da li fior, dentr' a quel seno
posti, ciascun saria di color vinto,
come dal suo maggiore è vinto il meno.

Gold and fine silver, cochineal [scarlet] and white lead, in-
digo, wood polished and bright, fresh emerald in the mo-

ciel de la terra è maggio" (12-13; italics mine) makes its way into Dante's "ciascun saria di color vinto, / come dal suo maggiore è vinto il meno" (77-78; italics mine).

ment it is split; each one would be surpassed in color by the grass and by the flowers placed in that valley, as the lesser is surpassed by the greater.

(*Purg.* VII, 73-78)

We note that the sentence structure duplicates that of "Biltà di donna": a series of substantives is first accumulated and then declared unequal to the wondrous thing named last. Dante presents us with a list of exquisite natural objects of great brilliance, all overshadowed by the flowers and grasses of the valley; the unsurpassable beauty that was once associated with Cavalcanti's lady belongs now to the valley of the princes. Dante has again taken one of the nature tableaux from "Biltà di donna" and placed it in a setting that is an implicit commentary; indeed, both *Inferno* XIV and *Purgatorio* VII provide paradigmatic contexts exemplifying two alternative outcomes for the rationalist point of view. In one case, the anti-natural oxymoronic image of the raining flakes of fire reflects the negative outcome of a rationalist philosophy that, by reifying nature as the highest referent for worth and beauty, becomes—like the sodomites in the same circle—sterile and self-immolating; an exaggerated estimation of nature's importance is by definition anti-natural, because it fails to recognize nature's Maker.⁶³ In the second case, we have the other possibility: nature can be accommodated within a super-natural setting as long as its subordinate status is acknowledged. Thus, the rationalist perspective is legitimate insofar as it is not radical, that is, as long as it will bow to a

⁶³ That nature is dependent on God is spelled out in the outline of Hell found in *Inferno* XI, precisely in the description of the circle of violence; here we learn that "natura lo suo corso prende / dal divino 'ntelletto e da sua arte" ("nature takes her course from divine intellect and from its art" [*Inf.* XI, 99-100]). Eugene Vance points to the raining flakes of fire in *Inferno* XIV as "anti-natural" in "Désir, rhétorique et texte (Semences de différence: Brunet Latin chez Dante)," *Poétique*, 42 (1980), 137-155. Vance's views on Dante's use of Cavalcanti in this passage are marred by his apparent belief that Dante draws his comparison of fire to snow from "Biltà di donna," although the sonnet contains no such comparison ("cette comparaison-ci ne découle pas de l'Écriture, mais plutôt d'un canzo [sic] amoureux de Guido Cavalcanti" [p. 148]).

higher reality "come dal suo maggiore è vinto il meno": a reality as superior to it as the colors of the purgatorial valley are superior to the colors provided by nature on earth.

Dante's discourse is predicated on the notion that the lady of Cavalcanti's texts, for all her superlative worth and beauty, does not finally serve to connect the poet to ultimate worth and beauty, i.e. to God; thus even a relatively "optimistic" and Guinizzellian composition like "Biltà di donna" is a worthy target (here too, in fact, we note that the "canoscenza" of line 12 is exclusively hers, not his), because it draws its potential negativity from the theoretical repository of "Donna me prega." The canzone itself is invoked in *Inferno* X, by way of the rhyme words in the passage immediately following the naming of Guido in line 63:

Le sue parole e 'l modo de la pena
m'avean di costui già letto il *nome*;
però fu la risposta così piena.
Di subito drizzato gridò: "Come?
dicesti 'elli ebbe'? non viv' elli ancora?
non fiere li occhi suoi lo dolce *lume*?"

His words and the nature of the punishment had already revealed his name to me; hence was my answer so full. Suddenly rising up, he cried: "What? Did you say 'he had'? Does he not still live? Does the sweet light not strike his eyes?"

(64-69; italics mine)

The use of *nome*, *come*, and *lume* recalls a celebrated section of the second stanza of "Donna me prega," where the same three words are used in rhyme, with *lume* as the *rimalmezzo*:⁶⁴

In quella parte — dove sta memora
prende suo stato, — sì formato, — *come*
diaffan da *lume*, — d'una scuritate

⁶⁴ Singleton notes the occurrence of *come*, *nome*, and *lume* in both texts; see *Commentary* to the *Inferno*, p. 154, where he also discusses the question of *lome* versus *lume* ("lume," as adopted by Petrocchi, is an acceptable Sicilian rhyme).

la qual da Marte — vène, e fa demora;
elli è creato — ed ha sensato — *nome*,
d'alma costume — e di cor volontate.

It [love] takes its being in the part where memory resides; just as a transparent being receives its form from light, so love is formed by a darkness which comes from Mars, and it dwells there [i.e. where it takes its form]. It is a created thing, and has a name denoting its sensory nature; it is a habit of the soul, and a desire of the heart.

(15-20; italics mine)

The second stanza of "Donna me prega" offers a definition of love that begins by saying that love resides "dove sta memora," that is, in the sensitive rather than intellectual soul, and then proceeds to assign the origin of love to Mars, the planet of anger and violent irrational feelings. In the following stanza, the poet again stresses love's connection with that faculty of the soul that is "non razionale, — ma che sente" ("not rational, but which feels" [31]); once more, then, love is assigned to the seat of the passions, the sensitive soul, which corresponds to the body rather than to the intellect. The effects of such an association are apparent in the next verses:

for di salute — giudicar mantene,
ché la 'ntenzione — per ragione — vale:
discerne male — in cui è vizio amico.
Di sua potenza segue spesso morte

Love deprives reason of health [salvation], since appetite takes the place of reason: he to whom vice is a friend judges badly. From love's power death often follows . . .

(32-35)

Thus love infects reason and judgment and, in the strikingly simple verse that falls at the poem's mathematical center (not including the *congedo*), love is explicitly aligned with death: "Di sua potenza segue spesso morte . . ." Since love cancels the light of reason, it inevitably leads to spiritual death; the association between love and darkness is made not only in the

second stanza, where love is said to originate in a darkness ("scuritate") that comes from Mars, but again in the closing verses of the last stanza, where the earlier "scuritate" is echoed by the phrase "'n mezzo scuro": "For di colore, d'essere diviso, / assiso — 'n mezzo scuro, luce rade" ("Without color, cut off from being, love dwells in a dark place, and puts out the light" [67-68]). Love's alignment with death and the dark powers is thus complete; it not only comes from darkness, but it dwells in darkness, and destroys the light.

Whatever our position on the question of Cavalcanti's alleged Averroism, so hotly debated by Nardi and Favati, there can be no doubt that the love Guido professes in "Donna me prega" is diametrically opposed to the love Dante professes in the *Comedy*.⁶⁵ Cavalcanti aligns love and death, Dante love and life; the

⁶⁵ Nardi is, of course, the champion of the Averroist thesis, while Favati maintains that Cavalcanti belongs within the context of orthodox neo-Aristotelian scholasticism. A mediating current is represented by the position of Fernando Figurelli, who accepts Nardi's thesis in attenuated form; see "Guido Cavalcanti," in *Orientamenti culturali. Letteratura italiana: I Minori* (Milan: Marzorati, 1961), pp. 217-240. Although all of Nardi's writings on the lyric reflect his point of view, his position is most clearly articulated in "L'averroismo del 'primo amico' di Dante" and "Di un nuovo commento alla canzone del Cavalcanti sull'amore" (this last essay also contains a summary of earlier critical opinion; both are in *Dante e la cultura medievale*, pp. 93-129 and 130-152); "Noterella polemica sull'averroismo di Guido Cavalcanti," *Rassegna di filosofia*, 3 (1954), 47-71; "Dante e Guido Cavalcanti" and "L'amore e i medici medievali" (both in *Saggi e note di critica dantesca*, pp. 190-219 and 238-267). Support for Nardi is provided by Paul Oskar Kristeller, "A Philosophical Treatise from Bologna Dedicated to Guido Cavalcanti: Magister Jacobus de Pistorio and his 'Questio de Felicitate,'" in *Medioevo e Rinascimento: Studi in onore di Bruno Nardi*, 2 vols. (Florence: Sansoni, 1955), vol. 1, pp. 425-463; the existence of the treatise with its affectionate dedication does in fact show "that there was a direct personal connection between at least one 'Averroist' philosopher at Bologna and Guido Cavalcanti" (p. 441). Favati's writings on this subject include: "La canzone d'amore del Cavalcanti," *Letterature moderne*, 3 (1952), 422-453; "Guido Cavalcanti, Dino del Garbo e l'averroismo di Bruno Nardi," *Filologia romanza*, 2 (1955), 67-83; and, most recently, the chapter on Cavalcanti in his book, *Inchiesta sul Dolce Stil Nuovo*. Other prominent "non-Averroists" are J. E. Shaw, *Guido Cavalcanti's Theory of Love: The Canzone d'Amore and Other Related Problems* (Toronto: U. of Toronto Press, 1949), who puts Cavalcanti in the context of the Christian Neoplatonism of Albertus

ending of "Donna me prega" reads like the antithesis of the *Paradiso*, or rather the *Paradiso* reads like a sustained contradiction of "Donna me prega." Returning to *Inferno X*, one can hardly doubt the significance of evoking the crucial second stanza of "Donna me prega" immediately after the pilgrim has uttered his notorious riposte to Cavalcanti senior:

E io a lui: "Da me stesso non vegno:
colui ch'attende là per qui mi mena,
forse cui Guido vostro ebbe a disdegno."

And I to him: "I come not on my own; the one who waits there leads me through here, to the one whom your Guido perhaps held in disdain."

(61-63)

The thesis that Guido's disdain is directed at Beatrice, that is at the possibility that an earthly lady may be a divine signifier

Magnus, and Mario Casella, "La canzone d'amore di Guido Cavalcanti," *Studi di filologia italiana*, 7 (1942), 97-160; Casella claims that Cavalcanti is simply the poetic expositor of the "dottrina aristotelico-tomista" (p. 153). Interestingly, a recent contribution by Ferdinando Pappalardo corrects both Nardi and Favati, while demonstrating Cavalcanti's strict Aristotelianism (and pointing out that Guido does not agree with Magister Jacobus); see "Per una rilettura della canzone d'amore del Cavalcanti," *Studi e problemi di critica testuale*, 13 (1976), 47-76. For all that he does not see any specific Averroism in "Donna me prega," Pappalardo underlines the canzone's radical overturning of the traditional equations between love and virtue and love and happiness, stressing that—unlike Guinizzelli or Dante—Cavalcanti recognizes in love "la forza animatrice della natura, della realtà tutta, ma non più la potenza che dal profondo suscita il cammino della civiltà, e che guida i destini dell'umanità verso la felicità e il progresso" (p. 74), and that Dante's path, therefore, is one that "Guido non volle e non seppe seguire" (p. 76). A likely textual indicator regarding Dante's view is his use of the phrase "possibile intelletto" in *Purgatorio XXV*, 65, with reference to Averroes' mistaken doctrine on the disjunction of the possible intellect from the soul. Dante, who here characterizes Averroes as a "savio . . . errante" (63), was surely aware of the prominent position of the phrase *possibile intelletto* in line 22 of Cavalcanti's poem (see Contini, "Cavalcanti in Dante," p. 155); perhaps his point is not specifically that Guido is an Averroist, but rather that he too is an erring sage. On Guido and radical Aristotelianism in *Inferno X*, see Maria Corti, *Dante a un nuovo crocevia* (Florence: Libreria commissionaria Sansoni, 1981), pp. 77-85.

and hence a carrier of beatitude, is further supported by the subsequent evocation of "Donna me prega," the text in which Guido categorically denies that ladies can transmit significance to their lovers.⁶⁶ As the pilgrim surely fails to convince Guido's father that his journey could not have been undertaken as a solitary enterprise, so the poet failed to convince his friend that his intellectual/poetic journey need not have been solitary, that *canoscenza* was indeed accessible. In *Inferno X*, then, the canzone "Donna me prega" is condemned as the chief exponent of Cavalcanti's rationalistic view, whereby love is a natural passion incapable of accommodating significance, metaphor, or beatitude.

⁶⁶ My interpretation of line 63 is, of course, apparent from my translation, in which I have rendered "cui" not as "quem" (i.e. Vergil), but as "ad eum quem," or, if we follow Dante in historicizing the Signifier as a woman, "ad eam quam" (the argument as to whether Beatrice or God is intended is a spurious one, since they amount to the same thing; however, in that Dante and Guido share a past as love poets, and Beatrice is that localized version of the divine that Dante chose and Guido refused to discover within love poetry, she would seem the more appropriate choice). Although the commentary tradition was univocal in reading line 63 as a reference to Vergil until the late nineteenth century, critical opinion has of late tended to opt for Beatrice; see, among others, Antonino Pagliaro, "Farinata e Cavalcante," in *Ulissee: Ricerche semantiche sulla Divina Commedia*, vol. I, pp. 185-224 (this essay is the elaboration of "Il disdegno di Guido," orig. in *Letterature moderne*, 1 [1950], 447-459); Contini, who comments that "pare accertato che grammaticalmente l'oggetto del 'disdegno' sia Beatrice (non Virgilio e non Dio); e che dunque Guido sia presentato come avverso alla sublimazione di Beatrice, al suo trasferimento sul piano trascendente" (*Poeti del Duecento*, vol. II, p. 489); and Marti, "Cavalcanti, Guido," *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, vol. I, esp. p. 895. Grammar aside, it would seem that the point of the *terzina's* last line is not to further qualify "colui ch'attende là," but to elaborate the notion of "per qui mi mena." Also suggestive is the fact that on the only other occasion in which Dante uses a formula like "Da me stesso non vegno," i.e. in *Purgatorio I* where Vergil says "Da me non venni" (52), he immediately backs it up with a reference to Beatrice: "donna scese del ciel" (53). For further information, see Pier Luigi Cerisola, who exhaustively details the hermeneutic history of this famous crux in "Il 'disdegno' di Guido Cavalcanti (*Inf. X*, 61-63)," *Aevum*, 52 (1978), 195-217, while also attempting to restore Vergil (interpreted metaphorically as the instigator of Dante's transition to a politically motivated and nonrestricted poetics) as the object of Guido's disdain.

Inferno X is about closure, a concept whose emotional paradigm is the "dispetto" or "disdegno" that characterizes the canto's two major episodes: the aggressive closure of Farinata's arrogant disdain; the paranoid closure of Cavalcante's premature certainties; the closure of heresy, entombment, death, and Hell. The Last Judgment is ultimate closure; for when the present merges with the future, the damned, whose "mala luce" ("bad light" [100]) allows them to see only distant events, will be cut off from the light of knowledge altogether. Guido fits into this context precisely as a theoretician of closure. It is not surprising, therefore, that Farinata's didactic discourse regarding the present and the future should contain phrases that are strikingly reminiscent of Cavalcanti's poetry. As events draw near, Farinata explains, "tutto è vano / nostro intelletto" ("our intellect is entirely vain" [103-104]); unless others bring them information, "nulla sapem di vostro stato umano" ("we know nothing of your human state" [105]). These verses are noteworthy for their persistent stress on the incapacity of our intellect, a theme that runs through Cavalcanti's lyrics; even more pronounced, however, is the Cavalcantian tone of the following *terzina*, in which one of Guido's key words, *canoscenza*, is modified by another, *morta*:

Però comprender puoi che tutta morta
fia nostra canoscenza da quel punto
che del futuro fia chiusa la porta.

Therefore you can comprehend that all our knowledge shall
be dead from that moment when the door of the future
shall be closed.

(106-108)

While proclaiming the death of knowledge, the irredeemable loss of *canoscenza*, this *terzina* simultaneously literalizes, in the image of the closing door, the spiritual closure that is the hallmark of both this canto and its chief protagonists.

Nonetheless, it should be noted that Dante does not choose to close Guido within the limits of *Inferno X*, a fact that is

stressed immediately in the pilgrim's last words to Farinata, containing his final message for Cavalcanti senior: "Or direte dunque a quel caduto / che 'l suo nato è co' vivi ancor congiunto" ("Now tell therefore that fallen one that his son is still among the living" [110-111]). These verses, with their emphatic "ancor congiunto," refer not only to Guido's literal life, in the spring of 1300, but also to his metaphoric life, a matter on which Dante is deliberately ambivalent, i.e. open.⁶⁷ Indeed, as the echo from "Biltà di donna" in *Inferno* XIV is counterbalanced by the echoes from the same sonnet in *Purgatorio* VII, so the infernal evocation of the condemned canzone is also countered by a sequence of purgatorial reminiscences. This time Dante draws on the *ballata* "In un boschetto trova' pasturella," a poem which is undoubtedly the intertext for the meeting with Matelda in *Purgatorio* XXVIII. Once again, as in the valley of the princes, the locale chosen for the Cavalcantian echoes is an "earthly paradise," a place of extraordinary natural beauty; into this springtime world of singing birds and many-colored flowers walks a lady who, as the most beautiful natural object of all, is identified with the setting and with spring itself. Textually, such a tableau is associated with Cavalcanti, whose lady's *senhal* is "Primavera" according to the *Vita Nuova*, and who describes just such a lady in another *ballata*: "Fresca rosa novella, / piacente primavera, / per prata e per rivera / gaiamente cantando" ("Fresh new rose, beautiful spring, through the fields and on the banks gaily singing"). Therefore, when Dante enters the eternal spring of his Earthly Paradise ("qui primavera sempre e ogne frutto" "here is always spring and every fruit" [*Purg.* XXVIII, 143]), and meets a lady singing and picking flowers, we know we are on Cavalcantian territory. We are dealing here, however, not simply with an oblique reference to a typically Cavalcantian scene, but with a precise series of allusions to a specific poem.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ I agree with Contini that Dante's silence on Cavalcanti reflects a deliberate strategy adopted in order to avoid explicitly judging him ("Cavalcanti in Dante," p. 143).

⁶⁸ The most developed discussion I have seen of the textual relation between

Cavalcanti's *ballata* begins: "In un boschetto trova' pasturella / più che la stella — bella, al mi' parere" ("In a little wood I found a shepherdess, more beautiful than the stars, in my opinion"). The privileged position Dante accords this *ballata* may be inferred from his previous use of it in *Inferno* II, where the expression "più che la stella" refers to Beatrice's eyes in a passage whose lyric resonance has already been discussed. As regards *Purgatorio* XXVIII, we note that this *ballata* is the only one of Cavalcanti's compositions to situate its narrative within a *boschetto*, a fact that was no doubt instrumental in making it Dante's choice as a textual backdrop for this episode, located in "la divina foresta spessa e viva" ("the divine forest dense and alive" [*Purg.* XXVIII, 2]) of the Earthly Paradise. Since Dante intentionally makes use of verses from each stanza of the *ballata*, in order to evoke the poem as a whole, we give it in its entirety (the italicized verses are the ones Dante draws on most explicitly):

In un boschetto trova' pasturella
più che la stella — bella, al mi' parere.

Cavelli avea biondetti e ricciutelli,
e gli occhi pien' d'amor, cera rosata;
con sua verghetta pasturav' agnelli;
[di]scalza, di rugiada era bagnata;
cantava come fosse 'namorata:
er' adornata — di tutto piacere.

D'amor la saluta' imantenente
e domandai s'avesse compagnia;
ed ella mi rispose dolzemente
che sola sola per lo bosco gia,

Dante and Guido in these cantos is provided by Bosco in his recent edition; see *Purgatorio*, esp. pp. 472-473. Singleton, in *Journey to Beatrice* (1958; repr. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U. Press, 1977), comments on the importance of Cavalcanti's "In un boschetto" as a backdrop for the meeting of canto XXVIII; he argues that Dante deliberately evokes the earlier poem in order to emphasize the difference between it and the *Comedy*, where the pilgrim's "love" for Matelda is not physically gratified (pp. 214-216).

e disse: "Sacci, quando l'augel pia,
allor disia — 'l me' cor drudo avere."

Po' che mi disse di sua condizione
e per lo bosco augelli audio cantare,
fra me stesso diss' i': "Or è stagione
di questa pasturella gio' pigliare."

Merzé le chiesi sol che di basciare
ed abbracciar, — se le fosse 'n volere.

Per man mi prese, d'amorosa voglia,
e disse che donato m'avea 'l core;
menòmmi sott' una freschetta foglia,
là dov' i' vidi fior' d'ogni colore;
e tanto vi sentio gioia e dolzore,
che 'l die d'amore — mi pareva vedere.

In a little wood I found a shepherdess, more beautiful than the stars in my opinion. / Her hair was blond and in curls, her eyes full of love, her face like a rose. With her little staff she was pasturing the lambs; barefoot, she was bathed with dew. *She was singing as though she were in love*; she was adorned with everything beautiful. / I greeted her amorously right off, and asked her if she had company; she answered me sweetly *that she was going through the wood completely alone*, and said: "Know that when the bird chirps, then my heart desires to have a lover." / When she told me of her condition, and *throughout the wood I heard the birds sing*, I said to myself: "Now is the time to take joy from this shepherdess." Grace I asked of her only to kiss and embrace, if this was her desire. / She took me by the hand, with amorous desire, and said that she had given me her heart; she led me under the fresh leaves, *there where I saw flowers of every color*, and so much joy and sweetness did I feel there that I seemed to see the god of love.

Purgatorio XXVIII opens with a musical symphony whose chief contributors are the singing birds and the rustling leaves;

the words "augelletti" (14), "cantando" (17), and "foglie" (17) are all bits of the Cavalcantian mosaic being created. Twice in the prelude to Matelda's arrival Dante uses the unusual double adjective intensifier that marks the progress of Cavalcanti's shepherdess, "che sola sola per lo bosco gia" (the pilgrim heads into the countryside "lento lento" in line 5, and the water is moving "bruna bruna" in line 31), only to switch to Cavalcanti's characteristic diminutive in the verses that bring Matelda into view: "una donna soletta che si gia / e cantando e scegliendo fior da fiore" ("a lady all alone who went along singing and choosing flower from flower" [40-41]). The pilgrim addresses Matelda as the lyric poet addresses his lady, saying "Deh, bella donna" (43);⁶⁹ his love for her is figured in the three similes of profane classical love that are rehearsed in the scene following their encounter: she reminds him of Proserpina in the moment when she is ravished by Pluto and loses "spring," i.e. the beautiful world in which she lived before her abduction (49-51; the word *primavera*, with its Cavalcantian echoes, is here used for the first time in the poem); the splendor of her eyes (of which she gives him a "gift," as the shepherdess gives a gift of her heart) is like that of Venus' eyes, in the moment that she falls in love with Adonis (64-66); the width of the stream between them seems like that of the Hellespont separating Hero and Leander (70-75). The flowers Matelda picks are, like those of the *ballata*, "d'ogni colore"; they "paint" the way on which she walks (42), and are referred to metonymically as "colors": "trattando più color con le sue mani" ("arranging many colors with her hands" [68]). Finally—were the singing birds, the colored flowers, the solitary damsel, the atmosphere of profane and lyric love, and the evocation of "primavera" not enough—

⁶⁹ Dante refers to Matelda as "la bella donna" throughout, for the last time in *Purgatorio* XXXIII, 134. By so doing, he signals his departure from Cavalcanti, whose heroine is a *pasturella*; Matelda, although a *pasturella vis-à-vis* Beatrice, is a *donna* in her own right, a fact that contributes to the irrelevance of physical gratification. Matelda's role as a lyric lady is further evoked by the withholding of her name until XXXIII, 119, in the same way that the lady's *senhal* is reserved for the end of the *canzo*.

Dante adds a last overt quote from the *ballata*. The first verse of canto XXIX, "Cantando come donna innamorata," is a replay of Guido's "cantava come fosse 'namorata," and thus serves to cast the lyric episode of canto XXVIII into final relief before passing into the new mode signaled by the allegorical procession.

It would seem, therefore, that a measure of textual redemption is indeed accorded Cavalcanti in the *Comedy*, and that this occurs in *Purgatorio* XXVIII (having been forecasted in *Inferno* II) vis-à-vis the *ballata*, a form that Cavalcanti makes particularly his and that Dante, conversely, uses infrequently.⁷⁰ Even so, it should be noted that the most Guido can recuperate in *Purgatorio* XXVIII is what he had in *Vita Nuova* XXIV, i.e. the position of a great but transcended precursor. In the episode of the Earthly Paradise we find the ratios of the *Vita Nuova* writ large: as the *boschetto* to the *divina foresta*; as the *ballata* to the *canzone*; as Matelda/Primavera to Beatrice, who will arrive in *Purgatorio* XXX; as the early Cavalcantian *stil novo* to the "true" *stil novo* of the *Vita Nuova*—a text insistently invoked in these cantos and obliquely named in XXX, 115—so is Guido to Dante. Cavalcanti is the only love poet, or indeed lyric poet, to have his poetic history traced so extensively in the *Comedy*; his path takes in *Inferno* II, X, XIV, *Purgatorio* VII, XI, XXIV, XXVI, and XXVIII-XXIX. On the other hand, he is the only love poet to be discussed in Hell, and to be exposed to insinuations regarding heresy and atheism that have become a permanent part of the legend surrounding his name. In the light of all the above, we might go so far as to suggest that the *Comedy* offers Cavalcanti a choice, and that this is the reason that the allusions to him are so carefully balanced between the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*, and that Dante takes such precautions not to judge him absolutely, to leave the door of the future

⁷⁰ It seems not insignificant that Dante should single out a *ballata* for such an important role in the *Purgatorio*, since it is not only a form that he himself rejected, but it is Guido's great contribution to the new style, his *stil novo* par excellence. Thus, even at a formal level the lines between the two poets are sharply drawn; what pertains to the one does not pertain to the other, and vice versa.

(as Farinata calls it) open; in this sense, Cavalcanti's option is *Inferno* X or *Purgatorio* XXVIII. In the first case he is "dead," but he retains a peculiar stature by virtue of the fact that he has detoured himself from the direct line of Dante's precursors, represented by Guinizzelli; he is damned, but not quite surpassed. In the second case he is redeemed, but must pay the price by becoming *the* precursor par excellence, most valued but also most surpassed: like John the Baptist, an eternal forerunner of the greatness to come.

Finally, Guido's naturalistic paradise is associated with that of the classical poets, who are the other chief textual contributors to canto XXVIII. Their Golden Age informs Dante's Earthly Paradise, along with the Cavalcantian love lyric; their stories of profane love—embodied in the similes of Proserpina and Pluto, Venus and Adonis, Hero and Leander—stand behind the eroticism of the pilgrim's encounter with Matelda, along with the Provençal *pastorela*. Like their paradise, then, Guido's is shadowed by an attendant *forse*. Indeed, the charged ambivalence surrounding Guido throughout the *Comedy* finds its best emblem in three verses, all containing *forse*, all belonging to the sphere of poetic influence: the first two—"forse cui Guido vostro ebbe a disdegno" and "forse è nato / chi l'uno e l'altro cacerà del nido"—are answered by an even more tellingly elliptical verse at the end of canto XXVIII: "forse in Parnaso esto loco sognaro" ("maybe, in dreaming of Parnassus, they dreamed of this place" [141]). Are we to imagine Guido smiling, like Vergil and Statius when they learn that their pagan dreams adumbrated a Christian truth? Their dreams had validity, but they are nonetheless just dreams; as Dante leaves Guido's lady to meet his own, the dreams of classical and vernacular precursors alike recede into the distance.

The Poetry of Politics: Bertran and Sordello

The analogy, which I intend to propose, between the *Comedy's* two remaining lyric poets—Bertran de Born and Sor-