

and done, all of the *Comedy's* autocitations are chosen for their ability to point beyond. The three poems share two common features; they all belong to Dante's *stil novo* register, and their incipits all emphasize the intellect. That is, they all point, from within the *stil novo*, to beyond the *stil novo*, to the radically transformed eros of the *Comedy*. "Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona," "Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore," "Voi che 'ntendendo il terzo ciel movete"—the intellectual stress of these verses unite all these canzoni as redeemed poetry.

The aim of this chapter has been to clarify some of the autobiographical impulses at work in the *Comedy*. If autobiography is a mode in which the urge for order is particularly acute, an urge that is translated into a teleological imperative, the autobiography of the *Comedy* is governed by a dual pressure: the one exerted by the mode, and the other by the providential framework. In the *Comedy*, all characters, all themes, all texts and their makers are inserted into a providential structure that guarantees the nature of the ending. In the autobiographical instance (and all of Dante's texts are profoundly autobiographical), the pressure imposed by providence is supplemented by the pressure implicit in the discourse, a narrative exigency that accounts for the self-consuming revisionism of these texts. This pressure, always present as the deep meaning of Dante's narrative structure, appears on the surface in some more "superficial" forms: the prose and the *divisioni* of the *Vita Nuova*, the gloss of the *Convivio*, the autocitations of the *Comedy*. From this point of view it was a foregone conclusion that the final autocitation would signify not itself but the guaranteed ending; "Voi che 'ntendendo" is yet one more new beginning to be transformed—"transmutata"—into a sign for the *Comedy* itself. And finally, in passing from Dante's treatment of himself to his treatment of his peers, we should note that the teleological imperative structured into his own "life" is, naturally, imposed onto the lives of others.

## II

### Lyric Quests

#### Historiography Revisited: " 'l Notaro e Guittone e me"

The historiographical knot of the *Comedy* centers, appropriately enough, around the knot of *Purgatorio* XXIV: "il nodo / che 'l Notaro e Guittone e me ritenne / di qua dal dolce stil novo ch'ì' odo!" (55-57). Whereas the first part of the pilgrim's conversation with Bonagiunta deals solely with Dante's internal poetic biography, implicitly situating "Donne ch'avete" with respect to his total oeuvre, Bonagiunta's reply raises external questions of poetic genealogy and historical precedence. Whereas the pilgrim articulates poetic principles in a vacuum, the older poet draws the historical implications of those principles, discovering in the pilgrim's poetic credo a criterion of measurement by which he judges earlier Italian poetry—" 'l Notaro e Guittone e me"—and finds it lacking. There are, in fact, two distinct moments accommodated by the dialogue's triadic structure; the personal and the historical are both present. We cannot, given the identity of the pilgrim's interlocutor and the nature of his comments, combined with the additional poetic references of *Purgatorio* XXVI, avoid the historiographical intentions of this passage. On the other hand, its historiographical weight does not detract from its impact at the level of autobiography.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In my opinion, Dante wishes to make both the following points in this

Dante intends us to draw a line between old and new; to this end, he provides us with names, both in canto XXIV and again in canto XXVI, that we can sketch in on either side of the imagined boundary, thus obtaining a rough chronology. Canto XXIV extends the scope of the investigation backwards to the beginning of the Italian tradition by mentioning the Notary, Giacomo da Lentini; we notice that the passage refers only to poetic masters, *capiscuola*, who implicate not only themselves but also their followers in an arc that spans each phase of the early Italian lyric: from the Notary, head of the Sicilian school, to Guittone, head of the Tuscan school, to Bonagiunta, a mediator, or Siculo-Tuscan.<sup>2</sup> We notice, also, the binary oppositions—we/you, one/other—that structure Bonagiunta's rejoinder, emanating from the original polarity at the heart of his

passage: (1) there is a new style that pertains to a group of new poets; this is the *stil novo* in the generic sense, defined historically as that style or manner to which the older poets named here cannot aspire; (2) within this new style, there is a truly new style, characterized by the *nove rime*, and this is Dante's own *stil novo*. A similar conclusion is reached by Franco Suitner, "Colui che fore trasse le nove rime," *Lettere italiane*, 28 (1976), 339-345. A balanced case for the existence of the school, based in particular on the perceptions of other poets, as documented by the various poetic challenges of contemporaries like Guido Orlandi and Onesto degli Onesti, is made by Mario Marti, *Storia dello Stil nuovo*, 2 vols. (Lecce: Milella, 1973); volume I also provides a useful summary of earlier criticism on the *stil novo*. For a résumé of more recent critical opinion, see Marti's "Sullo Stil nuovo e sugli stilnovisti: linee della problematica recente," *Cultura e scuola* 16, nos. 63-64 (1977), 19-28. Another moderate interpretation is that of Antonio Enzo Quaglio, *Gli stilnovisti*, in *Lo Stilnovo e la poesia religiosa*, vol. 1 of *Il Duecento: Dalle origini a Dante* (Bari: Laterza, 1970).

<sup>2</sup> The priority of the Sicilian school for Dante is established by *De Vulgari Eloquentia* I, xii, 2. Contini considers Bonagiunta "l'autentico trapiantatore dei modi siciliani in Toscana" (*Poeti del Duecento*, vol. 1, p. 258). On Bonagiunta in the *Comedy*, see: James E. Shaw, "Dante and Bonagiunta," *The Annual Report of the Dante Society*, 52-54 (1936), 1-18; Maria Simonelli, "Bonagiunta e la problematica dello stil novo," *Dante Studies*, 86 (1968), 65-83; Marcello Cicuto, "Dante e Bonagiunta: reperti allusivi nel canto XXIV del *Purgatorio*," *Lettere italiane*, 34 (1982), 386-395; R. L. Martinez, "The Pilgrim's Answer to Bonagiunta and the Poetics of the Spirit," *Stanford Italian Review*, 3 (1983), 37-63.

discourse, the prepositional phrase "di qua dal," that effectively divides all poets into "here" or "there," "us or them":

"O frate, issa vegg' io," diss' elli, "il nodo  
che 'l Notaro e Guittone e me ritenne  
di qua dal dolce stil novo ch'i' odo!  
Io veggio ben come le vostre penne  
di retro al dittator sen vanno strette,  
che de le nostre certo non avvenne;  
e qual più a gradire oltre si mette,  
non vede più da l'uno a l'altro stilo";  
e, quasi contentato, si tacette.

"O brother, now I see," he said, "the knot which held the Notary and Guittone and me on this side of the sweet new style which I hear! I see well how your pens follow closely after the dictator, which with ours certainly did not happen; and he who sets himself to proceed further sees no more from one to the other style." And, as if satisfied, he was silent.

(55-63; italics mine)

The dichotomy is temporal, extending from the stressed "now" of understanding ("issa vegg' io," "io veggio") to the "then" of ignorance, from "our" nonperforming pens to "your" capable ones, from "one to the other" style. The fact that on one side we find carefully chosen names and on the other the amorphous category "dolce stil novo" only strengthens the disparity, the sense of an unbridged gap.

*Purgatorio* XXVI adds to the general picture provided by canto XXIV: the historical framework is enlarged to incorporate the Provençal tradition; more names are forthcoming. An Italian poet, Guinizzelli, is singled out from the unprivileged past as a precursor to the privileged present; his poetry is carefully connected to Dante's and to the "dolce stil novo" invoked by Bonagiunta by a double use of the key word "dolce": "Li dolci detti vostri" of XXVI, 112 echoes "rime d'amor . . . dolci e leggiadre" from XXVI, 99. If the plural of canto XXIV, "vostre penne,"

is dismissed by some critics as a sudden shift to the honorific (permissible in early Italian syntax), the plural of canto XXVI is not so easily bypassed.<sup>3</sup> Here Dante calls Guinizzelli a poetic father, who has engendered not only Dante himself, but also other love poets; presumably, as Guinizzelli's metaphoric "sons," these others are contemporaries of Dante: "il padre / mio e de li altri miei miglior che mai / rime d'amor usar dolci e leggiadre" ("the father of me and of the others my betters who ever used sweet and graceful rhymes of love" [97-99]). In the light of this passage a plural connotation to "dolce stil novo" is, I believe, inescapable. *Purgatorio* XXVI thus serves to confirm and buttress canto XXIV: the later canto not only strengthens our sense of a dichotomized poetic history (even picking up Guittone again as an example of the old style), but also continues to wrap a deliberate anonymity around the practitioners of the new; where before they were hidden by the phrase "vostre penne," they are now identified cryptically as "miei miglior" in line 98.

The anonymity that afflicts Dante's "betters" is suggestive. The sense of a plural is required in order to create the historical framework Dante desires in this context; tradition, continuity, genealogy, paternity—the concepts he is here invoking—all require groupings, pluralities, for their enactments. Moreover, the plurals of cantos XXIV and XXVI are consonant with earlier groupings from a historically minded text Dante certainly has

<sup>3</sup> Much of the discussion of *Purgatorio* XXIV has centered on the value of "vostre penne"; while accepting the theoretical possibility of a shift in Bonagiunta's speech from *tu* to *voi*, Marti points out that "vostre penne" in line 58 is answered by "de le nostre," where the reference to a group is certain, in line 60 (*Storia dello Stil nuovo*, vol. I, p. 48). And Vittorio Russo, who denies that there is an implicit reference to a school of *stilnovisti* in this passage, nonetheless does not consider the argument that "vostre" is an honorific to be persuasive; he prefers to break the impasse created by "vostre penne" by substituting the textual variant "nove penne" ("Il 'nodo' del Dolce Stil Novo," *Medioevo romanzo*, 3 [1976], 236-264). Mark Musa, "The 'Sweet New Style' That I Hear," does away with the group of *stilnovisti* by taking "vostre" as the honorific and "penne" as "wings," so that the passage refers to the poet's "winged flight behind Love" (p. 128).

in mind in these sections of the *Purgatorio*, namely the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*. There he was more explicit regarding those of his contemporaries he considered his poetic comrades, on one occasion using an expression that seems (as has frequently been noted) like an anticipation of the formula "dolce stil novo," referring to Cino da Pistoia and himself as the vernacular poets who have composed "dulcius subtiliusque" ("more sweetly and subtly" [I, x, 2]). On another occasion he specifies that those Tuscan poets who have achieved vernacular excellence are Cavalcanti, Lapo, himself, and Cino (I, xiii, 4). Faced with these passages, we realize that in the *Comedy* Dante does indeed, while creating an undifferentiated poetic chorality as a backdrop for his efforts, accord a special status to his own—named—"nove rime." We notice, for instance, that whereas *dolce* is ostentatiously used in canto XXVI, *novo* is not. Instead, Guinizzelli's poetry pertains to the "uso moderno": "Li dolci detti vostri, / che, quanto durerà l'uso moderno, / faranno cari ancora i loro incostri" ("Your sweet verses, which, as long as the modern use will last, will make their ink still dear" [112-114]). The twice-used *novo* of canto XXIV ("nove rime," "stil novo") is avoided in canto XXVI; its burden of epistemological newness is replaced by the mere chronological inventiveness of "moderno."<sup>4</sup> Within the "new style," Dante thus reserves radical newness for himself.

If Dante is deliberately vague with reference to his peers, he is never less accountable than in his poetic credo. Perhaps the most striking feature of the "I mi son un" *terzina* is its programmatic lack of specificity. In *Purgatorio* XXIV Dante claims that he is a poet who takes note when Love in-spires him and

<sup>4</sup> The variant "nove penne" would result in a suggestive triple use of *novo* in canto XXIV. A propos of "moderno uso" and the slightly downgraded status it implies in comparison with "nove rime" and "stil novo," it seems not insignificant that, on the only other occasion in which "uso" and "moderno" are paired in the poem, Dante should carefully dissociate himself from "the modern use"; thus he tells Marco Lombardo that he has been graced to see God's court "per modo tutto fuor del moderno uso" ("in a manner wholly outside modern use" [*Purg.* XVI, 42]).

who signifies according to Love's dictation; herein, he has Bonagiunta categorically state, lies the only difference between his method of composition and that of his immediate precursors. He has learned to bypass the traditional line of authority—the "saggio" of his earlier sonnet—in order to draw his inspiration directly from the source: Amor. In this *terzina*, and within the context of love poetry, the relation between the dictator (Love) and the transcriber (Dante) is exactly analogous to the relation between God and the poet within the larger context of the *Comedy*: as Dante specifies in *Paradiso* X, speaking of "quella materia ond' io son fatto scriba" ("that matter of which I am made the scribe" [27]), he is God's secretary, taking down reality as dictation. The "dittator" of *Purgatorio* XXIV, 59—Amor—is therefore an analogue, within the lyric and amatory sphere, of the other *dittator*—God, also Amor—within the poem's overall structure. Because the only external referent in this process is an outside, indeed transcendent, authority, and because none of us can check with God as to what Dante saw, or with Love as to the fidelity of Dante's transcription, the apparently humble role of scribe results in a license to write the world, in fact to play God unchecked.

Without denying that Dante subscribes wholeheartedly to the notion that his poem is the instrument of a divine message, I would suggest that as a poetic strategy granting the poet absolute freedom and authority, the fiction of the *Comedy* is unparalleled. If, in Singleton's formula, the fiction of the *Comedy* is that it is no fiction, then it follows that the strategy of the *Comedy* is that there is no strategy.<sup>5</sup> Precisely such a conceptual exercise is at the core of the formulation of *Purgatorio* XXIV, whose content has been painstakingly examined for its troubadour components, its trinitarian resonances, but whose method of brilliant evasiveness has been less generally acknowledged.<sup>6</sup> The effect of the celebrated *terzina* is to create for Dante

<sup>5</sup> *Commedia: Elements of Structure* (1954; repr. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U. Press, 1977), p. 62.

<sup>6</sup> On troubadour resonances in the formulation of *Purgatorio* XXIV, see: Cesare De Lollis, "Dolce stil novo e 'noel dig de nova maestria,'" *Studi me-*

a vantage from which to assess the history of the love lyric—as within the poem as a whole, the scribal function permits an assessment of universal history—and to reassign value and priority as he chooses. The arbitrariness, or at least discontinuity, of some of these assessments is evident if we look at Dante's prior opinions as expressed particularly in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, a text that bears the burden of historical truth (i.e. one that is verifiable in human terms) much less lightly than the *Comedy*. The *Comedy* (which predictably employs many more forms of *vero*, *verità*, etc. than less subjective texts like the *Convivio*) respects no truth but its own, least of all that composite and approximate truth men know as history; in the words of one critic "Dante in his *Comedy* never serves history; he uses it."<sup>7</sup> To use history is to revise it, a pattern amply documented by Dante's treatment of that slice of history represented by his immediate peers—other poets.

The view of the vernacular lyric past that informs the *Comedy* is inherited from the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, where Dante attempts a history of the lyric beginning with Peire d'Alvernhe (whom he mistakenly believes to be among the "antiquiores doctores" [I, x, 2]) and ending with himself.<sup>8</sup> Although the treatise is explicit regarding the superiority of Dante and his group, a sense of historical continuity prevails, not yet dispelled

*dievali*, 1 (1904), 5-23; Alberto Del Monte, "Dolce stil novo," *Filologia romanza*, 3 (1956), 254-264; Silvio Pellegrini, "Quando Amor mi spira," *Studi mediolatini e volgari*, 6-7 (1959), 157-167. Giuseppe Mazzotta stresses the *terzina*'s trinitarian echoes in *Dante, Poet of the Desert*, pp. 204-206, as does Martinez, "The Pilgrim's Answer to Bonagiunta and the Poetics of the Spirit." Pellegrini recognizes the *terzina*'s evasiveness, saying that "una certa indeterminatazza è connaturata al linguaggio dell'incontro fra Dante e Bonagiunta" (p. 160).

<sup>7</sup> Irma Brandeis, *The Ladder of Vision: A Study of Dante's Comedy* (New York: Doubleday, 1960), p. 61. The expression "Vero è" is frequently used as a verse opening by Dante in the *Comedy*.

<sup>8</sup> Cesare De Lollis bases Dante's erroneous belief in Peire's antiquity on information received from the Provençal biographies and on Peire's position in the manuscripts; see "Intorno a Pietro d'Alvernia," *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 43 (1904), 28-38.

by the absolute polarity of the *Comedy*. The historicity of the treatise is revealed by the author's care to move chronologically from school to school, devoting separate chapters to each one in order to establish their discrete historical identities. Thus, he passes from a discussion of the Sicilians in chapter xii of Book I to the Tuscans in chapter xiii and the Bolognese in chapter xv; moreover, all poetic catalogues observe the sequence Provençal-Old French-Italian.<sup>9</sup> Most telling in this regard are the catalogues of incipits in Book II, chapters v and vi, which present the reader with nothing less than miniature histories of the lyric. The most complete catalogue, that of II, vi, lists incipits from the following poets, in the following order:

Giraut de Bornelh  
 Folquet de Marselha  
 Arnaut Daniel  
 Aimeric de Belenoi  
 Aimeric de Pegulhan  
 King of Navarre [Thibaut de Champagne]  
 Judge of Messina [Guido delle Colonne]  
 Guido Guinizzelli

<sup>9</sup> In his treatment of each poetic school, Dante collects a group of poets around a key figure, much as he collects the *stilnovisti* around himself. The poets of the Sicilian and Apulian contingent are Guido delle Colonne, Cielo d'Alcamo, Giacomo da Lentini, and Rinaldo d'Aquino. At this period Dante seems to regard Guido delle Colonne as the most notable figure in this group (perhaps because of his influence on Guinizzelli), citing him first in the chapter and choosing him for the lists of II, v and vi; see Marti, "Dante e i poeti della scuola siciliana" and "Il giudizio di Dante su Guido delle Colonne," in *Con Dante fra i poeti del suo tempo*, 2d ed. rev. (Lecce: Milella, 1971), pp. 9-28 and 29-42. The Tuscans Bonagiunta of Lucca, Gallo of Pisa, Mino Mocato of Siena, and Brunetto of Florence take their places around Guittone, while the Bolognese Guido Ghislieri, Fabruzzo de' Lambertazzi, and Onesto degli Onesti are grouped around their leader, "maximus" Guido Guinizzelli. The sequence of Provençal-Old French-Italian is followed in all the lists, beginning with the short one of I, ix, 3, which presents Giraut de Bornelh, Thibaut of Navarre, and Guido Guinizzelli in that order as the three representatives of their languages; Dante seems to be indicating that the lyric developed in Provence before northern France and in northern France before Italy.

Guido Cavalcanti  
 Cino da Pistoia  
 "amicus eius" [Dante]

Not only is the correct progression maintained, but the nationalities are represented according to Dante's estimation of their importance: five Provençals, one Old French, and five Italians. The same procedure obtains within the Italian group, who follow the order Sicilian-Bolognese-*stilnovist* (or, in Dante's terminology of the time, "new Tuscan"), and who are represented by one Sicilian, one Bolognese, and three *stilnovisti*.<sup>10</sup>

Where these lists deviate from the facts, they may be seen to posit an ideal ranking that begins to approximate the type of subjective judgment found in the *Comedy*. The positions at the catalogue's beginning and end are significant in this regard. At the top we find Giraut de Bornelh, whom Dante had earlier

<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that I follow the order of the list as given by Mengaldo in his 1979 Ricciardi edition of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, which is also that given by Aristide Marigo (*De Vulgari Eloquentia*, 3d ed. with appendix by Pier Giorgio Ricci [Florence: Le Monnier, 1968]); however, the editions of Ludovicus Bertalot (*Dantis Alagherii De Vulgari Eloquentia* [Geneva: Olschki, 1920]) and Bruno Panvini (*De Vulgari Eloquentia* [Palermo: Andò, 1968]) place the "Iudex de Messana" (Guido delle Colonne) after Guinizzelli and Cavalcanti, thus destroying perfect historical order among the Italians while preserving the larger sequence from Provençal to French to Italian. For a refutation, see Mengaldo's comments in the Introduction to his 1968 edition of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (Padova: Antenore, 1968), where he discusses the order of the lists and the manuscript tradition, stressing the deliberate chronology of the catalogues and their significance in attesting to the revolutionary historicity of the treatise (pp. LXXXV-LXXXVI). (All further references to Mengaldo's Introduction to the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* will be to this edition of 1968.) In the Introduction to his anthology of Dante's troubadours, *Vulgares eloquentes: Vite e poesie dei trovatori di Dante* (Padova: Liviana, 1961), Gianfranco Folena also remarks on the historiographical intent demonstrated by the catalogue of II, vi, which he sees as a progression from the classical troubadours at its head (Giraut, Folquet, Arnaut) to the later troubadours who mark the turn to Italy in their lives and poetic production, Aimeric de Belenoi and Aimeric de Pegulhan (p. VIII). Another useful annotated anthology, with translations, is that provided by Bruno Panvini, *Le poesie del De Vulgari Eloquentia: Testi e note* (Catania: Giannotta, 1968).

labeled the Provençal poet of rectitude and as such his own Occitanic equivalent. Although Giraut in fact belongs in first place chronologically, the inexactness of Dante's information regarding the troubadours would suggest that Giraut is in first place because Dante wanted him there as the ideal initiator of the series. Giraut at the beginning balances Dante at the end; the list moves from the Provençal poet of rectitude to his Italian counterpart. In Dante's own case, the manipulation of chronology is evident; although he was born before Cino, Dante places himself after the Pistoian as the ideal culmination of the tradition that began with Giraut. Such privileging of himself and his comrades is a constant in the treatise and is responsible also for other idiosyncratic deviations from the historical record. For instance, we would expect the discussion of the Italian schools to include a final chapter on the newest group, Dante's own, following the chapter dealing with Guinizzelli, their precursor. There is no such chapter because Dante has already referred to his own group in the chapter dealing with Guittone and the other Tuscans; immediately after the scathing denunciation of those old Tuscans in chapter xiii, the author breaks into a panegyric, whose opening is significantly marked by the adversative "Sed": "But although almost all the Tuscans are rendered insensitive by their low language, we feel that some know what excellence of the vernacular is, and these are Guido, Lapo, and one other, Florentines, as well as Cino of Pistoia, whom I unfairly name last, constrained by worthy reasons" (I, xiii, 4).

This abrupt departure from the almost pedantic regularity that governs most of the treatise takes us definitively into the realm of Dante the "militant critic," as he has been labeled in some recent studies.<sup>11</sup> The departure itself is caused, one sus-

<sup>11</sup> The two most significant investigations of Dante as critic both refer to his "militancy" in their titles: Marti, "Gli umori del critico militante," in *Con Dante fra i poeti del suo tempo*, pp. 69-121; Mengaldo, "Critica militante e storiografia letteraria," in the Introduction, *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, pp. LXXVII-CII. Folena, in the Introduction to *Vulgares eloquentes* and Quaglio, *Gli stilnovisti*, also discuss Dante's relations with his peers and predecessors, as do: Edmund G. Gardner, "Dante as Literary Critic," in *Dante: Essays in Com-*

pects, by the presence of Guittone d'Arezzo, the poet toward whom Dante is consistently most militant; the need for chronological progression is waived by the need to introduce Guittone's successors immediately, as an opposition force that will effectively cancel the Tuscan and his satellites from the record. Indeed, it is precisely in its attitude toward the poet from Arezzo that the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* most anticipates the *Comedy*, shedding the historicized restraint that is its trademark. Thus, the chapter on the Tuscans is unique in not containing citations from the work of the poets mentioned. Although it is Dante's practice, in treating the Sicilians and Bolognese, and indeed throughout the treatise, to follow each poet's name with an incipit, in chapter xiii this procedure is not respected; here, rather than include quotations from the Tuscan poets he has named (Guittone of Arezzo, Bonagiunta of Lucca, Mino Mocato of Siena, Brunetto of Florence), Dante presents as his examples anonymous doggerel taken from the municipal dialects of each of these cities, which are thus represented by folk art rather than by their poets. Even more striking is the deletion of Guittone from the catalogue of II, vi, especially since his absence cannot be explained as an oversight; the exhortation that follows the list names—and denounces—precisely him: "Let the followers of ignorance who extol Guittone d'Arezzo and certain others therefore cease, for in their vocabulary and construction these poets never lost their plebeian habits" (II, vi, 8).

Because the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* has gone so far in denigrating Guittone, and because Dante does not reverse his earlier opinion, the *Comedy* can confine itself to confirming Dante's original judgment of the Tuscan poet. Hence, *Purgatorio* XXVI repeats the tone and even the language of the treatise; the *Comedy's* "stolti" (as Dante refers to believers in the primacy

*memoration* (1921; repr. Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1968), pp. 83-104; Silvio Pellegrini, "Dante e la tradizione poetica volgare dai provenzali ai guittoniani," *Cultura e scuola* 4, nos. 13-14 (1965), 27-35; Ignazio Baldelli, "Dante e i poeti fiorentini del Duecento," *Lectura Dantis Scaligera* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1968); Enzo Noè Girardi, "Dante critico, saggio e postille," *Italianistica*, 6 (1977), 203-224.

of Giraut, in a passage that by implication considers followers of Guittone equally benighted) echo the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*'s "followers of ignorance." There is, however, a notable difference between the treatise and the poem. In the treatise, the weight of history is such that Dante feels obliged to present supporting evidence for his claims against Guittone, and hence insists on the Aretine's "plebeian" qualities of diction and construction: first in the chapter dedicated to the Tuscans, where he says that Guittone "nunquam se ad curiale vulgare direxit" ("never addressed himself to the courtly vernacular" [I, xiii, 1]) and goes on to specify that the writings of these poets are strictly municipal in character; and again in the passage cited above, following the catalogue of II, vi, where the use of the verb *plebescere* picks up the former distinction between *dicta municipalia* and *dicta curialia*. These statements, for all their highhandedness, are in marked contrast to the *Comedy*, where Guittone is declassified on mystical rather than linguistic grounds, where the only reason, if it can be called that, offered for his poetic inferiority is the blanket explanation of *Purgatorio* XXIV, which attributes his pedestrian verse (along with that of the other earlier poets) to a lack of inspiration, an inability to follow Love. Thus it is Guittone's lack, and not Dante's desire to discredit him, that accounts for the treatment he receives in the sacred poem.

Guittone is the only poet from canto XXIV to be mentioned a second time, a recurrence that signals the transition from the cool and apparently objective indictment of "l Notaro e Guittone e me" to the more heated and overtly autobiographical controversies of canto XXVI.<sup>12</sup> In order to bring Guittone back into the discourse, Dante has Guinizzelli first praise Arnaut Daniel, calling him the "miglior fabbro del parlar materno,"

<sup>12</sup> In "Il canto XXVI del *Purgatorio*," *Nuova Lectura Dantis* (Rome: Signorelli, 1951), Aurelio Roncaglia discusses the canto's two poles of critical objectivity and autobiographical subjectivity (p. 18). Also on this canto, see Angelo Monteverdi, "Il canto XXVI del *Purgatorio*," *Lectura Dantis Scaligera* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1965) and Gianfranco Folena, "Il canto di Guido Guinizzelli," *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 154 (1977), 481-508.

and then add that this newly affirmed primacy of Arnaut's is incontestable, despite those fools who think Giraut de Bornelh ("quel di Lemosi") the greater poet; Guinizzelli concludes by pointing out, rather gratuitously, that an analogous situation used to exist in Italy, where similar fools considered Guittone d'Arezzo the supreme poet, until finally the truth prevailed (we notice, in this moment of extreme subjectivity, Dante's insistence on "il ver," repeated twice in the course of six lines):

"O frate," disse, "questi ch'io ti cerno  
col dito," e additò un spirto innanzi,  
"fu miglior fabbro del parlar materno.  
Versi d'amore e prose di romanzi  
soverchiò tutti; e lascia dir li stolti  
che quel di Lemosi credon ch'avanzì.  
A voce più ch'al ver drizzan li volti,  
e così ferman sua oppinione  
prima ch'arte o ragion per lor s'ascolti.  
Così fer molti antichi di Guittone,  
di grido in grido pur lui dando pregio,  
fin che l'ha vinto il ver con più persone. . . ."

"O brother," he said, "the one there whom I indicate with my finger," and he pointed to a spirit ahead, "was a better craftsman of the mother tongue. Verses of love and proses of romances he surpassed all—and let the fools talk who think that he of Limoges is superior. They turn their faces toward rumor rather than the truth, and so they form their opinion before listening to art or reason. So did many of the oldtimers with Guittone, from cry to cry giving praise to him only, until with most people the truth conquered. . . ."

(*Purg.* XXVI, 115-126)

Guittone is thus embedded in a dialectical structure that encompasses old and new, false and true, on a historiographical grid whose Provençal components are the key to his undoing;<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The historiographical grid of canto XXVI also comprises, as scholars have

by coupling Guittone with Giraut, the most renowned troubadour of his day, Dante makes the denunciation all the more telling. Rather than denying the fame of these poets, he simply denies that their fame was justified.

Although undoubtedly effective, this method of attacking Guittone has serious repercussions of a revisionist nature. One result is to raise Arnaut definitively above Giraut, in sharp contrast to the situation in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, where if anything Giraut is the privileged poet. Although I do not agree with those critics who, like Santangelo, argue for the exclusive primacy of Giraut during the period of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, the special status accorded the poet from Limoges in the treatise is indisputable.<sup>14</sup> Giraut is the troubadour whose

noticed, interesting intertextual components: Dante's reference to Guinizelli as "il padre / mio" echoes Guinizelli's reference to Guittone, in the incipit of his sonnet to the Aretine, as "[O] caro padre meo"; Dante's use of the rare verb *imbarcare* in line 75 echoes Guinizelli's use of it, again in the sonnet to Guittone; Dante's stress on "il ver" (lines 121 and 126) recalls Guinizelli's reply to Bonagiunta, "Omo ch'è saggio non corre leggero," where the Bolognese poet appeals twice to the "truth." See Ernest Hatch Wilkins, "Guinizelli Praised and Corrected," in *The Invention of the Sonnet and Other Studies in Italian Literature* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1959), pp. 111-113, and most recently, Franco Suitner, "Colui che fore trasse le nove rime."

<sup>14</sup> Salvatore Santangelo's book, *Dante e i trovatori provenzali* (Catania: Giannotta, 1921), suffers from the schematic rigidity with which the author, insisting that Dante had access to only one troubadour *canzoniere*, assigns certain poets to discrete stages of Dante's development with no possibility of contamination; a recent critique is provided by Maurizio Perugi in his exhaustive study of Arnaldian echoes in Dante's texts, "Arnaut Daniel in Dante," *Studi danteschi*, 51 (1978), 59-152 (see esp. pp. 103-108). Some of the numerous articles devoted to Dante and the troubadours begin as reviews of Santangelo's book; among these are E. Hoepffner, "Dante et les Troubadours," *Études Italiennes*, 4 (1922), 193-210, and Luigi Pastine, "Dante e i trovatori," *Il Giornale dantesco*, 26 (1923), 15-26 and 128-141. Other contributions on this topic are: A. Jeanroy, "Dante et les Troubadours," in *Dante: Mélanges de Critique et d'Érudition françaises publiés à l'Occasion du VIe Centenaire de la Mort du Poète* (Paris: Union Intellectuelle Franco-Italienne, 1921), pp. 11-21; J. Vêran, "Dante et les Troubadours," *La Revue Hebdomadaire* 30, fasc. 27 (1921), 93-103; A. G. Ferrers Howell, "Dante and the Troubadours," in *Dante: Essays in Commemoration*, pp. 191-223; Henri Hauvette, "Dante et la Poésie provençale," in *La France et la Provence dans l'Oeuvre de Dante* (Paris: Boivin, 1929), pp. 107-146; A. Parducci, "Dante e i trovatori," in *Provenza e Italia* (Florence: Bem-

incipit represents the *langue d'oc* in the discussion of the common origin of Romance languages in I, ix; he is the Provençal poet of rectitude, paired with Dante among the Italians, in II, ii; and he heads the lists of II, v and II, vi, devoted respectively to canzoni that begin with hendecasyllables, and canzoni that are examples of the "gradum constructionis excellentissimum." In two of these categories he is without an Occitanic rival since he is the only troubadour cited (I, ix and II, v). Where other troubadours are also present, Giraut is invariably above the others (II, ii and II, vi). Arnaut overlaps with Giraut twice, and on both occasions he is "beneath" him: in one case he is the Provençal poet of love, paired with Cino among the Italians, while Giraut is the poet of rectitude (II, ii), and in the other he is two places below Giraut in the list of composers in the high style (II, vi). On the other hand, Arnaut is mentioned in two places where no other troubadour, including Giraut, is present; in both instances he serves as a representative of technical excellence, first for the use of the indivisible stanza (II, x) and secondly for the use of the stanza containing no rhymes in itself (II, xiii).

Thus, although Giraut and Arnaut share the honor of being the only troubadours in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* who are each mentioned four times in all, they emerge from the treatise with markedly distinct poetic physiognomies. The divergence between the two poets is borne out by their placement; Giraut appears earlier in the treatise, even once in the philosophically oriented first book, whereas Arnaut begins to appear with more frequency in the technical sections at the end of Book II. Giraut is in the loftier position, but Arnaut is perhaps the more studied. Indeed, it is debatable which is in fact the higher tribute—Giraut's classification with Dante in the category of poet of rectitude, or the frank avowal of imitation that is accorded Ar-

porad, 1930), pp. 81-95; Luigi Peirone, *Lingua e stile nella poesia di Dante* (Genova: Edizioni Universitarie, 1967). Also useful are the anthology of H. J. Chaytor, *The Troubadours of Dante* (1902; repr. Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1974) and the bibliographical study of F. Pirot, "Dante et les Troubadours," *Marche romane*, 15 (1965), 213-219.



naut. For, despite his typical chariness in admitting influence, Dante explicitly says that he copied Arnaut in the composition of his *sestina*; his exact words are "nos eum secuti sumus cum diximus 'Al poco giorno e al gran cerchio d'ombra' " ("we followed him when we composed . . ." [II, x, 2]). The gap between Arnaut's position in the treatise and his position in the poem is therefore not so great as has been supposed; rather, the *Comedy* preserves and renders explicit, in its delineation of a "fabbro," the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*'s implicit tribute to a master stylist. With respect to the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, then, Dante's opinion of Arnaut has not so much changed as intensified. What has changed, apparently, is his opinion of the poet who had been at the head of the lists, Giraut de Bornelh.

The status of "quel di Lemosì" is structurally connected—through the ratio of *Purgatorio* XXVI, which equates Giraut and Guittone, Arnaut and Guinizzelli—to the status of the poet from Arezzo. Although Guittone's oppressive presence as the cultural dictator of his day has been duly observed, it would be well to remind ourselves of the extent of Dante's own indebtedness to his Tuscan precursor, an indebtedness that spans his career, from the early *tenzoni* with the older Guittonian poet Dante da Maiano to the passages in the *Comedy* (particularly the invectives) that bear the imprint of the Aretine's oratorical style.<sup>15</sup> The young Dante starts as an imitator, exchanging son-

<sup>15</sup> For the influence of Guittone on the so-called *tenzone del duol d'amore* between Dante Alighieri and Dante da Maiano, see Marti, "Gli umori del critico militante," esp. pp. 71-77; for the pervasive Guittonianism of Dante's early lyrics, see Foster and Boyde, *Commentary*, pp. 1-71. Contini concludes his review of Francesco Egidi's edition of Guittone, *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 117 (1941), 55-82, with a brief discussion of Guittone in Dante, in which he speaks of "un Guittone quasi dantesco" (p. 82).

Guittone's influence on the *Comedy* falls into two main categories. Most apparent is the influence of his political poetry on the political invectives, where Dante appropriates not only the Aretine's impassioned tone but also some of his specific trademarks. Like Guittone, Dante punctuates his invectives with apostrophes and rhetorical questions. Taking as a basis for comparison the canzone "Ahi lasso, or è stagion de doler tanto" and the invective of *Purgatorio* VI, we find the following borrowed techniques in the *Comedy*: the standard

nets that recapitulate the worst of Guittone's rhetorical excesses and virtuosic obscurantism. As in the first *tenzone* Dante da Maiano begins with the exposition of a "vision" that needs decoding, so later Dante himself will request similar assistance from his peers in the sonnet that becomes the first lyric of the *Vita Nuova*, "A ciascun'alma presa e gentil core." Cavalcanti's reply to that sonnet may be used to effectively mark the end of Dante's first Guittonian stage; Dante had found a new poetic master. On the other hand, we must specify that the Guittonianism from which Dante is freed by Cavalcanti is but the first such stage in his poetic career; after his *stil novo* phase, which is best defined in negative terms as a rejection of the prevailing norm determined by Guittone, Dante develops the less restricted poetic language evidenced by the *petrose* and the moral canzoni.<sup>16</sup> It is at this point that Guittone makes his reappearance

Guittonian opening in "Ahi" (which characterizes numerous Dantesque invectives and apostrophes); the use of apostrophes and rhetorical questions for denunciation and accusation (indeed, both poets go so far as to direct such a question to God: compare Guittone's "Deo, com'hailo soffrito, / deritto pèra e torto entri 'n altezza?" ["God, how have you suffered it, that justice perish and injustice be raised on high?" 14-15] with Dante's "E se licito m'è, o sommo Giove . . . son li giusti occhi tuoi rivolti altrove?" ["And if it be allowed me, O supreme Jove . . . are your just eyes turned elsewhere?" 118-120]); the use of heavy sarcasm, of repetition and anaphora (anaphora in particular is cultivated by Dante in his invectives), of aphorisms; and intense rhetorical play in the form of etymological puns and the like. To a lesser degree, one can spot the impact of Guittone's religious poetry on the *Comedy*; compare, for instance, his *lauda* for Saint Dominic, "Meraviglioso beato," with the tribute to the saint in *Paradiso* XII. In fact, since Guittone wrote lauds for both Dominic and Francis, it would seem that he provided the paradigm for the double tribute of *Paradiso* XI and XII. Another suggestive connection between Guittone's *canzoniere* and the *Comedy* regards Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti, Guido's father; the possible allusions to heterodoxy in Guittone's exhortation to "messer Cavalcante" (XXVI; see esp. 43-44) seem to anticipate *Inferno* X.

<sup>16</sup> On the first page of their *Commentary*, Foster and Boyde define the *stil novo* as a purist movement and comment that "to appreciate the *stil novo* one must know what those poets reacted against, what they rejected"; at the end of the Guittonian section, they state that "when the reaction, or rather revolution, is complete, one can indeed speak of a new style, determined antithetically in polemic against the prevailing taste" (p. 71). In *Dante's Style* in

in Dante's lexicon and style, contributing most notably to the great lyrical sermons like "Doglia mi reca ne lo core ardire."

Despite Guittone's manifest importance as the first Italian poet to open up the vernacular to moral and political themes, criticism on Guittone has tended to reflect Dante's verdict of his Tuscan precursor.<sup>17</sup> But Dante's denunciation is too strong to be taken at face value; his very insistence on Guittone serves to set the Tuscan apart from other contemporaries he does not

*His Lyric Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1971), Patrick Boyde claims that, from the rhetorician's point of view, Dante's development as a lyric poet occurs in two distinct phases; the first phase (corresponding to the *stil novo*) is one in which "all the developments take the form of a contraction or restriction in the range of expressive means," whereas in the second phase (corresponding to the moral canzoni and the *petrose*) "the developments all represent an expansion" (p. 317).

<sup>17</sup> The traditional view of Guittone is stated by De Sanctis, who accords him moral value but no poetic artistry or inspiration. Scholars aware of Dante's debt to Guittone long sought excuses for Dante's refusal to acknowledge the Aretine, rather than face his essential arbitrariness in this matter; thus De Lollis, in "Arnaldo e Guittone," *Idealistiche Neuphilologie: Festschrift für Karl Vossler* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1922), pp. 159-173, argues that Dante rejects Guittone because his ideal lyric canon admits only love poetry, not political poetry. The basic comprehensive work on Guittone is Claude Margueron, *Recherches sur Guittone d'Arezzo* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966); other studies on Guittone include: Achille Pellizzari, *La vita e le opere di Guittone d'Arezzo* (Pisa: Nistri, 1906); Francesco Torraca, "Fra Guittone," in *Studi di storia letteraria* (Florence: Sansoni, 1923), pp. 108-152; Alberto Del Monte, "Guittone dell'aridità," in *Studi sulla poesia ermetica medievale* (Naples: Giannini, 1953), pp. 113-186; Maria Teresa Cattaneo, "Note sulla poesia di Guittone," *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 137 (1960), 165-203 and 325-367; Achille Tartaro, *Il manifesto di Guittone e altri studi fra Due e Quattrocento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1974), pp. 13-75; Agnello Baldi, *Guittone d'Arezzo fra impegno e poesia* (Cecola: Società Editrice Salernitana, 1975); Vincent Moleta, *The Early Poetry of Guittone d'Arezzo* (London: The Modern Humanities Research Association, 1976). Specifically on Dante's unfairness in dealing with Guittone is the article by Giuseppe Bolognese, "Dante and Guittone Revisited," *Romanic Review*, 70 (1979), 172-184. Contini speaks of the "assidua denigrazione compiuta da Dante" vis-à-vis Guittone, which is nonetheless "un omaggio reso alla sua attualità" (*Poeti del Duecento*, vol. I, p. 191), while Quaglio stresses Dante's need to rid himself of Guittone, "un pericoloso rivale" (*Gli stilnovisti*, p. 20).

consider important enough to mention, like Chiaro Davanzati or Monte Andrea. The impassioned cry at the end of *De Vulgari Eloquentia* II, vi—"Subsistant igitur ignorantie sectatores Guitionem Aretinum"—and the contrived reinsertion of Guittone into the dialogue of *Purgatorio* XXVI point not away from the Aretine but toward him: to his continuing significance, rather than to his lack thereof. We might note those features of Guittone's career that are particularly suggestive. First, there is the fact that the manuscript tradition presents him as essentially two different poets, "Guittone" before his conversion and "Frate Guittone" after his joining a new religious order, the Milites Beatae Virginis Mariae, in 1265.<sup>18</sup> While "Guittone" wrote love poetry whose incessant hammering on the *senhal* "gioia" with its rhyming counterpart "noia" is undeniably tedious, "Frate Guittone" wrote moral verse whose vigor and energy are undeniably effective. Second, Guittone was forced to leave Arezzo for political reasons. Although his poetry never achieves the grandeur of Dante's "l'essilio che m'è dato, onor mi tegno" ("the exile which is given me I hold an honor" ["Tre donne," 76]), his self-defense in "Gente noiosa e villana" forecasts the tone of moral superiority that characterizes analogous passages in Dante's verse. Guittone was also a political poet, whose attack on Florence in "Ahi lasso, or è stagion de doler tanto," written after the defeat of the Guelphs at Montaperti, anticipates the bitter sarcasm of the *Comedy's* Florentine invectives; like Dante in his political tirade of *Purgatorio* VI, Guittone has mastered a style that is grounded in the specific but not limited thereby, whose historicity is capable of generating a universal reproof.

<sup>18</sup> On Guittone's conversion and the probable date for his joining the "Knights of the Blessed Virgin Mary," popularly dubbed Frati Gaudenti, see Margueron, p. 22 and pp. 36-40. On the manuscript division into love poetry and moral poetry, see Francesco Egidi, ed., *Le rime di Guittone d'Arezzo* (Bari: Laterza, 1940), pp. 285-286. Guittone's poems are cited and numbered according to Egidi's edition, except for the following canzoni, taken from *Poeti del Duecento*, vol. I: "Tuttor, s'eo veglio o dormo"; "Ahi lasso, or è stagion de doler tanto"; "Ora parrà s'eo saverò cantare"; "Comune perta fa comun dolore"; "Magni baroni certo e regi quasi."

We should add that Guittone, through his letters, is the only Italian poet before Dante to contribute significantly to the development of vernacular prose style.<sup>19</sup> Finally, all of this literary activity takes place in a language whose composite quality has caused one linguist to speak not—with Dante—of “dicta municipalia,” but rather of “cosmopolitismo guitoniano,” an expression that more accurately reflects the scope of Guittone’s aspirations, and of his prestige.<sup>20</sup>

Of all his Italian predecessors, Guittone alone attempted what Dante would later accomplish—a fact that Dante, unaided by hindsight, was less inclined to discount than we. The central event in this problematic is Guittone’s conversion, a conversion that led not only to a different kind of life, as in the case of Folquet de Marselha (it is interesting that both poets left behind a wife and children), but also to a different kind of writing. Although Dante never acknowledges Guittone’s religious experience, one suspects that he did not view it favorably. Members of the order to which Guittone belonged were called Frati Gaudenti, because of their alleged laxity; Dante’s mockery of the Frati Gaudenti through the characters of Catalano and Lode-

<sup>19</sup> Cesare Segre writes on Guittone’s prose in *Lingua, stile e società: Studi sulla storia della prosa italiana* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1963), pp. 95-175. Santangelo discusses Guittone’s prose with reference to the prose of the *Convivio* in “‘Sole nuovo’ e ‘sole usato’: Dante e Guittone,” in *Saggi danteschi* (1926-27; repr. Padova: Cedam, 1959), pp. 93-129; he believes that the famous passage at the end of the first book of the *Convivio* on the coming of a “new sun” refers not to the vernacular’s rise to preeminence over Latin, as is generally supposed, but to the fact that the prose of the *Convivio* will surpass the prose of Guittone’s *Lettere*. Pellizzari points out that Guittone’s verse letters are responsible for introducing *prosimetrum* into Italian literature (p. 216).

<sup>20</sup> The expression “cosmopolitismo guitoniano” is used by Giacomo Devoto, *Profilo di storia linguistica italiana* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1953), p. 56. Silvio Pellegrini rejects Dante’s definition of Guittone’s language as “municipal” in “*De vulgari eloquentia*, Libro I, capp. 10-19,” *Studi mediolatini e volgari*, 8 (1960), 155-163, where he claims that the judgments of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* are biased because the treatise privileges poetry written in an immaterial and abstract lexicon. Carlo Salinari, in the Introduction to his anthology, *La poesia lirica del Duecento*, 2d ed. rev. (Turin: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1968), refers to Guittone’s “linguaggio aulico” (p. 24).

ringo in the *bolgia* of the hypocrites, and his implied connection between their previous state as “Jovial Brothers” (“Frati godenti fummo” [Inf. XXIII, 103]) and their present state as members of the “brotherhood of sad hypocrites” (“collegio / de l’ipocriti tristi” [Inf. XXIII, 91-92]), is undoubtedly linked to his anti-Guittonianism. Guittone seems to have been well-acquainted with Loderingo, one of the order’s principal founders: the two were companions in the monastery of Ronzano, and Guittone commiserated with him on his undeserved tribulations in a canzone reverentially addressed to “Padre dei padri miei e mio messere” (“Father of my fathers and my lord”). On the other hand, for all Dante’s derision of Guittone’s religious affiliations, he can hardly have overlooked verses like the following:

Vergognar troppo e doler, lasso, deggio,  
poi fui dal mio principio a mezza etate  
in loco laido, desorato e brutto,  
ove m’involsi tutto,  
e venni ingrotto, infermo, pover, nuto,  
cieco, sordo e muto,  
desviato, vanito, morto e peggio

Too much must I shame and sorrow, alas, since from my beginning to middle age I was in a filthy, dishonorable, and ugly place, in which I was completely caught up, and I came [from it] sick, infirm, poor, nude, blind, deaf, and dumb, off course, out of my senses, dead and worse

(“Ahi, quant’ho che vergogni e che doglia aggio,”  
5-11; italics mine)

Here we have Guittone’s *selva oscura*, complete with the coincidence between his “a mezza etate” and Dante’s “mezzo del cammin.” Most arresting is the phrase “desviato, vanito, morto e peggio,” which contains the voyage metaphor used repeatedly by Guittone: “desviai, tu me renvii” (“I went off the path, you put me back on”) he says to God in another strikingly “Dantesque” composition (“Vergogna ho, lasso, ed ho me stesso ad ira,” 95).

Guittone adumbrates not only the condition of the *Comedy's* pilgrim, but also the beliefs of its poet; he too is a *scriba Dei*. In one canzone he undertakes to speak out against atheism, buttressed not by his own wisdom but by God's:

Ma non del mio saver dico già farlo,  
ma del suo, per cui parlo;  
ché la sua gran mercé sper mi proveggia  
ed amaestri e reggia  
la lingua mia in assennando stolti.

But not with my own learning do I say that I will do it,  
but with His, for Whom I speak; since His great mercy  
provides me with hope, and teaches me, and guides my  
tongue in making fools wise.

("Poi male tutto è nulla inver peccato," 16-20)

Similarly, in his famous conversion poem, "Ora parrà s'eo saverò cantare," Guittone rejects the troubadour equation between poetry and Love; he claims that God is the only true source of inspiration and, using the metaphor of the poem as a ship so familiar to readers of the *Comedy*, he advises the poet to "make God his star" (19). Most significant with respect to Guittone's poetics is the statement with which he defends himself in the canzone "Altra fiata aggio già, donne, parlato" for his arduous verse; the nominal subject of his poem, chastity, has generated a larger discourse that he knows will displease some of his readers:

Ditt'aggio manto e non troppo, se bono:  
non gran materia cape in picciol loco.  
Di gran cosa dir poco  
non dicese al mestieri o dice scuro.  
E dice alcun ch'è duro  
e aspro mio trovato a savorare;  
e pote esser vero. Und'è cagione?  
che m'abonda ragione,  
perch'eo gran canzon faccio e serro motti,  
e nulla fiata tutti

locar loco li posso; und'eo rancuro,  
ch'un picciol motto pote un gran ben fare.

I have said much and not too much, if good; a great subject is not contained by a small space. To say little about a great thing does not befit the task or is obscure. And some say that my poetry is hard and harsh to savor; and this may be true. What is the reason? That my discourse abounds, because I make a great canzone and I bind the words, and never can I find a place for all of them; which I regret, because a little word can accomplish a great good.

(159-170)

Here Guittone justifies the length and "harshness" of his poem (using the same adjective, *aspro*, that Dante will use in the exordium of his first moral composition, "Le dolci rime") by invoking the greatness of his subject. Indeed, the weightiness of the theme is such that Guittone's thoughts—his "ragione"—must still exceed the boundaries of the container. Thus, for the poet who has a truly "gran materia," even a "gran canzon" remains a "picciol loco."<sup>21</sup>

At 170 lines "Altra fiata aggio già" is 10 lines longer than the *Comedy's* longest canto, but, as Guittone himself seems to realize, merely lengthening the genre that he has is not the

<sup>21</sup> This issue of length has some interesting ramifications; the contiguous elevation of Arnaut and disparagement of Guittone in *Purgatorio* XXVI is perhaps not unrelated. Whereas Guittone feels that the lyric is not long enough to accommodate his discourse, Arnaut is a declared devotee of compression; at Love's command, he says, he will make a "breu chansson de razon loigna" ("brief song with a long theme" [XVI, 4]). Brevity is thus the hallmark of the love poet, and Guittone's lack of it is one more sign of his aspiration to a different—and forbidden—status. The relative lengths of love poems and moral poems in his *canzoniere* support this hypothesis. Whereas Guittone's longest love canzone is 115 lines, and the average length of his love canzoni is 68 lines, his longest moral canzone is 219 lines, and the average length of his moral/political canzoni is 102 lines. Dante, although less extreme, follows the same pattern: the average length of his love canzoni is 71 lines and the average length of his moral canzoni is 136 lines. Dante's longest canzone is the moral poem deeply indebted to Guittone, "Doglia mi reca," which has 158 lines.

solution to his problem. What he needs to hold his "gran materia" is something altogether new, a really "gran canzon," perhaps—like the *Comedy*—the equivalent of many canzoni stitched together. Although Guittone is not capable of the Danteque leap required for such an invention, he is capable of a sense of mission much like Dante's, as articulated for instance in the last verse of "Altra fiata aggio già," where he states that "a little word can accomplish a great good," or, more succinctly, in his claim that his God-given task is to "make fools wise." It is not surprising, therefore, that Dante returns to Guittone precisely as he embarks upon his own mission to make fools wise. In a famous passage of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* Dante establishes that the *magnalia*, the greatest and most worthy topics on which to write poetry, belong to the three categories of "armorum probitas" ("prowess of arms"), "amoris accensio" ("kindling of love"), and "directio voluntatis" ("directing of the will"), and assigns representative Provençal and Italian poets to each of these categories: "About these [topics] alone, if we recall rightly, we have found illustrious men to have written poetry in the vernacular, that is Bertran de Born on arms, Arnaut Daniel on love, Giraut de Bornelh on rectitude; Cino of Pistoia on love, his friend on rectitude" (II, ii, 8). Cino's friend is, of course, Dante, who thus claims for himself the title of poet of rectitude, whose purpose is to direct the wills of others. In claiming such a title, and in citing his poem on avarice, "Doglia mi reca," as the example of his poetry in this mode, Dante cannot fail to be aware of the other major Italian lyric poet to have written on such matters. This is Guittone, who wrote not only about avarice but about all the seven deadly sins (most overtly in his sonnet sequence on the vices and virtues), and whose canzoni deal explicitly with the social manifestations of good and evil.

In this passage of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* Dante's Provençal equivalent is Giraut de Bornelh, whose cited poem is the *sirventes* "Per solatz revelhar," in which Giraut deplores the passing of the chivalric virtues *solatz* and *pretz*; as the opening

lines state, he writes in order to reawaken these slumbering and exiled virtues:<sup>22</sup>

Per solatz revelhar,  
Que s'es trop endormitz,  
E per pretz, qu'es faiditz,  
Acolhir e tornar,  
Me cudei trebalhar

To reawaken pleasure which has been too long asleep and to bring back and welcome true worth, which is exiled, I have decided to put myself to work

(1-5)

The chief enemy of the old values is the avarice of the present nobility, a group that no longer practices the generosity of their ancestors. In his contrastive analysis of "Per solatz revelhar" and "Doglia mi reca," Michelangelo Picone demonstrates Dante's enlargement of Giraut's themes from the socially circumscribed world of troubadour ethics to a universally formulated moral indictment.<sup>23</sup> Mediating between these two texts are the moral canzoni of Guittone d'Arezzo, an Italian poet who had already assimilated the lessons of Giraut de Bornelh and adapted his Occitan morality to Tuscany, his Provençal *sirventes* to Italian, thus becoming the initiator of the Italian tradition of the *directio voluntatis*. If "Doglia mi reca" hearkens back to the troubadour moralist Giraut de Bornelh, and to his moral *sirventes*, it hearkens back equally to the moral poetry of Guittone d'Arezzo. In fact, in his discussion of "Doglia mi reca" as an example of Dante's mature lyric style, Patrick Boyde stresses the poem's Guittonian elements and suggests as a general structural model "Altra fiata aggio già," Guittone's exhortation to chastity;<sup>24</sup> both poems

<sup>22</sup> Giraut's texts are from Adolf Kolsen, ed., *Sämtliche Lieder des Troubadors Giraut de Bornelh* (1910; repr. Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1976).

<sup>23</sup> "Giraut de Bornelh nella prospettiva di Dante," *Vox Romanica*, 39 (1980), 22-43.

<sup>24</sup> "Style and Structure in 'Doglia mi reca,'" in *Dante's Style in His Lyric Poetry*, pp. 317-331; on Dante's debt to Guittone and the structural similarities between "Doglia mi reca" and "Altra fiata aggio già," see esp. pp. 321-324.

begin as direct appeals to an audience of "ladies" who eventually make room for the authors' wider concerns. It is interesting, moreover, that in "Doglia mi reca" Dante should declare his intention to write clearly and openly: "ché rado sotto benda / parola oscura giugne ad intelletto" ("for rarely under a veil does the obscure word reach the intellect" [57-58]). Considering that "Altra fiata aggio già" contains Guittone's most celebrated defense of his obscurity, it is not impossible that Dante, aware of his debt to that poem, intends thus to inscribe an implicit disclaimer into his own composition.

One might go further, and speculate that Dante's insistence on clarity is also an implicit attempt to establish Giraut, rather than Guittone, as the poetic forebear of his text; a major part of the troubadour's legend centers in fact around his formulation of a *trobar leu*, or plain style, as the appropriate vehicle for moral verse.<sup>25</sup> Dante's choice of Giraut as his ideal precursor in the moral mode is borne out by the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, where two of Giraut's four incipits are from *sirventes*. "Si per mo Sobre-Totz no fos," cited in the list of II, vi, deals with themes similar to those treated in "Per solatz revelhar"; again

<sup>25</sup> On Giraut's *trobar leu* and the relation of his style to his moral concerns, see Linda M. Paterson, *Troubadours and Eloquence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), chap. 3. The fact that Giraut says he prefers the plain style does not mean, however, that he consistently employs it; in fact, the concision of his verse often renders it obscure, as J.-J. Salverda de Grave points out in *Observations sur l'Art lyrique de Giraut de Borneil*, Mededeelingen der koninklijke nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, afd. letterkunde, Nieuwe reeks, deel 1, no. 1 (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche, 1938): "La caractéristique la plus frappante du style de Giraut est son extrême concision, qui est une des causes principales de la difficulté qu'on éprouve à interpréter son oeuvre" (p. 47). Giraut's tendency toward gnomic verse greatly influenced Guittone's style as well as Dante's in such poems as "Doglia mi reca"; it is all the more interesting, therefore, that the key Giralduan term *leu* should appear in "Doglia mi reca," where Dante says that he will now use a "costrutto / più lieve" (55-56). This and other echoes of Giraut's poetry in Dante's lyrics are noted by De Lollis in "Quel di Lemosi," *Scritti vari di filologia per Ernesto Monaci* (Rome: Forzani, 1901), pp. 353-375. Ferrers Howell considers that the canzone "Poscia ch'Amor," which is particularly replete with Provençalisms, is "an attempt to write in Giraut's manner" ("Dante and the Troubadours," p. 215).

the troubadour world is in grave disarray. Particularly significant is the eschatological departure from the usual themes that begins in the sixth stanza, where the poet deduces from the general decadence that all men, including the most powerful, should concern themselves with the afterlife, when their power will be gone and they will be in the hands of the true king; Giraut offers as his "wise counsel" that it is preferable to correct one's faults here than to find them a burden later on. This theme intensifies in the next stanza, becoming an overt prayer to the "One and Triune God" at the poem's end. Indeed, Giraut's commitment to morality is such that even in a love poem like "Si'm sentis fizels amics," cited in I, ix, he is capable of announcing that "Oimais semblara prezics / Mos chans" ("from now on my song will seem a sermon" [46-47]).<sup>26</sup> This insistence on his poetry as a "prezics," which served Giraut so well in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, is ultimately responsible, I believe, for his demotion in the *Comedy*. Whereas in the treatise Giraut's moral themes are an asset, allowing him to be a forecaster of Dante, his figural adumbration as poet of rectitude, in the *Comedy* these same moral themes are a liability, because they inevitably link Giraut to the rejected Italian practitioner of the *directio voluntatis*, Guittone d'Arezzo.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, in the *Comedy*

<sup>26</sup> Paterson points out that Giraut's "didactic approach affects his love songs as well as his *sirventes*" (p. 142), and quotes Salverda de Grave, according to whom for Giraut "l'amour a été en grande partie matière à moralisation" (*Observations sur l'Art lyrique de Giraut de Borneil*, p. 16).

<sup>27</sup> Contini suggests that Dante rejects Giraut because the troubadour's commitment to *rectitudo* "lo avvicinava piuttosto a Guittone che al Dante morale" ("Dante come personaggio-poeta della *Commedia*," p. 58); I would amend that Giraut's *rectitudo* links him both to Guittone and to "Dante morale," since the three are inseparably linked. Picone argues that Dante condemns Giraut because he is identified with the *canzoni morali*, hence with the *Convivio* and the *donna gentile*; thus the *Comedy* replaces Giraut, "poeta della *virtus* mondana," with Folquet, "poeta della *Virtus* divina" ("Giraut de Borneil nella prospettiva di Dante," p. 43). However, since the canzone "Voi che 'ntendendo" is much more associated with the *Convivio* and the *donna gentile* than is Giraut de Borneil, and is nonetheless rehabilitated within the *Comedy*, the *Comedy's* failure to accommodate Giraut is more likely due, in my opinion, to his connection via *rectitudo* to Guittone. Antonio Stäuble, "Le Rime della 'rettitudine'

Dante no longer seems inclined to acknowledge any vernacular poet of rectitude before himself, whether this be the immediate precursor Guittone or the more removed Giraut; he prefers to intimate, as in *Inferno* I where he designates Vergil the sole source of "lo bello stilo che m'ha fatto onore" ("the beautiful style that has brought me honor" [87]), that he draws his poetic nourishment from a more distant past.

Neither Guinizzelli nor Arnaut, the poets praised in *Purgatorio* XXVI, wrote moral verse. This factor seems paramount in their positioning; both poets are almost exclusively love poets, supreme within this context, who here purge their metaphoric and textual passions in the refining fire.<sup>28</sup> Arnaut Daniel was canonized in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* as the Provençal love poet par excellence; nonetheless Dante's purgatorial celebration of the troubadour has elicited some mixed critical reaction, which still surfaces in the tendency to limit Arnaut's impact on Dante to his importance as a technical model, primarily in the *rime petrose*, and to claim that aesthetic criteria are alone responsible for his presence in *Purgatorio* XXVI.<sup>29</sup> Stylistic considerations

nella coscienza poetica di Dante," *Studi e problemi di critica testuale*, 8 (1974), 82-97, argues that Dante suppresses those poets who are his models in the area of moral poetry, namely Giraut and Guittone. De Lollis was working in this direction in "Arnaldo e Guittone," where he notes Dante's preference for love poetry, i.e. Arnaut, over moral/political poetry, i.e. Guittone.

<sup>28</sup> The nonamatory poetry of Arnaut and Guinizzelli is minimal: Arnaut wrote one *sirventes*, "Pois Raimons en Trucs Malecs"; Guinizzelli wrote a few sonnets on literary and moral themes. In accord with Roncaglia, "Il canto XXVI del *Purgatorio*," followed by Perugi, "Arnaut Daniel in Dante," and Folena, "Il canto di Guido Guinizzelli," I discount the biographical status of their lust; the point is that they are love poets.

<sup>29</sup> A number of critics, including Hoepffner, Hauvette, and Vêran, articulate their surprise at Dante's admiration for Arnaut; Hoepffner endorses the position taken by W. P. Ker in "Dante, Guido Guinicelli and Arnaut Daniel," *Modern Language Review*, 4 (1909), 145-152 (repr. in *Form and Style in Poetry* [London: Macmillan, 1928], pp. 319-328), when he claims that Dante's admiration for Arnaut rests "essentiellement sur la forme, et non sur le fond" ("Dante et les Troubadours," p. 200). Maurice Bowra, on the other hand, defends the notion of a thematic as well as formal convergence between Dante and Arnaut, arguing that Arnaut too possesses an idealized conception of love; see "Dante

are indeed an integral part of Arnaut's fascination, but precisely because he goes further than any previous troubadour in fusing formal values with his deepest identity, deriving style from an internalized erotic mysticism that is uniquely his. Dante is not so much interested in literal similarities, such as those critics insisted on positing between Guilhem de Montanhagol's chaste love and the *stil novo*, as he is in an ideal consonance;<sup>30</sup> he finds in Arnaut an intensity of amorous commitment that prefigures his own, a poet who displays throughout his verse an overt link between eros and praxis, eros and knowledge. Not only is Arnaut objectively the greatest of the *Comedy's* troubadours, from the poetic standpoint, but his understanding of the poet's métier is much like that articulated in *Purgatorio* XXIV; in Arnaut's poetry we find a total identification of the lover and the poet, as well as an insistence on Love as the exclusive source of poetic inspiration. Thus, in verses that proleptically combine the "fabbro" metaphor of *Purgatorio* XXVI with the poetic credo of *Purgatorio* XXIV, Arnaut claims to "forge and file words of worth with art of Love" (II, 12-14); he, like Dante, is initiated into a school where Love is the teacher.<sup>31</sup>

and Arnaut Daniel," *Speculum*, 27 (1952), 459-474, and the review by Marco Boni, in *Studi danteschi*, 33 (1955-56), 167-174. Both Elio Melli, "Dante e Arnaut Daniel," *Filologia romanza*, 6 (1959), 423-448, and Gianluigi Toja, in the Introduction to his edition, *Arnaut Daniel: Canzoni* (Florence: Sansoni, 1960), provide excellent bibliographical surveys of the criticism on Arnaut Daniel and Dante. Mauro Braccini, "Paralipomeni al 'Personaggio-Poeta' (*Purgatorio* XXVI 140-7)," in *Testi e interpretazioni: Studi del Seminario di filologia romanza dell'Università di Firenze* (Milan-Naples: Ricciardi, 1978), pp. 169-256, examines Arnaut's Provençal discourse within the larger phenomenon of the *Comedy's* plurilingualism.

<sup>30</sup> The case for Guilhem de Montanhagol's *prestilnovismo* is made by De Lollis, in "Dolce stil novo e 'noel dig de nova maestrìa.'" As Aurelio Roncaglia points out, the entire movement to find stilnovist precedents is a misguided one; see "Precedenti e significato dello 'stil novo' dantesco," in *Dante e Bologna nei tempi di Dante* (Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1967), pp. 13-34.

<sup>31</sup> Paterson, *Troubadours and Eloquence*, chap. 5, stresses the "unity of love and art" in Arnaut's poetry, giving more examples of this theme on pages 187-188. Michelangelo Picone, *Vita Nuova e tradizione romanza* (Padova: Liviana,



farai, c'Amors m'o comanda,  
breu chansson de razon loigna,  
que gen m'a duoich de las artz de s'escola

I will make, because Love commands me, a brief song with  
a long theme, for well has he trained me in the arts of his  
school

(XVI, 3-5)

If Love commands, then a poet can truly write "new" poetry. Of all the troubadour claims for newness, only Arnaut's is—for Dante—invested with the epistemological guarantee required to legitimize his "chantar tot nou" ("wholly new song" [XIV, 44]); only Arnaut's poetry, therefore, can be considered a true precursor of the "nove rime."

Arnaut Daniel, the last lyric poet in Purgatory, is the *Comedy's* quintessential love poet, in the same way that "Donne ch'avete," the canticle's last autocitation, is its quintessential love poem. In his first spoken verse Arnaut points forward to another poet, the only lyric poet in Paradise, Folquet de Marselha. As has frequently been remarked, this line from the *Comedy*, "Tan m'abellis vostre cortes deman" ("So much does your courteous request please me" [Purg. XXVI, 140]), echoes an incipit of Folquet's, indeed precisely the one cited in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (II, vi, 6), namely "Tant m'abellis l'amoros

1979), comments similarly: "È Arnaldo il primo poeta in volgare che formula con grande chiarezza il tema dell'identificazione di amore e poesia" (p. 39). Although one could assert the primacy of Bernart de Ventadorn for this tradition—one thinks of the well-known verses pointed to in this context by Silvio Pellegrini, "Quando Amor mi spira," p. 165: "Chantars no pot gaire valer, / si d'ins dal cor no mou lo chans; / ni chans no pot dal cor mover, / si no es fin' amor coraus" "Singing cannot be worth anything if the song does not come from within the heart; and the song cannot come from within the heart, if within it there is not true love" (Moshé Lazar, ed., *Bernart de Ventadorn, Troubadour du XIIe Siècle: Chansons d'Amour* [Paris: Klincksieck, 1966], p. 64)—Arnaut is the first, as Braccini notes, to associate Love "non con il generico trobar ma con il suo aspetto espressamente tecnico" ("Paralipomeni al 'Personaggio-Poeta,'" p. 252). All quotations of Arnaut are from Toja's edition.

pessamens."<sup>32</sup> Thus Arnaut indicates the identity of his successor; by echoing Folquet's love poem he implies that the troubadour from Marseilles will be the next (and last) of the *Comedy's* love poets. Like Arnaut, Folquet is placed among those with lustful tendencies; moreover, the "folle amore" of *Paradiso* VIII, 2 recalls Arnaut's "passada folor" of *Purgatorio* XXVI, 143.<sup>33</sup> In the episode of *Paradiso* IX Folquet briefly addresses himself to his past history as a "mad lover," stressing the intimate bond between himself and the heaven of Venus: "e questo cielo / di me s'imprenta, com' io fe' di lui" ("and this heaven is imprinted by me, as I was by it" [95-96]); to clarify the nature of the bond, he offers three classical parallels, saying that neither Dido nor Phyllis nor Hercules burned with greater love than he (97-102).<sup>34</sup> Interestingly, the poem echoed by Arnaut and cited in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* testifies to just such an excessive love as Folquet describes in the *Paradiso*: "no'us am saviemens" ("I do not love you wisely") says the poet to his lady at the beginning of stanza V, and later he adds

<sup>32</sup> The echo of Folquet's "Tant m'abellis l'amoros pessamens" in the *Purgatorio's* "Tan m'abellis vostre cortes deman" was noted by Nicola Zingarelli in his seminal study on Folquet in the *Comedy*, *La personalità storica di Folchetto di Marsiglia nella Commedia di Dante*, 2d ed. rev. (1897; repr. Bologna: Zanichelli, 1899), p. 25. See also the various reviews of Zingarelli's book: Cesare De Lollis, *Rassegna bibliografica della letteratura italiana*, 5 (1897), 127-132; Michele Scherillo, *Bullettino della Società Dantesca Italiana*, 4 (1897), 65-76; Francesco Torraca, *Nuova antologia*, 153 (1897), 152-165. Scherillo's "Dante et Folquet de Marseille," *Nouvelle Revue d'Italie*, 18 (Sept.-Oct. 1921), 59-75, is essentially the same article as his 1897 review. Folquet's poetry is quoted and numbered according to the edition of Stanisław Stroński, *Le Troubadour Folquet de Marseille* (Cracow: Librairie "Spółka Wydawnicza Polska," 1910).

<sup>33</sup> These parallels between the treatment of Arnaut and Folquet are noted by Franco Suitner, "Due trovatori nella *Commedia* (Bertran de Born e Folchetto di Marsiglia)," *Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Memorie, Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, Serie VIII, vol. XXIV, 5 (1980), 579-643.

<sup>34</sup> Zingarelli theorizes that the three classical parallels are an oblique reference to Folquet's three loves, and to the fact that the *canso* "Tant m'abellis" is sent, in its last line, to "tres donnas" (*La personalità storica di Folchetto di Marsiglia nella Commedia di Dante*, p. 40).



"Trop vos am mais, dona, qu'ieu no sai dire" ("I love you too much more, lady, than I know how to say" [41]). Such sentiments may be found throughout Folquet's love poetry; in XIII he tells us that "amiei follamen" ("I loved madly" [29]), using a variant of the key term *folle*, and twice he refers to the lady he adores (I, 31; VI, 25).

Folquet is suited for the heaven he inhabits not only as a lover in Venus but also as an extremely rhetorical and contrived poet in the heaven of Rhetoric.<sup>35</sup> As a lover he exemplifies the sublimation of erotic love into divine love—something he accomplishes while still on earth by choosing to give up his life as court poet and successful merchant for the monastery. The sublimation of eros that Folquet emblemizes is reproduced dramatically, by placing him in this heaven, and stylistically, by placing in this heaven some of the *Paradiso's* most daring examples of a transcendent linguistic eroticism. We have seen that in the heaven of Venus personal intimacy is deflected, as in the case of Dante's meeting with Charles Martel, by a dominant political discourse and a strategic use of rhetoric. In his meeting with the troubadour, the pilgrim requires nine lines just to ask Folquet his name: because God sees all, and Folquet sees in God, Folquet can see and satisfy Dante's desire to know who he is, as indeed Dante himself would do for him, were he in Folquet as Folquet is in him. The first and last lines in this passage are hallmarks of a rhetorical copulation that now takes the place of any more direct affectivity: the union between God and Folquet, "Dio vede tutto, e tuo veder s'inluia" ("God sees all, and your sight in-Hims itself" [Par. IX, 73]), leads to the union of Folquet and Dante, "s'io m'intuassi, come tu t'inmii" ("if I were to in-you myself, as you in-me yourself" [81]).<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> According to the correspondences Dante sets up in *Convivio* II, xiii between the heavens and the branches of learning, the heaven of Venus is also the heaven of Rhetoric. Stroński comments on the artificial and contrived nature of Folquet's poetry, saying that the troubadour was considered "le maitre du style subtil" (p. 86\*).

<sup>36</sup> Enzo Esposito, "Il canto IX del *Paradiso*," in *Lecture del Paradiso*, ed. Vittorio Vettori, pp. 141-166, refers to the three neologisms, "s'inluia," "m'intuassi," "t'inmii," as "i segni eroici d'un tentativo di approssimazione semantica all'inesprimibile" (pp. 158-159).

This passage is preceded by a description of Folquet, "L'altra letizia, che m'era già nota / per cara cosa" ("The other joy, who was already known to me as a precious thing" [67-68]), who comes to the pilgrim's attention "qual fin balasso in che lo sol percuota" ("like a fine ruby on which the sun is striking" [69]). Here the phrase "cara cosa" and the reference to Folquet as a precious gem echo Cunizza's original introduction of the troubadour, in which she calls him "questa luculenta e cara gioia" ("this resplendent and precious jewel" [37]); surely the repetition of "cara" and the insistence on Folquet as a precious jewel reflect his reputation as a poet of precious verse and *caras rimas*. The love poet who was so concerned to delineate the rhetorical and covert aspects of his passion, asking in one poem "s'ieu no'm sai cobrir, qui m'er cubrire?" ("if I cannot conceal myself, who will conceal me?" [IX, 32]), and whose biographers dwell on his use of "screen ladies" to hide the true object of his affections, now partakes of a love whose rhetoric is disengaged from the games of eros and from the service of concealment.<sup>37</sup>

The strategies of concealment were already, less complicatedly, dismantled by Arnaut, who tells the pilgrim that he cannot and will not hide himself: "qu'ieu no me puesc ni voill a vos cobrire" (*Purg.* XXVI, 141). His use of the verb *cobrir*, which figures so prominently in Folquet's lexicon, may be seen as another anticipation of Folquet, especially in that it immediately follows the recall of "Tant m'abellis."<sup>38</sup> *Cobrir* runs through

<sup>37</sup> Folquet's use of "screen ladies" causes a misunderstanding that leads to the loss of his true love; see Stroński, *Razo* 1, pp. 4-6. On the relation of the use of "screen ladies" by Folquet to the *donne dello schermo* of the *Vita Nuova*, see Zingarelli, pp. 45-46.

<sup>38</sup> This is not to deny the usual interpretation of line 141, namely that it is a palinode of Arnaut's *trobar clus*, as suggested by Sapegno, *Purgatorio*, p. 292. Regarding antecedents for *Purgatorio* XXVI, 143, "consiros vei la passada folor," for which Perugi suggests the incipit of a *canço* by Guillem de Berguedà, "Consiros cant e planc e plor," I would like to point also to the opening of Folquet's XXVII (a crusade song and the only one of the poems doubtfully attributed to Folquet which Stroński tends to accept as authentic); here we find, along with the initial "Consiros," a song that is antithetically composed both of joy and tears, as in the *Purgatorio's* "Ieu sui Arnaut, que plor e vau cantan": "Consiros, cum partitz d'amor, / chant mesclatz de joy e de plor" (XXVII, 1-2). A reconstruction of Arnaut's purgatorial speech is provided by Perugi,

Folquet's *canzoniere*, in thematic contrast to its opposite, *des-cobrir*, which stands at the other pole as the poet's unobtainable desire: "Chantan volgra mon fin cor descobrir" ("In singing I would like to disclose my true heart" [VI, 1]).<sup>39</sup> The necessity for concealment generates a painful tension; the lover wants to reveal himself to his beloved, "To you I would like to reveal the pain that I feel" (IX, 29), but he may not, precisely because "If I cannot conceal myself, who then will conceal me?" (IX, 32). To disclose is to dis-cover (*des-cobrir*), and discovery—either of the self or of the beloved—is not possible in the world of "courtly love," where masks and games are essential; in heaven, where they are not needed, the pilgrim's thoughts are spontaneously revealed to the troubadour through the divinely open medium of Paradise. It is worth noting that in his poetry Folquet did on one occasion suggest a turning to an unconcealed love; this anomalous use of *cobrir* occurs in his last poem, significantly not a love song, but a crusade song: "Hueimais no'y conosc razo / *ab que nos puscam cobrir*, / si ja Dieu voleu servir" ("Henceforth I know no reason *with which we can cover ourselves*, if indeed we want to serve God" [XIX, 1-3; italics mine]). In other words, to serve God we must put aside the

"Arnaut Daniel in Dante," pp. 116-139; Folena, "Il canto di Guido Guinizzelli," pp. 504-507; and Mauro Braccini, "Paralipomeni al 'Personaggio-Poeta,'" Appendix I, "Sul testo dei vv. 140-7," pp. 224-229. For a linguistic analysis of these verses, see Nathaniel B. Smith, "Arnaut Daniel in the *Purgatorio*: Dante's Ambivalence toward Provençal," *Dante Studies*, 98 (1980), 99-109.

<sup>39</sup> *Cobrir* and related words appear in Folquet's poems as follows: *cobrir* in III, 27; VI, 22; IX, 32; XIV, 15; XV, 57; XIX, 2; *celar* in IX, 30, 34; *celadamen* in IX, 31; *cobertamen* in XIV, 23. *Descobrir* appears only once, in VI, 1. Interestingly, the *tenso* with "Tostemps" also centers around concealment; the poets debate the pros and cons of loving a promiscuous lady who openly displays her love versus those of loving a loyal lady who keeps her love hidden. Folquet argues for the former, surprising his partner, who had considered him too refined a lover to make such a choice ("mas vos qi es fis amayre" [XV, 55]); are the courtly games of concealment so trying that they drive the lover to prefer openness even to fidelity? Regarding the verb *cobrir* in Arnaut's purgatorial speech, Braccini notes that "'parlar . . . ab cubertz entresens' è per Bernart de Ventadorn requisito dell'amore e il *celar* compare fin da Guglielmo IX" ("Paralipomeni al 'Personaggio-Poeta,'" p. 208).

strategies of closure that govern human love; we must uncover—or discover—ourselves, and stand revealed.

Folquet is the love poet of Paradise precisely because of the disclosed nature of his service to God, well-known to his contemporaries and demonstrated by the Provençal biography; after withdrawing to a Cistercian monastery, he became, eventually, Bishop of Toulouse, avid participant in the Albigensian Crusade, and loyal supporter of Saint Dominic:<sup>40</sup>

abandonet lo mon; e si se rendet a l'orde de Cistel ab sa  
muiller et ab dos fillz qu'el avia. E si fo faichs abas d'una  
rica abadia, qu'es en Proensa, que a nom lo Torondet. E  
pois el fo faichs evesques de Tolosa; e lai el muric.

he left the world. And he gave himself to the Cistercian order with his wife and the two sons that he had. And he was made abbot of a rich abbey which is in Provence which is called *lo Torondet*. And then he was made Bishop of Toulouse. And there he died.

The upheaval in Folquet's life chronicled by the *vida* is reflected in his last poems, the *planh* for his dead lord, Barral, and the two crusade songs. A tone of melancholic withdrawal runs through all three poems, but is particularly apparent in the lament, where the traditional complaints are compounded by an unusually defined sense of the futility of earthly life and earthly love:

Et er, qan foz plus poiatz,  
faillitz a guisa de flor  
que, qand hom la ve gensor,  
adoncs ill chai plus viatz;  
mas Dieus nos mostr' ab semblans  
que sol lui devem amar

<sup>40</sup> See Stroński for the details of Folquet's religious career, and for his positive assessment of Folquet's character, pp. 87\*-99\*. On Folquet's negative image and the *Chanson de la Croisade*, see also Suitner, "Due trovatori nella *Com-media*," pp. 633-636. The text of the *vida* is from Jean Boutière and A.-H. Schutz, eds., *Biographies des Troubadours*, 2d ed. rev. (Paris: Nizet, 1964), p. 471; all of the Provençal biographies will be quoted from this edition.

e'l chaitiu segl' azirar  
 on pass' om com vianans,  
 qu'autre pretz torn' en desonor  
 e totz autre sens en folor  
 mas de cels que fan sos comans.

And now, when you have most risen up, you fall down like a flower which, when one sees it at its most beautiful, then it falls the soonest; but God shows us with [such] examples that we must love only Him and despise the miserable world where man passes through as a voyager, for other worth turns into dishonor and all other understanding into madness, except [the understanding] of those who carry out his commands.

(XVII, 45-55)

In a genre that normally goes no further than to forecast secular desolation as a result of one man's death, this troubadour suggests that the death of his lord be read in an overtly religious key, as a lesson in *contemptus mundi*; the fall of this "flower" must be seen to signify not just the demise of a particular state or system but rather the eventual demise and consequent unworthiness of all mortal things.

It is a short step from Folquet's *planh* to his conversion; after the recognition that we are but "voyagers" in a transitory world ("on pass' om com vianans" [52]) comes the sure knowledge that "we must love only Him" ("que sol lui devam amar" [50]). If the *planh* for Barral illuminates the spiritual condition required for conversion from human to divine love, thus adumbrating one aspect of Dante's troubadour, Folquet's crusade songs prefigure the militant stance adopted by the poet in Paradise. The language used by Folquet in heaven to present Raab, and later in his denunciation of the Roman Curia, is the language of a crusader; both Christ's "triumph" (*Par.* IX, 120) and Joshua's "glory" (124) are viewed as victories in which Raab provided critical assistance to the heroic conquerors. Such a metaphoric construct comes easily to a poet who wrote at least two crusade songs, reminding us in one that "such death [death in

a crusade] is good" (XIX, 22). Indeed, the *razo* refers to this poem twice as a "prezicansa," or sermon, precisely because of its hortatory mission, and the critical tradition as far back as Zingarelli derives the apostolic tone of the last section of *Paradiso* IX from the tone of Folquet's crusade songs.<sup>41</sup> In this context, we can readily admit Folquet's suitability as the poet to take Giraut's place in the *Comedy's* version of the lists of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*; he moves from second place, immediately below Giraut in the catalogue of II, vi, to first place, his privileged position in Paradise, on the basis of his converted love and his divinely militaristic mission. On the other hand, although Folquet usurps the supreme position held by Giraut in the earlier text, his role in the *Comedy* is not the equivalent of Giraut's in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*. Mirroring the heaven in which he is situated, Folquet is dichotomous, as is apparent from the two distinct linguistic registers adopted by his discourse: one reflects the preciousness of his love poems and the other the fervor of his crusade songs.<sup>42</sup>

Folquet is not a poet of rectitude. His *canzoniere* presents us with fourteen love poems (of which I-IX give a hopeful view of love and X-XIV are negative), one *tenso* on an erotic theme (XV), one *cobla* of an unfinished *canço* (XVI), the lament for Barral (XVII), and the two crusade songs (XVIII and XIX). In other words, we find here two distinct kinds of love poetry, one motivated by a secular love and one by a divine love.<sup>43</sup> What

<sup>41</sup> The reference to a *prezicansa* is in Stroński's *Razo* IV, p. 8. The connection between Folquet's crusade songs and the invective at the end of *Paradiso* IX is made by Zingarelli, pp. 62-72; Folena, in the Introduction to *Vulgares eloquentes*, refers to the invective of canto IX as "la perorazione finale in chiave di sirventese morale e di canzone di crociata" (p. X).

<sup>42</sup> Toja elaborates on Zingarelli's idea that the linguistic registers of *Paradiso* IX are intended to reflect both Folquet the poet/lover and Folquet the apostle; see "Il canto di Folchetto da Marsiglia," *Convivium*, 34 (1966), 234-256.

<sup>43</sup> The poems of doubtful attribution do not in any way alter my argument. Besides love poems, there is one crusade song (XXVII) and two religious songs dealing with repentance (XXVIII and XXIX); of these, Stroński does not think any but the crusade song is even possibly authentic. Stäuble too refutes Mengaldo's argument that Folquet is the *Comedy's* poet of rectitude, saying "pre-

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.<sup>44</sup> 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).

<sup>44</sup> *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.<sup>45</sup> 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

<sup>45</sup> 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.