

epic poetry, nor does it speak to all humanity; Dante's point, however, is that it comes closer to embodying these ideals than does any other form of lyric poetry. Consequently, Dante deliberately links Sordello to the epic poets. He also takes care to show that, in this respect as well, Bertran is the exact opposite of Sordello. The description of Bertran in *Inferno* XXVIII as a trunk who carries its head like a lantern ("e 'l capo tronco tenea per le chiome, / pesol con mano a guisa di lanterna" "and it held the truncated head by the hair, dangling in its hand like a lantern" [121-122]), and lights the way for itself by itself ("Di sé facea a sé stesso lucerna" "Of itself it made for itself a lamp" [124]), cannot but call to mind Statius' tribute to Vergil in *Purgatorio* XXII:

Facesti come quei che va di notte,
che porta il lume dietro e sé non giova,
ma dopo sé fa le persone dotte

You did as one who goes by night, who carries the light
behind him and helps not himself, but makes those who
come after him wise

(67-69)

Bertran is a grotesque inversion of Vergil: in one there is total severance, a self-sufficiency that is not strength but meaninglessness, whereas in the other there is a sharing, a passing on, and an illumination of others at the expense of oneself.

In his presentation of Bertran and Sordello as polar opposites, Dante definitively alters the historical record, and in such a way as to affect the poetic record as well: Bertran's poetic reputation was not enhanced by the *Comedy*, and Sordello's certainly was. Sordello, who wrote a biting and savage poem (which, had it been acted on, would have resulted in fighting in every corner of Europe), is reincarnated as an emblem of unity; whereas Bertran, whose poems in fact had little political impact, becomes an emblem of schism. The point is that neither of these recreations, although justifiable, is without its arbitrary features. Dante was not interested in finding for each character in his

poem a niche to correspond exactly to the merits of that person as a historical figure; rather, he begins with ideal categories that will illuminate the structure of reality as he sees it, and into these he fits his characters. So it is for souls in general, and so it is for poets. If Dante has two political poets, they must perforce have more than gossip value; they must illustrate more than the fate that each found on dying. The ideal categories would naturally have to do with the use or misuse of their poetry, and Dante would look for figures whose biographies and poetic output worked well within these categories, even if not slavishly corresponding in all details. Accordingly, Dante's treatment of Bertran de Born and Sordello presents us with a deliberate revision of history for didactic purposes; in this instance the objective is to impart a moral lesson concerning the ways the poet uses his gifts vis-à-vis society, and specifically to illustrate—within the relation of the poet to the body politic—his indivisible responsibility to the state.

The Lyric Picture: Patterns of Revision

In concluding this chapter on Dante's treatment of his lyric peers, I would like to turn briefly to the historiographical perspective of his contemporaries, as embodied in the anonymous sonnet "Infra gli altri difetti del libello."⁸⁸ As the first line

⁸⁸ The attribution of this sonnet to Cino is based on the identification of the lady in the sextet as Selvaggia, Cino's lady; I think it more probable that the poem was written by someone else annoyed at Cino's exclusion from the *Comedy*. Although Gerolamo Biscaro, "Cino da Pistoia e Dante," *Studi medievali*, nuova serie, 1 (1928), 492-499, supports Cino's paternity of this sonnet and two others that attack Dante, Cino's authorship is denied by Zingarelli in his review of Biscaro, *Studi danteschi*, 14 (1930), 184-185, as well as by Sapegno, *Il Trecento* (Milan: Vallardi, 1934), p. 45. Marti places this sonnet among Cino's "Rime dubbie" in his edition *Poeti del Dolce stil nuovo* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1969); this is the edition I have used. The sonnet also rebukes Dante for failing to give Onesto degli Onesti his due; for a general discussion of Onesto's position vis-à-vis the *stilnovisti*, see Marti, "Onesto da Bologna, lo Stil nuovo e Dante," in *Con Dante fra i poeti del suo tempo*, pp. 45-68.

indicates, the poem is a critique of the *Comedy*, here pejoratively referred to as the "libello" (a term Dante uses for the *Vita Nuova*, but never for the *Comedy*); the sonneteer claims that, "among the other defects of the little book," composed by Dante "lord of all rhymes," there are two so great as to justify the belief that Dante's soul has not gone to Paradise. Both of these defects are of a poetic nature. First, Dante is accused of not having mentioned Onesto degli Onesti, the Bolognese follower of Guittone and Guinizzelli and poetic correspondent with Cino whom Dante places in the Bolognese school in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*; cleverly imitating the *Comedy*'s own technique of appropriating reality, the poet accuses Dante not of failing to include Onesto in his *Purgatorio*, but of failing to speak with Onesto, when he appeared in Purgatory next to Arnaut Daniel:

L'un è che ragionando con Sordello
e con molt'altri della dotta lima,
non fe' motto ad Onesto, di ben cima,
ch'era presso ad Arnaldo Daniello.

The first [defect] is that, while speaking with Sordello and with many others of learned polished verse, he did not speak to Onesto, of much renown, who was next to Arnaut Daniel.

(5-8)

In the sextet the poet accuses Dante of a second omission, this time in the *Paradiso*, where he failed to recognize a lady who stood with Beatrice "nel bel coro divino" (10). Since this lady is described as the "only phoenix" to have reached "Sion" (heaven) by way of the Apennines, she has been identified with Selvaggia, Cino's lady, who traditionally died in the Apennines near Pistoia; we may take the alleged omission of Selvaggia from the *Comedy* to stand for the omission of Cino, which would doubtless have startled those contemporary readers who took the testimony of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* at face value, and who knew of the long friendship between the two men.

What is interesting about this sonnet is that a contemporary, perhaps sensing the enormous prestige that would later be accorded the "libello's" opinions, should record his indignation

at two of its literary exclusions. More important than the specific poets involved is the sonnet's general indictment, for it essentially accuses Dante of arbitrary behavior in his treatment of other poets. This treatment may perhaps be best summarized by noting those poets whose reputations suffer at the hands of the *Comedy*, and those whose reputations are enhanced. We might set up two categories, one for those whom the *Comedy* revises negatively, and another for those whose metamorphosis is positive:⁸⁹

NEGATIVE REVISION

1. Guittone d'Arezzo: the negative treatment of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* continues into the *Comedy*, where it is intensified.
2. Guido Cavalcanti: the ambivalence of the *Comedy* diminishes the stature that was his in the *Vita Nuova* and, to a lesser degree, in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*.
3. Giraut de Bornelh: no longer the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*'s Provençal poet of rectitude, he is diminished in stature by being paired with Guittone in the *Comedy*.
4. Bertran de Born: rather than being the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*'s only poet of arms, he is an emblem of schism in the *Comedy*.

POSITIVE REVISION

1. Guido Guinizzelli: the remote "saggio" of the *Vita Nuova* and "maximus" of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* becomes the "padre" of the *Comedy*.

⁸⁹ Harold Bloom's theory of literary revisionism comes to mind here. Bloom posits an age of generous influence, lasting from Homer to Shakespeare, and says of Dante: "At the heart of this matrix of generous influence is Dante and his relation to his precursor Virgil, who moved his ephebe only to love and emulation and not to anxiety" (*The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* [1973; repr. paperback ed. New York: Oxford U. Press, 1975], p. 122). Whatever Dante's relation to Vergil, which we will discuss in the next chapter, there is no doubt that in dealing with contemporaries—whose poetic identities, unlike Vergil's, were still in the making, and whose reputations are to this day greatly shaped by the *Comedy*—Dante was less loving. In fact, his treatment of these poets suggests a degree of anxiety that is remarkable if one considers that it is experienced by a poet of enormous stature vis-à-vis poets who are, in the larger picture, only literary curiosities with respect to him.

2. Arnaut Daniel: the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*'s Provençal poet of love becomes the "miglior fabbro" of the *Comedy*.
3. Folquet de Marselha: from a poet of little importance in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* he is raised to the love poet of Paradise.
4. Sordello: mentioned in passing in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* as a linguistic curiosity, he becomes an emblem of political and linguistic unity in the *Comedy*.

Of the eight figures listed above, four are of primary importance as Dante's vernacular masters; these are Guido Cavalcanti, Guido Guinizzelli, Guittone d'Arezzo, and Arnaut Daniel. Guinizzelli and Cavalcanti were most important in the first phase of Dante's lyric development, what Boyde calls the "restrictive" phase, whereas Guittone and Arnaut belong to the second or "expansive" phase. In each of these phases, one poet exerts more influence over content or direction, the other over form or style. In the first phase, Guinizzelli provides the new *materia*, the concept of disinterested love, while Cavalcanti provides the new style; in the second phase, Guittone occupies a position analogous to Guinizzelli's, in that he is responsible for a shift in content, toward the poetry of the *directio voluntatis*, whereas Arnaut's role is analogous to Cavalcanti's. Indeed, the similarities between Arnaut and Cavalcanti are marked enough to suggest a further reason for Arnaut's prominence in the *Comedy*: Dante uses him to displace Guido, allowing his second stylistic master to absorb some of the recognition owed to the first. We note that both poets are praised on linguistic grounds—Cavalcanti for "la gloria de la lingua" and Arnaut as the "miglior fabbro"—and that they have a history of overlapping in Dante's texts; they are both mentioned in the technical chapters at the end of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*: Arnaut in II, x and xiii, Cavalcanti twice in II, xii. Moreover, as with Cavalcanti, there is a competitive streak in Dante's relation with Arnaut. Thus, he sets up a stylistic contest between himself and Arnaut in the matter of the *sestina*: although in general excessive use of the same rhyme sound is to be avoided, Dante says, the rule may be relaxed in the event that the poet is undertaking a new and

never before attempted technical feat; in this case his excess is permitted, as on the day of his investiture special privileges are accorded the new knight (II, xiii, 13). As an example of a technical feat that is "novum aliquid atque intentatum," Dante offers precisely the canzone in which he seeks to outdo Arnaut Daniel, the so-called double *sestina* "Amor, tu vedi ben che questa donna."

But the competitive streak that surfaces in Dante vis-à-vis Arnaut remains harmless, never taking the turn of *Purgatorio* XI, and again we may speculate that Dante found Arnaut's insistence on certain themes less threatening than Cavalcanti's similar preoccupations. Specifically, in both poets we find a stress on the poet as artificer, coupled with the emphatic claim that the source of his art is only and exclusively Love; thus Cavalcanti, displaying an affection for the verb *limare* ("to file" or "polish") shared by if not inherited from Arnaut, writes to Guido Orlandi that "Amore ha fabricato ciò ch'io limo" ("Love has made that which I polish"). In the same sonnet, "Di vil matera mi conven parlare," Cavalcanti not only echoes Arnaut's "obre e lim / motz de valor / ab art d'Amor" ("I forge and file words of worth with art of Love" [II, 12-14]), but by the same token he anticipates a good deal of Dante's poetic credo of *Purgatorio* XXIV;⁹⁰ he reminds Orlandi, a poet in the Guittonian

⁹⁰ In the Introduction to his edition of Arnaut, Toja observes that there are more images of craftsmanship in Arnaut's poetry than in that of any earlier troubadour (p. 74, n. 1). Paterson, *Troubadours and Eloquence*, lists examples of the poet-artisan topos in Arnaut (p. 189) and in other troubadours (p. 189, n. 1); Braccini comments that Arnaut and Cavalcanti have this set of images in common ("Paralipomeni al 'Personaggio-Poeta,'" p. 251). Besides the use of *limar* in II, 12, Arnaut also uses the noun *lima* ("file") in X, 4, while Cavalcanti's association with this image is so strong that Guido Orlandi plays on it in his reply *per le rime* to Cavalcanti's "Di vil matera." Orlandi's sonnet begins "Amico, i' saccio ben che sa' limare," and ends with the word "limo," in imitation of Cavalcanti's last verse "Amore ha fabricato ciò ch'io limo"; however, whereas Cavalcanti uses "limo" to mean "I polish," in the elevated context of Love's inspiration, Orlandi uses it to mean "mud," and accuses his friend precisely of a nonelevated carnal passion: "Io per lung' uso disusai lo primo / amor carnale: non tangio nel limo" ("I have long given up the first carnal love: I do not touch the mud" [15-16]).

manner, that his knowledge of Ovid and his use of equivocal rhyme do not qualify him to speak of love, or to consider himself a poet in Cavalcanti's league:

non pò venire per la vostra mente
là dove insegna Amor, sottile e piano,
di sua maniera dire e di su' stato.

Into your mind cannot come the place where Love teaches,
subtly and softly, to speak of his manner and of his state.

(9-11)

In these verses Love instructs the poet as to content, "di sua maniera dire e di su' stato," whereas the striking last verse, "Amore ha fabricato ciò ch'io limo," brings up the question of style, saying explicitly that Love is the true maker of this poetry. It is hardly surprising that, faced with a poet who formulates the relation of the poet to Love in terms almost identical to those of canto XXIV, Dante should displace him by conjuring up a similar but more distant precursor, one who wrote in Provençal rather than Italian. To do justice to Cavalcanti would require Dante to acknowledge that the linguistic program called the *stil novo* was in fact first formulated not by him but by his first friend.⁹¹

Returning to Dante's four vernacular masters, we note the following pattern of revision: of the first two—Guinizzelli and Cavalcanti—he acknowledges the one who influenced his poetic direction, and rejects the one who influenced his poetic form, whereas with the second two—Guittone and Arnaut—the reverse is true. In both phases, however, we note that Dante acknowledges the safer poet, the older poet, the one who is

⁹¹ This is the point made by Favati in "Contributo alla determinazione del problema dello Stil Nuovo," where he stresses the connection between the formulations of "Di vil materia" and those of *Purgatorio* XXIV. In the canzone "Io non pensava che lo cor giammai" Cavalcanti articulates the relation between the poet and Love in similar terms, even anticipating the image of the book used in the *Vita Nuova*: "Canzon, tu sai che de' libri d'Amore / io t'asemplai quando madonna vidi" ("Song, you know that I transcribed you from the books of Love when I saw my lady" [43-44]).

further away. Moreover, Guido Cavalcanti and Guittone d'Arezzo, the poets whom Dante rejects, have one extremely significant characteristic in common. Both are poets Dante suspects of having been new before him: Guittone because he opened the Italian lyric to new issues, Cavalcanti because he invented the new style. Putting it differently, we could say that if Cavalcanti's mistake lies in claiming Amor as his source, Guittone's lies in claiming God. Furthermore, although they are the most explicit victims of Dante's urge to rewrite poetic history, the pattern operates throughout: few of the contemporary lyric poets who actually appear in the *Comedy* are strong; indeed, three of them—Sordello, Bonagiunta, and Folquet—could be categorized as weak. The strongest lyric poet in the *Comedy* is Dante himself; after him, along with Guinizzelli and Arnaut, one could place Bertran de Born, who is canceled by being in Hell. Like Cavalcanti, whose nonpresence is masked both by Guinizzelli and by Arnaut, Guittone too suffers a double displacement, not only in *Purgatorio* XXIV and XXVI but also earlier, at the hands of Sordello. In fact, the arbitrary features inherent in Dante's use of Sordello are magnified if we consider that a poem of Guittone's, who is a more significant political poet than Sordello as well as being one who wrote in Italian, is in fact the vernacular force behind *Purgatorio* VI through VIII, cantos that derive at most a pallid and mechanical inspiration from the lament for Blacatz.

The poem in question, whose pervasive influence in cantos VI-VIII has, to my knowledge, gone unremarked, is the canzone "Magni baroni certo e regi quasi";⁹² in it Guittone exhorts two great lords and rulers of Pisa, Count Ugolino della Gherardesca and Nino Visconti, Ugolino's grandson and lord of Gallura in northern Sardinia, to come to the aid of their city: "Magni baroni certo e regi quasi, / conte Ugulin, giudici di Gallore" ("Great barons certainly and almost kings, Count Ugolino [and]

⁹² Although Contini records Dante's use of line 71, "donna de la provincia e regin' anco," for *Purgatorio* VI, 78, "non donna di provincie, ma bordello!" (*Poeti del Duecento*, vol. I, p. 238), no one seems to have noticed Dante's intensive use of this canzone as a backdrop for these cantos.

Judge of Gallura" [1-2]). The poem combines a moral theme on the identity of goodness and greatness ("Tutti rei parvi son, tutti bon' magni" "All evil men are small, and all good men great" [15]) with a political commentary on the need for Pisa's rulers to bring their power to bear constructively. Pisa's plight is rendered dramatically; the city is personified as a once beautiful lady now stripped of her beauty, status, sons, and friends:

Infermat'è, signor mii, la sorbella
madre vostra e dei vostri, e la migliore
donna de la provincia e regin' anco,
specchio nel mondo, ornamento e bello.
Oh, come in pia[n]ger mai suo figlio è stanco,
vederla quasi adoventata ancella,
di bellor tutto e d'onor dinudata,
di valor dimembrata
soi cari figli in morte e in pregione,
d'onne consolazione
quasi in disperazione,
e d'onni amico nuda e d'onni aiuto?

She is sick, my lords, the beautiful lady, mother of you
and yours, the greatest lady of the province, indeed a
queen, mirror of the world, ornament and beauty. Oh,
how her son never tires of weeping, to see her become al-
most a serving-girl, denuded of all beauty and honor, of
valor dismembered, her dear sons dead and in prison, with-
out consolation, almost in desperation, naked of all friends
and all aid.

(69-80)

Reminding Ugolino and Nino that the power to save their city is in their hands (86-96), and that the eyes of the whole world are upon them (97-99), the poet tells them that the choice is between dishonor and honor (100-102); they are to model themselves not on the many tyrants and kings who destroy their lands, but on the "good Romans," repositories of true valor:

De tiranni e di regi assai trovate:
merzé, non v'asemprate
a tiranni di lor terra struttori,
ma a Roman boni, in cui ver valor foe

Of tyrants and kings you will find many; please, do not be
like the tyrants destroyers of their lands, but like good Ro-
mans, in whom there was true valor

(103-106)

Finally, the poet warns the two potentates that there are two paths by which to proceed in life: "son este due malizia e bonitate" ("these two are malice and goodness" [121]); the path of malice leads to ruin and the path of goodness to peace and honor in perpetuity.

The gist of this canzone is repeated with surprising fidelity in *Purgatorio* VI through VIII, where Dante first signals his use of it by echoing and reversing Guittone's description of Pisa, "donna de la provincia e regin' anco" (71), in his opening fusillade against Italy, "non donna di provincie, ma bordello!" (*Purg.* VI, 78), and then goes on to reproduce the basic structure of the canzone in his invective: again a poet urges the powerful to awaken to their civic responsibilities, and again the organs of statehood—the Empire, the country, the cities—are pictured as abandoned, desolate, and infirm. As in the canzone, so here a long series of lacks is rehearsed, in the course of which Rome is personified as an abandoned woman, "vedova e sola" (113), who day and night calls out to her lord; the list culminates in the description of Florence as "quella inferma" (149), thus ending on the image of sickness with which Guittone's catalogue of woes begins. Guittone's lesson regarding the difference between "tiranni" and "Roman boni" is also punctually echoed by Dante, who essentially repeats Guittone's belief that Italy is populated by tyrants ("De tiranni e di regi assai trovate") in his comment "Ché le città d'Italia tutte piene / son di tiranni" ("For the cities of Italy are all full of tyrants" [124-125]). Indeed, Dante's subsequent thought, that every ignoble leader of

a political faction who comes along immediately dares to become a "Marcellus," i.e. an adversary to the Empire ("e un Marcel diventa" in line 125 seems to refer to one Marcellus characterized by Lucan as a strenuous opponent to Caesar), further echoes Guittone; as the "tiranni" of the canzone are followed by a reference to "Roman boni," so in the more critical and less trusting world of the purgatorial invective the "tiranni" are followed by "Roman cattivi." Dante's point is that his contemporaries have modeled themselves not on good Romans, but on the bad ones like Marcellus.

However, the *Comedy's* most suggestive use of Guittone's canzone is to be found in its treatment of the two figures to whom "Magni baroni" is addressed; in the *Comedy* Count Ugolino and Nino Visconti become conspicuous examples of political careers that fail or succeed according to Guittone's maxim: one, Ugolino's, fails because it is based on "malizia"; the other, Nino's, succeeds because it is based on "bonitate." Both figures play key roles in the development of cantos VI through VIII as political cantos. Although Ugolino does not appear in person, as does Nino, he is indirectly present in the expression "l'un l'altro si rode" (*Purg.* VI, 83), which is intended not only to contrast the mutual gnawing of Italian citizens with the mutual embrace of Vergil and Sordello, but also to echo the only other passage in the poem in which humans gnaw each other: that most despairing testimony to the destitution wrought by Italy's political factionalism, the episode of Ugolino. There too we find the syntax of mutuality, tied not to love but to hate: "ch'io vidi due ghiacciati in una buca, / sì che l'un capo a l'altro era cappello" ("I saw two frozen in one hole, such that the head of one was a hat to the other" [*Inf.* XXXII, 125-126; italics mine]). There too we find the verb *rodere* linked to human beings:⁹³

⁹³ *Rodere* is used in reference to human relations only in the context of these episodes, i.e. twice regarding Ugolino and once in *Purgatorio* VI. Its two other occurrences in the poem do not refer to people: in *Inferno* XXXIV, 131, it modifies the stone which has been "gnawed" by the stream passing through it; in *Paradiso* V, 134, it describes the heat of the sun, which "gnaws" or consumes the vapors of the atmosphere.

"non altrimenti Tidèo si rose / le tempie a Menalippo per disdegno" ("not otherwise did Tydeus gnaw the temples of Menalippus in his rage" [*Inf.* XXXII, 130-131]), says the narrator of Ugolino and his grisly repast, and Ugolino himself later speaks of the "traditor ch'i' rodo" ("the traitor whom I gnaw" [*Inf.* XXXIII, 8]). Finally, the fratricidal strife between citizens that Ugolino embodies is represented in *Purgatorio* VI even prior to the great invective, in the scene at the beginning of the canto that sets the stage for the later narrative outburst by showing us the victims of Italy's political crimes, the souls who died violent deaths.

Although the *Purgatorio's* chief victims of violent death—Iacopo del Cassero, Bonconte da Montefeltro, Pia de' Tolomei—are presented in canto V, the opening of canto VI shows the pilgrim surrounded by a "thick crowd" of souls whose very numbers and anonymity serve as eloquent indices of Italy's precarious political condition. Among these is one named by periphrasis as "quel da Pisa / che fé parer lo buon Marzucco forte" ("the one from Pisa who made the good Marzucco show his strength" [17-18]). This is most likely Gano Scornigiani, the son of the Pisan nobleman Marzucco Scornigiani, whom Dante had occasion to meet at Santa Croce, where Marzucco lived as a priest after his retirement from the world; it was Gano's death that gave Marzucco the opportunity to display his fortitude. Interestingly, Gano was embroiled in the feuding between Ugolino and Nino over control of Pisa, which was the outcome of Ugolino's bringing Nino into power as *capitano del popolo* in 1285; Gano, whose family had long ties with the Visconti, took Nino's side and was killed in 1287 by Ugolino's men.⁹⁴ Thus, Dante places here a soul whose personal situation is an emblem of Italy's problems: this man, deliberately named

⁹⁴ Ugolino, a Ghibelline, most likely took his grandson, a Guelph, into power in order to appease the Pisan Guelphs; on Ugolino's dealings as head of Pisa, a position he occupied from 1284-1288, when he was imprisoned, see Simonetta Saffiotti Bernardi, *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, vol. V, pp. 795-797. On Gano and Marzucco Scornigiani, see the articles by Renato Piattoli, *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, vol. V, pp. 87-88.

only by city and family connections, is a Pisan killed at the behest of another Pisan, Ugolino, on account of his loyalty to yet a third Pisan, Nino Visconti. Nino himself will appear only two cantos later, in the valley of the princes, in an episode redolent not only with nostalgia but with family pride; he does not believe that the viper of the Milanese Visconti will make his remarried wife as honorable a sepulchre as his own coat of arms, the cock of Gallura. Although Nino is treated lovingly, as an old friend, Dante always refers to him with the title of his office, the same title used by Guittone; he is "giudice Nin gentil" in VIII, 53, and "giudice" again in line 109 (this double use of "giudice" is the more noteworthy because the word occurs only one other time, in *Purgatorio* XXXI, 39, for God). A final suggestive correlation is provided by the fact that Guittone too had personal contacts with Nino, to whom he addresses the affectionate sonnet "Giudice de Gallura, en vostro amore," and with the Scornigiani; Marzucco had incurred a debt to Guittone's father, and Guittone wrote him once to request repayment and a second time to congratulate him on joining holy orders.⁹⁵

Dante's extensive use of Guittone's canzone as a textual backdrop for these political cantos has gone unrecognized, as he intended; Sordello is the poet the pilgrim meets in *Purgatorio* VI. Dante uses Sordello to point to the importance of political commitment in poetry, and he therefore connects Sordello to Folquet, who is intended to suggest—not embody—the fusion between love poetry and political poetry that alone can make a poet truly great. Indeed, such a fusion seems to be the *sine qua non* for surpassing what Dante sees as the lyric stage of poetic development. Most poets never go beyond this stage and Folquet is no exception, for although his commitment changes the course of his life, it did not deeply affect his poetry. But the very

⁹⁵ Guittone's letters to Marzucco are numbers XVIII (regarding the debt) and XXX (regarding holy orders); the second is a verse letter in the form of a canzone beginning "Messer Marzuccho Scornigian, sovente." See the edition of Francesco Meriano, *Le lettere di frate Guittone d'Arezzo* (Bologna: R. Commissione dei testi di lingua, 1922).

dichotomy between eros and politics that Dante sees in Folquet and reflects in the heaven of Venus serves to suggest an ideal state beyond dualism and dichotomy. This ideal fusion is further evoked through the oblique presence of Sordello, who was the protégé and "dilectus familiaris" of Charles I of Anjou, grandfather of the Charles Martel who dominates *Paradiso* VIII, as well as the notorious abductor and lover of Cunizza, who introduces Folquet in *Paradiso* IX.⁹⁶ Perhaps Cunizza's humility in presenting Folquet, reminiscent of Guinizzelli's introduction of Arnaut, stands for Sordello's humility in front of a poet who actually put his beliefs into action. At any rate, Folquet serves as a kind of summary of all the *Comedy's* Provençal poets: not only is his political *engagement* forecast by Sordello and his love poetry by Arnaut, but he was in life a good friend of Bertran de Born's, who should have emulated him in directing his energies toward holy rather than secular wars.⁹⁷

The episode of the last lyric poet is thus used to suggest an eventual necessary synthesis between love poetry and political poetry, a synthesis that Dante may have had in mind as early as the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*. Indeed, I would suggest that the treatise's three *magnalia*—"armorum probitas," "amoris accensio," and "directio voluntatis"—adumbrate the *Comedy's* three types of poets: political poets, love poets, and epic poets. Turning to the well-known passage of *De Vulgari Eloquentia* II, ii, 6-8, we note that Dante arrives at his three poetic topics by way of a discourse that begins with the tripartite division of man's soul; man's vegetative soul pursues the useful ("utile"), his animal soul pursues pleasure ("delectabile"), and his rational

⁹⁶ In the Introduction to his edition of Sordello, Boni discusses the troubadour's life and his relations with Charles I; Charles refers to Sordello as "dilectus familiaris et fidelis noster" in the document granting him certain feudal castles in the Abruzzi (Boni, p. XCVIII). Regarding Sordello's abduction of Cunizza, which was arranged by Cunizza's brother Ezzelino da Romano, see Boni, pp. XXIXff.

⁹⁷ Stroński recounts that Bertran de Born was Folquet's dearest friend (p. 39*); ironically, the two poets retired from secular life at the same time and even entered "deux abbayes-soeurs de l'ordre cistercien" (p. 58*).

soul pursues the honest ("honestum"). These three paths may be further defined: the goal of those who seek the useful is in fact "salus," salvation in a material sense, as pertaining to the preservation of one's self, one's family, one's homeland, and so on; those who seek pleasure desire "venus," physical love; and those who seek the honest desire "virtus" or virtue.⁹⁸ To each of these new categories—"salus," "venus," and "virtus"—there corresponds a poetic subject matter most suited to it; and for each of these poetic *magnalia* there are poets: poets of arms, of love, and of rectitude. We therefore end up with the following three sets, all stemming from the original Aristotelian division of the soul:

vegetative soul	sensitive soul	rational soul
utile	delectabile	honestum
salus	venus	virtus
armorum probitas	amoris accensio	directio voluntatis
poet of arms:	poets of love:	poets of rectitude:
Bertran de Born	Arnaut Daniel & Cino da Pistoia	Giraut de Bornelh & Dante

Political poets are precisely those who deal with the issue of salvation in a secular and social context; although the meaning of "armorum probitas" is dictated by context and medieval usage as "prowess of arms," we should not forget the original moral impact of the word *probitas*. With this expression Dante seeks to indicate not simply martial poetry, but poetry charged with the moral and political militancy required to preserve ethical life for society as a whole. From this perspective, we can understand the *Convivio's* association of a political poet, Bertran, with a social virtue, liberality; as for Dante's subsequent treatment of this troubadour, it seems he decided that Bertran was not in fact motivated by *probitas*, that his search for *salus* had become a search for schism instead. Love poets do, of course, pursue *venus*, at least at first, but they, like their political com-

⁹⁸ For the further glossing of these terms see Mengaldo's commentary, pp. 151-153.

rades, may aspire to the last category, created by fusing the previous two: the love lyric, with its itinerary preserved but expanded in that it is now directed to God rather than to the lady, is infused with a new social morality. The *Comedy's* highest exponents of the first two categories are therefore difficult to classify, because they are markers of the transition to the third: thus, Sordello is "quasi-epic," and Folquet is a love poet presented in an aura of politics. We see, moreover, why Folquet cannot be considered a true poet of rectitude; in the same way that the word *honestum* is associated in the *Comedy* with classical or "epic" poetry, so the last category, that of the *directio voluntatis*, becomes the category of epic poets. Although originally formulated to accommodate the moral lyrics that point to the *Comedy*, like "Doglia mi reca," the poetry of the *directio voluntatis* ultimately exceeds all lyric classifications, serving instead to define the poet's last step; only epic poets, in Dante's sense of the term, combine eros with commitment, fusing the search for *salus* and *venus* into the search for *virtus*, and thereby becoming poets of rectitude.