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Dante’ s helas civitas diaboli

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Dante's Hell as Civitas Diaboli[1]

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Abstract: Dante's hell represents the totality of the sins which the protagonist cannot bypass on his own. And the three beasts that appear in the prologue scene show in miniature hell's structure, patterned according to the order of corrupted appetites in the soul. Malice, violence, and incontinence, incarnated as the three beasts respectively, correspond to the threefold division of hell in reverse order. This paper investigates three episodes, i. e. Inferno 5, 15, 24-25, respectively, from the perspective of these three sins. It tries to show how Dante's hell, built upon a Thomastic moral system, is a civitas diaboli, the very opposite of Augustine's city of God. The paper also offers a glimpse of the allusions to Augustine which are at work in Dante's contexts, no matter how ironical those allusions may be.

Key Words: Dante, Inferno, Civitas

Dante's hell as a whole is the very opposite of Augustine's City of God. The evil shades, who lived according to their misdirected love, throw themselves down into hell. The disordering of their soul, which has brought about their condemnation, extends from their mortal existence into their afterlife.[2] Such a disordering is the very trait of infernal citizenship.

In this paper, I shall follow the triple division of Dante's hell, as is foreshadowed by the three

[1] Matthew Oseka, "How the Emerging Protestant Theology Took Shape in the Reformation Concept of Theological Studies as Enunciated by Philip Melanchthon in His Prolegomena to All Latin and German Version of Loci", International Journal of Sino-Western Studies, vol. 18, 77-99. (https://www. sinowesternstudies. com/latest-volumes/vol-18-2020/)

[2] A special place in hell is Limbo, of a different order of culpability, where people who are of great worth but lived before Christianity are "suspended."

beasts in the prologue scene.[3] Three episodes, respectively, from the sins of incontinence, of violence, and of malice, are chosen for analysis. They are Inferno 5 on lust, Inferno 15 on sodomy and Inferno 24-25 on thieves, the most "erotic" cantos of the Inferno. I shall investigate how, in these cantos, corrupted love leads to corrupted citizenship.

1. The Circle of the Lustful

In the Circle of the Lustful, the pilgrim encounters carnal sinners who are driven by an infernal whirlwind. The whirlwind, which never rests, is a figure for the power of passion. Among those sinners is Dido, whose incontinent love once impeded Aeneas' journey and brought about her own death. Two sinners from Dido's company are bent by the wind toward Virgil and the pilgrim. The female sinner is Francesca, the major speaker ofInferno 5. The male is Paolo, Francesca's lover, who says nothing at all. It is from Francesca's mouth that we hear some of the most renowned speeches of the Commedia:

Amor, ch'al cor gentil ratto s'apprende,
prese costui de la bella persona
che mi fu tolta, e 'l modo ancor m'offende.
Amor, ch'a nullo amato amar perdona,
mi presedel costui piacer sì forte
che, come vedi, ancor non m'abbandona.
Amor condusse noi ad una morte.
Caina attende chi a vita ci spense.
Queste parole da lor ci fuor porte.

Love, which is swiftly kindled in the noble heart, seized this one for the lovely person that was taken from me; and the manner still injures me.

Love, which pardons no one loved from loving in return, seized me for his

[3] Inferno begins with a vision of a pilgrim who, came to himself in a dark wood (selva oscura, v. 2), has lost the straight way ("ché la diritta via era smarrita" v. 3). then the frightened man, reaching the foot of a hill, looks up and sees the rays of the sun, the revealer of knowledge and wisdom, and to some extent is quieted. And having his weary body rested for a while, he took his way again along a deserted slope s and kept his "halted foot" (piè fermo) (v. 30) lower. Freccero has traced the allegorical meaning of "piè fermo" back to the Aristotelian tradition. As Aristotle observed, man naturally begin to walk by lifting the right foot, so that the "fixed foot" is the left one. When it came to Thomas, the act of walking is compared to the movement of the mind, and the two feet of body are compared to the two chief powers within the soul. Those powers are the intellect and the will, which in the broadest sense can be subdivided into three forces: rational, irascible, and concupiscent. The will is the left foot and the intellect is the right. The harmonious cooperation of the two existed before the Fall, when there was original justice in the soul. Such a justice is symbolized by the hill which the pilgrim cannot climb. Both intellect and will are afflicted by Adam's Fall. This condition is symbolized by the Dante-character in the dark wood, enmeshed in fear and sin with neither of his feet correct or rectus. Once he beholds the rays of the sun, he undergoes an intellectual conversion, and is healed in his right foot. Yet the will, remaining wounded, drags behind intellect just as the character's left foot is dragging behind the right. The three afflictions that have been suffered by each part of the will are revealed by the three animals that appeared. Therefore the leopard symbolizes malice, the lion, violence, and the wolf, incontinence. Although there are many interpretations of this allegory, this one seems to be more reasonable. For Freccero's analysis of "piè fermo" and the allegorical meaning of the three beasts, see his "The Firm Foot on a Journey without a Guide," in Dante: the Poetics of Conversion, ed. and introduction by Rachel Jacoff (Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 29-54.

beauty so strongly that, as you see, it still does not abandon me.

Love led us on to one death. Caina awaits him who extinguished our life, These words were borne from them to us. (Inf. 5. 100-108, emphasis added)[4]

This passage is composed of three tercets, and each begins with the wordamor (love). The first amor refers to Paolo's love for Francesca, the second refers to Francesca's love for him, and the last refers to the result of their mutual passion: una morte (a death). In the phrase "una morte" we find the word for love already buried in the sounds of "una" and "morte".[5] Lust, rather than leading one to real happiness, brought the couple to an eternal death. Such misdirected love,[6] as its smashed spelling in "una morte" implies, proves to be meaningless.

In response to the pilgrim's questioning how the couple first knew of their love for one another, Francesca relates a story of reading. One day, Paolo and Franscesca read the story of Lancelot and Guinevere. They took delight in it without "alcun sospetto" ("any suspicion," Inf. 5. 129). When they read that "il disïato riso esser basciato da cotanto amante" ("the yearned-for smile was kissed by so great a lover," Inf. 5. 133-34), Paolo surrendered to passion and kissed Francesca's mouth. The result of that reading is disastrous, as the literature of romance plays into their passion and ultimately leads to their murder by Paolo's brother/Francesca's husband.

Many interpretations have been devoted to this passage, since there appears to be a misreading in Francesca's narration. As commentators have noticed, in the surviving Old French Lancelot romance, it is invariably Guinevere who kisses Lancelot, while Francesca relates the story in reverse: it is she who is kissed by a trembling Paolo. Some commentators take this misreading to be an accidental one, but others such as Renato Poggioli, takes the misreading as Dante's poetic choice for the sake of structural symmetry: since it is Paolo who kissed first in 'reality,' there must be the male who kissed first in the 'story.' But Mark Musa, in a more rigorous reading, found the misreading to be Francesca's cunning. According to Musa, it is Francesca who kissed first, but in order to shirk her responsibility as the enticer, she reported Paolo as the major sinner and made the intentional misreading correspondingly.[7] For me, this passage primarily recalls two moments recorded in the Confessions. In both moments, Augustine looks back upon his early reading experience. One is in the Confessions 2. There, the young Augustine ignores the moral teaching of Dido's and Aeneas' love story in Aeneid 4. While the primary intention of Virgil is to praise Aeneas' fortitude against temptation, the young Augustine indulges in Dido's passion and sheds tears of pity for her. In Inferno 5, Dante, like Augustine, also tells a story of reading. In this story he shows how reason is subjected to emotion in a kind of incorrect reading. Francesca, out of her amorous desire, takes the romantic story as a model. Motivated by her vanity, she might also have reversed the narrative order of the

[4] All the original text and translation of Inferno are from Inferno, ed. and trans. Robert M. Durling, introduction and notes by Ronald L. Martinez and Robert M. Durling (Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 529.

[5] See Poeti del dolce stil nuovo, ed. Contini, Gianfranco (Milan: Mondadori, 1991), p. 87.

[6] As Hawkins points out, this phrase is repeated by Dante only once throughout the Commedia, in Purg. 28. 79. See Hawkins, "Watching Matelda," in his Dante's Testament: Essays in Scriptural Imagination. (Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 177.

[7] Cf. Renato Poggioli, "Paolo and Francesca" in Dante: a Collection of Critical Essays, ed. John Freccero, Englewood Cliffs, (N. J., Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965); Mark Musa, "Behold Francesca Who Speaks So Well (Inferno V)" in Dante's Inferno: the Indiana Critical Edition, ed. and trans. Mark Musa (Indiana University Press, 1995), pp. 310-324.

story so as to cover her fault. At the end of this canto, the pilgrim, having heard Francesca's story, "caddi come corpo morto cade" ("fell as a dead body falls" Inf. 5. 142). The symbolic death imitates Francesca's and Paolo's surrender to passion, just as the couple has imitated the book of Lancelot. The end of Francesca's speech—"quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante" ("that day we read there no further," Inf. 5. 138)—recalls another moment in the Confessions 8 where Augustine relates how one day he randomly took up the text of the Bible and discovered a passage in Romans,

Let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. (Romans 13. 13-14)

However brief the passage Augustine is changed by it, and no more reading is needed. "Nec ultra volui legere nec opus erat" ("I had no wish to read further, nor was there need," writes Augustine.[8] The statement marks Augustine's conversion from sin to virtue. InInferno 5, however, the similar statement ironically marks the fall of Francesca and Paolo.

Paolo keeps silent during the entire episode. It is only at the end of Francesca's speech that we realize he has been weeping for a long time. During the whole speech of Francesca, his name is not mentioned. Otherwise, she merely points to a nearby figure: costui (that one there), questi (this one here). Love changes him into a woman's shadow, and renders him a slave to, rather than a master of his desire.

Francesca, in contrast, holds the center of the stage during the scene. She is the only female in theInferno allowed to speak and is the first speaker in hell, the first sinner. This identity relates her to Eve, the first sinner in Judeo-Christian history. In the dramatic episode that takes place in Inferno 5, this Eve even tries to seduce the pilgrim, who stands for everyone, for the offspring of Adam.

As Musa carefully points out, Francesca does not seem to be enjoying her inseparability from Paolo in hell. She never turns to him, nor does she even for a little while address him. Her constant companionship with her lover represents not the free choice of the two, but the force of the infernal. Here repentance is impossible. Lust, asmisdirected love, becomes the exact contrapasso for her.[9] Such anguished inseparability is a reflection of the consorted civitas in all of hell.

The story of Francesca and Paolo implies the destruction of a family, which is the basic unit of human society and the miniature version of citizenship. As Francesca tells the pilgrim earlier, Caina awaits her husband, their killer. Caina is in the lowest circle of the hell, while the circle of the Lustful occupies the highest location in hell proper, after Limbo. The death of the family extends over the whole moral structure of hell. Lust becomes the killer of good citizenship, in part, by destroying families.

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〔8〕 Confessions 8. 12. 29. For the original Latin text see: http://www. thelatinlibrary. com/august. html.

Peter S. Hawkins in the prologue of his Dante's Testaments: Essays in Scriptural Imagination mentions this episode, op. cit. , p. 1-15.

〔9〕 In his essay "Behold Francesca who Speaks so Well," Musa, refutes the romantic reading presented by Grangent. According to such a reading, Francesca's words shows a fierce loyalty to her lover, to her love, to her sin. To refute this reading, Musa asserts that, rather than enjoying her eternal togetherness with Paolo, what Francesca found in such inseparability is the deepest anguish. To support his assertion, Musa lays out two reasons. Firstly, the eternal togetherness between Francesca and Paolo is the result of force rather than free choice. Secondly, Francesca cannot possibly glory in their naked exposure in the hell.

2. The Sin of Brunetto Latini

Coming down to the burning sand, the pilgrim encounters the sins of blasphemy, usury and sodomy. As a punishment for the flames of their false desires, broad flakes of fire fall down slowly onto the sinners. The sodomites are forced to keep walking or running on the burning sand. Their endless movement, like the endless wind inInferno 5, symbolizes their homosexual desire. Among the sodomites there is a particular shade who recognizes the pilgrim and seizes him by the hem of his robe (Inf. 15. 23-4).[10] The shade is Brunetto Latini, the author of Il Tesoro and once Dante's teacher.

As recorded by Villani, Brunetto was a "worthy citizen" ofFlorence. During the pre-Renaissance age, he made a determined effort to revive antiquity. It was he who "began to teach the Florentines to be less coarse, and to make them skilled in speaking well, and in knowing how to guide and rule our republic according to political science."[11] In short, he is remembered as a distinguished master of politics and rhetoric—a good citizen.

According to historians, there is no evidence that Brunetto was a homosexual sinner. He was a family man and strongly condemned homosexuality in his works.[12] But in Inferno 15, Brunetto appears in an unworthy place and shares the punishments of the sodomites. Such suspicious treatment has aroused many disputes among scholars. Some of them insist that Brunetto's sin is a sexual one. According to John Boswell, the term "sodomy" referred exclusively to homosexual activity in the High Middle Ages. The very sin was reputedly popular among the learned circle to which Brunetto belonged, and therefore it is possible that Brunetto had been 'infected' by it. The reason for the absence of the records of Brunetto's homosexual activity, argues Boswell, might be that sodomy by Dante's time was the unmentionable sin.[13] Boswell's idea, although it makes some sense, cannot provide positive evidence that Brunetto was a homosexual sinner.

I would support those who consider Brunetto's sin to be something other than homosexuality. I would stress one initial moment from which the whole episode develops. When the pilgrim recognizes Brunetto, he is amazed by seeing him among the sodomites "Siete voi qui, ser Brunetto?" ("Are you here, ser Brunetto?"Inf. 15. 30). This is the only time in hell that the pilgrim shows surprise over the sinners he encounters. Such a surprise is inexplicable if Dante knew that Brunetto was a sodomite.

Among those who consider Latini's sin to be non-sexual one is Peter Armour. According to his study, Brunetto's sin lies in his Stoic pessimism. In the course of his main speech (Inf. 15. 55-78), Dante's Brunetto expresses two kinds of determinism that might be considered as unorthodox beliefs. Firstly, he shows an inclination towards astrological determinism in attributing Dante's

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[10] As is pointed out by Durling, Augustine's Confessions 8. 11. 26 suggests a context and meaning for this gesture: "My love of old, trifles of trifles and vanities, held me back. They plucked at my fleshly garment, and they whispered softly: 'do you cast me off?'" Inferno, op. cit., p. 239.

[11] All the citations of Villani are from John M. Najemy's "Brunetto Latini's 'Politica,'" Dante Studies, CXII (State University of New York Press, 1994), p. 33-52.

[12] See Peter Armour, 'Brunetto, the Stoic Pessimist," in Dante's Studies, CXII, p. 1-18.

[13] The severity of the medieval public's opinion on homosexuality did not prevent clerics from going on about it in their condemnations. See John E. Boswell's "Dante and the Sodomites," in Dante's Studies, CXII, p. 63-76.

promising earthly destiny to the stars,

Se tu segui tua stella,
Non puoi fallire a glorïoso porto
If you follow your star,you cannot fail to reach a glorious port. (Inf. 15,55-56)

With the ignorance of the power of free will,Brunetto asserts that the pilgrim,born under the sign of Gemini,is destined by his constellation to win brilliant glory. Such a negation of free choice puts Brunetto at odds with Christian teaching on love and free choice.

Brunetto also identifies another sort of determinism, the genetic or racial one. In the conversation that follows,Brunetto ascribes the Florentine's degeneracy to the heredity from their Fiesolan ancestors,

Ma quello ingrato popolo maligno
che discese di Fiesole ab antico
e tiene ancor del monte e del macigno,
ti si farà,per tuo ben far,nimico;
ed è ragion,ché tra li lazzi sorbi
si disconvien fruttare al dolce fico.
Vecchia fama nel mondo li chiama orbi;
gent' è avara,indiviosa e superba:
dai lor costumi fa che tu ti forbi.

But that ungrateful,malicious people who came down from Fiesole of old,and still smack of mountains and the granite, will become your enemies because of your just actions;and that is reasonable,for among the sour crab apples it is not fitting that the sweet fig bear its fruit. Ancient fame in the world calls them blind;they are a people avaricious,envious,and proud;see that you keep yourself clean of their customs. (Inf. 15. 61-9)

Here Latini is alluding to the legend ofFlorence. Fiesole was once led by Catiline's sympathizers to revolt against Rome. After Fiesole had been razed by Julius Caesar,Florence was built on the Arno not far away,and the surviving Fiesolans,including descendants of Catilines' followers,were mixed in with the Roman colonists.[14] Therefore Florence had both a noble origin as well as a base one. Both the noble descendents of Rome and the base offspring of its enemy dwell in the city. The evil will fight with the just,and the pilgrim is destined to suffer an exile. Taking pagan Rome as the model and source of glory,Latini warns the pilgrim to protect the holy seed of Rome,which is the mission of a great 'Latin' poet.

Faccian le bestie fiesolane strame
Di lor medesme,e non tocchin la pianta,

〔14〕 See Inferno,op. cit. ,p. 241.

s'alcuna surge ancora in lor letame,
in cui riviva la sementa santa
di que' Roman che vi rimaser quando
fu fatto il nido di maliziatanta.

Let the Fiesolan beasts make straw of each other, but let them not touch the plant, if any still sprout in their manure, in which may live again the holy seed of the Romans who remained there when that nest of so much malice was built. (Inf. 15. 73-8)

Brunetto attributes the origin of Florentine evil to a genetic nature and therefore contradicts the Christian (and Augustinian anti-Manichaen) doctrine of the essential goodness of human nature. Moreover, when he talks about the pilgrim's mission, he ignores the grace of God and urges the pilgrim to pursue earthly glory.[15] Both kinds of determinism, according to Armour, are in compliance with the idea of Stoicism refuted by Augustine in the fifth book of the City of God. It is Stoic pessimism that earns Brunetto his eternal fate in hell. However insightful Armour's reading may be, he ignores the sins of other shades that are also running naked on the burning sand. Are they all supposed to be guilty of stoic pessimism?

In order to specify Latini's sin, commentaries have tried to investigate the life history of other "sodomites" who have been mentioned directly or indirectly inInferno 15 (Priscian, Francesco d'Accorso and Andrea de'Mozzi) and Inferno 16 (three Guelphs: Guido Guerra, Tegghiaio Aldobrandi and Jacopo Rusticucci). They only find the fact that these men were all great political writers or rhetoricians and not actual sexual sinners.[16] The historical evidence is supported by textual ones. At the end of Inferno 15, when Latini introduces his "compagni più noti e più sommi" ("more famous and accomplished companions," Inf. 15. 102) to the pilgrim, he describes them as "che tutti fur cherci/e litterati grandi e di gran fama,/ d'un peccato medesmo al mondo lerci" ("they were all clerks and great men of letters, of great fame, all fouled with the same sin in the world" Inf. 15. 106-108). It may be implied by Latini that the three men he introduces are punished for their writings. In Inferno 16, when the pilgrim addresses the three Guelphs, he says "sempre mai/l'ovra di voi e li onorati nomi/con affezion ritrassi e ascoltai" ("always your works and your honored names I

[15] To some extent, Latini's speech in Inferno 15 parallels Cacciaguida's speech in Paradiso 15-17. Both are not so off on their politics; but while Cacciaguida considers the pilgrim's mission as a poet to be a sacred one, Latini ignores the divine dimension of human wisdom. See Schnapp, Jeffrey T., The Transfiguration of History at the Center of Dante's Paradise (Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 40.

[16] See Richard Kay, "The Sin(s) of Brunetto Latini" Dante's Studies, CXII, p. 19-32.

have repeated and heard with affection" Inf. 16. 58-60).[17] In particular, one of the three Guelphs, Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, is called by Jacopo Rusticucci as "la cui voce nel mondo sù dovria esser gradita" ("whose words should have been more pleasing in the world above," Inf. 16. 41-42). All of these details imply the possibility that the 'sodomites' are sinners with respect to intellectual actions.

But are there substantial evidences that there is an intellectual dimension in the meaning of "sodomy"? If so, how to reconcile the literal meaning of "sodomy" as homosexuality and the possible allegorical meaning of the word in the context ofInferno 15? In order to investigate the exact meaning of sodomy, Richar Kay in his monograph on Inferno 15 makes an exhaustive study of all the appearances of the term "Sodom" in the Bible.[18] As he points out, the first appearance of this word is in Genesis 19. According to the narration of that episode, the men of Sodom once surrounded Lot's house and urged him to hand over the two angels who are disguised as men. "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, so that we may know (yada') them," (Genesis 19. 5) shout the men of Sodom. As Kay analyzes, in this episode there is no clear homosexual insinuation, and sex enters the story only when Lot offers his daughters as an exchange. In other biblical episodes, according to Kay, Sodom is an image of a community that has been perverted by its leaders. In other words, the allegorical meaning of the sin of Sodom in the Bible is a sin committed by false prophets who, with their perverse teachings, have misled God's people into profaneness. The perversion attributed to Sodom in the Bible is not primarily sexual and in fact may not be sexual at all. It is Philo Judaeus who first associates Sodom with homosexual practices, and in the centuries that follow, both meanings of the word (the sin of homosexuality and the sin of giving false teaching) are retained by the interpretative tradition. In Inferno 15 Dante, according to Kay, is playing with both meanings of Sodom. Therefore Latini, sharing punishment with sodomites, is a false prophet whose sin lies in misleading Florence and other Italian communities in their political life. It is for the corruptive influence of his teachings on Florentine politics that Dante regards his sin as contrary to nature.

Kay's critique sheds a new light onto the reading ofInferno 15. But what kinds of perverse teaching had Latini given? Many answers have been provided. Some commentaries retrace Latini's own works: Il Tesoro, Il Tesoretto; and in these works they find that Latini's political belief is at odds with Dante's. As Richard Kay understands, for Dante the natural political order is the worldwide monarchy, while Latini rejects monarchy in favor of the independence of city-states. It is Latini's insistence on the unnature political order that makes him share the punishment of sodomy, which is an activity that violates the natural, heterosexual desire of human being. Kay's idea is

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〔17〕 Susan Noakes, in her interpretation of canto 16 discusses the similarity and difference between Latini and other sodomites in the seventh circle of hell. "Brunetto distinguishes two subgroups in this zone of Hell: the file of the professionally lettered whom he allows temporarily to 'pass on ahead' (15. 33) and the other subgroup, which almost catches up with him and from which he emphatically wishes to keep himself separate: 'with whom I must not be' (15. 118). Brunetto thus forms a bridge that almost links the two subgroups but, for an important reason, does not completely do so. This second subgroup includes those who have, like Brunetto, served the Florentine city-state, at precisely the same period in its history as Brunetto did, and from within the same political party: all are prominent Guelphs of the third quarter of the thirteenth century. All three may be said to have been rhetoricians, in the sense that they provided political counsel for or against certain actions or served as political negotiators; they were unlike Brunetto in that they were not professional men of letters, and their rhetorical contributions were entirely oral, oratorical, while his was also written." See also Dante della Terza, "Canto XV: the Canto of Brunetto Latini." trans. Charles Ross, in Lectura Dantis: Inferno, eds. Allen Mandelbaum, Anthony Oldcorn, Charles Ross (University of California Press, 1998), pp. 191-212.

〔18〕 See Richard Kay, Dante's Swift and Strong: Essays on Inferno XV. (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1978), pp. 209-290.

supported by Susan Noakes. According to her study, the condemnation of the sodomites in Inferno marks Dante's break from his earlier Guelphism which is based on the notion that the city is a more natural form of government than empire,

> Thus, the Guelph ideal of civic autonomy is attractive on the surface, but ultimately unsatisfying to one who reflects on politics deeply. The notion that fellow citizens can, through deliberative rhetoric, create an autonomous state that will make possible earthly happiness is definitively rejected. What Brunetto Latini and the other three Guelph rhetoricians represent is a beautiful but ultimately superficial political ideal. Dante's placement of these counselors of civic autonomy with those who have done violence to nature has meaning not only in the erotic but also in the political domain. [19]

The erudite etymological analyses of Kay and Noakes are worth admiration. I also agree with him on the point that the unnatural aspect of Brunetto's sin is in thought, rather than in his sexual activity. But their conclusions still seems somewhat untenable, since as I have stated in the first chapter, Dante's thought on worldwide monarchy is a spiritual ideal, rather than a feasible policy. The freedom of city-states might not necessarily contradict Dante's idea of the ultimate end of the whole human race. For my part, I would like to stress the concluding episode of Brunetto's speech, when he entrusts his own book to the pilgrim,

> Sieti raccomandato il mio Tesoro,
> nel qual io vivo ancora, e più non cheggio.
> Let myTreasure be commended to you, in which I live still, and I ask no more.
> (Inf. 15. 119-120)

These verses, I believe, are the punch lines for characterizing Latini. It is by his excessive love of earthly glory and the inappropriate admiration of humaningegno that Brunetto is condemned as guilty of sodomy.

The ignorance of God that Latini shows in his seemingly right but actually wrong speech causes the pilgrim to give an ambiguous response to his teacher,

> ché 'n la mente m'è fitta, e or m'accora,
> la cara e buona imagine paterna
> di voi quando nel mondo ad ora ad ora
> m'insegnavate come l'uom s'etterna;
> e quant' io l'abbia in grado mentr'io vivo
> convien che ne la mia lingua si scerna.
> Ciò che narrate di mio corso scrivo,

[19] Susan Noakes "Canto XVI: From Other Sodomites to Fraud" in Lectura Dantis: Inferno, op. cit., pp. 219-220.

e serbolo a chiosar con altro testo
a donna che saprà,s'a lei arrivo.

for in my memory is fixed,and now it weighs on my heart,the dear,kind paternal image of you when,in the world,from time to time you used to each me how man makes himself eternal;and how grateful I am for that,as long as I live must be discerned in my language. What you narrate about my path I am writing down and keeping to be glossed,with other texts,by a lady who will know,if I reach her. (Inf. 15. 82-90)

Here the pilgrim's response turns out to be an ironic celebration of Latini. Taking the pilgrim to be a spiritual fruit of his intellectual culture,Latini urges the pilgrim to take care of the "la sementa santa di que' Roman" ("the holy seed of the Romans,"Inf. 15. 76-77),but the dialogue takes place on the barren sand;in the memory of the pilgrim,Latini's image is fixed,but his burned appearance defaces the good memory. He teaches the pilgrim how fame makes a man eternal,but the dialogue is in hell,where he suffers an eternal death. Latini acts as an educator,but as the pilgrim says,his words are to be glossed by a higher educator in heaven,that is,Beatrice.[20]

Having finished his speech,Latini turns back to his way like "quelli che vince,non colui che perde" ("the one who wins,not the one who loses,"Inf. 15. 124) — but there is no winner in hell. As infernal citizens,all the sinners in the città are eternal losers. With his excessive love of earthly glory,Brunetto becomes a model of the citizen of Cain's city. As a "worthy citizen" of Florence,his blasphemous teachings mislead young people. Just as the sodomites corrupt the bodies of others,so thinkers like Latini corrupt the souls of his fellow-citizens. His ingegno of writing and teaching,like the love of sodomites,is fruitless.

3. The bolgia of Thieves

At first glance,the Thomastic understanding of love of neighbor is the most obvious subtext ofInferno 24 and 25,the cantos of the thieves.[21] In Summa Theologica Ⅱ－Ⅱ,q. 66. a. 6,theft is defined as the fraudulent appropriation of other's property. Since this kind of fraud does harm to neighbors' belongings,it thereby damages the love of neighbor and the order of human society. It is by the reason of its harm to the common good that theft is considered to be a mortal sin. In light of this it is not accidental that at the beginning of Inf. 26,when the pilgrim leaves the bolgia of thieves,he makes a lamentation for the corrupted citizenry of Florence:

[20] Cf. Par. 14-17,where Cacciaguida's speech has been "glossed" by Beatrice for three times.

[21] The sin of theft has a particular importance for Dante,for he devotes two cantos to this topic. In Inf. 24 and Inf. 25,he displays great literary virtuosity in describing the metamorphoses of the souls of the thieves,and asserts in canto 25 that his art of writing about shape-changing has surpassed two of his major classical models,Ovid and Lucan. Many studies have been made of the Malebolgia of Thieves and different kinds of theft presented in these cantos have been discovered. According to these studies,Dante is concerned not only with the stealing of material goods,but also with the intellectual goods that are others' words. Dante the good thief,steals other classical poets' words to pursue his divine mission,while the bad thieves,the souls bound in the moat,steal public or sacred goods to satisfy their greed. What interests me more about the episode of thieves,however,are the biblical allusions in the text,and,only secondarily,Dante's relationship to the classical poets.

Godi,Fiorenza,poi che se' sì grande
che per mare e per terra batti l'ali
e per lo 'nferno tuo nome si spande!
Tra li ladron trovai cinque cotali
tuoi cittadini onde mi ven vergogna,
e tu in grande orranza non ne sali.

Rejoice,Florence,since you are so great that on sea and land you beat your wings,and your name spreads through Hell! Among the thieves I found five such citizens of yours that I feel shame,and you do not rise to honor by them. (Inf. 26. 1-6)

Yet the relationship between common good and theft cannot explain the poetic technique that Dante displays in the two cantos. In particular,why does Dante choose to represent the nature of theft by a series of metamorphoses?

For all the diversity in the three metamorphoses displayed in Inferno 24 and Inferno 25,there are two significant similarities. In the first place,in all three cases Dante uses a serpent as the punishment of the thieves. Vanni Fucci's metamorphosis happened after a serpent transfixed him at the crossing point of the spine and the shoulders (Inf. 25. 97-99). In Agnello's metamorphosis,after a serpent threw itself on the thief,both creatures lost their original form and combined to make a new,perverse image (Inf. 25. 51-72). In Cianfa's metamorphosis,the serpent pierced the thief's navel;later,the thief and the serpent exchanged their forms:the serpent is transformed into a thief and the thief into a serpent.

During the descriptions of these metamorphoses there are many direct allusions to sex and generation.[22] Soon after his reconstitution,Vanni Fucci made a scandalous gesture with his hands (Inf. 25. 2) with the intention of offending God:"Togli Dio,ch'a te le squadro!" ("Take them,God,I'm aiming at you," Inf. 25. 3) Fucci's gesture,signifying female genetalia,is considered sacrilegious and is forbidden in Dante's time by the laws of many Italian cities. With a gesture that imitates sexual intercourse,Fucci shows his attitude as a breaker of human law,the legitimacy of which,according to St. Thomas,comes from Divine Law.

Agnello's metamorphosis is of no less sexual reminiscence than Fucci's. It is like a portrait of sexual union,

li diretani a le cosce distese,
e miseli la coda tra' mbedue
e dietro per le ren sù la ritese.
Its hind feet it spread along his thighs,and put its tail between them,extending it up along his loins (Inf. 25. 55-57)

and in Ciafa's metamorphosis,sexual organs are mentioned implicitly,

[22] Anthony Oldcorn has written an essay to analyze Vanni Fucci's scandalous gesture. See his "Perverse Image" in Lectura Dantis:Inferno,op. cit. pp. 328-347.

Poscia li piè di rietro,insieme attorti,
diventaron lo membro che l'uom cela,
e 'l miserodel suo n'avea due porti.

Then the hind feet,twisted together,became the member which a man hides,and the other wretch out of his had extended two feet.(Inf. 25. 115-7)

It would make more sense if these sexual allusions appeared in the cantos of the lustful or of sodomy. But why do they appear in thebolgia of thieves?

The appropriateness of the snakes to the punishment of thieves,as Robert Durling points out,derives from the devil's temptation of Adam and Eve in Eden.[23] The devil,who stealthily entered the garden and took the shape of a serpent,is the first thief in Judeo-Christian history. By temptation the devil steals mankind from God. Following the devil's temptation and Eve's succumbing to it,Adam picked the forbidden fruit and thereby committed theft and all the other sins that followed.[24]

After the fall,man begins to suffer the tortures of sexual desires,and,deprived of eternal life,he can expect to obtain his immortality only by way of sexual union,which leads to the propagation of offspring. The concupiscent love between male and female after the fall,and the pain of sexual generation,therefore,are degradations of the right love that once existed between Adam and Eve. Such degradations are perfectly portrayed by Fucci,Agnello and Cianfa's metamorphoses,in which insinuations of generative organs and sexual intercourse are obviously included. It is exactly in reference to the original sin that Dante can legitimately puttheft,copulation,and procreation together in his poetic mimesis.

The story recorded in Genesis,however,might not be the only subtext of the sexual descriptions in cantos 24 and 25. As I have mentioned in chapter 2,in the second book of theConfessions Augustine explicates his adolescent theft of pears as a type of Adamic transgression. In that context Augustine stresses his sin as one of a misdirected love.

> The malice was loathsome,and I loved it. I was in love with my own ruin,in love with decay:not with the thing for which I was falling into decay but with decay itself,for I was depraved in soul,and I leapt down from your strong support into destruction,hungering not for some advantage to be gained by the foul deed,but for the foulness of it.[25]

As Augustine understands,his boyhood theft of pears is a copy of the theft of forbidden fruit committed by the first parent. It is by the memory of the original sin that the action of theft,the profane desire for transgression,and the sexual love that originates after the fall are placed together.

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[23] Cf. Inferno,op. cit. pp. 374.

[24] The thief is also identified by Jesus as the devil. See John 10. 1-18.

[25] Confessions 2. 9.

Dante's bolgia of thieves, then, strongly resounds with both biblical and Augustinian teaching.

As a result of the original sin of the first parent, there begins the cycling of life and death, as is stated inGenesis 3. 19:"for dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return." Such a human life-circle is perfectly acted out in Fucci's metamorphosis:

> NéO sì tosto mai né I si scrisse
> com el s'accese e arse, e cener tutto
> convenne che cascando divenisse;
> e poi che fu a terra sì distrutto,
> la polver si raccolse per se stessa
> e 'n quel medesmo ritorno di butto.
>
> Neither O nor I has ever been written so fast as he caught fire and burned and was all consumed, falling, to ashes; and when he was on the ground, destroyed, the dust gathered together by itself and instantly became the same one again. (Inf. 24. 100-105)

In the verses cited above, the combination ofO and I, in reverse, forms the pronoun "io," and expresses the most personal form of individual existence: I or the self. The soul of the thief, destructured in fire, regains his self from his own ash in a flash. The life-circle is forever rotating in him.

The thief, as is presented by Fucci, can never attain a state of permanent identity. Nor can any corrupted political entity. The thieves' native cities, Pistoia and Florence, also undergo continual flux, destruction and renewal, to no purpose. The meaningless rotations of political coups are precisely what Fucci proclaims in prophecy:

> Pistoia in pria d' i Neri sì dimagra;
> Poi Fiorenza rinova gente e modi.
>
> Pistoia first thins itself of Blacks; then Florence makes new its laws and people. (Inf. 24. 143-44)

As Joan Ferrante points out, it is noteworthy that Fucci, the only one who remains in human shape after the metamorphosis, describes himself as a beast and his city as a lair:[26]

> Vita bestial mi piacque e non umana,
> sì come a mul ch'i' fui; son Vanni Fucci
> bestia, ePistoia mi fu degna tana.
>
> Bestial life pleased me, not human, mule that I was; I am Vanni Fucci the beast, and Pistoia was a worthy lair for me. (Inf. 24. 124-6)

[26] Among all the commentators on the bolgia of thieves, Joan Frerrante seems to be the most sensitive one towards its political meaning. See her "Thieves and Metamorphoses," in Lectura Dantis: Inferno, op. cit., pp. 316-327.

For Fucci, from a corrupted city like Pistoia, bestial life is preferred, because Pistoia is set up for beasts and bestiality. In such a city one could be nothing but a beast in such a city. That is the very portrait of Dante's Italy, the earthly hell.

* * *

Besides the cantos investigated above, reminiscence of civitas diabolic can be found here and there in Inferno.[27] The depiction of the infernal civitas culminates in the lowest circle of hell. There, the pilgrim hears Ugolino's story. Uglino, the traitor of his city, was imprisoned with his sons in a tower by Ruggieri, the Pisan Archbishop. Over a final period of six days without food, the children fall one by one because of hunger. The father, in grief, "a brancolar sovra ciascuno" ("took to cropping over each of them," Inf. 33. 73), but later "più che 'l dolor, poté 'l digiuno" ("fasting had more power than grief," Inf. 33. 75).[28] In the afterlife he is allowed by the justice of hell to gnaw forever upon the skull of the Archbishop. Ugolino, a former citizen of Pisa, becomes the father wolf he dreamed about in prison. Imprisonment in the tower coincides with Uolino's situation in hell and combines earthly life and the afterlife into a hopeless duration. Ugolino's story shows us how a man, when the civic order is destroyed, ceases to be a human political animal and instead becomes a beast. We see in him that the outcome of self-love is the negation of citizenship.

In De Civitate Dei 14 and 15, Augustine relates will or love (amor) to the coming into being of two kinds of civitas, the earthly by the love of self, even to the contempt of God and the heavenly by the love of God.[29] The earthly city, moved by "invidentia illa diabolica (by the diabolical, envious hatred),[30] will finally ended with eternal strife and destruction, which has been revealed by the moral system of Dante's Inferno.

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[27] In the circle of the avaricious and the prodigal, for example, the pilgrim sees the two groups of sinners, dancing their round, break over each other as they collide. When they reverse directions after this impact, they look back and cry "Perché tieni" ("why do you hold?") and "Perché burli?" ("why do you toss?") (Inf. 7. 22-31). Cursing each other' crime, the two groups cannot come to reconciliation, and no round is completed in their dance. In the waves of the river Styx, the souls of the irate "si percotean, non pur con mano/ma con la testa e col petto e coi piedi,/ troncandosi co' denti a brano a brano" ("kept striking each other, not only with/hand, but with head and breast and feet, tearing/each other apart with their teeth, piece by piece" Inf. 7. 112-4). The anger which used to kindle their desire to fight still tortures them in the world below. In many cases like these, pride, self-love and disordered desire become the very punishments (contrapasso) of the sinners.

[28] I quote the original text here because there has been much debate about this line. It is not sure whether this line may mean Ugolino fed on his children's bodies. See Inferno, ed. and trans. Robert M. Durling, introduction and notes by Ronald L. Martinez and Robert M. Durling (Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 529.

[29] Cf. De Civitate Dei. 14. 28: "Terrenam scilicet amor sui usque ad contemptum Dei, caelestem vero amor Dei usque ad contemptum sui. Denique illa in se ipsa, haec in Domino gloriatur. Illa enim quaerit ab hominibus gloriam; huic autem Deus conscientiae testis maxima est gloria." (the earthly by the love of self, even to the contempt of God; the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self. The former, in a word, glories in itself, the latter in the Lord. For the one seeks glory from men; but the greatest glory of the other is God, the witness of conscience.) The original Latin text of De Civitate Dei is from website: http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/august.html. The translation is Marcus Dods'. See the City of God, trans. Marcus Dods, D. D. (Random House, 1950), pp. 477.

[30] Ibid. 15. 5, p. 482.

中文题目:
魔鬼之城:但丁的地狱

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关键词:但丁;地狱篇;城

摘　要:但丁的地狱代表着从原罪而来的所有罪过,仅凭主人公自己的力量是无法克服这些罪过的。《地狱篇》序篇中出现的三只野兽体现了地狱的微缩结构,即灵魂内在秩序中三种堕落的欲望:恶意、暴力和不节制。本文考察了《地狱篇》中分别出自这三种罪过的三个片段,第 5 歌,第 15 歌,第 24-25 歌,试图论证,奥古斯丁"上帝之城"相反,建立在托马斯式道德体系上的地狱是一个"魔鬼之城"。论文同时考察了三个片段对奥古斯丁文本的暗用,不论这些用典是多么讽刺,它们都在文本中起着重要作用。