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GUITTONE'S ORA PARRÀ, DANTE'S DOGLIA MI RECA, AND THE COMMEDIA'S ANATOMY OF DESIRE

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LE LETTERE - FIRENZE
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**Ora parrà** is well known as the canzone whose opening stanza so forcefully announces the transition from a poesis inspired by love to one driven by moral didacticism, or, in the terms of the manuscript headings, the transition from “Guittone” to “Frate Guittone”.\(^1\) In the canzone’s first two stanzas, Guittone strikes a blow at the inherited courtly problem of the lover-poet’s conflicted allegiance, his oscillation between fealty to God and fealty to the lady. Guittone simply repudiates the courtly ethos, first by denying the courtly linkage between Love and worth, especially poetic worth:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ora parrà s’eo saverò cantare} \\
\text{e s’eo varrò quanto valer già soglio,} \\
\text{poi che del tutto Amor fug[gh]’ e disvoglio,} \\
\text{e più che cosa mai forte mi spare:} \\
\text{ch’a om tenuto saggio audo contare} \\
\text{che trovare – non sa né valer punto} \\
\text{omo d’Amor non punto;} \\
\text{ma’ che digiunto – da vertà mi pare,} \\
\text{se lo pensare – a lo parlare – sembra,} \\
\text{ché ’n tutte parte ove distringe Amore} \\
\text{regge follore – in loco di savere:} \\
\text{donque como valere} \\
\text{pò, né piacer – di guisa alcuna fiore,} \\
\text{poi dal Fattor – d’ogni valor – dissembra} \\
\text{e al contrar d’ogni mainer’ assembra? (1-15)}
\end{align*}
\]

The poem is a testing ground; its purpose is to prove that the poet, now that he flees Love, is still worth what he used to be worth: “s’eo varrò quanto valer già soglio” (2). The repeated forms of *valere* (“varrò”, 2; “valer”, 2; “valer”, 6; “valere”, 12; “valor”, 14) keep the tension alive; the issue on the table is a man’s worth, his moral/poetic measure. Does he measure up, now that he no longer desires desire? To desire desire is a prerequisite of the courtly code; to eschew this mode of being is to unmoor oneself from a powerful governing paradigm and implicitly to pose the question of what to put in its place. But first, before the substitution, comes the process of
detachment, of severing love/desire from worth, a process which finds semantic focus in the densely conceptualized coinage *disvolere*, to “dis-want”, to “not-desire”. Desire thus enters this poem in the antithetical form “disvoglio”; our poet does not desire that which is usually desired – Love or desire itself. Rather, he flees and diswants Love (“Amor fug[g]h’ e disvoglio”, 3), for where Love holds sway there reigns madness, instead of wisdom: “regge follore – in loco di savere” (11).

“Savere”, the wisdom that is crowded out by love-induced “follore”, points us in the direction of the solution; what Guittone will be proposing in this canzone is a world in which *regge savere* – *in loco di follore*. The wisdom embodied in the noun *savere* and its variants (the adjective *saggio*, the verb *sapere*) gives further conceptual focus to the first stanza, offering the correct alternative to the false wisdom of the “om tenuto saggio” (5) who does not know (“non sa”, 6) that one need not be pierced by Love in order to write poetry. Moreover, “savere” (11) at the end of the stanza has the effect of retrospectively motivating the canzone’s great first verse: we are now in a position to understand the significance of “saverò cantare”. “To know how to sing” is not an idle phrasing, but a way of signifying a poesis that will be informed by *savere*, the new poesis that Guittone will achieve by dint of repudiating “Amor” and “follore”. To achieve this new poesis the poet has only to follow the instructions that introduce the second stanza; he must make Right (“Diritto”) the helmsman of his ship, place honored Wisdom (“orrato Saver”) at the tiller, and sail with God as his star:

Ma chi cantare vole e valer bene,  
in suo legno a nochier Diritto pone  
e orrato Saver mette al timone,  
Dio fa sua stella, e ’n ver Lausor sua spene (16-19)

One rarely encounters a citation from *Ora parrà* that ventures beyond the canzone’s first nineteen verses cited above. While the extraordinary energy of the *incipit* (which surely lodged in Dante’s mind as he composed “qui si parrà la tua nobilitate”, *Inf.* II, 9), and the strong posture of the opening cadenza, along with its autobiographical resonance, have preserved the poem from critical oblivion, scant attention has been paid to the rest of the canzone. And yet the remaining strophes continue the indictment of courtly values in a profoundly suggestive fashion. Indeed, the radical nature of Guittone’s critique will prove fertile for Dante’s *Doglia mi reca* and thence for the *Commedia* itself.

*Ora parrà* indicts courtly love by refusing to segregate it. This move allows the poet first to conflate courtly love with lust and then, even more interestingly, to conflate lust with desire in any form. We can see Guittone’s strategy reflected in the transition from the first stanza’s “disvoglio” – an
emblem for the poem’s anti-courtliness – to the second stanza’s morally-infused “carnal voglia” (21): we have moved from a negation, a refusal, to a positive redefinition, which tells us that, once stripped of its sustaining ideology, courtly love is nothing but lust, carnal desire. Proceeding along a trajectory that continues to broaden the conceptual base of desire, Guittone then passes beyond “disvoglio” and “carnal voglia” to simple “voglia” (here the imperative form of the verb volere, positioned as the first word of the third stanza): “Voglia in altrui ciascun ciò che ’n sé chere” (31). In order to see how Guittone navigates this transition, we must look back to stanza two:

ché grande onor né gran bene no è stato
acquistato – carnal voglia seguendo,
ma promente valendo
e astenendo – a vizi’ e a peccato;
unde ’l sennato – apparecchiato – ognora
de core tutto e di poder dea stare
d’avanzare – lo suo stato ad onore
no schifando labore:
ché già riccor – non dona altrui posare,
ma ’l fa lungiare, – e ben pugnare – onora;
ma tuttavia lo ’ntenda altri a misora. (20-30)

Noting that neither honor nor good can be attained by following “carnal voglia”, Guittone recommends a life of abstinence from vice and willingness to toil; only thus can one advance one’s “stato ad onore” (26). A bourgeois ethic replaces the courtly paradigm: in lieu of carnal delight Guittone proposes not monastic withdrawal but a life of civic morality and virtuous moderation, measured toil and measured gain leading ultimately to an honored position in the community. It is at this point that Guittone introduces an apparent non sequitur; the last three verses of stanza two tell us that “riches do not give anyone repose but rather distance it, and good striving brings honor, as long as one pursues it with measure”. How have a rejection of carnal desire and an endorsement of civic virtue led to a condemnation of wealth? How is “riccor” connected to a discourse on carnal desire? The answer is that Guittone is concerned lest, having exhorted us to reject carnal desire, he may seem – in his pursuit of the good life – to endorse the equally pernicious desire for material gain. The apparent non sequitur is dictated by the recognition that a repudiation of carnal desire – lust – must not be taken as an endorsement of material desire: avarice.

The movement from one type of desire to another – from “carnal voglia” to “riccor” – begins to effect a contaminatio between different kinds of desire. The introduction of wealth into the discourse sets the stage for the
fourth stanza's dramatic and rhetorically striking assertion that not many acquire gold; rather gold acquires them ("ma l'oro loro", 53):

In vita more, e sempre in morte vive,
omo fellon ch'è di ragion nemico;
credendo venir rico, ven mendico,
ché non già cupid' om pot' esser dive:
ch'adessa forte più cresce vaghezza
e gravezza – u’ più cresce tesoro.
Non manti acquistan l'oro,
ma l’oro loro; – e i più di gentilezza
e di richezza – e di bellezza – han danno. (46-54)

Having first demystified courtly love, calling it lust, carnal desire, Guittone then links love to other forms of immoderate and excessive desire, all rooted in cupidity. The lexicon for desire expands in this strophe to include the adjective “cupido” and the noun “vaghezza”, in place of the earlier “voglia”: a cupidinous man (“cupid' om”, 49) will never become rich, for his desire will grow along with his treasure: “[...] più cresce vaghezza / [...] u’ più cresce tesoro” (50-51). Desire for material wealth pits man against reason, making him reason's enemy, “di ragion nemico” (47); the result is a kind of death in life: “In vita more, e sempre in morte vive” (46).4

The metaphorical death-in-life to which Guittone consigns the seeker of material wealth carries over into Doglia mi reca as one of the canzone’s three structural metaphors devoted to expressing the antithesis between virtue and vice; these are defined by Foster and Boyde in their commentary as “life-death”, “man-animal”, and “lord-slave”.5 But the impact of Ora parrà on Doglia mi reca goes beyond the recuperation of metaphors to the very heart of the discourse on desire that we have been analyzing. Before looking more closely at the confluence between these two canzoni, a few points require clarification. First, in claiming a Guittonian influence on Dante’s canzone, I am following in the wake of Patrick Boyde who, in the only sustained critical discussion of Doglia mi reca to date, insists on Guittone’s presence: “Many of the words in Dante’s poem, its syntax, the predilection for repetition, antithesis and the affective figures, are, as we have seen, among the hallmarks of Guittone’s style. Even the structure of the strophe is unlike that of the early Dante, and very Guittonian, in its length, in the high proportion of settenari, and in the succession of couplets in the sirima”.6 However, the canzone that Boyd posits as the intertext for Doglia mi reca is Guittone’s canzone on chastity, Altra fiata aggio già, donne, parlato, whose structure he says “is quite typical of Guittone and moreover bears a general resemblance to that of Doglia mi reca” (p. 324). In particular, he notes the words that conclude the fourth stanza of Altra fiata – “Vertù è possession
donne riccore, / lo qual non perde alcun, se non lui piace” (65-66) – which he characterizes as “strikingly similar to those of the equivalent section in Doglia mi reca” (p. 324).

Virtue is the possession of all wealth; by implication, material possession is no possession at all, but loss. This, as we have seen, is the thematic core of Ora parrà. It is also fundamental to Doglia mi reca. In Altra fiata, on the other hand, the verses cited by Boyd are quite anomalous, a momentary invocation of a theme that the canzone does not in any way develop. Altra fiata begins with the poet-lover’s repudiation of an earlier self; as a former entrapper of women, he will now offer them advice on staying “free” (stanza I). It then moves from the particularity of women’s relation to vice and virtue in stanza II, where we learn that because it was through Eve that all humans perished, and through Mary that all humans are saved, women must hate vice and love virtue more than men, to two generically moralizing stanzas: vice made devils of angels (stanza III), and virtue almost has the capacity to make man and God one (stanza IV). In stanza V these general considerations find a gender-specific focus that will not again be relinquished (and this lengthy canzone has not yet reached the half-way mark): chastity is, of all the virtues, the sine qua non for women:

ma ciò che non vi vol nente fallire
è castità, for cui donna gradire
non, con tutt’altri vertù, mai poria. (70-72)

If absolute chastity is not the goal, then chastity within marriage is acceptable (stanza VI); better that a woman die than take a lover (stanza VII). Stanza VIII circles back to the persona of the lover-deceiver of the first stanza, informing the ladies that the men who say they love them deceive them, while stanza IX touches on other traits that become a woman, such as a courteous tongue. Stanza X brings the moral matter to conclusion, advising women to hide their beauty in order to better preserve their chastity.7

The point that I wish to make here is that Altra fiata is a much more homogeneous poem than either Ora parrà or Doglia mi reca; it is not marked by the disjunction between the courtly and the moral that is so striking in the other two. In Altra fiata the opening address to women does not co-exist uneasily with the later moral developments; rather, since the virtue to be extolled is chastity and the vice denounced is unchastity, the moral components of the canzone flow straightforwardly from its courtly – or rather, anti-courtly – premise. While it is true, as Boyd points out, that both Altra fiata and Doglia mi reca move from addressing women to moral concerns,8 the transition to chastity in Guittone’s canzone is hardly brusque; rather, chastity is the logical moral focus for a discussion of virtue in womanhood. By contrast, the transition to avarice in Dante’s canzone is
startling enough that it causes Foster and Boyde to comment that in verse 67 Dante ‘‘stumbles’ upon the main theme – avarice’’ (p. 305). The problem with this formulation is the assumption that avarice is the ‘‘main theme’’ of the poem, an assumption transmitted through a commentary tradition that routinely affixes to Doglia mi reca the label ‘‘Dante’s canzone on avarice’’. In fact, Doglia mi reca is an expansive meditation on desire that takes the lessons of Guittone’s Ora parrà to heart; it is Ora parrà’s suggestive conflation of lust and greed, love and avarice, that furnishes the key precedent for Doglia mi reca.

In Doglia mi reca Dante grafts a discourse on avarice onto a courtly materia and deliberately allows the suture marks to show. Indeed, the forcible yoking together of two discourses normally kept separate, a joining whose non-normative nature is purposefully kept in evidence by the visible suture, is exactly Dante’s point: like Guittone in Ora parrà, but much more systematically, Dante links carnal desire to desire for wealth, thus exploding the courtly ethos that would privilege love over baser desires and illuminating the common ground of all concupiscence. In other words, we are heading toward the radical disjunctions contained by the single moral framework of Inferno V, which embraces both the rude carnality suggested by Minos’s tail and the courtly refinement of Francesca; we are heading toward the juxtaposition of Francesca and Ciacco; we are heading for that composite of all desire – all cupiditas – that is la lupa.

But let us proceed in chronological order, and direct our attention to Doglia mi reca. The canzone begins aggressively, refusing to exculpate women from their share of blame in matters of love; it is a woman’s duty to deny her love to men who cannot match in virtue what she offers in beauty. Treating female beauty as the objective correlative of male virtue, Dante inveighs, in the first stanza, against the “base desire” (“vii vostro disire”, 6) that would prompt a woman to love an unworthy man. Nothing could be more anti-courtly than this hurling of the accusation of vil disire against donne – the poet seems to acknowledge as much, noting that he speaks “parole quasi contra a tutta gente” (4). Stanza II develops the absence of virtue that is stated as a given in stanza I (“poi che non c’è vertù”, 17), launching all three of the metaphorical couplings mentioned earlier – uomo/bestia, servo/signore and vita/morte. Men have distanced themselves from virtue and therefore are not men but evil beasts that resemble men (“omo no, mala bestia ch’om simiglia”, 23); this thought causes the poet to marvel at man’s willful fall from lord to slave, from life to death:

O Deo, qual maraviglia
voler cadere in servo di signore,
o ver di vita in morte! (24-26)
Also noteworthy in the second stanza is the sustained presence of voyage imagery in a passage that moves from the allegorized voyage of virtue through life to a definition of virtue as the “possession that is always beneficial”. Virtue is the mini-allegory’s protagonist, journeying forth as vassal to the rational soul (the “donna” of verse 33) and happily serving the soul during the brief voyage of human life:

lietamente esce da le belle porte,  
a la sua donna torna;  
lieta va e soggiorna,  
lietamente ovra suo gran vassallaggio;  
per lo corto viaggio  
conserva, adorna, accresce ciò che trova (32-37)

In the paradoxes that conclude the stanza, virtue is the servant that alone makes man master (“tu sola fai segnore”, 41) as well as the one possession that always benefits mankind: “tu se’ possession che sempre giova” (42). Very suggestive with respect to Dante’s thought process here is the transition from the metaphor of life as a voyage to the discourse of desire, signalled by the word “possession”. This same discursive and conceptual sequence is the hallmark of the passage that figures life as a pilgrimage in *Convivio* IV, xii (a passage that is, as I have argued elsewhere, virtually a blueprint for the *Commedia*). As the *Convivio* passage moves from the figuration of the soul as a pilgrim on the path of life to the objects that the pilgrim successively desires, so in *Doglia mi reca* we move from a figuration of life as voyage to that which propels us along the path: namely, desire, the desire to possess.

Because the desire to possess will never be satiated by any of the earthly desires the soul encounters along the way, the pilgrim-soul moves successively from one desire to the next – greater – desire: “Onde vedemo li parvuli desiderare massimamente un pomo; e poi, più procedendo, desiderare uno augellino; e poi, più oltre, desiderare bel vestimento; e poi lo cavallo, e poi una donna; e poi ricchezza non grande, e poi grande, e poi più” (*Conv.* IV, xii, 16). We begin, as children, by desiring an apple, a source of nourishment but also – due to its sweetness – of pleasure; as anyone who has fed small children knows, fruit is more desirable than equally nourishing but less pleasurable foods. Utility and affect are therefore both satisfied by this first object in the pyramid of desire. (Also important and symbolically weighted is the choice of the apple, which serves to inscribe the problem of limits and trespass into this analysis of human desire from the very beginning.) We then desire a little bird, a source of amusement and delight, as well as a repository for our youthful affect, a friend. Thence we move to beautiful clothing, an object of desire that suggests the burgeoning need for social integration and position: not just any clothing is desired, not just
sufficient protection from the elements, but beautiful clothing, clothing for display. With the desire for a horse, all the previous components of desire have been fused: the horse brings delight and friendship, but most of all is a signifier of the social status that ‘knighthood’ – being a cavaliere – still holds for bourgeois Florence. The donna signifies all the above but to a greater degree: more delight, more affect, more potential social prestige. (Pedigree comes into play here, for both horse and woman; indeed, the proximity of horse to woman in this simultaneously very philosophical and very realistic scale of values offers us a view of woman as commodity in Dante’s thought that should not be overlooked.) Finally, the ladder of desire ends with wealth, an item whose ability to generate unending wearying desire is conveyed by the very description, which culminates in the openended peacelessness of “più”: “ricchezza non grande, e poi grande, e poi più”. The eternal craving of the she-wolf, laden with all desire (“di tutte brame”, Inf. I, 49), is proleptically inscribed into that “e poi più”.

The objects on this fascinating list begin by alternating between living and non-living objects of desire: the first, “un pomo”, is not alive; the second, “uno augellino”, is alive; the third, “bel vestimento”, is not alive; the fourth, “lo cavallo” is alive, as is the fifth, “una donna”. With the transition from “lo cavallo” to “una donna” we are faced with two items of increasing value on the living side of the equation; they will be followed by ricchezza non grande, ricchezza grande, più ricchezza, that is by three items of increasing value on the ‘dead’ side:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NON-LIVING</th>
<th>LIVING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. un pomo</td>
<td>2. uno augellino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. bel vestimento</td>
<td>4. lo cavallo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. ricchezza non grande</td>
<td>5. una donna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. ricchezza grande</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. più ricchezza</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In other words, the latter half of the pyramid moves from a concentration of objects that are affectively as well as biologically alive, objects that can in different measures reward affection by showing love – or, if we approach the matter more in the spirit of the Vita Nuova, objects that can redeem affection by teaching us that love is its own reward – to a concentration of objects toward which any affective inclination is entirely misplaced, because they are truly ‘dead’. The balance is tipped toward death (there are three items in the ‘living’ column and five in the ‘non-living’) by the extraordinary importance
assigned to “ricchezza”, the only item for which the use of qualifying adjectives (“non grande”, “grande”, “più”) secures a triple presence.\textsuperscript{15}

The list of Convivio IV, xii, 16 tells us in essence that desire can lead to death-in-life. It figures the series of transitions that lead from the innocent desires of childhood (innocent, but already shadowed by the pomo) to desires that, if not innocent, are still fully comprehensible in the light of basic human needs – for spiritual nourishment, for warmth, for love – and finally to the desire for something cold, inert, dead. By degrees we reach a stage where what we desire is no longer commensurate with our fundamental human needs; while the desire to possess a woman can still be glossed as an extended version of those needs, the desire for greater and greater wealth cannot. Something has happened, the mechanism has changed; one could say that our minds have intervened, for desire propelled by need has been replaced by an intellectual construct: desire propelled by desire.

The fact that the desire for wealth is an intellectual enterprise is reflected in the Convivio chapter that contains the list we have been studying, a chapter that starts out by condemning the desire for wealth on the basis of wealth’s inherent ‘imperfection’, and then is concerned to clarify the difference between the desire for wealth and the desire for knowledge. After all, if wealth is imperfect because one’s desire for it continues to grow with each new acquisition, never achieving satiety, the same could be said for knowledge: “Veramente qui surge in dubbio una questione, da non trapassare sanza farla e rispondere a quella. Potrebbe dire alcuno calunniatore de la veritate che se, per crescere desiderio acquistando, le ricchezze sono imperfette e però vili, che per questa ragione sia imperfetta e vile la scienza, ne l’acquisto de la quale sempre cresce lo desiderio di quella” (Conv. IV, xii, 11). The rebuttal claims that whereas the desire for knowledge is successive, offering many scaled opportunities for reaching happiness or ‘perfection’, the desire for wealth is unilateral and homogeneous, leading only to increased desire: “E così appare che, dal desiderio de la scienza, la scienza non è da dire imperfetta, sì come le ricchezze sono da dire per lo loro, come la questione ponea; ché nel desiderare de la scienza successivamente finiscono lì desiderii e viensi a perfezione, e in quello de la ricchezza no” (Conv. IV, xiii, 5).

This view was dramatically introduced in the Convivio’s earlier ‘chapter on desire’, III, xv, where Dante asserts that we humans must be able to attain perfection since otherwise our desire would have been created to no end, or indeed to the end of frustrating us, since it would lead only to further desire: “imperò che desiderrebbe sé sempre desiderare e non compiere mai suo desiderio” (Conv. III, xv, 9).\textsuperscript{16} Dante concludes the thought by giving the counter-example – one with great relevance for Doglia mi reca – of the cursed miser, “l’avaro maladetto”. The miser is doomed to failure since, by pursuing an infinite number, a number that cannot be attained, he desires always to desire: “e in questo errore cade l’avaro maladetto, e non s’accorge
che desidera sé sempre desiderare, andando dietro al numero impossibile a giungere” (Conv. III, xv, 9). “Desidera sé sempre desiderare”: in this definition of the miser as a man who desires always to desire we come to the ideological crossroads where avarice meets the courtly lover. The courtly lover, we recall from our discussion of Ora parrà, is precisely one who desires to desire; thus, repudiation of the courtly stance can be summed up for Guittone in the formula “Amor fug[h]’ e disvoglio”, where Amor disvoglio replaces an implicit Amor voglio.

The common ground of avarice and love brings us back to Doglia mi reca, whose real topic is the transition from object five to object six in the Convivio catalogue: how is it that on the path of life/desire a man moves from desiring “una donna” to desiring “ricchezza”? Let us recapitulate. After an anti-courtly opening stanza castigating women for their vile desire of non-virtuous men, the second stanza briefly deplores the triune effects of virtue’s absence – men are as animals, falling from master to slave, from life to death – before praising virtue, the “possession che sempre giova”. With this paradoxical gloss – paradoxical since, by definition, possessions are that which can never fully satisfy, must always disappoint, and therefore, again by definition, cannot be “always beneficial” – the discourse of desire is squarely joined: the issue is, what do we desire to possess? What are the possessions that we want? And it is with the possibility of misdirected desire, desire not for the “possession che sempre giova” but for other possessions which are not beneficial, that the canzone will now be preoccupied, asking why it is that man wants to fall (“qual maraviglia / voler cadere”, 24-25). For, although virtue is the only possession worth having, man does not behave logically, taking virtue as his possession, but rather submits to make a possession of his very self: he enslaves himself to vice.

The submerged logical link between the phases of this argument is desire: the canzone moves from the ladies’ base desire to possess non-virtuous men in the first stanza, to virtue, the only possession worth desiring in the second. Men enslave themselves through their desire; by not desiring to possess virtue, the only possession of real worth, and by desiring to possess what is not virtuous, they are doubly enslaved, being, as the third stanza puts it, slaves “not of a lord, but of a base slave”: “Servo non di signor, ma di vil servo” (43). Once we grasp the logic that links the two phases of the argument, the courtly to the moral, both viewed as discourses of desire, the fourth stanza’s engagement of issues not normally associated with poems addressed to ladies is less startling. The man whom the ladies are not supposed to love, the man enslaved to vice, is like a servant following his master on a sorrowful path without knowing where he is headed; he is like the miser pursuing the material possessions (“avere”) that master us all:
Chi è servo è come quello ch’è seguace
ratto a segnore, e non sa dove vada,
per dolorosa strada;
come l’avaro seguittando avere,
ch’a tutti segnoreggia. (64-68)

Boyde makes much of the fact that at this stage in the canzone Dante introduces a simile, and that “the simile turns out to be his true theme!” (p. 326). But much more is at stake here than the delayed engagement of avarice, viewed as the poem’s “true theme”. The comparison is itself the message; we must not forget that the one who is being compared to the miser (“come l’avaro seguittando avere”), the “servo” of vice of the preceding verses, is the man whom the women are being told not to love. Thus, Dante offers as the type of the bad lover a miser, namely, someone who desires wrongly and excessively in a different but analogous sphere. This is a scandalous comparison, absolutely not normative within a courtly paradigm which, even while critiquing the lover, protects his desire from comparison with such base alternatives. Continuing in verses whose irascible energy adumbrates the Commedia, Dante depicts the “mad desire” (“folle volere”, 71) that induces a man to run after that which can never give him satisfaction:

Corre l’avaro, ma più fugge pace:
oh mente cieca, che non pò vedere
lo suo folle volere
che ’l numero, ch’ognora a passar bada,
che ’nfinito vaneggia!
Ecco giunta colci che ne pareggia:
dimmi, che hai tu fatto,
cio avaro disfatto?
Rispondimi, se puoi, altro che “Nulla”.
Maladetta tua culla,
che lusingò cotanti sonni invano!
Maladetto lo tuo perduto pane,
che non si perde al cane!
ché da sera e da mane
hai raunato e stretto ad ambo mano
ciò che si tosto si rifà lontano. (69-84)

We noted the same miser in the Convivio, presented in very similar terms: the adjective maladetto, which in the canzone qualifies the miser’s “culla” and “pane”, in the treatise is transposed to the avaro maladetto himself; the hoarding verb from the canzone, raunare, is featured throughout the imprecations against avarice in Convivio IV, xii; the futile search for “'l
numero, ch’ognora a passar bada, / che ’nfinito vaneggia” (72-73) is repeated in the treatise’s “andando dietro al numero impossibile a giungere” (Conv. III, xv, 9). Most importantly, the force and vitality of this strophe alert us to the fact that Dante has here tapped into a wellspring of his poetic identity. Much energy is generated by the brief inscribed dialogue, the brutally straightforward question (“dimmi, che hai tu fatto”, 75) and the reply in direct discourse (“Rispondimi, se puoi, altro che ‘Nulla’”, 77). This stanza, certainly the most dramatic of the poem (a feature perhaps related to the poet’s preceding statement that he will now make his discourse more accessible to his female audience), is replete with imagery: not only voyage imagery (“e non sa dove vada, / per dolorosa strada”, 65-66), which is heightened to flight imagery (“Corre l’avaro, ma più fugge pace”, 69), but also the metaphor of the eyes of the mind, with which the miser’s “mente cieca” (70) cannot see. Brutally effective as well are the retrospective curses of the miser’s cradle, which enticed in vain his infant slumbers, and of the bread which has been wasted on him throughout his life. The point is that all that has been invested in this life has come to nothing, because this life itself has been invested in nothing. The miser has hoarded and grasped the illusory, the fleeting, the void: “ciò che si tosto si rifà lontano” (84).

The miser is the figure through whom Dante explores the possibility of expanding the problematic of desire from the courtly and private to the social and public; he is an emblem of the completed transition from the enclosed lyric world of the Vita Nuova, where desire is synonymous with eros, to the larger social concerns of the Commedia and the treatises, where desire as cupiditas afflicts the body politic as well as the body. Already in the Convivio the social ills provoked by an insatiable desire are underscored: “E che altro cotidianamente pericola e uccide le cittadi, le contrade, le singulari persone, tanto quanto lo nuovo raunamento d’avere appo alcuno? Lo quale raunamento nuovi desiderii discuopre, a lo fine de li quali sanza ingiuria d’alcuno venire non si può” (Conv. IV, xii, 9). And in the Monarchia’s discussion of the greatest good to which society can aspire – justice – Dante explicitly states that the opposite of justice is cupiditas: “iustitie maxime contrariatur cupiditas” (I, xi, 11).

Misura is the key concept with respect to the deployment of our desire in the social sphere, as Doglia mi reca makes clear: virtue is praised for having been endowed by heaven with “misura” (“colt’hai nel ciel misura”, 40), and the hoarding and holding of the miser are characterized by precisely their “dismisura”: “Come con dismisura si rauna, / così con dismisura si distringe” (85-86). Dismisura is also expressed with the adjective folle: the miser’s “folle volere” (71) blinds him to the futility of his endeavor. It is noteworthy that Ora parrà features both misura (“ma tuttavia lo ‘ntenda altri a misora”, 30) and its opposite; the “folle volere” of Dante’s miser is preceded by the “talento folle” (78) against which Guittone inveighs in his
poem’s congedo. All of this will make its way into Inferno VII, the canto of avarice and prodigality, where the sinners were so mentally blinded while alive that they conducted themselves in spending without “misura”:

[...] Tutti quanti fuor guerci
sì de la mente in la vita primaia,
che con misura nullo spendio ferce. (Inf. VII, 40-42)

The goddess Fortuna too, charged with supervising the distribution of wealth, will move from Doglia mi reca to the Commedia; while she figures negatively in the canzone, where Dante attacks her, implying her failure to distribute properly (“che fai, fera Fortuna, / che non solvete quel che non si spende?”, 90-91), in canto VII she will be providentially endowed and thus infallible.

Although these points of literal confluence between the canzoni and Inferno VII are worth mentioning, I am more interested in pursuing to its logical conclusion in Dante’s thought the conflation between types of desire that is the hallmark first of Ora parrà and then of Doglia mi reca. Dante begins the seventh and final stanza of Doglia mi reca by re-addressing himself to the ladies, to whom he has unveiled the baseness of the men who gaze upon them (the “viltà” of the male admirers corresponds to the ladies’ own initial “vil [...] desire”, 6): “Disvelato v’ho, donne, in alcun membro / la viltà de la gente che vi mira” (127-28). Since the type of the bad lover offered earlier was the miser, these verses bring home the radical notion that the miser who yearns to possess “avere” (67) (what Verga will call la roba) could very well be the same man gazing upon — longing to possess — a woman. (Remembering the Convivio’s list, where “ricchezza” follows “una donna”, we note that a superseding desire need not cancel out its predecessors.) Given that a woman’s potential lover is vicious, “a union of vice” (“In ciascun è di ciascun vizio assembro”, 132), the love that results can only be turbid and confused (“per che amistà nel mondo si confonde”, 133), since the good of the woman requires a corresponding good from the man to draw forth love: “ché l’amorose fronde / di radice di ben altro ben tira” (134-35). Essentially, then, love for human beings is inseparable from virtue, from ethics; where there is no corresponding good, there is no love. A woman could only consider herself loved by men like these if she redefined love, “giving the name of love to a bestial appetite”: “chiamando amore appetito di fera” (143).20 Such a woman should perish, since she disjoins her beauty from natural goodness and believes love to be “outside of reason’s garden”:

Oh cotal donna pera
che sua biltà dischiera
da natura bontà per tal cagione,
e crede amor fuor d'orto di ragione. (144-47)

The idea of a love that is "appetito di fera" and "fuor d'orto di ragione" allows us to postulate its converse, namely, a love that is human rather than feral and that is within reason's garden. In other words, these verses supply the crucial discriminant between types of 'love', or more properly between lust and love, namely reason, the faculty that renders us human rather than bestial. The anatomy of love that results, with its two opposing categories — "amore appetito di fera" versus "amor [...] d'orto di ragione" — will find confirmation in the Commedia. But it is a view that is by no means unconflicted at the time of Doglia mi reca, a period when Dante was still writing lyrics that refute the very possibility of a love existing within reason's garden. The canzone that is presumed to be Dante's last, the so-called "canzone montanina", Amor, da che convien pur ch'io mi doglia, is a Cavalcantian testament to a deadly eros, a love-death that exerts an ineluctable force. Similarly, neither reason nor virtue can prevail over love in the sonnet Io sono stato con Amore insieme, written to Cino da Pistoia most likely between 1303 and 1306. Here, a decade or so after spiritualizing Beatrice in the Vita Nuova, Dante characterizes love as a force that "rides" him, reining him in and spurring him on, dominating reason and free will, and admits to having first experienced love in his ninth year, thus, in the words of Foster and Boyde, "implicitly admitting to a carnal love for Beatrice" (p. 323):

Io sono stato con Amore insieme
da la circulazion del sol mia nona,
e so com'egli affrena e come sprona,
e come sotto lui si ride e geme.
Chi ragione o virtù contra gli sprieme,
fa come que' che 'n la tempesta sona (1-6)

"Sotto lui si ride e geme": the lover of the sonnet is "beneath" love's dominion, literally sommesso, to use the verb that in Inferno V characterizes the lustful, those who submit reason to desire: "i peccator carnali, / che la ragion sommettono al talento" (Inf. V, 38-39). The comparison that follows, whereby the attempt to withstand passion with reason or virtue is as futile as the attempt to make oneself heard during a tempest, inevitably evokes Francesca, who speaks to the pilgrim during a brief respite in the buffetting violence of the infernal storm ("noi udiremo e parleremo a voi, / mentre che 'l vento, come fa, ci tace", 95-96). The lovers of Inferno V are reminiscent of the lover of Io sono stato, with the crucial difference that they are condemned for having allowed their reason to be vanquished, while he is not. The sonnet goes on to tell us that within Love's domain free will ("liber arbitrio") has no
power – that it is in fact not “free” (“franco”) – and that our deliberative
faculty (“consiglio”) fights in vain to resist Love’s dominion:

Però nel cerchio de la sua palestra
liber arbitrio già mai non fu franco,
sì che consiglio invan vi si balestra. (9-11)

Foster and Boyde comment that the sonnet’s “consiglio” is “the act of ‘la
virtù che consiglia’ which in Purg. XVIII, 61-74 seems virtually equivalent
to free will itself as the power to withhold or release a rational assent to
natural inclinations” (p. 324); they further note that a “comparison of the
present passage [in Io sono stato] with Purg. XVIII, 40-74, strongly
suggests that the carefully reasoned affirmation of free will in the latter text
was made with the present denial of free will (where erotic stimuli at least are
concerned) in mind” (p. 324). I agree, and offer the following textual echo as
confirmation of the link between Purgatorio XVIII and Io sono stato. The
souls found in this canto are “ridden” by their good will and just love, “cui
buon volere e giusto amor cavalca” (Purg. XVIII, 96); the sonnet’s
protagonist is also ridden by love – but not by “giusto amor”.

The argumentation that in the Commedia will be marshalled to refute Io
sono stato is already advanced in Doglia mi reca; although the context is
avarice, not lust, the argument works in the same way, for both are – and this
is the point of the canzone – sins of excess desire. In its critique of the
miser’s unruly passion, Doglia mi reca tells us that the fault lies in the
insufficient exercise of reason: “Colpa è de la ragion che nol gastiga” (95).
The canzone continues: if reason were to offer as justification for her poor
performance the excuse that she is overcome, possessed by desire, possessed
(one could add) by the desire to possess – “Se vol dire ‘I’ son presa’” (96)21
– she merely demonstrates the weakness of her resistance, since the master
should not be overcome by the servant: “ah com poca difesa / mostra segnore
a cui servo sormonta” (97-98). The language of being possessed – “I’ son
presa” – is of course Francesca’s language: “Amor [...] prese costui” (Inf. V,
100-01), “Amor [...] mi prese” (103-04). Indeed, it is the quintessential
language of desire, used in the great explication of love of precisely
Purgatorio XVIII – “così l’animo preso entra in disire” (31) – where too the
point will shortly be made that being possessed by desire is no excuse for
wrong action, for before we act on our desires they must be passed through
the screen of reason.

When, in Doglia mi reca, Dante makes the logical leap from the bad
lover to the miser, welding together eros and avarice, he creates a node of
enormous significance for his future, no less than an adumbration of that
she-wolf whose cupidity subtends both the lust of Paolo and Francesca and
the political corruption of Florence. Courtly literature offers us many
examples of lovers whose passion is outside of reason's garden, who are impelled by the *folle volere* that in *Doglia mi reca* drives the miser, but courtly literature never dreams of calling the immoderate lover a miser; nor would the protagonist of Dante's sonnet *Io sono stato*, which boldly proclaims that reason has no power over love, expect to find himself compared to an *avaro maladetto*! By making the comparison, Dante skewers courtly values, as Guittone had done before him, and then goes further: the comparison of the lover to the miser lays the foundation for the moral edifice of the *Commedia*, which is based on the idea that everything we do can be analyzed back to its root in desire, that desire or love is the motive force for all our actions: “amore, a cui reduci / ognè buono operare e 'l suo contraro” (*Purg.* XVIII, 14-15; emphasis added). It is thus not surprising that the language of *Doglia mi reca*, a profound meditation on desire, resonates not just in the canto on avarice, *Inferno* VII, but throughout the *Commedia*.

Ultimately, the *Commedia*’s lexicon of desire is Ulyssean, keyed not just to the she-wolf but to the rebellious wings and mad flight of that voyager. I have argued previously that Dante’s mature ideology differs from the *Convivio* in blurring the treatise’s sharp distinction between material and intellectual cupidity. Dante’s mature conviction that the desire for knowledge can become immoderate in ways that render it not so different from other forms of immoderate desire leads him to invoke Ulysses at the threshold of the sins of incontinence, in *Purgatorio* XIX, in the first half of a canto whose second half is devoted precisely to avarice. (The linking of material and intellectual cupidity is further highlighted by the juxtaposition of Ulysses, in *Purgatorio* XIX, and the she-wolf, cursed in very the next canto: “Maladetta sie tu, antica lupa” [*Purg.* XX, 10].) The presence of *Doglia mi reca* in the metaphoric tissue of *Purgatorio* XIX, which is noted but not explored by Foster and Boyde, is therefore highly significant; the canzone’s presence signals Dante’s awareness that the anatomy of desire conducted throughout this section of the *Purgatorio* found an early sophisticated expression in *Doglia mi reca* (not coincidentally the canzone he offers in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* as witness to his stature as poet of rectitude). The striking consistency of Dante’s iconography for desire is suggested by the Ulyssean texture of *Doglia mi reca*, as indicated by the proleptically Ulyssean adjective “folle” (preceded by “follia” in verse 52) as well as by the sustained voyage imagery. In the canzone’s sixth stanza the voyage imagery sprouts wings, as Dante compares virtue to a falconer attempting to attract the falcon/miser to her lure:

> Fassi dinanzi da l’avaro volto
> vertù, che i suoi nimici a pace invita,
> con matera pulita,
> per allettarlo a sé; ma poco vale,
ché sempre fugge l’esca.
Poi che girato l’ha chiamando molto,
gitta ’l pasto ver lui, tanto glien cale;
ma quei non v’apre l’ale (106-13; emphasis added)

These are the lines echoed in the Purgatorio, in the falcon imagery at the end of canto XIV and again in canto XIX; Foster and Boyde note that the Purgatorio’s “two passages represent a later transformation of the present quasi-allegorical scene: abstract virtue becomes the concrete cosmos that with its God-manifesting beauty can tempt man towards goodness” (p. 307). While in canto XIV we humans are figured as following the devil’s lure and ignoring the call of the heavens, in canto XIX the lure is figuratively in the hands of God, a situation analogous to that of the canzone: “li occhi rivolgi al logoro che gira / lo rege eterno con le rote magne” (Purg. XIX, 62-63).

These verses are immediately followed by a simile comparing the pilgrim’s upward motion toward the next terrace to the movement of a falcon toward the meal that tempts him:

Quale ’l falcon, che prima a’ piè si mira,
indì si volge al grido e si protende
per lo disio del pasto che là il tira,
tal mi fe’io; e tal, quanto si fendè
la roccia per dar via a chi va suso,
n’andai infin dove ’l cerchiar si prende.23

(Purg. XIX, 64-69; emphasis added)

While the miser-falcon of Doglia mi reca is oblivious to the “pasto” thrown before him by virtue, and refuses to spread his wings (“ma quei non v’apre l’ale”, 113), the pilgrim-falcon of Purgatorio XIX is propelled by “lo disio del pasto” (66) to fly up. The next verse will place him on the mountain’s “quinto giro” (Purg. XIX, 70), where he will participate in the purgation of avarice, with the result that the in malo flight imagery of Doglia mi reca – specifically attached to a miser – has been rewritten and given a positive valence in Purgatorio XIX.

This procedure is not atypical; in fact the Purgatorio is the canticle where the poet lays bare the need for desire as the propulsive force for all life-journeys, informing us in canto XVIII that desire is spiritual motion (“disire, / ch’è moto spiritale”, 31-32): no desire, in other words, signifies no motion; no motion, as we know from our passage through the earth’s frozen core, is death. So, we need to desire; the problem lies in how we go about it, or – to adopt the voyage metaphor – in which path we take. This much was clear from the Convivio’s pilgrim passage, which offers the paradigm of two kinds of spiritual motion, exemplified by two voyagers, a “buono
and an "erroneo camminatore": "lo buono camminatore giunge a termine e a posa; lo erroneo mai non l'aggiunge, ma con molta fatica del suo animo sempre con li occhi gulosi si mira innanzi" (Conv. IV, xii, 19). The adjective chosen to describe the restless avidity of the erroneous camminatore is guloso - a choice that is a telling emblem for the profoundly interwoven nature of desire: one could say, indeed, that Dante makes the same point when he puts a graft of the tree of knowledge on the terrace of gluttony, thus suggesting that gula may imply avidity of a metaphorical as well as material sort. Of course, the point is implicit also in the Convivio list, which begins after all with "un pomo"; if we bring to bear the full implications of that apple, we find the transgressive desire for knowledge - a fully Ulysscean dismisura - already implicated in the gluttonous yearnings of a young child. The lover/miser of Doglia mi reca, a lupine "bestia sanza pace" (Inf. I, 58) in his mad pursuit of an ever-receding peace ("Corre l'avaro, ma più fugge pace", 69), becomes the erroneous camminatore who "con molta fatica del suo animo sempre con li occhi gulosi si mira innanzi", who in turn adumbrates Dante's last great figural node for excess desire: la lupa/Ulysses.

NOTES


2 Note Guittone's fondness for this kind of coinage, e.g. "disragion" in stanza III of this canzone. Even more interesting, since it reveals Guittone's awareness of the implications of "disvoglio", is the statement from canzone XXVII: "ch'eo trovai / de disamor, ch'amai" (26-27).

3 See T. Barolini, Dante's Poets: Textuality and Truth in the "Comedy", Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984: "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" (p. 122).

4 The contest between reason and desire continues through the poem: stanza V elaborates on the "descrezion" that was given to mankind, while the congedo finds Guittone despairing of his ability to counter "talento folle" (78) with his teaching.

5 Dante's Lyric Poetry, edited by K. Foster and P. Boyle, 2 vols, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967, II, 297. All citations from Dante's lyrics are from this edition. With regard to the provenance of the metaphors in Doglia mi reca, Contini cites Guittone for the servant metaphor: "un 'sormanco servo' che regge un re chiamandolo 'vil servo' era in una comparazione di Guittone (XLVIII 183-5); vil servo era, anzi, tipica formula guittioniana, che figura anche in due dei sonetti sui vizi capitali (178 e 184)' (Rime, p. 464). The passage indicated by Contini from Guittone's canzone XLVIII, Onne vogliosa d'omo infermitate, is worth citing in full: "Non ben regno si regge, / somer re cavalcano: / servire esso e orrare / regi è nulla pregare. / Ma, for
comparizione, / voglia sovra ragione, / corpo sor spirto è via piggior, sornmanco / servo in sé regger franco / e regie regger vil servo appallando" (177-85). Particularly interesting is Guittone's explanation that, taken out of metaphor ("for comparizione"), his king and servant refer to reason and desire, "voglia" and "ragione". The need to wed reason to desire is Dante's theme in *Doglia mi reca*.


7 There is one more stanzetta, the eleventh, which is in fact the only part of *Altra fiata* that is routinely cited; it is the famous metapoetic coda in which Guittone meditates on the technical difficulties encountered by a poet embarked on a new kind of poetry. This last strophe of *Altra fiata* serves as the ideal counterpart to the first strophe of *Ora parrà*: where one is joyful and self-confident, the other shows us a rather grim poet, whose inability to find the form to accommodate his abundant "ragione" causes him grief—"und'e'o rancuro". Moving to the points of contact between *Altra fiata* and *Doglia mi reca*, I would note the presence in both canzoni of metapoetic passages in which the poets deal with the obscurity of their verse. While Guittone laments his necessary obscurity, for which he can find no remedy, Dante, who places the equivalent passage at his canzone's midpoint rather than at its end, uses it to announce a change in tone: "Ma perché lo meo dire util vi sia, / discenderò del tutto / in parte, ed in costrutto / più lieve, / sì che men grave s'intenda: / che rado sotto benda / parola oscura giugne ad intelletto; / per / chi parlar con voi si vole aperto" (53-59). This triumphant assertion of a pragmatic poetics of utility, which will bend to its audience of women, is of great interest, not least because it is misleading: the style of the canzone is not noticeably lightened—in the sense of simplified—after the poet's declaration. It is, however, more dramatic, especially in the strophe that immediately follows.

8 Boyde writes of *Altra fiata*: "Up to and including the seventh stanza [...] the structure of this canzone is not unlike that of *Doglia mi reca*, inasmuch as it is addressed to women, and passes from vituperation of vice and praise of virtue in general to the praise of a particular virtue and the denunciation of a particular vice" (p. 324).

9 More precisely, *Doglia mi reca* is labeled "la canzone della liberalità", with the caveat that "finalmente la canzone della liberalità si converte nella canzone dell'avarizia" (*Rime*, p. 462). The reason for this label is the canzone's presumed destination in the *Convivio*: "From Con. I.viii.18 we know that Dante intended in the fifteenth and last section of that work (which in fact he never wrote) to discuss the virtue of liberality, and it is commonly and plausibly assumed that the discussion would have taken the form of a commentary on the present canzone, *Doglia mi reca*. Only indirectly, however, is this poem about liberality; directly it is mainly an onslaught on the vice opposed to it, avarice" (Foster and Boyde, p. 295). The label "canzone della liberalità", then, is a kind of shorthand for Dante scholars which has less to do with glossing the poem in question than with building imaginary symmetries between Dante's existing lyrics and non-existent sections of the *Convivio*. It is dismaying to find these formulae thoughtlessly relayed to new generations of readers; thus, Piero Cudini's paperback edition of 1979 simply repeats Contini's formulation from 1946, informing us that the poem "si svolge, da canzone della liberalità, a canzone dell'avarizia" (*Le rime*, edited by P. Cudini, Milano: Garzanti, 1979, p. 246). I should mention that I too have called *Doglia mi reca* Dante's "poem on avarice" (*Dante's Poets*, p. 108).

10 Even as a lyric poet Dante likes the persona of writing against sinners and wrong-doers, going so far as to refer to *Le doeli rime*, another moral canzone, as "Contra-li-erranti mia" (141). As Foster and Boyde note, "so Dante names his canzone after the *Contra Gentiles* of St. Thomas" (p. 227).

11 There are traces of these verses in *Purgatorio* XVI's description of the newborn soul as a young female child setting forth on the path of *lite*: "Esce di mano a lui che la vagheggia / prima che sia, a guisa di fanciulla / che piangendo e ridendo paragleggia, / l'anima semplicetta che sa nulla, / salvo che, mossa da lieto fattore, / volontier torna a ciò che la trastulla" (*Purg.*, XVI, 85-90).
At least one commentary to *Doglia mi reca* seems to pick up this trace, glossing "torni" as follows: "ma torna signifca anche 'si volge', come in *Purg.*, XVI, v. 90, detto dell'anima; 'Volentier torna acio che la trastulla'”; see *Rime della maturità e dell'esilio*, edited by M. Barbi and V. Pernicone, Firenze: Le Monnier, 1969, p. 610. The canonzone continues to be felt in the description of the soul running after the goods of life: “Di piccio bene in pria sente sapore; / quivi s'inganna, e dietro ad esso corre, / se guida o fren non torce suo amore” (*Purg.* XVI, 91-93). The latent presence of *Doglia mi reca* in this passage is not surprising: there is, as we shall see, enormous overlap between *Doglia mi reca* and *Convivio* IV, xii, and the latter is, as I have argued previously, "translated into verse at the very heart of the *Purgatorio*", i.e. precisely in the above verses (*The Undivine Comedy: Dethelogizing Dante*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992, p. 104).

12 See *The Undivine Comedy*, especially pp. 99-101 and the rest of chapter 5, which elaborates on the interconnectedness of the sins of excess desire as treated by Dante in the second half of the *Purgatorio* and previously in the *Convivio*. In this paper I have attempted to illuminate the development of Dante’s anatomy of desire by bringing in material that predates the material treated in my book. An earlier effort in this direction may be found in my essay "Dante and the lyric past", in *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, edited by R. Jacoff, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp. 14-33.

13 One notes the transition from the definite article, “lo cavallo”, to the indefinite, “una donna”: does “la donna” smack too much of the reified abstractions of the courtly lyric? But is “una donna” any improvement? Or does the indefinite article more obviously point to a commodity? It could be argued that woman is as much a commodity when she serves as a man’s beatifier as when she satisfies his desire more than a horse but less than wealth. That “lo cavallo” and “una donna” continue to exert a contiguous hold over the male imagination is suggested by a recent reading of the debate on woman in the *Orlando furioso*: Ariosto is paraphrased to the effect that “Only when knights learn to distinguish between women and horses, can they begin to be happy”; see P. J. Benson, *The Invention of the Renaissance Woman*, University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992, p. 122.

14 I was tempted to read the list’s concluding “e poi piú” as a generic reference to limitless unspecified desire, in which case there would be only two specific references to wealth per se (“ricchezza non grande, e poi grande”), followed by an all-encompassing undifferentiated desire. Richard Lansing has, however, dissuaded me from this reading, pointing out the unanimity of the *Convivio*’s editors in agreeing that Dante here presents a gradation with respect to “ricchezza”. Indeed, Busnelli and Vandelli note the “gradazione che qui Dante fa” (*Il Convivio*, edited by G. Busnelli and G. Vandelli, 2 vols, second edition, Firenze: Le Monnier, 1964, II, 146); their comment is picked up by Cesare Vasoli, *Conv.* p. 669. Upon further reflection the traditional reading does seem also to capture the sense of openness that is conveyed by “e poi piú” since desire for wealth is – of all forms of desire – by definition limitless, openended, and undifferentiated.

15 Dante’s implication that the temptations, and the corresponding sins into which one could fall, become greater as one grows older is belied by the traditional order of the seven cardinal sins, the order that he follows in the *Purgatorio*. In other words, if one extrapolated an order for the sins of excess desire from the *Convivio* list, one would arrive not at the order of the *Purgatorio* – avarice, gluttony, lust – but at an inversion in the positions of gluttony and lust: while avarice (*ricchezza*) is the most serious sin in both orders, in the *Convivio* it is followed not by gluttony (the juvenile “pomo”) but by lust (“una donna”).

16 Chapter xv is the conclusive chapter of Book III; I call it the “chapter on desire” because it offers the most succinct definition of desire found in the treatise: “lo desiderio [è] cosa defettiva; ché nullo desidera quello che ha, ma quello che non ha, che è manifesto difetto” (III, xv, 3). The discussion of desire in III, xv is anticipated in III, vi and echoed in the chapters cited in the preceding paragraph, IV, xii and IV, xiii.
“Promettendo le false traditrici sempre, in certo numero adunate, rendere lo raunatore pieno d’ogni appagamento; e con questa promissione conducono l’umana volontade in vizio d’avarizia” (IV, xii, 4); and “e pongasi mente, per avere oculata fede, pur a la vita di coloro che dietro a esse vanno, come vivono sicuri quando di quelle hanno raunate, come s’appagano, come si riposano. E che altro costidianamente pericola e uccide le cittadi, le contrade, le singulari persone, tanto quanto lo nuovo raunamento d’avere appo alcuno? Lo quale raunamento nuovi desiderii discuopre, a lo fine de li quali sanza ingiuria d’alcuno venire non si può. E che altro intende di meditare l’una e l’altra Ragione, Canonica dico e Civile, tanto quanto a riparare a la cupiditade che, raunando ricchezze, cresce?” (IV, xii. 8-9; emphasis added in both quotations). By choosing language that stresses the root uno Dante anticipates his argument regarding the defectiveness of wealth as an object of desire; it is defective precisely because of its homogeneity, its oneness: “Quello [desiderio] veramente de la ricchezza c propriamente crescere, che è sempre pur uno, si che nulla successione quivi si vede, e per nullo termine e per nulla perfezione” (IV, xiii, 2; emphasis added).

Rhetorically, this feature is a trademark of our poet; we think, for instance, of the extended dialogue in the final ecphrasis of Purgatorio X, describing the encounter of Trajan and the widow.

Discussing Doglia mi reca as a companion piece to Tre donne, Foster and Boyle comment perceptively: “It was fitting that these two poems should close the series of Dante’s ethical canzoni: their respective themes – justice in Tre donne, avarice in Doglia mi reca – are those that lay closest to his heart as a moralist. Indeed, if we understand avarice in a broad sense as equivalent to cupiditas or cupidigia (and that certainly is its sense in Doglia mi reca) we shall see that the two themes are really one – are the positive and negative sides of that one fundamental insight which was to find its clearest didactic expression in the chapter on justice in the Monarchia” (p. 296).

The last stanza’s “appetito di fera” echoes the canzone’s earlier imputations of bestiality, beginning with “omo no, mala bestia ch’om simiglia” in stanza II, followed by “falsi animali” in stanza V.

Note how this briefest of personification allegories achieves its vigor, as in the case of the implicit dialogue between the poet and the miser in stanza IV, through the use of direct discourse.

See The Undivine Comedy, chapter 5, especially pp. 109-12. This chapter also treats the relation between the textual presence of Ulysses in Purgatorio XIX and the subsequent terraces; see pp. 105-08.

The similarity between Purgatorio XIV, 145-51 and Purgatorio XIX, 62-69 includes the reprise of the rhyme words “tira”, “gira”, and “mira”.