

The Art of Memory in Dante

By

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Note on Translations

The English translation of Dante's works as well as other primary sources are incorporated within the text, and they are placed in parenthesis after the original quotations. I have seldom left longer citations in the text in the original language, providing English translations in the footnotes. When one or more English translations of Dante's works exist, I have tried to cite from the most recent edition, though I have occasionally chosen a specific translation to underscore specific components or constituents or terms in the original texts. Some terms from Dante's works (i.e., *disio*, *velle*, *trasumanar*) and several Latin concepts (i.e., *recordatio*, *cogitatio*, *intellectus possibilis*) have been included in the text in italics with the English translations in parenthesis. I have chosen to incorporate translations of specific philosophers or theoreticians or theologians (Latin, and French) in the footnotes, while providing my English paraphrase in the text. With respect to philosophical concepts from the Greek or Arabic language, I decided to directly provide either the English translation from the most recent edition or my own English restatement. All translations have been chosen to particularly enhance this study's line of argumentation. More precisely, they are aimed at putting into dialogue literary and philosophical concepts and to facilitating the reading and the interpretation of this dissertation by the members of the evaluating oral committee.

Abstract

The distinction between memory as a natural faculty and memory as a form of art in Dante entails a twofold implication. Memory, on the one hand, is a human faculty whose primary source is the repository of wisdom—that is to say, of knowledge and learning or acquainting and familiarizing result with the classical disciplines of philosophy, theology, rhetoric, and history. A natural memory is also recognized as a process of *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process), which consists respectively of reminiscence and thought processing. In broader and more common contexts, memory refers to both storage and reminiscence, and it is largely attached to earthly features and bodily characterizations. The art of memory in Dante, on the other hand, consists of a shapeless representation of memory. Its gradual development begins with metaphysical memory through ontological truths like the correlation of soul, mind, and memory. Unlike the lower realities of *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, the art of memory allows Dante the pilgrim to absorb the supernatural, higher state of paradisiac forces like the bliss of the Empyrean in *Paradiso*.

Furthermore, memory has always been considered an art form from antiquity until today, and because natural memory fails the pilgrim in *Paradiso* XXXIII, this study aims at examining a way to restore the pilgrim's awareness after the failure of biological memory. One way to do so is by first reconnecting the present state of being to a network of otherworldly experiences. Second, by reproducing a course of study around the inherently regenerative power that occurs with the art of memory in Dante's final verses from the last canto of *Paradiso*. This process begins with a metaphysical correlation between finite and non-finite beings, between the states of humanly perceptible experience and the pilgrim's imagination. (Chapter Two). This study

subsequently aims at the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and love, from which the art form of memory shifts from a purely metaphysical standpoint (first evolution of the art of memory in Dante) to a largely theological development (second evolution of the art of memory in Dante). Since the art of memory in Dante is subject to a Christianized metaphysics (Chapter Three), this theologizing process allows Dante to expand his divine knowledge while evolving with the art of memory—that is, towards a heavenly concept of the *ars memorativa* in Dante.

This last aspect sustains Dante's remaking of his final image of salvation (Chapter Four) by means of *expectatio*, the transmuted desire (*disio*), and the will (*velle*). When Dante is finally advancing towards the ultimate realm of the Empyrean where he encounters the otherworldly ethereal blissfulness from angels and various saints' figures (Saint Bernard, etc.), the art of memory in Dante remains the active agency that brings Dante into reconciliation with his own Christian values. This ultimately shows how the paramount nature of the *ars memorativa* can never perish in the face of unearthly experiences, which ultimately indicates that this art form is embodied in the heavenly principles of Dante's poetry.

The art of memory is an image of eternity, whose indivisible present extends itself to all times.

~ Saint Bonaventure

Introduction

When we think of a human faculty, we tend to habitually think of memory, and when we think of memory in the Middle Ages, we also think of memory as an art form. Memory makes knowledge into useful experience and combines pieces of information-becoming-experience into what we call ideas. With the many standpoints from which memory can be examined, I employed the main argument of my dissertation with respect to Dante and the *ars memorativa* (art of memory). While the art of memory in Dante engages with important texts like the *Vita Nuova*, the *De Monarchia*, the *Rime*, the *Epistle to Cangrande della Scala*, the *Questio de aqua et terra*, and the *Convivio*, this research is predominantly centered on the *Divina Commedia*.¹ On the one hand, these literary, political, and philosophical writings that Dante composed throughout the years assist in shaping the course of the art of memory in Dante. On the other hand, these writings and specifically the numerous verses taken from Dante's *Commedia* (the order of the verses and the canticles will often not be chronological) will be tailored to see how

¹ *Ars Memorativa* originates from Greece, and the first to adopt this mnemonic technique was the poet Simonides of Ceos (ca. 557-467). Simonides proved his skill by remembering and identifying the images of people sitting at a banquet, as well as the exact time and space in which the event took place. This aspect will be fully elaborated upon later in this study.

important the less-studied distinction between memory as a natural faculty and memory as a form of art is.

Despite the symbolically fascinating representations that the art of memory in general has generated in philosophy, theology, history, and literature, there is still an overall lack of research about this art form in Dante studies. To best investigate memory in Dante's writings we need to not only examine memory through mnemonic functions and operations, but through the previously suggested twofold distinction between memory as a natural faculty and as a form of art.² This research aims to identify and examine the *ars memorativa* in Dante for a highly dynamic audience, and the subject knowledge can be appraised in highly academic environments where this same study subject could potentially evolve as a result. This introduction will indeed serve to enhance and invigorate the course of the art of memory in Dante. I will introduce this study by first discussing general background and context, as it will allow us to contextualize the theory of memory prior to Dante. The research problem will be identified, and the gap in current research will be explained. From this point on, this introduction describes the research aims, objectives, and questions to be answered. I will also explain why this research is worth undertaking and will provide value to Dante studies and to the broader academic world.

To begin with some historical background, memory has been considered an art form from antiquity, long before Dante's time. The art of memory begins with the poet Simonides of Ceos, who recited a lyric poem in honor of his host and in praise of Castor and Pollux. The story takes place at a banquet where Simonides and other guests are gathered. By the time Simonides goes outside, the banquet is destroyed. At the same time, Simonides is able to remember the

² While the adjective mnemonic might have various meanings such as reminder, cue, etc., mnemonic will be adopted as a term throughout this study in specific reference to the operations and functions of memory.

places where each one of the guests was sitting at the table.³ According to this experience, it has been suggested that these were the principles of the art of memory of which Simonides is said to have been the inventor.⁴ In order for him to remember those exact places, Simonides must have taken into account the significance of time, particularly when he proves to remember by going back to the past experience. According to this specific circumstance that Simonides has lived or experienced, memory operates according to its space and time. More importantly, through this single experience, Simonides is not only underlining the significance of analyzing the sources of the past rooted in human experiences from earthly circumstances, but he is also underscoring the idea that human memory operates in signs. These symbols take the form of images and places, and what precisely characterizes this mnemonic procedure as one of the main principles of the art of memory, is that these images (i.e., guests sitting at the table) act as cues for the development of memory because they are both pertinent to the realm in which they live, and they are signals that call up matters that they have recognized and reassessed in their minds.⁵

A few centuries after Simonides' experience, there was a precise interest in examining the nature of the art of memory as a physical process involving psychic organs and the idea of training. Part of the tenuously fragile nature of memory resonates with the position of memory in

³ For a full account on the story of Simonides of Ceos, see, Cicero, *Ad Herennium*, trans. by H. Caplan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), III, xxii & xxiv.40. See also the section on memory from the same volume III, xvi-xxiv. Cicero, *De oratore*, trans. by E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1948), II, lxxxvi, 351-354. Finally, Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, trans. by H. E. Butler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), V, xi.2.

⁴ Quintilian states (*Institutio oratoria*, XI, ii.14-16) that there is disagreement among the Greek sources as to whether the banquet was held at Pharsalus, as Simonides himself seems to indicate in a certain passage and is recorded by Apollodorus, Eratosthenes, Euphorion and Eurypylus of Larissa. Furthermore, a collection of references to Simonides in ancient literature is in *Lyra Graeca*, ed. and trans. by J. M. Edmonds (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, 1924), 246.

⁵ Aristotle, "On the Memory and Recollection," in *On the Soul Parva Naturalia On Breath*, ed. and trans. by W. S. Hett (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), 291-297. See also: Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 14. Carruthers gives a well detailed explanation in part of her chapter "Having a Place to Put Things". See also pp. 14-16.

the human brain.⁶ While Thomas Aquinas has reshaped the mnemonic function of the so-called *vis memorativa* among the five interior senses of the brain, this mental process was first categorized by Galen's influential medical compendium. By classifying the five senses of *sensus communis* (common sense), *phantasia* (the fantastic), *vis imaginativa* (the composing imagination), *vis aestimativa* (opinion beliefs), and *vis memorativa* (memorativa), Galen respectively classifies the first two senses in the anterior part of the brain, the next two senses in the medial, and *vis memorativa* in the posterior part of the brain.⁷ In fact, this is the moment when medieval encyclopedists like Bartholomaeus Anglicus often paired active and passive states of these mental functions, ascribing them to these distinct areas and functions in the brain.⁸ Additionally, the three interior senses of *imaginativa*, *aestimativa*, and *memorativa* are actively involved in crafting a mental image, and just like thought and imagination, memory is also *vis*, namely an agent and a power.⁹ Yet, Galen and other anatomists believed that since *vis memorativa* is positioned in the very back of the human brain, this position will also appear as the least responsive in the active operation among the five internal senses. In fact, *vis memorativa* represents the final stage of this constructive process, where the conceptions in the forms of phantasms and mental images are finally crafted, retained, and recollected by memory.

⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *In De anima commentarium*, ed. by R. A. Gautier and trans. by K. Foster and S. Humphries (London: Routledge, 1951) Lectio 13.III, par. 792.

⁷ For clear definitions of each of these five senses, see the glossary of terms at the end of my dissertation. To delve more into the natures of these five senses, see Galen, *On the Natural Faculties*, trans. by Arthur John Brock (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 163-184. There is also an important figure of the human brain as a late medieval diagram in which the mental procedures are depicted. It is in a mainly French-language manuscript, Cambridge University Library MS. Gg I.I, written in England in the fourteenth century. In this same diagram, the various activities involved in thought are drawn as compartments linked by channels and between the various activities in the brain. There is also another image in this manuscript accompanying this selection, which is adapted from a schematic drawing of the brain in Cambridge University Library MS Gg. 1.1, fol. 490v.

⁸ Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *On the Properties of Soul and Body*, ed. and trans. by R. J. Long (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1979), 45-59.

⁹ To better consider the idea of the mental image penetrating through the eye from which begins this constructive process, see pages 9-10 from the main Introduction.

Medical awareness of the enhancement and maintenance of memory is a continuing theme in ancient and medieval writings on the subject. The idea of physical or bodily memory through mental images means understanding the functionality and the origins of images. From Galen until the present day, it has been indicated that memory is in the posterior ventricle of the human brain.¹⁰ There is also an apocalypse with fifty-five illustrations, a manual of sins, elementary prayers, and psalms. Moreover, the five cells in the brain that are active in the construction of human thought resonate with the Galenic tradition of the three ventricles or pouches in the brain, which are identified with common sense and image-making power, the *cogitatio* power (thought process), and the *memorativa* power.¹¹

It was believed that the estimative power connects to the image-making process by reacting to sensory material with an immediate positive or negative response. Both common sense and the imagination are connected directly to the eyes, and they are understood in the first instance as the power of shaping sensory impressions into intelligible mental images. Galen claims that the cerebellar *vermis* (worm) is drawn plainly at the juncture of the cogitative (also called imaginative) power and the remembering power.¹² This construction was thought to act as a kind of valve that vigorously opens and closes the passage between the middle and posterior parts of the brain (memory and cogitation).¹³ Galen was a medieval physician and offered a practical definition of those mnemonic features around the posterior ventricle of the human brain. Moreover, Galen also argued for memory as an instrument related to bodily senses as well as experiences, and if the body dies and decays, then memory dies with it too.

¹⁰ See note #7 on p. 4 from the Main Introduction.

¹¹ Cfr. Galen, *On the Natural Faculties*, 195-219. *Cogitatio* is a thought process that relates to memory, which can be compared to a small-scale composition and a bringing-together of various pieces from one's artistic inventory.

¹² *Ibid.*, 167-195.

¹³ Cfr. Mary Carruthers, *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, ed. by Mary Carruthers and Jan M. Ziolkowski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 120. For further examples of early depictions of the brain, see Edwin Clarke and Kenneth Dewhurst, *An Illustrated History of Brain Function*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

Furthermore, the relation between memory and *recordatio* (act of recollection) is understood as a physical process involving physical organs which is fundamental to the whole idea of memory training.¹⁴ In fact, between the posterior and the anterior ventricles, there is a middle organ known as the pineal gland.¹⁵ When we apply ourselves to seeking something with memory, this pineal gland is opened to provide access to the psychical pneuma from the anterior to the posterior ventricle. Proclus, a professor of the medical art, said that the posterior ventricle endorses the viable notion of mental fluidity across the sole realm of what can be plausible in the event of lucidity.¹⁶ This means that if the psychical pneuma is serene, lucid, and clear, it can cross from the anterior to the posterior ventricle without interference. Yet, if this part is blunted by immoderate cold, while it seems to summon to itself humidity or dryness, it also renders our memory dull and languid. One explanation could be that simple cold joined with humidity can often activate signs of weariness and lethargy, and when merged with the occurrence of dryness, it summons insomnia and immoderate wakefulness.¹⁷

¹⁴ The act of *recordatio* (recollection) entails a mnemonic process by means of remembering and bringing back to the present mental images, experiences, visions, and other forms of experiences related to human senses. Galen offers a more detailed explanation in *The Art of Medicine*, ed. by Jeffrey Henderson and trans. by Ian Johnston (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 157-317. See also one of the more influential late medieval, medical texts written by Matheolus, a physician of Perugia. Galen also wrote that two organs were involved in the production of memories: the heart, which received all externally derived impressions, and the brain, to which this information was relayed and where it was stored. Galen tried to prove through this approach that memory as a function of the heart was encoded in the common Latin verb *recordari*, meaning to recollect.

¹⁵ While these theories originate with classical figures like Galen and Matheolus of Perugia, and while I acknowledge their efforts, I tend to incorporate them in my study to innovate the nature of my research. I am also aware about the distant relation between Galen and Dante and that labeling a medieval physician with a Florentine poet might at first appear to be anachronistic. However, Galen as well as other medieval physicians and philosophers are adopted in this study to determine the nature of Dante's philosophical thinking with respect to the relation between mind and memory.

¹⁶ See Mary Carruthers, *The Medieval Craft of Memory*, 256-257.

¹⁷ In her volume *The Medieval Craft of Memory*, (118-152) Carruthers argues that the outcomes of insomnia and lethargy are caused by a close relation between these temporal distortions. While my theory seems to resemble Carruthers', I take a rather relevant approach to what Dante will acknowledge in the *Convivio*. This is to say that I construct my theory by considering predominantly the words from Dante's text and not necessarily (as Carruthers does) the conceptions that Aristotle, Avicenna, Averroes, Sabinus of Ithaca, Galen, etc. have postulated throughout the centuries.

These atmospheric aspects that render memory dull and languid entail that all memories are also mental images that are attached to bodily experiences. The appropriate term used during this period is *phantasia*,¹⁸ which is generally reserved for emotionally laden fictions that act powerfully in memory and on the mind.¹⁹ This is to say that there is an emotional component in all memory while juxtaposing its implications for the realm of material practice. For instance, memory can in this case be considered an instrument that absorbs two elements at the same time. On the one hand there is similitude, which is translated in modern terms as likeness.²⁰ This type can be connected to the emotional side of memory and serves as a cognitive cue or token for the matter or *res* (a thing, object, aspect, or place) being remembered. On the other hand, there is inclination or attitude. In this case, we have the remembered experience attached to a physical space or figure, which helps both categories to classify and retrieve it. Both cases are to be identified through the representation of memory around its bodily and physical characterizations. One of the first definitions that emerges from the origins of ideas is that “memory is neither sensation nor judgement, but is a state or affection of one of these when time has elapsed.”²¹ When time and memory are juxtaposed, it is said that “there can be no memory of something now present at the present time,” but only a “sensation” that “refers to what is present,” and “expectation to what is future, and memory of what is past.”²² While this lapse of time is what

¹⁸ The idea of *phantasia* that I examine in this study comes from Aristotle, “On the Soul,” in *On the Soul Parva Naturalia On Breath*, ed. and trans. by W. S. Hett (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), III, III, 427b-428b. Aristotle suggests that *phantasia* (or imagination) is the blend of perception and opinion, meaning that to imagine is to form an opinion exactly corresponding to a direct perception.

¹⁹ These ideas were also expounded by Saint Augustine: see Janet Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories: The Reconstruction of the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Two earlier essays that contain much good judgment are R. A. Markus, “St. Augustine on Signs” and G. Matthews, “Augustine on Speaking from Memory.” The concept of “image” also has a resonance in rhetorical training: Augustine’s conception of these terms has as much to do with their rhetorical usage, of which he was master, as with the various philosophical traditions with which he was familiar.

²⁰ The conception of similitude originates from Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Blackfriars edition (Latin and English), 61 vols, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964-1981), 84, A8, r2.

²¹ Aristotle, *On the Memory and Recollection*, 291.

²² *Ibidem*.

essentially ties the significance of both time and memory, only those living creatures that are conscious of time can be said to remember, and they do so with that part that is conscious of time.²³

Additionally, since the faculty of memory belongs to the posterior ventricle, memory retains the insensible characteristics of objects that are perceived by the *vis estimativa*. The relation of the faculty of memory to that of the *vis estimativa* is like the relation of the faculty recalling imagery to the senses. Accordingly, the relation of the former faculty of memory to its connotational attributes is like the relation of the latter faculty to the forms of sensibility.²⁴ This is to say that memory is also one of the faculties of the human soul, which corresponds to the practical intellect to which the bodily feature of memory is connected. If one's moral temperament may be attributable to the faculties of the body, and if these are in control and are configured to act, the practical intellect is configured to be affected. Consequently, if the bodily memory is affected and controlled, it will be configured to be affected as well, and the practical intellect is configured to act regularly. It is a practical faculty of the memory and if the practical intellect is served by the estimative faculty, then that same estimative faculty is served by two other faculties: one in front to fit and one behind it in the body.²⁵ The faculty positioned behind

²³ There is a long list of theoreticians, philosophers, and physicians who have meticulously considered and investigated the art of memory but are not included directly in this research. Boncompagno, *Rhetorica Novissima*, ed. A. Gaudentio, *Bibliotheca Iuridica Medii Aevi*, II, Bologna, 1891; Albertus Magnus, "De bono," in *Opera omnia*, ed. and trans. by H. Kühle, C. Feckes, B. Geyer, W. Kübel, (Monasterii Westfalorum: Aedibus Aschendorff XXVIII, 1951), 82-94; Thomas Aquinas, *In Aristotelis libros De sensu et sensate, De memoria et reminiscentia commentarium*, ed. R. M. Spiazzi, Turin-Rome, 1949. Augustinus Aurelius, *Confessionum*, edited by L. Verheijen, CCSL 27, (Turnhout: Brepols, 1981); *De doctrina christiana*, edited by J. Martin, CCSL 32, (Turnhout: Brepols, 1962); *De Trinitate*, edited by K. D. Daur, CCSL 34, (Turnhout: Brepols, 1973); Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Blackfriars edition (Latin and English), 61 vols, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964-1981), I, q. 2, a. 3.

²⁴ Ibn Sīnā, *Avicenna's Psychology: An English Translation of Kitāb al-Najāt, Book II, Chapter VI*, trans. by Fazlur Rahman (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1952).

²⁵ Intellect here refers to the faculty of the soul that is called intellect in the true sense. It is not the intellect in the broad sense—namely, the imaginative faculty in the Greek language as *phantasia*, but rather the faculty by which we discriminate theoretical things and think about future things to be done in the real world.

the brain is the one that retains what the estimative faculty relays to it, which is the physical characterization of how memory operates in the face of actions taken in the real world.²⁶

The practical intellect can also operate as a material form that passes through the eyes to create a mental impression. Likewise, common sense fuses with images from the other senses to create the intention and likeness of the material form. On the one hand, memory, like other mental processes such as dreaming, is a power of perception that is characteristic of the body. On the other hand, *recordatio* or reminiscence or recollection is a kind of reasoning and manifestation motivated by thought rather than perception.²⁷ Since the goal of recollecting images and places is receiving the past according to a fixed or unfixed standard, *recordatio* (act of recollection), as well as the ability to remember according to the bodily natures, must also be corporeal. More specifically, once knowledge of places and images have been received as a whole, in that instant it is present in the subject—that is, the impression and the knowledge are now in the one receiving the knowledge. If we do not remember those things is because we have present knowledge of them. This is to say that memory does not come into being before time has elapsed—that is, before an interval of time has occurred between previously created knowledge and its memory.

Consequently, this long range of theories from antiquity (Simonides, Galen, etc.) continues to be particularly observed from the nineteenth century and onwards. Numerous

²⁶ Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), *Avicenna's Psychology*, 112-145. See also Ibn Rushd (Averroes), *Ibn Rushd's Metaphysics: A Translation with Introduction of Ibn Rushd's Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics, Book Lām*, trans. by Charles Genequand. *Islamic Philosophy and Theology; Texts and Studies, I*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986. While I consider this part of faculty as a practical intellect, Averroes considers it a passive imagination that still originates from *vis estimativa*. Avicenna also infers a passive intelligible with the forms of imagination and the cognitive faculty proper to the human acts on them. He continues and states that this faculty is a rationality, and its action is nothing other than to place the intention of the form and the body of imagination and past experience with its individual in the memory or to distinguish the intention from the individual in the form-bearing faculty of imagination.

²⁷ Carruthers makes a canny argument about memory being considered more than a mere power of perception. See *The Medieval Craft of Memory*, 119.

scholars have recently developed a mixed interest in existing research into the art of memory across a multitude of academic disciplines, including literature, psychology (cognitive sciences), philosophy, neuroscience, and medicine (natural sciences).²⁸ Some literary critics have explored memory in Dante's *Commedia*, such as considering memory as a mnemonic tool through its biological origins. These critics' approaches indicate their interest in considering memory in terms of its own limitations, which consequently tends to "affect its workings in the face of supernatural encounters."²⁹ They focus particularly on *Paradiso* XXXIII, where the pilgrim demonstrates his ultimate human limitation when memory and consequently speech abandon him.³⁰ It is this critical approach that has led memory to become a practical object through theatrical characterization,³¹ or a figure of speech by considering Dante's rhetorical abilities throughout his own text.³²

²⁸ What follows is a chronological list of Dante scholars who have specifically engaged with Dante's natural memory. Even if their arguments and their approaches are different, they all examine memory from a natural perspective. John Freccero, "The Final Image: *Paradiso* XXXIII," in *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 245-257; Manuela Colombo, *Dai mistici a Dante: il linguaggio dell'ineffabilità* (Rome: La Nuova Italia, 1987); Steven Botterill, "*Quae non Licet Homini Loqui*: The Ineffability of Mystical Experience in *Paradiso* I and the Epistle to Can Grande," *The Modern Language Review* 83, no. 2 (1988): 332-341; Luisa Pinnelli, "*La Divina Commedia come teatro della memoria*," *Il Veltro* 35 (1991): 310-315; Janet Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories: The Reconstruction of the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Maria Corti, *Il libro della memoria e i libri dello scrittore*, in *Percorsi dell'invenzione: Il linguaggio poetico e Dante*, (Turin: Einaudi, 1993), 179-199; Harald Weinrich, *La memoria di Dante*, (Florence: Accademia della Crusca, 1994); Paola Rigo, *Memoria classica e memoria biblica in Dante* (Florence: Olschki, 1994). Jerome Mazzaro, "*The Divina Commedia and the Rhetoric of Memory*," *Rivista di studi italiani*, no. 1 (1999): 112-129; Roberto Antonelli, "*Memoria rerum et memoria verborum. La costruzione della 'Divina Commedia'*," *Criticòn* 87-9 (2003): 35-45; Lina Bolzoni, "The Impassioned Memory in Dante's Divine Comedy," in *Citation, Intertextuality and Memory in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Medieval Culture*, Vol. II, ed. by Giuliano Di Bacco and Yolanda Plumley (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 18-29.

²⁹ John Freccero, *The Final Image: Paradiso XXXIII*, 246.

³⁰ Steven Botterill, *Quae non Licet Homini Loqui: The Ineffability of Mystical Experience in Paradiso I and the Epistle to Can Grande*, 338.

³¹ Pinnelli states: "Non è improbabile che Dante abbia inteso il suo capolavoro come un grande teatro della memoria, in cui ogni luogo, ogni immagine, ogni personaggio, legati in un'unica intenzione, avessero il compito di stampare nella memoria del lettore un segno indelebile." Luisa Pinnelli, *La Divina Commedia come teatro della memoria*, 310.

³² Antonelli states: "le tappe del proprio viaggio nella propria memoria sono anche le tappe nei luoghi in cui sarà collocato nell'Aldilà, il completamento della propria figura." Roberto Antonelli, *Memoria rerum et memoria verborum. La costruzione della 'Divina Commedia'*, 39.

In her volume *The Book of Memory*, Mary Carruthers claims that sensory memory does not survive death, since “it has no activity apart from the corporal organ.”³³ This means that after death, a conception of having had a memory when one was still alive in one’s body cannot be possible. At the same time, it is not possible to form any new memories when there is no longer a body because memory requires a body.³⁴ Carruthers ultimately states that, “the souls in Dante’s *Inferno* are forever stuck in their recollected pasts, unable to form new memories in hell and yet also cut off from the continuous vision that nourishes the blessed souls and angels.”³⁵ What Carruthers highlights in her argument is the essence of biological continuity with respect to Dante’s memory, which operates on a practical front and can logically unfold through cause and effect. Once the effect causes death, such as fear or doubt or misperception, then memory can no longer arise. In other words, Mary Carruthers is claiming that physical characteristics can react solely to their own causes because they are mnemonic operations that fall short of human functioning.³⁶

Along this line of thought, Antonelli states that memory balances the pilgrim’s status throughout his journey which transits between causes that the world provokes and the same poetic voice that faces those causes.³⁷ It is exactly this narrative voice of the pilgrim that creates this logical order from unknown, earthly space to anxiety, which makes of the memory an organic agent that renders the pilgrim movable across the many atria of the memory in the *Commedia*. Antonelli considers this mnemonic operation to be not only biological, but

³³ Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 73.

³⁴ According to philosophers and physicians like Galen and Avicenna, memory represents a human faculty that needs to be juxtaposed to a body.

³⁵ Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 73.

³⁶ I consider the most recent pioneer for the study of memory to be Mary Carruthers, who has perhaps replaced and overtaken the prominent voices of Paolo Rossi and Frances Yates.

³⁷ Antonelli states: “il suo *itinerarium mentis in Deum* si svolge lungo la linea d’ombra ovvero lungo il Luogo ove il mondo traballa, ove risiede ciò che è posto fra la vita e la morte, fra realtà e sogno, fra desiderio dell’identità e suo annichilimento.” Roberto Antonelli, *Memoria rerum et memoria verborum. La costruzione della ‘Divina Commedia’*, 44.

objectively theatrical because such actions refer back to the material past and they are easily connected to world events.³⁸ If Antonelli considers the relation of cause and effect as the origin (which is the world spaces) and the *Io persona* (which is the way an effect is manifested) this is to suggest that unknown and mythical *loci* and figures potentiate the mnemonic structure of the entire *Commedia*. This same combination creates a macrostructural frame by which the pilgrim conveys his results, and the reader can easily grasp the outcome.

While the result of these scholars' assertions ultimately corroborates the natural memory as a biological faculty, another set of scholars examine Dante's memory through a psychological and a philosophical approach. They try to expand the scope of memory beyond the mere biological perspective by underscoring a connection between concepts of memory from previous centuries up to the medieval period, and by considering memory as a universal and real language.³⁹ Paolo Rossi claims that the technique impressing places and images on memory has been termed "mnemotechnic."⁴⁰ While this technique resonates with the art form of memory, he also suggests that mental images in memory must always to some extent involve the psyche as a whole.⁴¹ Given Dante's rhetorical training and acquaintance with the philosophical and theological literature of his day, it is "inconceivable that he should have been unfamiliar with the art of local memory."⁴² Since Dante is entirely engaged with the otherworldliness throughout his

³⁸ Antonelli states: "L'al di là di Dante, la *Commedia*, è dunque anche un gigantesco teatro della memoria, la rappresentazione di una memoria in sé, oggettivata, in cui Dante si muove con libertà creatrice operando con continui corti circuiti temporali fra passato e presente." *Ibid.*, 39.

³⁹ Rossi states: "The adoption of the universal language would facilitate the transmission of ideas between the confines of knowledge, and this would be enlarged and the general good of mankind would be able to be pursued with renewed vigor." Paolo Rossi, *Logic and the Art of Memory: The Quest for a Universal Language*, trans. by Stephen Clucas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Il Mulino, 2000), 158-159.

⁴⁰ I borrow the expression of *mnemotechnic* from Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: The Bodley Head, 2014), 100.

⁴¹ Paolo Rossi, *Logic and the Art of Memory: The Quest for a Universal Language*, 158-163.

⁴² Spencer Pearce, "Dante and the Art of Memory," *The Italianist* 61, no. 1 (1996): 25.

voyage towards redemption, it would be unthinkable to fathom Dante the pilgrim without experiencing mental images that exist outside human faculties.⁴³

Eleonora Buonocore has recently debated the consideration of memory as an art form that allows the individual to produce mental images precisely outside the human faculties.⁴⁴ She starts by claiming that memory can be considered one of the underlying structuring principles of the *Commedia*, a rhetorical concept of memory rooted in the fixation of place of the art of memory. She argues that the two rivers of *Lethe* and *Eunoè* in the earthly paradise embody the fluidity of Dante's new concept of memory. To trace the evolution of Dante's concept of memory, Buonocore begins with the *Vita Nuova* and the *Convivio* as examples of a fixed memory rooted in the rhetorical art of memory. She then continues with Dante's radical revision of his concept of memory in *Inferno*, in which rhetorical memory is shown to be a trap. More precisely, this is a way for the sinner to become stuck eternally in their moment of sin. The second stage of this analysis shows how memory in *Purgatorio* becomes a force for good when it is linked to the power of intercession of prayer, which resonates with a fruitful dialogue between the dead and the living that can reduce the time of penance. She finally argues that at the end of

⁴³ I provide here a short list of theoreticians and philosophers who have engaged with the art of memory after Dante's period: Jacobus Publicius, *Oratoriae artis epitome*, Venice, 1482 and 1485, G 4 *recto*; Johannes Romberch, *Congestorium artificiosa memoriae*, ed. of Venice, 1533; Ramon Lull, "Arbre de ciencia," in *Obres essencials*, Barcelona, 1957, I; & "Libri contemplationis in Deum," in *Opera omnia*, Mainz, 1721-1742, X; Giordano Bruno, *Opere latine*, ed. F. Fiorentino, Naples and Florence, 1879, II; Peter Ramus, *Scholae in liberales artes, Scholae rhetoricae*, Lib. XIX (ed. of Bâle, 1578, col. 39); Robert Fludd, *Utriusque Cosmi Maioris Scilicet et Minoris, Metaphysica, Physica atque Technica Historia. Tomus Secundus. De Supernaturali, Naturali, Praeternaturali et Contranaturali Microcosmi Historia*. Oppenheim, Impensis Johannis Theodori de Bry, typis Hieronymi Galleri, 1619, section II, 50. While their studies have contributed greatly to key existing research, and I acknowledge their perennial significance in the field of memory, it was not paramount to engage these figures' ideas and adopt them into my research.

⁴⁴ It is fundamental for me to acknowledge this well-constructed study that Eleonora Buonocore achieved by completing her PhD dissertation in Spring 2016, in which she discusses Dante's *memoria* and *oblio*. Eleonora Buonocore, "Ciphers of Remembrance and Fluidity of Oblivion: A Study of Memory in Dante", abstract PhD diss., (Yale University, 2016).

Purgatorio, there is a paradigm shift from memory to oblivion, or at least to an oblivious memory linked to a theologically informed concept of memory as part of the soul.

At the same time, it is still important to approach memory in Dante with an interdisciplinary approach, as the clear divisions present today among the various disciplines were not typical of the understanding of knowledge in the Middle Ages. It is from this point on that some differences emerge between memory as conceived by the previously mentioned scholars and my study. In fact, the main point that separates Buonocore's thesis from mine is that she approaches memory as an underlying and structural instrument for the composition of Dante's *Divina Commedia*. Instead, I engage with Dante's memory by considering it an art form that allows the human mind to create a regenerative course in the face of divine justice. I additionally separate myself from the idea of considering memory as an object of ultimate human hindrance, or a practical object through a theatrical characterization,⁴⁵ or a figure of speech by solely considering Dante's rhetorical abilities throughout his own text. Memory is an art form that precisely empowers the human mind to not only create mental images, but also to refashion and reconnect to the present state of being in a network of otherworldly experiences (i.e., Dante's experiences of otherworldliness).⁴⁶

Even if the art of memory has been a fascinating topic to study across disciplines like philosophy, theology, history, and literature, the less-studied distinction between memory as a natural faculty and as a form of art has been left behind. This suggests that there is still a gap in the existing literature on Dante and the art of memory, or at least in the existing research from Dante's scholarship. Consequently, there exists the need to pursue a study of the art of memory as the object of a main research problem, and this is a question whose answer will be thoroughly

⁴⁵ Luisa Pinnelli, *La Divina Commedia come teatro della memoria*, 310.

⁴⁶ Roberto Antonelli, *Memoria rerum et memoria verborum. La costruzione della 'Divina Commedia'*, 39.

investigated throughout this dissertation. Since memory has always been considered an art form from antiquity until today, and because the natural memory fails the pilgrim at the end of his otherworldly experience, does the art form of memory die with the natural faculty of memory? Is there a way to reproduce a course of study around the inherently regenerative power that occurs with the art of memory in Dante's writings? Existing research about Dante and the art of memory produces a gap that is uniformly problematic, which occurs when we are to think that the art form of memory dies once Dante's natural memory fails him, and most importantly when there are still eighty-eight verses left in the last canto of *Paradiso* that are implicitly representative of the art of memory.

If the aftermath of Dante's failing memory in *Paradiso* has not been fully explored, this study will aim to identify and analyze the regenerative course of memory regardless of the pilgrim's failing natural memory. From the shortfall of his own memory to investigate the shapeless representation of memory for Dante, namely an artificial theory that I consider the *ars memorativa* (art of memory) in Dante. This consists of a mnemonic advancement whose gradual development begins with metaphysical memory through ontological truths like the correlation of soul, mind, and memory. Unlike the lower realities of *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*,⁴⁷ and even if his memory has failed, the art of memory allows Dante the pilgrim to absorb the supernatural, higher state of paradisiac forces like the bliss of the Empyrean in *Paradiso*.⁴⁸ More precisely,

⁴⁷ By lower realities I mean a type of reality that refers to the corporeal, earthly features that characterize a tangible experience, which are seen particularly in *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*. By higher realities I mean a type of reality that refers to the immaterial, divine realm and characterizes an intangible experience, which is precisely the experience from *Paradiso*.

⁴⁸ The *ars memorativa* in Dante implies a collective operation that I will mainly demonstrate across the roles of Dante the poet, Dante the pilgrim, and Beatrice. I will consider Dante the poet the central mediator behind my examination of this art form. Dante the poet's writings potentiate my idea of new memory, whereas Dante the pilgrim will represent the main practitioner who experiences this new memory throughout the journey. I will examine the figure of Beatrice as the edifying figure behind the pilgrim's experiences of new memory. As I gradually examine this *ars memorativa*, it will also include characters, angels, souls, and the role of the reader, and all are collectively considered advocates of this new theory of memory. Furthermore, the reader will notice that I

juxtaposing the metaphysical memory (Chapter Two) with the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity/love (Chapter Three) allows Dante to operate more smoothly along the course of his journey in *Paradiso*.

Hence, if the *ars memorativa* in Dante can continue to function until the end of the journey, what are some of the outcomes manifesting the final significances that the heavenly art of memory has for Dante the poet, Dante the pilgrim, his natural memory, and the journey itself? Dante is finally advancing towards the ultimate realm of the Empyrean, and the contiguous nature of this spiritual domain reverberates with overpowering features like ethereal blissfulness from angels and various saints' figures (Saint Bernard, etc.). Yet, while the abandonment of memory and high fantasy (*alta fantasia*) reflect Dante's concept of human truth, how does the *ars memorativa* restore the pilgrim's awareness after the failure of memory? What are some of those main aspects, and how do they sustain the art of memory when the pilgrim explicitly reenacts moments and images from his previous experiences to move forward? Most decisively, how would the *ars memorativa* be able to reproduce and sustain Dante's remaking of his final image of salvation?

often allude to *ars memorativa* in Dante and I do not necessarily refer to Dante's *ars memorativa*. This is to confirm that the art of memory (*ars memorativa*) in this study will resonate with Dante throughout his writings and with a particular focus on Dante's *Commedia*. The making of *ars memorativa* in Dante resonates with a shared effort of faculties (intellect, will, soul, etc.) as well as other forms of truths (Godly Goodness, prolepsis, virtues, etc.). I call this theoretical operation a shared effort because the making of art of memory in Dante will forego through these above-mentioned stages of argumentation. Furthermore, the course of the *ars memorativa* in Dante begins with Dante's journey, and one procedure that manifests the beginning sign of Dante's poetic artifice occurs throughout this entire dissertation. It concerns the correlation between soul, mind, and will, particularly when the pilgrim begins to face the divine light among the numerous movers (angels) that appear throughout the circles of *Paradiso*. From this correlation of faculties, the theory of Dante's memory (*ars memorativa*) continues to emerge with the "divina bontà" (Godly Goodness), which resembles an abstract process that symbolizes a form of art and thus presents the first implication about the art of memory in Dante. By reiterating these last two aspects as a cooperative force towards the rise of the *ars memorativa* in Dante, they also reveal the importance of the metaphysical memory in the realm of Dante the poet's imaginative power. Most importantly, these last two aspects resemble some of the fundamental characteristics that led to the rise of the *ars memorativa* in Dante, which is, after all, the art form that operates throughout Dante's journey, but mostly shines within the divine realm of *Paradiso*.

These are research questions that bring the aims and objectives of this dissertation to a greater degree of understanding. More specifically, they will act as the driving force of this study. From the literature review to the methodology and beyond, they represent significant issues that this dissertation will seek to resolve. Furthermore, these research questions describe the actions I will take and the specific features I will investigate in order to achieve the dissertation's ultimate aim. My ultimate intention in this study is to demonstrate that the heavenly concept of the art of memory in Dante will subdue the pilgrim's conception of enfeebled memory.

This study will contribute to the body of knowledge on the art of memory because it embraces several disciplines, including literature, poetry, science, philosophy, and history. It is a study that will expand the perception of the academic reader from the conventional nature of biological memory in Dante. The characteristic that specifically enhances this analysis is the investigation of Dante's writings through a different lens, which motivates the reader to go that extra mile and read this unconventional analysis of the art of memory in Dante's writings. In fact, the reader will benefit from this same research because for the first time, they can go beyond the idea of failed memory of Dante. They are invited to rethink audaciously the last verses of *Paradiso* and corroborate the significance of mnemonic remnants with which the *ars memorativa* in Dante is able to engage. This is to say that by reading this study, the reader will overcome the static idea that memory operates solely through human senses because it is a human faculty. In its place, this study will consistently invoke the significantly paramount nature of the *ars memorativa* as a form of art that can never perish in the face of otherworldly experiences, since it is embodied in the heavenly principles of Dante's poetry.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Recent scholars of Dante who have engaged with Christian Platonism, Neo-Platonism, and the notion of Moral theology are Vittorio Montemaggi, Claire Honess, and Matthew Treherne. These scholars seem to all agree about

To enable the reader in fully grasping the course that the art of memory takes in this study, I decided to integrate a glossary section at the end of this dissertation. In this case, the reader will be able to find all the essential technical and philosophical terms and conceptions, as I hope they can be used to better decipher those theoretical frameworks in this same dissertation. Additionally, I take care to clarify my research aims, objectives, and outcomes to the best of my ability by outlining a well-articulated and well-formed structure to my chapters. In fact, the following structural outline of the chapters should provide the reader with a constructive roadmap of the structure of my dissertation.

In Chapter One, the study begins with a thorough discussion of Dante's natural memory by considering the correlation of memory and mental images. I employ the systematization of mnemonic operations, which includes methodical rationalization (*art rotunda* and *ars quadrata*), the psychological moments of passion (through Paolo and Francesca's episode), and the physiognomic aspect of memory (through the Virgin Mary and Dante the pilgrim).⁵⁰ By the time we reach the notion of *trasumanar* from *Paradiso* I,⁵¹ the limitations of memory are intensified,

the significance of Neo-Platonism as a paramount doctrine to delve into the theology of Dante's *Commedia*. They claim that the interpretation of symbols incites and ignites Dante's contemplation of invisible realities; and the realm of symbols is thus akin to divine communication. Furthermore, insofar as the symbol is intuited in its meaning, such intuition provides an analogy of the superior, nondiscursive awareness that is proper to the poetic realm of the divine mind. See: Claire E. Honess and Matthew Treherne, *Reviewing Dante's Theology*, (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013). Vittorio Montemaggi and Matthew Treherne *Dante's Commedia: Theology as Poetry*. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010).

⁵⁰ Even if this is my theory, I have also adapted a portion from Descartes, who claims: "Quamobrem illas continuo quodam imaginationis motu singula intuentis simul et ad alia transeuntis aliquoties percurram, donec a primâ ad ultimam tam celeriter transire didicerim, ut fere nullas memoriae partes relinquendo, rem totam simul videam intueri; hoc enim pacto, dum memoriae subvenitur, ingenii etiam tarditas emendatur, eiusque capacitas quâdam ratione extenditur." Descartes, *Oeuvres X, Physicomathematica, Compendium musicæ, Regulæ ad directionem ingenii, Recherche de la vérité, Supplément à la correspondance.*, in *Oeuvres*, ed. by Charles Adam and Paul Tannery, 12 vols (Paris: L. Cerf, 1897-1909), 387-388. [I have run through a number of times with a kind of movement of the imagination that intuits single relations and transfers them together into other intuitions. By this what Descartes is essentially stating is that one can learn to pass from the first to the last with such celerity that – hardly leaving anything in the memory – one seems to intuit the whole ensemble. In this manner, while aiding the memory, one can also mitigate the slowness of the intellect and to some extent enlarge its capacity] (my own trans.).

⁵¹ In *Paradiso* I, Dante the poet defines a symbolic change for the pilgrim, who is about to enter the most spiritual realm of all. Dante states: "Trasumanar significar per verba, / non si poria; però l'esempio basti / a cui esperienza grazia serba." (Passing beyond the human cannot be / worded; let Glaucus serve as simile – / until grace grant you

and Dante will not be able to respond consistently or properly to the new sphere's needs through solely human faculties. Consequently, I will discuss the nature of a shapeless representation of memory for Dante in Chapter Two, which materializes on a threefold implication. From the metaphysical correlation between finite and non-finite beings, to the states of humanly perceptible experience and the pilgrim's imagination (*Epist.* XIII. v. 15 & *Mon.* III.xvi.3-4).⁵² In second, the notion of metaphysics is reexamined, which I argue moves from a knowledge of sensible things (natural memory) to an understanding of non-sensible concepts (metaphysical memory [*Conv.* III.i.10]), and from the domain of humanly perceptible experiences (material past) to the state of immaterial perceptive experiences (immaterial sense of perception [*Par.* VII.64-66]).⁵³ In the last section of this analysis, I examine the correlation between metaphysical memory and the *ars memorativa* in Dante,⁵⁴ where the latter will resonate with a mnemonic

the experience [*Par.* I.70-72]). The idea of passing beyond the human or trans-humanize means to go beyond the limits of human capacities. However, it does not suggest a physical transformation, but rather a transmutation that goes through the Latin phrase, *per verba*, which translates into "in words." In reference to the translation of "trasumanar," I will interlace both terms passing beyond the human and trans-humanize, whereas I will be using the former in direct translation to the Italian version.

⁵² There is a difference between the use of the adjectives perceptible and perceptive. The idea behind the term perceptible implies the human ability to perceive solely by the senses, whereas experiences are more detectable. I will align this definition with the notion of humanly perceptible experiences (finite). The idea behind the term perceptive implies the ability to exhibit more keen observations, which is characterized by inner understanding and insight. I will align this definition with the notion of immaterial perceptive experiences (non-finite).

⁵³ Through Dante the poet's imaginative power that spurred his world of imagination, I ultimately argue that this same imaginative power leads to the metaphysical idea of memory. I will further examine the notion of imaginative power in pages 127-130 of Chapter One. I would like to reveal an important assertion with respect to the imaginative power of Dante. This imaginative power is essential for our analysis because it sustains the metaphysical making of the art of memory in Dante as well as sustaining other elements of this study (i.e., the three theological virtues, etc.). However, there is a distinction to be made. This imaginative power is also connected to the highest type of imagination, an image-making faculty namely "alta fantasia" (high fantasy [*Par.* XXXIII.142]), which fails Dante at the end of *Paradiso*. I would like to reassure the reader that this failure of imagination (which follows the failure of Dante's memory and speech) will not jeopardize the course of art of memory in Dante. If on the one hand, this imaginative power is essential to craft this art form, and to outline its course to the otherworldliness, on the other hand, the art of memory can still stand until the end of Dante's journey because the art of memory is a self-subsistent principle (Chapter Two). The art of memory is not dependent upon imagination, because there is not a relationship of causality of art of memory and imagination. They can work in conjunction, and be interconnected throughout the course of this study, but they are not dependent clause. Therefore, if imagination fails, this does not necessarily entail that the art of memory fails with the image-making faculty (high fantasy) too.

⁵⁴ See note #48 on p. 16 of this Introduction, where I clearly describe how the *ars memorativa* in Dante implies a collective operation among the roles of Dante the poet, Dante the pilgrim, and Beatrice.

advancement whose gradual development allows the pilgrim to absorb the supernatural, higher state of paradisiac forces.⁵⁵

In Chapter Three, the art of memory in Dante will be further investigated with respect to the theological understanding of the significantly Christianized Metaphysics and focusing particularly from *Paradiso XXII* to *Paradiso XXVIII*.⁵⁶ I will examine how the *ars memorativa* in Dante advances to a greater extent by the time the three theological virtues assist Dante the pilgrim in operating more efficiently throughout his journey. Since adopting the language of God for Dante entails juxtaposing heavenly concepts with metaphysical memory, I will demonstrate how the art form of memory shifts from a purely metaphysical standpoint (first evolution of the art of memory in Dante) to a largely theological development (second evolution of the art of memory in Dante). This theologizing process allows Dante to expand his divine knowledge

⁵⁵ Even if the notion of *ars memorativa* (or art of memory) as a theory is only mentioned here, the course of its development will be gradually crafted from the beginning of this dissertation, establishing each step needed for this form of art. The order of scholars goes by the relevant impact that their approach has had on Dante and the art of memory: Spencer Pearce, "Dante and the Art of Memory," *The Italianist* 61, no. 1 (1996): 20-61; Lina Bolzoni, *The Impassioned Memory in Dante's 'Divine Comedy'*, 18-29. There are also some more general studies about the art of memory: Paolo Rossi, *Logic and the Art of Memory: The Quest for a Universal Language*, trans. by Stephen Clucas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Il Mulino, 2000); Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: The Bodley Head, 2014), 81-92. Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Mary Carruthers and Jan M. Ziolkowski, *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁵⁶ I am aware about the lack of Neo-Platonism in my research methodology with the view of symbols and concepts as preserving both aspects of the human relationship with the divine. In lieu of Neoplatonic doctrines in Dante and what this philosophical phenomenon was and meant to Dante, I decided to fully engage my analysis with the notion of Christianized Metaphysics and offer you my first reasoning for choosing this same notion over Neoplatonism. While Christianized Metaphysics has been adopted and examined by several theologians and philosophers, I mostly consider the definition that Saint Thomas Aquinas provides in his *Summa*. In the following passage, Saint Thomas Aquinas summarizes his position with respect of philosophy and theology, confronting an objection to there being any need for theological discourse: "The astronomer and the natural philosopher both conclude that the earth is round, but the astronomer does this through a mathematical middle that is abstracted from matter, whereas the natural philosopher considers a middle lodged in matter. Thus, there is nothing to prevent another science like moral theology from treating in the light of divine revelation what the philosophical disciplines treat as knowable in the light of human reason." (*Summa theologiae*, Ia.1.1 ad 2). While philosophical discourse for Aquinas begins with knowledge of the world, theological discourse begins with what God has revealed about Himself and His action in creating and redeeming the world. Aquinas suggests that there are in fact elements of what God has revealed that are formally speaking philosophical but that are subject to theological discussion, which can be revealed and investigated through the precondition of faith. Furthermore, this last point summarizes Saint Thomas Aquinas' point on Christianized metaphysics, from which a human mind can engage with both a theological and a philosophical discussion, providing for a fruitful engagement between the theological and the philosophical.

while evolving with the art of memory in Dante—that is, towards a heavenly concept of the *ars memorativa* in Dante.

Chapter Four, which for the most part focuses on the last cantos of *Paradiso*, will be about manifesting the final significances that the heavenly art of memory has for Dante the poet, Dante the pilgrim, his natural memory, and the journey itself. While the abandonment of memory and high fantasy (*alta fantasia*) reflect Dante’s concept of human truth, I will argue that the unceasing potency of Dante’s heavenly concept of art of memory restores the pilgrim’s awareness by means of *expectatio*, transmuted desire (*disio*), and the will (*velle*). I consequently examine Dante’s course of salvation from the inherency of transmuted desire (*disio*) and the will (*velle*) to the explicit manifestation of the final reproduced image (*vista nova*). I shall ultimately seek to prove that the heavenly concept of the art of memory in Dante will minimize the pilgrim’s conception of his enfeebled memory.

To continue clarifying my research aims, objectives, and outcomes to a greater extent, I will adopt a twofold methodological approach to the thesis. First, I will specify my theoretical approach by framing my discussion of natural memory and the art of memory through the discipline of metaphysics. Frances Yates advances the question of whether Dante’s *Inferno* could be “regarded as a kind of memory system for memorizing *Hell* and its punishments, with striking images on orders of places” or as a memory intended to stimulate the “intense visualization of many similitudes in the powerful effort to hold in memory the scheme of salvation.”⁵⁷ This implies how through the scientific realm of metaphysics, one can open up various definitions of memory in Dante’s *Commedia*. In fact, I will adopt the metaphysical approach because it will

⁵⁷ Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 104.

assist my analysis in detecting those important aspects that connect natural memory, Dante's human faculties, and the metaphysical representation of memory.⁵⁸

Finally, the critical approach of this study aligns closely with that of Harald Weinrich and Lina Bolzoni. In *Oblio mortale e immortale* (1997), Weinrich studies *ars memorativa* and *ars oblivionalis*, but he specifically investigates a major aspect of his research that reflects the first lesson that *ars memorativa* consists of recalling what might have possibly existed in the past from memory, which Weinrich defines as *memoria artificialis*.⁵⁹ By closely considering Weinrich's critical approach, I will claim that *ars memorativa* indicates the process of reproducing images, which will inform the second part of this research. Additionally, Lina Bolzoni carefully considers Weinrich's account of mnemonic technique by focusing particularly on *ars memorativa*. She implies that the relation between *ars memorativa* and other forms of art as well as mnemonic techniques essentially "act on the boundaries between the body and the psyche, between rational consciousness and deep emotional involvement."⁶⁰

On the one hand, the intertextual approach allows us to penetrate Dante's texts and find the ways in which Dante abandons the human senses, human faculties (memory and language), high fantasy, speech, and his overwhelming anxiety. On the other hand, the critical approach enables us to overcome the statically established conception of natural memory with Dante transcending himself and all things, ascending to the divine realm of the Empyrean and bringing himself into reconciliation with his own values. More precisely, by carefully examining Dante's

⁵⁸ This is my second reasoning for choosing the Aristotelian metaphysics above the Platonic metaphysics. Through the Aristotelian metaphysics I have been able to adopt crucial points of philosophical allegiance to individual doctrines, such as divine ideas in human epistemology, and most importantly, to decipher the relative prosperity and twofold implication of finite and non-finite being, which represent the backbone behind the metaphysical making of the art of memory in Dante.

⁵⁹ Weinrich states: "Una memoria naturale, per quanto buona possa essere, non è di sicuro sufficiente a un tale compito. Solo una memoria professionale, una *memoria artificialis*, potrà riuscire a farlo, se l'uomo di memoria avrà imparato ad arte i principi della mnemotecnica." Harald Weinrich, *Oblio mortale e immortale*, in *Lete: Arte e critica dell'oblio*, (Bologna: Il Mulino Editore, 1999), 45.

⁶⁰ Lina Bolzoni, *The Impassioned Memory in Dante's Divine Comedy*, 19.

Commedia, the *Convivio*, *Monarchia*, and *Vita Nuova*, and by thoughtfully using the previously suggested critical approaches as models (Weinrich, Bolzoni, etc.), my analysis aims to facilitate a dialogue between memory as a natural faculty and memory as a form of art. One particular purpose is that of realizing that the art of memory in Dante shows an increasing degree of awareness that ultimately resonates with the ability to reproduce and sustain Dante's remaking of his final image of salvation.

Chapter 1

Dante's Natural Memory and the Ineffable Milieus

Memory is a natural faculty that entails a twofold process. Memory is a main source and repository of wisdom – of knowledge and learning in the classical disciplines of philosophy, theology, rhetoric, and history. A natural memory is also recognized as a process of *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process), which consist respectively of reminiscence and thought processing. In broader and more common contexts, memory refers to both storage and reminiscence.¹ Indeed, when described as an aspect of rhetoric, memory refers to training and

¹ The list that follows comprises a sequence of technical, methodical terms, which should be useful for this entire chapter: *ars memorativa* is an artificial understanding that translates from the metaphysical memory into the heavenly concept of *ars memorativa* in Dante. This art of memory consists of a mnemonic advancement whose gradual development allows the pilgrim to absorb the supernatural, higher state of paradisiac forces; *recordatio* (recollection) entails a mnemonic process by means of remembering and bringing back to present mental images, experiences, visions, and other forms of experiences related to human senses; *imaginative power* refers to Dante's representation and exemplification of abstract concepts in general, with much resourcefulness and inventiveness; *intellectual crescendo* occurs when Dante the pilgrim demonstrates to have a well-defined sense of the intangible existence in the event of celestial cosmos and bodies along his journey; *material and immaterial past* refer back to the tangible experiences on earth, and immaterial past reveals instead those experiences that cannot be juxtaposed to any earthly feature because they did not originate from human senses, but imagination; *humanly perceptible experience* is the human ability to perceive solely by senses, where the experiences are more detectable finite, spatiotemporal, and tangible; *immaterial perceptive experience* is the ability to exhibit more keen observation, which is characterized by inner understanding and insight and relates to the non-finite; *immaterial experience* are relevant to the higher reality of Dante the pilgrim, including the meeting or the vision of angels, intelligences, and the paradisiac lights; *mnemonic perception* relates to the perception pertinent to the metaphysical memory; *lower reality* is a type of reality that refers to the corporeal, earthly features which characterize a tangible experience; *higher reality* is a type of reality that refers to the immaterial, divine realm which also characterizes an intangible experience; *divine science* is a type of skill through which the pilgrim will gain knowledge about several aspects within the realm of divinity; *intellectus possibilis* represents an internal power that conceptualizes the possible

discipline in a whole craft of memory, encompassing techniques for storing memorial accounts designed to facilitate more productive recollection. Subsequently, memory training is given great significance as a fundamental, educational, and edifying necessity for poets like Dante to acquire in composing their works.²

This instructive need to keep a memory exercised for Dante the poet transpires first through the acquisition of habits of memory that endow one to act prudently. This same necessity for the poet materializes with a farsightedness born of past experience and a mindfulness of what the present moment requires. Consequently, memory cannot be defined until time has passed, which is a main characteristic of Dante in initiating some of his works. As a modality of medieval culture that inevitably shapes Dante's procedures and assumptions from his own past experiences in Florence, memory informs the composition, structure, imagery, and even the finalities of that supreme example of medieval writing of Dante's *Commedia* in a present state of mind. This is to state that writing is conceived of as a rhetorical activity which made use of

comprehensible content confined within from its individuating conditions and renders it actually intelligible and abstract; mnemonic advancement is an advancement of memory studies because it concerns a progression from the natural memory to the metaphysical memory; active agent represents an active cause that allows Dante to reenact memories from past experiences; divine artifice relates to divine artfulness, and to the element of artificiality, which is most relevant to God's creations; imagines agentes are also called in English images of memory, which is a concept capable of lending concrete shape to abstract concepts; divina bontà translates into Godly Goodness which represents the form of highest good and refining the course of Dante's journey towards the Empyrean; cogitatio is a thought process that relates to memory, which can be compared to a small-scale composition, and a bringing-together of various pieces from one's artistic inventory; mnemonic sensibility corresponds to an intangible state of being, where only abstract and divine experiences form the higher reality can be perceived; divine action is a generic notion and an action symbolic of an internal aspect, as well as intrinsic progress to the divine moment that the pilgrim is experiencing while perceiving new divine realities of *Paradiso*; moral rectitude is a type of moral act that triggers and traces the pilgrim's effort to reach out for the salvation in the *Commedia*; moral truth is a principle belonging to Dante making right choices for the right reasons; theological transcendence is a procedure that emerges through mutual interlacement leading to a theological interconnectedness between the three virtues and the art of memory; imago dei translates as image of God, which refers to the image of He who created him as regards his body or any part of his consciousness, but as regards the rational unity of mind, soul, and memory that is capable of recognizing God.

² A note that is worth mentioning concerns the title of my dissertation: The Art of Memory in Dante. One point that needs to be clarified first regards the literary contribution by Spencer Pearce, with the title of his article being "Dante and the Art of Memory." Unlike the scholar who orthodoxically juxtaposes and adapts the traditional views and studies of the art of memory (i.e., Simonides, *Ad Herennium*, Cicero, Aristotle, etc.) to Dante's works, this dissertation will instead take a rather different trajectory. While several conventional themes from the traditional art of memory will be considered, the main concern of the thesis is to trace and discuss the course of this divine theory across Dante's works, namely the *ars memorativa* in Dante.

things already inscribed in the book of one's memory that needed to be revealed.³ Objects, actions, activities, aphorisms, judgments, opinions, and thoughts are symptomatic of those aspects already inscribed in one's memory, where Dante treated them as commonplaces and considerately collected them in their appropriate place in one's memory store.

By identifying and writing about representations of bodily and physical characteristics, Dante collects actions, visions, thoughts, and judgments through memory.⁴ It is a process that hints at a parallel between Dante's mental images, memory, and bodily experiences; these coexist around the realm of material practice, namely through the realm of physicality. I examine this notion of physicality because human faculties and senses relate to natural memory. This last notion can also be considered a symbolic spatial representation in which images and stories (experiences) are collected and recollected. In the case of Dante, natural memory represents a mental instrument rooted in his human experiences, which consequently originate from his earthly circumstances.⁵ Whether political, social, friendly, historical, religious, literary, or philosophical, past experiences are significant for Dante the poet because of the development and understanding of his own memory and because they are pertinent to the realm in which Dante lives. Whether it is his love for Beatrice or his determination towards his own literary works,

³ The idea of writing as a rhetorical activity and notion will be fully examined on pages 53-56 of this chapter.

⁴ One pivotal aspect that I like to mention (and that it will be gradually examined throughout the chapter) concerns the nature of Dante's natural memory, which I consider a collective operation. If on the one hand, Dante the poet symbolizes the craftsman, the developer, and the archetype of the pilgrim's memory, Dante the pilgrim is the protagonist who delivers and deliberates the course of his natural memory throughout the journey. At the same time, as Dante the pilgrim embraces his natural memory throughout his journey, his course will also have an impact upon characters, sinners, souls, and places from *Inferno* to *Paradiso*. Therefore, whether explicitly or implicitly, and whether gradually or intermittently, Dante's natural memory represents the outcome of a mutual effort.

⁵ While memory embodying human experiences and earthly features will be examined in full in the third section of this chapter entitled *The Preliminary Shortcomings of Dante's Biological Memory* on pages 71-75, there are also more descriptive details on pages 9-13 in the main Introduction.

Dante's natural memory (as with any other human's memory) operates according to his time and space.⁶

I.1. Dante's Memory from *Recordatio* to *Cogitatio*

I.1.1. The Scent of Memory in the *Vita Nuova*

Dante the poet begins *Inferno in media res* (in the middle of things), which reveals that the pilgrim's story or his experience has been already created in the past.⁷ While this does not entail that an invented or imagined story cannot also begin this way, it should be remembered that the memory of the past is an important instrument of the present. It is the same poetic voice of Dante that can move from his experience with Beatrice into his own writing and begin the *Vita Nuova* in the present state:

In quella parte del libro de la mia memoria dinanzi a la quale poco si potrebbe leggere si trova una rubrica la qual dice: *Incipit Vita Nuova*, sotto la qual rubrica io trovo scritte le parole le quali è mio intendimento d'assemblare in questo libello; e se non tutte, almeno la loro sentenza (VN I).⁸

[In that part of the book of my memory before which little could be read, a rubric is found that says: *Incipit vita nova* (Here begins the new life). Beneath this rubric I find written the words that it is my intention to transcribe into this little book: if not all of them, at least their substance.]⁹

This passage represents the beginning of Dante's *Vita Nuova* where the author selects a collection of memories since he was nine years old. While this year indicates when Dante falls in

⁶ It is the case to mention that I am referring directly to Dante, but this mnemonic function corresponds to a generic exercise, which applies to any human memory with respect to time and space.

⁷ I will often refer to Dante's memory, Dante's biological/natural memory, the shapeless representation of memory in Dante, the metaphysical memory in Dante, the *ars memorativa* in Dante, the art of memory in Dante, and the heavenly concept of memory in Dante. Even if I will do so without specifying which Dante I am referring to (i.e., poet, author, or pilgrim), rest assured that this is done intentionally. While these references to memory are my own idea, they more precisely characterize the outcome of a mnemonic interlacement of both the poet and the pilgrim. Moreover, they represent the result of a shared effort between the creator of experiences (the poet) and the deliberator of experiences (the pilgrim), all of which are symptomatic of the encyclopedically all-inclusive realm of Dante's writings.

⁸ Citations from the *Vita Nuova* are from: Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nuova*, ed. by Donato Pirovano and Marco Grimaldi (Rome: Salerno, 2015).

⁹ All the English prose translations of *Vita Nuova* are from: Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nuova*, trans. by Dino S. Cervigni & Edward Vasta (Notre Dame, Ind.: The University of Notre Dame Press, 2002).

love with Beatrice, Dante also wants us to know that the proceedings to follow in this book are written in his memory under the “maggiori paragrafi” (greater paragraphs [VN II]). *Incipit Vita Nuova* (Here begins the new life) is a beginning that has been preserved through a recollected operation that Dante has adapted by the time he begins his *libello* (little book). The author begins his *libello* (little book) with a word that can undoubtedly be related to the past, which shows that in order to move on with his text, Dante needs to establish the beginning parameters between himself and his own memory.

This parallel between Dante’s self and his memory symbolizes a notion that goes even beyond some inserts from *Vita Nuova*, such as the poem *Era venuta nella mente mia*. In this stanza, memory is a mere space for Dante from which he divulges verses and memories without any sort of identity:

“Era venuta ne la mente mia
 la gentil donna che per suo valore
 fu posta da l’altissimo signore
 nel ciel de l’umiltate, ov’è Maria!”
 (VN XXXIV)¹⁰

[That lady came into my memory,
 the noble one who, for her excellence,
 was placed by him who reigns on high
 in the heaven of the meek, where Mary is.]¹¹

These verses capture Dante’s mnemonic images of this “gentil donna” (gentle woman) through his words and his past experience (memory). Furthermore, Teodolinda Barolini postulates these exact verses as they are indispensable to the understanding of this poem. She claims that the first redaction of this poem advances the idea of memory of the *Madonna* through the identical

¹⁰ Dante Alighieri, *Rime giovanili e della Vita nuova*, ed. with an intro. by Teodolinda Barolini and with notes by Manuele Gragnolati (Milan: BUR Rizzoli, 2009), 462-465.

¹¹ All the English translations of poetry and *Rime giovanili e della Vita nuova* are from: Dante Alighieri, *Dante’s Lyric Poetry: Poems of Youth and of the Vita Nuova*, ed. with a general introduction by Teodolinda Barolini & trans. by Richard Lansing (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

aforementioned verses. According to the scholar, memory is attached to that specific occasion, which means that this sonnet is addressed to people whose identity and gender are not specified.

The unspecified notion of a spatial memory connecting the poet's mind to that of space also includes something else. It is an implication that motivates the poet to seek what has been previously conveyed to his own memory, which becomes symptomatic of the writing's own poetic significance:

E però che soprastare a le passioni e atti di tanta gioventudine pare alcun parlare fabuloso, mi partirò da esse e, trapassando molte cose le quali si potrebbero trarre de l'esempio onde nascono queste, verrò a quelle parole le quali sono scritte nella mia memoria sotto maggiori paragrafi (VN II).

[But since dwelling on the passions and acts of such a youthful age may seem a fabulous tale, I shall move away from them; and omitting many things that might be drawn from the exemplar from which the present ones originate, I shall come to those words that are written in my memory under the greater paragraphs.]

Dante the poet's spatial representation of memory will ultimately influence Dante the character's past experience by revealing words that are already buried in his own past, like "trapassando molte cose" (omitting many things [VN II]). Through the juxtaposition of time and space in the *Vita Nuova*, readers are able to perceive the motivation of Dante the poet when he retrieves those words from his own memory. Sometimes implicitly and sometimes explicitly, the very act of thinking and recollecting images from his memory produces positive and negative effects on the young poet's physical and particularly mental operations. The consequences might also be undesirable, which derive from interrelating mnemonic techniques such as the act of *recordatio* (recollection) that Dante has employed even before the beginning of *Inferno*. In *Vita Nuova*, there are several aspects of Dante's memory that consequently motivate the nature of his own fear:

E quando mi videro, cominciaro a dire: 'Questi pare morto', e a dire tra loro: 'proccuriamo di confortarlo'; onde molte parole mi diceano da confortarmi e talora mi domandavano di che io avesse avuto paura, onde io, essendo alquanto riconfortato e conosciuto lo fallace imaginare, rispuosi a loro: 'Io vi dirò quello ch'io ho avuto'. Allora, cominciandomi dal principio infino a la fine, dissi loro quello che veduto avea, tacendo il

nome di questa gentilissima. Onde poi, sanato di questa infermitade, propuosi di dire parole di questo che m'era addivenuto [...] (VN XXIII).¹²

[And when they saw me, they began to say: 'This one looks dead,' and to say among themselves, 'Let's try to comfort him;' whereupon many things they said to comfort me, and at times they asked me what I had feared. Hence I, being somewhat comforted and aware of my false imagining, to them responded: 'I will tell you what has happened to me.' Thereafter, from beginning to end, I told them what I had seen, leaving unmentioned the name of this most gentle one. Then later, cured of this infirmity, I resolved to write verses about what had happened to me [...]

In commenting on this passage, Donato Pirovano claims that for one last time Dante is in his own room, which is symbolic and representative of loneliness and fear. Yet, he is not alone.¹³ In fact, Dante is surrounded by several “gentil donne” (gentle women) who happen to witness Dante’s agony. Whether it is a physical room or a literary *topos*, Dante is engaging with a private matter within a familiar ambience, from which he expresses a feeling of an emotional predicament. Furthermore, this series of emotional manifestations is characterized through Dante’s act of *recordatio* (recollection). By adopting this mnemonic technique in several sections of the *Vita Nuova*, Dante the poet is able to outline the cause, such as the spatial representation of private or domestic ambience, and the effect, which is manifested through pain, suffering, anguish, tears, and discomfort.¹⁴

I.1.2. The Act of *Recordatio*

The manifestation of cause and effect is very well represented in Dante’s *Inferno*. Even if the nature of fear implies different meanings, the pilgrim’s emotional reaction is very similar to that in *Vita Nuova*. By reminiscing on specific scenes that might have occurred over a short or a

¹² Since this example characterizes only the beginning section of the chapter, there will be many more examples from *Vita Nuova* that will continue to model the parallel between fear, emotions, and memory.

¹³ Cfr. Donato Pirovano, “Notes to Vita Nuova XXIII,” in *Vita Nuova / Rime*, ed. by Donato Pirovano and Marco Grimaldi (Rome: Salerno, 2015), 191: “Per l’ultima volta nel libello siamo nella camera di Dante, ma a differenza delle precedenti in questa circostanza il protagonista non è solo: attorno a lui c’è il coro femminile di donne di nobile sentire [...]”

¹⁴ It is not only the act of *recordatio* (recollection) that Dante embraces in the *Vita Nuova*, but also *cogitatio* (thought process) as well as crafting mental images.

long period of time, Dante recovers those same infernal moments by recollecting past experiences. The pilgrim is able to recover the first essence of memory by engaging with a status of confusion as well as facing his own past conscience. The symptoms that will follow in the next passage are similar to the previously cited passage from *Vita Nuova*.¹⁵ Dante the pilgrim feels sleepy, fearful, anxious, and all these aspects are encompassed within his emotional manifestation. An example of such an outcome occurs when he first sees the three beasts among which the ferocious she-wolf renews his fear constantly:

“E qual è quei che volontieri acquista,
 e giugne ‘l tempo che perder lo face,
 che ‘n tutti suoi pensier piange e s’attrista;
 tal mi fece la bestia senza pace,
 che, venendomi ‘ncontro, a poco a poco
 mi ripingeva là dove ‘l sol tace.”
 (*Inf.* I.55-60)¹⁶

[Even as he who glories while he gains
 will, when the time has come to tally loss,
 lament with every thought and turn despondent,
 so was I when I faced that restless beast,
 which, even as she stalked me, step by step
 had thrust me back to where the sun is speechless.]¹⁷

One aspect to be first investigated when the pilgrim faces consistent trepidation after his encounter with the she-wolf occurs by examine the value of the term “ripingeva” (thrust me back [*Inf.* I.60]) semantically. If on the one hand, Dante’s encounter with the infernal beasts symbolizes the initial stage for Dante the pilgrim facing constant apprehension, on the other hand, the beast’s visit represents the first for Dante the pilgrim’s recurring idea of fear throughout his journey: “mi ripingeva là dove ‘l sol tace” (had thrust me back to where the sun is speechless [*Inf.* I.60]). Dante the pilgrim identifies his fearful status with the infernal beasts

¹⁵ Even if I am juxtaposing two of Dante’s texts that are peculiarly different from each other (*Vita Nuova* and Dante’s *Inferno*), it is to clarify a similar case of human fear that gets manifested in both texts through the act of *recordatio*.

¹⁶ All the Italian quotations of Dante’s *Inferno* are from the following edition: Dante Alighieri, *La Divina Commedia: Inferno*, edited, and with a commentary by Anna Maria Chiavacci Leonardi (Milan, Mondadori, 2005).

¹⁷ The English translation of Dante’s *Inferno* is from the following edition: Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Inferno*, trans., with a commentary, by Allen Mandelbaum (New York: Bantam Classic, 2004).

when Dante recollects some aspects from his previous experience with these same beasts. This last aspect resonates with memory because this frequent manifestation of fear originates from the pilgrim's mnemonic effort to recollect those beasts that thrust him back.¹⁸

The notion of fear arises with Dante even before the pilgrim meets the three ferocious beasts. At the very beginning of *Inferno*, the pilgrim displays signs of disconcertment because he finds himself lost in the woods—a place he has never encountered before: “Ah quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura / esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte / che ne la mente rinova la paura!” (Ah, it is hard to speak of what it was, / that savage forest, dense and difficult, / which even I recall renews my fear! [*Inf.* I.4-6]).¹⁹ The fierce woods, the darkness, and the thick air are all characteristics of this unprecedented ambience to the pilgrim.²⁰ These infernal aspects consequently trigger great misperceptions in the pilgrim and they momentarily obfuscate his power of reason. At the same time, the pilgrim's fear does not yet explain how this emotional outcome can be related to memory. Dante the poet explicates the reasons why these undesirable emotions are tied to his own memory two cantos later, where he offers great details about the natural phenomenon of thunder:

“Finito questo, la buia campagna
tremò sì forte, che dello spavento
la mente di sudore ancor mi bagna.
La terra lagrimosa diede vento,
che balenò una luce vermiglia
la qual mi vinse ciascun sentimento;
e caddi come l'uom che 'l sonno piglia.”
(*Inf.* III.130-136)

[And after this was said, the darkened plain
quaked so tremendously – the memory
of terror then, bathes me in sweat again.

¹⁸ These are ideas that can be re-examined by looking back at the pages 13-16 from the main Introduction.

¹⁹ This process moves through the notion of *renovatio*, with the pilgrim's use of the verb “rinova” (renew) at the beginning of *Inferno*. It is a conception that indicates the transition from past to present, and this same renewal will continue until the end of *Purgatorio*.

²⁰ It is certainly true to state that these examples are mere representations of literary *topos*. However, it should also be mentioned that these same textual examples trigger emotional outcomes that resonate with the faculty of memory.

A whirlwind burst out of the tear-drenched earth,
 a wind that crackled with a bloodred light,
 a light that overcame all of my senses;
 and like a man whom sleep has seized, I fell.]

The sudden earthquake and the thunder that move Dante the pilgrim's senses are extraordinary because they originate from divinity. The natural phenomena of thunder, rain, and earthquakes are foremost present in the Holy Scriptures, and they accompany God's direct interventions throughout history. The above-examined verses from the third canto of *Inferno* also ends in a similar dramatic environment. Most importantly, these tragic moments are motivated by the pilgrim's act of *recordatio* (recollection) with the notion of "mente" (memory [*Inf.* III.132]) capturing those tragic images. Dante the wayfarer is about to enter *Inferno*, and he consequently spawns the feelings and emotions that derive from the reality of his journey.²¹ He sweats, he is scared, he loses control, he falls asleep, and he is perplexed. By the time the pilgrim enters *Inferno*, his mind elevates, and his unhappy cognition is the result of such elevation.²² These signs represent a major asset in the Dantesque narrative, with the poet underlining the truthfulness of human history until the end of *Paradiso* (*Par.* XXXIII.61-63). Moreover, the previously examined infernal passage is paramount because it reveals how the spatial representation of the pilgrim's actual infernal reality moves his memory. The "terra lagrimosa" (tear-drenched earth [*Inf.* III.133]) and the "luce vermiglia" (blood-red light [*Inf.* III.134]) are some of the turbulent descriptions that characterize the tempestuous ambience and that entail Dante re-experiencing part of his past. Through the mnemonic act of *recordatio* (recollection),

²¹ To avoid repetitions, I will often interlace the figure of Dante the pilgrim with other terms like wayfarer, voyager, journeyer, and traveler.

²² Matteo Chiromono, *Chiose alla 'Commedia,'* ed. by Andrea Mazzucchi, Tomo I, Edizione Nazionale dei Commenti Danteschi (Rome: Salerno, 2004), 119: "Potest significari quod poeta, in maxima speculationis contemplatione existens, ad omnibus aliis rebus alienatus est. Et sic per somnum Infernum ingressus est, idest per profundam mentis elevationem, cognito infelicissimo fine impiorum."

readers realize that the pilgrim's memory is filled with fear, emotional outcomes, and temporarily lost senses.

I.1.3. The Function of Human Vision

From the infernal beasts to tragic moments like thunder, rain, and earthquakes, these are past experiences that also characterize the pilgrim's impulse about the notion of time. The impulses or instincts from Dante the wayfarer's past experiences are sometimes identical and sometimes simultaneous with those of what he seeks.²³ The impulse relating to time is of two kinds. On the one hand, the pilgrim remembers vaguely and still fears the "buia campagna" (the darkened plain [*Inf.* III.130]). On the other hand, he has a clear vision in the present of what precisely frightens him. These textual examples characterize one of the causes as being spatial representation and the effect of fear and terror related to memory. Moreover, it is also important to analyze the ways in which Dante the voyager recalls these same aspects from his own past memory. If Dante the pilgrim's memory of the earthquake and the terror from that obscured light indicate an act of memory, these events also imply that the pilgrim has seen something of this sort before. This last aspect demonstrates how vision and experience are related, and so the sense of vision represents an important vehicle for Dante the voyager while evoking his past experiences.

According to the past theories mentioned in the introduction, vision is a sense that contributes to the pilgrim's act of *recordatio* (recollection).²⁴ Without his vision, Dante the pilgrim might not have been able to remember those unknown woods or refashion those tragic moments during the earthquake from *Inferno* III. It is also known from antiquity that vision is

²³ Aristotle, *On the Memory and Recollection*, 291-297.

²⁴ Cfr. Aristotle, *On the Memory and Recollection*, 287-313. Galen, *The Art of Medicine*, 2-133. The majority of examined theories can be found on pages 2-10 in the main Introduction.

one of the greatest and most useful senses. In fact, Dante discusses the nature of this sense in the *Convivio*, and defines a close parallel between the human eye and the notion of recollection: “Queste cose visibili, si le proprie come le comuni, in quanto sono visibili, vengono dentro a l’occhio.”²⁵ (These visible things, the proper as well as the common, insofar as they are visible, enter into the eye [*Conv.* III.ix.7]).²⁶ The function of the human eye is not only to reverberate, but also to represent the past event. For the eye (vision) to properly function, Dante the author finds it necessary to return to the past, where some of those mental images (in which case we can take the unknown woods, etc. from *Inf.* III.130-136) are being placed inside the memory. Lina Bolzoni claims that mental images revealing unfamiliar notions model the interior faculty of

²⁵ The Italian quotations of Dante’s *Convivio* are from: Dante Alighieri, *Convivio*, ed. by Franca Brambilla Ageno (Florence: Le lettere, 2003). Since several philosophical notions from Dante’s *Convivio* will be examined in this study, some important aspects about differences that transpire through Dante’s philosophy must be clarified. First, the philosophy in the *Convivio* symbolizes the temporal happiness of an individual that is manifested through human wisdom. The desire for human wisdom is what makes a great philosopher who can embrace the different realms of science. In other words, the notion of wisdom is the quintessential body of philosophy and the sole element that can juxtapose humans with the wisdom of God. While the philosophy of the *Convivio* teaches about the temporal happiness of the individual, Dante’s *Commedia* instead teaches us the eternal salvation of men through the Church. This is the ultimate teaching of the *Divina Commedia*. Additionally, the notion of philosophy in Dante’s *Commedia* is symbiotic with the notion of poetry. The *Commedia* is defined as an *opus doctrinale*, which precisely characterizes a specific genre of philosophy considered ethical and moral. Dante the pilgrim is the character that delivers and engages with the course of morality, where he acts upon the human consciousness and relieves humans of their misery by replacing it with happiness. The happiness for the pilgrim and for the collective audience is the eternal salvation of man, which is the ultimate philosophical teaching that Dante conveys from his journey and throughout the *Divina Commedia*. We also know that Dante begins to write the *Commedia* around the beginning of the fourteenth century and he writes the *Convivio* in 1307. Despite the gap in time, there are two main reasons why both texts were adopted. While engaging with philosophical examples from the *Convivio* and the *Commedia*, *Questio de aqua et terra* or *Monarchia*, a philosophical truth in Dante becomes a meeting point. Dante’s desire to shape his own wisdom becomes a philosophical truth because his wisdom is instilled and philosophically contextualized either through the ethical judgment of the *Convivio* or through the divine intelligences of *Paradiso*. Dante expresses in the *Convivio* the desire to know while in the *Commedia* he expresses his desire for divine wisdom. Both of these examples characterize one meeting point where these different philosophical points of view belong to the sole mind of Dante. That meeting point is indicative of the same divine wisdom that translates these different philosophical points of view into the sole mind of Dante. To further examine the differences in Dante’s philosophy that emerge from the *Convivio* and *Divina Commedia*, see also: Roberto Di Ceglie, “Dante Alighieri e la filosofia Cristiana nell’interpretazione di Étienne Gilson,” *Rivista di Filosofia neo-Scolastica* 97, no. 4 (Ottobre-Dicembre 2005): 627-649. Andrea A. Robiglio, “Philosophy and Theology,” in *Dante in Context*, eds. Zygmunt G. Barański and Lino Pertile (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 137-158; Johannes Bartuschat, “La filosofia di Brunetto Latini e il Convivio,” in *Il Convivio di Dante*, eds. Johannes Bartuschat and Andrea A. Robiglio (Ravenna: Longo, 2015), 33-51; Alfonso Maierù, “Sull’epistemologia di Dante,” in *Dante e la scienza*, eds. Patrick Boyde and Vittorio Russo (Ravenna: Longo, 1995), 157-172; Vittorio Russo, “Tecniche e forme della poesia dottrinale di Dante,” in *Dante e la scienza*, eds. Patrick Boyde and Vittorio Russo (Ravenna: Longo, 1995), 173-189.

²⁶ The English translations of Dante’s *Convivio* are from: Dante, *Il Convivio* (The Banquet), trans. by Richard H. Lansing (Garland Library of Medieval Literature, 1990).

memory.²⁷ Consequently, Dante the author remembers the mental image of the savage woods by reintegrating this experience through the vision that has mustered the same moment for the very first time. Dante also adds other details to his explanation about the function of the eye. For instance, there are other elements that help vision to operate properly such as color and light, which symbolize two elements that coexist within the sphere of Dante's vision: "Ma lo colore e la luce sono propriamente, perché solo col viso comprendiamo ciò, e non con altro senso." (But the color and light are, properly speaking, visible because we apprehend them by sight alone and by no other sense [*Conv.* III.ix.7]). While this passage reiterates the importance of vision as an efficient sense among the other senses, it also extends the peculiarity of human vision that infers other complexities and operations.

Dante acknowledges the complexity of human vision by describing a close connection between the eye and the brain. He connects human vision to that of the brain and defines the idea behind the five cells in the brain that are active in the construction of human thought. In the following passage from *Convivio*, we see not only the close connection between vision and brain, but also the course that a mental image takes through the act of *recordatio* (recollection). Dante coherently explains that a visual spirit (or, as he calls it, *spirito visivo*) acted as a kind of valve, which actively opens and closes the passage between the middle and posterior parts of the brain (memory and *cogitatio*) as thinking procedures required:

Di questa pupilla lo spirito visivo, che si continua da essa, a la parte del cerebro dinanzi, dov'è la sensibile virtude sì come in principio fontale, subitamente senza tempo la ripresenta, e così vedemo (*Conv.* III.ix.8-9).²⁸

²⁷ Lina Bolzoni, "Allegorie e immagini della memoria: il colloquio spirituale e il ciclo della Torre della Sapienza," in *La rete delle immagini: predicazione in volgare dalle origini a Bernardino da Siena* (Turin: Einaudi, 2009), 90-91: "Le immagini infatti modellano le facoltà interiori e nello stesso tempo scandiscono le varie fasi del progresso umano [...]."

²⁸ To further examine the idea of pupil and its parallel with the brain, see the following theories: Albertus Magnus, *De natura et immortalitate animae, cum commento* (Nürbert: Hochfeder Kaspar, 1493), II.4,7, "Sensibilis autem cognitio est communicata quinque sensibus, et ideo oportet esse unum fontem ex quo omnis sensus oriatur et ad quem omnis motus sensibilibus referatur sicut ad ultimum finem; et hic fons vocatur sensus communis." See also

[The visual spirit, which passes from the pupil to the front part of the brain where the principal source of the sensitive power resides, instantaneously reproduces the form, without any lapse of time, and thus we see.]

From this last passage Dante the author reveals an internal motion with the ventricles of a human's eyes (*pupilla*) and the spirit of the human vision instantly representing and corresponding to the image of the anterior section of the human brain.²⁹ In addition, the importance of the eye's pupil is described in its physical form, which refers to a great physical implication in reference to spatial representations: "ma quivi a modo d'una palla, percossa si ferma; sì che la forma, che nel mezzo trasparente non pare, [nella parte pare] lucida e terminata" (there like a ball that is stopped when struck so that the form, which cannot be seen in the transparent medium, here appears lucid where it is arrested [*Conv.* III.ix.7]). By adopting a metaphor of a circular form like a ball, Dante anticipates an obstacle that misleads human vision. If we juxtapose this passage with some of those above-mentioned literary passages from the *Inferno*, we notice that recalling the space around the pilgrim not only produces fear, but also hurts his vision:

"La terra lagrimosa diede vento,
che balenò una luce vermiglia
la qual mi vinse ciascun sentimento;
e caddi come l'uom che 'l sonno piglia."
(*Inf.* III.133-136)

[A whirlwind burst out of the tear-drenched earth,
a wind that crackled with a bloodred light,
that overcame all of my senses;
and like a man whom sleep has seized, I fell.]

In this passage, Dante the poet reveals a source of meteorology with the subterranean winds that cause earthquakes. The pilgrim is falling into unconsciousness for the overwhelming experience of his crossing into the realm of *Inferno*. It is an overpowering instance for the pilgrim because

from the same source II.4.9: "Sensum igitur communem in anteriori parte cerebri posuerunt in loco ubi concurrunt nervi sensitiva quinque sensum sicut in quodam centro."

²⁹ Cfr. Galen, *On the Natural Faculties*, 195-219. See also pages 4-6 in the Introduction. Galen himself first characterized memory as a faculty arrayed in the posterior ventricle of the human brain.

Dante the pilgrim's vision succumbs to other causes such as humidity and thick air. The human sight's effects are often desirable throughout the pilgrim's journey, but just like the previously examined fear from the three beasts of *Inf. I*, these effects taken all together (including *Inf. III*) can also be undesirable to Dante the pilgrim.

There are more adverse consequences that include the function of vision in the *Convivio*. Dante the author begins by defining the parameters between visual space and vision itself. While the visual space turns out to be the cause of illness or fatigue, the vision is what embraces and conveys the unwanted results of being temporarily weak or feeble. For instance, in the next passage from the *Convivio*, Dante adapts his eyes' functionality to the burden of stress and other external elements that could impair his vision and other senses:

Però puote anche parere così per l'organo visivo, cioè l'occhio, lo quale per infertade e per fatica si transmuta in alcuno coloramento e in alcuna debilitade; sì come avviene molte volte che, per essere la tunica della pupilla sanguinosa molto, per alcuna corruzione d'infertade, le cose paiono quasi tutte rubicunde [...]. E per essere lo viso debilitato, incontra in esso alcuna disgregazione di spirito, sì che le cose non paiono unite ma disgregate, quasi a guisa che fa la nostra lettera in su la carta umida [...] (*Conv. III.ix.13-14*).

[It may have this appearance also by reason of the visual organ (namely the eye), which because of illness or fatigue undergoes change, acquiring a certain coloration and a certain feebleness, as when it often happens that because the membrane of the pupil has become thoroughly bloodshot as a result of some impairment brought about by illness, things have the appearance of being completely red, [...]. And because the sight is weakened, some deterioration of the visual spirit takes place, so that things do not seem in focus but blurred, almost as our writing does on damp paper [...]³⁰

To clarify the idea behind the parallel between visual space and vision itself, Boyde highlights the Aristotelian idea of *Scala Naturae*, which refers to the ladder of being.³¹ He argues that Dante simultaneously makes it clear that the differences between individuals in any given species are also differences of higher and lower, and that these "individual differences are so contrived that the noblest example of one species will possess powers that can scarcely be

³⁰ While I am merely introducing the notion of weakness in the face of memory, I will fully investigate the human debility of memory in the section entitled *The Preliminary Shortcomings of Dante's Natural Memory*.

³¹ This is a notion that Dante expresses (even if with the usage of different words) in other of his writings. There are also other references to visit in order: *Questio de aqua et terra*, ed. by Paolo Chiesa and Andrea Tabarroni (Rome: Salerno, 2013), xviii, [41-48], 720-724; & xx, [63-74], 735-741; *Monarchia I*, iii, [5-7], 17-19; *Convivio I*, v, [9-10], 14-15; *Purgatorio IV.1-18*.

distinguished from the most defective specimen of the species on the next highest rung of the ladder.”³² I expand upon Boyde’s discussion by arguing that from the last passage of the *Convivio*, Dante discusses and determines the elements that such a cause (i.e., illness or fatigue) reveals through his act of *recordatio* (recollection). Dante recalls and recollects the humid temperature that originates from a vapid and swampy space through his vision (*Inf.* III.133). This same image causes a transformation in the external senses, such as face discoloring where the ventricle and the pupil become blood-spattered (*Inf.* III.134-135) and the great fragility of the membrane of the human pupil, which turns out to be thoroughly enflamed.

These physical representations as defined above consequently reveal the human mind’s susceptibility while operating within these same ventricles in the event of earthshaking or culminating consequences. Dante calls it “disgregazione” (deterioration [*Conv.* III.ix.14) of the visual spirit. It represents an unyielding adversity that outlines first Dante’s need to overcome peculiar atmospheres and second that reveal an additional strain on his mind. I also link this relation between the ventricles of the brain and the climatic conditions to what Dante previously stated: “si macolerebbe la forma visibile del color del mezzo e di quello della pupilla” (the visible form would be tinged with the color of the medium as well as that of the pupil [*Conv.* III.ix.9]). The Italian verb “macolare” means to tinge, which even in a figurative sense shows how unpleasant the effects of weather can be on the human condition.³³ This same sentence from the *Convivio* also foreshadows the main notion of the next passage where the color and the weather alter the visible form, which implies a filthy version of man’s humor:

³² Patrick Boyde, “The Natural World and the Scale of Being,” in *Dante Philomythes and Philosopher: Man in the Cosmos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 130.

³³ It originates from the Latin word “maculare,” which translates into Italian as “macchiare” (to tinge): this term comprises a series of meanings, such as “inquino,” (to pollute or to contaminate); but also as to “spargo” (to spread). Another synonym for macolare is “imbrattare,” which also originates from the Latin word “maculāre.” For further references: Gian Biagio Conte, *Dizionario della Lingua Latina*, (Florence: Le Monnier, 2004).

Transmutasi anche questo mezzo di sottile in grosso, di secco in umido, per li vapori della terra che continuamente salgono: lo quale mezzo, così transmutato, trasmuta la imagine della stella, che viene per esso, per la grossezza in oscuritate, e per l'umido e per lo secco in colore (*Conv.* III.ix.7).³⁴

[This medium changes from greater light to lesser light, as with the presence or absence of the sun; and with its presence the medium, which is diaphanous, is so full of light that it overpowers the star and therefore no longer appears to shine]

In the event of a sunny day, the transparent air turns out to be very illuminating to the extent of overcoming the lights of stars.³⁵ At the same time, this passage demonstrates a continuous manifestation of a contrast, which originates from a higher condensation of air causing the surroundings to become obscure and unintelligible. If Dante states that the light overpowers the stars and this same light no longer appears to shine, this last aspect represents the cause. Moreover, the effect resonates with Dante's reference to "infertade" (illness [*Conv.* III.ix.13]), which makes it more likely for the human mind to face an imminent and ephemeral "disgregazione" (deterioration [*Conv.* III.ix.14]).

I.1.4. *Cogitatio* and Natural Memory

Just as in the act of *recordatio* (recollection), Dante the author can deliver his description of what he has previously experienced or seen through the act of *cogitatio* (thought process).³⁶

³⁴ Cfr. Maria Luisa Ardizzone, *Reading as the Angels Read: Speculation and Politics in Dante's Banquet*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016). Ardizzone claims that among the purposes of the treaties are the identification and formation of a new kind of reader. She suggests this because the *Convivio* is not just an encyclopedia of learning, as many have claimed, but Dante's attempt to articulate a theory of human and intellectual happiness, in which perfect knowledge is the natural basis for a well-organized society in the Middle Ages. Along this line of thought, see also Maria Corti, "Il libro della memoria e i libri dello scrittore," in *La felicità mentale. Nuove prospettive per Cavalcanti e Dante* (Turin: Einaudi, 1983), 179-199.

³⁵ In reference to the idea of Dante's notion of visual spirit, see also Robert Podgurski, "Where Optics and Visionary Metaphysics Converge in Dante's 'Novella Vista,'" in *Italian Quarterly*, (XXXV), nos. 135-136 (1998), 30-31. Podgurski claims that Dante's notion of the visual spirit is two-fold. On the one hand, Dante established his adherence to the physiology of intromission, and on the other hand, he expresses his concern with the physical component of vision when he speaks of the rectilinear path that images must take to be truly seen.

³⁶ A definition of *cogitatio* as a methodical and technical term can be found in note #1 on p. 25 of Chapter One.

This is an operation of natural memory that originates from the Classical Era.³⁷ Quintilian states that one must employ a large number of places, that must be well lighted and clearly set out in order.³⁸ While this series of norms are relevant to the rhetorical aspect of memory, *cogitatio* (thought process) is also an act that sets in motion mental images in Dante the pilgrim's mind.³⁹ Throughout its long history, *cogitatio* (thought process) is the activity of putting images together in a consciously recollected and deliberative way. One should therefore think of *cogitatio* (thought process) as a small-scale composition, a bringing-together of various pieces from one's inventory that operates first across a series of structures located in the first two canticles. In his *Commedia*, Dante describes several physical configurations such as a large number of castles, houses, intercolumnar spaces, or corners. Dante the poet must place these mental images from his past experiences in definite spatial representations.⁴⁰ While refashioning the mental images of specific places, Dante the traveler feels more vividly open to what he is seeing in the present. Moreover, he approaches these places even if his emotional status is still affected by some fear that occasionally overwhelms him.

Thus, the act of *cogitatio* (thought process) strengthens Dante's act of *recordatio* (recollection) by not only implying past familiarities through vision from earlier times of his life, but also by registering examples of the pilgrim's past experiences in reference to specific places. Dante the poet remembers places such as a small town near Florence or a public place in which

³⁷ It is true that *cogitatio* has been considered by the Classics as an operation symptomatic the human memory. However, it also concerns an act of thinking deliberately, which I interlace it with Dante's imagination. In fact, this same interlacement between *cogitatio* and imagination will be discussed in Chapter Two.

³⁸ Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, II, ii.33-59.

³⁹ On the idea of the rhetorical aspect of memory, see Quintilian M. Fabius, *Institutio oratoria*, 4-6.

⁴⁰ The idea of dividing memory in two originates from the Classical Era: the natural and the artificial memory (from which Simonides defines it as the art of memory). It all starts with an unknown teacher of rhetoric in Rome who compiled, circa 86-82 B.C., a textbook for his students which immortalized the name of the man to whom it was dedicated. The book is *Ad Herennium* in which the author defines the five parts of rhetoric (*inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, pronuntiatio*) in a rather dry textbook style. In reference to this topic, see also: Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 17-39.

the same poet used to meet old folks during his youth, or about some infrastructures near Pisa or places like Pistoia or Campo Picen where some of the Black Guelphs resided. This series of experiences resonates with the thought process of *cogitatio* (thought process) which allows the poet to expand these memories into the present:

“Pistoia in pria d’i Neri si dimagra;
 poi Fiorenza rinova gente e modi.
 Tragge Marte vapor di Val di Magra
 ch’è di torbidi nuvoli involuto;
 e con tempesta impetuosa e agra
 sovra Campo Picen fia combattuto;”
 (Inf. XXIV.143-148)

[Pistoia first will strip herself of Blacks,
 then Florence will renew her men and manners.
 From Val di Magra, Mars will draw a vapor
 which turbid clouds will try to wrap; the clash
 between them will be fierce, impetuous,
 a tempest, fought upon Campo Piceno;]

In 1301, the Blacks of Pistoia were expelled, their houses were burned, and Dante the pilgrim recounts the episode of one of those blacks whose name was Vanni Fucci.⁴¹ To delve more fully into this historical sequence about Campo Piceno, Vanni Fucci, and Malaspina, the vaticinator employs a meteorological allegory, which is imagined by the author according to the principles of his own time period.⁴² More precisely, Dante adopts the idea of the verbal image, which consists of the ability to use these images (like the previously mentioned Campo Picen or Pistoia) and experiences supplied by the practice of *cogitatio* (thought process).⁴³ Memory for

⁴¹ Finding a sympathetic and crafty champion in Charles of Valois, who had come to Florence ostensibly to keep the peace, the Blacks of Pistoia and Florence were able to renew their attacks on the Whites of Florence, whom they expelled in 1302. The specific vapor from Val di Magra is the Guelph military leader Malaspina, who will defeat the Whites just as lightning breaks through clouds. That defeat of the White Guelphs will take place on Campo Piceno, a generic name for the plain of Pistoia.

⁴² Vittorio Rossi, *Commento alla ‘Divina Commedia’*, ed. by Massimiliano Corrado, Tomo I, Edizione Nazionale dei Commenti Danteschi (Rome: Salerno, 2007), 429: “Il vaticinio, oscuro e misterioso, ha la forma d’un’allegoria meteorologica; [...] le quali insegnavano esistere nell’aria vapori ignei e vapori acquei, e i vapori acquei, moltiplicandosi, combattere coi vapori ignei e costringerli, imprigionarli; e questi poi squarciare quelli, infiammandosi e facendo romore, producendo cioè il fulmine.”

⁴³ To further consider the idea of verbal image, see also: Paola Rigo, *Memoria classica e memoria biblica in Dante* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1994); Roberto Antonelli, *Memoria rerum et memoria verborum. La costruzione della Divina Commedia*, 35-45.

things or images or places is the special property of those who know well how to remember.⁴⁴ Frances Yates argues that we are able to imprint on our minds by a skillful arrangement of the several masks that represent them, so that we may grasp ideas by means of images and their order by means of places.⁴⁵ Furthermore, I also argue that if Dante the pilgrim is able to remember a place like Pisa or Pistoia or Campo Picen from *Inferno* XXIV, this is because he is able to write about this from his own process of *cogitatio* (thought process). By doing so, the wayfarer's description of places like those previously suggested enhances the connection between both the act of recollection (*recordatio*) and the thought process (*cogitatio*).

There are also more verbal images from Dante's *Commedia* that are active and sharply defined, which have the power of promptly encountering and penetrating the mind of a character like the pilgrim. *Cogitatio* (thought process) in this case consists of a way of reproducing images through textbook instructions that should be well known and familiar to Dante the poet whose aim is to exhume ideas from earlier poetry. For instance, in Dante's *Inferno* there is a myriad of mental images that Dante reproduces from the Classical Era, or more precisely from Latin literature and history. In the next passage from *Inferno*, Dante depicts a mental image by revealing what his memory is able to retrieve from the past:

Però disse 'l maestro: "Se tu tronchi
 qualche fraschetta d'una d'este piante,
 li pensier c'hai si faran tutti monchi."
 Allor porsi la mano un poco avante
 e colsi un ramicel da un gran pruno;
 e 'l tronco suo gridò: "Perché mi schiante?"
 Da che fatto fu poi di sangue bruno,
 ricomincio a dir: "Perché mi scerpi?
 non hai tu spirto di pietade alcuno?"

⁴⁴ In order to underline this notion, see Cicero's *De Oratore*, in which this same practice engenders habit, and by images of similar words changed and unchanged in case or drawn from denoting the part of denoting the genus, and by using the image of one word to remind of a whole sentence. Cicero, *De Oratore*, II, lxxxviii, 359.

⁴⁵ Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 25.

(*Inf.* XIII.28-36)⁴⁶

[Therefore, my master said: "If you would tear
 a little twig from any of these plants,
 the thoughts you have will also be cut off."
 Then I stretched out my hand a little way
 and from a great thorn bush snapped off a branch,
 at which its trunk cried out: "Why do you tear me?"
 And then, when it had grown more dark with blood,
 it asked again: "Why do you break me off?
 Are you without all sentiment of pity?"]

It is a passage from *Inferno* XIII in the Seventh Circle, where violence against oneself (suicide) or against one's possessions (squandering) is punished. There is also the dreary wood, with the suicides transformed into strange trees, and the squanderers hounded and rent by dogs. Despite noticing how the poet eventually makes changes to fit the pattern of his own journey's spectrum, Dante the poet's own illustration of Pier Della Vigna and his instance is still a product of his own *cogitatio* (thought process). This is because the main theme consists of the anecdote of tweaking a little branch, which originates from Dante past reading of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Likewise, the episode that Dante the poet is communicating through this vivid image refers to one of Virgil's own narratives. In this episode Aeneas, while landing in Thrace and trying to tear a green branch from the soil to serve as leafy cover for his altars, is shocked by black blood dripping down from the severed roots.⁴⁷

Writing the episode of Pier della Vigna prompts Dante the writer to digest simultaneously both the words and the context of Virgil's book. Digesting leads Dante the poet not only to familiarity with the text, but also to meditation on those past memories. However, Dante re-experiences the vivid image of the broken branches from his own memory of Virgil's *Aeneid*. According to Carruthers, thinking from the past is the "special activity of meditation, the

⁴⁶ The speaker is Pier della Vigna (c1190-1249), who was minister, private secretary, and chief counselor to Emperor Frederick II. Pier della Vigna fell into disfavor and was jailed and blinded. Soon afterward he committed suicide.

⁴⁷ Cfr. Virgil, *Aeneid*, ed. by Jeffrey Henderson, and trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), II.32-63.

culmination of *lectio* but bound by none of its rules, a free play of the recollecting mind.”⁴⁸ In addition, the scholar suggests that “as though at this point the student of the text, having digested it by re-experiencing it in memory, has become not its interpreter, but its new author, its re-author.”⁴⁹ On the one hand, writing about Virgil’s *Aeneid* allows Dante the author to digest and to become familiar with words and contexts through full observation. On the other hand, this same meaning must now determine Dante the poet’s preparation for the pilgrim’s speech as he cues the representational process of *recordatio* (recollection). Dante is the present scribe, and from the very beginning of his poem, he announces Dante the poet’s authorial intentions through the authorial voice of “I.”⁵⁰ While Dante the scribe communicates the previously suggested intentions with Dante the pilgrim, the latter deliberates the poet’s writing memories from the past (such as from the *Aeneid*) throughout the journey towards redemption. Ultimately, the readers engage with the authorial intentions through the author’s practice of writing.

Likewise, writing about the past consists of a mnemonic procedure that engenders one’s past in the present narrative. According to Isidore of Seville, writing was considered a form of art for two reasons: it regulated the image of a place in the written narrative through memory and this same procedure represented an inner motion.⁵¹ This means that physical spaces like Pisa or Pistoia or Camp Picen or the Tower of Muda from *Inf.* XXXIII can be considered not only mental images that the pilgrim materializes in his narrative and throughout his journey, but also

⁴⁸ Mary Carruthers, “Memory and the Ethics of Reading,” in *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 210.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁰ To fully engage with the discussion of Dante’s authorial “I”, see Jelena Todorović, “Introduction,” in *Dante and the Dynamics of Textual Exchange: Authorship, Manuscript Culture, and the Making of the Vita Nova* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 1-17.

⁵¹ Besides the notion of writing, Isidore of Seville also delves into the idea of alphabets. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, ed. by W. M. Lindsay. 2 vols. Oxford Classical Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), I.3.2. For the idea of inner motion, see also Quintilian M. Fabius, *Institutio oratoria*, V, i.11.2. Quintilian expands on Isidore’s rhetorical idea of alphabets and begins to consider more rightly the assumption that the mind is already writing when it stores up its experience in representations. The symbolic representations that we call writing are no more than cues or triggers for the memorial representations upon which human cognition is based.

as wax tablets or papyrus. This last aspect alludes to the image of a tower or a building that Dante the poet transcribes on paper, which acts like the letters of an alphabet. The procedure and nature of the images are like scripts, while the release of these images across the *Inferno* is like reading in the present to his audience.⁵² Therefore, through the practice of thinking about Virgil or Ovid and writing while imitating their topics (i.e., metamorphosis from Ovid, or the idea of rivers from Virgil) and physical figures (i.e., Cerberus, Minos, etc.), Dante proves to have learned about the past through the classics, and so he can continue to set in place what he has seen or heard and deliver it from memory. I argue that Dante re-writes the literary past to underscore the ability for ample system-building, which symbolizes the beginning of trained memory.

I.1.5. The Trained Memory

Both practices of thinking about past literature and re-writing Dante the poet's mental image (i.e., Pier della Vigna from *Inf.* XIII, etc.) represent two elements that Dante adopts to reproduce a new scene and to train his own memory. Paola Rigo claims that Dante's trained memory discusses and renews at the same time.⁵³ She claims that a trained memory is a methodical memory, which allows Dante to conjunct the sensible and the over-sensible, the intelligible and the unintelligible.⁵⁴ At the same time, the idea of trained memory is essentially another way of stating that Dante the poet's memory needs to be educated and cultivated. This process occurs with writing and thinking representing two components that need to be

⁵² Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 36-39.

⁵³ Paola Rigo, *Memoria classica e memoria biblica in Dante*, 109-118.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 162-163: "È una memoria che discute rovescia rinnova e se la parola poetica, la poesia, è per Dante quel vincolo che congiunge il sensibile al sovrasensibile, l'intelligibile all'inintelligibile; se è quel nodo in cui convergono e si esprimono trapassando l'una nell'altra vicendevolmente esistenza ed essenza, fisica e metafisica, allora la poesia non si dissolve varcando la soglia tra il tempo e l'eterno, ma in questo transito, come Beatrice, vive e si manifesta."

considered entirely as matters of memory. A trained memory operates and shines according to both practices of thinking about the past and re-writing in the present. I argue that a trained memory corresponds to a well-educated memory in which Dante the poet can properly refashion past readings like in the case of Virgil's *Aeneid* verses and mental images of places like Pistoia, the Tower of Muda, and other physical structures previously mentioned.

Whether it is thinking, writing, or any emotional outcomes such as fear or trepidation due to humid or grotesque settings (*Inf.* III.130-136), all these elements sustain two main foundations of memory: *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process). These two mnemonic acts bear the basis of trained memory and symbolize Dante the poet's compositional habits.⁵⁵ This is to say that memory can operate as a form of habit or a training device that allows the pilgrim to go through a range of different sources. It is possible for Dante the author with a well-trained memory to compose clearly in an organized fashion on several different subjects. Whether rewriting or reproducing Virgilian ideas in his narrative, Dante the author shows that he can transform his images of previous episodes into his own *Commedia*. Once he has the all-important stated places in the ordering scheme and the contents firmly in their places within it, it is quite possible for Dante the author to move back and forth from one distinct composition to another without losing his place or becoming confused. The proper preparation of material (*recordatio*), order, and complete absorption and composition (*cogitatio*) are the requirements that Dante the poet himself defines or that we apprehend from his trained memory.

We have seen with Dante the poet how *recordatio* (recollection) turns his memory into a realm where to store arguments, or where to invoke the topics of familiar arguments through the practice of thinking about the past literature of Virgil, Ovid and later Statius in *Purgatorio*.

⁵⁵ I will soon consider this trained memory a natural memory – which will be explained more in depth in the next four pages.

Dante the author engages his vision (as explained in the *Convivio*) with the act of recollection to store memory in such a way as to enable effective thinking processes (*cogitatio*) of places like the Tower of Muda (*Inf.* XXXIII) or the monument from the city of Pistoia (*Inf.* XXIV). Moreover, a trained or a well-educated memory is still a product of biological/natural memory, which also implies a physiological process. This suggests that recollection and thought process are subject to training and habituation just like physical activity, and that both mnemonic techniques imply the role of human habit in transferring images from past to present. Therefore, I argue that if the faculty of natural memory is an essential treasure house for the *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process), mental images (the product of both mnemonic techniques) characterize the pilgrim's virtuous achievement. This is to say that it is the spatial nature of Dante the author's memory-images that allows for recollective memories to be formed. Most importantly, the process that connects *recordatio* (recollection), *cogitatio* (thought process), physical settings and places, and mental images occurs through a variety of consciously applied techniques, training, and diligent practice that will be examined beyond the sphere of literature.

I.2. Dante's Memory and the Scientific Method

I.2.1. The Biological Nature of Memory

In spite of transformations in the mnemotechnical tradition over the centuries, there are discussions among philosophers, theoreticians, and scholars in terms of continuously juxtaposing memory to the human body.⁵⁶ One of the most recent scholars of memory is Mary Carruthers,

⁵⁶ Since I focus on two sections in this chapter that interact constantly with one another, the first part comprises indeed these same theories that I employ from antiquity to modern times. I borrow the idea of memory as a

whose study intersects numerous disciplines and particularly focuses on the *Divina Commedia*.⁵⁷ Her comprehensive analysis filters those old views about memory into a modern realm of refashionable theories. Most importantly, Carruthers makes a considerably universal assertion about Dante's memory:

Because memory requires a body, the souls in Dante's *Inferno* are forever stuck in their recollected past, unable to form new memories in hell, yet cut off also from the continuous vision that nourishes the blessed souls and angels.⁵⁸

Frances Yates peruses the significance of memory as a form of art known as mnemotechnic,⁵⁹ Paolo Rossi enhances the art of memory by juxtaposing it to the philosophical notion of logic,⁶⁰ and Mary Carruthers strengthens the physical ideal of memory by referring to it as a "bodily matrix of memory."⁶¹ One might argue that Carruthers does not seem to investigate what memories are formed when these souls relive the same torture over and over again, or specifying which Dante she is alluding to (the pilgrim or the poet). It could also be argued that Carruthers does not seem to image how difficult it would be to think of memory requiring a body in the otherworld when there is no notion of time in *Inferno* and *Paradiso*. Yet, considering memory in the face of physical and corporeal features is Carruthers' major claim about Dante's memory. This same assertion of hers sums up also what other scholars of Dante have pondered over these past decades. One major aspect that scholars like Lina Bolzoni, Roberto Antonelli, Steven

biological corpus from the following volume whose significance emerges while defining it across the realms of many disciplines: Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁵⁷ Among other Italian poets and authors from the Middle Ages, Mary Carruthers has also read extensively about Petrarca, Boccaccio, Jacopone da Todi, Saint Francis of Assisi, Bonvesin de la Riva, and many other Italian humanists. See: Mary Carruthers, *Notes to pp. 71-76*, in *The Book of Memory*, 391.

⁵⁸ Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 73. It seems also interesting to share that the scholar places her only assertion about Dante under the chapter entitled "Description of the Neuropsychology of Memory." This seems to introduce those implications from science that can be fundamentally analogous to the poet's intellectual activity. For further consideration, see also 56-98 from Carruthers' same chapter.

⁵⁹ Yates states: "This art seeks to memorize through a technique of impressing places and images on memory and it has usually been classed as mnemotechnics." Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 11.

⁶⁰ Rossi states: "The art of memory of the ancients entered into logic, bringing with it the themes of universal language and general or primary science." Paolo Rossi, *Logic and the Art of Memory*, xv.

⁶¹ Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 73.

Botterill, Luisa Pinnelli, Paola Rigo, Maria Corti, and several others share is to consider the representation of memory as a “bodily matrix” from *Inferno* until the end of *Paradiso*.⁶²

I precisely consider the natural memory to be biological and organic because memory inhabits the realm of physicality as an organic apparatus.⁶³ The etymological definition of biological memory originates from biology, which is a major branch of science. This etymological definition implies an inherent and intrinsic sense of physicality through the manifestation of human thinking, which simultaneously implies an extrinsic and outer seeming characterization through the manifestation of human action.⁶⁴ The combination of both definitions heightens the human deed, its accomplishment through the scientific method, and the extensive sustenance that a mental organism can achieve through its own biological nature. This is to say that any mental images as previously examined, Dante the author determines an absolute standard of truth through the demonstrations of the infernal physical world.⁶⁵

This is to say that the ordering of all knowable moments of Dante’s literary history consists of a process of systematization of the pilgrim’s mnemonic operations.⁶⁶ It is a development that operates through a mnemonic arrangement that indicates the creation of a schematic form (obviously a symbolic form) that is still tied to Dante the pilgrim’s senses. This form operates by considering these same demonstrations of the infernal physical world through human figures, animal figures, and rarely inanimate objects or buildings such as towers, castles,

⁶² Ibidem.

⁶³ This concept resonates with imagination which ties to the past through the idea of recollecting memories from past experiences.

⁶⁴ While Mary Carruthers alludes to the previously mentioned “bodily matrix of memory,” the idea of biological memory adopted in this chapter is mine. Furthermore, I will often intermingle both natural memory with biological memory. While the adjective preceding memory is different, the meaning is the same. Both natures of memory and biological memory resonate with the human faculty of memory.

⁶⁵ In his volume *Logic and the Art of Memory*, Rossi argues that this mnemonic tradition interacts with the *logica combinatoria*, and the tension arises as a result of such an interaction in the event of new theories of memory and the art of memory. Paolo Rossi, *Logic and the Art of Memory*, 23-27.

⁶⁶ The idea that follows about this type of art highlights features that lie behind fictitious places and times in reference to the notion of order, methods, and systematization. I will demonstrate this process later by alluding to the notion of real places such as towers, castles, and churches.

and bridges from Dante's *Commedia*. Unlike the previously mentioned places of Florence, Pisa, Pistoia, etc., which have been examined through the acts of *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process) and that have transmitted emotional outcomes such as fear or trepidation, the physical features of human-animal figures will next be examined through a classification of scientific values.

I.2.2. The Mnemonic Technique of *Ars Quadrata*

One example that I adopt to model the beginning of Dante the author's mnemonic systematization entails a geometrical exercise. In order for the pilgrim to remember specific figures like Cerberus from *Inferno* III and Geryon from *Inferno* XVII (to name a few),⁶⁷ this mathematical practice expands through the schematic exercise of *ars quadrata* (square art).⁶⁸ It is a form of art that belongs to the artificial memory and begins with *Ad Herennium*, where the author's intention is to provide symmetrical order to the flourishing mental images of figures and their monstrous natures.⁶⁹ Through this type of art, readers of Dante should be able to distinguish Dante the author's mental images of figures adopted by previous poets from the Classical Age. In fact, *ars quadrata* is a subcategory of the artificial memory because it allows perceiving how images are reproduced internally. In other words, *ars quadrata* or squared art symbolizes an

⁶⁷ Even if I chose only Cerberus and Geryon in this case, there is a multitude of figures in *Inferno* that could be defined through a systematic method and according to their monstrosity. See also the following descriptions: the three beasts (*Inf.* I); Minos (*Inf.* V.4-20); the Minotaur (*Inf.* XII.11-30); Nimrod (*Inf.* XXXI.58-66); Lucifer (*Inf.* XXXIII.28-36).

⁶⁸ I borrow the conception of *ars quadrata* from *Ad Herennium*, where the author adopts this form of art to realize the method used to recollect and think of figures. Cicero. *Ad Herennium*, 145-169. Robert Fludd later discusses *ars rotunda* as well as *ars quadrata* through a different perspective: Robert Fludd, *Utriusque Cosmi Maioris Scilicet et Minoris, Metaphysica, Physica atque Technica Historia. Tomus Secundus. De Supernaturali, Naturali, Praeternaturali et Contranaturali Microcosmi Historia* (Oppenheim, Impensis Johannis Theodori de Bry, typis Hieronymi Galleri, 1619), section II, 50. Even if I borrow these terms, I adopt them to enhance the validity of my own argument and not to necessarily outline the significance of Robert Fludd's theory on the art of memory.

⁶⁹ It is significant that the phrase "artificial memory" was used by a post-thirteenth-century reader to describe memory as an artifice, meaning a reproduction of specific moments from the past. However, from Simonides onwards, artificial memory was understood to constitute an "art of memory" where manuals about this art were to be consequently composed.

artifice that provides us with a methodical systematization of images for understanding how natural memory works from the inside.⁷⁰

To begin with corporeal things of grotesque characters, *ars quadrata* (square art) allows us to see images of animal figures or giants that are active or engaged in action of some kind. A case in point occurs in *Inferno* VI where Dante the pilgrim encounters a savaged three-headed dog guarding the entrance to the underworld. Dante the poet openly defines the monster's physical nature, and he does so by extensively elucidating what he thinks of Cerberus in a sequence of six verses. The poet delineates these grotesque traits to capture the animosity that they transmit to the reader and to express what Dante the poet thinks about Cerberus through his systemic methodization:

“Cerbero, fiera crudele e diversa,
con tre gole caninamente latra
sopra la gente che quivi è sommersa.
Li occhi ha vermigli, la barba unta e atra,
e 'l ventre largo, e unghiate le mani;
graffia li spirti ed iscoia ed isquatra.”
(*Inf.* VI.13-18)

[Over the souls of those submerged beneath
that mess, is an outlandish, vicious beast,
his three throats barking, doglike: Cerberus.
His eyes are bloodred; greasy, black, his beard;
his belly bulges, and his hands are claws;
his talons tear and flay and rend the shades.]

Dante the pilgrim is investigating his surroundings and is deliberating what Dante the poet has decided to make of the classical figure of Cerberus. The main point here is that Dante the poet draws one of the guardians of *Inferno*'s circles from classical sources but transforms him to suit the requirements of the creatures' infernal office. Dante the poet systematizes a figure like Cerberus that has been previously adopted by Virgil (*Aeneid* VI.417-423) in order to properly

⁷⁰ Frances Yates justifies Robert Fludd's idea of both arts by highlighting his conviction of being entirely opposed to the use of fictitious buildings in both arts: "These confuse memory and add to its task. One must always use real places in real buildings. Some who are versed in these arts wish to place their round and square arts in palaces fabricated or erected by invention of the imagination." Frances Yates, "The Theatre Memory System of Robert Fludd," in *The Art of Memory* (London: The Bodley Head, 2014), 317.

operate within the realm of *Inferno*. More importantly, the specifically physical description of red eyes or the greasy beard or the belly swollen symbolize the great details that Dante the poet adopts to systematize his mental image on paper—a systematic process that echoes itself by the time Dante also describes the grotesque nature of Geryon:

“La faccia sua era faccia d’uom giusto,
 tanto benigna avea di fuor la pelle,
 e d’un serpente tutto l’altro fusto;
 due branche avea pilose insin l’ascelle;
 lo dosso e ‘l petto e ambedue le coste
 dipinti avea di nodi e di rotelle.
 Con più color, sommesse e sovrapposte
 non fer mai drappi Tartari né Turchi,
 né fuor tai tele per Aragne imposte.”
 (*Inf.* XVII.10-18)

[The face he wore was that of a just man,
 so gracious was his features’ outer semblance;
 and all his trunk, the body of a serpent;
 he had two paws, with hair up to the armpits;
 his back and chest as well as both his flanks
 had been adorned with twining knots and circlets.
 No Turks or Tartars ever fashioned fabrics
 more colorful in background and relief,
 nor had Arachne ever loomed such webs.]

The description of Geryon draws on a wide variety of sources, which resonates with either biblical (*Apocalypse* 9:7-10) or with classical literature sources such as Pliny, who describes the fabulous Manticore, which combines parts of man, lion, and scorpion.⁷¹ This is to state that in the eyes of Dante the author, Geryon is a triple hybrid. Furthermore, while Geryon and Cerberus are described with such grotesque language and they are buried with disdain by the pilgrim’s vision, Geryon seems to be described with even greater features. In fact, when the poet compares the vivid colors of Geryon as “adorned with twining knots and circlets” (*Inf.* XVII.15) to the vivid colors that “no Turk or Tartar ever fashioned,” (*Inf.* XVII.16) Dante the author is defining his

⁷¹ The Manticore was a man-eating Persian monster with the body of a lion, the face of a man, and a spike-tipped, arrow-shooting tail. The name Manticore was derived from the Persian word for "man-eater." The Manticore also occurs in Medieval bestiaries inspired by the works of ancient Greek and Roman writers. See: Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 8.75, trans. by Rackham.

intention about this infernal monster. I argue that in order to understand the parameters of Dante's purpose of idiosyncratically underscoring Geryon physical features, one needs to engage with this process of systematization on a twofold implication. First, it is a systematic rationalization when the poet distinguishes the implications of Geryon's physical nature as opposed to that of the "Turk or Tartar" (*Inf.* XVII.26). This is because Dante the poet is simultaneously reproducing a mental image for Geryon to fit the realm of fraud. Second, by applying this *ars quadrata* (square art), the purpose of Dante the poet's systematization of mental images becomes more graspable because it serves the author's need to underscore the gravity of the course that he is paving from the beginning of each episode.

The square art assists Dante the author in reevaluating the physical monstrosity of each figure that has been distinctively described (even if with evil manners) in *Inferno*. Through the idea of monstrosity, Dante the poet crafts a symbolic platform or a theatrical scenery in which he is able to represent his strong propensity to use fictitious figures in memory. In fact, underscoring the two above-mentioned examples of Cerberus and Geryon is still symptomatic of a mnemonic effort. For this reason, both acts of *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process) are enormously important in defining the artificial memory in Dante. In the *Comentum super poema Comedie Dantis*, Pietro Alighieri delineates Dante the author's mnemonic process which moves from methodically recollecting to carefully thinking and reproducing the poet's mental image of Cerberus on paper.⁷² Whether Dante the poet has read about Cerberus and Geryon, or whether Dante the scribe might have only thought of each one while writing these episodes from *Inf.* VI and *Inf.* XVII, these monstrous figures are all embodied in the poet's intention of revealing a total infernal-reflecting system.

⁷² Pietro Alighieri, *Comentum super poema Comedie Dantis*, ed. by Massimiliano Chiamenti (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2002), 134: "Ideo auctor hic eum Cerberum talem in oculis, in barba, in minibus, et in ventre describit, ut in tetu dicitur."

Moreover, by reproducing figures like Cerberus and Geryon, Dante the poet is systematically recollecting images from the past and is methodically deliberating them through *cogitatio* (thought process). This last aspect also reveals that systematically recollecting and thinking in place provides Dante the poet one way of methodically elucidating his own mnemonic operations for the infernal system. Dante the poet read or thought of figures like Cerberus and Geryon, as well as other numerous figures from the three canticles. Even if these infernal creatures were adopted from classical authors like Virgil or Pliny, Dante the poet tried to enhance these figures' meaning by adopting strategies like *ars quadrata*. By engaging with the methodical practice of square art, Dante the poet is also able to manifest more clearly his sense of perception with respect to memory where the faculty is regarded as an essential aspect of understanding. More precisely, *ars quadrata* is symbolic of the Middle Ages and is important to Dante because it allows the poet to elucidate his mnemonic perceptiveness and the nature of his trained memory through geometrical characteristics.

I.2.3. The Psychology of Spirit and the Perception of Bodily Features

Similarly, Dante's perceptiveness of bodily features can assimilate other aspects that go beyond the squared art. Through the previously suggested mnemonic operations of *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process), Dante the poet manifests other mnemonic procedures. Another mnemonic exercise for the poet occurs with the relationship between the psychology of spirit and the perception of bodily features, which characterizes another way of expressing Dante's mnemonic perceptiveness of the otherworldly reality. This same juxtaposition of spirit and bodily features resonates with passion and physical pain. For instance, any sort of physical discomfort makes the person feeling demoted. This discomforting

experience reveals a human condition that consequently makes the pilgrim momentarily unable (even if only momentarily, as happens with Dante) to proceed with his own objective.

A case in point occurs with Dante the pilgrim when he shows affection for sinners and souls as he approaches them. As Dante the traveler is speaking to Francesca from *Inferno* V, their same word exchange temporarily perverts Dante the poet's figure of authority in the face of his infernal order against sinners. While Dante the poet generates a peculiar relationship between the maker of passion (Francesca) and the perceiver (Dante the pilgrim), Francesca and Dante the pilgrim share some inner values on the literary surface of the beginning of the journey. *Inferno* V is indeed a specific case from which Paolo and Francesca's feelings merge with those of the pilgrim as well. On the one hand, Francesca conveys her own passion to the pilgrim, where in this next passage, she reveals the role of love that leads her to death: "Amor condusse noi ad una morte. / Caina attende chi a vita ci spense." (Love led the two of us unto one death. / Caina waits for him who took our life [*Inf.* V.106-107]). On the other hand, Dante the pilgrim also expresses affection that consequently emerges through a manifestation of bodily features: "Francesca, i tuoi martiri / a lagrimar mi fanno tristo e pio" (Francesca, your afflictions / move me to tears of sorrow and of pity [*Inf.* V.116-117]). Dante the pilgrim is manifesting his anguish with tears in his eyes while watching Francesca tormenting herself for not being able to love Paolo. It is a combination of passion and pain that affects the pilgrim to a greater extent in this next textual example:

"Mentre che l'uno spirto questo disse,
l'altro piangëa; sì che di pietade
io venni men così com'io morisse.
E caddi come corpo morto cade."
(*Inf.* V.139-142)

[And while one spirit said these words to me,
the other wept, so that – because of pity –
I fainted, as if I had met my death.
And then I fell as a dead body falls.]

The pain and the passion that Francesca communicates in these verses affect not only Dante the pilgrim's perception, but particularly his body. More specifically, when Francesca responds to the pilgrim, readers realize that Francesca's pain and passion are mainly caused by her memory because it cannot stop reintegrating evidence of the same sin into the present discourse.⁷³ Dante the pilgrim falls down at a particular moment at the end of the episode of Paolo and Francesca because the pilgrim is living in the present while thinking of Francesca's past memory. The previous words spoken by Francesca are already part of the pilgrim's past, and so his fall represents a bodily manifestation of his present state.

To further examine the combination of passion and pain in Dante the pilgrim's present state is essential to underscore a biological representation of what is felt and what is imagined. According to Henri Bergson, the pain that characterizes the human experience resembles the human pain that originates from the body as well as from the human psyche.⁷⁴ Since pain remains a value that connects the spirit to the body of the pilgrim and characterizes the pilgrim's experience through the passions of Francesca and Paolo, memory is the faculty that mitigates the relation between the pilgrim, the sinners, his past, and his own journey. This last aspect justifies Dante the pilgrim's passion and pain as a mnemonic procedure because memory bridges that

⁷³ Alessandro Vellutello, *La 'Comedia' di Dante Alighieri con la nova Esposizione*, ed. by Donato Pirovano, Tomo I, Edizione Nazionale dei Commenti Danteschi (Rome: Salerno, 2006), 206-207: "La donna poi, rispondendo, attesta che di tutti i dolori il maggiore, cioè più del turbine che senza posa li volta e percuote, è la memoria del passato piacere."

⁷⁴ A reader of Dante, Henri Bergson claims that the pain becomes the major instrument in relation to the ambience or the space. He also suggests that human pain is significantly different from human affection and the human imagination: "La douleur est donc à l'endroit où elle se produit, comme l'objet est à la place où il est perçu. Entre l'affection sentie et l'image perçue il ya cette différence que l'affection est dans notre corps, l'image hors de notre corps. Et c'est pourquoi la surface de notre corps, limite commune de ce corps et des autres corps, nous est donnée à la fois sous forme de sensations et sous forme d'image." [Pain is therefore in the place where it is felt, as the object is at the place where it is perceived. Between the affection felt and the image perceived there is this difference, that the affection is within our body, the image outside our body. And that is why the surface of our body, the common limit of this and of other bodies, is given to us in the form both of sensations and of an image]. Henri Bergson, *Matière et mémoire: Essai sur la relation du corps à l'esprit* (Paris: Editions Ligarán, 2015), 156. Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. by N. M. Paul & W. S. Palmer, (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 187.

same passion from the pilgrim's perception through his bodily senses. Whether it concerns the weeping of Dante the pilgrim or Paolo towards the end of the episode, the result of these bodily features is a visual depiction of the pilgrim's bodily senses. Manuele Gragnolati argues that the "pain that the souls experience through their aerial bodies in both hell and purgatory is physical."⁷⁵ I additionally underline the significance of the physicality of memory because the above-stated corporeal features shared by Francesca and Dante the pilgrim enable modern readers to depict the essence of memory as an instrument of bodily action.

I.2.4. The Physiological Nature of Dante's Memory

Since the essence of memory resonates with a bodily action, the shift from human perception to bodily senses also reveals a transition between the sense of sight and memory.⁷⁶ Most of all, this transfer reveals that the memory is precisely related to the physical features of the human.⁷⁷ The mnemonic features are to be considered biological and bodily, even in the visual representation of the written text. In this next passage from *Paradiso*, Beatrice's proverbial phrasing implies that intellectual absorption is a metaphorical point. It is a link that remains implicit in the idea of conserving what has been learned as food for the mind, namely within the memory:

"Apri la mente a quel ch'io ti paleso

⁷⁵ Manuele Gragnolati examines the notion of pain in *Purgatorio* and he focuses particularly on the productive pain as an initiation of the birth of *Purgatorio*. See: Manuele Gragnolati, "Productive Pain: The *Red Scripture*, the *Purgatorio*, and a New Hypothesis on the 'Birth of Purgatory,'" in *Experiencing the Afterlife: Soul and Body in Dante and Medieval Culture* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 89-136.

⁷⁶ While the activity of thinking and the activity of having a sense of perception are analogous, images and representative likeness are fundamental to knowing even if they must be reproduced in something which has no matter to be formed. Perception and memory are needed for understanding knowledge, and they are embodied as the form which causes and creates the matter from the body itself.

⁷⁷ Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 73. Mary Carruthers claims that if the memory can create images, this latter takes a bodily form. This sensory memory then does not or cannot survive any earthly disaster for it has no activity apart from the corporeal organ. Then one can say that Carruthers is right to consider Dante's memory not as immortal or intellectual memory, but memory as someone had it when one was still alive in one's body. Memory cannot innovate or form any new memories when it no longer has a body.

e fermalvi entro; chè non fa scienza,
 senza lo ritenere, avere inteso.
 Due cose si convegnono all'essenza
 di questo sacrificio: l'una è quella
 di che si fa; l'altr'è la convenenza."⁷⁸
 (Par. V.40-45)⁷⁹

[Open your mind to what I shall disclose,
 and hold it fast within you; he who hears,
 but does not hold what he has heard, learns nothing.
 Two things are of the essence when one vows
 a sacrifice: the matter of the pledge
 and then the formal compact one accepts.]⁸⁰

Beatrice's proverbial articulation demonstrates that the body of the poet's own fiction consists of creating the body of his own work in visual form, which is written in his memory as pages with text. For just as his text consists of marks indicating letters and of the material on which those marks are imprinted, so the structure of memory employs places, and in these places, Dante the poet gathers images like letters in bodily form. Through this process, the poet wants to demonstrate how to regulate the physical structure of *Inferno*, including physical images from Dante's memory.⁸¹ This is to say that one aspect of Dante the poet's memory turns out to be a literary medium for a structured region of the mind where arguments, places, and images belong to the physiological nature of the mnemonic operations in Dante's *Commedia*.⁸²

⁷⁸ Consider also Dante Alighieri, *Convivio*, I i, [18], 7. "Oh beati quelli pochi che seggiono a quella mensa dove lo pane de li angeli si manuca!"

⁷⁹ All the Italian quotations of Dante's *Paradiso* are from the following edition: Dante Alighieri, *La Divina Commedia: Paradiso*, edited, and with a commentary by Anna Maria Chiavacci Leonardi (Milan, Mondadori, 2005).

⁸⁰ The English translation of Dante's *Paradiso* is from the following edition: Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Paradiso*, trans., with a commentary, by Allen Mandelbaum (New York: Bantam Classic, 2004).

⁸¹ Roberto Antonelli, *Memoria rerum et memoria verborum. La costruzione della 'Divina Commedia,'* 37: "La regola della concretezza (anche luoghi più filosofici, teologici o scientifici); la regola della visualizzazione (il senso conduttore con cui il poeta percepisce principalmente la natura e lo stato dei personaggi incontrati è la vista); la regola della configurazione topica (tutto il palcoscenico della *Divina Commedia* forma un paesaggio immaginato con strutture topologiche ben determinate – *l'Inferno* con i suoi nove cerchi; il *Purgatorio*, con le nove cornici; il *Paradiso*, con le sue nove sfere celesti e in più l'Empireo quale sede di Dio, situato al di fuori dello spazio e del tempo); la regola dell'itinerario mnemonico (La *Divina Commedia* è un viaggio, durante il quale il pellegrino viene in contatto con tutta una serie di immagini mnemoniche)."

⁸² Meanwhile, the reader might notice that I begin Chapter One with an examination of the mnemonic shortcomings, and even if I only mention the failure of memory in this chapter, the reader can perceive that the argument shifts focus towards the end of *Paradiso*. This beginning section of my dissertation, which shifts focus from failing memory (Chapter One) to the formation of the art of memory in Dante (Chapter Two) will showcase that my dissertation does not necessarily follow a chronological order from one canticle to another. This way of proceeding

More specifically, this physiological nature of Dante's memory (biological memory) correlates the quality of physiognomy (appearance) with that of memory in Dante's *Commedia*. I define physiognomy as a form of appearance and a subcategory of the biological system of memory, which consists also of facial features held to show qualities of mind or character by their configuration or expression. This last aspect demonstrates how temperament and character originate from outward appearance. In other words, physiognomy and memory are connected through external aspects because qualities, places, letters, and images are revealed outwardly.

A case in point is to refashion the *ars quadrata* (square art) within a different realm of interpretation. I previously stated that this form of art reveals a literary truth to the poet that arises through their own outwardly grotesque appearance, while they create a two-sided relationship. On the one hand, Dante the author depicts the images of souls and sinners from his own memory. The acts of *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process) are still those two mnemonic elements that allow the author to reproduce mental images of great figures around the notion of visual representation. On the other hand, another organic feature included in this procedure is the reaction of the same pilgrim who often interrogates figures that he continuously meets throughout the journey.⁸³

While I previously considered the pilgrim's reaction from Francesca's passion an emulation of psyche between two characters, in this following section I consider Dante the pilgrim's reaction through the physiognomic indication of faces and appearances.⁸⁴ Rather than simply reacting to the grotesque figure of Cerberus (*Inf.* VI) or Geryon (*Inf.* XVII), the

from *Paradiso* to *Inferno* to *Purgatorio* and back to the end of *Paradiso* should serve the reader understanding the threefold implication of memory. More precisely, when memory suffers shortcomings from Chapter One, a resolution to these same shortcomings in Chapters Two & Three, and the art of memory subduing the failure of memory in Chapter Four.

⁸³ Even if I previously discussed a similar concept, there is a major difference that distinguishes the argument about *Inferno* V on pp. 55-58 and this claim. In the former argument I claim that Dante the pilgrim is expressing a certain affection, which consequently emerges through a manifestation of bodily features.

⁸⁴ To reconsider the notion of emulating the character's psyche, see 56-58 from this same chapter.

physiognomic process becomes essential for the author who wishes to reveal what he has recollected or thought through an outward movement. To proceed with such a process, Dante the author employs souls and sinners that convey the message so instilled by Dante's memory. In this next passage, Dante the pilgrim will be faced with some imagery of the Primum Mobile, with the concave inner surface of the ninth heaven. The ninth heaven is said to be so far beyond the reach of Dante's eyes that as he looks up, he cannot see the motion:

“Lo real manto di tutti i volumi
 del mondo, che più ferve e più s'avviva
 nell'alito di Dio e nei costumi,
 avea sopra di noi l'interna riva
 tanto distante, che la sua parvenza,
 là dov'io era, ancor non appariva:
 però non ebber li occhi miei potenza
 di seguitar la coronata fiamma
 che si levò appresso sua semenza.”
 (*Par.* XXIII.112-120)

[The royal cloak of all the wheeling spheres
 within the universe, the heaven most
 intense, alive, most burning in the breath
 of God and in His laws and ordinance,
 was far above us at its inner shore,
 so distant that it still lay out of sight
 from that point where I was; and thus my eyes
 possessed no power to follow that crowned flame,
 which mounted upward, following her Son.]

Beyond the idea of distant sight from the crowned flame, these verses communicate a dichotomy that exists between the Virgin Mary and Dante the pilgrim. Through this dual perspective, one traces both the Virgin Mary's "parvenza" (sight [*Par.* XXIII.116]) and the pilgrim's "li occhi miei" (my eyes [*Par.* XXIII.118]). One way to clarify both concepts is by asserting that the "interna riva" (inner shore [*Par.* XXIII.115]) corresponds to the extreme part of ourselves which makes of the sky a concave shape. It is particularly essential the idea behind "coronata fiamma" (crowned flame [*Par.* XXIII.119]) which represents the Virgin Mary coronated.⁸⁵ Howbeit, these

⁸⁵ Alessandro Vellutello, *La 'Comedia' di Dante Alighieri con la nova Esposizione*, tomo III, 1596.

verses symbolize a dichotomy that stands between the outer and the inner, between the appearance of the Virgin Mary and the pilgrim feeling distant from it.⁸⁶

Along this line of thought, Lina Bolzoni believes that those squared or rounded images or faces, correspond to a science that implies in the place settings of Dante's *Commedia* a system of correspondence of images.⁸⁷ The scholar also underscores the systemic method of perceiving the products (towers, castles, figures, etc.) through an elucidation of scientific method. At the same time, I underline the interpretation about the Virgin Mary's facial features of "parvenza" (sight [*Par.* XXIII.116]) by alluding to the notion of physiognomy, because this same textual example consists of facial features held to show qualities of mind or character by their pattern or manifestation. Dante the poet is able to connect the external aspect with the inner self, or so the outward appearance of the Virgin Mary to the interior realm of the pilgrim's memory. This last aspect shows how the notion of discovering temperament and character originate from outward appearance (Virgin Mary). Thus, physiognomy crosses memory because the Virgin Mary's appearance is likely to exemplify what is inside the pilgrim's mind from which he manifests his own response. It would also be the case when Dante the pilgrim is facing and conversing with Francesca from *Inferno* V. If the parallel between memory and physiognomy symbolizes a mnemonic representation that frames a gallery of images, this same parallel becomes available for Dante the poet's memory because of this physiognomic operation.

Furthermore, the systematization of mnemonic operations, which includes the methodical rationalization (*ars quadrata*), the psychological moments of passion (through Paolo and

⁸⁶ Lina Bolzoni, "San Bernardino da Siena," in *La rete delle immagini: Predicazione in volgare dalle origini a Bernardino da Siena* (Turin: Einaudi, 2009), 179. The scholar makes a similar but different argument to this present, particularly because she does not recognize this dichotomy as physiognomy: "Il modo in cui sono disposti nei loci dell'immagine visualizza il sistema di corrispondenza e di opposizione che li lega: se il godere è Oriente, ad esempio, il dolore sarà posto a Occidente. L'immagine del quadrato diventa così capace di organizzare, e di far ricordare, tutto il resto [...]."

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*.

Francesca's episode), and the physiognomic aspect of memory (through the Virgin Mary and Dante the pilgrim), symbolizes a mnemonic system of its own. It is a system because this series of aspects characterizes a central role in Dante the poet's mnemonic procedures, from his representations of human-animal figures like Cerberus or Geryon to his passionate experience with Francesca. Even so, Dante the poet employs these experiences, whether visual or sensual, through the manifestation of bodily features. This point of view confirms what Mary Carruthers argued regarding Dante's mnemonic function and its association with bodily functions, figures, and physical places.⁸⁸ This scholar makes a legitimate claim related to Dante's scholarship in which memory should be considered a bodily part from *Inferno* until the end of *Paradiso*. Additionally, these memories that I have described through specific textual examples all belong to views strictly related to memory in biological terms. Most decisively, the preceding textual examples depicted through a scientific method or psychological domain will continue to evolve from those well-studied lines in Dante's *Divina Commedia*. This last aspect entails a cyclical mechanism from which places and human figures throughout the *Commedia* are first reproduced via the biological power of memory. Dante's memory will indeed continue to be a living and natural faculty, and I will next show how the above-mentioned corporeal realities undergo a series of initial flaws.⁸⁹

I.3. The Preliminary Shortcomings of Dante's Biological Memory

⁸⁸ Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 73.

⁸⁹ While the notion of mnemonic weakness has already appeared in the previous pages, there is a difference about the upcoming analysis. It is true that in both cases I discuss the human debility in reference to Dante's memory. However, in the first case, I tie the biological weakness of memory particularly to the idea of time, space, humidity, humor, etc. In the argument that will follow, I will propound the nature of such a biological weakness by penetrating inside the pilgrim's operations that correspond to himself and not necessarily to the outer appearances or the outward world.

I.3.1. *Renovatio* and Memory

Despite the numerous cases of fear, anxiety, passion, pain, perplexity, confusion, and fainting, Dante the pilgrim will move onward. His memory will subsist through the course of his own journey by continuously replenishing past events while adapting them around the spectrum of Dante's *Commedia*. If Dante's memory refashions past experiences, and whether Dante has truly seen or lived those experiences or not, the idea of renewing parts of the past also means that a past figure, character, or place will always emerge from Dante the poet's past experiences. I particularly consider this idea of renewal a literary question that constitutes a cyclical mechanism, whereby Dante the pilgrim will constantly renew his desire and faith to achieve redemption through the notion of *renovatio* (regeneration).

The medieval concept known as *renovatio* (regeneration) is a concept that Saint Augustine shapes and defines in Book XIV of *The Trinity*. Augustine explains that the generic notion of a mental image starts to be reformed by Him (God) who formed it in the first place.⁹⁰ The theologian delves into biblical writings and to heighten this type of reformation, Saint Augustine alludes to the letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians: "Be renewed in the spirit of your minds and put on the new man who was created according to God in justice and the holiness of truth."⁹¹ If on the one hand, the idea of "created according to God" means the same as created in the image of God, on the other hand, sinning man lost "justice and the holiness of truth." By analyzing this small segment from Saint Paul's letter to the Ephesians, it becomes clear that the image of God becomes deformed and discolored. However, the sinning man gets those qualities back again when he is reformed and renovated. For the phrase "in justice and holiness of truth,"

⁹⁰ Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, ed. and trans. by Edmund Hill (New York: New City Press, 2017), 498.

⁹¹ Saint Paul, "The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians," in *The Harper Collins Study Bible*, ed. by Harold W. Attridge (New York: HarperOne, 1989), 4:23.

Augustine argues that this renewal and reforming of the mind takes place according to God or the image of God.⁹²

Additionally, Augustine suggests that this renewal of the mental image does not happen in one moment of conversion, but rather entails a twofold implication. The first stage of this renewal occurs by removing the cause of human debility, and this is done by pardoning all sins. God forgives a Christian who has committed a sin through the priest's absolution that occurs through confession. The second stage is renewing the human debility itself, and this is done gradually by making steady progress in the renewal of the image.⁹³ It is a conception that Augustine reproduces from Saint Paul, who claims: "Even if our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day."⁹⁴ Thus, the man is being renewed in the recognition of God and in justice "and holiness of truth" because he makes progress day by day. Moreover, if this progress resonates with a form of renewal with respect to God and His Christian truth, the notion of love will engage with other values where love will move from temporal things to eternal, from visible to intelligible, and from carnal to spiritual things.

This concept of *renovatio* (regeneration) operates also on a twofold mission for Dante. Where the first stage renews his fears, anxiety, and other forms of adversities, the second stage renews his desire to move forward with his mission towards salvation.⁹⁵ Memory resonates with *renovatio* (regeneration) in Dante from the time he writes *Vita Nuova*, where Dante the poet adopts this classical notion while referring to the image of Beatrice. In fact, in the following verses, the acts of *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process) become useful in

⁹² Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, 499.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 500.

⁹⁴ Saint Paul, "The Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians," in *The Harper Collins Study Bible*, ed. by Harold W. Attridge (New York: HarperOne, 1989), 4:16.

⁹⁵ While this upcoming analysis on *renovatio* resonates particularly with Dante's *Commedia*, I would like to briefly mention that *renovatio* is a paramount notion that Dante already adopts in *Vita Nuova*. Some of the implications that entail this Dantean text concern the renewal of desire for Beatrice, as well as renewing the image of Beatrice or about Dante's previous experience while seeing Beatrice for the first time.

deciphering the meaning behind Dante's memory that allows the poet to recount a story about Beatrice:

Era venuta ne la mente mia
la gentil donna che per suo valore
fu posta da l'altissimo Signore,
nel ciel de l'umiltate, ov'è Maria.

(VN XXXIV)

[Into my mind had come
the gentle lady who for her worth
was placed by the most high Lord
in the heaven of the humble, where Mary dwells.]

From this short passage, we are able to read how Beatrice already lives in Dante's memory, and he tells his readers how he constantly thinks of her prior to the poet: "In quello giorno nel quale si compiea l'anno che questa donna era fatta de li cittadini vita eterna, io mi sedea in parte ne la quale, ricordandomi di lei, disegnava uno angelo sopra certe tavolette" (On that day when a year was completed since this lady had become a citizen of life eternal, I was sitting in a place where, thinking of her, I was designing an angel on certain panels [VN XXXIV]). Dante is rethinking of Beatrice while composing an angelic image of her. This means that the poet's task is to recollect and reveal the effect of Beatrice's image that lives inside Dante's memory through the notion of *cogitatio* (thought process). More precisely, every time Dante the poet rethinks of Beatrice, the poet simultaneously demonstrates how paramount the notion of *renovatio* (regeneration) is because Dante falls in love with Beatrice when he renews her own image from his own memory.

Dante the pilgrim's continuous fears and physical reactions are also revealed through mnemonic operations such as *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process). The pilgrim's desire to move onwards with his enterprise develops into a constant theme of regenerating new paths across his journey. At the beginning of the *Inferno*, Dante the poet demonstrates how likely the pilgrim's fears and anxiety are to continuously renew themselves: "Ahi quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura / esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte / che nel pensier

rinova la paura!” (Ah, it is hard to speak of what it was, / that savage forest, dense and difficult, / which even in recall renews my fear! [*Inf.* I.4-6]).⁹⁶ It is true that this “selva selvaggia” (savage forest [*Inf.* I.5]) produces fear, and it is through Dante’s act of *recordatio* (recollection) that his same fear endures throughout.⁹⁷ Moreover, the perceptibility of this same forest is rather noticeable, its nature symptomatic of a physical place, and both aspects reflect the idea that earthly features are tangible. Even if the fierce woods might be merely allegorical and might not be entirely relevant to the notion of earthly reality, the designation given by the poet still belongs to Dante the pilgrim’s reality check, which implies a physical reality at the beginning of *Inferno*.

Additionally, if *renovatio* (regeneration) implies that Dante’s natural memory continuously renews past experiences into the present, I argue that this same memory must also highlight a biological continuity that renews the weak nature of natural memory. Just as any category or phenomenon connected to bodily features exemplifies a number of limitations, so does Dante’s natural memory. The boundaries of such a memory are defined by a comprehensive investigation between the body and the pilgrim’s memory. This same parallel consequently resonates with an important correlation between cause and effect: the cause being the body affected by human fragility and imperfection, and the effect being the spirit moved by the notions of limitability and thus weakness. More precisely, the relations among the unknown space (*Inf.* I), the unprecedented encounter with these giants (*Inf.* VI & XVII), and the pilgrim’s fear (*Inf.* III) underlines the concurrent structure between cause and effect. While *renovatio* (regeneration) is useful to understand how past experiences such as Beatrice’s image from *Vita*

⁹⁶ The specific source of *renovatio* with reference to fear originates from the Classical Period, and more precisely from Cicero: Cicero, *Ad Familiares*, (Turin: UTET, 1969), 11.18.3. Cicero specifically states the following: “Nec dubito, quin tu plus provideas; sed tamen tam recenti gratulatione, quam tuo nomine ad omnia deorum templa fecimus, renovatio timoris magnam molestiam afferebat.”

⁹⁷ These same verses have been previously analyzed on p. 32 of Chapter One to demonstrate how the pilgrim subdues momentarily his power of reason with emotional outcomes (fear, etc.). The verses in this case address particularly the idea of regenerating that same fear or experience for the pilgrim.

Nuova or the fearful experience with the giants get recalled through memory, it is also useful to envision the weak side of memory that continuously renews itself throughout the pilgrim's journey.⁹⁸ By the time Dante the pilgrim slowly becomes conscious of the narrow strength that his memory can advance, he starts to increasingly minimize his mnemonic operations.⁹⁹

I.3.2. Re-Mystifying Dante's Memory

One aspect that characterizes the mnemonic shortcoming in Dante is the notion of doubt, which will be examined on a twofold implication.¹⁰⁰ On the one hand, Dante the poet inserts a sequence of doubts throughout the three canticles as a rhetorical strategy. It is a valuable process because it generates suspense for the pilgrim and Dante's reader. For instance, if the pilgrim expresses doubts about a concept that has been explained to him by any higher figures like Virgil, Beatrice, Saint Lucy, etc., the pilgrim is consequently hesitating about the course of action that he needs to embrace. Thus, I argue that this sort of hesitancy develops into the source of a cause. On the other hand, we readers of Dante are aware that the pilgrim's hesitation is only temporary and allows the pilgrim to rethink concepts that he might not recall immediately. At the same time, the notion of doubt is fundamentally allowing the pilgrim to temporarily digress from that course of action, which represents the effect.

⁹⁸ It should be remembered that the idea of superior realm in light of biological memory will be discussed in the next section of this chapter as well as in Chapter Two. What I just mentioned is only an introduction to a major aspect which is waiting to be outlined. Furthermore, I begin underlining a gradual process that features the course of this biological debility of Dante's memory (which grows gradually). To navigate memory through a biological domain means to convey a sequence of natural effects along the same line of scientific thinking. In the previous sections we discussed the production of mnemonic techniques of *recordatio*, *cogitatio*, and physiognomy, now we shift our focus towards the outcome of these mnemonic productions.

⁹⁹ To reconsider the tenuously fragile nature of biological memory and the position of memory in the human brain, see p. 4 from the Introduction. Cfr. Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *On the Properties of Soul and Body*, 45-59. Galen, *On the Natural Faculties*, 163-184.

¹⁰⁰ The preliminary shortcomings of Dante's natural memory are only the beginning section that will eventually lead to Dante's failure of memory in *Par.* XXXIII. This last section will be fully examined and discussed in Chapter Four. If I examine these preliminary shortcomings of Dante's natural memory in this chapter is to seek the necessity for a new understanding of memory, which translates into the metaphysical understanding of memory that will be fully examined in Chapter Two.

From this same correlation of cause and effect, I argue that the notion of doubts is connected to the concept of memory because the pilgrim is not able to recall a concept or an image in front of him. One specific circumstance where the pilgrim's doubt mystifies his mnemonic functions occurs in *Inferno* XI. While the poet delineates the parameters for the moral order of *Inferno*, like the three Aristotelian dispositions of the soul that Heaven opposes (incontinence, malice, and mad brutishness), Dante the pilgrim hesitates over these same dispositions. For several verses, we readers of Dante read about this doubtful process which most of all, shows how the poet explores the different points of the pilgrim's imagination. In fact, the following passage is symbolic of the pilgrim's unconvincing comments to Virgil who essentially withstands the pilgrim's memory by recalling what the pilgrim has momentarily lost:

“Non ti rimembra di quelle parole
 con le quai la tua Etica pertratta
 le tre disposizion che 'l ciel non vole,
 incontenenza, malizia e la matta
 bestialitate? E come incontenenza,
 men Dio offende e men biasimo accatta?
 Se tu riguardi ben questa sentenza,
 e rechiti a la mente chi son quelli
 che su di fuor sostegnon penitenza,
 tu vedrai ben perché da questi felli
 sien dipartiti, e perché men crucciata
 la divina vendetta li martelli.’
 ‘O sol che sani ogne vista turbata,
 tu mi contenti s'è quando tu solvi,
 che, non men che saver, dubbiar m'aggrata.”
 (*Inf.* XI.79-93)

[‘Have you forgotten, then, the words with which
 your Ethics treats of those three dispositions
 that strike at Heaven's will: incontinence
 and malice and mad bestiality?
 And how the fault that is the least condemned
 and least offends God is incontinence?
 If you consider carefully this judgment
 and call to mind the souls of upper Hell
 who bear their penalties outside this city,
 you'll see why they have been set off from these
 unrighteous ones, and why, when heaven's vengeance
 hammers at them, it carries lesser anger.’
 ‘O sun that heals all sight that is perplexed,
 when I ask you, your answer so contents
 that doubting pleases me as much as knowing.]

Having told Virgil that his discourse has been clear and convincing, the protagonist nonetheless reveals that he has not quite gotten it. It is the beginning of Dante the pilgrim's doubt, which led him to ask why are not the lustful (*Inf.* V), the gluttonous (*Inf.* VI), the avaricious and prodigal (*Inf.* VII), and the angry sullen (*Inf.* VIII) punished inside the City of Dis if God holds them in his righteous anger. Dante the poet has set up his reader with this inattentive question. Consequently, Dante the poet allows the pilgrim to justify his doubt by thinking that Virgil's analysis of God's wrath in v. 22 makes God hate only malice and does not understand the relationship between that form of sin and incontinence.

Moreover, the parallel between Dante the pilgrim's doubt and the concept of memory emerges by the time Virgil clarifies the situation. In the seventh book of the *Ethics*, Aristotle treats the three dispositions of the soul that Heaven opposes. The clarity of this statement should not have left so much vexation in its wake, but it has. Virgil admonishes Dante the pilgrim because the latter is not able to recall "quelle parole" (the words [*Inf.* XI.79]) from the Aristotelian treatise, which Dante has evidently studied. Virgil's admonishment makes the pilgrim aware of his own doubt, and so the pilgrim can understand why they are set apart from these wicked spirits. Even shortly after the pilgrim raises another particular doubt about the sin of usury, Dante the pilgrim is able to rethink his previous doubt and demonstrates that he can look elsewhere in the "sol" (sun [*Inf.* XI.91]) and temporarily renews his mnemonic awareness.

But the correlation between the concept of doubt and that of natural memory occurs also in the next canticle of *Purgatorio*.¹⁰¹ Dante the pilgrim's next doubt arises by the time he participates in the event of the past virtuosity in *Purgatorio* XI. In the following passage Dante the poet describes the natural phenomenon of mist, which signifies a thick vapor or steam – the

¹⁰¹ Even if I only mention one or two examples concerning the pilgrim's doubts, see the followings for a more comprehensive list of examples: *Inf.* XXVIII.97; *Purg.* III.72; XV.60; XVI.54; XVIII.42.

mist of sin. It is a series of verses in which the souls of the prideful bring this stain to *Purgatorio* to be purged away, and both the mist and the fog symbolize two types of obstruction to be removed:

“Così a sé e noi buona ramogna
 quell’ombre orando, andavan sotto ‘l pondo,
 simile a quel che talvolta si sogna,
 disparmente angosciate tutte a tondo
 e lasse su per la prima cornice,
 purgando la caligine del mondo.”
 (*Purg.* XI.25-30)¹⁰²

[Beseeching, thus, good penitence for us
 and for themselves those shades moved on beneath
 their weights, like those we sometimes bear in dreams
 each in his own degree of suffering
 but all, exhausted, circling the first terrace,
 purging themselves of this world’s scoriae.]¹⁰³

The idea of mists symbolizes a type of fog that reflects the sin of pride, which as we will soon see, has consequently obfuscated the purity of each prideful soul. The interesting point in this passage is that the mist embodies traces of the infernal mists, which can be considered a continuation from the beginning of *Purgatorio*. By representing this type of mist among the prideful artists, the idea of mists characterizes an impediment for the pilgrim that temporarily obfuscates the pilgrim’s mind and vision.

The symbols of mist as well as fog in *Purgatorio* XI are literary *topos*, which subsequently exemplify another weakening aspect of Dante’s natural memory. Since the pilgrim’s vision gets obfuscated by the mist, Dante the pilgrim can only discern the voices of these artists, and he can reveal his own doubt simply in words. Oderisi da Gubbio is a miniature-painter and illuminator in Bologna at the time of Dante and the former is able to move a little

¹⁰² All the Italian quotations of Dante’s *Purgatorio* are from the following edition: Dante Alighieri, *La Divina Commedia: Purgatorio*, edited, and with a commentary by Anna Maria Chiavacci Leonardi (Milan, Mondadori, 2005).

¹⁰³ The English translation of Dante’s *Purgatorio* is from the following edition: Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Purgatorio*, trans., with a commentary, by Allen Mandelbaum (New York: Bantam Classic, 2004).

under his rock. Oderisi twists his neck enough to glance at the features of the pilgrim, and Dante the pilgrim can conveniently lower his head in his desire to speak and barely see Oderisi. Through this physical effort from both sides of Oderisi da Gubbio and Dante the pilgrim, the latter finally recognizes the artist:

“Ascoltando chinai in giù la faccia;
 e un di lor, non questi che parlava,
 si torse sotto il peso che li mpaccia,
 e videmi e conobbemi e chiamava,
 tenendo li occhi con fatica fisi
 a me che tutto chin con loro andava.”
 (*Purg.* XI.73-78)¹⁰⁴

[My face was lowered as I listened; and
 one of the souls not he who'd spoken, twisted
 himself beneath the weight that burdened them;
 he saw and knew me and called out to me,
 fixing his eyes on me laboriously
 as I, completely hunched, walked on with them.]

This passage reveals a twofold concept: the idea of weight and both notions of mist and fog. While the voice of “peso” (weight [*Purg.* XI.75]) might sound tangibly material and substantial, it implies instead a more symbolic meaning if it is examined through the pilgrim’s past experience. In fact, artists such as Oderisi da Gubbio are curved down because of their weight.¹⁰⁵ This weight corresponds to the type of *contrapasso* that the artist must embrace as a result of his own sins, and which Dante defines in this canto by the term of “andavan sotto ‘l pondo” (moved on beneath their weights [*Purg.* XI.26]).¹⁰⁶ Additionally, the idea of mist used to obfuscate these souls’ vision contaminates also the path that Dante the pilgrim is embracing simultaneously. Because the composing *vis imaginativa* (imagination) is in a sense interconnected with *vis*

¹⁰⁴ See also Torraca’s comment, which could be useful to a certain extent: “Altra pennellata da maestro: impacciato dal peso, non potendo alzare il capo, lo spirito costringeva gli occhi a guardare di sotto in su, e nonostante la fatica, li teneva fissi, fissi per lo stupor, fissi per la commozione.” Francesco Torraca, *Commento alla Divina Commedia*, tomo II, ed. by Valerio Marucci (Rome: Salerno, 2008), 743-744.

¹⁰⁵ To underscore the parallel between visual and reading interpretation, these verses reveal that same parallel in the event of both representations of mist and weight, confusion and bewilderment. This is to state that from this same parallel, the pilgrim embodies a biological implication through his own visualization of arts that stands still behind a cause.

¹⁰⁶ *Pondo* is from Latin *pondus*, which literally translates as weight in English and then *peso* in Italian.

memorativa, this twofold meaning of weight, mist and fog demonstrates that Dante the pilgrim's memory cannot be held in check by some of those conditions that obfuscate his imagination.¹⁰⁷

Even if the notions of doubt and the figurative aspect of mist indicate only one representation of what the pilgrim cannot hold in check, they are sufficient for making Dante the pilgrim aware that some characteristics of his journey are not well supported by his own memory. It is part of the human debility that resonates through the mnemonic operations examined earlier in the chapter. By reconsidering the inability of Dante the pilgrim in recollecting information from the *Ethics* of Aristotle in *Inferno* XI, the wayfarer shows the first signs of flawed memory when demonstrating doubt about the moral and physical structure of *Inferno*. Because Dante the pilgrim's doubts reproduce his unceasing state of hesitancy and misperception of time and space, this adversity begins to aggravate the pilgrim's way of recollecting aspects from his past. I consider this last aspect as an act of re-mystification of memory. While his undesirable characteristics manifest, the pilgrim continues to renew his act of *recordatio* (recollection) through the notion of *renovatio* (regeneration). More specifically, by re-mystifying memory, we can target more determining factors that contribute to weakening Dante's biological memory.

I.3.3. The Slow Progression of Memory

In the Eight Circle, in the Seventh Pouch, which comprises *Inferno* XXIV and XXV, there are the thieves that are bitten by a serpent, and a thieving sinner who turns to ashes and is then restored. While Dante the pilgrim and Virgil are climbing down the bridge towards the seventh pouch, the pilgrim has a closer look at the frightful throng of serpents. By temporarily staring at those beasts, the pilgrim is gradually slowing down his progress toward the next pouch:

¹⁰⁷ To reconsider the concept of *vis memorativa* see the pages 4-5 from the main Introduction.

“e vidivi entro terribile stipa / di serpenti, e di sì diversa mena / che la memoria il sangue ancor mi scipa” (and there within I saw a dreadful swarm / of serpents so extravagant in form - / remembering them still drains my blood from me [*Inf.* XXIV.82-84]). In the previous verses Dante the pilgrim wanted to know the identity of the speaker known as Vanni Fucci, which he has been so eager to learn. However, the pilgrim can only hear Vanni’s voice, and the latter is temporarily forgotten: “ché, com’i’ odo quinci e non intendo, / così giù veggio e neente affiguro” (for as I hear and cannot understand, / so I see down but can distinguish nothing [*Inf.* XXIV.74-75]). The pilgrim will have the opportunity to redeem Vanni’s identity only a few verses later: “Ed ecco a un ch’era da nostra proda, / s’avventò un serpente che ‘l trafisse / là dove ‘l collo a le spalle s’annoda.” (And there! A serpent sprang with force at one / who stood upon our shore, transfixing him / just where the neck and shoulders form a knot [*Inf.* XXIV.97-99]). The remembrance of those snakes that still drains the pilgrim’s blood turns out to be a rhetorical strategy that allows the pilgrim a moment of suspense between these two above-mentioned passages. If Dante the pilgrim feels uncertain about the voice of Vanni Fucci, the pilgrim’s act of *recordatio* (recollection) allows him to think over this grotesque image of snakes. This is the reason Dante the pilgrim attempts to remember those snakes from experience (or past reading in the case of Dante the poet), and his progression suddenly slows down.¹⁰⁸

This hesitant recollection for the pilgrim continues in *Inferno* XXV, where even Dante the narrator intervenes to caution the reader about what is coming next. This specifically occurs in the following passage, where the pilgrim is undecided about this next unknown circumstance. Dante the pilgrim is very doubtful about the two metamorphoses that constantly affect the thieves Agnello, Buoso, and Puccio. While these same thieves are shouting to the wayfarers, they

¹⁰⁸ Cfr. Lucano, *Pharsalia: Volgarizzamento Toscano trecentesco*, ed. and trans. by Maria Carla Marinoni (Florence: Sismel Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2011), IX.1363-1366: “Lo serpente è piccolo, ma niuno hai tanto di sanguinosa morte, perciò che la cotenna proximana alla piaga fugge dintorno alla rottura e ricoperse la pallida faccia.”

do not follow up with their question because other infernal characteristics soon claim all their attention:

“Io non li conoscea; ma ei seguette,
 come suol seguitar per alcun caso,
 che l’un nomar un altro convenette,
 dicendo: ‘Cianfa dove fia rimaso?’
 per ch’io, acciò che ‘l duca stesse attento,
 mi puosi ‘l dito su dal mento al naso.
 Se tu se’ or, lettore, a creder lento
 ciò ch’io dirò, non sarà meraviglia,
 chè io che ‘l vidi, a pena il mi consento.”
 (*Inf.* XXV.40-48)¹⁰⁹

[I did not recognize them, but it happened,
 as chance will usually bring about,
 that one of them called out the other’s name,
 exclaiming: ‘Where was Cianfa left behind?’
 At this, so that my guide might be alert,
 I raised my finger up from chin to nose.
 If, reader, you are slow now to believe
 what I shall tell, that is no cause for wonder,
 for I who saw it hardly can accept it.]

The significance of this passage is shown in Dante the poet/narrator in referring to his own reader. In his commentary on *Inferno*, Charles Singleton argues that by addressing Dante’s reader, Dante is expressing a kind of address that signals amazement and generates suspense.¹¹⁰ In addition to that, Dante the poet and the pilgrim are likely to slow down their understanding about the procedure of this novel notion and special signal that both are facing, namely the metamorphoses of thieves. Most importantly, Dante the poet and the pilgrim will continue to hesitate to know how these sinners turned into a new creature of shared nature: “Così vid’io la settima zavorra / mutare e trasmutare; e qui mi scusi / la novità se fior la penna abborra.” (And so

¹⁰⁹ Cfr. *Inf.*, XXII.112-120: In these verses Dante the author refers to his reader and states how new and unprecedented is what follows. The novelty of such a circumstance (this is the circle in which the devils are mocking both protagonists Virgil and Dante and they are also deriding Virgil), represents an impulsive outcome towards the pilgrim and the reader again. The author appeals to the reader to call his/her attention in reference to this new vision of the devils that apparently the pilgrim has not seen it either. This imminent vision carries out also a confusion and anxiety in the pilgrim’s mind, which is once again transmitted to the direct version to his own audience.

¹¹⁰ Charles S. Singleton, “Notes to Canto 2,” in *Inferno*, ed. and trans. by Charles S. Singleton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 436.

I saw the seventh ballast change / and rechange; may the strangeness plead for me / if there's been some confusion in my pen [*Inf.* XXV.142-144]). Dante the poet worries that his pen, following these never observed and rapid transformations, may have blotted his page a bit when he attempted to set them down from his mnemonic process of *cogitatio* (thinking process). Thus, the narrator invites and simultaneously warns the reader of this reconsideration prior to this because the pilgrim himself seems to hold up the course of his vision due to the immediacy of his action. Even the semantic value of “a pena il mi consento” (hardly can accept it [*Inf.* XXV.48]) outlines the author's implication behind such a literary method, which automatically transmits doubt and indecision to the reader. Ultimately, this call to the reader signals the beginning of an extraordinary scene. If on the one hand it increases the credibility between the author and the reader, on the other hand, Dante the narrator continues to adjust the reader's perception around Dante the pilgrim's unpredictable mnemonic operations.

The idea of slowing down the progress of a main character like Dante the pilgrim is a very common literary strategy during the Middle Ages. Paul Zumthor claims that this strategy belongs to medieval poetry, where the medieval poet is located along his own language rather than his language upon himself. What matters the most to Zumthor is the poet's intervention in the face of his audience, which contributes to the production of his own text.¹¹¹ By the same token, implanting the poetic voice across a scenery of sinners just like Dante the poet employs

¹¹¹ Paul Zumthor, *Le poète et le texte in Essai de poétique médiévale*, (Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 1972), 39-40. Zumthor claims that Medieval poetry is nothing less than poetry, and it is due to some general questions posed. The main element (in his opinion all the factors that contribute to the production of the text) is the way in which one inserts the language of the poet: it is a way of inserting authorial notes in the poetry that polarizes the relation and it intentionally constitutes the message that he wishes to convey. On a more abstract note, one can conceive also the presence of the poet within the poem like he would proceed through this impulse of joking to which Schiller was already alluding. He would qualify this rather by its own effect, which is a type of figuration, but he also understands it to be a transformation that simultaneously affects the text itself in its entirety. This aspect evades from a contingent situation, which is equivalent to a global figure, such as a metaphor, metonymy, or another literary device. From where the ambiguity of an intriguing relation to a degree still different and unpredictable, this corresponds to historicizing the poetic voice.

his voice through literary devices obscures the poet's relationship to the constituent of his own message. Dante the author slows down the progression of the journey by having the pilgrim imagining that he is falling asleep or expressing doubts and misperceptions. Consequently, the author finds himself planning another route and he adapts his pilgrim's emotional status to digress (as he often does) from the main cause. Since the author is creating more suspense with verses like "se tu se' or, lettore, a creder lento," (if, reader, you are now slow to credit [*Inf.* XXV.46]), the slow progression of the pilgrim intensifies the tension that he faces every time he is about to alter a projected path within the infernal realm. Meanwhile, the reader is in the process of understanding what the outcome of that doubt will be. Even if the pilgrim is aiming his voice directly towards his own reader, the author's purpose is to call the reader's attention to the event of the pilgrim's own doubt.

Similarly to the notion of doubt, the concept of sleep also contributes to the pilgrim's slowing down his onward motion. Dante the pilgrim is imagining falling asleep, and through Dante the author's imagination, the pilgrim is compared to a sleeper and a dreamer. One textual example that characterizes this type of imagination occurs in *Purgatorio* IX, specifically the canto in which Dante the pilgrim dreams for the first thirty-three verses. It is nighttime, Dante the wayfarer feels tired, and he imagines falling asleep as his dream begins: "quand'io, che meco avea di quel d'Adamo, / vinto dal sonno, in su l'erba inchinai / là 've già tutti e cinque sedavamo." (when I, who bore something of Adam with me / felling the need for sleep, lay down upon / the grass where now all five of us were seated [*Purg.* IX.10-12]). The five that fall asleep are Dante the pilgrim, Virgil, Sordello, Nino Visconti, and Currado Malaspina. Moreover, Dante's Adamic sleepiness, that is, the heaviness brought on by his physical being, is adumbrated in a later passage (*Purg.* XI.43-44) in which Virgil comments upon the difficulties

experienced by this living soul as he climbs the mountain in his flesh.¹¹² Most importantly, as Dante the pilgrim is seated on grass and flowers, and he reclines to sleep (even if by only imagining), he still feels that the climb has been wearisome for him. Dante the pilgrim is here in the flesh, and even if he momentarily rests on the grass, this literary *topos* that Dante the poet adopts slows down the course of the action.

Dante the pilgrim manifests his sleepiness to a greater extent in the subsequent verses of *Purgatorio* IX. In fact, in this following passage, the idea of Dante the pilgrim's dream vision appears to be more explicit. This occurs when the pilgrim and Virgil are going down the mountain's slope. They are facing the east, and there is the sun in their faces as the morning advances. Saint Lucy appears when she addresses the four who are with Dante the pilgrim, not Virgil alone, and he points to the sleeping pilgrim as being near them in the group.¹¹³ One point that we learn from these next verses is that Dante the poet depicts a scene that rather digresses from their entrance in *Ante-Purgatorio*:

“Dianzi, ne l'alba che procede al giorno,
 quando l'anima tua dentro dormia,
 sopra li fiori ond'è là giù addorno
 venne una donna, e disse: 'I' son Lucia;
 lasciatemi pigliar costui che dorme;
 sì l'agevolerò per la sua via.'
 Sordel rimase e l'altre genti forme;
 ella ti tolse, e come 'l dì fu chiaro,
 sen venne suso; e io per le sue orme.
 Qui ti posò, ma pria mi dimostraro
 li occhi suoi belli quella intrata aperta;
 poi ella e 'l sonno ad una se n'andaro.'
 A guisa d'uom che 'n dubbio si raccerta

¹¹² The theme is however introduced in the first canto of *Inferno* (I.10-12) where Dante's sleepiness is associated with Adam's suggesting a figural relationship between the fallen Adam, sent forth into his exile from the garden, and the sinful Dante.

¹¹³ The figure of Saint Lucy remains one of the more problematic presences in Dante's poem. She is believed to be an early-fourth-century martyr from Syracuse, killed while Diocletian was emperor ca. A.D. 304. She is usually associated with the well-being of the eyes, and this may have had some resonance for Dante who, in *Convivio* III.ix.15, reports a severe bout of eye trouble in the same year that he was composing his ode "Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona." For whatever reason, Dante was particularly devoted to the cult of this saint. She has a presence in three major scenes in the work, the prologue in heaven (*Inf.* II.97-108); the transport of Dante while he sleeps in this canto; and the prospect of the inhabitants of the stadium-rose (*Par.* XXXII.137).

e che muta in conforto sua paura,
 poi che la verità li è discoperta,
 mi cambia' io; e come sanza cura
 vide me 'l duca mio, su per lo balzo
 si mosse, e io di rietro inver' l'altura."
 (*Purg.* IX.52-69)

[Before, at dawn that ushers in the day,
 when soul was sleeping in your body, on
 the flowers that adorn the ground below,
 a lady came; she said: 'I am Lucia;
 let me take hold of him who is asleep,
 that I may help to speed him on his way.
 Sordello and the other noble spirits
 stayed there; and she took you, and once the day
 was bright, she climbed, I following behind.
 And here she set you down, but first her lovely
 eyes showed that open entryway to me;
 then she and sleep together took their leave.
 Just like a man in doubt who then grows sure,
 exchanging fear for confidence, once truth
 has been revealed to him, so was I changed
 and when my guide has seen that I was free
 from hesitation, then he moved, with me
 behind him, up the rocks and toward the heights.]

Dante the pilgrim's dream vision is narrated by a counterpart, that of Virgil. The latter's explanation glosses the dream as it explains the coming of Lucy, while Dante the pilgrim is imagining sleeping at the solar aurora, nine hours after he had seen the lunar aurora. Sometime after dawn she begins her ascent with Dante in her arms, leaving their companions in *Ante-Purgatorio*. Most importantly, a final simile prepares us readers for the entrance to *Purgatorio* proper, comparing Dante the pilgrim to one who moves from dubiety to confidence. This symbolizes a movement that required that the pilgrim reinterpret the dream vision and his association in a positive light. Moreover, this same moment of passing from doubt to awareness reintegrates the notion of *renovatio* (regeneration), where Dante the pilgrim renews his awareness after his dream vision ends. Yet, before becoming aware of his surroundings, Dante the pilgrim momentarily slows down his *cogitatio* (thought process) about his future advancement in the first terrace of *Purgatorio*.

Consequently, Dante the poet exemplifies the pilgrim's dream vision with a higher degree of interpretation by the time the former justifies the dream vision as a rhetorical strategy. This procedure serves the poet's need to better illustrate the consequences of the dream vision to his reader such as doubts, hesitancy, uncertainties, and mnemonic adversities. In fact, Dante the pilgrim's sleepiness in his own dream vision turns out to be not only the cause of a slow progression, but also a circumstance guided by the author himself through the rhetorical strategy of similes in *Purgatorio* XVII:

“Come si frange il sonno ove di butto
nuova luce percuote il viso chiuso,
che fratto guizza pria che muoia tutto;
così l'imaginar mio cadde giuso
tosto che lume il volto mi percosse,
maggior assai che quel ch'è in nostro uso.”
(*Purg.* XVII.40-45)

[Even as sleep is shattered when new light
strikes suddenly against closed eyes and, once
it's shattered, gleams before it dies completely,
so my imagination fell away
as soon as light, more powerful than light
we are accustomed to, beat on my eyes.]

Dante the pilgrim is compared to a dreamer/sleeper who is awakened by a sunbeam, and then loses his hold on his dream in bits and pieces before it utterly disappears. Yet, if Dante the poet is engaging his reader using suspense, so is Dante the pilgrim jarred from his visionary sleep by the sudden brightness of the Angel of Mercy. This angelic light outshines even that of the sun, explains Benvenuto da Imola, because an angel gives off light more splendid than any light found in the world.¹¹⁴ The idea of a dominant light hurting Dante the pilgrim's vision is symbolic of how the journey will end for the pilgrim. However, the wayfarer's memory is mostly affected in that he cannot recollect where he left off, and so his next step is to momentarily rest his own

¹¹⁴ Benvenuto da Imola, *Lectura Dantis Bononiensis*, ed. by Paolo Pasquino, (Ravenna: Longo, 2017), 434: “in qua ponit apparitionem angeli qui ipsum purgavit. Et ostendit per comparationem qualiter excitavit se, dicens quod accidit ei sicut alicui dormienti fixe in camera et aperiatur fenestra et sol percuriat faciem eius: iste, territus, excitatur; vel, si aperiatur hostium et apportetur doblerium, similiter excitatur territus. Similiter ego, in adventu angeli qui huc descendit.”

memory/mind. It should also be mentioned that this is not a light that originates from a physical sphere because it originates from the divine God, which subsequently causes and distorts Dante the pilgrim's visualization of his own path. Unlike the previous example of Saint Lucy and Dante the pilgrim, the point of discussion in this case concerns the pilgrim's memory not being able to endure the light that strikes his own eyes. Consequently, Dante's dream vision is symptomatic of a memory that begins to show signs of debility in the face of otherworldly experiences.

Furthermore, these past examples from *Inferno* XXIV, XXV, and *Purgatorio* IX and XVII are characteristic of the pilgrim who cannot prompt his words, cannot organize his thoughts, and can neither absorb nor endure what he is seeing. Most importantly, these verses are representative of the pilgrim's insufficient mnemonic command because he is constantly facing unprecedented circumstances. They have shaken him from his farsighted sleep by the unexpected illumination of the Angel of Mercy and have simultaneously witnessed Dante the pilgrim's mnemonic shortcomings. In other words, these textual examples are the mere representation of what the pilgrim is about to undertake, which develops to increasingly constrain the pilgrim's understanding of features that are often humanly unbearable to conceive.¹¹⁵

I.4. Dante's Mnemonic Ineffability

I.4.1. The Indescribability in Dante's *Commedia*

The notions of cause and effect that have been exemplified through the parallels between doubt and anxiety, weight (i.e., mist or fog from *Purgatorio* XI) and misperception have proven to elucidate only parts of the pilgrim's mnemonic weakness. The previously examined textual

¹¹⁵ This conception will be explained in great details in the next section entitled *Dante's Mnemonic Ineffability*.

examples from *Inferno* XXIV, XXV, and *Purgatorio* IX and XVII represent the basis of physical shortcomings that will persist through Dante's journey. Furthermore, one aspect that expands the reader's understanding more thoroughly around Dante's mnemonic weakness is the distinguishing nature of ineffability, which also determines and corroborates a unified vision of a biological memory operating from cause to effect.¹¹⁶ While doubts and sleep have paved the way for us to start thinking about the impact that Dante's memory has, the notion of ineffability will empower this this same mnemonic impact. The following cases of ineffability in Dante will not only strengthen the course of mnemonic debility (mnemonic weakness) but will also develop into the foundation of the inadequate and insufficient resources from Dante's mnemonic constraints (Dante the pilgrim facing other limitations).

Dante the poet might not use the term ineffability, but he is unquestionably proving, and the pilgrim is undeniably demonstrating his entry into a state of ephemeral incommunicability. This is the case for the pilgrim when he subtly materializes the question of ineffability through the notions of indescribability and silence.¹¹⁷ Dante the poet often adopts a peculiar language to describe the most grotesque examples and the tragic and dramatic sections of his poem (*Inferno* XXVIII-XXXIV). This means that the essence of tragedy in the poem is often linguistic for Dante the poet, and it has to do with issues of the inherent ambiguities of language. From these uncertainties that the poet instills along tragic sections, there is also the impossibility of decoding

¹¹⁶ I begin with a clear and concise description of ineffability, which originates from Latin *ineffabilis*, (*in* + *effabilis*). *Effabilis* means to be capable of being expressed, from *effari* to speak out, and from *ex* and *fari* to speak. With the preposition *in* the word *effari* gets distorted from the fluency of speaking out, since it calls into question the contingency of human ability to overcome linguistic adversity. Ineffability is also a conception that is concerned with ideas that cannot or should not be expressed in spoken words (or language in general), because they are often expressed in incomprehensible terms, space, or circumstance. It is an expression that is commonly associated with literature, science, and with philosophy through aspects of existence. This same expression occurs also in similar concepts that are inherently too great or too complex or too abstract to be adequately communicated.

¹¹⁷ To perceive a more comprehensible definition of ineffability and to underline ineffability as the symbolic essence behind the human debility of Dante's memory, I adopt a constructed line of readings from specific cantos of the *Inferno*. Furthermore, while ineffability represents (in general terms) the inability to describe or define in words what the pilgrim sees or experiences, both notions of indescribability and silence precisely indicate the specific cases of ineffability along Dante's journey.

and deciphering what is being manifested in one statement as opposed to another. *Inferno* XXVIII is a difficult canto with a reflection on war and references to ineffability:

“Chi poria mai pur con parole sciolte
 dicer del sangue e de le piaghe a pieno
 ch’i’ ora vidi, per narrar più volte?
 Ogne lingua per certo verria meno
 per lo nostro sermone e per la mente
 c’hanno a tanto comprender poco seno.”
 (*Inf.* XXVIII.1-6)

[Who, even with untrammelled words and many
 attempts at telling, ever could recount
 in full the blood and wounds that I now saw?
 Each tongue that tired would certainly fall short
 because the shallowness of both our speech
 and intellect cannot contain so much.]

This passage shows how all the people were assembled again who once in the land of Apulia lamented their blood shed by the Trojans. It is a textual example that ties to those who felt the pain of blows in the struggle with Robert Guiscard, and with those others whose bones are still heaped up at Ceperano. It was the case that every Apulian was false, there by Tagliacozzo where old Alardo conquered without arms. Additionally, this sequence of verses shows how Dante the poet proves his ability to design the grounds for an ineffable space or tortured sinners.¹¹⁸ The pilgrim’s spiritual experience at the beginning of his journey is very arduous to describe, and therefore adopting a plan for distortion was the author’s only solution to overcome this pilgrim’s shortcomings. More importantly, this is a case in which language cannot be adequate to describe

¹¹⁸ Along this line of thought, see also: Giorgio Stabile, “Cosmologia e teologia nella Commedia,” in *Dante e la filosofia della natura: Percezioni, linguaggi, cosmologie* (Florence: Sismel Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2007), 156. While Stabile focuses particularly on the last canto of *Inferno*, he claims that ineffability arises while trialing around new soils in which the pilgrim can solely manifest his incapability to recognize the true nature of important figures like Lucifer. For instance, the scholar argues that should Dante have considered the cosmic nature that surrendered Lucifer in *Inferno* XXXIV, the pilgrim might have also had a different understanding of that same scene. While ineffability shows the pilgrim’s weakness in lacking the proper understanding, this same process can also be indicative of a freedom from human error: “L’iniziale turbamento di Dante personaggio nello sperimentare un modo nuovo di ‘ergersi’ nel mondo (“Levati su [...] in piede” v. 94; “quando fui dritto” v. 101) sorge dunque dalla incapacità di riconoscere subito nella giacitura di Lucifero quella definitiva di un *antitypus* cosmico; giacitura comune all’intera umanità e alla terra su cui è radicata, e da Dante stesso inconsapevolmente condivisa. Perciò il ribaltamento si configura come liberazione o meglio, sradicamento dall’abisso e come sottrazione dai vincoli dell’errore.”

the reality it wants to represent. Dante the poet emulates Virgil in his disclaimer of the ability to describe blood and wounds that surpass both words and memory: “And if I had a hundred tongues and as many mouths, along with a voice of iron, I could not put together all the shapes of crime nor run through all the catalogue of torments.”¹¹⁹ By adopting a similar assertion to that of Virgil, Dante the poet strengthens the idea behind the pilgrim’s insufficient idiom, which consequently would collapse because his mind has little capacity to comprehend so much from these tragic visions. Even if Dante the poet wants to describe all the dismemberments of bodies from old wars, he cannot come close to what the pilgrim has seen in this realm. Because the pilgrim’s memory is momentarily incapable of recollecting what the pilgrim has previously thought (*cogitatio*) about those tragic visions; consequently, the pilgrim’s “intellect” and mind “cannot contain so much” (*Inf.* XXVIII.6), and his memory cannot rethink or elucidate them in their present state by any linguistic means.¹²⁰

These linguistic examples demonstrate how consistently difficult it is for Dante the poet to discuss matters that go beyond human understanding. There are cases where Dante the poet/narrator apologizes for outlining a language rough enough to be the exact counterpart of what he must describe. The place he needs to describe is the center of the entire universe in his geocentric view, which characterizes a state of despair and hopelessness. Dante the poet is preparing himself to describe the infernal city of destruction, the ninth circle (home of Lucifer)

¹¹⁹ Cfr. Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI, 625-627: “non mihi si linguae centum sint oraque centum, / ferrea vox, omnis scelerum comprehendere formas, / omnia poenarum percurrere nomina possim.” This passage was first cited by Pietro di Dante and is now a commonplace in the commentaries. See also Dante Alighieri, canzone II, 14-18 (*Convivio* III): “Però, se le mie rime avran difetto / ch’entreran ne la loda di costei, / di ciò si biasmi il debole intelletto / e’l parlar nostro, che non ha valore / di ritrar tutto ciò che dice Amore.” [Wherefore if defect shall mark my rhymes, / which shall enter upon her praises, / for his le tour feeble intellect be blamed, / and our speech which hath not power / to tell again all that love speaketh.]

¹²⁰ This correlation between mind, intellect, and memory appears as early as the first canticle, where in *Inferno* II, Dante names “mente” (mind) when his intention is to refer to memory: “O Muse, o alto ingegno, or m’aiutate; / o mente che scrivesti ciò ch’io vidi, / qui si parrà la tua nobilitate” (O Muses, O lofty genius, aid me now! / O memory, that set down what I saw, / here shall your worth be shown [*Inf.* II.7-9]). This same correlation will be fully examined on pp. 151-152 of Chapter Two.

by asking for help from the muses. Dante the poet asks the muses for assistance to build not the physical city, but his image of it in words that do justice to the conception he has been given. In this next passage, Dante's memory should prove to be useful in this circumstance, and yet memory cannot assist him any further at that specific moment:

“S’io avessi le rime aspre e chioce,
 come si converrebbe al tristo buco
 sovra ‘l qual pontan tutte l’altre rocce,
 io premerei di mio concetto il suco
 più pienamente; ma perch’io non l’abbo,
 non senza tema a dicer mi conduco;
 ché non è impresa da pigliare a gabbo
 discriver fondo a tutto l’universo,
 né da lingua che chiami mamma o babbo.”
 (*Inf.* XXXII.1-9)

[Had I the crude and scannel rhymes to suit
 the melancholy hole upon which all
 the other circling crags converge and rest
 the juice of my conception would be pressed
 more fully; but because I feel their lack,
 I bring myself to speak, yet speak in fear;
 for it is not a task to take in jest,
 to show the base of all the universe-
 not for a tongue that cries out, mama, papa.]

Dante the poet disclaims the same circumstance that has left him frail. If he had accurate words, he would be able to set forth more adequately what he indeed fully understands. This means that Dante's own conception does not fall short of the nature of these things, although his words may. More precisely, Dante the poet's conception is one matter, while his description of it is another. The depiction of a specific experience in verse is no “impresa da pigliare a gabbo” (not a task to take in jest [*Inf.* XXXII.7]), and not one “da lingua che chiami mamma o babbo” (for a tongue that cries out, mamma, papa [*Inf.* XXXIII.9]). Because facing these previously suggested tragic moments towards the end of *Inferno* is a major task that Dante the pilgrim cannot approach, it is also inconceivable expressing natural love for a tongue that speaks the tender words between

child and parent.¹²¹ Dante the poet finds very harsh the sequence of these respective rhymes, but the question of how language can suit a place of such horror remains throughout these final cantos.¹²²

I.4.2. The Indescribability in Dante's *Convivio*

Dante explicates the nature of ineffability by specifically manifesting it through the notion of indescribability throughout his own writings. Dante the author considers those moments of ineffability as a condition that mostly reflects the linguistic impossibility of proceeding with any sort of reasoning. It is for this reason that a human shortcoming in intellect and language can hardly be controlled or managed. In the following passage from the *Convivio*, Dante suggests that the thoughts of the narrator are inferior to the being of this woman. In other words, there is a declared insufficiency that leads to ineffability in different terms:

Poi quando dico: E di quel che s'intende, dico che non pur a quello che lo mio intelletto non sostiene, ma eziandio a quello che io intendo sufficiente non sono, però che la lingua mia non è di tanta facundia che dire potesse ciò che nel pensiero mio se ne ragiona; per che è da vedere che, a rispetto de la veritate, poco fia quello che dirà. [...] (*Conv.* III.iv.8-9).

[Then when I say: *And of what it understands* I assert that my inability extends not only to what my intellect does not grasp but even to what I do understand, because my tongue lacks the eloquence to be able to express what is spoken of her in my thought. Consequently, it will be apparent that what I shall say concerning the truth will be quite little [...]

¹²¹ Such words as *mamma* and *babbo* are in *De vulgari eloquentia* and they are explicitly excluded from the tragic style. Dante Alighieri, *De vulgari eloquentia* ed. by Enrico Fenzi (Rome: Salerno, 2012), 2, vii, [4], 194: "In quorum numero nec puerilia propter sui simplicitatem, ut *mamma* et *babbo*, *mate* et *pate*, nec muliebria propter sui mollitiem, ut *dolciada* et *placevole*, nec silvestria propter austeritatem, ut *greggia* et *cetra*, nec urbana lubrica et reburra, ut *femina* et *corpo*, ullo modo poteris conlocare." [And among these you will not be able to make any room at all for infantile words (such as *mamma* and *babbo*, or *mate* and *pate*), because of their simplicity; or for the womanish (like *dolciada* or *placevole*), because of their yielding quality; or for the rustic (like *greggia* and *cetra*), because of their roughness; or for the urbane, smooth or unkempt, like *femina* or *corpo*.] All the English translations of *De vulgari eloquentia* come from Dante, *De vulgari eloquentia*, ed. and trans. by Steven Botterill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹²² A type of horror that filters through Dante the narrator's mind and places his ability to express the meaning of what the pilgrim sees because of inexplicable circumstances. See also the verses from *Inferno* XXXIV. 22-27, where the narrator cannot reveal what the pilgrim sees due to the diabolic image of Lucifer. Consider also the study by Giuseppe Ledda, who discusses this specific case of ineffability from a philological perspective: Giuseppe Ledda, *La Guerra della lingua. Ineffabilità, retorica e narrativa nella 'Commedia' di Dante* (Ravenna: Longo, 2002), 243-298.

It is a passage in which Dante justifies that if he had the right words, he would be able to set forth more adequately what he indeed understands.¹²³ Along this line of thought, Maria Luisa Ardizzone analyzes this same passage and identifies a gap between the inner words that are pure thinking and the sensible words that seem to express a duality between the sensitive and the intellectual to the human being.¹²⁴ This text contains positions acknowledged as orthodox, and glosses the verses recalled and quoted in order to express the impossibility of knowing such a separate substance.¹²⁵ The reason for not knowing this separate substance implies the theory of a diaphanous body, in which a vision of the separate substance fails to take place – that is, the mind and the memory are unable to contemplate such a separate being.¹²⁶

While mind and memory are unable to operate on this separate being, and Dante's language is unable to absorb the symbolic image of a woman as described from the *Convivio*, we also learn how connected memory, mind, and language are.¹²⁷ A case in point occurs when juxtaposing the previously suggested passage of the *Convivio* with the following one, where Dante explicates his actual status in the face of a lady whose name remains unveiled: “ne le mie parole che a trattare di costei sono ordinate, di ciò è da biasimare la debilitade de lo ‘ntelletto e la

¹²³ Having been faced with the case of Dante the pilgrim who according to Stabile commits an error in front of Lucifer, this is not so much an undesirable implication, but a means by which to highlight the author's linguistic and literary consciousness in the face of his ability to measure the system of concepts across the realm of the *Commedia*: “Caratteristica di ogni linguaggio poetico, sia esso formalizzato o solo implicitamente pattuito, è infatti l'ipersensibilità del sistema alle variazioni anche minime di componenti anche minime. Il linguaggio poetico è un tipico esempio di questa ipersensibilità, caratterizzato com'è dalla stretta correlazione tra variazioni delle parti e alterazione del tutto [...]. L'uso mirato del lessico diviene quindi misura della coscienza linguistica, cioè della cultura, dell'autore, il quale quanto più esercita un consapevole dominio sul vasto sistema delle accezioni, tanto più è in grado di commisurarle alle esigenze del suo sistema dei concetti, che è il referente implicito del suo discorso e la ragione che presiede all'organizzazione del testo.” Giorgio Stabile, *Cosmologia e teologia nella Commedia*, 140.

¹²⁴ Maria Luisa Ardizzone, “Community and Intellectual Happiness,” in *Reading as the Angels Read: Speculation and Politics in Dante's Banquet*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 255.

¹²⁵ On the notion of separate substances of intellect, see also: John Bruce-Jones, “L'importanza primaria della materia prima,” in *Dante e la Scienza*, ed. by Patrick Boyde and Vittorio Russo (Ravenna: Longo, 1995), 214-215.

¹²⁶ The basis of the theory of diaphanous in the thirteenth century is in Aristotle's *On the Soul* [*De anima*], II. Moreover, the metaphor of diaphanous that derives from Aristotle's theory of vision is utilized in the thirteenth century to discuss not just vision but also knowledge. See also: Maria Luisa Ardizzone, *Guido Cavalcanti: The Other Middle Ages*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

¹²⁷ To reconsider the correlation between mind, memory, and intellect, see note #118 on p. 85 of Chapter One.

cortezza del nostro parlare, lo quale per lo pensiero è vinto, si che seguire lui non puote a pieno” (my words which are arranged to treat of her-the blame is due to the weakness of the intellect and the inadequacy of our power of speech, which is so overwhelmed by a thought that it cannot fully follow it [*Conv.* III.iv.3-4]). It is the word “debilitate” (weakness) that captures and underlines Dante’s case for ineffability. His own awareness subsumes him, so he responds with a fragile and feeble tone. This overwhelming feeling occurs once Dante is particularly aware that he cannot describe in human words aspects (such as the above-mentioned) that engage with a superior realm of understanding. Moreover, the lack of proper language and deeper interpretation both continue to underline constraints in the background of Dante’s mnemonic experience.

I.4.3. From Indescribability to Silence

Another outcome that evolves as a result of ineffability is the notion of silence.¹²⁸ For instance, when someone writes or pronounces the word silence, the immediate response indicates the idea of unspoken words. Whether Dante the pilgrim cannot recall or reveal what he has thought or seen in the past, he communicates with silence by omitting a description of certain concepts and the explanation of their causes. In this next passage of *Purgatorio* XVII, Dante is engaging with the notion of Love that Virgil is intensely explicating. Since Love is profoundly imperative for the pilgrim to fully absorb before moving onwards with his journey, Virgil’s speech to the pilgrim cannot be intersected with superfluous questions. Thus, Dante the poet prefers omitting specific words and replacing them with silence: “Ed io, cui nova sete ancor

¹²⁸ Although the notion of silence could potentially be examined through the nature of other disciplines as well, I wish to clarify otherwise. I will adopt silence in this case to solely support the question of ineffability and the parallel of cause and effect (silence being considered as another type of effect). I will eventually reintegrate the biological memory and its own functions (*recordatio*, *cogitatio*, etc.) through the juxtaposition between ineffability and silence.

frugava, / di fuor, taceva, e, dentro, dicea: ‘Forse / lo troppo domandar, ch’i’ fo’ gli grava’.’¹²⁹ (And I, still goaded by new thirst, was silent / without, although within I said: ‘Perhaps / I have displeased him with too many questions’ [*Purg.* XVIII.4-6]). Dante the pilgrim shows how eager he is to continue learning as much as possible from Virgil’s previous lesson about Love in *Purg.* XVII. However, silence takes over by omitting what Dante the pilgrim was about to disclose next. Dante the pilgrim would rather regret or rethink what he has achieved thus far than intersecting with major implications about Virgil’s discourse on Love. Aldo Vallone reveals that the poet’s regret results in some type of thinking-over of what he has achieved or done thus far.¹³⁰ While this rethinking about “lo troppo domandar” (too many questions [*Purg.* XVIII.6]) puts the pilgrim in suspense, Dante the poet is essentially adopting this technique to re-narrate what the pilgrim has vaguely recalled. More precisely, the pilgrim remains silent because he is rethinking the moral order of *Purgatorio*, because he is reevaluating the distinctions of Good (love of primary Good towards happiness) and good (love of secondary goods such as avarice, gluttony, and lust), and because he is contemplating Virgil’s explanation on his own (*Purg.* XVII.137-139).

Thus, unspoken words do not necessarily omit the pilgrim’s aim to proceed with the journey but put his intention to move onwards temporarily at rest. Dante the poet’s temporary suspense from expressing his own intention provides the pilgrim with the ability to describe a grotesque place or a monstrous figure like Geryon from *Inferno* XVII. This above-mentioned

¹²⁹ Another similar case of silence like this occurs in *Paradiso* XXII.22-27. Benvenuto da Imola justifies the idea behind the terms “di fuor, taceva,” – in verbis; “e dentro dicea,” – in mente: “Per hoc dat intelligere quod diu deliberavit cum ratione, si satis dictum erat de materia amoris, et visum est quod non; ideo subdit quomodo Virgilius praestitit sibi securitatem.” Benvenuto da Imola, *Lectura Dantis Bononiensis*, 772.

¹³⁰ Aldo Vallone, “Il silenzio in Dante,” *Dante Studies* no. CX (1992), 45-56. “A questi modi frequenti peraltro si possono accostare altri che nel passaggio dalla parola al silenzio, valgono come rammarico, ripensamento di quel che si è fatto, bene o male, e di quel che si poteva fare [...]. E vi si rende il sovrappensiero: la sospensione del discorso non esprime, allora, il proseguimento di una storia; ma piuttosto un indugio interiore, un affanno della mente e dello spirito.”

suspense that the pilgrim's silence produces can also occur through an exchange of words between the pilgrim and another character like Statius. For instance, the episode of the gluttons in *Purgatorio* represents a relevant example in which their silence is charged with strain because there is a lack of spoken communicability. By the same token, the passage from a spoken to an unspoken communicability can be justified through the cause of ineffability:

“Si come i peregrin pensosi fanno,
 giugnendo per cammin gente non nota,
 che si volgono ad essa e non restanno,
 così di retro a noi, più tosto mota,
 venendo e trapassando ci ammirava
 d'anime turba tacita e devota.”

(*Purg.* XXIII.16-21)

[Even as pensive pilgrims do, who when
 they've overtaken folk unknown to them
 along the way, will turn but will not stop,
 so, overtaking us, they had come from
 behind but were more swift, a crowd of souls,
 devout and silent, looked at us in wonder.]

There is the retrospective focus on Statius from *Purgatorio* XXI as he comes up behind Virgil and Dante the pilgrim before Statius is seen by them. Moreover, the soul, as we learn later (vv. 113-114), are marveling that Dante the pilgrim casts a shadow. The sun is now high enough for this, as apparently it was not earlier in the morning when Statius first saw Dante. Similarly, the souls remain lost in thought and praise God in their minds, even though they are not singing the verse now, and look with wonder toward the pilgrim. This last event between the souls and Dante the traveler characterizes a silent environment, where silence itself governs them all. This is to say that Dante the pilgrim is reticent, and he is unable to speak or say anything because silence takes over.

Figures like Statius, the gluttons, Virgil (to name a few), or previous structures from the square art, are all aspects that belong to the theater of Dante the poet's memory.¹³¹ Since Dante the pilgrim cannot speak the indescribable, Dante the poet would rather contain these words within his memory than outline them. Memory and silence, as well as the notion of ineffability, are parallel because human memory stores those words kept in silence by the pilgrim. Dante the poet knows that the human memory is fragile, and the pilgrim cannot hold in check, for instance, the distinctions of Good (love of primary Good towards happiness) and good (love of secondary goods) from *Purg.* XVII.137-139. Likewise, this close parallel between silence and ineffability symbolizes a close engagement, and rather than dividing the concept of ineffability among numerous definitions, ineffability acquires greater value in juxtaposition with the pilgrim's silence. Furthermore, this same correlation between silence and ineffability does not undermine the continuous inadequacy of biological memory, but it only underscores its mnemonic function weakening as the pilgrim moves onwards. In other words, the notion of silence resonates with a means of contemplating another way to highlight constraints in the background of the pilgrim's mnemonic experience.

I.5. The Implications of *Trasumanar*

I.5.1. Dante's Eagerness for a Greater Mindset

¹³¹ About Dante's theater of memory, see the following: Luisa Pinnelli, "La 'Divina Commedia' come teatro della memoria," *Il Veltro* no. 1 (1991): 310-315. In her essay, Pinnelli claims that Dante's main aspect of such a theater of memory refers to the infernal places. These are places that symbolize important instruments that consequently allude to the physical status of the *Commedia*. Pinnelli argues that Dante renews the properties of these spaces (from *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*) by adopting their images within his own work. Additionally, the theater refers solely to the memory of Dante the author himself, excluding the mnemonic perception of the above-mentioned places from characters and the pilgrim himself. See also Roberto Antonelli, *Memoria rerum et memoria verborum. La costruzione della 'Divina Commedia'*, 39: "L'al di là di Dante, la *Commedia*, è dunque anche un gigantesco teatro della memoria, la rappresentazione di una memoria oggettivata, in quanto garantita dall'ordine dell'intera umanità, dall'antichità più remota, cristiana e pagana, in cui Dante si può muovere fra passato e presente."

Whether the pilgrim's motivation to continue with his journey concerns the use of ineffability such as the case of silence, or Dante the poet offering the ability to learn about several literary *topos* to his reader, the pilgrim will overcome these cases. Dante the pilgrim incorporates various instructions given by superior figures like God or Beatrice and he attempts to disengage, even if only temporarily, from the great question of ineffability. These lessons and instructions are important for the pilgrim to evolve with his human senses (vision, etc.) while advancing towards the Empyrean. It is precisely when Dante the poet describes his sixth address to his readers in *Purgatorio* XXXI that he suggests a glimpse of something in action for Dante the pilgrim: "Pensa lettore, s'io mi maravigliava, / quando vedea la cosa in sé star queta, / e nell'idolo suo si trasmutava." (Consider, reader, if I did not wonder / when I saw something that displayed no movement / though its reflected image kept on changing [*Purg.* XXXI.124-126]). Dante the poet defines the vision of Beatrice in constant motion. While her image changes from one nature to another, the pilgrim's vision is borne out of a powerful motivation that is generated by this same verb of changing.¹³² More precisely, this last textual example entails the beginning perception of the pilgrim moving from an incredulous stance, such as remaining silent for a time, to moving onwards with the dynamics of his own journey.¹³³

Additionally, Dante the pilgrim's perception of *Paradiso* catches up more vividly with the paradisiac experience of the *Primo Mobile* where all motion begins. All of *Paradiso* is about the refinement of sight, from which Dante the poet will soothe and channel the pilgrim into a

¹³² These cases that follow represent other aspects in which Dante the pilgrim demonstrates his increasing eagerness to avoid the ineffable cases: *Inferno* XXXI.22-45; *Purgatorio* I.115-136; IX.87-138; XII.109-136; XII.130-154; XVII.13-24; XVIII.28-33; XXV.61-75; XXX.119-114; XXXII.106-111; *De Monarchia* I, iii, [2], 14; *Vita Nuova*, III, [3], 88; Furthermore, through other biblical aspects: *II Corinthians* 12.2-4; *Romans* IX.20; *Luke* 18.13.

¹³³ Dante the pilgrim will have to ultimately face a major implication that causes his memory to fail in *Paradiso* XXXIII. However, this specific aspect of Dante's failure of natural memory which occurs in the last canto of *Paradiso* will be entirely taken into examination in the fourth and last chapter. Additionally, this last episode has been considered the pinnacle of ineffable cases.

more imaginative effort to proceed with his own journey. In this next passage, the pilgrim is about to face something he has never seen before, and this same experience produces a temporary confusion in the pilgrim. While Dante the pilgrim thinks he is still on earth, he soon discovers that he is essentially at the entrance of *Paradiso*. Dante the pilgrim is about to describe his own outcome by experiencing a self-transformation that occurs because of this motion:

“Beatrice tutta nell’etterne rote
 fissa con li occhi stava; ed io in lei
 le luci fissi, di là su remote.
 Nel suo aspetto tal dentro mi fei,
 qual si fè Glauco nel gustar dell’erba
 che’l fè consorte in mar delli altri Dei.”
 (Par. I.64-69)

[The eyes of Beatrice were all intent
 on the eternal circles; from the sun
 I turned aside; I set my eyes on her.
 In watching her, within me I was changed
 as Glaucus changed, tasting the herb that made
 him a companion of the other sea gods.]

Dante the poet fashions a complex transition at the center of the canto. The poet adopts a suggestive approach to describe the effect of gazing on Beatrice, from which the pilgrim is first transformed within himself. This same passage resembles the previous series of verses from *Purgatorio* XXXI where Dante the pilgrim is in Eden and sees the two natures of Christ in the form of the gryphon. That sight, compared to eating, is a precedent for how the pilgrim’s experience of gazing at Beatrice is analogous to Glaucus’ tasting and transformation.¹³⁴ What these two textual examples (*Purg.* XXXI.124-126 & *Par.* I.64-69) have in common is the result from the pilgrim’s drive that has turned his same motivation into carefully facing transformations to reach out to divinity.

¹³⁴ Glaucus was a fisherman of Boeotia who, according to Ovid, sat down one day on a grassy spot where no one had ever been before, to count his catch. The fish began to move about on the grass and made their way back into the sea. In addition to that, the two major classical myths evoked in this canto, Apollo and Glaucus, indicate the two main ways to understanding that we will hear about all through the *cantica*, intellectual penetration and a more passive reception of the truth. See Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ed. and trans. by Peter Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), XIII, 904-959.

The idea of engaging with the figure of Glaucus and his physical transformation helps the reader to understand what Dante the poet is anticipating. From the previous example of *Par.* I.64-69 we read about Glaucus, who becomes immortal and lives in the sea after tasting some magical herbs. While Dante the poet integrates this classical example from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Dante cannot forget that the pilgrim is still a human moving across the otherworldliness. Dante the poet does not undermine the significance of the human limits for the pilgrim, but the poet still defines ways to cope with those limits such as adopting and renewing the previously suggested Ovidian idea of metamorphosis: "Trasumanar significar per verba, / non si poria; però l'esempio basti / a cui esperienza grazia serba." (Passing beyond the human cannot be / worded; let Glaucus serve as simile – / until grace grant you the experience [*Par.* I.70-72]). The literal English translation of "trasumanar" corresponds to passing beyond the human or trans-humanize, which means to go beyond the limits of human capacities. It is not a definition that suggests a physical transformation as in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, but rather a transmutation that goes through the Latin phrase *per verba*, which translates into "in words."¹³⁵

The term trans-humanizing shows how Dante the pilgrim will not literally rise with Beatrice through the spheres and high above the mortal condition. It is a term that refers to the kind of vision the pilgrim will have while Beatrice guides him. Dante the pilgrim will engage with a symbolic transformation while moving through the superior figures of *Paradiso* such as Saint Benedict, Saint Bernard, Saint Francis, and the eternal wheels of Beatrice. More specifically, one aspect of "trasumanar" (passing beyond the human [*Par.* I.70]) resonates with Dante the pilgrim now passing into that mode of vision made possible through the special grace

¹³⁵ What distances Dante from Ovid is that the pilgrim's transformation occurs from within himself, and not in some external fashion. Dante compares the change wrought in himself as he gazes upon Beatrice to the transformation of Glaucus after he tasted the divine herb. This example also shows how Dante first adopts a classical aspect but then he models his own interpretation at the work's conclusion.

that Beatrice represents, which is infused from on high. Going beyond the limits of human capacities or rising above the human state is an aspect that Saint Thomas Aquinas considered in his *Summa theologiae*. Rather than being solely transcendental, Aquinas registers a similar idea while highlighting the limits of physical deformity: “Facultas autem videndi Deum non competit intellectui creato secundum suam naturam, sed per lumen gloriae, quod intellectum in quadam deiformitate constituit.”¹³⁶ The conception of godliness from Aquinas seems to imply a better understanding in the face of the pilgrim’s symbolic transformation. It is an aspect that restores Dante’s imagination by emulating a theological model while innovating the pilgrim’s concept of otherworldliness.

I.5.2. Coining the Transcendental Aspect of *Trasumanar*

Dante the poet innovates the pilgrim’s perception of otherworldliness through the idea of *trasumanar*. The pilgrim will engage with an uplifting movement that postulates a transcendental authority.¹³⁷ In one of his chapters entitled *Unica Spes Hominum*, Jeffrey Schnapp argues that what precedes and highlights the emergence of *trasumanar* is the “Father’s direct empowerment of the Son’s prophetic word into a universal empowerment of the word of Christ.”¹³⁸ He refers back to a significant biblical scripture known as the Second Epistle of Peter (I:16-21), where it is adduced as proof of the truthfulness of all scriptural prediction and associated generally with prophetic vision.¹³⁹ This same prophetic vision enhances Dante’s own understanding of such a

¹³⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, 12, 6. (Now the capacity to see God belongs to a created intellect not by its nature, but rather through the light of glory, which, as is clear from what was said above (a. 5), gives the intellect a certain godlikeness.)

¹³⁷ Botterill makes an interesting case concerning ineffability in relation to the mysticism in *Paradiso I*. For further reference, see his article: Steven Botterill, *Quae non Licet Homini Loqui: The Ineffability of Mystical Experience in Paradiso I and the Epistle to Can Grande*, 332-341.

¹³⁸ Jeffrey T. Schnapp, “Unica Spes Hominum,” in *The Transfiguration of History at the Center of Dante’s Paradise* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 95-96.

¹³⁹ *Ibidem*.

transfiguration in the face of a mystical sense, in which the evangelist Matthew is also cited in defense of the epistemological marginality of Pauline rapture. Schnapp ultimately relates this passage to *Paradiso* I, where one finds the inevitable gap that separates transcendent realities from their linguistic representation of divinity.¹⁴⁰ However, to consider the beginning of *trasumanar* (passing beyond the human) the result of words so empowered by God seems also to condense Dante's poetic faculty as a sole biblical emulation. Because *trasumanar* (passing beyond the human) represents the epitome of a new undertaking for the pilgrim, I argue that the notion of *trasumanar* (passing beyond the human) arises through the empowerment of Dante's own poetry. Dante's own authority as a poet traces its progress by attempting to reconstruct religious and spiritual states of awareness that no standard language could ever express.¹⁴¹ In fact, this same canto of *Par.* I.70-72 echoes the beginning of a new path towards salvation, and the pilgrim is able to approach his own journey with a distinctive conviction because of this neologism.¹⁴²

The notion of "trasumanar" (passing beyond the human [*Par.* I.70]) is indeed a neologism that can be explained with two implications. On the one hand, this neologism serves Dante the poet's purpose to define the transcendental ability of the pilgrim to go beyond the human. This is to say that the term *trasumanar* (passing beyond the human) is not merely a pure invention indicating the poet's linguistic ability to represent a new word. This notion of trans-

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 107-108.

¹⁴¹ A scholar that briefly focuses on *trasumanar* as a representational icon of poetry, is John Freccero. See: John Freccero, "Introduction to the *Paradiso*," in *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1986), 210-211. On the parallel between mystic and ineffability, see: Manuela Colombo, *Dai mistici a Dante: il linguaggio dell'ineffabilità* (Rome: La Nuova Italia, 1987).

¹⁴² On the idea of *trasumanar* as neologism, see also: Ghino Ghinassi, "Neologismi," in *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, Vol. IV (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1973), 37-38; P. A. Di Pretoro, "Innovazioni lessicali nella 'Commedia'," in *Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, XXV (1970) 263-297; Alfredo Schiaffini, *Momenti di storia della lingua italiana* (Rome: Studium, 1953); Joan Ferrante, "Words and Images in the *Paradiso*: Reflections of the Divine," in *Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio: Studies in the Italian Trecento in Honor of Charles S. Singleton*, ed. by Aldo S. Bernardo and Anthony L. Pellegrini (Binghamton, New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1983), 115.

humanizing represents the potential transcendent communion of mind and body, man and God, nature and the universe, and words and ideas: “Trasumanar significar per verba / non si poria; però l’esempio basti / a cui esperienza grazia serba.”¹⁴³ (Passing beyond the human cannot be / worded; let Glaucus serve as simile / until grace grant you the experience [*Par.* I.70-72]).¹⁴⁴ By conceiving a verb like *trasumanar* (passing beyond the human) the poet is attempting to reconstruct religious and spiritual states of awareness that no standard language could ever express. On the other hand, the notion of “trasumanar” (passing beyond the human [*Par.* I.70]) allows Dante the poet to stretch the linguistic possibilities beyond convention because in the Italian language, the case of “trasumanar significar per verba” (passing beyond the human cannot be spoken) implies the previously examined concept of indescribability.¹⁴⁵ This is the reason why Dante the poet describes the upcoming pilgrim’s experience as something inexpressible because it can only be felt: “Già contento requievi / di grande ammirazion; ma ora ammiro / com’io trascenda questi corpi levi.” (I was / content already after such great wonder, / I rested. But again, I wonder how / my body rises past these lighter bodies [*Par.* I.97-99]). Dante’s free fall while rising into space seems to the pilgrim to be a violation of the natural laws of gravity.¹⁴⁶ Dante the pilgrim has no words to describe his actual experience of how he transcends “questi

¹⁴³ There are two points to remember about the notion of *trasumanar* as a neologism: first, it is a new linguistic novelty for Dante. It is a term rooted both in the New Testament and in classical theories of rhetoric and grammar with which Dante was undoubtedly acquainted. Second, Dante shows his interest in neologism already in the developments and discussion in the *De vulgari eloquentia*, *Convivio* and then *Paradiso*, as well as through his own grammatical experimentation.

¹⁴⁴ Brenda Deen Schildgen, “Dante’s Neologisms in the *Paradiso* and the Latin Rhetorical Tradition,” *Dante Studies* no. 107 (1989), 102.

¹⁴⁵ *Significar* comes from Latin *significāre*, comp. of *sīgnum* ‘sign and *-ficare*, from *facēre* ‘to do/to make. Literally the word *significare* in Italian expresses thoughts and feelings, concepts and notions through language either verbally or in writing: that would be the case of *Trasumanar significar per verba non si poria*.

¹⁴⁶ Erminia Ardissino, “‘Ciascuna cosa qual ell’è diventa.’ L’essere in divenire,” in *L’umana Commedia di Dante* (Ravenna: Longo, 2016), 26: “Dante all’avvio della terza cantica, subito dopo la proposizione, l’invocazione e la determinazione astronomica del tempo, racconta del suo rivolgere lo sguardo al sole ad imitazione di Beatrice, in modo del tutto contrario alle leggi di natura.”

corpi lievi” (these lighter bodies [*Par.* I.99]). Most importantly, the pilgrim cannot describe why he is still unable to express his sudden feeling of lightness.

Since “*trasumanar*” (passing beyond the human [*Par.* I.70]) resonates with a transcendental experience that cannot be fully determined, and Dante the pilgrim cannot speak a word of this symbolic transformation, this verbally indescribable circumstance entails the question of ineffability, which continues to endure across the realm of *Paradiso*.¹⁴⁷ Dante the poet’s effort to adopt a neologism like *trasumanar* (passing beyond the human) is to fabricate new concepts and engineer new experiences in *Paradiso*. Furthermore, the poet’s conception of *trasumanar* (passing beyond the human) is still an attempt to manage his intention around the domain of indescribable and inexpressible cases. This is the main reason why trans-humanize and ineffability resonate with both notions of cause and effect. The cause is the transcendental experience of passing beyond the human and the effect is the indescribability and inexpressibility.

Dante’s readers are already aware that Dante’s poetic voyage is unprecedented. However, Dante the poet wants to warn his audience further to confirm that the theological and philosophical description of *Paradiso* cannot be fulfilled by words. This can only be fulfilled through the paradisaical experiences where the poet must find inspiration to otherworldly figures like Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, and Apollo, the god of poetry and poetic inspiration:¹⁴⁸

“O voi che siete in piccioletta barca,
desiderosi d’ascoltar, seguiti
dietro al mio legno che cantando varca,
tornate a riveder li vostri liti:
non vi mettete in pelago, ché forse,
perdendo me, rimarreste smarriti.

¹⁴⁷ Cfr. Deen Schildgen, *Dante’s neologisms in the Paradiso and the Latin Rhetorical Tradition*, 93.

¹⁴⁸ We should also keep in mind that Dante’s nature of such an ineffability laid (in the prior analysis) some of its roots within the linguistic realm of limitations. One of the major examples emerges with the *Questio de aqua et terra*, where the poet defines another way to describe the difficulty that humans encounter through linguistic hardships. Dante Alighieri, *Questio de aqua et de terra*, xxi, [76], 742.

L'acqua ch'io prendo già mai non si corse;
 Minerva spira, e conducemi Apollo,
 e nove Muse mi dimostrar l'Orse.”

(*Par.* II.1-9)

[O you who are within your little bark,
 eager to listen, following behind
 my ship that, singing, crosses to deep seas,
 turn back to see your shores again: do not
 attempt to sail the seas I sail; you may
 by losing sight of me, be left astray.
 The waves I take were never sailed before;
 Minerva breathes, Apollo pilots me,
 and the nine Muses show to me the Bears.]

Dante the poet is explicitly distinguishing two groups of readers with differing levels of competence and in counseling the less qualified to read no further. Even if these readers do not exclude each other and can coexist and be true at the same time, only readers who acquired early training in philosophy and theology are encouraged to continue, and they are cautioned to pay close attention. Dante the poet warns these readers that if not equipped to follow the poet, they will lose his meaning and will be lost at sea. Ronald Martinez claims that the “apparent elitism of this discouragement of unprepared readers may well be intended as a challenge, as well as a notice to all readers that this canticle will be a good deal more difficult than the first two.”¹⁴⁹ However, this passage from *Par.* II.1-9 serves as a warning that *Paradiso* will challenge their preconceptions about the limitations and capacities of the human spirit. This journey will encompass realms of experience that are hard to comprehend and impossible to describe other than by precise appeal. More precisely, it becomes difficult to describe the challenging nature of that impossibility while not being able to express it in your own words. Likewise, this difficulty of comprehension and expression is integrated by *Paradiso* I into the key image of Dante’s transfigured humanity, which according to Botterill is a call to discuss the idea of trans-humanize

¹⁴⁹ Ronald L. Martinez, “Notes to Canto 2,” in *Paradiso*, ed. and trans. by Robert M. Durling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 53.

as a trigger for the ineffability *topos*.¹⁵⁰ Thus, if the pilgrim is reintroduced to the face of ineffability through the notion of *trasumanar* (passing beyond the human), Dante the poet is simultaneously cautioning the reader about the upcoming challenge that the reader will face with the pilgrim's transcendental experience of trans-humanization.

I.6. The Impasse of Dante's Biological Memory

I.6.1. The Fragile Nature of Dante's Memory

The symbolic representation of *trasumanar* (passing beyond the human) opens new prospects for Dante the pilgrim, who becomes more aware of paradisiac knowledges and involvements. The pilgrim can experience feelings that he has never felt before, such as the feeling with the lighter bodies: “ma ora ammiro / com'io trascenda questi corpi levi.” (I wonder how / my body rises past these lighter bodies [*Par.* I.98-99]). At the same time, the pilgrim becomes also aware of a greater series of inadequate circumstances that will affect his human faculties (intellect, language, and memory). Even if *Paradiso* represents a realm where evil cannot fit, Dante the pilgrim still needs to balance his own intellectual authority of the past, which will open a channel to focus the results of his own symbolic representation from human to trans-humanizing. In the *Epistle to Can Grande della Scala*, Dante discusses the mystical experience of *Paradiso* and shows his awareness of mnemonic adversity. Yet, Dante is unable to fully articulate the perception of the divine:

¹⁵⁰ Steven Botterill, *Quae non Licet Homini Loqui: The Ineffability of Mystical Experience in Paradiso I and the Epistle to Can Grande*, 333. The scholar also claims: “The Epistle to Can Grande's discussion of the mystical experience of *Paradiso* begins with an explanation that Dante claims to have seen things in Paradise ‘que recitare non potest qui descendit’. It moves on to the reason for this inability to articulate the perception of the divine: ‘Ad que intelligenda sciendum est quod intellectus humanus in hac vita, propter connaturalitatem et affinitatem quam habet ad substantiam intellectualem separatam, quando elevatur, in tantum elevatur, ut memoria, post reditum, deficiat propter transcendisse humanum modum.’” For the direct quotation, cfr. *Opere minori*, II, 638.

Et postquam dixit quod fuit in loco illo Paradisi per suam circumlocutionem, prosequitur dicens se vidisse aliqua que recitare non potest qui descendit. Et reddit causam dicens quod intellectus in tantum profundat se in ipsum desiderium suum, quod est Deus, quod memoria sequi non potest (*Epist. XIII.77*).¹⁵¹

[And after he has said that he was in that place of Paradise which he describes by circumlocution, he goes on to say that he saw certain things which he who descends therefrom is powerless to relate. And he gives the reason, saying that ‘the intellect plunges itself to such depth’ in its very longing, which is for God, ‘that the memory cannot follow’]¹⁵²

If on the one hand this specific passage anticipates the coming of *trasumanar* (passing beyond the human) for the pilgrim, on the other hand, the events of *Paradiso* are different in kind from those of *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* because they are far surpassing all human capacity, including memory. Dante the pilgrim’s memory, which is considered a part of the sensitive soul, cannot follow properly that same divine essence (which is God) for the pilgrim still holds a human mind and a human memory.¹⁵³ It is true that Dante the pilgrim has been trans-humanized, where the power of his memory, his intellect or understanding, and his will are immeasurably increased. Even if his faculties are enhanced as a privilege granted only for the duration of his vision, there are still renewed limits of his all-too-human memory, and the reader is not allowed to forget. Dante the pilgrim has absorbed the lecture to perceive experiences in *Paradiso* that could not be embraced before. Yet, his memory and intellect are still inadequate in the face of the divine realm of *Paradiso*.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ All the Italian quotations of Dante’s *Epistola a Cangrande della Scala* are from: Dante Alighieri, *Epistola a Cangrande della Scala*, ed by Marco Baglio, Luca Azzetta, Marco Petoletti, and Michele Rinaldi (Rome: Salerno, 2016).

¹⁵² The English translation of the *Epistola a Cangrande della Scala XIII* is from: Paget Toynbee, “Dante: ‘Epistles’,” in *The Letters of Dante* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1920).

¹⁵³ Cfr. Giuseppe Ledda, “Visione, memoria e scrittura nel ‘Paradiso,’” in *La Guerra della lingua: Ineffabilità, retorica e narrativa nella ‘Commedia’ di Dante* (Ravenna: Longo, 2002), 251-253.

¹⁵⁴ I wish to clarify a difference between the notion of systematization (from the previous section about “Dante’s Memory and the scientific method”) and this new mnemonic ability. In order to categorize those measures that the pilgrim takes in order to define the different types of *cogitatio* (whether in relation to time or space – *loci*), I interpret Dante the author’s method through the notion of systematization. This new mnemonic ability that occurs after passing beyond the human relies on a twofold implication. Whereas I argue that memory operates upon this ordering system to avoid the cases of ineffability, this mnemonic order is the result of a symbolic transformation. This goes beyond the real places, such as castles, towers, and churches because being in *Paradiso* nothing is tangible, the sole remedy is to approach divinity. While his level of consciousness continues to upsurge, ordering allows Dante the pilgrim to foresee new solutions. In short, if the idea of systematizing Dante’s *cogitatio* reflects an ordering system that emerges with *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, and it differs from *Paradiso*. In the first two *cantiche*,

However, with the transformation of his body into a transcendental form, Dante the pilgrim progressively enhances his spiritual belief during his heavenly journey. It has been already explained that language cannot express what the pilgrim sees, and regardless of the inadequate face of memory, the notion of *trasmunar* (passing beyond the human) removes the pilgrim from the statically human view of earthly matters to move onwards to the third and final canticle of *Paradiso*. Since the pilgrim's mind will now trace supernatural experiences, he needs an even greater mnemonic effort to supersede mnemonic ineffability (i.e., indescribability in *Inf.* XXVIII.1-6 and silence in *Purg.* XXIII.16-21), as well as the weak side of biological/natural memory, such as the fears and doubts that the pilgrim engages with throughout the journey. While facing supernatural experiences (i.e., Dante's trans-humanization) puts memory in the position of balancing its process in the event of altering the pilgrim's path from past to future, it also makes the pilgrim more willing to supersede the previous impassible phase (prior to passing beyond the human) and to experience the unknown in the face of superior light (towards the Empyrean). Nevertheless, the pilgrim continues to face a conundrum. While the pilgrim's greater mnemonic effort cannot subdue the great impasse that his biological memory has now verified, the pilgrim will move onwards despite the continuous mnemonic challenges that will continue to occur after *trasmunar* (passing beyond the human).

I.6.2. Dante's Poetic Imagination upon the Course of Memory

the pilgrim cannot acknowledge yet any symbolic transformation for the divine that does not impinge upon the tangibility of physical *loci*. It has known that in *Paradiso*, with the spheres of the elements, of the planets, of the fixed stars, and above them the celestial sphere and those of the nine orders of angels they all take a greater mnemonic and symbolic effort for the pilgrim to employ and exercise his role towards his salvation. Because these steps belong solely to *Paradiso* and correspond to the domain of Dante's imaginary places, the mnemonic order must also adapt in respect to those figurative representations.

By experiencing the mystical unknown with more awareness through a non-human figure allows Dante the pilgrim to move onwards with the rest of the last *cantica*. Dante the pilgrim will tailor his imagination to move his mind and memory from the physical sphere of *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* to the celestial cosmos of *Paradiso*.¹⁵⁵ Dante the poet refers to this imagination as the power of the mind that forms and stores mental images.¹⁵⁶ It is an imaginative procedure that can be identified by reading one *canzone* (song) from Dante's *Rime giovanili*, in which Dante the poet seems to anticipate that a symbolic transformation like *trasumanar* (passing beyond the human) would also imply a mnemonic perseverance.¹⁵⁷ In the *canzone* entitled *Li occhi dolenti per pietà del core*, the poet-lover is mourning the death of his lady, and his tears are symptomatic of his sorrow: "Dannomi angoscia li sospiri forte, / quando 'l pensiero ne la mente grave / mi reca quella che m'ha 'l cor diviso." (My sighing makes me grieve convulsively / when thinking brings back to my weary mind / the thought of her who's cleaved my heart in two [VN XXXI]). These verses have been written before the beginning of *Paradiso* and display the poet's pain over Beatrice's death. Furthermore, these are verses that also empower the reader in moving away from the grain of the text and to employ a greater effort to understand the poet's imaginative force. In fact, Dante the poet delineates a phenomenology of his own imaginative force with his form of desire for Beatrice: "e spesse fiata pensando a la morte, / veneme un disio tanto soave, / che mi tramuta lo color nel viso." (And many times while contemplating death, / so sweet a longing makes its way to me / that all the color in my face is lost [VN XXXI]). Dante the poet

¹⁵⁵ While the idea of imagination seems rather relevant to this ongoing argument, this aspect represents only the beginning since the notion of Dante's imagination will be fully engaged within my next chapter.

¹⁵⁶ Dante's understanding of this imaginative faculty derives from Aristotle's *De anima* and medieval commentaries on it. See Aristotle, *Aristotelis De anima*, ed. and trans. by W. D. Ross (Oxford, 1979); Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 173, a.2.

¹⁵⁷ I am fully aware of the time gap in which Dante writes the *Rime* and the *Commedia*, which occurs at different times. However, what ties these temporal differences is Dante's idea of communicating a symbolic transformation, which also entails Dante's imagination to a greater degree of understanding and that gets manifested throughout several of his writings.

engages with *recordatio* and *cogitatio* to bring Beatrice back to his mind, and he converges the sweet desire of God in the previous verse 24 and the above-mentioned sweet longing in the figure of Beatrice.

From this analysis of the *canzone* entitled *Li occhi dolente per pietà del core*, the idea of *trasumanar* (passing beyond the human) is confirmed to be an important asset of Dante's imaginative power. Despite its linguistic symbolism, the notion of trans-humanizing also resonates with a metaphorical transformation. While Deen Schildgen suggests that the meaning of transcendental signification forces the mind to turn to a visual metaphor,¹⁵⁸ Maria Corti also argues that this same visual metaphor is potentiated by a mental image.¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, I argue that what the reader captures from these last verses is the rigorous imaginative power that the poet needs to exercise for his pilgrim in order to surmount these vexing circumstances. As the pilgrim previously faced a sense of urgency to act upon the unwritten and the unknown, this same sense of urgency turned out to be the pilgrim's motivation to move on from a mnemonic delusion to the crossroads of *Paradiso*.¹⁶⁰

A case in point occurs when Dante the pilgrim shifts his “pensero ne la mente grave” (thinking brings back to my weary mind [VN XXXI]) from the physical death of Beatrice that persists in the past, to the contemplation and evaluation of her death that recurs in the present. This requires a shift of mnemonic operation from past to present, from the danger of remaining oblivious to such a tragic circumstance to the flamboyant characterization of Beatrice's existence that takes the poet's mind beyond the notion of death. The shift from past to present means a

¹⁵⁸ Deen Schildgen, *Dante's neologisms in the Paradiso and the Latin Rhetorical Tradition*, 111-112.

¹⁵⁹ Maria Corti, *Il libro della memoria e i libri dello scrittore*, 188: “Le metafore del magazzino, suscitate dall'immagine di una memoria deposito, si sono ovviamente potenziate all'interno della mnemotecnica, nella quale l'*ars memorativa* abbisognava di vari luoghi come contenitori delle serie di immagini necessarie a costituire la memoria artificiale.” In this reference, see also: Paolo Rossi, *Logic and the Art of Memory: The Quest for a Universal Language*, 45-69.

¹⁶⁰ The sense of urgency is an operation that turns out to be the pilgrim's motivation to move on from a mnemonic delusion to the crossroads of *Paradiso*.

shift from disconsolation to consolation, and according to Barolini, Dante manages to find *consolatio* (consolation) in his present state.¹⁶¹ Even if the poem ends with the poet's disconsolation when he says "vatten disconsolate a star con elle" (go off in misery to stay with them [VN XXXI]), Dante's *consolatio* (consolation) represents his reaction as fashioned by the poet's imaginative power. In other words, it is a convergence from the tragic vision of Beatrice's physical image endangered by the insidious past to the *consolatio* (consolation) that only Dante's own memory enables him to move forwards despite the impasse of biological memory.

Within the realm of the *Commedia*, Dante the pilgrim is about to face an entirely new experience through his new transcendental vision of *Paradiso*. The pilgrim is more cognizant of this new and upcoming paradisiacal realm, where his own knowledge of his celestial surroundings makes him more responsive to his unsatisfactory and inadequate progression.¹⁶² If the pilgrim is more responsive and aware that future instances from *Paradiso* will continue to create mnemonic ineffability, then the pilgrim is also aware that he will need to coexist between the inadequacy of memory and the supernatural nature of *Paradiso*. Furthermore, to begin cohabiting with the inadequacy of memory means for Dante the pilgrim also having a well-defined sense of the immaterial experience (i.e., *Par.* I.70-73, *Par.* III.58-61, etc.) in the event of these celestial cosmos and bodies.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Teodolinda Barolini, *Introduction to Li occhi dolenti per pietà del core*, 243-252.

¹⁶² While the parallel between *trasumanar*/awareness indicates the pilgrim becoming aware of the *aldilà*, this juxtaposition makes the pilgrim more aware of physical ambience and physical experience.

¹⁶³ In reference to Dante claiming his own bodily features and characteristics, see also: *Purg.* III.140; & IV.133. Even if the idea of unknown space at first caused fear in the pilgrim, as well as other negative consequences in time and knowledge such as trepidation, bewilderment, doubts, and misperception, Dante the pilgrim is able to reduce them from an inconceivable form into a conceivable form. One way to visualize such a progress is by continuing to follow the pilgrim's physical reactions to external and physical factors, which characterize the significance of the biological and physical realm to a greater extent. In fact, scientific tests compute certain results in the face of their particular natures with a precise method of enumeration. This is a resourceful advancement since it is useful to first adopt a pragmatic approach in the event of physical space like "*selva oscura*". Second, it is useful because the effect that an individual like Dante the pilgrim who is made of "carne" can convey through his human faculties when Virgil claims: "E 'l mio maestro: 'Voi potete andarne / e ritrarre a color che vi mandaro / che 'l corpo di costui è vera carne" (My master answered them: 'You can return / and carry this report to those who sent you: / in truth, the

Dante the poet has also transformed the pilgrim's self-image into an archetypical representation of a character that needs to balance his human faculties (memory, intellect, etc.) in juxtaposition with the upcoming supernatural forces of *Paradiso* (Beatrice's glowing lights, etc.). This self-image reveals several changes in Dante the pilgrim's mindset who also embraces a more balanced sense of ethical understanding alongside the sense of order in the universal sphere of *Paradiso*: "Le cose tutte quante / hanno ordine tra loro, e questo è forma / che l'universo a Dio fa simigliante." (All things, among themselves, / possess an order; and this order is / the form that makes the universe like God [*Par.* I.103-105]). These verses reveal the pilgrim absorbing a greater amount of mnemonic sensibility, which corresponds to an elevated form of human responsiveness in the face of the immaterial intelligences of *Paradiso*. More importantly, readers can perceive this ethical balance in the paradisaical order, which resonates with the pilgrim's notion of synchronicity with the inadequate state of the pilgrim's human memory.

This series of synchronous conceptions shows that Dante the poet will continue to engage with the biological memory (from the end of *Purgatorio*) across the indiscernible realm of the immaterial senses. I argue that Dante the poet does so by adopting mnemonic operations while in *Paradiso* through an interchangeable course. This idea of interchangeability resonates with the biological memory and its operations (*recordatio*, *cogitatio*, etc.), which I consider interchangeable and substitutable because Dante the poet allows the pilgrim to free himself from this old setting. Dante the poet turns the pilgrim to engineering an important segment of his own journey. The pilgrim's role consists not only of forming and reforming images ahead of the celestial spheres, but also in accordance with the forming and reforming of the astral images on the central wheel through discoveries that comprehend past, present, and future.

body of this man is flesh [*Purg.*, V.31-33]). To further study the idea of metaphysics in Dante's *Commedia*, which will be fully analyzed and investigated in the next chapter, see: Christian Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante's Comedy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

More precisely, the interchangeability of memory in Dante transforms essentially into a biological memory that becomes accessible and adaptable to the nature of a divine man.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, I justify the notion of divine man alluding rigorously to Dante the pilgrim who cannot be considered simply a human, but someone above who cannot yet be described.¹⁶⁵ In this regard, Dante the pilgrim can be considered a being with divine powers, where his imagination is bound to the language of the cosmic powers. Yates claims this to be an attempt to rest on the hermetic assumption that man's mind is divine, which is related in its origin to the governor of the world, namely to both reflect and to control better his journey throughout *Paradiso*.¹⁶⁶ As an aside, the memory system that the pilgrim will embrace from now on aims at unification by respecting and implementing the rules given by Beatrice as a preparation for reaching this higher unity.

The notion of trans-humanizing from *Par. I.70-72* converts into a literary phenomenon that cannot be considered an end in itself or an end to the biological mechanism (which will continue to exist), but a means of reaching Beatrice behind appearances. Dante the author's objective is also that of a memory system that establishes this divine ascent for the pilgrim within, through the memory based on the supernatural star-images. At the beginning of *Paradiso I*, the pilgrim begins to manifest great enthusiasm while hunting vestiges of the divine and obtains the power of contemplating the beautiful disposition of the body of a paradisiac nature:

¹⁶⁴ The reason why I clearly state "adaptable" and not necessarily becoming a divine man is because of the limits so imposed by the human knowledge in the face of the divine creation, see: *Convivio* IV, v.7-10: "Ma da maravigliare è forte, quando la esecuzione dello eterno consiglio tanto manifesto procede che la nostra ragione lo discerne." [But we have reason to wonder greatly, when the execution of the Eternal Counsel proceeds in so manifest a way that our reason can discern it.]; *Purgatorio* XXXIII.88-90: "E veggi vostra via dalla divina / distar cotanto, quanto si discorda / da terra il ciel che più alto festina." (and see that, as the earth is distant from / the highest and the swiftest of the heavens, / so distant is your way from the divine').

¹⁶⁵ Alessandro Vellutello, *La 'Comedia' di Dante Alighieri con la nova Esposizione*, tomo III, 1266: "e certamente chi persevera ne gli studi de le sacre lettere, fa tal abito ne la cognizione de le divine, che al tutto si diparte da l'umane cose, e allora possiamo dire costui non esser più omo ma dio, non più umano, ma divino."

¹⁶⁶ Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 220.

“Quando la rota che tu sempiterni / desiderato, a sé mi fece atteso / con l’armonia che temperi e discerni” (When that wheel which You make eternal through / the heavens’ longing for You drew me with / the harmony You temper and distinguish [*Par.* I.76-78]). Dante the pilgrim will then see circles and lights and angels. Yet, if he does not see these in their essence yet, the absolute light is able to see it in its image.¹⁶⁷ For now, the biological memory of the pilgrim operates as a memory system to evolve the inner images of things nearer to reality and less impervious to the light rather than the things themselves in the outer world.

I.7. Conclusions

Despite its fragile nature, Dante’s memory is the key element needed to assist him in moving from past to present, from what he has recalled to what he can now absorb and write at the present state with full awareness. Dante the pilgrim has grasped with mindfulness the comprehensible world beyond physical appearances. He demonstrated in such events as his laying hold of significant images like Pisa or Pistoia or Camp Picen from *Inf.* XXIV or the Tower of Muda from *Inf.* XXXIII. If on the one hand Dante’s memory is what lets him recognize these above-mentioned physical places, on the other hand, they manifest a temporal truth for the pilgrim that is likely to prevail over the consequent notion of transcendence from *Paradiso* I onwards. The physicality of towers, castles, edifices, walls, those mnemonic procedures that emerge from human perception in the face of passion and physical pain are nothing less than a way for the pilgrim to divulge what he has seen or felt. Consequently, Dante the poet adopts the

¹⁶⁷ It is a theory that will be encompassed throughout Chapter Two. It is barely mentioned here to prove how Dante the pilgrim is eager to free himself by the conventional idea of traveling in the celestial realm with the sole biological memory.

act of *recordatio* (recollection) to recognize those mental images that are yet attached to the tangible realm of Dante's natural memory.

It is true that these same images of physical places are better understood through the systematization of mnemonic operations, which include methodical rationalization (*art rotunda* and *ars quadrata*), the psychological moments of passion (through Paolo and Francesca's episode), and the physiognomic aspect of memory (through the Virgin Mary and Dante the pilgrim). They symbolize the necessary consequences of an uninterrupted chain of truths along which the pilgrim's mind passes in a contiguous motion of thought.¹⁶⁸ It is a case that also brings us back to the idea of *renovatio* (regeneration), which is a conception that indicates the transition from past to present, and this same renewal will continue into the imminent future until the end of *Purgatorio*. This regenerative motion rests inside the pilgrim's mind and is manifested through the pilgrim's fear like at the sight of the three beasts, as well as the beginning of his journey: "Ah quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura / esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte / che ne la mente rinova la paura!" (Ah, it is hard to speak of what it was, / that savage forest, dense and difficult, / which even I recall renews my fear! [*Inf.* I.4-6]). This is to say that the idea of regeneration continuously reactivates the pilgrim's ineffability, which slows down the pilgrim's progression towards salvation.

Dante the pilgrim faces numerous obstacles such as doubt, fear, anxiety, perplexity, and fainting. While these obstacles are primarily literary *topos* that Dante the poet adopts to enrich his poetic tapestry, they also represent reservations that continue to renew themselves as the wayfarer moves onwards. However, Dante's doubts and fears do not solicit any sort of change because they only show successful/unsuccessful remembrances from past experiences as

¹⁶⁸ Even if this is my theory, I also adapted a segment of it from another process of thinking by Descartes. Descartes, *Oeuvres X, Physicomathematica, Compendium musicae, Regulæ ad directionem ingenii, Recherche de la verité, Supplément à la correspondance*, 387-388.

intermediate links upon which depend connections to other memories. This occurs because the biological mechanism of memory is executed by means of a lingering sequence of *cogitatio* (thought process) significances. In correspondence to the biological mechanism of *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, the lingering sequence of thought process (*cogitatio*) significances is conceived as a movement or a succession of events that are in some way connected under the same category within a mnemonic system.

As I previously explained, this system symbolizes Dante the poet's compositional habits, which represent memory as a habit or a training device that allows the pilgrim to go through a range of different sources. Dante the poet has a well-trained memory to compose on several different subjects in an organized fashion. Moreover, this same memory entails the connection among *recordatio* (recollection), *cogitatio* (thought process), and mental images, which transpires through a range of willfully related techniques, training, and diligent practice. This aspect ultimately shows us that the biological mnemonic system of the pilgrim is not particularly complex, and his memory is sufficient while facing a short chain of events that still fit the pilgrim's intuitive coping capacities.

Nevertheless, nothing can be more treasured for the pilgrim than the enduring encyclopedic ordering that allows him to reproduce the path towards salvation. The biological memory that is exposed to this new realm offers the pilgrim the coherent but all-encompassing nature. This last aspect allows him to discover indissoluble coherence and complete consensus of the cosmic elements, the planets, the angels, the superior voices, and the supernatural lights of *Paradiso*, in which everything corresponds to the magisterial world of ideals. Looking ahead of his own trans-humanization does not solely mean to envision the result of the pilgrim's persistence, but also the result of his renewed interest in ideas yet to be outlined around

Paradiso. Dante the pilgrim engages his regenerated vision of memory through an organic mechanism because it activates a mnemonic evolution through a mnemonic effort (i.e., the previously examined interchangeable course of natural memory). It is in precisely this way of regenerating his nature of being that from Dante's weakening biological memory, the author aims to disseminate the seeds of his own poetic imagination in the dazzling arena of canny power.

Chapter 2

The Evolution of Ars Memorativa in Dante

In the first chapter, I examine the systematization of mnemonic operations, which include methodical rationalization (*art rotunda* and *ars quadrata*), psychological moments of passion (through Paolo and Francesca's episode), and the physiognomic aspect of memory (through the Virgin Mary and Dante the pilgrim). These mnemonic operations are useful to better perceive adversities (doubt, sleep, confusion, anxiety, ineffability) that the pilgrim's natural memory spawns throughout his journey.¹ When these operations of memory are juxtaposed to the pilgrim's symbolic transformation of *trasumanar* (passing beyond the human), Dante the pilgrim is able to grasp the incomprehensible world of immaterial sense and experiences with mindfulness.²

At the same time, Dante's biological memory is still inadequate to the spread of the divine power and can only subsist and coexist with such mnemonic ineffability. In light of the inadequacy of Dante's biological memory, I seek to investigate the nature of a shapeless representation of memory for Dante in the second chapter, and I will present my argument along

¹ To review a list of Dante scholars, in chronological order, who have particularly engaged with Dante's natural memory, see note #28 on p. 10.

² Some examples of immaterial sense and experiences are the notion of *trasumanar* from *Par.* I.70-73, the glowing light that Beatrice emanates *Par.* III.58-61, or the revelation of the nine centric heavens in *Paradiso* prior to the Empyrean.

three main lines. The first section will engage closely with the metaphysical correlation between finite and non-finite beings, between the states of humanly perceptible experience and the pilgrim's imagination (*Epist. XIII. v. 15 & Mon. III.xvi.3-4*).³ By settling the discussion of non-finite being and the notion of *non-esse* as a self-subsistent principle, the second section is introduced with the close juxtaposition of Dante's imaginative power and memory.⁴ The notion

³ To review the difference between the use of the adjectives perceptible and perceptive, see note #52 on p. 19 from the main Introduction.

⁴ The list that follows comprises a sequence of technical, methodical terms, which should be useful for this entire chapter: *ars memorativa* is an artificial understanding that translates from the metaphysical memory into the *ars memorativa* in Dante. This art of memory consists of a mnemonic advancement whose gradual development allows the pilgrim to absorb the supernatural, higher state of paradisiac forces; metaphysical memory represents the beginning section of the art of memory in Dante, where a series of metaphysical aspects (finite, non-finite, *esse*, *non-esse*, *divina bontà*, *intellectus possibilis*) contribute to the advancement leading to the art of memory in Dante; so this metaphysical memory detaches (not entirely) from the biological memory and relates to the higher reality of Dante's journey; finite being represents a tangible state of being, that can be perceived through only human experiences; non-finite being represents an intangible state of being, where only abstract and divine experiences form the higher reality can be perceived; *esse* symbolizes a state of being that accompanies the simple nature of the being in the case of simple substances; *non-esse* symbolizes a state of being that seeks alternate and more complex experience; imaginative power refers to Dante's representation and exemplification of abstract concepts in general, with much resourcefulness and inventiveness; intellectual crescendo occurs when Dante the pilgrim demonstrates to have a well-defined sense of the intangible existence in the event of celestial cosmos and bodies along his journey; truth-claim refers to ontological expression of a shift from one principle to another or the representation of an abstract discipline like divine science; ontological truth indicates one type of truth-claim, which can be manifested through experiences, thought process, and imagination; self-subsistent principle is a concept that emerges and exists on its own, without any attachment to human senses; immaterial perception is a type of perception that I relate to the metaphysical memory and in relation solely to immaterial experiences; material past refers back to the tangible experiences on earth; immaterial past reveals instead those experiences that cannot be juxtaposed to any earthly feature because they did not originate from human senses, but imagination; humanly perceptible experience is the human ability to perceive solely by senses, where the experiences are more detectable finite, spatiotemporal, and somewhat tangible; immaterial perceptive experience is the ability to exhibit more keen observation, which is characterized by inner understanding and insight and relates to the non-finite; immaterial experience are relevant to the higher reality of Dante the pilgrim, including the meeting or the vision of angels, intelligences, and the paradisiac lights; mnemonic perception relates to the perception pertinent to the metaphysical memory; act of potency reflects a form of action of the self, meaning that of the angels whose existence relates to their own operation. It also relates to a self-subsistent principle, whose nature and stigma originates from their own action; lower reality is a type of reality that refers to the corporeal, earthly features which characterize a tangible experience; higher reality is a type of reality that refers to the immaterial, divine realm which also characterizes an intangible experience; divine science is a type of skill through which the pilgrim will gain knowledge about several aspects within the realm of divinity; *intellectus possibilis* represents an internal power that conceptualizes the possible comprehensible content confined within from its individuating conditions and renders it actually intelligible and abstract; shapeless representation of truth is a conception unrelated to human senses and functions, but only potentiates the abstractive power behind Dante's imaginative power; mnemonic advancement is an advancement of memory studies because it concerns a progression from the biological memory to the metaphysical memory; active agent represents an active cause that allows Dante to reenact memories from past experiences; divine artifice relates to divine artfulness, and to the element of artificiality, which is most relevant to God's creations; *imagines agentes* are also called in English images of memory, which is a concept capable of lending concrete shape to abstract concepts; *divina bontà* translates into Godly Goodness which represents the form of highest good and refining the

of metaphysics is being reexamined, which I argue moves from a knowledge of sensible things (biological memory) to an understanding of concepts that are non-sensible (metaphysical memory [Conv. III.i.10]). More specifically, the metaphysical memory will shift Dante's perception from lower realities (inward) to higher realities (outward), and from the domain of humanly perceptible experiences (material past) to the state of immaterial perceptive experiences (immaterial sense of perception [Par. VII.64-66]).⁵ After examining the nature of metaphysical memory through several ontological truths, such as the correlation of soul, mind, and memory or the role of the reader in enhancing this new theory, the last section of this analysis addresses the correlation between metaphysical memory and the *ars memorativa* in Dante.⁶ Both concepts will be closely related through the idea of divine artifice, which implies a nexus of creator (God, or Dante the poet) and the created. Finally, I will argue that the art of memory is an artificial understanding that translates from metaphysical memory into the *ars memorativa* in Dante. The art of memory consists of a mnemonic advancement whose gradual development allows the pilgrim to absorb the supernatural, higher state of paradisiac forces.⁷

II.1. Finite Being and Dante the Pilgrim

As the pilgrim begins to constitute his uplifting vision of *Paradiso*, he continues to find a greater number of adversities, including doubts, fears, anxiety, perplexity, and fainting, all of

course of Dante's journey towards the Empyrean; *cogitatio* is a thought process that relates to memory, which can be compared to a small-scale composition, and a bringing-together of various pieces from one's artistic inventory.

⁵ Dante the poet's imaginative power spurred his world of imagination, which ultimately leads to the metaphysical memory. To further examine the notion of imaginative power, see pages 108-110 from Chapter One.

⁶ To reconsider my unabridged definition of *ars memorativa* in Dante, see note #48 on p. 16 from the main Introduction.

⁷ The theories in this chapter follow a series of theoretical steps (which get elaborated occasionally one after the other) and they are fundamentally essential to understand the nature and the metaphysical making of the *ars memorativa* in Dante.

which underscore the inadequate state of Dante's natural memory in *Paradiso*.⁸ This regeneration of the pilgrim's limitations and reservations shows how Dante the pilgrim is a mortal, finite, and spatiotemporal creature. Dante the pilgrim will demonstrate his ability to travel beyond the world to become one with the divine while still maintaining his natural memory. However, the pilgrim's effort is already in progress at the end of *Purgatorio*, even prior to the notion of "trasumanar" (passing beyond human (*Par.* I.70)). Dante the pilgrim engages with several signs of transitioning from the realm of the essence to that of divine existence, which translates from a memory attached to earthly features to one that can approach the One (Beatrice) beyond appearances:

"E Beatrice: 'Forse maggior cura
che spesse volte la memoria priva,
fatt'ha la mente sua ne li occhi oscura.
Ma vedi Eünoè che là diriva:
menalo ad esso, e come tu se' usa,
la tramortita sua virtù ravniva.'"
(*Purg.* XXXIII.124-129)

[And Beatrice: 'Perhaps some greater care,
which often weakens memory, has made
his mind, in things regarding sight, grow dark.
But see Eünoè as it flows from there:
lead him to it and, as you are used to doing,
revive the power that is faint in him.']

Matelda leads Dante the pilgrim and Statius to drink at the waters of Eünoè. This is the final step in the ritual of purification that began with Virgil cleaning the pilgrim's tear-stained cheeks with his dew-soaked hands at the beginning of *Purgatorio*.⁹ Moreover, in *Inferno* and throughout

⁸ The idea of Dante's memory throughout the chapter will be described in generic terms (i.e., Dante's natural or biological memory and the metaphysical memory), namely without specifying to which Dante (poet or pilgrim) this memory belongs to. Memory (whether natural, biological, metaphysical, or artificial) gets characterized collectively by the different versions of Dante across the following pages, and it is a collective effort just like the course towards the rise of the *ars memorativa*.

⁹ See the long line of verses from *Purgatorio*, I.12-129. Additionally, the two canticles that will be mainly examined in this chapter are *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, but there will often be references to verses from *Inferno*. In addition to that, the adaptation of verses from Dante's *Divina Commedia* that will follow in this chapter is not to be consequential, and there is no shift chronologically from one canto to another, or from *Purgatorio* to *Paradiso*. The priority in this chapter will be given to the thematic aspect in question, namely the evolvement of the *ars*

Purgatorio, the question of mnemonic ineffability is barely mentioned by other characters or by Dante the pilgrim.¹⁰ In *Purgatorio* XXXIII, Beatrice suggests to the pilgrim that he first tackles the question of ineffability with “greater care” (124) because this “often weakens memory” (125). By cleansing his memory in the river, Dante the pilgrim is about to enter the highest of all realms, and while Beatrice reminds him that human faculties will not operate properly there, the “power that is faint in him” (129) is temporarily restored through the water of Eünoè.

According to the previously examined passage from *Purgatorio* XXXIII, Beatrice warns Dante the pilgrim that his biological memory will continue to engage along his journey with the indiscernible realm of immaterial senses. Beatrice is essentially cautioning Dante the pilgrim that he will soon engage with a well-defined sense of the intangible in the presence of the celestial cosmos and bodies. These types of spaces (cosmos and celestial bodies) entail the pilgrim’s sense of immaterial existence, and while it corresponds to paradisiac nature, it also reveals the very beginning of the pilgrim’s intellectual crescendo.¹¹ It is an upward movement that gets symbolically activated by Dante the poet’s notion of immaterial sense. Yet, Dante the pilgrim is still adopting the mnemonic functions of *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought

memorativa in Dante. Thus, it is of paramount importance to adopt the congruent textual examples (regardless of the canticle) which enhance the different points of argumentation throughout the chapter.

¹⁰ There are two reasons why the mnemonic ineffability is barely mentioned in the first two canticles. First, the characters in *Purgatorio* operate in the *Divina Commedia* to reach out redemption one day, which gives them hope to strive for this same objective. If Dante had included the mnemonic ineffability along characters of *Purgatorio* this would represent a momentary interruption for the souls who are more concerned about perceiving prayers from people still living on earth than focusing on the reason why certain things cannot be mnemonically achieved (ineffability). Second, the question of ineffability in *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* is not so evidently characterized by supernatural figures (angels, etc.), which means that the ineffability is not so evidently powerful yet in the narrative because no faculty or memory has failed the pilgrim yet. In *Paradiso*, Dante’s memory will openly fail, in which ineffability plays a major role in the face of Dante’s abandonment of human memory. Thus, it seems more necessary for the poet to explicate the mnemonic ineffability more clearly in *Paradiso* because the human faculties get more drastically exposed and more openly rendered vulnerable.

¹¹ Since the pilgrim is more cognizant of his new paradisiac experience, his knowledge of his celestial surroundings makes him more responsive to his unsatisfactory and inadequate progress. To share his experience as a human with the inadequacy of memory means also to have a well-defined sense of intangible existence in the event of this celestial cosmos and its bodies. Rather than bearing the pilgrim’s intangible existence under this same mnemonic ineffability, this mental upsurge (intellectual crescendo) represents one aspect of activating Dante’s notion of immaterial sense; by submitting himself to *trasumanar*, Dante has also transformed his self-image into an archetypical representation.

process) through an interchangeable course in *Paradiso*.¹² For instance, the pilgrim's perplexed face when confronted with Beatrice's eternal wheels (*Par.* I.64-66) or his doubts after feeling lighter by going beyond human capacities (*Par.* I.70-72) are balanced by the same pilgrim who shifts from past to present examination. Consequently, the identification of the pilgrim balancing the state of natural memory allows him to classify two experiences. One is in the domain of humanly perceptible experiences where human faculties can still function properly through the state of natural memory.¹³ The other is in the state of immaterial perceptive experiences, from which *ars memorativa* reaches its peak with the pilgrim crossing the celestial spheres of *Paradiso*.¹⁴

The state of humanly perceptible experiences produces finite beings in Dante's *Commedia* and corresponds to a lower reality for the pilgrim.¹⁵ One way to understand this juxtaposition is by taking into account the notion of dimensional quantity. It refers to the position of a place or the ordering of parts in a whole spatial representation like a church or other physical aspects, as well as other aspects that are no less humanly perceptible.¹⁶ This dimensional quantity

¹² To reexamine both notions of *recordatio* and *cogitatio*, see pages 30-46 from Chapter One.

¹³ Humanly perceptible experiences are related to earthly perception of previous experiences, thus, still need the memory to reenact its mnemonic recollection. These types of perceptible experiences also indicate the lower reality, including infernal corporeal and bloody reality.

¹⁴ Dante's imaginative power source represents the force behind the construction of immaterial figures (like Piccarda and other souls) that are representative of non-finite being of self-subsistent principles, and which are not related to any earthly matters. Additionally, this imaginative power source and immaterial figures represent the higher reality, among which are abstract and universal concepts. See also *Paradiso*, I.127-141; Dante Alighieri, *De Monarchia*, (Rome: Salerno, 2013), II.ii.3. Dante Alighieri, *Convivio*, ed. by Franca Brambilla Ageno (Florence: Le lettere, 2003), II.i.10. Even if the *ars memorativa* in Dante lays its roots throughout Dante's *Commedia*, *Paradiso* represents the canticle in which this form of art will shine the most.

¹⁵ The notions of finite and non-finite beings are metaphysical notions that originated with Aristotle and were later developed by Thomas Aquinas: Aristotle, *On the Soul*, edited and translated by Jeffrey Henderson (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); Thomas Aquinas, *In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio*, ed. by R. M. Spiazzi (Taurini-Romae: Marietti, 1950). Some of the scholars who have fully engaged with these metaphysical notions are: Christian Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante's Comedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000); Paul Arvisu Dumol, *The Metaphysics of Reading Underlying Dante's 'Commedia,'* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1998).

¹⁶ The terms of dimensional quantity, numerical quantity, and self-individuating originate from the two sources: Thomas Aquinas, *In Aristotelis libros De caelo et mundo; De generatione et Corruptione; Meteorologicorum.*

becomes more explicit in the *Commedia* through the notion of numerical identity, which is a type of identity that Dante the poet also discusses in the first two canticles. For instance, the entity of finite being will remain numerically the same insofar as it is understood to exist under the specified dimensions that the pilgrim's human perception can grasp, whether it is tangible or comprehensible. Dante the pilgrim perceives monstrous figures like Cerberus (*Inf.* VI) or Geryon (*Inf.* XVII) with a specific and tangible mindset thanks to the system of *ars quadrata* (square art).¹⁷ Likewise, this same approach is tied to Dante's natural memory because the latter is what captures the same image from the pilgrim's past, which is tied to the lower reality of earthly features.

Ars quadrata is a subcategory that refers to natural memory because it allows perception of how images are reproduced internally. This squared art symbolizes a type of artifice through which human perception gets coordinated by the biological memory from the inside. The juxtaposition of this same geometric theory of *ars quadrata* (square art) with the nature of finite being allows the finite being to be identified through spatiotemporal characteristics, which is different than a conscious or abstract being. For example, if Dante the poet's finite beings correspond to corporeal features of grotesque characters like Lucifer in this next passage, *ars*

Expositio cum textu ex recensione Leonina, ed. Raimondo Spiazzi (Torin: Marietti, 1952); *De substantiis separatis*, vol. 40 of *Opera omnia*, 1-87, ed. H. F. Dondaine (Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1969); and Aristotle, *Metaphysics: A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary*, ed. and trans. by W. D. Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Clarendon, 1985). Moreover, it is not to imply that both *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* are realities or real worlds. The pilgrim's mnemonic perception and awareness of spatial and timely representations (towers, churches, monuments, historical timelines, real characters, etc.) are mainly instilled within the boundaries of both canticles.

¹⁷ To reevaluate this geometric theory of *ars quadrata* (square art), see pages 51-55 from my previous chapter. Furthermore, by reexamining the idea of the symmetric thinking of grotesque figures exemplifying the defined dimensions, does not necessarily imply a mere repetition in this matter from the previous chapter. Even if using a similar theory and similar examples or physical structures in this chapter might appear otherwise, the analysis of finite being is different from the physical reality that has been considered the cause of Dante's ineffability. Some concepts that have been readapted from Chapter One are investigated more thoroughly in this chapter on the juxtaposition of finite and non-finite beings and how Dante carries on with both natures. Moreover, the analysis in this chapter will follow a different logic of study and ideas, in which spatial and timely representations will be examined from the distinguished transformation.

quadrata allows readers to see images of horrific figures or giants that are active or engaged in action of some kind:

“Oh quanto parve a me gran meraviglia
 quand’io vidi tre facce alla sua testa!
 L’una dinanzi, e quella era vermiglia;
 l’altr’eran due, che s’aggiugnieno a questa
 sovresso ‘l mezzo di ciascuna spalla,
 e sé giugnieno al luogo della cresta;”
 (*Inf. XXXIV.37-42*)

[how every sorrow has its source in him!
 I marveled when I saw that, on his head,
 he had three faces: one – in front – bloodred;
 and then another two that, just above
 the midpoint of each shoulder, joined the first;
 and at the crown, all three were reattached.]

While Dante the pilgrim encounters a three-headed, savage devil surrounding his kingdom of the underworld, Dante the poet delineates Lucifer’s dimensions and grotesque traits. Lucifer has been described with great details and colors, which helps us readers to coordinate our human perception through these spatiotemporal characteristics. Consequently, readers can also notice how Dante the pilgrim’s mnemonic perception can easily keep the human and dimensional experience in check while discussing those substantial figures (Cerberus, Minos, Geryon, etc.).

Additionally, these dimensional and numerical notions also imply an expansion in the systematic way of reading the pilgrim’s mnemonic procedures that occurs through a methodical systematization of images in the celestial sphere of *Paradiso*.¹⁸ The dimensional quantity of the above-discussed finite being echoes more than a corporeal figure like Lucifer. While these examples mark one side of the nature of finite being, the same finite being (i.e., grotesque figural description of Lucifer) can also be perceived beyond physicality and tangibility.¹⁹ Since the pilgrim will continue to encounter representations of the human figure (Piccarda, Cacciaguida,

¹⁸ To reexamine this systematic way, see the entire section from my previous chapter entitled “Dante’s Memory and the Scientific Method” on pages 48-63.

¹⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio*, XII 3 2443.

etc.), they still symbolize visible aspects of humanity. Even if nothing is tangible in *Paradiso*, everything that Dante the poet describes in *Paradiso* can become temporarily graspable because these figures still express their human content to Dante the pilgrim. The nature of this dimensional method makes all this more vivid and intelligible. The dimensional quantity alone can be easily individuated, and the ultimate result for the dimensional development arises from the dimensions themselves, which become understandable to human perception.

A case in point is the pilgrim engaging his perception with a visible aspect of humanity. Dante the pilgrim will encounter finite beings even in *Paradiso* that are likely to reveal intelligible and comprehensible content. Dante the poet gives form to these souls who make themselves recognizable to the pilgrim and reveal themselves and become tangible for the pilgrim to converse with. In *Paradiso* III, Dante the poet defines the many souls who wish to speak to the pilgrim (particularly Piccarda Donati) by offering them a metaphorical appearance, which also has a greater impact on the pilgrim's perceptibility and understanding of such impression:

“tornar d’i nostri visi le postille
debili sì, che perla in bianca fronte
non vien men forte a le nostre pupille;
tali vid’io più facce a parlar pronte.”

(*Par.* III.13-16)

[the mirrored image of our faces meets
our pupils with no greater force than that
a pearl has when displayed on a white forehead
so faint, the many faces I saw keen to speak.]

Dante the poet is referring to these souls by figuratively comparing them to a “perla” (pearl [*Par.* III.14]). Since this object is more humanly perceivable, they are also more graspable for the pilgrim to follow through once he begins his upcoming conversation with Piccarda Donati. In fact, she makes herself even more graspable when she elaborates comprehensible content for

Dante the pilgrim. While revealing her new identity might confuse the pilgrim at first, Piccarda later speaks out, and the pilgrim can perceive who she is:

“Ond’io a lei: ‘Ne’ mirabili aspetti
 vostri risplende non so che divino
 che vi trasmuta da’ primi concetti:
 però non fui a rimembrar festino;
 ma or m’aiuta ciò che tu mi dici,
 sì che raffigurar m’è più latino.”
 (*Par.* III.58-63)

[And I to her: ‘Within your wonderful
 semblance there is something divine that glows,
 transforming the appearance you once showed:
 therefore, my recognizing you was slow;
 but what you now have told me is of help;
 I can identify you much more clearly.]

Dante the pilgrim’s memory is slow to recollect the proper image of Piccarda that he once knew. Piccarda’s appearance has been transformed, but her voice still transmits comprehensible content that is perceptible to Dante the pilgrim. Piccarda delves more into her own identity, and by doing so she distinctly unveils her human experience in *Paradiso*: “Uomini poi, a mal più ch’a bene usi, / fuor mi rapiron de la dolce chiostra” (‘Then men more used to malice than to good / took me – violently – from my sweet cloister [*Par.* III.106-107]). Piccarda has devoted herself to being a nun and narrates that while in the convent, she was carried away by evil men. In so narrating, Piccarda explains to Dante the pilgrim a finite matter, namely being a nun on earth and submitting to violence from other humans. Since the experience that Piccarda is recounting to Dante the pilgrim concerns an earthly matter and because Dante the poet compares her to a “perla” (pearl [*Par.* III.14]), this can be recalled.

By closely examining the passage from *Par.* III indicated above it becomes clear that *121ogitation121* (recollection) and awareness correspond to memory and human perception of finite beings. It is important to state that Dante the pilgrim is able to perceive Piccarda being figuratively compared to a “perla” (pearl [*Par.* III.14]), as well as those earthly experiences she

is narrating. Piccarda also conveys her human experience of being a former nun while on earth by utilizing mnemonic *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process).²⁰ If we were to leave this observation as it stands, then the pilgrim represents the perceiver, and Piccarda would determine the role of memory in terms of human perception. This is to say that Piccarda would be considered the respective figure of perception. However, if Dante the poet allows his pilgrim to perceive what can be humanly perceived (objects like pearls, or earthly discussions and experiences), this also means that the pilgrim is able to activate his mnemonic act of recollection (*cogitatio*) to embrace what he sees and the content of Piccarda's. The fact that the pilgrim can perceive by simultaneously recollecting what he hears from Piccarda also corroborates the significant correlation between memory and perception. In fact, memory's role in perception serves not only Piccarda and other souls, but also the pilgrim's need to reenact temporarily a specific, finite figure from the past. Thus, memory and perception intersect on a twofold implication. The time Dante the poet describes these voices as "pearls" and when the pilgrim, Piccarda, and the other souls refashion this perceivable process through the mnemonic techniques of *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process).

Another example of a finite being that transmits humanly perceptible experience occurs in the episode of Cacciaguida. Dante the poet refers to Cacciaguida as a precious stone in *Paradiso XV*: "né si partì la gemma dal suo nastro, / ma per la lista radial trascorse, / che parve foco dietro ad alabastro" (Nor did that gem desert the cross's track, / but coursed along the radii, and seemed / just like a flame that alabaster screens [*Par. XV.22-24*]).²¹ If on the one hand

²⁰ To reconsider the act of *recordatio* and *cogitatio*, see the entire section from my previous chapter entitled "Dante's Memory and the Scientific Method" on pages 48-63.

²¹ If the two characters, Piccarda and Cacciaguida, are singled out, it is because their representation with the pilgrim enhances the course of my argument about finite and non-finite beings. All the souls in *Paradiso* (i.e., the three apostles, Saint Bernard, etc.) become symbolically tangible because they engage with a human like the pilgrim and discuss of humanly perceptible experiences. Piccarda, Cacciaguida, and all the other paradisiacal souls are non-finite beings who become graspable and understandable (as we already saw in the discussion of finite beings previously).

Piccarda Donati is described as a “perla” (pearl [*Par.* III.14]), on the other hand, Cacciaguida is described as a “gemma” (gem [*Par.* XV.22]). This case with Cacciaguida simultaneously facilitates Dante the pilgrim’s perception because a gem (just like a pearl) is graspable and humanly understandable. Since Cacciaguida reveals himself as Dante’s ancestor, he can also discuss finite matters such as the Florence of his times, and his death in the Holy Land with the Second Crusade, where he served Emperor Conrad.²² In *Paradiso* XVII, Dante the pilgrim asks Cacciaguida for a word of what future awaits him, and Cacciaguida elaborates his prophecy concerning Dante’s exile and tribulations: “Tu lascerai ogni cosa diletta / più cara mente; e questo è quello strale / che l’arco de lo essilio pria saetta” (‘You shall leave everything you love / most dearly: this is the arrow / that the bow of exile shoots first [*Par.* XVII.55-57]). Cacciaguida is recalling the instance from the injured party in Florence which resonates with a dramatic loss in the life of Dante the poet, his possessions, and Dante the pilgrim’s future. When Cacciaguida is figuratively compared to a “gemma” (gem [*Par.* XV.22]) and communicates content that is traceable to Dante’s earthly past, this is another example in which memory and perception once again intersect. Both of these experiences make Cacciaguida more graspable and perceivable and allow him to manifest the concept of finite matter.

II.2. From Finite Being to Non-finite Being

They become finite beings symbolically because they absorb human characteristics that are easily graspable and understandable and they engage in humanly conversation with Dante the pilgrim, who is made of flesh. If Dante the poet describes Piccarda, Cacciaguida, and any other paradisiacal souls as intangible figures in *Paradiso*, Dante the poet allows them to representatively assume a physical appearance as well as implement the human content of words, even if only for a short period. Second, some non-finite beings cannot be straightforwardly recognized because they do not absorb any human features (i.e., the human appearance and content in Piccarda’s case).

²² Cfr. *Par.* XV.88-148; XVI.88-139.

The second aspect of the earlier description of hybridity is non-finite beings, which emerge through the abstract conception of ideas in *Paradiso*. Non-finite beings have no extension in space or time, a self-subsistent concept that projects space and time within itself.²³ It is an internal process that, for instance, shines more prominently by the time Dante the pilgrim shifts his way of thinking (after Beatrice's rebuke in *Purgatorio* XXXI) from a mistakenly human perception of things to a transcendental and trans-humanized vision of the present state in *Paradiso*. It is from this point that Dante needs to point his and the readers' minds in the right direction—that is, towards the light of the angels.²⁴ This internal process or shift indicates how the nature of non-finite beings works in Dante, which becomes very important to Dante the pilgrim and his natural memory.

To clarify this immaterial, self-subsistent concept, namely any principle separated from and not dependent upon matter or finite being, it is necessary to first examine the idea of divine science in Dante's *Commedia*. This divine science represents the first category of non-finite, which relates to Dante the poet's divine learning and reflects his idea of divinity by placing the pilgrim in a state of divine awareness. More precisely, divine science represents the divine objective or a discipline or a lesson that the pilgrim will need to learn (divine learning) by first responding with a great amount of perception (divine awareness). For instance, in the next passage, both the beautiful sound and the brilliant and extended pool of light increase Dante the pilgrim's intense objective to know the higher realities of the heavenly spheres:

“La novità del suono e ‘l grande lume
di lor cagion m’accesero un disio
mai non sentito di cotanto acume.
Ond’ella, che vedea me sì com’io,

²³ The idea of self-subsistent being is mine and will be useful to consider in the discussion about the metaphysical memory. Even if non-finite beings are mostly associated to the canticle of *Paradiso*, it is a concept that has existed throughout Dante's experience across the otherworldliness.

²⁴ The idea of angels will be constantly used in this chapter, but I engage them across different grounds of argumentation.

a quïetarmi l'animo commosso,
 pria ch'io a dimandar, la bocca aprio
 e cominciò: 'Tu stesso ti fai grosso
 col falso imaginar sì che non vedi
 ciò che vedresti se l'avessi scosso.
 Tu non se' in terra, sì come tu credi;
 ma folgore, fuggendo il proprio sito,
 non corse come tu ch'ad esso riedi.'"
 (*Par.* I.82-93)

[The newness of the sound and the great light
 incited me to learn their cause – I was
 more keen than I had ever been before.
 And she who read me as I read myself,
 to quiet the commotion in my mind,
 opened her lips before I opened mine
 to ask, and she began: 'You make yourself
 obtuse with false imagining; you can
 not see what you would see if you dispelled it.
 You are not on the earth as you believe;
 but lightning, flying from its own adobe,
 is less swift than you are, returning home.]

This passage showcases not only Dante's effect from the "novità del suono e 'l grande lume" (newness of the sound and the great light [*Par.* I.82]), but also Beatrice's appeal to the natural motion of the elements concerning the places allotted to them by their weight. Beatrice draws her simile from the phenomenon of lightning, which strove upward to reach its proper adobe in the Sphere of Fire. This is a concept that the same Beatrice materializes into her narrative from medieval science. In fact, Beatrice prepares the way for the answer to Dante's second perplexity by underscoring that everything seeks its true place in the universe, including the human soul whose true place is in heaven. Beatrice is lecturing Dante the pilgrim about a discipline that is about to unfold in the divine realm of *Paradiso*, and that resonates with a divine aspect. As a result of this lecture about a divine discipline, Dante the pilgrim will satisfy his "disio" (desire [*Par.* I.83]), which is an instance of the laboring spirit driving him toward God and the first cause of this new awareness.

To make the pilgrim more aware of the divine science, Dante the poet underlines the figurative language to a greater extent. It implies the verse "e 'l grande lume" (the great light

[*Par.* I.82]), which consequently enlightens the pilgrim's keenness in what he has never seen or experienced before. This same passage of *Par.* I.82-93 tailors the correlation between the pilgrim's objective to move onwards and his readiness to learn a new discipline (divine science), which I translate as a truth-claim within the concept of divinity. This passage also sharpens the distinction between the pilgrim's perception of lower realities and higher realities. In fact, Dante the pilgrim is accustomed to seeing measurable space objects or creatures that are occasionally vaster than a lake or a sea. These last aspect belong to a lower reality of perception because they can be perceived through a dimensional and numerical approach.²⁵ However, the pilgrim's gaze is now directed at a higher reality with this fiery ring that surrounds the sphere of the moon (*Par.* I.64-66), as well as the medieval and astronomical idea of sphere of fire (*Par.* I.91-93).²⁶ It is through this common fixture of medieval astronomy that Dante acknowledges the science of these divine spheres by explaining the reason why these beings (non-finite) are not attached to matter.

While the natures of the nine heavens and the sphere of fire (*Par.* I.91-93) indicate the notion of divine science, the pilgrim will still need to engage with the divine domain, which does not depend on matter to exist. What the superior lectures from Beatrice and Saint Bernard teach Dante the pilgrim is to understand how to cope with his perception and human faculties while feeling something else in the face of the superior light of Beatrice. In this next passage, Beatrice appears to be surrounded by brightening rings of light, which will fix the pilgrim's gaze:

²⁵ Some examples are Cerberus in *Inf.* VI, Geryon in *Inf.* XVII, as well as Camp Picen in *Inf.* XXIV or Tower of Muda in *Inf.* XXXIII. Additionally, the notion of dimensional quantity refers to the position of a place, the ordering of parts in a whole spatial representation like a church or other physical aspects, as well as other aspects that are no less humanly perceptible. This dimensional quantity becomes more explicit in the *Commedia* through the notion of numerical identity, which is a type of identity that Dante the poet discusses also in the first two canticles. For instance, the entity of finite being will remain numerically the same insofar as it is understood to exist under the specified dimensions that the pilgrim's human perception can grasp, whether it is tangible or comprehensible.

²⁶ Lower realities refer to the corporeal, earthly features that characterize a tangible experience, which are seen particularly in *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*. Higher realities refer to the immaterial, divine realm and characterizes an intangible experience, which is precisely the experiences from *Paradiso*.

“Beatrice tutta ne l’etterne rote / fissa con li occhi stava; e io in lei / le luci fissi, di là su rimote” (The eyes of Beatrice were all intent / on the eternal circles; from the sun, / I turned aside: I set my eyes on her [*Par.* I.64-66]). The guide and her charge seemingly have passed through the sphere of fire that tightens the earth just below the sphere of the moon. Beatrice guides the pilgrim’s eyes beyond this home of earth’s highest-dwelling constituent and to his first sight of the heavenly spheres. By guiding the pilgrim’s eyes, readers observe a complex transition at the center of the canto that describes not only the effect of gazing at Beatrice but also the effect of learning a new discipline that reveals the symbolic, paradisiacal spheres of light.

II.3. Dante the Pilgrim: A Double Protagonist

If the nature of the non-finite is more suited to the otherworldly conception of *Paradiso*, Dante the pilgrim’s human faculties will continue to operate throughout his journey.²⁷ Dante the pilgrim will still need his human memory to recognize (even if implicitly or indirectly) the nature of important edifices where he might have spent some time during the last stage of his life. One specific place that Dante is implicitly portraying in the following verses is a famous church in Ravenna, called Saint Apollinaire in Classe: “sì ch’un’altra fiata omai s’adiri / del comperare e vender dentro al templo / che si murò di segni e di martiri” (that once again His anger fall upon / those who would buy and sell within that temple / whose walls were built by miracles and martyrs [*Par.* XVIII.121-123]). Dante the poet prays to God that He look down with wrath upon the corruption of the papacy. Dante the poet is refining his invective against the papacy of Pope Boniface VIII by specifically referring to a physical structure, that “templo / che si murò di segni

²⁷ The idea of non-finite being should not serve the purpose of erasing the paramount significance of the operating and functioning human faculties, of which the pilgrim will adopt and use throughout his journey.

e di martiri” (temple / whose walls were built by miracles and martyrs [*Par.* XVIII.122-123]), namely Saint Apollinaire in Classe. The vision of physical structures like Saint Apollinaire in Classe from Ravenna demonstrates that finite factors will continue to appear in Dante’s journey across *Paradiso*. Thus, Dante’s mnemonic perception will still function in the face of the characters or real buildings examined earlier in the chapter even through transcendental ideas and paradisiacal concepts.²⁸

The correlation of both passages from respectively *Par.* I.64-66 and *Par.* XVIII.122-123 showcases Dante the pilgrim moving forward with finite and non-finite beings. On the one hand, the pilgrim engages with the finite beings through the humanly perceptible experiences and characters like Piccarda and Cacciaguida in *Par.* I.64-66. On the other hand, Dante the pilgrim features the non-finite beings through the divine science, the nine heavens, the sphere of fire, and the great light in *Par.* XVIII.122-123. This is to say that Dante the pilgrim will move through hybridity, which implies a correlation between finite and non-finite. This correlation symbolizes a process of coexistence within the same mind, which is characterized by a duality between the creator (God) and creation (the finite and non-finite). The duality of beings relies on self-subsistent being (non-finite) and common principles (finite) because the pilgrim himself is moving onward in his journey with both beings. Despite nothing being concrete or tangible in *Paradiso*, Dante the pilgrim will still need to have different experiences of different natures. Consequently, the pilgrim can move onwards with both finite and non-finite, and he can continue to consider himself a double protagonist between the physical characteristics of the body and the abstract thinking of the soul. In other words, the pilgrim will journey towards *Paradiso* by

²⁸ The idea for Dante the pilgrim to hold both finite and non-finite being after his trans-humanization is a juxtaposition that will be further examined in the pages below.

showcasing his status between the states of humanly perceptible experience (lower reality) and the state of the pilgrim's imagination (higher reality).

By stating that humans can represent a double nature, Dante the author is validating Dante the pilgrim's dual and simultaneous existence.²⁹ Dante the author alludes to the notion of double nature first in the *Epistle to Cangrande della Scala* and later in *De Monarchia*.³⁰ In the *Epistle to Cangrande*, Dante introduces a disquisition on the relation between two different principles that belong to one mind.³¹ Their existences are different because their natures originate either from prime matter or from the abstract world of imagination: "Eorum vero que sunt, quedam sic sunt ut habeant esse absolutum in se; quedam sunt ita ut habeant esse dependens ab alio per relationem quandam, ut ea quorum esse est ad aliud se habere ut relativa" (Now of things which exist, some are such as to have absolute being in themselves; while others are such as to have their being dependent upon something else, by virtue of a certain relation, as being in existence at the same time, or having respect to some other thing [*Epist.* XIII.v.15]). Dante's *Epistle to Cangrande* anticipates his journey to *Paradiso*, and this passage showcases the dual relation that Dante the pilgrim will embody as he continues his journey. More notably, Dante the author clarifies this distinction by claiming two conceptions: that of the absolute, where being

²⁹ Both figures of Dante the poet and Dante the author will be intermingled throughout the chapter. Whereas the poet will refer to the creator of the *Divina Commedia* and other poems (i.e., *Rime*), Dante the author will refer to the creator of prose writings (*De Monarchia*, *Convivio*, *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, *Questio de aqua et terra*, and *Vita Nuova*).

³⁰ The debate about the authorship of the *Epistle to Cangrande della Scala* is still active, and two types of scholars have examined the authenticity of this letter. There are those who believe that Dante's authorship is farfetched, with half of them claiming that Dante could not have possibly written the letter. The other half believe that only the exegetical section does not belong to Dante. Other scholars, instead, fully believe that Dante is the real author of such a letter. I am aware of this dispute among scholars, but I agree with Alberto Casadei who strongly considers Dante's true authorship of this letter. Alberto Casadei has suggested Verona as a likely place for the creation of the *Epistle to Cangrande della Scala*. Not only was Verona a place where one might expect to find such a letter, but the city also possessed an important manuscript of Pliny's *Naturalis historia*, which might have provided a suggestion and a model for it: and it contains the author's dedication of the work to the future emperor Titus. See: Alberto Casadei, "Sull'autenticità dell'*Epistola a Cangrande*," *Ortodossia ed eterodossia in Dante Alighieri; Atti del convegno di Madrid (5-7 novembre 2012)*, ed. Carlota Cattermore et al. (Madrid, 2014), pp. 803-30, esp. 823-25.

³¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1988), II 1 993b 30: "Unumquodque sicut se habet ut sit, ita et ad veritatem" (just like anything in relation to the being, so that is in the face of truth).

can be independent so that no external factors can entail anything, and that of prime matter, in which being must depend upon external factors to determine its existence.

Dante makes another important assertion regarding the double nature of beings in *De Monarchia*.³² While in the third book of *De Monarchia* Dante describes the authority of the empire and the origins of the supreme Pontiff, he also establishes that a human being can possess a double nature. Dante claims that a human can be considered as both an ephemeral body-soul composite and an intelligence separable from anything corruptible: “Homo solus in entibus tenet medium corruptibilium et incorruptibilium; propter quod recte a phylosophis assimilatur orizonti, qui est medium duorum emisperiorum” (man alone created beings is the link between the corruptible and the incorruptible things; and thus, he is rightly compared by philosophers to the horizon, which is the link between two hemispheres [*Mon.* III.xvi.3-4]).³³ This passage comes after the description of the Supreme Pontiff to lead humankind to eternal life, and the Emperor, to guide humankind to happiness in this world and in accordance with the teachings of philosophy. It is the passage in which Dante offers proof that the emperor or worldly ruler is directly dependent on God. However, this passage also reveals a metaphor for a human being as the “medium duorum emisperiorum” (link between two hemispheres [*Mon.* III.xvi.4]). It is a

³² The notion of philosophy in *De Monarchia* is not entirely congruent with the philosophical perspective that Dante the poet employs in the course of the pilgrim’s journey. However, it is the same philosophical tradition that endures even if applied at two different times or in two different treaties or literary writings. The *Convivio*, *De Monarchia*, and the *Divina Commedia* represent a threefold philosophical implication that goes as follows: The *Convivio* teaches us the temporal happiness of the individual through human wisdom; *De Monarchia* teaches us about the temporal salvation of humanity through the Empire; and Dante’s *Commedia* teaches us about eternal salvation. Since this threefold work is knit together in all its parts, Dante was never able to uphold one of these theses without preparing, formulating, or even defending the other two. Whether Dante might have written some passages from *Paradiso* before, during, or after he composed the *De Monarchia*, there is also the possibility that Dante might have reused and refashioned the philosophical conception of a double nature for the human being while applying it across the spheres of the political treatise (*De Monarchia*) or through the literary realm of *Paradiso*. See also the assertion of such a philosophical conception that Chiesa makes with the *Convivio* IV: Paolo Chiesa, “Notes to Third Book, Chapter Sixteen of De Monarchia,” in *De Monarchia*, ed. Paolo Chiesa and Andrea Tabarroni (Rome: Salerno, 2013), 232. See also: Christian Trottmann, “À propos des ‘duo ultima,’; de la ‘Monarchia’ au ‘Banquet’ et retour,” in *Pour Dante: Dante et l’Apocalypse: Lectures Humanistes de Dante* (Paris: Champion, 2001), 215-236.

³³ The English translations of Dante’s *De Monarchia* are from: Dante, *Monarchy*, ed. and trans. by Prue Shaw (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

medium between eternity and time, between God and creation, between self-subsistent being and contingent or finite being.

As this horizon is found after eternity and above the notion of time, it also highlights the metaphysical notions of *esse* and *non-esse*.³⁴ Even though Dante might have considered Aquinas' metaphysical idea of both *esse* and *non-esse*, Dante still formulates his idea of both metaphysical conceptions. Just like Aquinas, Dante himself is a Christian and believes that humans are made of a body and a soul. Furthermore, Dante believes that the human soul is considered the third hypostasis of the Neoplatonic system through the conception of the celestial bodies in *Paradiso*.³⁵ This same soul occupies the border between corporeal and incorporeal substances, just as in between eternity and time. Dante heightens this metaphysical theory in the third book of *De Monarchia*, in which he alludes to two concepts resulting from the union of the principles of two beings. The notion of *esse* represents a complete being outside the mind (i.e., earthly experience), and accompanies the simple nature of being in the case of simple substances.³⁶ The notion of *non-esse* seeks alternate and more complex experiences, and exists only in the mind and the intellect (i.e., abstract thinking):

Si ergo homo medium quoddam est corruptibilem et incorruptibilem, cum omne medium sapiat naturam extremorum, necesse est hominem sapere utranque naturam. Et cum omnis natura ad ultimum quandam finem ordinetur, consequitur ut hominis duplex finis existat: ut, sicut inter omnia entia solus incorruptibilitatem et corruptibilitatem participat, sic solus inter omnia entia in duo ultima ordinetur, quorum alterum sit finis eius prout corruptibilis est, alterum vero prout incorruptibilis (*Mon.* III.xvi.5-6).

[If man holds a middle place between perishable and imperishable, then, since every mean shares the nature of the extremes, man must share both natures. And since every nature is ordained for a certain ultimate end, it follows that there exists for man a twofold end, so that as he alone of all beings partakes of the perishable

³⁴ Cfr. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles, seu de veritate catholicae Fidei* (Taurini: Typographia Pontificia, 1901), II 81; Aristotle, *Physics*, ed. and trans. by Jeffrey Henderson (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1961), II 5 229b 14-22; and *De anima*, ed. by Jeffrey Henderson (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1961), II 2 413b 6; Albertus Magnus, *Opera Magna: De anima* 7, ed. by Clemens Stroick (Monasterii Westfalorum, 1968), 2.I.8.

³⁵ I would like to specify that even if I am not adopting the notion of Neoplatonism to sustain my research and analytical methodology, this does not necessarily mean that I will not mention some Neoplatonic aspects like the one above-mentioned. To further address this specific question about third hypostasis, see: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles, seu de veritate catholicae Fidei*, II 82.

³⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, Vols. I, ed. by P. Mandonnet (Paris: Lingard, 1929), 765-768. Aquinas is here discussing the nature of relations in the Trinity and thus responds to an objection he comments.

and the imperishable, so he alone of all beings should be ordained for two ultimate ends. One end is for that in him which is perishable, the other for that which is imperishable.]

This brief description speaks to the double nature of the pilgrim.³⁷ Dante the author expands further on this double nature, declaring that humans can employ it while relying on the philosophical tradition that separates the corruptible from the incorruptible.³⁸ We readers of Dante are well aware that *De Monarchia* is a political treatise in which the author underscores the tension and various distinctions between Church and Empire. However, the important notion to take from this passage is that this dual nature composed of a soul and a body, of matter and form, is in fact one.³⁹ According to this passage, man is the only *esse* (being) in which the temporal reality of human experiences and the journey towards eternal redemption can coexist.

To corroborate the course of this hybrid case between *esse* and *non-esse* in the *Commedia*, Dante the pilgrim needs to maintain two natures while wayfaring.⁴⁰ The following passage represents an episode where the pilgrim's words with Casella enhance the meaning of motion and thus traveling for the pilgrim. Dante the poet does not necessarily move forward with his narrative all the time since he sometimes reflects upon situations and what he has thought.

³⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Sentencia libri De sensu et sensatio*, ed. and trans. by J. F. Anderson (Garden City, 1956), d. 19, q. 5, a. 1. Aquinas is also aware that both concepts can be used with different meanings, and he distinguishes them with two different implications. As he puts it, the term *esse* may be taken to signify the very quiddity or physical nature or corporeal feature of a being, as when we refer to a definition as signifying what a being's *esse* is. This means that one implication behind the notion of *esse* indicates that the quiddity of *esse* needs to be tangible and corporeal. Secondly, *non-esse* is a form of being that may signify the very act of an essence, meaning thereby the act of operation of the being's actual existence can solely shine within one's intellect. Thus, the quiddity of *non-esse* can be solely exemplified through ethereal representations.

³⁸ The main source from which Dante adopts the existence of this double nature of human being is Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I q. 23 art. 1 co. Thomas Aquinas underscores the imminent end of men, which is proportioned to his nature; it is a transcendental end that can only be reached if predestined through the help of divine grace.

³⁹ Another scholar who closely analyzes Dante's philosophy is Roberto Di Ceglie. He argues that despite the writings of *Convivio*, *De Monarchia* and *Divina Commedia* symbolizing three different works, they all exercise the need for Dante to operate in order to reach out for a goal. That goal is salvation (whether earthly, political, philosophical, or divine). Roberto Di Ceglie, *Dante Alighieri e la filosofia Cristiana nell'interpretazione di Étienne Gilson*, 627-649. Another scholar of Dante who studied Dante's philosophy throughout is Etienne Gilson, *Dante and Philosophy* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1979).

⁴⁰ To consider that both finite and non-finite (also *esse* and *non-esse*) have always existed and operated within Dante since the beginning of his journey. This passage marks one of those exceptions from which the poet has activated the pilgrim's double nature by the time the latter enters *Inferno*.

However, if Dante the pilgrim either feels or imagines going back in time to meet someone important to him like Casella, this meeting showcases the pilgrim engaging with both natures. More precisely, this meeting shows how Dante moves from the realm of the essence to that of existence:

“Rispuosemi: ‘Così com’io t’amai
 nel mortal corpo, così t’amo sciolta:
 però m’arresto; ma tu perché vai?’
 ‘Casella mio, per tornar altra volta
 là dov’io son, fo io questo viaggio,’”
 (*Purg.* II.88-92)

[‘He answered: ‘As I loved you when I was
 within my mortal flesh, so, freed, I love you:
 therefore I stay. But you, why do you journey?
 My own Casella, to return again
 to where I am, I journey thus.’]

While Dante the pilgrim is talking to Casella, one important implication that these verses manifest concerns Dante the pilgrim prediction for his own salvation. The salvation is what drives the pilgrim onwards to his most extraordinary journey which simultaneously aims at a constant movement thereof.⁴¹ Moreover, Dante the poet demonstrates to his audience the importance of motion within his narrative, which allows the pilgrim to go back to where he was before stopping numerous times with different sinners and souls. By doing so, Dante the poet temporarily shifts the pilgrim’s perception from one place to another, which shows how Dante the poet shifts from the reality of earthly features (lower reality) to divine reality (higher reality), or from corruptible to the incorruptible.

This example of Casella from *Purg.* II also symbolizes how significant Dante’s double nature as a protagonist is in the face of his natural memory. Memory in this case is fundamental because it bridges both *esse* and *non-esse*. On the one hand, Dante’s natural memory champions mutual progress because memory is the holding action in human existence, holding lives together

⁴¹ Although I am referring to the example of Casella, the idea of salvation is present since *Inferno* I, and that will recur constantly until the end of the journey.

as well as *esse* and *non-esse* as a whole.⁴² On the other hand, Dante's natural memory is itself a transformation in which images convey the past into the present through the act of *recordatio* (recollection). When Casella states to have loved Dante when the former was in flesh, this example frames the capacity of memory images to capture and transfigure memorial content. In addition to that, the verses from this same passage endorse the mnemonic ability to refer back and to refer forward, to sum up, and to move on (*Purg.* II.88-92). Even if the idea of salvation originates with the beginning of Dante's journey from *Inferno* I, I consider the episode of Casella as a key example that showcases the pilgrim's imagination and memory. As the pilgrim moves from the realm of essence to that of existence, Dante the poet can reveal more explicitly both natures of being. Memory in the face of the imagination is action from one end to the next, and it is the same pilgrim's progress and traveling that nurtures this action. Just as Dante the pilgrim's imagining exceeds the confines of the anticipatable future, so his recollection of images or events overruns the boundaries of the delimited past.⁴³

Although human memory can bridge both finite and non-finite natures within one mind, Dante the poet is also aware of the distinct natures these beings uphold between corruptibility and incorruptibility, ephemeral and eternal. This is not to reverse the idea of Dante as a double protagonist for upholding both finite and non-finite, but rather to highlight the fact that their separate natures also make Dante aware that both natures are not the same thing. At the same

⁴² To enhance the meaning behind the correlation between *esse* and *non-esse*, see the following texts from Aquinas: Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, 226-230; from the same text, see also vol. 2, d. 3, q. I, a. I, 87-88; *Quaestiones disputate*, vol. 2, incl. *De unione verbi incarnati*, ed. M. Calcaterra and T. S. Centi (Turin-Rome, 1953), 370-372. To further examine the idea of memory championing a mutual progress of *esse* and *non-esse*, see: Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: The Bodley Head, 2014), 81-92. Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 69-89.

⁴³ Cfr. Leo Elders, *The Philosophical Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), 19-34; David Burrell, *Knowing the Unknowable God* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986); for an extended discussion on the nature of *esse* and the idea of matter and potency, see Peter Weigel, *Aquinas on Simplicity: An Investigation into the Foundations of His Philosophical Theology* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2008), 356-380; Brian Davies, "Simplicity," in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Philosophical Theology*, eds. Chad Meister and Charles Taliaferro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 36-54.

time, this separation of beings corresponds to the pilgrim's mind located between the world of realities filled with finite (*esse*) and the world of imagination (non-finite and *non-esse*). More specifically, this same separated status of the pilgrim symbolizes a form of reasoning regarding a new truth. Both natures do not entail adverse implications because this same separation of beings allows the poet to reveal this new truth by distinguishing the material from the immaterial.⁴⁴

II.4. The Metaphysical Memory

II.4.1. The Ontological Account of Memory

By becoming more aware of the separation of finite and non-finite natures, Dante the pilgrim is also more aware of the distance between humanly perceptible experience and the world of imagination (*Epist.* XIII. V. 15 & *Mon.* III.xvi.3-4).⁴⁵ Dante the pilgrim acts partway between the human and divine spheres, the world of finite, spatiotemporal experiences and the heavenly cosmos, and approaching this relationship through the notion of metaphysics is indispensable.⁴⁶ Absent this approach, Dante's understanding of reality and his ideas about the cosmos, history, salvation, God, or poetry within the context of broadly diffused presupposition can be self-defeating.⁴⁷ This metaphysical approach is significant because it comes after physics

⁴⁴ See also, Cristoforo Landino, *Comento sopra la Comedia*, ed. by Paolo Procaccioli, Vol. IV, Edizione Nazionale dei Commenti Danteschi (Rome: Salerno, 2001), 1620-1627.

⁴⁵ To review the difference between the use of the adjectives perceptible and perceptive, see note #52 on p. 19 from the main Introduction.

⁴⁶ Bonaventure, *The Journey of the Mind to God*, trans. by Philotheus Boehner (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993). See also Alessandro Vellutello, *La 'Comedia' di Dante Alighieri con la nova Esposizione*, ed. by Donato Pirovano, Vol. II, Edizione Nazionale dei Commenti Danteschi (Rome: Salerno, 2006), 794-795. This role also highlights the pilgrim's spiritual awareness, which, according to Bonaventure, is transferred and transformed into God, and through which the subject of experience reveals itself as the ground of all realities, including the finite and non-finite.

⁴⁷ I am not suggesting that what I propose next in my study is the only way to understand Dante's reality and his ideas about the cosmos, history, salvation, God, or poetry within the context of broadly diffused presupposition. It is, however, one way to read and examine Dante's idea about the cosmos and other paradisiacal aspects through the metaphysical realm. Cfr. Teodolinda Barolini, *The Undivine Comedy: Detheologizing Dante* (Princeton: Princeton

in order of learning. Rather than holding together these natures of beings, as Christian Moevs suggests, we must move from a knowledge of sensible things (finite) to an understanding of things that are non-sensible (non-finite).⁴⁸ The shift from one knowledge base to the other symbolizes how truth-claims are grounded in the *Commedia's* metaphysics. As these truths are uncovered, they are implemented in the relation of what is contingent and what is self-subsistent.⁴⁹

Beatrice, for example, symbolizes the motion principle of the creaturely agency that serves as the productive and emergent cause of such agents. This transition from one nature to another serves Dante the poet's explanation of the implications behind the immaterial conception, of which Dante the pilgrim becomes aware once he absorbs the truth-claim of divine science.⁵⁰ Dante the author values the previously examined notion of divine science to a greater extent when he focuses on the specific notion of metaphysics, which he considers a major branch of philosophy in the *Convivio*.⁵¹ Dante the author debates which branch of philosophy values his idea on the correlation between philosophy and the notion of science. The following passage indicates how Dante adopts the value of philosophy as a subject to understand and be considered a divine love:

University Press, 1992); William Franke, *Dante's Interpretive Journey* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); for an extended explanation about Dante's philosophy and theology, see also Bruno Nardi, "Filosofia e teologia ai tempi di Dante in rapporto al pensiero del poeta," in *Saggi e note di critica dantesca* (Milan: Ricciardi, 1966), 3-109; and Zygmunt G. Barański, "L'iter ideologico di Dante," in *Dante e I segni: saggi per una storia intellettuale di Dante Alighieri* (Naples: Liguori, 2000), 9-39.

⁴⁸ To delve further in Dante's metaphysics and the numerous implications for theology and philosophy in general, see Christian Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante's Comedy*. Moevs argues that this type of revelation accounts for the diversity of the same mind, such as the pilgrim holding onto two beings. Most importantly, Moevs agrees that metaphysics will hold together the fundamental natures of experiences, reality, and consequently, both beings. Metaphysics does embrace both beings through ontological explanations, while examining the natures of beings through this plurality of accounts, 35-49.

⁴⁹ Despite the fact that both finite and non-finite beings will be considered throughout this chapter, the main focus in this remaining analysis concerns mostly the non-finite beings.

⁵⁰ To reconsider the notion of divine science, see pp. 124-128 from Chapter Two.

⁵¹ To review the differences in Dante's philosophy that emerge from the *Convivio* and *Divina Commedia*, see note #25 on p. 35 of Chapter One.

E sì come la vera amistade, astratta de l'animo, solo in sé considerata, ha per subietto la conoscenza de l'operazione buona, e per forma l'appetito di quella, così la filosofia, fuori d'anima, in sé considerata, ha per subietto lo 'ntendere, e per forma uno quasi divino amore allo 'intelletto. E sì come della vera amistade è cagione efficiente la vertude, così della filosofia è cagione efficiente la veritade (*Conv.* III.xi.13).

[And just as true friendship, conceived abstractly apart from the mind and considered solely in itself, has its subject the knowledge of virtuous action and as its form the desire for it, so philosophy, apart from the soul, considered in itself, has as its subject understanding, and as its form an almost divine love for what is to be understood. And just as the efficient cause of true love is virtue, so the efficient cause of philosophy is truth.]

While Aristotle's juxtaposition of science and philosophy represents an organic mechanism in his *Metaphysics*, Dante the author, however, argues that the best way of thinking about the efficient cause of philosophical truth is using divine love. If philosophy is compared to friendship, this is fundamental to understanding Dante's notion of philosophy originating from a subject. Since Dante absorbs this branch of philosophy through the notion of friendship, metaphysics can then be characterized through a means of utility as well as delight.⁵² In other words, if Dante considers metaphysics a divine science, and the pilgrim is approaching the divine domain of *Paradiso*, divine science also emerges with aspects of divine love in the pilgrim's wisdom.

Dante the poet also suggests that the pilgrim might not be able to juxtapose his wisdom with the divine truth of love for Beatrice. Essentially, to move upward means that the pilgrim must encompass a divine motion. It simultaneously requires that he be disciplined through the understanding of the paradisiacal natures that he needs to absorb, among which are intelligences, generally known as angels. They belong to the second category of non-finite, namely a self-subsistent being.⁵³ By beautifying the immateriality of *Paradiso*, these angels or intelligences

⁵² For further reference on the relation between philosophy and friendship in Dante's *Convivio*, see Johannes Bartuschat, *La filosofia di Brunetto Latini e il Convivio*, 41-47. See also: Claude Lafleur, *Quatre introductions à la philosophie au XIIIe siècle. Textes critiques et étude historique*, (Montréal, Institut d'études médiévales – Paris, Vrin, 1988).

⁵³ I would like to clarify that non-finite being does not necessarily resonate with an actual being or a figure or a character, but it can also resonate with a concept, an idea, an abstract realm, or an activity. To further consider my

enhance Dante the pilgrim's engagement with immaterial experience to a higher degree of interpretation. If Dante the author discusses the potential of metaphysics balancing and enhancing his understanding of intelligences, it is the result of the pilgrim moving upwards towards the angels. By taking a step back and delving into the *Convivio*, Dante the author debates the question of numbering the intelligences or angels.⁵⁴ He begins by informing his audience that these intelligences are made of an abstract essence, entirely separated by matter and unable to be held together:

Poi ch'è mostrato nel precedente capitolo quale è questo terzo cielo e come in se medesimo è disposto, resta di dimostrare chi sono questi che 'l muovono. È adunque da sapere primamente che li movitori di quelli cieli sono sustanze separate da materia, cioè Intelligenze, le quali la volgare gente chiamano Angeli. E di queste creature, sì come delli cieli, diversi diversamente hanno sentito, avegna che la veritade sia trovata (*Conv. II.iv.1-2*).

[Now that in the preceding chapter it has been shown what this third heaven is and how it is ordered, it remains to show who they are who move it. And so we must first know that its movers are substances separate from matter, namely Intelligences, which the common people call Angels. Although the truth is now known, different people have held different opinions about these creatures as they have about the heavens.]

This passage demonstrates Dante's ontological truth from this double identification of intelligences and angels, which is also equal to the number of celestial spheres in *Paradiso*. Dante the author subsequently linked the intelligences to the heavens, asserting the existence of as many intelligences as there were revolutions in the heavens. This last aspect outlines the notion of intelligences known as angels and movers to be a metaphysical idea. Dante the author states this just a few lines later:

Furono certi filosofi, de' quali pare essere Aristotile ne la sua metafisica (avvegna che nel primo di Celò incidentemente paia sentire altrimenti), che credettero solamente essere tante queste, quante circolazioni fossero ne li cieli [...] (*Conv. II.iv.3*).

interpretation of non-finite being, see pp. 123-127 from this same chapter. Non-finite beings have no extension in space or time, a self-subsistent concept that projects space and time within itself.

⁵⁴ On the idea of intelligences as angels, see Paolo Porro, "Intelligenze oziose e angeli cattivi. Note in margine a un capitolo del 'Convivio' dantesco (II, IV), in 'Ad ingenii Acuitionem.' *Studies in Honor of Alfonso Maierù*, ed. by Silvia Caroti, Roger Imbach, Z. Kaluza, Giorgio Stabile (Louvain-la Neuve, F.I.D.E.M., 2006), 303-351. Susanna Barsella, *In the Light of the Angels: Angelology and Cosmology in Dante's 'Divina Commedia'* (Florence: Olschki, 2010).

[There were certain philosophers, among whom seems to be Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* (although in the first book on *Heaven* he appears incidentally to think otherwise), who believed that there were only as many of these beings as there were circular movements in the heavens.]⁵⁵

This idea of intelligences and angels lends itself to multiple interpretations, but Dante's main concern in this passage is to explain how a being (angel) is in continuous motion. If non-motion intelligences were next to these intelligences in motion, the former ones would be without an objective or scope: "dicendo che l'altre sarebbero state eternamente indarno, senza operazione" (saying that any others would have existed in vain for eternity and have lacked all activity [*Conv.* II.iv.3]). However, since these angels can only operate if they are in motion, their intimate nature can only be identified fully with the act in which they operate: "ch'era impossibile, con ciò sia cosa che loro essere è loro operazione" (which would be impossible since their being consists of their activity [*Conv.* II.iv.3-4]). The argument in place between the divine power and the intelligences is sustained through their essential activity. Bruno Nardi also states that the eternal movement of the celestial spheres in *Paradiso* becomes an act entirely free of any sense of potentiality; otherwise, the same act of these intelligences in motion would not be eternal in *Paradiso*.⁵⁶

In metaphysical terms, the act of these intelligences is an act of potency, which can be translated as an angelic functioning that resonates with their own activity. This act of potency shows that while the intelligences (angels) are continuously in motion, they are also immaterial because they are not attached to any sensible or earthly features.⁵⁷ Furthermore, it is an act of

⁵⁵ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII, 8, 1073a26-b1. See also: Averroës, *Metaphysics*, XII, comm. 44 (*Aristotelis Opera cum Averrois Commentariis*, VIII), Venetiis, apud Iunctas, 1562, f. 327vaH (ristampa Frankfurt am main, Minerva, 1962): "dicit Aristoteles quod, si aliquae substantiae essent non moventes, essent ociosae."

⁵⁶ Bruno Nardi, *Dal Convivio alla 'Commedia.'* (*Sei saggi danteschi*), Rome, Istituto Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1960 (new edition with preface by O. Capitani, Rome Istituto per il Medio Evo, 1992), essay II.

⁵⁷ In reference to the intelligences as an act of potency, or as Dante would call it "loro essere è loro operazione," see also book XI from Saint Augustine's *The Trinity*. The theologian discusses the formation of an image from the memory unattached to senses: "Now we come to that other divine truth, which is indeed more inward than this one of the senses and sensible objects. It is not a sense of the body being formed from a body, but the conscious attention being formed from the memory [...]. So here we can say that this look in the memory is the quasi-parent of the one

potency because these angels' motion is characterized by their own immaterial power along the immaterial realm of otherworldliness. These intelligences (angels) are always linked to their sole act and are regenerated through their own cyclical motion. If the intelligences' activity characterizes their uniqueness, it also makes intelligences self-subsistent beings, just like non-finite beings. Both intelligences and the non-finite are represented by Dante as an act of potency that symbolizes the state of being to a maximum degree.⁵⁸ The pilgrim begins to adopt this maximum degree because he too will continue to absorb the supreme principles of the non-finite, which will be free from matter.

The act of potency from these beings in motion characterizes the divine domain of Dante the poet's imaginative power. Despite considering Aristotle's metaphysical concepts, Dante the poet still emerges with his idea of intelligences through his efforts. I essentially justify both natures and argue that through Dante the poet's imaginative power, we can consider intelligences as symbolizing the ontological truth about non-finite beings (which are also self-subsistent beings).⁵⁹ Since non-finite beings (i.e., intelligences, angels, paradisial ideas, etc.) will continue to exist within themselves and will continue to be a substance that is not consumed or eaten, so to speak, both intelligences (abstract elements) and non-finite beings (self-subsistent beings) are existences intrinsic to their realm and "loro operazione" (their activity [*Conv.* II.iv.4]).⁶⁰

which is produced in the imagination of the thinking subject. There it was in the memory even before we started thinking about it." Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, 398.

⁵⁸ Even if the act of potency is a metaphysical idea that originates from Thomas Aquinas, *In duodecim libros metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio*, I would like to clarify that I provide a different interpretation of this same idea. I do so to adapt the act of potency and make it relevant to the formation of art of memory in Dante. The act of potency has also been outlined and interpreted by John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being*, 156-166.

⁵⁹ To review the idea of non-finite being as self-subsistent being, see pages 123-127 above.

⁶⁰ Thomas Aquinas discusses that any such non-finite being is composed of essence and of a distinct act of being that is diverse from other beings. Aquinas also highlights the difference between extrinsic and intrinsic value for the pilgrim, in which Dante participates to divine realm of *Paradiso*, and so he builds up his intrinsic act of being in the divine realm. Thomas Aquinas, *In duodecim libros metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio*, XII 3 2443.

A self-subsistent being like the non-finite being exists in its intrinsic state of being and gradually begins to move toward the advancement of *ars memorativa* (also a self-subsistent principle). As this same state of being is activated by an act of potency, the state of being is represented through their operation, from which simultaneously emerges the self-subsistent existence of a being: “loro essere è loro operazione” (their being consists of their activity [*Conv.* II.iv.4]). Dante determines, not coincidentally, the way for abstract ideas to be conveyed. The connection between the philosophical definition of intelligences and self-subsistent being in Dante’s *Commedia* reverberates with the idea of motion.⁶¹ Angels are the flawless representation of motion because they are movers and are in constant motion. The passage below reveals a formulaic ascent that will precede the arrival and description of each new heaven:

“La concreata e perpetua sete
 del deiforme regno cen portava
 veloci quasi come ‘l ciel vedete.
 Beatrice in suso, e io in lei guardava;
 e forse in tanto in quanto un quadrel posa
 e vola e da la noce si dischiava,
 giunto mi vidi ove mirabil cosa
 mi torse il viso a sé;”
 (*Par.* II.19-26)⁶²

[The thirst that is innate and everlasting
 thirst for the godly realm, bore us away
 as swiftly as the heavens that you see.
 Beatrice gazed upward. I watched her.
 But in a span perhaps no longer than
 an arrow takes to strike, to fly, to leave
 the bow, I reached a place where I could see
 that something wonderful drew me.]

The idea of drawing the pilgrim to Beatrice indicates a certain motion, and whether symbolic or mental, this process alludes to a transformed pilgrim whose desire is “concreata e perpetua”

⁶¹ See also the idea of traveling that has been previously examined on pages 132-134 above.

⁶² Dante the pilgrim is in motion from the beginning of his journey, and despite a number of other aspects that can be analyzed in reference to Dante the pilgrim’s motion, the main focus here is on two aspects in particular: that of motion among immaterial and self-subsistent beings (intelligences, etc.) and that of *Paradiso*, where nothing can be tangible.

(innate and everlasting [*Par.* II.19]).⁶³ Dante the poet, who knows that the stars are moving rapidly in their orbits, compares their movement to the rapid upward movement of Beatrice and the pilgrim. This type of rapid movement also represents one example of the poet's use of rhetorical strategies. In fact, *hysteron proteron* represents a rhetorical figure, since the actions in the flight of an arrow shot from a crossbow are presented here in opposite order.⁶⁴ This means that the arrow's flight is viewed beginning from the end, in which the end is viewed as a cause instead of an effect. The *hysteron proteron* needs to be reconstructed by the mind in retrospect upon seeing the arrow strike, which ultimately seems again to convey again tremendous velocity. This rhetorical strategy (*hysteron proteron*) requires a major understanding of a supernatural, symbolic transformation from human to non-human.

If this rhetorical strategy allows Dante to reconstruct the reverse order of the arrow's flight, this means that this textual example from *Par.* II.19-26 also demonstrates that Dante's natural memory continues to engage with otherworldly transformations. This requires a series of paramount alignments for his memory, where Dante will need to apply the mnemonic technique of *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process) to refashion or reproduce the reverse order of the arrow's flight. This also shows that Dante the pilgrim's mnemonic ability to recollect relates to the seed of his otherworldly experience in facing another non-finite concept, namely, to altogether restate his innate thirst to see the superior lights of the heavens:

“S'io era corpo, e qui non si concepe
com'una dimensione altra patio,
ch'esser convien se corpo in corpo repe,
accender ne dovia più il disio

⁶³ The term “concreata” is a Latin term and originates from *cum* and *creata*, and the etymology of such a word goes as follows: to create together (with *cum* + abl. or with dat.).

⁶⁴ *Hysteron proteron* is a rhetorical figure that, to denote speed and the resultant difficulty of knowing which event in a sequence preceded which others, reverses the normal order of things. It occurs when the first key word of the idea refers to something that happens temporally later than the second key word. The goal is to call attention to the more important idea by placing it first. A standard example comes from the *Aeneid* of Virgil: “Moriatur, et in media arma ruamus” (Let us die, and charge into the thick of the fight). Virgil, *Aeneid*, II.353.

di veder quella essenza in che si vede
 come nostra natura e Dio s'unio.
 Lì si vedrà ciò che tenem per fede,
 non dimostrato, ma fia per sé noto
 a guisa del ver primo che l'uom crede."
 (*Par.* II.37-45)

[If I was a body (an on earth we can
 not see how things material can share
 one space – the case, when body enters body),
 then should our longing be still more inflamed
 to see that Essence in which we discern
 how God and human nature were made one.
 What we hold here by faith, shall there be seen,
 not demonstrated but directly known,
 even as the first truth that man believes.]

This passage indicates the mystery of incarnation in the second person of the Holy Trinity known as Christ who became flesh, absorbing human nature, and connecting it to his divine nature while remaining one person to “veder quella essenza” (see that Essence [*Par.* II.41]). It is represented as a form of divine miracle, which according to Thomas Aquinas, should inflame still more our longing in whom divine nature and human nature were united in the Incarnation.⁶⁵ Dante the poet conveys the idea of a union between human and divine. He does so through the pilgrim’s desire to see Christ in the exact essence of Christ human and divine natures which are miraculously united.

The manifestation of the pilgrim’s desire to discover the essence of God symbolizes an ontological truth for his journey, and even if it cannot be demonstrated yet, it is still a truth. It is a desire that the pilgrim reveals momentarily to express how his nature will be conjoined later with God. This also means that Dante the pilgrim needs to reactivate his natural memory to store this same desire or innate “sete” (thirst [*Par.* II.19]) while continuing with his enterprise until redemption. The importance of memory emerges by the time Dante the pilgrim reenacts what he now takes “per fede” (by faith [*Par.* II.43]). For any Christian, the notion of faith is an important

⁶⁵ Cfr. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, III, 83, q. 3. Dante the poet is referring to the miraculous union at the end of the pilgrim’s journey. See *Paradiso* XXXIII.127.

element and a theological virtue, and Dante the pilgrim reenacts this faith in the face of non-finite concepts like “come nostra natura e Dio s’uino” (how God and human nature were made one [*Par.* II.42]).⁶⁶ The idea of Incarnation is a divine miracle, but also an abstract, non-finite concept that we need to remember it while holding it in faith in our present state. For Dante the pilgrim to manifest this same truth at the end of his journey, he will still need to rely on a main faculty like memory and its respective functions. By reenacting images or Christian beliefs like recalling “quella essenza in che si vede / come nostra natura e Dio s’uino” (that Essence in which we discern / how God and human nature were made one [*Par.* II.41-42]), Dante the pilgrim is also engaging his mnemonic technique of *recordatio* (recollection).

However, the juxtaposition of Dante’s natural memory with the intelligences (angels) and non-finite concepts (i.e., innate thirst to see heaven or the divine miracle of Incarnation) implies a challenge. Since these metaphysical concepts encourage the pilgrim to embrace them (intelligences and non-finite beings) as abstract ideas, Dante’s natural memory figuratively absorbs a symbolic concept. Since non-finite beings are not necessarily tied to earthly features, Dante the poet shows how the pilgrim’s memory can be figuratively detached from natural

⁶⁶ One way to deter the reader from thinking about negative theology is to think of Dante as a *poeta teologo*. Theology was adopted from Saint Bonaventure and Saint Thomas Aquinas for the sole purpose of enhancing the understanding of how to reach divinity through his mystic and allegorical poem. Dante’s early and open-ended definition of poetry had not been superseded by the prophetic claims of the *Commedia*; it is their foundation, the key to the poem’s transcendent enterprise and truth-claims. There is no distinction between *theologus* and *poeta* in the *Commedia* because the *Commedia* has no content, no teaching or message that can be put into words like the Holy Scriptures, except as the *Commedia* itself. I avoid alluding to or implicitly suggesting negative theology in my dissertation for the following reason: poets like Dante can write allegorically or figuratively or metaphorically, and they can weave fictions and unfolding other meanings. However, the numerous allegories that Dante the poet adopts in his *Commedia* veil a purposed significance in a poetic fabrication. This same fabrication of ideas gives way to what it unfolds and manifests, and this can be autonomously perceived, as in a personification like Philosophy in the *Convivio* or Poverty in *Paradiso* XI. Because Dante’s poem is allegorical in nature, the meaning of the Holy Scripture and divinity or the outreach of salvation are autonomously designated or personified within the literary realm of Dante’s *Commedia* and cannot be put into words: it is the over sense or beyond the senses from *Convivio* 2.I.7, which transcends all thought, history, and language. In reference to the notion of negative theology, and to further examine a clear justification about Dante’s approach on theology, see: Christian Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante’s Comedy*, 175-180; Amilcare A. Iannucci, “Theology,” in *The Dante Encyclopedia*, ed. by Richard Lansing (New York: Routledge, 2010), 811-815.

memory and be configured to the poet's imaginative power.⁶⁷ At the same time, a non-finite being or concept lacks the proper power and agency to move onward. A non-finite being is a metaphysical abstraction but does not have the agency to reenact superior voices like that of Beatrice, who constantly upholds her voice to the same pilgrim regarding redemption. Because it has no agency, the non-finite being cannot empower the recollective activity of shifting or stretching the pilgrim's intentions and moments from one realm to the next (i.e., *Par.* II.37-45). This is to say that a non-finite being will not be able to reestablish a new configuration for the pilgrim's remaining part of his journey every time he faces new, abstract circumstances. This is the reason that the pilgrim will constantly rely on the mnemonic techniques of *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process) and, unlike non-finite being, memory seems more suitable than non-finite being.

The metaphysical memory possesses the proper mnemonic agency to reenact and uphold the voice of Beatrice regarding redemption and the spiritual features from the Heaven of the Fixed Stars. One way to underscore the metaphysical memory is by examining memory in relation to other faculties, such as the soul, the mind, and the intelligences.⁶⁸ A case in point occurs in some sections of the *Commedia* where Dante the poet mentions memory with an unprecedented description. In the following passage, Beatrice applies this principle of spiritual causality to the Heaven of the Fixed Stars, with which she further enhances her argument on the notion of intelligences, angels, and the mind:

⁶⁷ This shift from non-finite being (self-subsistent principle) to memory as a metaphysical understanding symbolizes the first phase of the *ars memorativa* in Dante.

⁶⁸ Since the soul of man is intellectual and able to recall, Saint Athanasius believed that the soul could heighten the process of mnemonic recollection by revealing the light of God that might be found in ourselves. This means that the soul of man can know the superior light of God who is beyond any previous vision of the human being. In reference to memory as a faculty of the soul, see Saint Athanasius, "Contra Gentes," in *Selected Writings and Letters of Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria*, ed. and trans. by Archibald Robertson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991), 4-30. Saint Athanasius tells us that God is not far off and may be found in ourselves, which is why the Savior declared "The kingdom of God is within you." It is by the intelligence and memory in us that we come to see God.

“Riguarda bene omai sì com’io vado
 per questo loco al vero che disiri,
 sì che poi sappi sol tener lo guado.
 Lo moto e la virtù d’i santi giri,
 come dal fabbro l’arte del martello,
 da’ beati motor convien che spiri;
 e ‘l ciel cui tanti lumi fanno bello,
 de la mente profonda che lui volve
 prende l’image e fassene suggello.
 E come l’alma dentro a vostra polve
 per differenti membra e conformate
 a diverse potenze si risolve,
 così l’intelligenza sua bontate
 moltiplicata per le stelle spiega,
 girando sé sovra sua unitate.”

(*Par. II.124-138*)

[Now do attend to how I pass by way
 of reason to the truth you want that – then –
 you may learn how to cross the ford alone.
 The force and motion of the holy spheres
 must be inspired by the blessed movers,
 just as the smith imparts the hammer’s art;
 and so, from the deep Mind that makes it wheel,
 the sphere that many lights adorn receives
 that stamp of which it then becomes the seal.
 And as the soul within your dust is shared
 by different potency, so does that mind
 unfold and multiply its bounty through
 the varied heavens, though that Intellect
 itself revolves upon its unity.]

When Beatrice introduces the angelic intelligences known as “beati motor” (blessed movers [*Par. II.129*]), readers of Dante also perceive the general metaphysical principle and the highest visible heavenly bodies (the fixed stars). She describes the relationship of the angels to their spheres as analogous to that of the soul to the body and the mind in human beings. The profound mind of the fixed stars is the angelic mind governing it. From the angelic intelligence comes the form or image engraved as if by a seal in the sublunar matter by the influence of the sphere. On the one hand, Dante the poet disseminates an image that lies between soul and angelic intelligences. These angelic intelligences and the mind are self-subsistent beings, and yet the

pilgrim needs the ability that guides, governs, and moves the pilgrim around those stars.⁶⁹ On the other hand, the close relation that Dante the poet often conveys between faculties (soul, intelligences, mind, and memory) with the notion of mind appears to exercise the function of memory.⁷⁰

This correlation between mind and memory appears as early as the first canticle, where in *Inferno* II, Dante names mind when his intention is to refer to memory: “O Muse, o alto ingegno, or m’aiutate; / o mente che scrivesti ciò ch’io vidi, / qui si parrà la tua nobilitate” (O Muses, o high genius, help me now; / o memory that set down what I saw, / here shall your excellence reveal itself [*Inf.* II.7-9]).⁷¹ And a similar case occurs in the first canto of *Paradiso* with the second piece of Dante’s invocation, where he asks to be inspired: “O divina virtù, se mi ti presti / tanto che l’ombra del beato regno / segnata nel mio capo io manifesti” (O godly force, if you so lend yourself / to me, that I might show the shadow of / the blessed realm inscribed within my mind [*Par.* I.22-24]). This juxtaposition of mind and memory that both Pietro Alighieri and Benvenuto da Imola have also examined suggests that there is another side of memory. This side was considered a form of intelligence in motion and a faculty of the soul well before Dante.⁷²

⁶⁹ For future reference regarding the idea of intelligence and memory, see also Saint Augustine, *The Trinity* book XV.vi.553-565; and Alessandro Vellutello, *La ‘Comedia’ di Dante Alighieri con la nova Esposizione*, 1384-1385.

⁷⁰ Dante’s word is *mente* (mind), closely related in derivation to *memoria* (c. *memora* [*Aeneid* 1.8] and compare the English verb *to mind*): “Musa, mihi causas memora, quo numine laeso [...]” Virgil, *Aeneid*, III.34. Other examples from Dante’s works are in *Vita Nuova*, I.1; *Rime*, LXVII.59; *Paradiso*, XXIII.54. Pietro Alighieri engages with this juxtaposition: “idest a scientiis respicientibus poesiam, item invocat altum ingenium ut extendat que per intellectum concepit.” Pietro Alighieri, *Comentum super poema Comedie Dantis*, 105. Benvenuto da Imola also makes a similar assertion about this interlacement between mind and memory: “scientiae profunditas, intellectus perspicacitas, memoriae vivacitas.” The first refers to the Muses, the second to the wit, and the third to the mind. Benvenuto da Imola, *Lectura Dantis Bononiensis*, 123-124.

⁷¹ Another textual example that expresses this close relation between soul and memory comes from *Purgatorio* XVIII.13-20; & XXV.52-66.

⁷² On the idea of mental abilities and virtues in motion, see Pietro Alighieri, *Comentum super poema Comedie Dantis*, 530: “Beatrix dicit quomodo celum divine pacis, idest quietis, cum in eo non sit aliquis motus, continet in se nonum celum, primum mobile in quo esse totius eius contenti dependet virtute motiva. Qui tali esse sequens celum stelliferum, scilicet octava sphaera, ut instrumentum divine mentis et sigillum partitur per diversas essentias, idest per diversa predicta principia formalia seu formas substantiales ab eo distinctas et contentas [...]” In reference to the concept of mind and imagination, see also Boethius, *Philosophae Consolatio*, ed. and trans. by Claudio Moreschini

Most essentially, both examples from *Inf.* II.7-9 and *Par.* I.22-24 characterize the significance of a metaphysical process in juxtaposition with the intelligences. The outcome of such a process resonates with an ontological truth, which simultaneously contributes to the advancement towards *ars memorativa* in Dante.⁷³

Moreover, another ontological truth that underscores the advancement of art of memory in Dante emerges through the pilgrim shifting from the material past to his immaterial sense of perception.⁷⁴ This same shift refers back to the domain of humanly perceptible experiences (material past) and the state of immaterial perceptive experiences (immaterial sense of perception).⁷⁵ The figure of Piccarda from *Paradiso* III considered earlier is able to correlate recollection and awareness because Dante the poet makes her (and all the other paradisiac souls) temporarily graspable and understandable. As noted earlier, memory and perception intersect through the mnemonic techniques of *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process). This occurs by the time the pilgrim, Piccarda, and other souls like Cacciaguida reinstate the pilgrim parts of their earthly experiences. The metaphysical memory also intersects with perception as an intellectual capacity for comprehension through abstract concepts like intelligences or angels. The pilgrim's perception will submit to the metaphysical memory while

(Turin, UTET 2014), III m. ix, 8. "Mundum mente gerens simulique in imagine formans". See also Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I, i.4-5 (981a 2-5); X, 3-4 (1054b 14-1055a 10).

⁷³ Pietro Alighieri, *Comentum super poema Comedie Dantis*, 576: "[...] sed Dominus domus qui eam formavit antequam fieret, similiter et providentia predicta divina ad bene esse universi creaturas dicte nature distinguit et disponit ad diversa mediante celo ut eius organo et instrumento [...] ex quibus auctor habet ante oculos solutionem, dicit dicta umbra, quam prius habebat post tergum et dorsum dicti sui dubii, et quamvis dicta umbra satisfecerit auctori in eo quod petiit ab ea dubitando adhuc ultra promissione, vult ex gratia sibi loqui circa assumptam materiam [...]". Alessandro Vellutello also confirms much later in time the idea of mnemonic operations being refashioned in the face of a new phase for the pilgrim: Alessandro Vellutello, *La 'Comedia' di Dante Alighieri con la nova Esposizione*, 1384-1385.

⁷⁴ The material past is a type of reality that refers to corporeal, earthly features that characterize a tangible experience from the past. The immaterial sense of perception is a type of reality that refers to the immaterial, divine realm. This last aspect also characterizes an intangible experience such as a fiery ring that surrounds the sphere of the moon from *Par.* I.64-66, as well as the medieval and astronomical ideas of sphere of fire from *Par.* I.91-93.

⁷⁵ To review the full description of the domain of humanly perceptible experiences (material past) and the state of immaterial perceptive experiences (immaterial sense of perception), see pp. 112-114 from Chapter Two.

advancing from material (humanly perception experiences) to immaterial (abstract experiences). This shift symbolizes a significant factor that Dante the poet illustrates by once again juxtaposing memory and perception. Consequently, this idea of perception will align with the pilgrim's awareness and absorption of universal concepts (i.e., Holy Incarnation, the vision of the Empyrean, etc.) about his journey.

A representation of the pilgrim's perception about the universal concepts that requires him to shift from the domain of humanly perceptible experiences to a state of immaterial perceptive experiences also occurs when Beatrice lectures him about the nine paradisiacal spheres. In this next passage, Dante the poet depicts a moment when Dante the pilgrim gazes at Beatrice: "Beatrice tutta ne l'etterne rote / fissa con li occhi stava; e io in lei / le luci fissi, di là su rimote" (The eyes of Beatrice were all intent / on the eternal circles; from the sun, / I turned aside: I set my eyes on her [*Par.* I.64-66]). Dante the pilgrim is able to reveal how imperial the superior light is that encircles those "etterne rote" (eternal circles [*Par.* I.64]).⁷⁶ Since this passage reveals the universal concept of these eternal circles that enhance the superior light around Beatrice, this same concept of eternal circles resonates with cause and effect, meaning the circles are the cause, and the effect on the pilgrim is the immaterial perceptive experience. More precisely, Dante the pilgrim interiorizes this same otherworldly experience as a form of immaterial perception: "Nel suo aspetto tal dentro mi fei" (In watching her, within me I was changed [*Par.* I.67]). Dante the pilgrim is about to enter *Paradiso*, and he recalls those lectures from Beatrice that teach him how to alter his perception from the beginning of his journey in *Inferno*. On the one hand, this moment represents Dante the poet who corroborates the unceasing

⁷⁶ On the idea of memory as a faculty that allows a human to imitate or reproduce, see Gregory of Nyssa, *From Glory to Glory: Texts from Gregory of Nyssa's Mystical Writings*, trans. and ed. by Herbert Musurillo (Crestwood, N.Y.: Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), 54. Saint Gregory of Nyssa says that God lives in us, as we encompass of creation within ourselves: "You alone are made in the likeness of that nature which surpasses all understanding, and if you look up to Him, you will become what he is imitating him who shines within you."

motion that motivates the pilgrim to advance his mnemonic perception from material to immaterial experience. On the other hand, the metaphysical notion of divine science becomes significant once again as a form of divine discipline that enhances the pilgrim's learning about the realm of divinity and its ontological truths.⁷⁷ In other words, this last example from *Par. I.64-67* begins to show how this metaphysical memory in *Paradiso* allows Dante's mnemonic power not only to be abstract and detached from the senses, but also to transform what he has perceived and interiorized.

II.4.2. The Role of the Reader

The examination of Dante's memory through the metaphysical approach enables also readers to underscore those ontological truths and to highlight the pilgrim's gradual shift from the material past to the immaterial sense of perception (or immaterial perceptive experience).⁷⁸ More precisely, by analyzing Dante's relationship with his audience, the changing course of Dante's perception with respect to his readers becomes clearer. One example that characterizes this close relationship between Dante and his audience occurs when Dante refers to his readers by emulating an act of authorial self-reflexivity, which relates to the author's reflection on his authorial account.⁷⁹ For instance, in *Inferno XVI*, Dante the poet connects the veracity of the entire *Commedia* to the reality of Geryon:

“ma qui tacer nol posso; e per le note
di questa comedia, lettor, ti giuro,
s'elle non sien di lunga grazia vòte,

⁷⁷ Benvenuto da Imola, *Lectura Dantis Bononiensis*, 528: “Unde solus homo, ut inquit Hermes, est nexus Dei et mundi, eo quod divinum intellectum in se habet, per quem aliquando supra mundum elevatur; unde homo perseverans in culmine mentis trahit ad se corpus et mundum, quia anima nata est dominari corpori et mundo.”

⁷⁸ Some examples of ontological truths previously examined are the double identification of intelligences and angels, discovering the essence of God, correlation between faculties, etc.

⁷⁹ To support the idea of Dante's authorial self-reflexivity (a term of my own), see also later commentators of Dante's *Commedia*: Cristoforo Landino, *Comento sopra la Comedia*, 556-557. Matteo Chiromono, *Chiose alla 'Commedia'*, 186-187.

ch'i' vidi per quell'aere grosso e scuro
 venir notando una figura in suso,
 maravigliosa ad ogne cor sicuro."
 (*Inf.* XVI.127-132)

[but here I can't be still; and by the lines
 of this my Comedy, reader, I swear –
 and may my verse find favor for long years –
 that through the dense and darkened air I saw
 a figure swimming, rising up, enough
 to bring amazement to the firmest heart.]

This is the third of the seven apostrophes to the reader in the *Inferno*. In his oath, and by naming his poem here close to the center of the *Inferno*, Dante the poet is both asserting the importance of his analysis of fraud and problematizing the fictional-allegorical mode of the poem. It is a type of oath that resonates with the act of authorial self-reflexivity because Dante the poet manifests the need of integrating other voices to witness the changing course of his perception. Dante the poet needs to share it with his reader, which also occurs later in the second canticle: “Lettor, tu vedi ben com'io innalzo / la mia matera, e però con più arte / non ti maravigliar s'io la rincalzo” (Reader, you can see clearly how I lift / my matter; do not wonder, therefore, if / I have to call on more art to sustain it [*Purg.* IX.70-72]).⁸⁰ Just like the passage previously proposed from *Inf.* XVI.127-132, the pilgrim's confidence at this stage of the journey in *Purgatorio* accompanies the poet's claim to loftier subject matter, which is a reflection that once again Dante the poet likes to share with his readers. Both examples from *Inf.* XVI and *Purg.* IX assert that Dante the poet's implication of the reader in the general sense entails a reflection of the poet's determination and industry in the face of the pilgrim's absorption of immaterial concepts about his journey.

While the author's self-reflexivity represents one reason for the poet to integrate the reader into the narrative, it is not the only way to demonstrate how Dante the pilgrim's

⁸⁰ Although this passage as well as others from *Inferno* and *Paradiso* will be used more than once within the chapter, they will serve different purposes of argumentation. See also *Purgatorio* IX.70-72; XXIX.97-105; & XXXIII.136-141.

intellectual capacity for perception expands abstractly through engagement with intelligences or angels. There are more passages in Dante's *Commedia* where the poet interrupts the journey to appeal to his reader and asks the latter to participate in the experiences and emotions of the pilgrim himself. By inviting the reader to enter the narrative, Dante the poet is establishing a fraternal relationship with his reader.⁸¹ Dante explicitly invites the reader to concentrate carefully on the narrative and its extraordinary circumstances. This means that Dante continues to ask his reader to follow the advancement of the pilgrim's enterprise into the next canticle of *Purgatorio*, which also indicates that Dante's explicit addresses emerge throughout the entire pilgrim's journey.

In *Purgatorio* XXXI, there is the postlude with the eyes and smile of Beatrice. Matelda draws the pilgrim forth from the river into the dance of the four cardinal virtues, and later four ladies appear who bring him to Beatrice, standing at the breast of the griffin and facing him and the four ladies. Right after this postlude, Dante the poet openly clarifies his way of wondering to his reader where and at what his pilgrim is gazing: "Pensa, lettore, s'io mi maravigliava, / quando vedea la cosa in sé star queta, / e ne l'idolo suo si trasmutava" (Consider, reader, if I did not wonder / when I saw something that displayed no movement / though its reflected image kept on changing [*Purg.* XXXI.124-126]).⁸² In Dante's sixth address to his readers in *Purgatorio*, he asks that we share his wonder. The griffin is constant in its appearance and remains unchanged and motionless as the pilgrim looks across it and he gazes into Beatrice's eyes. Furthermore, this example from *Purgatorio* XXXI is representative of many passages in which the reader is

⁸¹ In reference to Dante's fraternal relationship with his reader, see Eric Auerbach, *Lingua letteraria e pubblico nella tarda antichità Latina e nel Medioevo*, (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1958), 309 and 316-318. To further examine the idea of Dante the author considered the superior voice above the pilgrim and the reader, see; Vincenzo Russo, "Appelli di Dante al lettore: quale?" *Esperienze di letture dantesche* IV, no. 1 (1970): 324.

⁸² In order to examine Dante's explicit appeal to his reader about the limits of imagination and how to encourage the reader to surmount them, see also *Inferno*, VIII.94; XVI.127; XX.19; XXII.118; XXV.46; XXXIV.22; *Purgatorio*, XVII.1; XXXIII.136.

directly invited to absorb the outcome of Dante the pilgrim's imaginative power through a marvelous vision.

There are instances at the beginning of *Paradiso* where Dante engages less explicitly with his small group of readers. Dante recalls and reminds his small number of readers about what is coming, and in *Paradiso* II, Dante the poet begins with another remarkable address to the reader. It is an invitation to his readers to explore the limits of Dante's imaginative power. While engaging with Dante's own narrative, Dante is elevating the reader to another level of interpretation.⁸³ We readers of Dante are about to witness the voice of the poet and his navigational figure concerning the voyage of his art as it now enters a new sea and crosses over from time into eternity:

“O voi che siete in piccioletta barca,
desiderosi d’ascoltar, seguiti
dietro al mio legno che cantando varca,
tornate a riveder li vostri liti:
non vi mettete in pelago, ché forse,
perdendo me, rimarreste smarriti.
L’acqua ch’io prendo già mai non si corse;”
(*Par.* II.1-7)⁸⁴

[O you who are within your little bark,
eager to listen, following behind
my ship that, singing, crosses to deep seas,
turn back to see your shores again: do not
attempt to sail the seas I sail: you may,
by losing sight of me, be left astray.
The waves I take were never sailed before.]

This passage is unique in the *Commedia* in openly differentiating between two groups of readers with distinguishing levels of competence and in counseling the less qualified to read no further.

⁸³ This passage from *Paradiso* II seems to be a near reinstatement of Beatrice's admonishment to the pilgrim at the end of *Purgatorio*, and thus prior to Dante's *trasumanar*. Yet, if Beatrice admonishes him for not being able to overcome the human unimaginativeness and fragility it is because this passage represents an anticipation of what Dante will need to face, that is, of going beyond the human capacities: “Ben ti dovevi, per lo primo strale / de le cose fallaci, levar suso / di retro a me che non era più tale” (Indeed, at the very first arrow / of deceitful things, you should have risen up / and followed me who was no longer of them [*Purg.* XXXI.55-57]).

⁸⁴ While this specific passage will be investigated multiple times throughout this chapter and throughout the dissertation, the level of analysis and interpretation will be relevant to each respective discussion. To further examine the versions that Dante implements to his reader less explicitly, see also *Purgatorio*, IX.70; X.106; XXIX.97; and *Paradiso*, V.109; X.7.

Even if these readers do not exclude each other and can coexist, and be true at the same time, only readers who acquired early training in philosophy and theology are encouraged to continue and are advised to pay close attention.⁸⁵ Only those willing to embrace the next stage of *Paradiso* through philosophy and theology can symbolically engage with the pilgrim's effort. Moreover, the first verse demonstrates how Dante's tone is indirect because unlike the preceding passages, the poet does not use the word "lettor" (reader [*Purg.* XXXI.124]). Dante gives the readers indications about what to do in case they get lost. Dante wants the reader to be part of this new adventure, but he also warns them that it might become impossible for them to follow through because nobody has ever taken this unprecedented course to salvation. Dante is fundamentally asking the reader not to be discouraged in the face of divine justice, and to follow him to contemplate the sublime order of creation. He is asking the reader to believe in him, which will allow the poet to better integrate the pilgrim's experience and the poet's short narration through the poet's imaginative power.⁸⁶

In his study of Dante's appeals to his reader, Giuseppe Ledda argues that Dante establishes a network of voices, including the reader, the pilgrim, and the poet himself. The scholar primarily envisions a unanimous effort to reach for salvation through this correlation of roles in Dante's *Commedia*.⁸⁷ While the scholar's assertion invites multiple interpretations, I argue that this same correlation of roles plays a major part in reinforcing and holding Dante the

⁸⁵ This apostrophe is articulated in terms of the conventional trope of the composition of poetry as a sea voyage, here developed to an unprecedented degree: the daring of the poet's undertaking is compared to that of the Argonauts, the heroes who sailed the entire length of the Black Sea to acquire the Golden Fleece. According to the myth, the *Argo* was the very first ship, constructed under the supervision of Minerva. Some good discussions about Dante's use of the myth of *Argo* as well as his address to his readers imply the following: Ernst Robert Curtius, "Dante as a Classic," in *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. by Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 348-374; Robert Hollander, *Allegory in Dante's Commedia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 193-228.

⁸⁶ Some other textual examples that highlight the notion of "credere" (to believe) in the poet's judgments are as follows: Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, XXV.46; *Paradiso*, X.45.

⁸⁷ In his volume, Giuseppe Ledda dedicates an entire chapter to Dante's numerous appeals to his readers and diversifies the poet's approach in numerous ways. Giuseppe Ledda, *La Guerra della lingua: ineffabilità, retorica e narrativa nella Commedia di Dante*, 243-298.

poet's imaginative power in check. The sequence of verses in which Dante addresses the reader demonstrates how the poet creates a role for his readers. This same role would engage the reader with immaterial conceptions like intelligences, angels, and the notion of divinity, and interlacing the reader in such a development means to Dante the poet that his reader does the same. If Dante's readers have a sound intellect, they can absorb uniformly and under the poet's guidance the constant metaphors that allude to the pilgrim's motion forward to new horizons.

In the second section of Dante's fifteenth address to the reader in *Paradiso* II, Dante accurately addresses this specific group of readers, and invites them to turn their attention from backward to forward. This shift for the reader means to symbolically move their minds in the present direction where the pilgrim is about to engage in the next stage with much effort, particularly his arrival at the moon spots. This is a figurative shift from the old world (*Inferno*) to the new realm (*Paradiso*), and thus from the past to the present. Dante the poet indeed writes about the symbolism of an abstract truth that conforms to a new, challenging path. According to Dante, this path will require the reader to abandon the course thus far reached, which is implied by the "picciola barca" (little bark [*Par. II.1*]) and to embrace a larger course that awaits:

"Voi altri pochi che drizzaste il collo
per tempo al pan de li angeli, del quale
vivesi qui ma non sen vien satollo
metter potete ben per alto sale
vostro navigio, servando mio solco
dinanzi a l'acqua che ritorna equale."
(*Par. II.10-15*)⁸⁸

[You other few who turned your minds in time
unto the bread of angels, which provides
men here with life – but hungering for more –
you may indeed commit your vessel to
the deep salt-sea, keeping your course within
my wake, ahead of where waves smooth again.]

⁸⁸ To further investigate the versions that Dante implements to his reader implicitly, see also *Purgatorio*, IX.70; X.106; XXIX.97; *Paradiso*, V.109; X.7.

The readers' shift forward and into the present course of the "alto sale" (deep salt-sea [*Par.* II.14]) is a movement into the immaterial experience of the pilgrim's journey, which requires a mnemonic transformation. Dante invites his readers to observe and engage more keenly with the inner understanding of the paradisiac surroundings, and to set aside the sole human ability to perceive detectable experiences (i.e., giants from *Inf.* XXXI or the Tower of Muda from *Inf.* XXXIII).

One outcome that the reader is able to grasp from this last passage of *Par.* II.10-15 is to essentially learn how to encompass the correlation between poet and pilgrim figuratively. Besides readers turning in time to reach for "pan de li angeli" (bread of angels [*Par.* II.11]), Dante the poet integrates the new "solco" (wake [*Par.* II.14]), which is a symbolic vessel, a path whereby Dante the poet can continue to use his imaginative power and to move through those waves that "già mai non si corse" (were never sailed before [*Par.* II.7]).⁸⁹ By alluding to this sea where nobody has ever navigated before, the poet is indicating a new path in which he interlaces past with "picciolletta barca" (little bark [*Par.* II.1]) and present with "navigio" (vessel [*Par.* II.14]). This is another motivation for the reader to move outward and embrace Dante's imaginative power as a means to set out this "navigio" (vessel [*Par.* II.14]) along with the "alto sale" (deep salt-sea [*Par.* II.14]). Since this textual example demonstrates the reader's ability to absorb this abstract meaning and to engage with the poet's imagination, this same shift connects symbolically metaphysical memory and imaginative power two connecting forces operating within this new "solco" (wake [*Par.* II.14]).

The narrative from this last examined passage of *Par.* II.1-15 is metaphorical, and the specifically studied "solco" (wake [*Par.* II.14]) represents an abstract concept that Dante the poet

⁸⁹ Two commentators that have explored the symbolism behind the idea of "solco" (wake [*Par.* II.14]) are: Cristoforo Landino, *Comento sopra la Comedia*, 1584-1586; Vittorio Rossi, *Commento alla Divina Commedia*, 1117-1118.

shares with his small group of readers. Since the connection between the metaphysical memory and the imaginative power occurs in abstract and figurative terms, we should consider this same correlation a result of a shapeless representation of truth because no human sense can be part of it. This shapeless representation of truth symbolizes a reinforcing constant for Dante's memory through the principle of metaphysics, which also showcases one side of memory not tied to human senses or human function, but rather to Dante the poet's abstractive power.⁹⁰

II.4.3. The Implication of *Intellectus Possibilis*

Abstract concepts, like the new "solco" (wake [*Par.* II.14]), can be further examined by delving more extensively into Dante the poet's abstractive power. One way to expand this type of investigation is by understanding how these abstract concepts can be internalized. The notion of *intellectus possibilis* (possible intellect) represents the internal power that conceptualizes comprehensible content confined within its individuating conditions, thus rendering it intelligible and abstract.⁹¹ Aristotle defines *intellectus possibilis* (possible intellect) as a part or potential of the human soul that is nothing in itself, which is immaterial and dependent on no organ.⁹² This type of intellect has no intrinsic nature or attributes and hence is unrestricted in its capacity to take on the forms of everything that exists.⁹³ Since it is immune to bodily processes, *intellectus*

⁹⁰ Abstractive power is a type of mental power that begins with an ontological type of truth reinforcing Dante's memory through the principle of metaphysics, from which we can interpret one side of memory detached from human senses.

⁹¹ One important difference concerns the correlation between divine science and *intellectus possibilis*. Divine science relates to Dante's divine learning knowledge of a virtuous action, with the pilgrim being placed into a motion of divine awareness. If divine science represents learning about a truth-claim within the concept of divinity, *intellectus possibilis* is the internal agent that manages and supports the divine agency (divine science) of learning about divinity. Metaphorically speaking, divine science relates to a divine form of art, which still needs the internal power (*intellectus possibilis*) to carve the truth-claim out of the divine realm.

⁹² Aristotle, *De anima: Books II and III*, with passages from book I, ed. and trans. by D. W. Hamlyn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Clarendon, 1993), III.4.429a24. See also: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Ia q. 65.4, I a.110.2.

⁹³ Aristotle, *De anima*, III.4, 3.5.430a18.

possibilis (possible intellect) is the power to be everything, a self-subsistent principle, and not part of the world or its flux.⁹⁴

While Dante might have considered this Aristotelian notion of *intellectus possibilis* (possible intellect), Dante still identifies his own idea of possible intellect through the notion of divine science.⁹⁵ Since Dante the pilgrim is moving towards divinity, *intellectus possibilis* (possible intellect) represents the creative agent needed for the poet to twist reality.⁹⁶ In the next passage from the second canticle, the poet alludes to an abstract mental power (or abstractive power) that emerges by the time Dante the pilgrim carefully listens to Statius' lecture on embryology. While Dante the pilgrim asks how shades grow lean if they do not require nourishment, in *Purgatorio* XXV Statius provides him with a lengthy response describing how the aerial body is formed step by step. The Latin poet begins by explaining the vegetative soul, which is first formed, and which enables the growth of the physical body:

“Anima fatta la virtute attiva
 qual d’una pianta, in tanto differente
 che questa è in via e quella è già a riva,
 tanto ovra poi che già si move e sente
 come spungo marino, e indi imprende
 ad organar le posse ond’è semente.
 Or si spiega, figliuolo, or si distende
 la virtù ch’è dal cor del generante,
 dove natura a tutte membra intende.
 Ma come d’animal divegna fante
 non vedi tu ancor: quest’è tal punto
 che più savio di te fé già errante,
 sì che per sua dottrina fé disgiunto
 da l’anima il possibile intelletto,
 perché da lui non vide organo assunto.”
 (*Purg.* XXV.52-66)⁹⁷

[‘Having become a soul (much like a plant,
 though with this difference – a plant’s complete,

⁹⁴ Cfr. Christian Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante’s Comedy*, 52.

⁹⁵ To refer back to the notion of divine science as a useful metaphysical tool for Dante the pilgrim to move through the numerous ontological truths, see pages 132-136 above.

⁹⁶ Cfr. Dante Alighieri, *De Monarchia*, I.iii.7-8. A scholar who has previously embraced the discussion and distinction of divine and human intellect is Maria Luisa Ardizzone, *Reading as the Angels Read: Speculation and Politics in Dante’s Banquet*, 276-280.

⁹⁷ In reference to the notion of intellect and its nature, see also *Paradiso*, VIII.100-111.

whereas a fetus still is journeying),
 the active virtue labors, so the fetus
 may move and feel, like a sea-sponge; and then
 it starts to organize the powers it's seeded.
 At this point, son, the power that had come
 from the begetter's heart unfolds and spreads,
 that nature may see every limb perfected.
 But how the animal becomes a speaking
 being, you've not yet seen; this point's so hard,
 it led one wiser than you are to err
 in separating from the possible
 intellect the soul, since he could see
 no organ for the mind – so did he teach.]

According to Dante the poet, the active power of the seed is revealed to be the soul of the fetus, passing in a natural evolution from an initial stage of plant life through an intermediate stage like the life of a sponge. The metaphor of the formative power in the seed as a craftsman's tool or sculptor's chisel is also important. Until the soul has fashioned the organs for perception and locomotion as well as nutrition, it possesses these faculties virtually as their seed. Once he describes the vegetative soul as a close connection between animate matter (things that grow like plants, as opposed to inanimate matter like rocks) and animals, Statius moves on to the sensitive soul, which is the seat of human emotion and has the capability we also share with the animals. Dante the pilgrim does not yet understand how this animal embryo can and does become a human being—i.e., how it receives its rational soul. Through the voice of Statius, Dante the pilgrim indicates that once the rational soul is joined to the embryo, only then does it make this new creature theoretically fully human. We share this third capacity of the soul with no other mortal beings (angels are nothing but rational souls, having no bodily form). While the correlation of the faculties of the soul with bodily organs was central to Aristotle's conception, the faculty of the soul in juxtaposition with Dante's notion of intelligences (angels) symbolizes an ontological truth that the poet internalizes through the possible intellect.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Aristotle, *On the Soul*, II. iv. 415b.

The notion of the *intellectus possibilis* (possible intellect) was of considerable interest in Dante's day and was also addressed even by orthodox Christian thinkers like Albertus Magnus and his pupil Thomas Aquinas. At the same time, this above-examined passage from *Purgatorio* XXV.52-66 shows the error targeted by Averroës. According to Aristotle, no organ can be found for the possible intellect. Averroës, therefore, credited to him the view that both the conceivable and the active intellect were external to the human soul, angelic intelligences operating through heavenly bodies.⁹⁹ Dante the author suggests that the *intellectus possibilis* (possible intellect) is the capacity to form abstractions that could be the focus of the divine act of intellection:

La quale, incontanente prodotta, riceve da la virtù del Motore del cielo lo intelletto possibile; lo quale potenzialmente in sé adduce tutte le forme universali, secondo che sono nel suo produttore, e tanto meno quanto più dilungato da la prima Intelligenza è (*Conv.* IV.xxi.5).¹⁰⁰

[As soon as the living soul is created it receives, from the power of the celestial mover, intellectual potential, which draws to itself all the universal forms, in their potentiality, as they are found in its maker, but to a lesser degree the more distant it is from the primal Intelligence.]

More specifically, Dante the author believes that the possible intellect is the potential capacity to perceive and internalize universal ideas existing apart from any human agent:

E s'elli avviene che, per la puritate de l'anima ricevente, la intellettuale vertude sia bene astratta e assoluta da ogni ombra corporea, la divina bontade in lei multiplica, sì come in cosa sufficiente a ricevere quella, e quindi si multiplica, ne l'anima di questa intelligenza dotata, la divina influenza secondo che ricevere puote (*Conv.* IV.xxi.8).

[If, due to the purity of the recipient soul, it should happen that the intellectual power is quite free of and distant from every physical shadow, then divine virtue increases in it, as in a substance fitted to receive it: hence it increases this intellectual power in the mind, according to the mind's capacity for receiving it.]

Dante the poet proves his disagreement with Averroës's idea of the immortality of the individual human soul by making the possible intellect coterminous with the rational soul. More

⁹⁹ Averroës, *Averroës' Long Commentary on the De Anima*, trans. by Richard C. Taylor (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 2008), III 4, 429a21-24, c.1-10. See also Averroës, *Epitome of Parva Naturalia*, ed. by A. L. Shields and H. Blumberg (Cambridge MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1961).

¹⁰⁰ Cfr. Dante Alighieri, *Convivio*, IV.xxi.5. In reference to this passage, see also: Maria Luisa Ardizzone, *Reading as the Angels Read: Speculation and Politics in Dante's Banquet*, 256-273. Ardizzone discussed the human intellect as a divine being: intellect that the humans share with intelligences and where Dante has given this function a shape with the invention of the love for the gentle woman, who is in fact *mirata* and the intelligences and receives the divine light.

specifically, Dante underscores the *intellectus possibilis* (possible intellect) as an internal power breathed into the embryo directly by God.¹⁰¹

The correlation between possible intellect and the rational soul reflects the idea of the divine intellect, which originates from Anselm, who states that creatures because they are in God are not different from God are creative essences.¹⁰² Dante's divine act of intellection belongs to the Divine essence of all things that derive from God. The goal in these previously discussed lines from *Purgatorio* XXV.52-66 and the *Convivio* IV.xxi.5 & 8 is for Dante the poet to imply a contrast with Averroës, who believed in the division between soul and intellect.¹⁰³ Unlike Averroës, who believed that both the conceivable and the active intellect were external to the human soul, Dante believed otherwise. Dante the poet absorbs the medieval conception that faculties are interconnected to each other, with angelic intelligences operating through heavenly bodies. More notably, Dante the poet explicates the power of the soul as an important element characterizing the pilgrim's cohesion with his intellect and memory. The possible intellect supports Dante the poet's imaginative power, which consequently conceptualizes and materializes the possible, comprehensible content confined within its conditions and renders it intelligible.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Averroës, *Averroës' Long Commentary on the De Anima*, III 5, 430a20-25, c. 1-4.

¹⁰² Anselm, "Monologion," in *Opera Omnia* Vol. 1, ed. by F. S. Schmitt (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Frommann Verlag, 1968), 34-36. The notion of divine intellect will be fully examined in Chapter Three.

¹⁰³ Cfr. Niccolò Tommaseo, *Commento alla 'Commedia'*, ed. by Valerio Marucci, Vol. III, Edizione Nazionale dei Commenti Danteschi (Rome: Salerno, 2004), 1220-1222. Tommaseo validates the idea of *intellectus possibilis* and its connection to the power of soul. In reference to the juxtaposition between *intellectus possibilis* and imagination, see Siger of Brabant, *Quaestiones in Tertium De Anima. De Anima intellective. De Aeternitate mundi*, ed. by B. Bazan (Louvain: Editions Universitaires Beatrice Nauwelaerts, 1948), 13.45-46. Siger argues that the possible intellect continues with us through the form of imagination.

¹⁰⁴ To investigate further the idea of operational unity between possible intellect and imagination, see Roland Hissette, *Enquete sur les 219 articles condamnés a Paris le 7 Mars 1277* (Paris: Publications Universitaires, Vander Oyez, S.A., 1977), 177-179. The philosopher argues that in the case of Dante, the sensitive and intellectual in the human being do not make an essential unity, because what is possible to have is an operational unity as that of the intellectual motor and the heaven.

This is to say that Dante the poet's figurative approach and his *intellectus possibilis* (possible intellect) help readers to materialize the juxtaposition of the metaphysical memory and the imaginative power as two connecting forces. This same correlation of forces allows the pilgrim to move from an incredulous stance such as remaining silent for a time (i.e., doubt, perplexity, etc.) to catching up more conceptually with the dynamics of his journey (i.e., facing higher universal truths such as the cosmos, numerous angels, etc.). Since Dante the pilgrim will mostly face the higher reality of *Paradiso*, there will still be forming and reforming of images in accordance with the cosmological and centric system that Dante the poet has in place. For instance, the centric vortex that the angels form (*Par.* II.19) or the idea of moon spots (*Par.* III.58) are just two of the examples requiring the pilgrim to refashion those images in terms of a fresh, immaterial perception. Consequently, the correlation between imaginative power and metaphysical memory becomes stronger when the pilgrim needs to advance and progress with a type of memory that enables, internalizes, and reforms immaterial operations at the same time. Therefore, only by progressing from his previous infernal corporeal and bloody reality can this metaphysical memory continue to emerge as an alternative to the biological causes of natural memory.

II.5. Embodying *Ars Memorativa*

The *ars memorativa* in Dante implies a conclusive analysis of metaphysical memory in which the notion of artificiality plays an important part in this symbolic advancement and transition from low to high reality.¹⁰⁵ Although artificiality traditionally concerns imitation, or

¹⁰⁵ The notion of artificiality also relates to divine artfulness, which is most relevant to God's creations.

being a copy reproduced from something of natural entity, this analysis characterizes a concept of pure artfulness echoing creativity. One way to demonstrate how Dante the poet adopts the idea of artifice is through “divina bontà” (Godly Goodness [*Par.* VII.64]). In fact, in this next passage, Dante the poet describes the Goodness of God being, which is free of every desire, and springs creation through the eternal beauties: “La divina bontà, che da sé sperne / ogne livore, ardendo in sé, sfavilla / sì che dispiega le bellezze etterne” (The Godly Goodness that has banished every / envy from Its own Self, burns in Itself; / and sparkling so, it shows eternal beauties [*Par.* VII.64-66]).¹⁰⁶ Besides representing the form of the highest good and refining the course of Dante’s journey towards the Empyrean, the notion behind the “divina bontà” (Godly Goodness [*Par.* VII.64]) triggers another mental construct for the pilgrim. These are ideas directly generated by God such as angels and the heavenly spheres: “ciò che da lei senza mezzo distilla / non ha poi fine, perché non si move / la sua impronta quand’ella sigilla” (All that derives directly from this Goodness / is everlasting, since the seal of Goodness / impresses an imprint that never alters [*Par.* VII.67-69]). Things created directly by God without mediation include the angels, the heavenly spheres, unformed matter, and the rational power of the tripartite human soul.¹⁰⁷ At the same time, these same immaterial aspects above-mentioned represent mental constructs and are divine because the “divina bontà” (Godly Goodness [*Par.* VII.64]) manifests life from the supreme goodness: “ma vostra vita senza mezzo spira / la somma beninanza” (but your life is breathed forth immediately / by the Chief Good [*Par.* VII.142-143]).

¹⁰⁶ In Chapter Three, another significant divine power will be discussed, namely the Divine Grace, which will enhance the theory of memory (or memory as a concept) by infusing the three theological virtues upon the pilgrim and by ultimately producing a divine concept (the art of memory in Dante).

¹⁰⁷ Cfr. Boethius, *Philosophiae Consolatio*, III m. ix, 4-6. In this following passage, Boethius addresses the Creator, where he explains the significance on the matter: “quem non externae pepulerunt fingere causae / materiae fluitantis opus, verum insita summi / forma boni, livore carens.” (No external causes impelled You to make this work / from chaotic matter. Rather it was the form of the / highest good, existing within You without envy).

The figure of God represents the efficient cause—that is to say, God as the creator of his creations (angels, spheres, unformed matter, etc.).

If God is the creator of His own artifice, the divine creations (angels, etc.) are products of the divine intellect because they need only one creator to be generated with no mediation (*Par.* VII.67-69).¹⁰⁸ These divine creations symbolize the quiddity of *non-esse*, and in *Paradiso* this quiddity can be solely characterized through divine, ethereal representations. Dante the poet considers these divine representations a form of art and describes one of them with the following metaphor. A description that allows us readers to notice how Dante the pilgrim is accustoming to this highly divine perception of heavenly spheres: “lo moto e la virtù d’i santi giri, / come dal fabbro l’arte del martello, / da’ beati motor convien che spiri” (the force and motion of the holy spheres / must be inspired by the blessed movers, / just as the smith imparts the hammer’s art [*Par.* II.127-129]). The heavenly sphere, whose power is governed and applied to the sublunar by angelic intelligence (with the blessed movers being the angels), is like a “martello” (hammer [*Par.* II.128]) in the hands of a “fabbro” (smith [*Par.* II.128]) with knowledge and the acquired skill of his art. The knowledge and skill that generate this form of art consequently concern more complex existences (*non-esse*) because they pertain to the divine realm of *Paradiso*.

These divine creations that operate under the previously suggested “divina bontà” (Godly Goodness [*Par.* VII.64]) also manifest their own nature through their same operation. This last aspect resonates with a specific moment in the *Convivio* where Dante the author reveals the divine nature of the angels. He says that angels can only operate if they are in motion, whereas their intimate nature can only be identified fully with the act in which they operate: “ch’era impossibile, con ciò sia cosa che loro essere è loro operazione” (which would be impossible since their being consists of their activity [*Conv.* II.iv.3-4]). These divine creations are forms of

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Sentencia libri De sensu et sensatio*, d. 19, q. 5, a. I.

art that belong to the divine self-operation of the act of potency, which inspires ideas of self-subsistent existence to a complex, divine degree of analysis.¹⁰⁹ The metaphysical memory resonates with this self-subsistent existence because not only represents a self-subsistent existence (which originates from the notion of the non-finite) but is also characterized through the self-operation of the act of potency. Through this self-operation, Dante the poet fully contemplates the pilgrim's journey towards redemption. At the same time, Dante the poet constantly needs the mnemonic operation of *cogitatio* (thought process) for the change of reality that the latter must undertake. The notion of *cogitatio* (thought process) is an act that sets in motion several mental images in Dante the pilgrim's mind after being recollected such as the shift between lower and higher reality and the close relation between the higher reality and the metaphysical approach of memory.¹¹⁰ We should think of *cogitatio* (thought process) as a small-scale composition, a combination of various pieces from one's artistic inventory that allows Dante the poet to group images together in a consciously recollected and deliberative way.¹¹¹

Dante the poet ponders *cogitatio* as a thought process within the self in one of the addresses to his reader in *Purgatorio*, where he alludes to his power of imagination interlacing with his rhetoric, his style, and most importantly his artistry throughout the entire poem. In the following passage, the poet shifts the level of the creation of his artistry to a higher level of understanding. Dante the poet is telling his readers that for higher matters and higher experiences, he needs to elevate his level of imagination and to adopt a higher form of art:

¹⁰⁹ To reevaluate the explanation about the act of potency, see pages 139-142 above.

¹¹⁰ On the idea of the rhetorical aspect of memory, see, Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, II, ii.33-59. See also the pages 4-6 from the Introduction.

¹¹¹ A question that might arise as a result of reintegrating the notion of *cogitatio* in this chapter resonates with the juxtaposition with *intellectus possibilis* (possible intellect). On the one hand, the possible intellect represents an internal power that internalizes and conceptualizes the possible, comprehensible content confined within from its individuating conditions and renders it intelligible and abstract. On the other hand, *cogitatio* (thought process) is a thought process that relates to the art of memory. This thought process can be compared to a form of composing and recomposing mental images from those internalized perceptions (that originate from the pilgrim's immaterial experiences) by the internal power of possible intellect.

“Lettor, tu vedi ben com’io innalzo / la mia matera, e però con più arte / non ti maravigliar s’io la rincalzo” (Reader, you can see clearly how I lift / my matter; do not wonder, therefore, if / I have to call on more art to sustain it [*Purg.* IX.70-72]). Dante the poet is the creator of his own *Commedia*, which means that he controls the style, the rhetoric, the language, and the imagination. Since he needs to elevate the artistry of the poem, Dante the poet also needs mnemonic operations (*recordatio* and *cogitatio*) to shift from the lower reality of *Inferno* to the higher reality of *Paradiso*. Dante the poet needs *cogitatio* (thought process) because he needs to contemplate this shift with full artistry and elevate his poem to a level of an art form that his reader has not seen thus far. Even though this is a passage from *Purgatorio* rather than *Paradiso*, these same purgatorial verses represent a decisive moment, where the poet projects a course from the hollow of *Inferno* toward the divine realm.

In this same purgatorial passage, Lucia not only carries Dante the pilgrim’s body closer to the entrance of *Purgatorio*, but just as his dream reveals, also conveys the pilgrim’s soul within the flames of divine love (*Purg.* IX.30-31). For Dante the poet to elevate his creation, his art form, he needs to elevate not only his rhetoric, his style, and his voice, but also his thought process (*cogitatio*). *Cogitatio* (thought process) has indeed been considered in the classics as an operation specific to human memory. However, this mnemonic technique also concerns an act of thinking deliberately, which gets interspersed with Dante the poet’s imaginative power. Thus, *cogitatio* (thought process) remains an important asset for the art of memory in Dante because it can be compared to a form of composing and recomposing mental images from those internalized perceptions (that originate from the pilgrim’s immaterial experiences) by the internal power of possible intellect. Likewise, elements like rhetoric, style, language, and *cogitatio* (thought process) all participate in Dante the poet’s creativity and artistry in the poem because

they enhance the course of his imagination, and they are embodied within the art form of *ars memorativa* in Dante. Since this art form only operates along with higher realities (i.e., the newness of the sound and the bright light from *Par.* I.82), metaphysical memory symbolizes a higher account of memory.¹¹² It is a type of memory that resonates with an artistic theory that endorses the poet's change through the thought process of *cogitatio* and becomes fully participatory in Dante the poet's artistry and his creation of the *Commedia*.

Another example supporting progression from metaphysical memory leading to the *ars memorativa* in Dante occurs in *Paradiso*. Dante the pilgrim is with Beatrice in the habitation of the sun in the first circle, where the brightness of the sun defeats Dante's telling. However, Dante the poet narrates how critical it is for the pilgrim to adopt the art form to absorb the unconceivable: "Perch'io lo 'ngegno e l'arte e l'uso chiami, / sì nol direi che mai s'imaginasse; / ma creder puossi e di veder si brami" (Though I should call on talent, craft, and practice, / my telling cannot help them be imagined; / but you can trust – and may you long to see it [*Par.* X.43-45]). The brightness that Dante the pilgrim saw in these souls, which made them stand out from the sun, simply cannot be described by the poet. However, this series of verses resonates with the internalizing process that the *intellectus possibilis* (possible intellect) generates while the pilgrim is trying to absorb this elevated form of art. The *intellectus possibilis* (possible intellect) harvests a divine activity for the pilgrim. While God Himself is the creator of that art form, the divine idea is nothing but a way in which God understands Himself as capable of being imitated without deception: "E Beatrice cominciò: 'ringrazia, / ringrazia il Sol de li angeli, ch'a

¹¹² This does not mean that metaphysical memory is immortal or that survives his death. I will be advancing from metaphysical memory into an art of memory, and I will only be discussing theory (art form) resulting from a concurrent effort, that is the last aspect that belongs to Dante the poet's imaginative power and is connected to his art form in writing the poem. Cfr. Pietro Alighieri, *Comentum super poema Comedie Dantis*, 451-452. Additionally, Benvenuto da Imola, *Lectura Dantis Bononiensis*, 486-487; and lastly, Matteo Chiromono, *Chiose alla 'Commedia'*, 322-324.

questo / sensibil t'ha levato per sua grazia" (And Beatrice began: 'Give thanks, give thanks / to the Sun who makes the angels shine and who, / by His grace, has raised you to this visible sun' [Par. X.52-54]). Beatrice plays with one of the most common medieval metaphors: the sun as representing God. Through this metaphorical use of the sun, Dante the pilgrim rises to the height of this heaven, which is home of the physical sun.

By listening to Beatrice's in this previously examined passage, and by reconsidering the internal power of *intellectus possibilis* (possible intellect), this passage from *Par. X.52-54* also demonstrates how Dante the pilgrim becomes a follower of divinity, which consequently enables him to follow through the poet's description of "ingegno e l'arte" (talent, craft [Par. X.43]). The essence of any existing creature is an expression of a particular way in which these above-examined divine ideas can be imitated. Since ideas are part of an intrinsic plan (or God's plan) or structure of any created entity, the *ars memorativa* in Dante becomes an intrinsic principle that is transmuted along the realm of *Paradiso*.¹¹³ This art form is a theory, an intrinsic concept because it is created through Dante the poet's act of creation and, his idea of such a divine project for his pilgrim. Considering this art of memory as a concept enhancing Dante the poet's artistry within the poem also encompasses a great amount of unprecedented production for Dante the poet himself.

Furthermore, Dante the poet adopts figurative language to describe the divine project for his pilgrim. The poet underscores the notion of artistry to a higher degree of interpretation by alluding to the idea of decomposition as interpreted in relation to the thought process (*cogitatio*). For instance, if on the one hand, there is the decomposition of one thought, on the other hand,

¹¹³ Even if it does not seem to properly align with this analysis, we should also notice how Mary Carruthers considers another side of memory known as intellectual memory, which she argues is immortal since the intellect survives death. Cfr. Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 73

there is the composition of a new thought which reveals the elevated form of artistry.¹¹⁴ Likewise, Dante the author makes a significant reference to painters, saying that the painter must paint a figure intentionally before he can paint it: “Onde nullo dipintore potrebbe porre alcuna figura, se intenzionalmente non si facesse prima tale quale la figura essere dee” (No painter could depict any form if he did not first conceive in his imagination how he wishes it to be [*Conv.* IV.x.11]). In this passage, Dante suggests that painters should first portray their art form in their mind before creating it on canvas, which consequently underscores the connection between the mind of a creator and the created. More precisely, this passage suggests that the creation of a painting must take place in the painter’s mind/memory before it is put on canvas.¹¹⁵ While the role of the mind is to disclose the idea, the canvas represents the matter upon which that same idea is realized in line with the aim of the painter.¹¹⁶

By adopting figurative language, Dante the poet encourages the reader to make a careful effort to understand the notion of divine artifice results from a close reading of the last canticle. In *Paradiso* X, Dante the poet specifically mentions how desirable his art is and his rigorous attachment to the divine figure of God. Likewise, Dante the poet decides to share with his reader this tantalizing desire to envision this otherworldly figure:

“Leva dunque, lettore, a l’alte rote
 meco la vista, dritto a quella parte
 dove l’un moto e l’altro si percuote;
 e li comincia a vagheggiar ne l’arte
 di quel maestro che dentro a sé l’ama,
 tanto che mai da lei l’occhio non parte.”
 (*Par.* X.7-12)

¹¹⁴ Some examples resonate with composing the path towards higher reality, the realm of divinity or the craft and talent from *Par.* X.43-45.

¹¹⁵ The notion of mind used in this chapter corresponds to the close relation that Dante the poet often conveys between faculties, namely soul, intelligences, mind, and memory. It is from this hybrid of faculties that I examine the definition of mind, which exercises with the function of memory. To reconsider the correlation between mind and memory, see pp. 147-148 from this chapter.

¹¹⁶ Cfr. Thomas Aquinas, *In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio*, XII 3, 2444: “ea quae generantur ab arte fiunt ex sibi simili. Aedificator enim per formam domus quam habet in mente, facit domum quae est in materia.”

[Then, reader, lift your eyes with me to see
 the high wheels; gaze directly at that part
 where the one motion strikes against the other;
 and there begin to look with longing at
 that Master's art, which in Himself he loves
 so much that his eye never parts from it.]

Before ascending to the heavens, Dante narrates God's three Persons and his addresses to his readers, in which the reader is asked to elevate their sight and gaze at the stars. Unlike the previously examined role of the reader which served the poet's purpose to warn and simultaneously encourage his audience about the upcoming change in the narrative of the poem and nature of the journey for the pilgrim, this last address from *Par. X* is meaningfully paramount with respect to Dante's divine artifice. This passage suggests how important it is for Dante's reader to shift perception across the celestial spheres. Dante the poet is essentially motivating his audience to finding delight in this divine artistry that he will continue to emerge throughout the remaining of the journey: "e lì comincia a vagheggiar ne l'arte / di quel maestro che dentro a sé l'ama" (and there begin to look with longing at / that Master's art, which in Himself he loves [*Par. X.10-11*]). Dante is fundamentally depicting a heavenly representation of the celestial order for the reader to contemplate the divine perfection of the universal order.¹¹⁷ Since God, apparently an aesthete, loves contemplating His work, the reader is encouraged to do so as well.

Additionally, the notion of artifice, namely the operation that originates from the poet's active agency and interaction with the realm of divinity, is found in profusion in *Paradiso X*.¹¹⁸ At the very beginning of this canto, Dante the poet asserts the value of the primordial power of

¹¹⁷ Some of examples of celestial order for the reader to contemplate are the celestial equator and the ecliptic intersect, which shows how Dante describes the powers and virtues of the stars and planets, dependent, for their effect, upon the heavenly bodies properly varying positions.

¹¹⁸ The idea of artifice corresponds also to the previously stated notion of artificiality, which consequently relates to creativity rather than the conventionally assumption of considering artificiality a form of imitation or deception.

all the divine sources. Before inviting the reader's change of perception of the celestial spheres, Dante the poet begins his trinitarian prologue by contemplating the Son of God. After several references to human strife in the last canto, Dante the poet, in this next passage, turns to celestial harmony instead of earthly disarray:

“Guardando nel suo Figlio con l’Amore
 che l’uno e l’altro eternalmente spira,
 lo primo e ineffabile Valore
 quanto per mente e per loco si gira
 con tant’ordine fé, ch’esser non puote
 senza gustar di lui chi ciò rimira.”
 (Par. X.1-6)

[Gazing upon His Son with that Love which
 One and the Other breathe eternally,
 the Power – first and inexpressible –
 made everything that wheels through mind and space
 so orderly that one who contemplates
 that harmony cannot but taste of Him.]

These verses give Dante the poet an opportunity to examine parts of his work, such as the pilgrim's journey towards salvation. By contemplating the work that corresponds to divine love, or more particularly as the “lo primo e ineffabile Valore” (the Power – first and inexpressible [Par. X.3]), the poet is also contemplating God's artifice by using *cogitatio* (thought process). When Dante the poet says “con tanto ordine fé, ch’esser non puote / senza gustar di lui chi ciò rimira” (so orderly that one who contemplates / that harmony cannot but taste of Him [Par. X.5-6]), he implies an intrinsic operation within the realm of divinity. In doing so, Dante the poet refashions the pilgrim's active agency (i.e., artifice) that as a poet continuously reintegrates through the notion of *cogitatio* (thought process). If Dante the pilgrim is to study the inexpressible value from the primal power (Par. X.3), this means that *cogitatio* (thought process) allows him to inherit a “gustar di lui” (taste of Him [Par. X.6]). Therefore, these above-examined verses from Par. X showcase a point of reference between *cogitatio* (thought process) and Dante's imaginative power, namely that the poet's poetic and creative artifice (operation or

artfulness) becomes the essence behind the notion of an art form, or the *ars memorativa* in Dante. The *ars memorativa* in Dante is nurtured by the poet's imaginative power (powered by *cogitatio*) and by the immaterial experiences (internalized by the possible intellect) that continue to appear throughout the third canticle.¹¹⁹

Ars memorativa is the product of a shared effort that strengthens the close connection between art and order, between artifice (artfulness) and taste of the proper work or the numerous, learning involvements from canticle to canticle.¹²⁰ One final example that characterizes *ars memorativa* as the product of a shared effort occurs with Thomas Aquinas in *Paradiso* XIII. The philosopher suggests being slow in coming to judgment, being sure to make the necessary distinctions, and avoiding erroneous opinions: “Vie più che ‘ndarno da riva si parte, / perché non torna tal qual e’ si move, / chi pesca per lo vero e non ha l’arte” (‘Far worse than uselessly he leaves the shore / more full of error than he was before / who fishes for the truth but lacks the art [Par. XIII.121-123]). Aquinas confers a metaphor for the search for truth, which moves to fishing. Within the metaphor, the fisherman without the necessary skills of his craft not only returns home without a catch but is also tired from the voyage. If, however, we deconstruct and refashion this same metaphor, we notice that Dante the poet represents the thinker who lacks the proper intellectual tools and not only fails to arrive at the divine truth, but also enmeshes himself in failure. The fisherman, just like the pilgrim, needs the proper ability to reach the truth, and the same effort that both need to make seems to closely relate to the notion of a reader from the *Paradiso*. In the opening canto of *Paradiso* II, the unskilled readers should not stray from the shore, for if they lose their guide they may be lost (i.e., *Par.* II.1-7). This is to say that Dante’s

¹¹⁹ See: *Paradiso*, I.64-65: “tutta ne l’etterne rote / fissa con li occhi stava” (The eyes of Beatrice were all intent / on the eternal circles); see also - *Paradiso*, VII.64-66: “La divina bontà, che da sé sperne / ogni livore, ardendo in sé, sfavilla / sì che dispiega le bellezze etterne.” (Spurning any kind of envy, Godly Goodness, / burning within, so sparkles / that it unfolds Eternal Beauty).

¹²⁰ On the idea of *ars memorativa* as a shared effort, see note #48 on pp. 16 from the main Introduction.

ingredients for an *ars memorativa* are doctrine, ability, and skill acquired through practice. This art form for Dante includes both the theoretical equipment of an artist and the skill required to control the divine truth. Therefore, the *ars memorativa* in Dante empowers the pilgrim's mnemonic operations in the face of idea of divine artifice, which implies a nexus of creator (God, or Dante the poet) and the created (the vision of angels, the heavenly spheres, the Empyrean, etc.).

II.6. Conclusions

If Dante the pilgrim moves through a world of images and needs to subsume a representative vision of his imminent and celestial upcoming, his nature as a major character and protagonist of this journey must also change. Whether his natural memory often fails or weakens his mnemonic operations during the journey, and whether his symbolic transformation shows tension between finite and non-finite beings, Dante the poet uses his imaginative power to trigger his will and to end his enterprise. I consider this metaphysical memory as an extra step because the pilgrim needs to go that extra mile to embrace a superior realm of images, mental constructs (Godly Goodness), cosmos, and intelligences (angels). It is this circumstance that calls for a metaphysical memory that allows us readers to closely perceive how the pilgrim's mnemonic nature shifts from a low to a high reality.

This same mnemonic advancement and its gradual development of self-subsistent being allow Dante the poet to encompass memory as an art form, which operates through the mediation of metaphysical memory. This art form starts from a shared effort beginning with a non-finite being that has no extension in time and space, and which proves to be very important to Dante

and his memory. Moreover, the *ars memorativa* in Dante must still work throughout Dante's journey, and so the non-finite being is metaphysically refashioned into a metaphysical memory that allows undertaking the pilgrim's notion of time in the divine realm of *Paradiso*. The implication of the metaphysical memory remains an important element because it characterizes the rise of the *ars memorativa* in Dante. Furthermore, it is equally important to realize that this art form will continue to undergo the cooperative effort of several other faculties, which will enhance further the meaning of the *ars memorativa*. Part of this collective and shared effort also involves the integration of other abstract, spiritual faculties such as the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity/love from *Paradiso*.

Chapter 3

The Theological Element of the Ars Memorativa in Dante

After examining the impasse of Dante's natural memory in Chapter One and the metaphysically flourishing concept of *ars memorativa* in Chapter Two, the third chapter reveals the art of memory in Dante through the theological understanding of Christianized metaphysics.¹ In this specific study, Christianized Metaphysics is a process that firstly appears while being introduced to the moral theology of Dante.² If metaphysics was adopted to craft the origin and the making of the art of memory in Dante from the previous chapter, the same notion of

¹ While the notion of Christianized Metaphysics has been adopted and examined by several theologians and philosophers, I mostly consider the definition that Saint Thomas Aquinas provides in his *Summa*. In the following passage, Saint Thomas Aquinas summarizes his position with respect of philosophy and theology, confronting an objection to there being any need for theological discourse: "The astronomer and the natural philosopher both conclude that the earth is round, but the astronomer does this through a mathematical middle that is abstracted from matter, whereas the natural philosopher considers a middle lodged in matter. Thus, there is nothing to prevent another science like moral theology from treating in the light of divine revelation what the philosophical disciplines treat as knowable in the light of human reason." (*Summa theologiae*, Ia.1.1 ad 2). While philosophical discourse for Aquinas begins with knowledge of the world, theological discourse resonates with what the revelation of God about Himself and His action in generating the world. Aquinas suggests that there are in fact elements of what God has manifested that are philosophical and subject to theological discussion, which can be underscored and examined through the precondition of faith. Furthermore, this last point summarizes Saint Thomas Aquinas' point on Christianized Metaphysics, from which a human mind can engage with both a theological and a philosophical discussion, providing for a fruitful engagement between the theological and the philosophical.

² After several research held in between metaphysics and moral theology, I would like to present also my own definition of Christianized metaphysics, which is essentially the theory that I will postulate in my study. Christianized Metaphysics represents a form of metaphysics that gets examined through the realm of moral theology. It occurs by a philosophical conversion that takes place in between organic philosophy (Aristotle's metaphysics) and religious thought. It is through this conversion that in Dante's case, the ontological truths like double identification of intelligences and angels, discovering the essence of God, and the correlation between faculties are being filtered and examined through a theological framework.

metaphysics will be Christianized in this present chapter to proceed with the theologizing factor (by adopting the three virtues) of the art of memory.³ The Christianized Metaphysics is juxtaposed to the theological realm of Dante's *Commedia* by the time the three theological virtues assist Dante the pilgrim in operating more efficiently throughout his journey. By crafting a theological framework around the *ars memorativa* in Dante, the ontological bond between the images of Dante's mind and being will be manifested in the most exalted and spiritual sense of Dante's journey (faith, hope, and charity). Consequently, the poet's imaginative realm representing a vehicle of that truth not only spiritualizes of his art of memory, but also divinizes this truth. Since Dante is foremost a Christian poet and adopting the language of God for Dante thus entails juxtaposing heavenly concepts with metaphysical memory, the art form of memory shifts from a purely metaphysical standpoint (first evolution of the art of memory in Dante) to a largely theological development (second evolution of the art of memory in Dante).

I begin by first examining the ideas of prolepsis and *habitus* (*Par.* XXII.112-120), which account for empowering Dante the pilgrim with the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and love/charity. While the wayfarer's engagement of virtues corresponds symbolically to human and divine interaction, or a shift from natural to spiritual (*Par.* XIX.58-60), these virtues also

³ Since metaphysics sustains the making of art of memory in Dante, I found the Christianized Metaphysics by Thomas Aquinas more relevant to my argumentation because it represents a version of metaphysics with respect to Christianity, which is more relevant to moral theology. Christianity is a religion of salvation which suggests that no philosophical idea can be fully Christian because no philosophical idea can manifest the peculiar content of Christianity. Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy and is a discipline based on human reflection and human intellectual resources. However, the message of salvation that we readers examine in Dante's narrative is not a discovery of human reflection. It comes to us by revelation, and Christians have consistently acknowledged that its central truths (i.e., the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, his atoning death for our sins, his resurrection from the dead, salvation by grace through faith) cannot be known by unassisted human thought. If a Christian theologian and philosopher like Thomas Aquinas seeks to develop a metaphysical system which is compatible with Christian faith, which is an adequate vehicle for the expression of Christian convictions, then we can consider this transformation a Christianized metaphysics. This is to say that no metaphysical aspects (like the art of memory in Dante) can proceed in the realm of divinity without becoming something other than philosophy, particularly because Christianity came into the world as a religion of salvation rather than a metaphysical system. Most importantly, a metaphysical aspect like the art of memory becomes Christianized because this art form represents a shapeless representation that sustains the path of revelation towards salvation, which means that also the art form speaks of God because it is a heavenly concept of art of memory.

become the excellence and the traits of character by means of which the Holy Spirit teaches Dante the pilgrim the ways of salvation. By investigating the theologizing factor between the art of memory in Dante and the theological virtues, the art form of memory is exposed to a doctrinal-theological element, which operates internally to illuminate the relationship between human and divine. This relationship consists of the immanence of the divine and Dante's conformance to Christian values (theological virtues) which will be highlighted by examining the dowries (*Par. XXX.40-42*).⁴ This last aspect entails the love of others in charity, which constitutes life in union with the God, and He who created all persons in the *imago dei* for a common destiny of union with God and with each other. I shall ultimately seek to prove that the theologizing process allows Dante to expand his divine knowledge while evolving with the art of memory in Dante—that is, towards a heavenly concept of the *ars memorativa* in Dante.⁵

III.1. The Ethereal Transmutation of the Art of Memory in Dante

From his first appearance in the realm of *Paradiso* to knowledge of the different moons (*Par. II-V*), Dante the pilgrim engages with a new series of transcendental experiences where he absorbs a well-defined sense of intangible existence in the presence of the celestial cosmos and bodies. Dante the pilgrim embraces the transcendental notion of “trasumanar” (passing beyond

⁴ As I am fully aware of the philosophical distinction between the Thomistic and the Augustinian philosophy, I will also integrate theological aspects such as the notion of dowries from Saint Augustine, which could be easily interpreted from a Neoplatonic perspective. This intermingling approach of both Aquinas and Augustine demonstrates that Dante can be identified as either one of them, depending on the matter discussed along the lines written.

⁵ While the previously theoretical framework in Chapter Two resonated with the metaphysical understanding and making of the *ars memorativa* in Dante, the theoretical framework that will be elaborated in Chapter Three resonates with the heavenly concept of the art of memory in Dante. This theological framework gets characterized with the theological approach, which implies a subsequent series of theoretical steps that often are elaborated one after the other. However, I would like to reassure the reader that the respective theories in this chapter are fundamentally essential to understand the nature and the theological nuance of the heavenly concept of *ars memorativa* in Dante.

the human [*Par.* I.70]) in the first canto of *Paradiso*, in which the pilgrim symbolizes a nimbler figure with a transcendental spirit. Dante the wayfarer's persona materializes from a weighty figure with cumbersome understandings of immaterial realities (souls, Beatrice's circles, the numerous lights, etc.).⁶ One significant aspect of this trans-humanizing experience concerns the pilgrim beginning to sense his experience of lightness in the celestial cosmos, where nothing can be permanently tangible.

As this transcendental experience of trans-humanization continues to represent an important step in Dante the pilgrim's enterprise towards redemption, the pilgrim continues to absorb transcendental experiences later in the realm of *Paradiso*. For instance, only a few moments after the pilgrim submits to his process of trans-humanizing in the first canto of *Paradiso*, the pilgrim demonstrates how ably he can perceive the novel condition of light figures: "Già contento requièvi / di grande ammirazion; ma ora ammiro / com'io trascenda questi corpi levi" ('after such great wonder, / I rested. But again, I wonder how / my body rises past these lighter bodies [*Par.* I.97-99]). That novel condition translates from the transcendental perception of those "corpi levi" (light bodies [*Par.* I.99]), which simultaneously corroborate the pilgrim's imminent, immaterial experience. These types of space (cosmos and celestial bodies) entail the pilgrim's sense of immaterial existence (namely, the high reality),⁷ which is symptomatic of the paradisiac nature and corroborates the continuation of the pilgrim's mental upsurge through the previously suggested intellectual crescendo.⁸

This upward movement (mental upsurge and intellectual crescendo) contributes to Dante the poet's notion of immaterial sense by first making the pilgrim more acquainted with the

⁶ To reconsider my analysis of the notion of trans-humanization, see pages 92-100 from Chapter One. To reiterate my definition of sense of urgency, please see pages 104-105 from Chapter One.

⁷ The higher reality is a type of reality that refers to the immaterial, divine realm that also characterizes an intangible experience.

⁸ This mental upsurge is a notion that I examined in Chapter One on pp. 115-117.

paradisiac experience and the higher reality. Second, it also transforms the pilgrim's self-image into an archetypal representation of the poet's audience in the later stage of his enterprise in the realm of *Paradiso*.⁹ The pilgrim's self-image reveals the possibility of change in a human mindset that consequently indicates a more balanced sense of awareness. His own self-image reveals a number of changes symptomatic of a more balanced sense of ethical understanding and, a more balanced understanding of divinity. However, the idea of "trasumanar" (passing beyond the human [*Par.* I.70]) that characterizes a transcendental experience for the pilgrim activates only an important moment along the transcendental experience for the pilgrim. Dante the pilgrim will be absorbing a greater amount of mnemonic sensibility through a higher degree of interpretation. He will be engaging with not only transcendental and immaterial realities, (souls, lights, etc.), but heavenly experiences that relate to the pilgrim's responsiveness to upcoming divine experiences (earlier in *Purgatorio*) and of divine realities in *Paradiso* (the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity).

To be responsive to divine experiences such as those mentioned earlier in *Purgatorio*, Dante the pilgrim must demonstrate his willingness to do good through the notion of "divina bontà" (Godly Goodness [*Par.* VII.64]).¹⁰ Known as the quality or disposition of what is good and infinite, which is moved by the same pilgrim's willingness to do good, the notion of "divina bontà" (Godly Goodness [*Par.* VII.64]) refers to an abstracted intelligible content whose most eloquent version occurs in the seventh canto of *Paradiso*.¹¹ Beatrice explains to the pilgrim what is hidden from those who have not been brought up in the flame of divine love, and she describes

⁹ An example would be the poet's address to the reader from *Paradiso* II.1-15. In reference to the notion of immaterial sense, please see pages see pp. 116-119 from Chapter Two.

¹⁰ Some examples of previously examined divine aspects are heavenly lights formed along the heavens from *Purg.* XVII.13-18 and the theological virtues.

¹¹ The previously studied "Godly Goodness" allows Dante's art of memory to shine within the divine realm of *Paradiso*, such as Beatrice lecturing Dante the pilgrim about a discipline that is about to be unfolded in the divine realm of *Paradiso*. To consider further the notion of *divina bontà* (Godly Goodness from *Par.* VII.64) and its first implication for the pilgrim advancing across the realm of *Paradiso*, see pp. 163-165 from Chapter Two.

how man's privileged position is in the universe. Beatrice's important indication refers to this divine graciousness to do good as a concept that transcends other divine truths: "La divina bontà, che da sé sperne / ogne livore, ardendo in sé, sfavilla / sì che dispiega le bellezze etterne" (The Godly Goodness that has banished every / envy from Its own Self, burns in Itself; / and sparkling so, it shows eternal beauties [*Par.* VII.64-66]). This "Godly Goodness" brings forth men and angels, just as a blazing fire sends out sparks. It reveals other truths such as its eternal beauties by giving them a visible, objective form in the created world.¹² In other terms, this "divina bontà" (Godly Goodness [*Par.* VII.64]) represents the form of the highest good existing within divine man, which allows him to fashion all characteristics according to the external surroundings and divine realities of *Paradiso*.¹³

¹² Cfr. Boethius, *Philosophae Consolatio*, III, m. ix, 4-6.

¹³ The list that follows comprises a sequence of technical-methodical terms that should be useful for this entire chapter: mnemonic sensibility corresponds to an intangible state of being, where only abstract and divine experiences from the higher reality can be perceived; intellectual crescendo is a mental upsurge that represents one aspect of activating Dante's notion of immaterial sense; prolepsis is a procedure that embraces a movement forward and for a good reason; divine action is symbolic of an internal aspect, as well as intrinsic progress to the divine moment that the pilgrim is experiencing while perceiving new divine realities of *Paradiso*; operatio (or moral act of potency) is a moral action from which Dante is able to act upon the transcendental rather than merely speculating about it; habitus is a conception of the human person (Dante) as open to development and modification from both natural and divine causes (i.e., altering imagination – connected to memory); disposition is the quality indicating what is good and infinite, which is moved by the same pilgrim's willingness to do good; moral rectitude is a type of moral act that triggers and traces the pilgrim's effort to reach eventually out for the salvation in the *Commedia*; moral truth is a principle belonging to Dante making right choices for the right reasons; theological exercise is a spiritual practice that will guide Dante to the absorption of his own enduring desire, namely eschatological salvation; theological framework (or structure) is a framework that the three virtues of faith, hope, and love generate after the three individual examinations are offered to Dante the pilgrim; theological crescendo is a mental upsurge that begins when Dante the pilgrim embraces the first virtue of faith; theological transcendence is a procedure that emerges through mutual interlacement leading to a theological interconnectedness between the three virtues and the art of memory; imago dei translates as image of God, which refers to the image of He who created him as regards his body or any part of his consciousness, but as regards the rational unity of mind, soul, and memory that is capable of recognizing God; esse symbolizes a state of being that accompanies simple nature in the case of simple substances; non-esse symbolizes a state of being that seeks alternative and more complex experience; imaginative power refers to Dante's representation and exemplification of abstract concepts in general, with much resourcefulness and inventiveness; truth-claim represents an ontological expression of a shift from one principle to another or the representation of an abstract discipline like divine science; ontological truth/principle indicates one type of truth-claim, which can be manifested through experiences, thought processes, and imagination; self-subsistent principle is a type of concept that emerges and exists on its own, without any attachment to human senses; immaterial perception is a type of perception related to the metaphysical memory and in relation solely to immaterial experiences; material and immaterial past: material past refers to the tangible experiences on earth, while immaterial past reveals to those experiences that cannot be juxtaposed with any earthly feature because they did not originate from the human senses, but rather from the imagination; immaterial experience are experiences relevant to the

If this “divina bontà” (Godly Goodness [*Par.* VII.64]) represents the form of the highest good existing within the divine man, this divine aspect should not characterize Dante the pilgrim as a divine man. However, his perseverance symbolizes the means that determines the process to move onwards that is also a point that has been outlined in Saint Augustine’s *De civitate Dei* and in Boethius’ *Philosophiae Consolatio*. While Augustine expresses the need to be persistent in detaching oneself from material possessions,¹⁴ Boethius advocates the outcome of perseverance, which continues into finally embracing the splendor of the true light.¹⁵ If Dante the pilgrim has finally detached from the light of darkness, his idea of persistence is exemplified to a greater extent.¹⁶ Dante the author manifests the pilgrim’s willingness to overcome constraints by first believing in the existence of a superior God. Dante the poet knows that without enduring any

higher reality of Dante the pilgrim, including the meeting or the vision of angels, intelligences, and the paradisiac lights; mnemonic perception relates to perception of the metaphysical memory; act of potency concerns a form of action of the self, meaning not only that of the angels whose existence relates to their own operation, but also of self-subsistent principle whose nature and stigma originate from their own action; mnemonic advancement indicates a progression from biological memory to the metaphysical memory; active agent represents an active cause that allows Dante to reenact memories from past experiences; divine artifice relates to divine artfulness and to the element of artificiality, which is most relevant to God’s creations; imagines agentes are also called in English images of memory, a concept that lends concrete shape to abstract concepts; divina bontà translates to Godly Goodness, which represents the form of highest good and refines the course of Dante’s journey towards the Empyrean; cogitatio is a thought process that relates to memory, which can be compared to a small-scale composition and a combination of various pieces from one’s artistic inventory.

¹⁴ Augustinus Aurelius, *De civitate Dei*, C. D., XV, ed. and trans. by Jeffrey Henderson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 132: “Nullo enim modo fit minor accedente seu permanente consorte possessio bonitatis, immo possessio bonitas, quam tanto latius, quanto concordius indiuidua sociorum possidet caritas. Non habebit denique istam possessionem, qui eam noluerit habere communem, et tanto eam reperiet ampliorem, quanto amplius ibi potuerit amare consortem.” [For the possession of goodness is by no means diminished by being shared with a partner either permanent or temporarily assumed; on the contrary, the possession of goodness is increased in proportion to the concord and charity of each of those who share it. In short, he who is unwilling to share this possession cannot have it; and he who is most willing to admit others to a share of it will have the greatest abundance to himself.] The English translation of Augustinus Aurelius, *De civitate Dei* comes from: Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, 281.

¹⁵ Boethius, *Philosophiae Consolatio*, 120: “hanc paulisper lenibus mediocribusque fomentis attenuare temptabo, ut dimotis fallacium affectionum tenebris splendorem verae lucis possis agnoscere.” [I shall try to dispel this cloud by gentle treatment, so that when the darkness of deceptive feeling is removed you may recognize the splendor of true light.] Boethius’ English translation is provided by Douglas C. Langston, *The Consolation of Philosophy* (New York: Norton, 2010), 16.

¹⁶ Niccolò Tommaseo, *Commento alla ‘Commedia’*, 1030-1031. Tommaseo suggests that Dante’s determination results into removing what is unnecessary and so move onwards with his journey. But his comment about these specific verses from *Purgatorio* XV (as most of the pages from the three volumes collection) relies mostly on voices from earlier period than Dante, such as Saint Augustine, Benvenuto da Imola, Boethius, etc.

motivation towards divinity, this stance could be deliberately caged within the static realm of human conditions.

Benvenuto da Imola undoubtedly justifies the pilgrim's impetus to reach divinity and alludes to the parallel between the power of a human and that of an animal. He claims that only the human being is able to bond between God and the earth, between the corporeal entity of humans and the spiritual nature of God.¹⁷ This concept of stretching the mental power of a mortal human being in the face of divinity remains consistent with Dante the author in the *Convivio*: "dice Aristotele nel decimo dell' *Etica*, contra Simonide poeta parlando, che 'l'uomo si dee traere alle divine cose quanto può:' in che mostra che a certo fine bada la nostra potenza." (Therefore, Aristotle in the tenth book of the *Ethics*, speaking against the poet Simonides, says that 'A man should be drawn as far as possible to divine things,' by which he shows that our faculty contemplates a certain end [*Conv.* IV.xiii.8]). This same period demonstrates a certain continuity through which this series of textual references coherently evolves. Maria Luisa Ardizzone claims that the human being (as shown in this passage) receiving the grace or nobility of intellect as something collective alludes to an intellectual activity bestowed by God and thus the intrinsic unity of the human intellectual activity.¹⁸ In the case of Dante, this intrinsic unity spawns and simultaneously strengthens Dante the pilgrim's eagerness to move onwards with perseverance.¹⁹

Since Dante the pilgrim can never reach or see God or face directly the realm of divinity, Dante refashions parts of the pilgrim's self-image and surroundings to act as a quasi-divine man,

¹⁷ Benvenuto da Imola, *Lectura Dantis Bononiensis*, 528: "Unde solus homo, ut inquit Hermes, est nexus Dei et mundi, eo quod divinum intellectum in se habet, per quem aliquando supra mundum elevatur; unde homo perseverans in culmine mentis trahit ad se corpus et mundum, quia anima nata est dominari corpori et mundo."

¹⁸ Maria Luisa Ardizzone, *Reading as the Angels Read: Speculation and Politics in Dante's Banquet*, 364.

¹⁹ To reconsider my reasoning around the notion of negative theology, see note #66, on p. 144 from Chapter Two.

even prior to his entrance to *Paradiso*.²⁰ In fact, the evolution of the art of memory in Dante begins by representing an art form that operates mostly along higher realities and through Dante's own imaginative realm, as seen in Chapter Two. According to Dante the author, the higher imagination is an index, a manifestation, a symbol of the presence, a necessity for fully embracing the nature of the divine, and by fully embracing what has been sent down from God. In this next textual example, the pilgrim is captivated by another divine reality, which occurs by perceiving the divine light in *Purgatorio* (i.e., angels, Beatrice's voice, heavenly lights). Despite being in profusion in *Paradiso*, heavenly aspects are also present throughout Dante's journey:

“O imaginativa che ne rube
 talvolta sì di fuor, ch'om non s'accorge
 perché dintorno suonin mille tube,
 chi move te, se 'l senso non ti porge?
 Moveti lume che nel ciel s'informa,
 per sé o per voler che giù lo scorge.”
 (*Purg.* XVII.13-18)

[O fantasy, you that at times would snatch
 us so from outward things – we notice nothing
 although a thousand trumpets sound around us
 who moves you when the senses do not spur you?
 A light that finds its form in Heaven moves you
 directly or led downward by God's will.]

Dante the poet reveals the idea of the five senses in this passage, which converse without physical elements in the imagination. In contrast to common sense, the recipient of sense impressions is able to preserve those impressions only so long as they are present. It seems also clear that the visions that follow, like those experiences of the protagonist two cantos earlier (*Purg.* XV.22-29), are sent to him and to the penitents on the terrace directly by God. By transferring those experiences down to the penitents, the pilgrim is perceiving this transcendental

²⁰ It is widely known that Dante is not a divine man who acts like God, and he also suggests that it is not possible for any human to be like God (*De Monarchia*, III.ii). However, we will soon examine the significance of Dante adopting the language of God and we should keep in mind that it is the light of God that makes Himself visible to Dante and not otherwise (*Par.* I.97-99). Just as any other human being, Dante cannot be like God, but the latter can reach out to him. Another example occurs when God bestows His grace upon the pilgrim (*Purg.* XXX.112), which shows how close God can be to the pilgrim by means of virtuous action.

motion that comes from above, from the heavens, which is a light that takes form in Heaven either naturally through the natural influence of the stars or through the will of God. Even if Dante the pilgrim is not yet positioned in *Paradiso*, he feels the need to embrace this “lume che nel ciel s’informa” (light that finds its form in Heaven [*Purg.* XVII.17]) as a sign of acceptance to do good (Godly Goodness from *Par.* VII.64). By doing good, Dante the pilgrim can absorb this transcendental experience and further change his imagination in order to move forward and to enrich the course of his eschatological salvation.²¹ Most essentially, if moving forward for Dante entails a change in his imagination (which is connected with the previously examined metaphysical memory), Dante the poet is asking his readers to trust in this “lume” (light [*Purg.* XVII.17]) in motion as a necessary step for these faculties (imagination and memory) to take once the pilgrim faces this symbolic advancement in the heavens.²²

III.2. From the Idea of Prolepsis to Divine Action

III.2.1. The Notion of Prolepsis

If moving forward for the pilgrim means to absorb the previously suggested transcendental experience that concerns the transcendental motion of the imagination (*Purg.* XVII.13-18), this aspect conveys that Dante is not only a Christian poet, but also a poet of moral rectitude and change. In order to be a poet of moral rectitude, Dante will need to face change in

²¹ The episode of Casella from *Purg.* II offers a good example for the interconnectedness between metaphysical memory and imagination, with respect to the idea of salvation. As the pilgrim moves from the realm of essence to that of existence, Dante the poet can showcase more explicitly both natures of being. Memory in the face of the imagination is action from one end to the next, and it is the same pilgrim’s progress and traveling that nurtures this action. Just as Dante the pilgrim’s imagining exceeds the confines of the anticipatable future, so his recollection of images or events overruns the boundaries of the delimited past.

²² To take the interconnectedness of metaphysical memory and imagination to a greater extent, see my interpretation of new “solco” (wake) from *Par.* II.14 on pages 155-157 from Chapter Two, where I argue that this wake cannot belong to Dante’s natural memory because this “wake” is the product of the poet’s imagination.

order to fulfill his moral act of potency.²³ An example of formed moral action appears in the *Epistle to Cangrande della Scala*, in which Dante the author detaches the notion of moral integrity from any sign of ethical conjecture: “Genus vero phylosophie sub quo hic in toto et parte proceditur, est morale negotium, sive ethica; quia non ad speculandum, sed ad opus inventum est totum et pars” (The branch of philosophy to which the work is subject, in the whole as in the part, is that of morals or ethics; inasmuch as the whole as well as the part was conceived, not for speculation, but with a practical object [*Epist.* XIII.xvi.40]). Dante the pilgrim constantly faces otherworldly challenges that heighten his own human expectations along the course of his eschatological salvation. This is also another reason he needs to move forward with his enterprise with the concepts that he has absorbed along the way (i.e., art of memory). Yet, by engaging with this moral action, Dante is able to act upon the transcendental rather than merely speculating about it.

Instead of speculation, Dante the pilgrim’s motion represents a form of action that is unceasingly engaged toward the goal of salvation, where the pilgrim continuously attempts an undeviating movement in a given direction. It is this process that I call prolepsis, which is a procedure that not only indicates a movement forward, but most specifically for a good reason. Since the pilgrim’s moral rectitude operates through the metaphysical notion of act of potency and “divina bontà” (Godly Goodness [*Par.* VII.64]), Dante the poet endorses new mental constructs or abstract and intangible ideas to bear value across the pilgrim’s moral standings. Aquinas claimed that the full development of true freedom and human flourishing requires a principle of rectitude. He called this rectitude the truth of life, which undergirds the whole of

²³ The act of potency reflects a form of action of the self, such as that of the angels whose existence relates to their own operation. This act also relates to a self-subsistent principle, whose nature and stigma originate from their own action. Additionally, in reference to the idea of action as opposed to speculation in *Paradiso*, see also Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, II 1 993b 21 and Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super Sententiis*, Vols. 3 and 4, ed. by M. F. Moos (Paris, 1947), II 2 2.

human existence.²⁴ Despite the fact that Aquinas' assertion is significantly valid from an anthropological perspective, Dante is a poet of moral rectitude, in which rectitude specifically refers to the moralizing truth of his own journey.

One way to decipher the moralizing truth of Dante's own journey is by embracing the notion of *habitus* (quality) which comes from Thomas Aquinas' *Summa* to indicate the definite capacity for growth through activity.²⁵ *Habitus* is a conception of the human person (Dante) as open to development and modification from both natural and divine causes (i.e., altering imagination as connected to memory, from *Purg.* XVII.13-18). *Habitus* represents a state of potentiality in regard to itself, to something else, or someone else. For the quality to be described as a *habitus*, it must attain a certain degree of individual's human psychology. The notion of *habitus* will shape Dante the pilgrim's psyche to the best of his ability, and Marco Lombardo's explanation of free will from *Purgatorio* XVI needs to be considered as a wakeup call for the pilgrim. In this next passage, Dante the pilgrim needs to flourish with his moral attitude ahead of constant changes that can undermine his ability to fully and truthfully engage with his terms of salvation and redemption: "e libero voler; che, se fatica / ne le prime battaglie col ciel dura, / poi vince tutto, se ben si notrica (and free will, which though / it struggle in its first wards with the heavens, / then conquers all, if it has been well nurtured [*Purg.* XVI.76-78]). Since the moral life and the poet's rectitude requires free choice to develop and move forward with his enterprise, the measure or value of a given quality, namely the notion of *habitus*, will result from how well such a choice conforms to the requirements of authentic moral wisdom and rectitude.

²⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, IIa-IIae q. 109, a. 3, ad 3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, q. 49, a. 3. Aquinas says that *habitus* is derived from the Latin language as "habere" (to have). *Habitus* is taken from this word in two ways: a man has something or has a particular thing in relation to either itself or something else. *Habitus*, Aquinas continues, is one species of quality, that is habit and disposition.

While Dante the wayfarer has free will like any human being, he also finds the privilege to measure it up to higher standards (Beatrice, Virgin Mary). While he does so, Dante the pilgrim must also recalculate the right measurements to engage with free will properly and morally correct. A case in point occurs at the end of the second canticle, where Dante the poet defines Beatrice's rebuke to the pilgrim as a form of potentiality for a new quest: "Questi fu tal ne la sua vita nova / virtüalmente, ch'ogne abito destro / fatto averebbe in lui mirabil prova" (he, when young, was such – potentially – that any / propensity innate in him would have / prodigiously succeeded, had he acted [*Purg.* XXX.115-117]). Even if these verses refer to the first age of Dante in the *Vita Nuova* where Dante and Beatrice met at a young age, Dante the pilgrim must be fully disposed in order to operate with the properly fit free will.²⁶ More specifically, *habitus* and free will for the pilgrim are mutually exclusive because he needs to move forward with a given quality that allows the pilgrim to conform to higher standards of rectitude. Dante the poet considers *habitus* as a psychological empowerment of human disposition of the pilgrim's moral rectitude, particularly when we think of *habitus* as a conception of the human person (Dante) as open to development and modification from both natural and divine causes (*Purg.* XXX.115-117). From a psychological empowerment, these previously suggested verses from *Purgatorio* represent the pilgrim's progress while exposed to both natural and divine realities (paradisiac spheres, lights, angels, etc.). Since *habitus* assists the pilgrim in making good choices by respecting the moral rectitude of his enterprise, the pilgrim's conformation to the divine requirements of his journey demonstrates how close free will and *habitus* are.

²⁶ In *Purgatorio* XXX, Beatrice rebukes the pilgrim after the disappearance of Virgil. Additionally, the poet defines also a temporal stage from Dante's youth to maturity, dividing the ages into a threefold implication. The first age of adolescence goes from zero to twenty-five years old. The second age of youth goes from twenty-five to forty-five. The third age for Dante resonates with perfection and goes until his death in 1321.

By examining this same passage from *Purgatorio* XXX to a deeper extent, the notion of *habitus* becomes more clearly identified as a form of disposition. The nature and notion of a disposition is to be a source of action, and every *habitus* is united with his/her possessor (Dante), whose capacity is connected primarily with action.²⁷ In these next verses, Dante the poet integrates the notion of *habitus* as a means of disposing the pilgrim's self-image through the considerably admonishing voice of Beatrice. What follows needs to be taken in context, including intellectual as well as other modes of activity:

“Non pur per ovra delle rote magne,
 che drizzan ciascun seme ad alcun fine
 secondo che le stelle son compagne,
 ma per larghezza di grazie divine,
 che sì alti vapori hanno a lor piova,
 che nostre viste là non van vicine,
 questi fu tal nella sua vita nova
 virtüalmente, ch’ogni abito destro
 fatto averebbe in lui mirabil prova.”
 (Purg. XXX.109-117)

[‘Not only through the work of the great spheres which guide each seed to a determined end, depending on what stars are its companions but through the bounty of the godly graces, which shower down from clouds so high that we cannot approach them with our vision, he, when young, was such – potentially – that any propensity innate in him would have prodigiously succeeded, had he acted.’]

Beatrice's gentle rebuke of the angels is that they, aware of Dante the pilgrim's past sins and of his eventual salvation, are now seeing him primarily as a saved soul rather than as a formerly sinful one. The last four lines from the previously mentioned passage unfold the figure of God who finally breathes in the vital element, the intellectual, or rational soul. These last verses also explain that the generation of the rational soul is performed directly by God, and that not even the saved in the Empyrean nor the angels can understand the love that moves God in the creation of the soul in each of his human creatures. Dante the poet is able to dispose and exercise the

²⁷ Including the art of memory in Dante, which is an art form that provides the pilgrim with a form of action.

pilgrim's will power while integrating the notion of *habitus* as a form of disposition with the act of potency. By doing so, the pilgrim must hold that *habitus* develops as a result of human agency while being submitted to the "divina bontà" (Godly Goodness [*Par.* VII.64]).

Additionally, if Dante is a poet of change across the realm of divinity, he is still willing to enhance the path of his own prolepsis by adopting *habitus* as an imperative means of nurturing the significant value of virtue.²⁸ Dante the poet characterizes the close significance between *habitus* and virtue, particularly when Dante the pilgrim speaks of God in terms of His grace. *Habitus* represents in this case a form of special activity, an inclination as a form of nature from some gift of grace, for which a man might have more power to produce its effect than another man. This same active power (*habitus*) comes about in such a way that one man is more readily responsive to an act of virtue than another. For instance, in *Paradiso* XXII, Dante presents the seventh invocation in the poem to the Constellation of Gemini. Dante the poet shows how much more inclined some humans can be towards a different form of nature while embracing a special virtue because of that form of *habitus*:

"O gloriose stelle, o lume pregno
di gran virtù, dal quale io riconosco
tutto, qual che si sia, il mio ingegno,
con voi nasceva e s'ascondeva vosco
quelli ch'è padre d'ogne mortal vita,
quand'io senti' di prima l'aere tosco;
e poi, quando mi fu grazia largita
d'entrar ne l'alta rota che vi gira,
la vostra regione mi fu sortita."
(*Par.* XXII.112-120)

[O stars of glory, constellation steeped
in mighty force, all of my genius
whatever be its worth – has you as source:
with you was born and under you was hidden
he who is father of all mortal lives,
when I first felt the air of Tuscany;

²⁸ Aquinas suggests that dispositions belong to the predicament position, which is the order of parts in a place. He also suggests that disposition refers to power which is in course of formation and not yet arrived at perfect usefulness. The last stage of *habitus* as a form of disposition resonates with perfect dispositions, which are called habits, such as perfected science and virtue. Cfr. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, IIa-IIae q. 49, a. 4.

and then, when grace was granted me to enter
the high wheel that impels your revolutions,
your region was my fated point of entry.’]

This invocation can be examined in two aspects. It underlines the importance of the visit to the stars that shaped his human abilities on the one hand. That is the reason why in this same invocation we read about the poet asking the muses for help and for God to announce His own grace. Dante the poet’s soul now devoutly locates the source of this poetic gift because his power to define his strenuous imaginings needs to be constantly reenacted in Dante the poet’s own imagination. The poet’s power of definition is a product of his imagination because *Paradiso* and the entire *Commedia* is a product of his own imagination. On the other hand, Dante the poet aligns his own powers as a virtuous poet with specific qualities allotted him by God. Dante the poet proceeds by highlighting the equation between God’s powers and the heavenly spheres suggested by *Paradiso* II.9. This occurs through the agency of the orientation of the stars at his birth when the Sun was under the sign of Gemini. Dante the pilgrim’s *habitus* disposes him to some abilities that are special and active in the face of divinity: “e tutti e sette mi si dimostraro / quanto son grandi e quanto son veloci / e come sono in distante riparo” (And all the seven heavens showed to me / their magnitudes, their speeds, the distances / of each from each [*Par.* XXII.148-150]). From his vantage point in the eighth-celestial sphere, Dante the pilgrim is now able to observe the relationships among the seven planets and the differing speeds of their rotations around the earth. Most importantly, by writing these verses, Dante wants readers to understand that his devotion of his entire *ingegno* (talent, including poetic talent) to the stars of Gemini indicates a shared effort between the poet’s disposition to do good (by adopting virtuous ways) and his poetic talent to increase the reader’s receptiveness to his own poetic abilities.²⁹

²⁹ The last stage of *habitus* as a form of disposition resonates with perfect dispositions, which are called habits, such as perfected science and virtue. Cfr. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, IIa-IIae q. 49, a. 4. See also: Richard of St. Victor, *The Twelve Patriarchs, The Mystical Ark, Book Three of the Trinity*, trans. by Grover A. Zinn (New

III.2.2. The Concept of Divine Action

Dante the poet's imagining exceeds the confines of the foreseeable future. It extends not only to the past recaptured in recollection (i.e., recollecting an episode that happened to Dante), but stretches beyond anything the pilgrim might have previously experienced in his past.³⁰ In the eighth celestial sphere of *Paradiso* XXII, Dante the pilgrim perceives the relationships among the seven planets and the differing speeds of their rotations. Dante the poet is expanding his imagination beyond the pilgrim's foreseeable future. The poet disposes the pilgrim's virtuous action in preparation for certain divine actions (God's grace, abundant and divine *Par.* XXV.69), which contrast with the earthly principles of human acts. As developed within his journey, Dante's notion of virtue consists of real sources of human action, working in both efficient and final causality. In the *Convivio*, Dante defines moral virtue as an "abito elettivo consistente nel mezzo" (a habit of choice that keeps to the mean [*Conv.* IV.xvii.7]), which is acquired through repeated actions.³¹ In other words, virtue is activated by the *habitus*, which disposes the virtuous poet to action while energizing both his quest and the attainment of a happy life.

Dante's notion of virtue represents also a divine enlightening principle or power that saturates the content of the *Paradiso*. This occurs already in Beatrice's explanation of the varying intensities of virtue in the moon spots in *Paradiso* II. Beatrice tells the pilgrim about the

York: Paulist Press, 1979), pp. 180-181. Richard of St. Victor is among the first to consider virtue as a form of action in the face of future progression and advancement. Richard of St. Victor also explains how the nature of artwork operates: an artificial work is considered a work of human activity, as in engraving, painting, writing, agriculture, and other artificial works, in all of which we find many things that we ought worthily to venerate and marvel at the dignity of a divine gift.

³⁰ Cfr. Leo Elders, *The Philosophical Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 19-34; David Burrell, *Knowing the Unknowable God* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986); for more extended discussion of the nature of *esse* and the idea of matter and potency, see Peter Weigel, *Aquinas on Simplicity: An Investigation into the Foundations of His Philosophical Theology* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2008), 356-380; Brian Davies, "Simplicity," in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Philosophical Theology*, eds. Chad Meister and Charles Taliaferro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 36-54.

³¹ Cfr. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I. IIae. 56.i.

quantity and the quality of light, while focusing lastly on the formal principle of distribution for the universe's matter that is spiritual and not physical: "Dentro dal ciel de la divina pace / si gira un corpo ne la cui virtute / l'esser di tutto suo contento giace" (Within the heaven of the godly peace / revolves a body in whose power lies / the being of all things that it enfolds [*Par.* II.112-114]). The "ciel de la divina pace" (the heaven of the godly peace) is the Empyrean, which is located beyond space and time, and Beatrice identifies it as located in the mind of God (*Par.* XXVII.109-111). Dante the poet suggests that the aforesaid heaven of the moon spots governs the daily revolution of all the others with its movement, by which every day they all receive and transmit here below the virtue of all their parts.

In Dante's world, virtue entails a particular structuring principle. It is a transcendental structure of the third canticle, where virtue, according to Dante, pervades the superior structures of *Paradiso*. Beatrice explains the varying intensities of virtue in the moon spots in *Paradiso* II, and the pilgrim is consequently absorbing this same lecture in order to later apply as he moves forwards with his journey. Through this same explanation about the levels of intensities in *Paradiso* II, the pilgrim will also need to absorb the implication of such a virtue. On the one hand, Dante's virtue must also be considered as a divine informing principle or power that pervades both structure and content from the beginning of the *Paradiso*. On the other hand, virtue must be considered a form of action, which indicates a value foregrounded from the beginning of *Paradiso* to the positioning of the celestial heavens themselves. Virtue is foremost a form of action to Dante's accreditation of his own poetic virtue to the informing virtue of Gemini when he arrives in the Heaven of the Fixed Stars in *Paradiso* XXII.

By following and perceiving Beatrice's explanation of the moon spots and the constant motion, such as to learn about the motion and the power of the holy wheels, Dante the pilgrim is

also engaging his virtue shaped by *habitus* and astrological aspects to live these as divine moments. The vision of moon spots and other astrological aspects refer to divine moments because *Paradiso* is a divine realm and virtue is a transcendental structure of *Paradiso*. *Habitus* disposes Dante the pilgrim's psyche in the face of upcoming immaterial divine actions, which represent the first apparatus of the theologizing element of the *ars memorativa* in Dante: "e come l'alma dentro a vostra polve / per differenti membra e conformate / a diverse potenze si risolve" (And as the soul within your dust is shared / by different organs, each most suited to / a difference potency [*Par.* II.133-135]). The "polve" (dust [*Par.* II.133]) in these verses is our flesh which is in motion with respect to its various members through the divine action of the angelic intelligences. Divine action is representative of a generic notion of what fundamentally begins the process of divinization for Dante's past experiences and events (including the art of memory in Dante).

Dante the pilgrim will still need to proceed on the rest of his journey very cautiously. He has been vigilantly listening to constant rebukes from Beatrice in *Paradiso* II concerning accounts of the moon spots (vv. 46-51), as well as the correct way to perceive the rarity and density of the celestial powers (vv. 64-11). To cautiously perceive these same paradisiacal, higher realities obliges the pilgrim to properly engage with divine actions and to encompass these divine moments with the virtue of prudence. The virtue of prudence is a distinct *habitus* of the intellect. Prudence relates to this refining procedure of the art of memory in Dante (which already entails *habitus*, virtue, and divine action) because it informs forward motion, prolepsis, and the exercise of Dante's Christian life (*Par.* XXV.67-70).³² Without possessing prudence, Dante can neither behave well nor develop good character prior to meeting God. A case in point

³² In these next few pages, I will craft a theological framework that consists of examining concepts such as prudence, the three theological virtues, theological interconnectedness, divine rule, etc. that will trace the theological development of the *ars memorativa* in Dante.

occurs in *Paradiso* XIII, where Dante the poet introduces the wisdom of Solomon and simultaneously describes the importance of prudence:

“Onde, se ciò ch’io dissi e questo note,
 regal prudenza è quel vedere impari
 in che lo stral di mia intenzion percuote;
 e se al surse drizzi li occhi chiari,
 vedrai aver solamente rispetto
 ai regi, che son molti, e’ buon son rari.”
 (*Par.* XIII.103-108)

[‘Thus, if you note both what I said and say,
 by ‘matchless vision’ it is kingly prudence
 my arrow of intention means to strike;
 and if you turn clear eyes to that word ‘rose,’
 you’ll see that it referred to kings alone
 kings, who are many, and the good are rare.’]

If Solomon is discussing “regal prudenza” (kingly prudence [*Par.* XIII.104]) while justifying it with “quell veder impari” (matchless vision [Ibid]) on the one hand, he is also alluding to the purpose that this same prudence can lend to the pilgrim’s constant forward motion on the other hand. Solomon was the first among the wise kings, but he was so prudent and virtuous that he did not infringe upon the primacy of either Adam (the first father) or of Jesus (the One we love). According to Dante the poet, the virtue of prudence in Solomon becomes a significant asset for the pilgrim to absorb because the virtue of prudence resonates with regal wisdom, which is what Dante the pilgrim finally perceives from Solomon’s talk.

If the previously suggested divine action begins the process of divinization for Dante’s past experiences and events (*Par.* II.133-135), the virtue of prudence represents the beginning point of divine action because it remains a virtue of flawlessness. The generic practice of the virtues enables a person to pursue with intelligence, wisdom, and embrace the real natural and supernatural goods that are intended by God to perfect human existence. Prudence enables a person to choose what conforms sensibly to the dictates of right reason (moral truth). The previously examined passage about Solomon in *Paradiso* XIII demonstrates how prudence puts

the pilgrim's moral truth in human conduct. This passage showcases how the virtue of prudence shapes human action and enhances Dante's moral rectitude throughout his decisions. By placing prudence at the center of moral practice, Dante the poet is able to avoid the anxieties and misperceptions that certain obstacles cause throughout the pilgrim's enterprise.

III.3. The Three Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope, and Love

The virtue of prudence will still allow Dante the pilgrim to operate cautiously among paradisiac souls like Solomon (*Par.* XIII). This specific virtue will be characterized as that "matchless vision" (*Par.* XIII.104) that refines Dante's perception of the course of his Christian life (*Par.* XXV.67-70). If prudence allows Dante the pilgrim to behave well and develop good character prior to meeting God, the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity will allow the pilgrim to materialize the foundation of moral rectitude to a greater extent. The three virtues are described in *Paradiso* XXIV, XXV, and XXVI, respectively, which will contribute to the theologizing factor of *ars memorativa*. However, Dante the pilgrim's theological understanding of the virtues begins in *Purgatorio* I, in which Dante the poet invokes several themes central to the question of Dante's theological notion of virtue.

In *Purgatorio* I, we are reminded forcibly that Dante is on a journey, progressing from place to place and from state to state. In this next passage, Dante the poet describes an assisted journey in which divine virtue descends upon Dante the pilgrim in the form first of Beatrice and then mediated through Virgil: "Com'io l'ho tratto, saria lungo a dirti; / de l'alto scende virtù che m'aiuta / condurlo a vederti e a udirti" (To tell you how I led him would take long; / it is a power descending from above / that helps me guide him here, to see and hear you [*Purg.* I.67-

69]). While these words resonate with part of Virgil's *captatio benevolentiae*, in these early lines Dante the poet implicitly notes that the three theological virtues are not acquired.³³ It is rather an implicit case because the "virtù" (power [*Purg.* I.68]) that descends from on high upon the pilgrim makes this most extraordinary journey possible. By the light of the intellect, we can discern what is good and bad for us. Consequently, the intellect sees that the mind is free from the heavens and that we must lead a life in accordance with our highest power, and in the case of Dante, the pilgrim through divine action.

These previously suggested lines from *Purgatorio* I assert continuous divine help and account for the new dimensions of Virgil's knowledge. The "virtù" (power [*Purg.* I.68]) that leads Virgil from above is apparent to him when he first sees Beatrice in Limbo, which is what Dante the poet describes also in the first canticle: "O donna di virtù sola per cui / l'umana spezie eccede ogne contento / di quel ciel c'ha minor li cerchi sui" (O Lady of virtue, the sole reason why / the human race surpasses all that lies / beneath the heaven with the smallest spheres [*Inf.* II.76-78]). Beatrice is considered a virtuous lady whose virtuous dispositions alone, which are shared by others, will bring them to salvation and out of the sublunar world of sin. Beatrice demonstrates that sin is incompatible with virtue, and that human beings can avoid sin only through God's grace. If considered in their perfection, absorbed virtues (faith, hope, and love) are incompatible with any mortal sin. The absorbed type of virtue is effective to the extent that even if the pilgrim feels emotions, they do control him, for absorbed virtue means that we refrain

³³ The word grace comes from Latin *gratia*, which implies something that is given freely or granted as a favor. The receiving of grace (or the indwelling of the Holy Spirit) was believed to be the conjunction of divine grace and free will. Saint Augustine believed that salvation depends more on one's own faith than on God's grace. The philosopher also set out to show that this understanding of predestination does not negate the good brought about by asceticism and fidelity. While God's foreknowledge never obliterates human striving like Dante's journey, each step of that striving is accomplished by God's grace. From this point on, we understand that divine grace emboldens and makes the created will truly and gradually free. Dante's actions are free after he is infused with the virtues precisely because God's grace has first emancipated his will to be free and to perform good actions until the end of his journey. Cfr. Saint Augustine, *Spirit et litterae*, ed. and trans. Roland Teske (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2001), 30.52.

totally from obeying sinful desires, and as long as it remains in us, we do so unfailingly.³⁴ Beatrice's voice symbolizes a form of mediation through a human figure with whom the poet engages emotionally. Thus, the necessity of a reciprocal relationship between God and man is conceptually and symbolically grounded in human interaction.

Furthermore, the "virtù" (power [*Purg.* I.68]) descending "de l'alto" (from above [*Purg.* I.68]) that makes possible this most extraordinary journey is essentially what resonates with divine help, which will be bestowed upon the sole pilgrim later in the course of his journey. Dante the poet establishes a peculiar case by the time a human like the pilgrim is about to absorb the three theological virtues, making him the product of mediation between divine and human. The antagonist to Dante the pilgrim's virtues is Ulysses in *Inferno* XXVI. Dante the poet is said to pray for guidance by the virtue given from above, which is a power that was not given to Ulysses. The pursuit of knowledge and that of the will are interwoven, and in *Inferno* XXVI, Ulysses says: "Considerate la vostra semenza: / fatti non foste a viver come bruti, / ma per seguir virtute e canoscenza" (Consider well the seed that gave you birth: / you were not made to live your lives as brutes, / but to be followers of worth and knowledge [*Inf.* XXVI.118-120]). Dante the poet writes about Ulysses, who tries to convince Dante the pilgrim to advance towards the geographical limits of the known world because of a burning desire: "ch'i' ebbi a divenir del mondo esperto / e de li vizi umani e del valore" (I had to gain experience of the world / and of the vices and the worth of men [vv. 98-99]). However, Ulysses fails because he leaves behind his love and abandons his son and father. Since Ulysses thinks selfishly, he is both born out of and

³⁴ Cfr. Saint Paul, "The Letter of Paul to the Romans," in *The Harper Collins Study Bible*, ed. by Harold W. Attridge (New York: HarperOne, 1989), 7:5-6.

leads into a world without people. It is a world that does not value communal relationships, and a world without people or community is a world without virtues.³⁵

Additionally, Dante the pilgrim contrasts this unburdened desire of Ulysses by making a direct reference to the will of God. The will to which Dante the pilgrim conforms in starting his journey through *Purgatorio* is at once that of God and that of another human being, one through the other. Dante the poet believes that the individual perceives Christ's own conforming to Dante's will for the sake of others to that of God. Unlike Ulysses's desire to pursue his own individual knowledge for a mere individual purpose, Dante the pilgrim's desire reflects a more collective and altruistic purpose. This requires a major sense of humility for the pilgrim since the journey he is engaging with indicates a journey for all of humanity (*Inf.* I.3) and not for himself and his own objective to discover, like Ulysses does. Dante the pilgrim instead engages in a conversation with himself while perceiving the necessity of a reciprocal relationship between God and man. Dante the poet reconsiders this statement once the pilgrim approaches *Purgatorio*, where Dante the poet engages in an address to his reader and manifests the necessity for the pilgrim of a reciprocal relationship between the divine and the human:

“Venimmo poi in sul lito disertò,
che mai non vide navicar sue acque

³⁵ *Inferno* XXVI holds many interpretations, and they all differ from each other. While Hollander (1969) believes that Ulysses' words echo those of the serpent in the Garden to Adam and Eve, promising that, if they were to eat the forbidden fruit, they would become like gods, knowing good and evil, Baldelli (1998) argues that the speech is the *locus* of Ulysses' fraudulent counsel, since he urges his men to go beyond the known limits in search of experience. Gustavo Vinay (1960) instead points out that these verses echo the opening of the *Convivio* (“All men naturally desire knowledge”), and his insight gives support to those who have argued that Ulysses is staged as a precursor of the venturesome younger Dante. While I am fully aware of these interpretations about *Inferno* XXVI and that this list of Dante's scholars represents only a small selection, the scholar that I side with is Vittorio Montemaggi, who has comprehensively embraced this comparison between Dante and Ulysses. I side with Montemaggi because his argument is seemingly close to what I argue here, where Montemaggi states the differentiations between the two characters in relation to the interwoven pursuit of knowledge and pursuit of virtue. From a Dantean perspective, Ulysses may be right to state that knowledge and virtue are interwoven. But he is mistaken in thinking that an understanding of virtue may be abstracted from its flourishing within a communal context, or that it may be arrived at following the apprehension of those ultimate truths regarding the world and human beings which Ulysses believes are there for him to grasp beyond the Pillars of Hercules. Vittorio Montemaggi, “In Unknowability as Love: The Theology of Dante's *Commedia*,” in *Dante's Commedia: Theology as Poetry*, (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 60-94.

omo, che di tornar sia poscia esperto.
 Quivi mi cinse sì com'altrui piacque:
 oh meraviglia! ché qual si scelse
 l'umile pianta, cotal si rinacque
 subitamente là onde l'avelse.”

(*Purg.* I.130-136)

[‘When we arrived at the deserted shore,
 which never yet had seen its waters coursed
 by any man who journeyed back again.
 There, just as pleased another, he girt me.
 O wonder! Where he plucked the humble plant
 that he had chosen, there that plant sprang up
 again, identical, immediately.’]

Dante the poet showcases that the pursuit of virtue and knowledge cannot be bound to the individual will but should be pursued as the bound to the will of God or the needs of others. It is bound rather to one’s willingness to conform one’s will to that which may redefine it in love and humility. Dante the pilgrim’s golden bough to this new realm of *Purgatorio* is the necessary stone that he has gained by his descent into humility. Dante the pilgrim may now ascend the mountain because humility represents the virtue that Ulysses does not have. This is the reason this same passage manifests and suggests the failed voyage of Ulysses.

Additionally, the perception of virtue is what essentially distances Dante the pilgrim from Ulysses. The idea of Dante the poet perceiving the necessity of a reciprocal relationship between God and man indicates awareness of virtue and is also important because it reintegrates the art of memory in Dante. This above-studied sense of perception about the virtue of humility (*Purg.* I.135) for the pilgrim occurs through immaterial perceptive experiences. Dante the pilgrim conveys a more explicit, immaterial perceptive experience through the reciprocal relation between the divine and the human, namely between the pilgrim’s faith and his trust in God: “Così da un di quelli spirti pii / detto mi fu; e da Beatrice: Dì, dì / sicuramente, e credi come a dii” (So did one of those pious spirits speak / to me. And Beatrice then urged: ‘Speak, speak / confidently; trust them as you trust gods [*Par.* V.121-123]). Beatrice excitedly urges Dante the

pilgrim on in his increasing hunger for knowledge of heavenly things. In order to do so and to enhance his sense of immaterial perception, Dante the pilgrim reenacts his *cogitatio* (thought process) to think about and perceive the paradisiac concept of virtue fully. Since Beatrice is asking Dante the pilgrim to speak out and to “credi come a dii” (as you trust gods [*Par.* V.123]), Beatrice is implicitly inviting Dante to recall and to deliberate his virtuosity from his Christian faith. It is through this manifestation of virtuosity that the pilgrim can shine his perception as an intellectual capacity for the enhancement of abstract concepts like the virtue of humility. By going beyond Ulysses’ desire for knowledge, Dante the pilgrim showcases his ability to perceive and detect the immaterial sense of a virtue. Through the notion of *cogitatio* (thought process), which closely resonates with the art of memory, Dante the pilgrim can engage with virtues that another human cannot absorb. Consequently, by reenacting the virtue of humility, Dante the pilgrim is able to heighten the idea of immaterial perception along his theological journey.

Another example underscoring the pilgrim’s awareness of his upcoming theological engagement with the three virtues occurs by characterizing virtue as aiding man’s ascent to God. This is also apparent in the role that Dante assigns to virtue in the process of man’s attainment of happiness in the divine realm. The theological virtues are those that enable man to attain his second and ultimate state of happiness, which is the vision of God.³⁶ Through this divinely symbolic interaction, Dante the pilgrim can discern what is good and bad for him. Dante the pilgrim is moved by his own willingness to do good, and so he conveys the virtue of humility (*Par.* VII.64-66) because of his engagement with “divina bontà” (Godly Goodness [*Par.* VII.64]). Since it represents the highest good existing within the divine man and allowing him to fashion all characteristics according to the external surroundings and divine realities of *Paradiso*, “divina bontà” (Godly Goodness [*Par.* VII.64]) will also assist the pilgrim in revealing his

³⁶ Cfr. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I.II.ae.5.7.

privileged position of virtuous intellect in the cross-examinations across his journey (i.e., the three apostles who assess Dante's integrity with regard to the three virtues). Thus, these three theological virtues of faith, hope, and love become the traits of character by means of which the Spirit teaches Dante the pilgrim the ways of salvation.³⁷

Dante the pilgrim will receive the respective virtues of faith, hope, and love in this same respective order. The order in which they are always named is biblically and theologically significant, if only because each is seen as growing out of its predecessor. In his *First Letter to the Corinthians*, Saint Paul establishes this order and says that it is with *fides* (belief) that we envision a kingdom of Heaven, in which we trust that Jesus has the will and the power to save.³⁸ This same trust gives rise to the *spes* (hope) that makes it possible to endure tribulations in the long struggle to obtain eternal life. In turn, it is the hoped-for loving union with God in the hereafter that may jeopardize the notion of perfect on earth, that is selfless *charitas* (love) for God and for our neighbor.³⁹ Faith precedes hope and hope precedes charity in the order of coming into being. Saint Paul also suggests that in the order of perfecting, charity precedes faith and hope, which is why it is called their form, as the thing that perfects what is imperfect.⁴⁰ Charity is not the form of the virtues in the sense of being a part of their essence, so it must follow in time after the other virtues. Ultimately, the virtue of charity (as we will soon examine)

³⁷ To further consider the notion of virtue as a means to excellence, see also *Convivio* IV.xxii.18. Dante states more particularly the idea of intellectual virtue as opposed to moral virtue, but both operate towards the same objective, namely that of the superior beauty of God.

³⁸ Saint Paul, "The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians," in *The Harper Collins Study Bible*, ed. by Harold W. Attridge (New York: HarperOne, 1989), 13:1-4.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 13:5-9.

⁴⁰ A scholar of Dante who has fully embraced the Christian values of the three theological virtues in Dante's *Commedia* is Patrick Boyde. One of his main arguments concerns the specific order in which the virtues of faith, hope, and love have been orthodoxically reshaped by Dante without endangering his faithful Christian appreciation for the Christian Bible. Patrick Boyde, *Christian Values through Dante's Eyes*, in *Human Vices and Human Worth in Dante's Comedy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 100-125.

is their form in the sense that it gives them form, so it ought to naturally exist before the other virtues.⁴¹

III.3.1. The Implication of Faith

The representation of theological virtues begins through a doctrinal, theological examination that authorizes Dante the pilgrim to move onward with his journey towards redemption. Faith symbolizes a virtue through which this divine plan for salvation is revealed for the pilgrim. Before Saint Peter begins his examination about faith with Dante the pilgrim, Beatrice first reveals a type of festivity in the opening of *Paradiso* XXIV at the Lamb's supper, with Beatrice's apostrophe of the host on behalf of Dante.⁴² Beatrice hopes that they will share their meal, as it were, with her pupil: "O sodalizio eletto a la gran cena / del benedetto Agnello, il qual vi ciba / sì, che la vostra voglia è sempre piena" (O fellowship that has been chosen for / the Blessed Lamb's great supper, where He feeds / you so as always to fulfill your need [*Par.* XXIV.1-3]).⁴³ As the blessed spin about like "a guise di comete" (as comets glow [v. 12]), it is a celebration whose joy overflows all boundaries and the poet's pen is forced to leap over a form of joy not even he can describe: "Però salta la penna e non lo scrivo: / ché l'immagine nostra a cotai pieghe, / non che 'l parlare, è troppo color vivo" (My pen leaps over it; I do not write; / our fantasy and, all the more so, speech / are far too gross for painting folds so deep [vv. 25-27]). Even if the poet cannot bring Peter's song of affection for Beatrice back to mind, the festivity is fundamentally addressed to the pilgrim's potential to change and enhances his path to redemption.

⁴¹ Saint Paul, *The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians*, 13:11-13.

⁴² Dante appeals to the three apostles, whom Aquinas considers important for maintaining the sacred doctrine of the Scripture. See: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, I, 8, ad. 2.

⁴³ Cfr. "The Revelation to John (Apocalypse)," in *The Harper Collins Study Bible*, ed. by Harold W. Attridge (New York: HarperOne, 1989), 13:1-4.

The notion of faith is fundamental because it implies desire as well as love. This section begins with Saint Peter for faith, whose very name stands for the foundation on which the edifice of Christian belief is built. Saint Peter in this case is considered the *magister* (master) who intervenes not to settle, but to formulate the question. The examination about faith begins with the explanation of the nature of faith: “fede è sustanza di cose sperate / e argomento de le non parventi” (faith is the substance of the things we hope for / and is the evidence of things not seen [Par. XXIV.64-65]). Dante the poet seems to echo what Saint Paul claims in his letter to the Hebrews: “Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). By integrating the biblical figure of Saint Paul and his definition of faith, Dante the poet wants to demonstrate his faithful belief in Christianity as well as the way the pilgrim will be introduced along the realm of theological virtue in his journey.

While Saint Peter expects to know from Dante the pilgrim about his manifestation of faith from Saint Paul, Saint Peter also inquires whether the pilgrim possesses faith. Once the pilgrim manifests to Saint Peter that he has faith, then Saint Peter approves Dante’s intellectual grasp of its doctrinal aspect. Consequently, Saint Peter wants to know if his pupil really understands or is only talking a good game, like the sophist Dante the pilgrim seems to have convinced him he is not:

“Allora udì: ‘Se quantunque s’acquista
 giù per dottrina, fosse così ‘nteso,
 non li avria loco ingegno di sofista.’
 Così spirò di quello amore acceso;
 indi soggiunse: ‘Assai bene è trascorsa
 d’esta moneta già la lega e ‘l peso;
 ma dimmi se tu l’hai ne la tua borsa.’”
 (Par. XXIV.79-85)

[‘And then I heard: ‘If all one learns below
 as doctrine were so understood, there would
 be no place for the sophist’s cleverness.’
 This speech was breathed from that enkindled love.
 He added: ‘Now this coin is well-examined,
 and now we know its alloy and its weight.

But tell me: do you have it in your purse?']

While this passage indicates Saint Peter's intention to delve more deeply into the question, the former persists in his testing of the wayfarer's faith. Saint Peter is asking the pilgrim whether it might be true that the argument from miracles is not verifiable, or that such an argument is based on the truth of the proposition being tested.⁴⁴ The pilgrim's answer represents his seventh response, which involves the experience of Peter and John at Christ's tomb: "O santo padre, e spirito che vedi / ciò che credesti sì, che tu vincesti / ver' lo sepulcro più giovani piedi" (O holy father, soul who now can see / what you believed with such intensity / that, to His tomb, you outran younger feet [*Par.* XXIV.124-126]). It is the beginning of Dante's *credo* in God the Creator. Dante the pilgrim lays out his proofs and outcome of his understanding from this doctrinal examination, which encompasses philosophical, theological, and Scriptural evidence from *Genesis* to Peter's *Epistles*. Dante the pilgrim recites his *credo* in the Trinity, and Dante the poet begins to outline the purpose of moral theology in his *Commedia*, namely the theological virtue of faith as proof of God's trinitarian nature. Having heard these verses from the pilgrim, Saint Peter honors Dante the pilgrim in faith, where he gives the pilgrim his blessings with his apostolic light.

Dante the pilgrim's achievement from this first examination corresponds to a form of mystical thought. While Dante the pilgrim's first response in *Paradiso* XXIV was addressed to Peter, cites Paul instead.⁴⁵ Through his own examination of faith, Dante seeks it out and places full trust in Saint Paul in order to provide a canonical answer: "e seguitai: 'Come 'l verace stilo / ne scrisse, padre, del tuo caro frate / che mise teco Roma nel buon filo'" (and followed, 'Father,

⁴⁴ On this same topic of Peter's lack of belief in the pilgrim, some literary critics like Giuseppe Mazzotta alludes to the metaphor of "money" to show how faith displaces and subverts what the world holds dear. Giuseppe Mazzotta, "Dante and the Virtues of Exile," *Poetics Today* vol. 5, no. 3 (1984), 664.

⁴⁵ When St. Peter asks him to define faith, Dante the pilgrim replies not only by giving the familiar formulation taken from the *Epistle to the Hebrews* (11:1), a work ascribed to Saint Paul, but by echoing a reference to "carissimus frater noster Paulus" in one of Peter's own letters (2 Pet. 3:15).

as the truthful pen / of your dear brother wrote – that brother who, / with you, set Rome upon the righteous road [*Par.* XXIV.61-63]). This same example shows how the pilgrim implicitly questions Saint Peter’s authority because Dante the poet refers directly to the two testaments of the Bible. It shows a mystical practice where for Dante the pilgrim, faith has no fear of reason. Just as grace echoes nature and brings it to fulfillment, so faith builds upon and perfects reason. Moreover, faith is a form of practice of thought because just like Saint Paul, for Dante, faith is literally the foundation that underlies all things. The act of faith, perfected by sacramental baptism, constitutes a divine action on the part of the believer and entails a movement from the potential state of nonbeing in Christ (act of potency) to an actual state of being with Christ. In like manner, the moral life and beginning of theological virtues with their actual implementation reflect this same dynamic.

Dante the poet’s faith also expresses a means to open up humanity to knowledge of God. The theological faith opens humanity up to awareness of God and a human purpose that far transcends what humanity could know through the simple belief that is proper to human nature.⁴⁶ Dante’s knowledge of God, which occurs by manifesting his belief and faith, occurs through his own belief in the Trinity while also providing the evidence for it:

“De la profonda condizion divina
 ch’io tocco mo, la mente mi sigilla
 più volte l’evangelica dottrina.
 Quest’è ‘l principio, quest’è la favilla
 che si dilata in fiamma poi vivace,
 e come stella in cielo in me scintilla.”
 (*Par.* XXIV.142-147)

[‘Of this profound condition of God
 that I have touched on, Gospel teaching
 has often set the imprint on my mind.
 This is the origin, this is the spark
 that then extends into a vivid flame
 and, like a star in heaven, glows in me.’]

⁴⁶ Cfr. William C. Mattison III, “The Virtue of Faith,” in *Introducing Moral Theology: True Happiness and the Virtues* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2008), pp. 224-226.

To give the fullest and most definitive revelation of the triune nature of God, Dante the poet considers the New Testament more than the Old Testament. The existence of God, One and Three, is a principle given by revelation through the Holy Scriptures. This principle is therefore the source of all articles of faith, that Dante the poet considers it the “favilla” (spark [*Par.* XXIV.145]) that becomes a great flame. By absorbing and learning about this flame, Dante the pilgrim can underscore his big picture of transcendence from human to trans-human. This theological virtue of faith symbolizes the instrument that opens Dante the pilgrim’s soul to that necessary divine aid, and it is the adoption of revealed truths found in the Bible and interpreted through the Catholic Church.⁴⁷

Dante the pilgrim is beginning to absorb the revealed truths found in the Christian Bible, namely faith in Christ that cures the soul and leads to direct knowledge of God by the soul (as a form of mystical practice of thought with subsequent hope and charity). Most importantly, Dante the pilgrim’s faithful adoption of the theological virtue of faith demonstrates and corroborates that Dante is both a poet and an acting theologian.⁴⁸ While this could mean that all Christians are theologians because they all have faith, the Christians in general have not directly experienced what this literary character has been able to experience through his direct examination with Saint

⁴⁷ Robert Hollander argues that the *selva* that reflects the Fall in Eden to the vision of God’s ultimate kingdom is obviously meant to correspond meaningfully to John’s Revelation. Robert Hollander, “Dante ‘Theologus-Poeta,’” *Dante Studies* no. 118 (2000), 273-289.

⁴⁸ Even if my discussion of Dante the poet acting as a theologian in this chapter is brief, it is pivotal to remember that from the first lines of the *Inferno* to the end of the poem, with its Paradisal vision, the matter is continually interactive with events from biblical history. The list of scholars who have fully engaged with it goes as follows: Giuseppe Mazzotta, “Dante and the Virtues of Exile,” *Poetics Today* 5, no. 3 (1984), 645-667; Robert Hollander, “Dante ‘Theologus-Poeta,’” *Dante Studies* no. 118 (2000), 261-302; Vittorio Montemaggi, “Truth and Theological Virtue,” in *Reading Dante’s Commedia as Theology: Divinity Realized in Human Encounter*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 89-158; Theresa Federici, “Dante’s Davidic Journey,” in *Dante’s Commedia: Theology as Poetry*, ed. by Vittorio Montemaggi and Matthew Treherne (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 180-209. In strict reference to the idea of Dante as an acting theologian, I side with Robert Hollander, from whom I was able to craft my thought of Dante the pilgrim as an acting theologian because he is directly operating as a theologian in the face of a direct source, namely Saint Peter. Robert Hollander, *Dante Theologus-Poeta*, 275

Peter.⁴⁹ For example, Dante the poet defines the source of the pilgrim's responses to the Apostle Peter when the latter asks the pilgrim where he is getting his information and details:

Appresso uscì de la luce profonda
 che li splendeva: 'Questa cara gioia
 sopra la quale ogne virtù si fonda,
 onde ti venne?' E io: 'La larga ploia
 de lo Spirito Santo, ch'è diffusa
 in su le vecchie e 'n su le nuove cuoia,
 è silogismo che la m'ha conchiusa
 acutamente sì, che 'nverso d'ella
 ogne dimostrazion mi pare ottusa.'
 (Par. XXIV.88-96)

[‘Next, from the deep light gleaming there, I heard:
 ‘What is the origin of the dear gem
 that comes to you, the gem on which all virtues
 are founded?’ I: ‘The Holy Ghost’s abundant
 rain poured upon the parchments old and new;
 that is the syllogism that has proved
 with such persuasiveness that faith has truth
 when set beside that argument, all other
 demonstrations seem to me obtuse.’]

The old and new “cuoia” (parchments [Par. XXIV.93]) are the books of the Old and the New Testaments. Dante the pilgrim refers to his reading of the Bible, which he says has been a conclusive “silogismo” (syllogism [Ibidem]) for him. It is a passage that also conveys a sense of figural nature in the entire enterprise of the *Commedia*, where one could also argue that Dante the poet might have adapted spiritual aspects like the virtue of faith and the direct presence of Saint Peter as a pure, biblical imitation. However, this symbolic representation between both testaments in the Bible wants to outline that both are being bestowed by divine grace, which means that they have been written under God's inspiration. It is for this reason that Dante, who

⁴⁹ In his commentary, Pietro Alighieri states the following: “Dantes, ita dabat, sive dedit se ad diversa; scilicet primo ad theologiam, secundo ad poetica.” Pietro Alighieri, *Comentum super poema Comedie Dantis*, 475. Dante's son Pietro was among the first to consider his father to be foremost a theologian and then a poet because Pietro Alighieri believed that Dante's poetry is a Christian poetry and has rooted his poem in the teachings of the Bible and the Church. I side with Pietro Alighieri's commentary. For instance, in *Paradiso* II.1-15, Dante distinguishes himself from the majority of his readers and followers because he states that the water he will be entering have never been sailed before. Among the waters that the pilgrim is about to sail (the poet) there are also the three virtues which have never been revealed directly by the three saints as it occurs to the pilgrim. Unless other poets like Dante have written about this theological experience in *Paradiso*, it is the direct experience of a human like Dante the pilgrim in the face of divinity that reveals the poet the sole acting theologian.

has firmly held this “silogismo” (syllogism [Ibidem]) in his own mind, finds this type of argument truly impenetrable by any other means of interpretation. Dante finds his motif in this passage to consider theologically true the virtue of faith within the Holy Scriptures as he discusses it with the Apostle Peter.

Faith for the pilgrim is about the moral and epistemic refurbishment of the soul by that divine power, leading to the renewal of its spiritual ability to discern the presence of God. When Saint Peter asks the pilgrim to carry out his definition of faith, Saint Peter also implies that it is time for the pilgrim to reenact parts of his previous spiritual understanding: “poi mi volsi a Beatrice, ed essa pronte / sembianze femmi perch’io spandessi / l’acqua di fuor del mio interno fonte” (then turned to Beatrice, whose glance / immediately signaled me to let / the waters of my inner source pour forth [*Par.* XXIV.55-57]). This passage entails an important metaphor, namely the “l’acqua di fuor” (waters pour forth [*Par.* XXIV.57]) from within the pilgrim’s mind. The notion of “waters” in relation to the pilgrim’s spiritual knowledge thus far goes behind a metaphorical meaning. Beatrice’s glance at the pilgrim motivates the latter to renew his confidence and precisely reveals his spiritual ability to discern the presence of God while conveying the significance of faith. It is a form of motivation that Beatrice has already mentioned prior to meeting with the apostle, where Beatrice depicts a reciprocal relation between the divine and the human, between the pilgrim’s faith and his trust in God: “detto mi fu; e da Beatrice: Dì, dì / sicuramente, e credi come a dii” (And Beatrice then urged: ‘Speak, speak / confidently; trust them as you trust gods [*Par.* V.122-123]). Beatrice excitedly urges Dante the pilgrim on in his increasing hunger for knowledge of heavenly things, which simultaneously motivates the pilgrim to pour out “l’acqua” (the waters [*Par.* XXIV.57]) welling from the “interno fonte” (inner source [Ibidem]) within the same pilgrim.

Most importantly, the idea of renewing the spiritual ability to discern the message from God recalls the importance of the art of memory in Dante with respect to the theological virtues. If they represent revealed truths from the Holy Scriptures, Dante the poet reenacts his spiritual knowledge (i.e., faith and divine trust) through his thought process of *cogitatio* (thought process). Consequently, the faculty of natural memory cannot be taken into account with respect to the three theological virtues because biological memory alludes to the idea of lower realities.⁵⁰ Because of that, natural memory does not fully operate by the time the pilgrim is setting the course towards *Paradiso* without manifesting mnemonic shortcomings: “E Beatrice: ‘Forse maggior cura, / che spesse volte la memoria priva, / fatt’ha la mente sua ne li occhi oscura” (And Beatrice: ‘Perhaps some greater care, / which often weakens memory, has made / his mind, in things regarding sight, grow dark [*Purg.* XXXIII.124-126]). Dante the pilgrim’s shortcomings of his memory occur constantly, and now he has forgotten Matelda’s account of the rivers (*Purg.* XXVIII.121-133). This passage showcases that unless Dante’s memory gets restored through the paradisiacal source of Eünoè, his natural memory cannot fully operate with respect to the paradisiacal explanations that Beatrice is reiterating the pilgrim after his meet with Matelda: “Ma vedi Eünoè che là diriva: / menalo ad esso, e come tu se’ usa, / la tramortita sua virtù ravniva” (But see Eunoe as it flows from there: / lead him to it and, as you’re used to doing, / revive the power that is faint in him [*Purg.* XXVIII. 127-129]). It is true that Beatrice instructs Matelda to restore the power that seems to fade away from Dante’s memory. However, there is no more sources like Eünoè that will restore memory because Dante the pilgrim’s memory will soon fail while trying to absorb more divine truths across the realm of the Empyrean. Unlike the natural memory’s inability to restore past experiences through a theological realm, the art of memory in Dante is a

⁵⁰ It is a type of reality that refers to the corporeal, earthly features that characterize a tangible experience, which are seen particularly in *Inferno* V, VI, XXIV, XXV, XXXIII, XXXIV and *Purgatorio* IX, & XI.

self-subsistent principle that relates to abstract, spiritual, intangible concepts like the virtues. Therefore, the revealed truths from the Bible that refers to the idea of Dante as a *theologus-poeta* (theologian-poet) can solely be absorbed through a theoretical, theological framework of memory.

III.3.2. The Implication of Hope

Since Dante the poet also embraces the figure of a theologian, the doctrinal, theological examination as authorization for Dante continues onwards with the virtue of hope. The opening of *Paradiso* XXV gives pensive expression to Dante's earthly hopes: his long-cherished hope to return to Florence and his hope of being crowned a poet. However, his major hope was that this sacred poem might overcome the cruelty of the past, and even if this virtue appears earlier in the journey (*Purg.* III.133-135), it materializes with a clear definition from Saint James in *Paradiso*, who prepares his set of questions for Dante the pilgrim.⁵¹ Saint James begins his questionnaire with a simile where an eager pupil is to his master as Dante is to James. A few verses later, Dante the poet writes that hope is the sure and certain hope of the Resurrection, produced by divine grace and preceding merit: "Spene, ' diss'io, 'è uno attender certo / de la gloria futura, il qual produce / grazia divina e precedente merto" (I said: 'Hope is the certain expectation / of future glory; it is the result / of God's grace and of merit we have earned [*Par.* XXV.67-69]). This definition of hope is drawn from the 12th-century handbook of Catholic theology from which every scholastic theologian made his debut by expounding on Peter Lombard's *Liber*

⁵¹ In this passage, we see this turning possible as long as hope shows something green: "Per lor maladizion sì non si perde, / che non possa tornar, l'eterno amore, / mentre che la speranza ha fior del verde" (By such a curse as theirs none is so lost / that the eternal Love cannot return / as long as hope maintains a thread of green [*Purg.* III.133-135]). Dante is here manifesting a trace of hope as turning towards a beloved and desired object, secure in the knowledge that the object is eternal love which will welcome with open arms the soul who actively chooses to return to it, expressing that choice in love.

sententiarum.⁵² In this passage, we note that the virtue of hope inclines one to yearn for union with God as one's true destiny and the source of complete fulfillment. Hope succeeds faith, since it is only by faith that one is even aware of the possibility of such fulfillment in God. Like faith and love, hope is a theological virtue in that it concerns God directly. Hope inclines us to seek union with the God we are designed for, even when that full union is not yet evidently present.⁵³

The virtue of hope helps Dante the poet to project the forthcoming redemption. Dante is a Christian poet who is not only enabled but also expected to manifest divine attributes before others on earth. Dante the pilgrim proceeds through the gift of hope by participating in God, the source of these good deeds, and is aware that he or she will in heaven participate even more fully and more completely.⁵⁴ The "gloria futura" (future glory [*Par.* XXV.68]) from this same passage originates from divine grace, and it is what Dante the pilgrim will be attending and expecting to reach out.⁵⁵ Thus, while Christians are made partakers of goodness on earth, the degree of participation they enjoy is only a foretaste of the fullness still to be experienced. Even if the abovementioned glory is in the future and will be eventually absorbed by the pilgrim, the latter is saved in hope, for it is in hope that he has been made happy.⁵⁶ Dante the wayfarer might not yet have experienced salvation, and that is why he aims for constant motion forward. This happiness

⁵² Cfr. Peter Lombard, *The Sentences*, trans. by Giulio Silano (Toronto: Pontifical institute of Medieval Studies 2010), III.xxvi.i: "Est enim spes certa expectatio futurae beatitudinis, veniens ex Dei gratia et meritis praecedentibus" (Now hope is a certain expectation of future beatitude proceeding from God's grace and antecedent merits).

⁵³ The virtue of hope is possible only through divine grace since the nature of that destiny for Dante is beyond our unaided comprehension. By remaining fixed on it as our ultimate goal, this requires divine assistance.

⁵⁴ Cfr. Saint Augustine, *Sermons III/4 (94A-147A)*, trans. by Edmund Hill, (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1992), 140.33.77.

⁵⁵ A Dantean scholar who has written precisely about the juxtaposition of hope and future glory is Peter Hawkins. One of his main points alludes to the Israel's return to the Promised Land, which also characterizes the way in which hope projects Dante's return in future glory. Peter S. Hawkins, "Self-Authenticating Artifact," in *Dante's Testaments: Essays in Scriptural Imagination* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 72-99.

⁵⁶ To underscore the biblical perspective in which hope becomes an important virtue for Dante's expectations, see Saint Paul, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans*, 8:24-25; Saint Paul, "The Letter of Paul to the Hebrews," in *The Harper Collins Study Bible*, ed. by Harold W. Attridge (New York: HarperOne, 1989), 6:19; lastly Saint Paul, "The Letter of Paul to the I Corinthians," in *The Harper Collins Study Bible*, ed. by Harold W. Attridge (New York: HarperOne, 1989), 13:13.

for the pilgrim is both an experience and a state that awaits those open to the grace of perseverance and determined to avoid falling into great despair.⁵⁷

Dante's hope joins the pilgrim in a future-oriented time where a relationship exists between the pilgrim's experience of happiness and the assessment of the theological virtue of hope.⁵⁸ It is from both this relationship and the previously suggested perseverant status that Dante's hope is refashioned through *expectatio* (expectation).⁵⁹ This is a typical notion in the Middle Ages: Saint Augustine, for example, took it as the motivator for major outcomes and results from human efforts.⁶⁰ However, the form of *expectatio* (expectation) embraced by Dante is a little different. The persevering grace of uniting with God is not something already possessed, as in the case of joy or pleasure, but is still to be attained, as in the case of longing or for lusting after something. In *Paradiso* XXV, Dante the poet describes an example that occurs through the pilgrim's anticipation of what is about to appear after pronouncing the words of Isaiah:

Dice Isaia che ciascuna vestita
 ne la sua terra fia di doppia vesta:
 e la sua terra è questa dolce vita;
 e 'l tuo fratello assai vie più digesta,
 là dove tratta de le bianche stole,
 questa revelazion ci manifesta.”
 (Par. XXV.91-96)

[‘Isaiah says that all of the elect
 shall wear a double garment in their land:

⁵⁷ The negation or opposite of hope would be despair, as depicted in *Inferno* VIII and IX with the encounter of the Furies and Medusa. Medusa can turn anyone into stone and remain caught either in the reality that there is at that moment, or an idea of yourself as you think you have been in an idea of the past. The virtue of hope, instead, is a virtue of the future that can change the past.

⁵⁸ Cfr. Saint Augustine, *De civitate dei*, ed. by K. D. Daur CCSL 34, (Turnhout: Brepols, 1978), 4.21. Saint Augustine suggests that virtue corresponds to the art of living well but emphatically rejects the equation of living well with living happily (*De libero arbitrio* 2.50; *De moribus* 1.10). More specifically, the notion of happiness (salvation in the case of Dante) for Saint Augustine allows him to create something understood as goddesses as gifts of God. Virtue possesses the virtue, and does not need any other external goddesses, but only Divine Grace to infuse itself into others.

⁵⁹ The notion of *expectatio* underscores the biblical perspective in which hope becomes an important virtue for Dante's expectations.

⁶⁰ Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, IX.ii.346-353.

and their land is this sweet life of the blessed.
And where your brother treats of those white robes,
he has – with words direct and evident,
made clear to us Isaiah’s revelation.’]

The idea of “*tuo fratello*” (your brother [*Par.* XXV.94]) in this passage refers to Saint John, author of the *Apocalypse*. Saint John claims to have seen a great multitude standing before the throne in the sight of the Lamb, clothed with “*bianche stole*” (white robes [*Par.* XXV.95]), and palms in their hands.⁶¹ From a biblical standpoint, this same verse is significant for two reasons. First, by expressing the pilgrim’s divine learning about the hope of both beatitudes as revealed to him by the words of Isaiah, Dante the poet is also manifesting another way to theologize his thinking process (*cogitatio*) regarding the virtue of hope. Second, Dante the poet conjoins the previously suggested idea of resurrection by addressing the cheerfulness of the soul and the glory of the resurrected body.

Moreover, the resurrection that Dante the poet outlines in the above-examined passage from *Paradiso* XXV corresponds to the Ascension and the Assumption. These two principles are theologically grounded in the possibility of Dante’s journey, and they do so because they ground hope in the resurrection as a form of revival of both the body and the soul. Resurrection is a future event that corresponds to a form of revival and is expected by the pilgrim to deliver the possibility of future, eternal, and bodily glory for him reaching out to Beatrice in Heaven: “*con tanto ordine fé, ch’esser non puote / senza gustar di lui chi ciò rimira*” (so orderly that one who contemplates / that harmony cannot but taste of Him [*Par.* X.5-6]). Even if this passage corresponds to divine love, or more particularly to the “*ineffabile Valore*” (inexpressible Power [*Par.* X.3]), these verses indicate a revelation for Dante, namely the pilgrim inheriting a “*gustar di lui*” (taste of Him [*Par.* X.6]). Thus, if Dante’s notion of resurrection refers to a “*revelazion*”

⁶¹ Cfr. “*The Revelation to John (Apocalypse)*, 3:5: “If you conquer, you will be clothed like them in white robes.”

(revelation [*Par.* XXV.96]), and resurrection entails a form of revival, Dante the poet revives the pilgrim's perception to allow the abovementioned revealed truth to be carried out within this theological framework of virtues.

The virtue of hope in the Resurrection is what spiritually animates Dante's poetry. Dante underscores a meditation upon the Resurrection, which is specifically the central concern of the entire poem. At the beginning of the second canticle, Dante the poet describes a proem and invocation to the muses. Dante the poet elevates his poetry by rising from *Inferno* and considering it a form of resurrection: "Ma qui la morta poesì resurga, / o sante Muse, poi che vostro sono; / e qui Calliòpè alquanto surga" (But here, since I am yours, o holy Muses, / may this poem rise again from Hell's dead realm; / and may Calliope rise somewhat here [*Purg.* I.7-9]). Dante's poem often needs to be empowered and therefore Dante the poet finds it necessary to juxtapose the notion of resurrection to his entire poem. By doing so, Dante programmatically links his poetry to hope in the salvation and redemption. This tie between poetry and the Resurrection, sustained by the virtue of hope, corresponds to a biblical assertion from the *Psalms*: "And those who know your name shall put their trust in you *sperant in te*" [*Psalms*, 9:10]). The protagonist credits David (before the Apostle James) with being the first to instill hope in his heart, and for having systematically prophesied the Incarnation of Christ in his *Psalms*.

Furthermore, both the *Psalms* and the *Commedia* are sacred poems in which a human author has chosen to communicate the divine message of salvation in verse. More specifically, by adopting a biblical, theological approach to these verses and elsewhere in *Paradiso* (or prior to it), the virtue of hope sustains Dante's poetry by enhancing the theological structure (known also as theological framework) of this canto and the preceding end of Dante's journey. IF Dante's divine action continuously operates towards the previous revelations, hope lays the

groundwork for a narrative in which these revelations (i.e., *Par.* XXV.91-96) become structurally important to the pilgrim. It is a form of theological development that corresponds to Dante the pilgrim's second examination with Saint James. The wayfarer is still under examination in preparation for his salvation, and his infused virtue of hope thus reappears as the driving force of Dante's journey and of the cosmos as a whole.

III.3.3. The Implication of Charity/Love

The last doctrinal, theological examination that will authorize Dante the pilgrim to continue on with his journey concerns the virtue of charity. Charity resembles the notion of love, and in *Paradiso* XXVI, Dante the poet allows the pilgrim to deliberate a series of answers by which important theological topics are consequently revealed. The Creation, the procession of the Word, the Word made flesh, and the redemption of man are some of the answers that symbolize another form of theologizing Dante's course in the wake of new revealed truths.⁶² Dante the pilgrim begins discussing these theological and spiritual aspects by appealing to the prologue to John's Gospel, whose intention is clear—namely, to have Dante speak about the role of love in leading him to understanding. In this next passage, we assist to the pilgrim speaking about charity and his previous experiences leading to this theological virtue:

“Però ricominciai: ‘Tutti quei morsi
 che posson far lo cor volgere a Dio,
 a la mia caritate son concorsi:
 ché l'essere del mondo e l'esser mio,
 la morte ch'el sostenne perch'io viva,
 e quel che spera ogne fedel com'io,
 con la predetta conoscenza viva,
 tratto m'hanno del mar de l'amor torto,
 e del diritto m'han posto a la riva.
 Le fronde onde s'infronda tutto l'orto
 de l'ortolano eterno, am'io cotanto
 quanto da lui a lor di bene è porto.”

⁶² Cfr. John, “Gospel according to John,” in *The Harper Collins Study Bible*, ed. by Harold W. Attridge (New York: HarperOne, 1989), 4:9.

(*Par.* XXVI.55-66)

['Thus I began again: 'My charity
 results from all those things whose bite can bring
 the heart to turn to God; the world's existence
 and mine, the death that He sustained that I
 might live, and that which is the hope of all
 believers, as it is my hope, together
 with living knowledge I have spoken of
 these drew me from the sea of twisted love
 and set me on the shore of the right love.
 The leaves enleaving all the garden of
 the Everlasting Gardener, I love
 according to the good He gave to them.']

The abovementioned revealed truths of the Creation, the procession of the Word, the Word made flesh, and the redemption of man have drawn Dante the pilgrim from the “mar de l’amor torto” (sea of twisted love [*Par.* XXVI.62]) to the shore of the true love.⁶³ Dante the poet is essentially describing a symbolic shift from the pilgrim’s past (twisted love) to the present (true love). Since the pilgrim professes love, he is subsequently revealing that he has faith and hope, the virtues on which he has previously been tested and theologically examined: “e quel che spera ogne fedel com’io” (and that which is the hope of all believers, as it is my hope [*Par.* XXVI.60]). Dante the poet is refashioning a biblical passage from the letters of Saint Paul in which the eternal beatitude is what all believers are hoping to achieve, and that can only occur if these same believers can fully love God to their maximum abilities.⁶⁴

Dante the poet specifies the notion of charity/love to a greater extent when the pilgrim states that charity represents the love of God for God’s own sake above all else, and all others in God.⁶⁵ Dante the poet outlines representatively the love for God when the poet underscores the creation as God’s garden with trees and leaves that are its creatures, which the pilgrim loves in

⁶³ It is important to consider the notion of Christian theology through which we readers understand the Redemption as springing from God’s love for man.

⁶⁴ Cfr. Saint Paul, *The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians*, II:9 & Saint Paul, “The First Letter of Paul to the Colossians,” in *The Harper Collins Study Bible*, ed. by Harold W. Attridge (New York: HarperOne, 1989), I:5.

⁶⁵ It is the greatest commandment referred to by Christ in each of the synoptic Gospels. Cfr. Luke, “Gospel according to Luke,” in *The Harper Collins Study Bible*, ed. by Harold W. Attridge (New York: HarperOne, 1989), 10:25-28.

keeping with their participation in the supreme Good: “Le fronde onde s’infronda tutto l’orto / de l’ortolano eterno, am’io cotanto” (The leaves enleaving all the garden of / the Everlasting Gardener, I love [*Par.* XXVI.64-65]).⁶⁶ This passage manifests a metaphor by which Dante the pilgrim is saying that he loves the various creatures of God’s creation (i.e., the leaves of His garden) that make up the world. These same creations are in proportion to the goodness of their Maker (the eternal Gardener) in His predestination that He has bestowed upon them. As a result of this metaphor, the creation of the world and man, the cross of Christ, and the hope of glory emerge subsequently. As Dante the poet is adopting the biblical example from Saint John and his *Apocalypse*, Dante the poet claims that the good Christian should love God alone for Himself and love other creatures only insofar as they participate in the goodness of God.

Even if the examination of love ends at this point, the virtue of charity is still paramount because it resonates with other virtues. They not only include faith and hope, but also cardinal virtues like prudence. Charity significantly assists Dante the pilgrim when he states that he was brought to the shore where love is just (*Par.* XXVI.62). The love that is just is the virtue of charity which remains an important and essential virtue because it orders all the types of virtues in life accordingly and demonstrates how they are prioritized.⁶⁷ Unlike Frank Ordiway, who believes that Dante can rise to the final visions of *Paradiso* and achieve union with God only if charity is guided by love to the wrong degree for the wrong object, charity is traditionally called the form of the virtues that shapes or transforms all the virtues by directing them towards the ultimate goal of union with God.⁶⁸ A case in point occurs when Dante the poet describes the virtue of charity perfecting all the virtues because of love while directing them in union with the

⁶⁶ Cfr. *Purg.* XXVIII.103-120. In this passage Dante discusses the breeze in the garden which is limited to this upper reach of the mountain, and it was caused by the movement of the highest sphere in the heavens.

⁶⁷ Cfr. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I-IIae, 55.1. See also: Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, book X.x.13.

⁶⁸ Frank Ordiway, “In the Earth’s Shadow: The Theological Virtues Marred.” *Dante Studies* no. 100 (1982), 90.

love of God: “Tal vero a l’intelletto mio sterne / colui che mi dimostra il primo amore / di tutte le sustanze sempiterno” (My mind discerns this truth, made plain by him / who demonstrates to me that the first love / of the eternal beings is their Maker [*Par.* XXVI.37-39]). Through these verses, Dante advances his reasoning that for the universe to be preserved, there must be an eternal first heaven moving in a circle, which is moved by an unmoved mover. This mover is supremely good, and it moves by being desired. Dante the poet is ultimately suggesting that love/charity (love of God) is the cause of this celestial movement.

The notion of the celestial mover occurs even prior to *Paradiso*. In *Purgatorio* Dante the poet reveals that Love moves all the faculties, while Love is properly directed to God. Being the source of its being, which must always be good, Dante essentially states that love thus properly directed will regulate a person’s attachment to the lesser goods of the world. Love comes from God’s hands through the notion of the soul created with God’s love, and since God gave it motion, it will automatically turn to things that bring delight all around. This idea of motion and turning around to God connects to the idea of love as the celestial mover:

Esce di mano a lui che la vagheggia
 prima che sia, a guisa di fanciulla
 che piangendo e ridendo pargoleggia,
 l’anima semplicetta che sa nulla,
 salvo che, mossa da lieto fattore,
 volentier torna a ciò che la trastulla.
 (*Purg.* XVI.85-90)

[‘Issuing from His hands, the soul – on which
 He thought with love before creating it
 is like a child who weeps and laughs in sport;
 that soul is simple, unaware; but since
 a joyful Maker gave it motion, it
 turns willingly to things that bring delight.’]

If love is directed to the primal good, God, then it cannot be the cause of wrongful pleasure because this love was born from God and will return to him. Human perception takes from outward reality an impression and evolves it within you, so it makes the mind turn to it. In

juxtaposing the soul and love, which are both created by God, the soul is still simple and unaware and possesses the capacity to understand. Moreover, the soul is naturally inclined to seek the Highest Good. Even if is undeveloped at first, the soul will later find that Good by turning it towards the primal love, which represents the love that has shaped and cared for the created soul.

Dante peculiarly states that Love represents the main celestial mover, which makes Love circular because it must be. Consequently, Love is far from hatred because the Love created by the primal love (God) can never be divorced from Him. This means that one can never hate God (Love), and this love will circulate around him: “Or, perché mai non può da la salute / amor del suo subietto volger viso, / da l’odio proprio son le cose tute;” (Now, since love never turns aside its eyes / from the well-being of its subject, things / are surely free from hatred of themselves [*Purg.* XVII.106-108]). This tercet reveals a doctrine which is to remove two possible motivations from consideration: hatred of self or hatred of God, both of which are declared to be impossible. According to Dante it would be unbearable to hate God because the soul returns to Him, God, namely the love that was created by God: “Poi, come ‘l foco movesi in altura / per la sua forma ch’è nata a salire / là dove più in sua matera dura” (Then, just as flames ascend because the form / of fire was fashioned to fly upward, toward / the stuff of its own sphere, where it lasts longest [*Purg.* XVIII.28-30]). These last verses reveal the theory of natural desire, and that is why Dante commonly says that everybody tends towards its natural place as toward its own perfection (God). There is also the celestial virtue, which is constantly operative in Love, because like any natural place, Love is a celestial virtue that has the property of preserving the things it contains for a longer time.

We have also seen how the notion of Love interconnects with angels and humans in the rational beings, where Love returns to Him. For instance, Love returns in the lower animals to one another and to their habitat, and in insentient bodies to their habitat or place of origin. Moreover, Dante the poet defines a way in *Purgatorio* in which Love will enable the pilgrim to maintain a proper balance between using the physical world while not being bound by it. More specifically, Love reveals every type of virtue, which enhances the system that Love produces. In this next passage, Dante the poet defines the virtue of charity as an important foundation with respect to also punishments: “Quinci comprender puoi ch’esser convene / amor sementa in voi d’ogne virtute / e d’ogne operazion che merta pene” (From this you see that – of necessity / love is the seed in you of every virtue / and of all acts deserving punishment [*Purg.* XVII.103-105]). This balance is fully supported by Dante’s first guide Virgil, who praises the love directed to God as a primordial aspect. Virgil is principally alluding to love as the form of all loves. This love symbolizes the mover of celestial spheres, and the seed behind every single action, and every single virtue, which is founded in love.

Since love characterizes the celestial motion as shown from the mechanics of love in the middle of *Purgatorio* that moves the celestial heavens (*Purg.* XVI.89-90), and because charity is also a virtue that corresponds to an aspect of love, charity from *Par.* XXVI also represents the mechanics behind the motion and ordering all the other virtues.⁶⁹ The love for God represents the cause of all celestial movement, and this motion motivates every action among the virtues by means of prolepsis. For instance, Dante the pilgrim’s motion with his enterprise represents a form of action. The notion of virtue represents a form of action that is constantly engaged with the goal of salvation, whereby following the theological virtue of charity/love, the pilgrim

⁶⁹ This reasoning follows the verses *Purg.* XVII.91-93 because God is Love, and it comes from John 4:8. In reference to love ordering heavens, see also *Conv.* III.iii.25, for the love that the Creators’ creatures have.

continuously attempts unequivocal movement in a given direction. It is the uplifting motion that comes from above that allows the pilgrim to reenact his immaterial perception to encompass the “lume che nel ciel s’informa” (light that finds its form in Heaven [*Purg.* XVII.17]), which implies on the one hand the acceptance to do good through “divina bontà” (Godly Goodness [*Par.* VII.64]). On the other hand, this uplifting motion also allows the pilgrim a further change in his imagination to move forward with the virtue of charity while enriching the course of his eschatological salvation.

Through the examination of the virtue of charity while speaking with Saint Peter in *Par.* XXVI, Dante the poet fully acknowledges that his pilgrim needs to renew his mind and align it with the truthfulness of God. This idea of renewing Dante the pilgrim’s mind needs to be renewed with the Love for God because the latter interconnects with the virtue of charity by the time Dante the poet suggests that anyone is moved to love [*Par.* XXVI.32]). Dante the poet indicates that this person who is moved to love is also able to perceive and engage with revealed truths (i.e., theological virtues), but they need to be reenacted and moved by love and not by “lume di suo raggio” (ray reflected from Its radiance [*Par.* XXVI.33]). If the proof of truth is founded and moved to love, Dante the poet constantly reenacts this same prolepsis, whose motion forward allows us to observe how every “sustanze sempiterno” (eternal beings [*Par.* XXVI.39]) gets carried out from the “primo amore” (first love [*Par.* XXVI.38]), namely God. Because charity is a virtue and a representation of Love, Dante the pilgrim’s engagement with the virtue of charity enables him to examine this celestial movement, which consequently spurs his mind to move forward and to cogitate (*cogitatio*) on his self-image and ultimately act as a quasi-divine man.

III.4. Theologizing the Art of Memory in Dante

III.4.1. A Theological Exercise of Thought

The threefold implication entailing the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love have generated a theological framework around the pilgrim's enterprise. This symbolic framework represents a divine domain where the pilgrim engages mostly with the three theological virtues. Faith represents the moral renewal of its spiritual ability to discern the presence of God. Hope symbolizes future glory as a form of resurrection and revealed truth. Charity represents the cause of all celestial movement. On the one hand, they demonstrate how Dante interconnects with the three virtues in terms of reshaping old perceptions (i.e., "inexpressible Power" *Par.* X.3) and carrying them across other divine realities (i.e., "eternal beings" *Par.* XXVI.39). On the other hand, these three virtues resonate with inner abilities that showcase the pilgrim's advancement towards the next stage of his enterprise. Dante the pilgrim advances because he has finally absorbed the three theological virtues, which will enable him to absorb an important ability, namely a theological exercise towards the Empyrean.

This theological exercise represents a spiritual practice to guide Dante the pilgrim to the absorption of his own objective for eschatological salvation. While this exercise characterizes the first landmark towards the theologizing factor of the art of memory in Dante, this theological exercise evolves prior to the three examinations offered by the three apostles. A case in point occurs with Saint Benedict's prophecy in this next passage from *Paradiso*. Upon meeting with Dante the pilgrim, Saint Benedict underscores the pilgrim's desire. Dante the pilgrim wishes to embrace much grace for him to envision Saint Benedict without the respective veil covering the saint: "Ond'elli: 'Frate, il tuo alto disio / s'adempierà in su l'ultima spera, / ove s'adempion tutti

li altri e 'l mio" (And he: 'Brother, your high desire will be / fulfilled within the final sphere, as all / the other souls' and my own longing will [*Par.* XXII.61-63]). The pilgrim is conversing with Saint Benedict, who wishes to see him soon. While Benedict tells Dante that they will soon see each other in the Empyrean, Dante the pilgrim is simultaneously manifesting his spiritual status by engaging into a religious conversation. It is about Jacob's Ladder and its function as the connecting point between the rest of the timebound universe and the unchanging Empyrean.

The theological exercise towards the Empyrean becomes more evident in *Paradiso XXII* when Dante the pilgrim will also have to render divine or theological all his mental constructs and images. Before any faculty would transition to the next stage leading to the Empyrean, Dante the poet accrues the significance of his invocation to the muses in this following passage where he defines how devoutly upwards his soul needs to aspire: "A voi divotamente ora sospira / l'anima mia, per acquistar virtute / al passo forte che a sé la tira" ('To you my soul now sighs devotedly, / that it may gain the force for this attempt, / hard trail that now demands its very strength [*Par.* XXII.121-123]). This is an invocation as if of a Muse, asking for help. Dante's soul does not deeply cite the source of his poetic gifts because his power to describe his increasingly arduous imaginings depends on their active influence in the present and on his talent. To "acquistar virtute" (gain the force [*Par.* XXII.122]) Dante needs to employ the proper virtue and move onwards with the journey. Furthermore, Dante can only do so if his human soul is in motion towards the "passo forte che a sé la tira" (hard trail that now demands its very strength [*Par.* XXII.123]). This last aspect echoes with a specific passage from the middle cantos of *Purgatorio*, where Virgil lectures Dante the pilgrim about the movement of the soul towards Empyrean which recreates propensity towards the Love: "così l'animo preso entra in disire, / ch'è moto spiritale, e mai non posa / fin che la cosa amata il fa gioire" (the soul, when seized,

move into longing, / a motion of the spirit, never resting / till the beloved thing has made it joyous [*Purg.* XVIII.31-33]). Dante defines the human soul like the previously examined flame (*Purg.* XVIII.28-30), which tends to move upwards, just like the human soul does with respect to Love. Thus, Dante the pilgrim will not be able to describe his imminent experiences unless he converts his soul to “acquistar virtute” (gain the force [*Par.* XXII.122]). Dante might not have absorbed the three theological virtues yet, but he is already weighting his theological understanding about this process of conversion for his soul.

If this same conversion of soul upwards indicates a motion towards the next phase with respect to the Empyrean, so are Dante’s faculties and elements, which are following the same motion that the human soul is tracing with its motion and its action in itself. A case in point occurs when Dante the poet has Virgil defining how human soul is formed by divine intellect and emotional and vegetative powers, with also primal intellect and primal will. In *Purgatorio* XVIII, Virgil will also state that these same faculties and elements are only perceptible in the action of the soul: “Ogne forma sustanzial, che setta, / è da matera ed è con lei unita, / specifica vertute ha in sé colletta” (Every substantial form, at once distinct / from matter and conjoined to it, ingathers / the force that is distinctively its own [*Purg.* XVIII.49-51]). This passage specifies the substantial form as being that of the intellectual soul, which contains a virtue, and it is composed of intellect and will. The argument that Dante the poet proposes in these three verses from *Purg.* XVIII is to fundamentally unite the intellect and the will into one virtue or power. More precisely, the above-mentioned virtue is of paramount significance because operates only in motion and only then can this virtue “in sé colletta” (ingathers [*Purg.* XVIII.51]) other faculties. The human soul’s motion upwards that “ingathers” faculties like intellect and will resonates with

a theological exercise for the pilgrim's mind, and a spiritual nuance that Dante's soul characterizes its impact while in motion.

Consequently, if the previously suggested faculties (intellect and will) must be conjoined with the motion of the human soul, and because the art of memory belongs to the human soul and relates to intellect and will, the art of memory in Dante also becomes participant of this theological exercise for the pilgrim's mind. To fully operate within this theological exercise, the art of memory in Dante needs to transcend (the philosophical definition of) metaphysics to become a spiritual vision of this form of art. It is a shift from a metaphysical approach to a theological approach that corresponds to a mystical motion of values aligned with the pilgrim's enterprise. This shift does not solely entail the numinous perception of those "corpi lievi" (light bodies [*Par.* I.99]), which simultaneously corroborate the pilgrim's imminent, immaterial experience. This shift does not merely conjoin the soul's motion upwards, but also the preparation for immaterial perception of the upcoming divine Empyrean. Rather than the continuation of the pilgrim's mental upsurge through the previously suggested intellectual crescendo, Dante the pilgrim is now faced with a theological crescendo while reciting his *credo*. In this next passage, Dante the poet defines the notion of belief in need to be fully converted from the notions of science and philosophy (physics ad metaphysics) to the spiritual and theological realm:

"e a tal creder non ho io pur prove
fisice e metafisice, ma dalmi
anche la verità che quinci piove
per Moisè, per profeti e per salmi,
per l'Evangelio e per voi che scriveste
poi che l'ardente Spirto vi fè almi;
e credo in tre persone etterne, e queste
credo una essenza sì una e sì trina,
che sofferà congiunto sono ed este"

(Par. XXIV.133-141)⁷⁰

[‘for this belief I have not only proofs
 both physical and metaphysical;
 I also have the truth that here rains down
 through Moses and the prophets and the Psalms
 and through the Gospels and through you who wrote
 words given to you by the Holy Ghost.
 And I believe in three Eternal Persons,
 and these I do believe to be one essence,
 so single and threefold as to allow both is and are.’]

While this passage reveals the full version of Dante’s *credo* in God the Creator, the pilgrim also lays out the proofs and outcomes of his understanding from this doctrinal examination, which encompasses philosophical, theological, and scriptural texts from *Genesis* to Peter’s *Epistles*. The characterization of spiritual truths from the Old and New Testaments showcases how Dante the poet traces the path for the pilgrim’s advancement towards redemption, which also reverberates with the previously suggested theological crescendo. Dante the author underscores the philosophical proofs (physical or metaphysical) that the natural human power of reason develops. Dante will ultimately contrast those proofs by the time he begins narrating the parts of the New Testament (*The Acts*, *Epistles*, and *Apocalypse* in vv. 136-138) as well as describing the time of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost in tongues of fire descended upon the apostles (*The Acts* 2:1-4).⁷¹

However, from this same passage of *Paradiso* XXIV.133-141, Dante the poet also argues that metaphysics or entire philosophy cannot be the sole means to trace Dante the pilgrim’s salvation because of the need of theologically exercising the Gospel. Dante the poet states that we read about the good news of salvation, which is testified to by each of the four evangelists:

⁷⁰ The theological crescendo is my own idea, which I consider a mental upsurge with respect to the theological impact that those virtues had produced upon the pilgrim’s enterprise. This crescendo represents the outcome of the symbolic, theological framework (i.e., faith representing the moral renewal of its spiritual ability to discern the presence of God). This same impact has had a major influence upon the pilgrim and his faculties (i.e., art of memory). To examine further both the mental upsurge and the intellectual crescendo, see pages 116-118 from Chapter One.

⁷¹ Cfr. Saint Paul, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans*, I:18-20. As physical proofs Dante probably has in mind this biblical assertion, which is a period regularly cited to support the view of God’s eternal power.

“per l’Evangelio e per voi che scriveste / poi che l’ardente Spirto vi fé almi” (through the Gospels and through you who wrote / words given to you by the Holy Ghost [*Par.* XXIV.137-138]). When the poet describes the idea of “Evangelio e per voi che scriveste” (through the Gospels and through you who wrote [*Par.* XXIV.137]), Dante the poet is essentially defining the paramount importance of the Gospel. This same notion of Gospel gets testified by each of the four evangelists who are mentioned by Dante from the New Testament. Dante the poet is revealing a theological exercise by transcending the pilgrim’s standards of salvation to the descent of the Holy Spirit into the Church at Pentecost. What makes Dante’s poetic experience about the significance of the gospel symbolically spiritual is the form of flames which is representative of the heads of the assembled disciples. By suggesting the pilgrim to shift to the immanence of the divine, Dante the poet is simultaneously motivating the pilgrim to shift from philosophy to theology.⁷² In other words, this abovementioned passage from *Par.* XXIV represents one example of the poet foregrounding the boldness of the pilgrim’s conception considering the relationship and union between the human and the divine.

Another example concerning the theological exercise to the immanence of the divine occurs even prior to the pilgrim’s examination of faith. In *Paradiso* IV, Beatrice refers to a significant phenomenon of ancient Christian lineage known as the accommodative metaphor. It is a metaphorical demonstration of higher things and higher beings that ordinary humans simply lack the empirical background to understand. Dante the poet will later state that angels are pure being or, as he would say, “atto puro” (pure act [*Par.* XXIX.33]). However, the verses in the following passage demonstrate Dante the pilgrim’s transcendental vision and understanding of the angels from the Holy Scriptures to be perceived metaphorically:

⁷² Some examples of shifting to the immanence of the divine are the three theological virtues enhancing the course of the *ars memorativa* in Dante, on estrangement from and intimacy with God.

“Per questo la Scrittura condescende
 a vostra facultate, e piedi e mano
 attribuisce a Dio e altro intende;
 e Santa Chiesa con aspetto umano
 Gabriel e Michel vi rappresenta,
 e l’altro che Tobia rifece sano.”

(Par. IV.43-48)

[‘And this is why the Bible condescends
 to human powers, assigning feet and hands
 to God, but meaning something else instead.
 And Gabriel and Michael and the angel
 who healed the eyes of Tobit are portrayed
 by Holy Church with human visages.’]

Beatrice states that divine revelation from the Holy Scriptures must be adapted to human understanding. This same revelation is implicit in the Old Testament and fundamental to the New Testament, though seldom stated or generalized. Although it is the notion of scholastic metaphor in the Bible that spurs the focus on theology, Dante the author believes that human knowledge is ultimately based on sensory perception. While Dante the author clarifies that human senses operate with a number of limitations in the face of supernatural experiences, he also suggests other ways to accommodate the human’s needs through the use of imagination. In the *Convivio*, Dante takes into account the idea of human intellect from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* in juxtaposition with the function of human organs:

Che però medesimamente dovemo ammirare loro eccellenza – la quale soverchia li occhi della mente umana, sì come dice lo Filosofo nel secondo della *Metafisica* -, e affermar loro essere. Poi che, non avendo di loro alcuno senso (dal quale comincia la nostra conoscenza), pure risplende nel nostro intelletto alcuno lume della vivacissima loro essenza, in quanto vedemo le sopra dette ragioni e molt’altre: sì come afferma chi ha li occhi chiusi l’aere essere luminoso, per un poco di splendore o vero raggio che passa per le pupille del vispistrello; ché non altrimenti sono chiusi li nostri occhi intellettuali, mentre che l’anima è legata e incarcerata per li organi del nostro corpo (*Conv. II.iv.17*).

[We should admire the excellence of these creatures—which transcends the eyes of the human mind, as the Philosopher says in the second book of the *Metaphysics*—and affirm their existence. For although we cannot perceive them with the senses (from which our knowledge originates), yet there shines in our intellect some light of their most lively existence insofar as we perceive the above-mentioned reasons and many others—just as one whose eyes are closed may affirm that the air is luminous because some slight radiance or ray of light, such as passes through the pupils of a bat, reaches him. For in just this way the eyes of our intellect are closed, as long as the soul is bound and imprisoned by the organs of our body.]

Dante takes an Aristotelean approach when he claims that the human intellect is naturally most fitted to understand the so-called *quidditas* (specific essence) of the objects of sense perception.

If humans operate by activating their own senses, their perception must be made equally possible by shining some light on those immaterial existences (i.e., angels). This would occur by using the human imagination while characterizing the angels' nonexistent physical nature and simultaneously adding human physical features such as eyes, arms, etc. This last aspect wants to also suggest why Dante believes that humans are allowed to conceive of such higher realities, namely the angels from *Par.* IV.46-48 in more concrete and familiar terms. Dante the pilgrim is the only literary character engaging with this otherworldly pilgrimage towards salvation, and because he has been directly experiencing these same abstract existences as the angels, his sensory perception refers to the previously examined immaterial perception. This is a type of perception related to metaphysical memory but most importantly in relation to immaterial experiences that the pilgrim is solely undergoing throughout his journey.

Seemingly, the course that the pilgrim encompasses after the examination of the three virtues must be conceived as an invisible Christian reality. Since angels are pure being and have no visible aspect without arms, faces, or legs, Dante the poet must still face this symbolic representation of angels across the realm of Christian reality and within his own *Commedia*. It is true that angels are invisible, and it is also true that in the previous passage from the *Convivio*, Dante offers an option by stating that angels can be characterized through physical features by use of imagination. However, in the case of Dante the pilgrim and his enterprise towards salvation, Dante's sense of allegory allows the pilgrim to better conceive them (angels) as having wings, faces, voices, and other physical attributes. In the face of Christian reality, angels can appear to be both invisible and physical. Similarly, God Himself is beyond any anthropomorphic human understanding. At the same time, the notion of allegory empowers verses from the

Commedia to underscore how “la Scrittura condescende” (the Bible condescends [*Par.* IV.43]) the pilgrim to think of God Himself as having hands and feet.

Thus, if the art of memory in Dante originates from the metaphysical memory (as discussed in Chapter Two), the interpretation of Christian symbols like the portrayal of the Holy Church incites and ignites Dante’s contemplation of the invisible on the one hand. On the other hand, these Christian symbols inspire Christian realities because they belong to the Holy Scriptures of the Bible. Angels belong to a Christian invisible reality and are thus considered to be divine truths (i.e., Gabriel, Michael, Holy Church, Scriptures) that correspond to the realm of symbols (such as his art of memory as a concept), which is thus akin to divine communication.

III.4.2. The Theological Transcendence of Dowries

The previously examined theological framework expands from the theological exercise of embracing the metaphorical presentation of higher things and higher beings through the theological transcendence of the triad of dowries. This same triad emerges through a mutual interlacement opening up to a theological interconnectedness among the three virtues and spiritual faculties (i.e., light, love, and joy), which operates as the second landmark towards the theologizing factor of the art of memory in Dante. More specifically, this theological, doctrinal interconnectedness operates through the symbolic doctrine of the triad. This same doctrine appears to have arisen sometime in the late twelfth or early thirteenth centuries through a melding of influences that includes Saint Augustine in particular. The analogy of dowry itself originates from the early Middle Ages, where Saint Augustine specifically refers to them as the “spiritual nuptials between the soul and Christ.”⁷³

⁷³ Cfr. Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, X.x.13. The Augustinian triad of memory, intellect, and will, which Saint Augustine had proposed as the image of the divine Trinity reflected in the human mind, was thought to be perfected

At the same time, the idea of dowries in Dante's *Commedia* corresponds to the triad or the three dowries of the soul. In the next passage from *Paradiso*, Dante the poet describes these three dowries of the soul as often conceived as the special grace by which the soul's likeness to God is made perfect: "Di tutte queste dote s'avvantaggia / l'umana creatura" (In all these dowries the human creature / is advantaged [*Par.* VII.76-77]). Dante the poet suggests that these dowries correspond to three prerogatives that were stated when God created man, namely immortality (v. 68), freedom (v. 71), and resemblance to God (vv. 73-75). Dante the poet tends to use these three prerogatives as they are given to the soul in its moment of creation while being capable of or disposed toward beatific union.

Dante the poet expands the triad of dowries by adopting the three notions of light, love, and grace, which appear throughout a series of verses in *Paradiso*. Beginning with the fourteenth canto, the voice of the most divine member of the inner circle (Solomon) is compared to the voice of Gabriel to Mary. Solomon highlights the essentials of beatitude by alluding to this triad of elements in the heaven of the sun, namely vision or knowledge, love or charity, and joy or sweetness. It begins when Solomon refers to light with the verse "ne la luce più dia" (within the smaller circle's divinest light [*Par.* XIV.34]). He continues with the notion of love with "tanto il nostro amore si raggerà dintorno cotal vesta" (so long shall our / love radiate around us such a garment [*Par.* XIV.38-39]). Solomon finally states the notion of grace when he says "quant'ha di grazia sovra suo valore" (by what grace each receives beyond his merit [*Par.* XIV.42]).⁷⁴ It is a triad of dowries that Solomon describes because it refers to a chain of spiritual values in

in the state of beatitude. The idea of a triad or doctrine of three elements, even if spoken first by Saint Augustine, still represents a scholastic doctrine considered by later philosophers and theologians (i.e., Anselm, Bernard, etc.).

⁷⁴ A scholar who has closely examined the tradition of the Augustinian triad of dowries and its relation to Dante's writing of the *Commedia* is Tamara Pollack, "Light, Love, and Joy in Dante's Doctrine of Beatitude," in *Reviewing Dante's Theology*, ed. by Claire E. Honess and Matthew Treherne (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013), 263-319. Pollack argues that the three dowries in Dante's *Commedia* were conceived as the special grace by which the soul's likeness to God is made perfect. It is this grace that lifts the soul up and makes it capable of or disposed to beatific union.

connection with each other, and that are presented as cause-and-effect. The brightness corresponds to ardor, the ardor to the power of sight, and that power to grace. It is a chain of values on a threefold implication: the more grace Solomon and his fellow saints experience, the better they see God; the better they see Him, the more they love Him; and the more they love Him, the brighter they will shine. The result of this triad of dowries corresponds to a special illumination that lifts Solomon's intellect so high that it sees into God as the angels do. It lifts Solomon so far above himself that he can see the supreme God, which brings joy and splendor.

The purpose of these dowries given to the soul in *Paradiso* is that they can be united directly with God while establishing the interconnectedness among spiritual faculties (light, love, and joy). Through these dowries, Dante the pilgrim is able to underscore the relationship and union between the human and the divine, between the outcome of his imaginative realm (i.e., his art of memory) and his upcoming redemption. It is true that Dante the poet already defines a close relationship between faculties (soul, intelligence, mind, and memory) with the notion of mind that appears to exercise the function of memory.⁷⁵ This correlation of soul, mind, and memory appears as early as the first canticle and contributes to the previously mentioned shared effort towards *ars memorativa* in Dante.⁷⁶ However, it is a metaphysical process in juxtaposition with the divine intelligence. The interconnectedness of memory, intellect, and will belonging to the faculty of the soul refers to an ontological truth. By considering the triad of dowries (light, love, and joy) to a greater extent, the interconnectedness between the three virtues and the art of memory in Dante becomes representative of a chain of spiritual values. This interconnectedness

⁷⁵ To reexamine further the interconnectedness of faculties like memory, mind, will, and soul, see pages 147-148 from Chapter Two.

⁷⁶ In *Inferno* II, Dante names "mente" (mind) when his intention is to refer to memory: "O Muse, o alto ingegno, or m'aiutate; / o mente che scrivesti ciò ch'io vidi, / qui si parrà la tua nobilitate" (O Muses, O lofty genius, aid me now! / O memory, that set down what I saw, / here shall your worth be shown [*Inf.* II.7-9]). Another textual example expressing this close relation between soul and memory comes from *Purgatorio* XVIII.13-20; XXV.52-66.

is symbolic of a theological transcendence which simultaneously strengthens the theological framework generated by the three virtues.

The most explicit verses that manifest more prominently the three dowries occur in *Paradiso* XXX. The following tercet presents the pattern of light to love to joy. They are placed in the following order: the first to be stressed is seeing, which pertains to intellect. Love, which is of the will, follows on seeing, and joy, which is fulfillment of the intellectual desire to see and of love resulting from the seeing, completes the triad of dowries: “luce intellettual, piena d’amore; / amore di vero ben, pien di letizia; / letizia che trascende ogne dolzore” (light of the intellect, light filled with love, / love of true good, love filled with happiness, / a happiness surpassing every sweetness [*Par.* XXX.40-42]). Dante the poet adopts more noticeably these lines with the three dowries of light, love, and happiness into a triad or a threefold. He does so by expressing the nature of God’s kingdom in a pattern of linkage new to the poem, which is calculated to offer a first sense of the higher spiritual reality of the Empyrean. It is a relationship or an interconnectedness whose starting point is motion, which gives rise to love, and in turn overflows into joy.

From the point of motion to love and joy, the central cantos from *Purgatorio* (i.e., *Purg.* XVII.106-111) are essential since love is far from hatred because the love created by the primal love (God) can never be divorced. This means that a human being can never hate God (Love), and his/her love will circulate around while enhancing light and delight: “così l’animo preso entra in disire, / ch’è moto spiritale, e mai non posa / fin che la cosa amata il fa gioire” (so does the soul, when seized, move into longing, / a motion of the spirit, never resting / til the beloved thing has made it joyous [*Purg.* XVIII.31-33]). These verses (and *Purg.* XVI.85-90) showcase Love coming from God’s hands through the notion of the soul, and that the soul has been created

with God's love. Since God gave Love motion, Dante the poet clarifies the significance of Love in the face of God, which will automatically turn to things that bring delight, light, and joy all around. Additionally, Dante suggests that the idea of motion and turning to God reconnects to the idea of Love as the celestial mover (i.e., *Purg.* XVI.97-99 & *Purg.* XVIII.22-27). It is a celestial motion (Love) in reference to the notion of interconnectedness of the three dowries.

Unlike the interconnectedness of memory, intellect, and will—all belonging to the faculty of the soul—the order of these dowries (light, love, and joy) considerably enhances the significance of this theological transcendence. More specifically, these dowries' transcendental operation occurs by underscoring the spiritual succession of values, which symbolically presents the pattern of the Trinity. The trinitarian value of Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit seemingly characterizes the interconnectedness of the three virtues by means of spiritual and revelation of truth. The trinitarian aspect remains fundamental because it also represents an example that spawns a divine reality in Dante's *Commedia* and that guides the three elements of dowries within the divine realm of *Paradiso* (i.e., *Par.* XXX.40-42). If the notion of the Trinity corresponds to a divine reality in Dante's *Commedia*, the triad of dowries becomes relevant to Trinity because it creates a sophisticated triadic relationship among the image of God in the soul. This occurs on a threefold basis: the theological virtues of the wayfarer, the beatific gifts of the blessed, and the Trinity itself. They are all aligned in perfect symmetry: God symbolizes the "luce intellettuale" (light of the intellect [*Par.* XXX.40]) and relates to Eternity or Majesty, which represents the Father. The "vero ben" (true good [*Par.* XXX.41]) indicates Truth or Beauty, which represents the sun. The "letizia che trascende ogni dolcezza" (happiness surpassing every sweetness [*Par.* XXX.42]) indicates Joy or Peace, which corresponds to the Spirit. Thus, if the three dowries depict the trinitarian pattern, this means that the pilgrim is also absorbing the

divine truth of the Trinity. Consequently, Dante the pilgrim is empowering the theological transcendence and reinforcing the theological framework.

III.4.3. Conforming to Christian Values

Since Dante the pilgrim constantly embraces free will from the beginning of his journey and because the moral life and the poet's rectitude require free choice to develop and move forward with his enterprise, the art of memory in Dante must conform to the requirements of Christian values. The three dowries represent a theological transcendence operating within this theological, doctrinal interconnectedness. Furthermore, the notion of divine rule continues to empower the pilgrim's theological transcendence in *Paradiso* by enabling the notion of *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process) from the art of memory within this theological scheme. The divine rule empowers the doctrinal interconnectedness between the three virtues and the art of memory through a theologizing factor that entails Christian conformation of imagination, faculties, and art form (i.e., art of memory) to Christian values (i.e., the three theological virtues and the three dowries).

What characterizes this divine rule is Dante the pilgrim's actions and otherworldly experiences (i.e., the three theological virtues, or engagement with Godly Goodness) in relation to the hierarchy of goods in which he participates.⁷⁷ For instance, the experiences that embody the wayfarer's intrinsic examinations of faith, hope, and love must be rightly ordered to God as their end salvation. God is the ultimate objective, and since desire for Dante's salvation is endless and unlimited about the intensity of these examinations' motion, they are measured by God's infinite rule. This form of decree that originates from God is known as the divine rule. Likewise, even Dante the pilgrim's charitable engagements with angels (i.e., *Purg.* XXX.109-

⁷⁷ Cfr. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, IIae q. 49, a. 4.

117 and *Par.* XXIX.33) and saints (i.e., Saint Thomas in *Par.* XI, Saint Benedict in *Par.* XXII, and Saint Bernard in *Par.* XXXII) must be regulated by cognitive principles. They need to be measured according to a cognitive scale of values (divine rule) to show that the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and love are necessary.⁷⁸

Dante the pilgrim provides us with an example of divine rule by the time he engages with the three apostles and the three theological virtues. These three virtues are not acquired through human effort because they are instilled and bestowed by divine grace. Since the three theological virtues are characterized by three distinct examinations between the master (the three Apostles) and the bachelor (Dante the pilgrim), it is imperative for Dante the pilgrim to engage fully with this aspect of his journey. More specifically, it is pivotal for the pilgrim to absorb closely the instructions as taught by the apostles, who are messengers of God. These messengers trace a pattern of questions for the pilgrim, and these questions symbolize the instructions that divine grace has established with the three apostles prior to their meetings.

Along this line of thought, the virtues themselves represent rules of divinity, and despite the idea of prolepsis, which motivates Dante the pilgrim's purpose to reach out for redemption, he still needs to reactivate those virtues. The three apostles James, John, and Peter examine and

⁷⁸ The virtue of prudence also follows this basic regulating structure by calibrating it according to the new fellowship in the good established by God's Divine Grace. Besides enabling a person to choose what conforms to the dictates of right reason (moral truth), prudence develops into a preceptor for virtues, which represents the achievement of a complete moral culture in the human person whose intelligence and appetites function harmoniously towards good human activity. If, on the one hand, charity symbolizes the cause of the three theological virtues (i.e., charity perfecting all the virtues while directing them in union with the love of God from *Par.* XXVI.37-39), on the other hand, prudence is a virtue that synchronizes other faculties, including theological virtues. In fact, prudence forms the theoretical nerve of a theological conception of Dante's moral life, which synchronizes the finalization of a moral action insofar as its principal act or command terminates in accord with the dictates of right reason from God. In reference to considering prudence as a part of the theological virtues, see Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, XI.vi.2-5. Saint Augustine observes how love as delectation became as it were a weight on his soul; authentic love orders the soul, so that where the heart dwells, there also one finds delectation. Saint Augustine suggests that the dependence of conscience upon prudence is indicated by the very nature of conscience as a rational act of moral judgment concerning what is to be done here and now. In the probative sense, this judgment must existentially conform to the truth of the proposed act, agent, and circumstances, all of which are impossible without the integrating work of prudence.

interrogate the pilgrim about the three virtues of faith, hope, and charity, but it will be up to Dante the pilgrim to process them within himself. If the pilgrim does not activate the process of virtues, he cannot move on with the enterprise, and that is the rule of thumb for Dante the pilgrim:

“Sì come il baccialier s’arma e non parla
 fin che ‘l maestro la question propone,
 per approvarla, non per terminarla,
 così m’armava io d’ogne ragione
 mentre ch’ella dicea, per esser presto
 a tal querente e a tal professione.”
 (Par. XXIV.46-51)

[‘Just as the bachelor candidate must arm himself and does not speak until the master submits the question for discussion, not for settlement, so while she spoke I armed myself with all my argument, preparing for such a questioner and such professing.’]

The passage illustrates the notion of the medieval bachelor’s examination in theology (just like any other academic discipline) because the voyager is under interrogation and from which he will learn his own lesson about theology as a form of revealed truth (i.e., Dante learns about faith, hope, and charity/love). A bachelor, in this case Dante the pilgrim, was a candidate for the first degree in the field, and the examination was administered by a master. This same master (or *magister*) would interrogate Dante with numerous questions, which should also be considered a form of examination because the apostles scrutinize Dante’s mind (memory) to truly see whether he recollects (*cogitatio*) these three virtues or not. Therefore, this interrogation and examination represent a type of spiritual law, a divine rule that on the one hand needed to be instructed and elaborated by experts or scholastics. On the other hand, the candidate needs to engage with this spiritual law by reenacting that same divine instruction.⁷⁹ This means that the virtues are spiritual

⁷⁹ Cfr. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I.IIae.5.7.

laws that absorb divine values because the saints' own knowledge about the virtues resonates with the canonical learning of the Christian Bible.

III.4.4. Espousing the Language of God

While these three theological virtues embody the divine rule from divine grace, these virtues also anchor and enhance Dante the pilgrim's heavenly progress towards redemption. For instance, when the pilgrim experiences the three theological virtues or engagement with the Godly Goodness from *Par.* VII.64 and participates in God's very own divine nature (*2 Pet.* 1:4), Dante is united in friendship with God who is love (*John* 4:8). Dante the poet demonstrates that charity is friendship with God made possible through Christ, through whom Dante knows God most fully (*Par.* XXIV.61-63). To be able to be friends with God, He is made possible through Christ, through whom Dante feels reconciled to God (*John* 15:15). Being a friend of God in charity means loving and appreciating who God is. It also means to faithfully participating in His plans and instructions (divine rule) to the fullest extent possible.⁸⁰ Through the above-mentioned verses (*Par.* XXIV.61-63), Dante and Christians in general are created to love and reconcile. However, if every Christian is allowed to fully participate in God's plans (*John* 4:8), in Dante's *Commedia* it is solely Dante the pilgrim who exercises the virtue of charity and directly experiences this precisely theological reconciliation with God.

Along this line of thought, Dante the poet's notion of charity forms all the virtues because of love directing them in union with the love of God (*Par.* XXVI.37-39). However, language perfects the act of loving itself. Dante the poet's notion of charity shapes and renews his previous

⁸⁰ The virtue of faith for Dante is literally the foundation that underlies all things. The act of faith, perfected by sacramental baptism, constitutes a divine action on the part of the believer, as well as entailing a movement from the potential state of nonbeing in Christ (act of potency) to the actual state of being with Christ. In like manner, the moral life and beginning of theological virtues with the actual implementation of the virtues reflects this same dynamic.

notion of love, with the course of his otherworldly experiences enhancing the pilgrim's understanding of true love for God. For instance, in *Paradiso* XXVI, we read about the virtue of charity that leads Dante the pilgrim into perceiving the revealed truths,⁸¹ which consequently have drawn Dante the pilgrim from the sea of twisted love to the shore of good love: “tratto m'hanno del mar de l'amor torto, / e del diritto m'han posto a la riva” (these drew me from the sea of twisted love / and set me on the shore of the right love [*Par.* XXVI.62-63]). Dante the poet turns to the motif of the exodus to express the pilgrim's personal journey from sin to redemption and from “torto” (twisted [*Par.* XXVI.62]) shifting to the “diritto” (right [*Par.* XXVI.63]) type of love. The virtue of charity precisely embodies the divine rule by the time Dante writes that the love being true represents God. God needs to be loved above all else, as well as to be in communion with persons in self-giving love who created all things out of love (*Par.* XXX.40-42).

This type of renewal of love for God from a perverse version to a rightful type of love seems to resemble faithfully the biblical features that Dante has closely examined, which concerns some of the letters of Saint Paul: “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, the one who was created according to God.”⁸² This resemblance becomes even more paramount in the next passage, with Saint Paul underscoring the significance and the recognition of God: “Putting off the old man, with his actions, put on the new who is being renewed for the recognition of God according to the image of him who created him.”⁸³ The juxtaposition of these two biblical passages to the previously studied verses from *Paradiso* XXVI.62-63 showcases how Dante the poet significantly underscores his use of the language of God. The reinvigoration

⁸¹ Some examples of revealed truths are the Creation, the procession of the Word, the Word made flesh, and the redemption of man.

⁸² Saint Paul, *The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians*, 4:23.

⁸³ Saint Paul, *The First Letter of Paul to the Colossians*, 3:9.

of the language of God is an essential step for the poet who needs to conform to the divine teachings that divine grace bestows upon the pilgrim. Since conforming to the divine teachings and lectures requires a constant renewal across the pilgrim's journey towards redemption, the art of memory allows the pilgrim to renew those divine instructions from divine grace (faith, hope, and love/charity) and move onwards by expanding his realm of imagination.⁸⁴

Since the art of memory in Dante characterizes this process of renewing and refashioning Dante's spirit and disposition, this same process corresponds to the standards of the theological vision of *Paradiso* where everyone and everything needs to follow through as well: "luce intellettual, piena d'amore; / amore di vero ben, pien di letizia; / letizia che trascende ogne dolzore" (light of the intellect, light filled with love, / love of true good, love filled with happiness, / a happiness surpassing every sweetness [*Par.* XXX.40-42]).⁸⁵ Love, which is of the will, follows on seeing, and joy, which is the fulfillment of intellectual desire to see and of love resulting from the seeing, is that which completes the triad of dowries. Most importantly, this triad of dowries conveys a chain of values, a succession and a sequence of divine experiences and revelations that are intertwined with each other. Within this same motion from love to joy to will, Dante the pilgrim is constantly engaging with the theological spirit along his journey.

This triad of theological and divine values concerns one aspect of Christian theology, namely *imago dei*, which consists of a divine revelation.⁸⁶ With Dante the pilgrim absorbing this triad of dowries, readers learn that virtues are the means whereby the Christian believer is transformed and made into an active image of God, or *imago dei*. Aquinas claims that friendship can exist between humans and God, and charity is a love for God after all. This means that

⁸⁴ Since Dante the pilgrim is operating through the realm of the poet's imagination and because he finds himself en route towards the Empyrean, these aspects resonate with the higher reality of *Paradiso*.

⁸⁵ In reference to the central notion of Love, see *Purg.* XVI.85-90; *Purg.* XVII.106-111; & *Purg.* XVIII.28-33.

⁸⁶ I consider the notion of *imago dei* as it belongs to the nature of the will that communicates to others the good it possesses. *Imago dei* belongs mostly to the divine will, from which every perfection is derived by some likeness.

charity is loving God above all else, not arbitrarily, but rather because God is goodness and the source of all that is good.⁸⁷ In the central cantos of *Purgatorio*, God is universally good, and the love of God and of his Creation in Him is never wrong but always good (*Purg.* XVII.91-105). Through this idea of *imago dei*, which is an active image of God, Dante says that each form of image contains its own outlining disposition that can be perceived only while in action, namely through light, love, and joy: “specifica vertute ha in sé colletta, / la qual sanza operar non è sentita, / né si dimostra mai che per effetto” (the force that is distinctively its own, / a force unknown to us until it acts / it’s never shown except in its effects [*Purg.* XVIII.51-53]). This short passage indicates that even if Virgil tells Dante the pilgrim that we have no recollection or current undertaking of our original inclination to love God, yet we do demonstrate its presence in us because God created humans in his own defining disposition and in his own image (*imago dei*).

If God created all persons according to His image for a common destiny of union with God, each other (*Purg.* XVIII.61-63), and everything around us, Dante’s use of the language of God must also espouse the art of memory. Dante the pilgrim imbues the three dowries of light, love, and joy, and the art of memory serves the pilgrim’s purpose of renewing the recognition of God according to the image of He who created him (*Purg.* XVIII.51-53). With regards to the rational unity of mind, soul, and memory, which is capable of recognizing God, Dante the pilgrim becomes a quasi-divine man, who is moved by his own willingness to do good. Furthermore, the pilgrim still needs the art of memory to renew continuously his spiritual ability

⁸⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Ia, q. 93, a. 6, ad 3.

to discern instructions, three dowries of light, love, and joy and divine rules from divine grace and from Beatrice.⁸⁸

Dante the poet adopts the language of God to reenact his spiritual knowledge (i.e., faith and divine trust) and interconnects the art of memory (by taking into account the process of *cogitatio*) and the three virtues (*Par.* XXVI.33-35) because he needs to recollect and thus place back into action every “sustanze sempiterno” (eternal beings [*Par.* XXVI.39]) that is carried out from the “primo amore” (first love [*Par.* XXVI.38]) of God. Dante’s use of this sacred language espouses both the art of memory and the three virtues. Consequently, this same art form seems indispensable in terms of the theological framework that the three virtues of faith, hope, and love have generated, and the three dowries of light, love, and joy have considerably expanded the significance of this theological transcendence. Likewise, in the face of abstract, spiritual, intangible concepts like the virtues of faith, hope, and love, the art of memory in Dante operates within this theological framework and becomes part of this same theological factor.

In his writing dedicated to Dante, Giovanni Boccaccio alludes to the significant parallel between theology and poetry and argues that Dante’s poetry is the divine poetry—that Dante’s language in the *Commedia* is the language of God. Boccaccio corroborates and justifies that Dante adopts the language of God, and through language Dante can divinize his poem.⁸⁹ What Boccaccio essentially implies here is that Dante can favorably adopt a type of language in the

⁸⁸ Cfr. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I.IIae. 4.3. The communion of persons in loving God and the One who created all things out of love is a type of symbolic reconciliation because all human persons are created to be in loving union with God in ultimate happiness. In the example of Elijah in *I Kings* 19.9:13, God shows himself and gets closer to humans. Another case in point occurs with Beatrice, who through the voice of God, she allows Dante the pilgrim to love God. This same love for God is not ascending towards God but descending from himself. Even though the intellect requires a higher measure infused by God to act according to the exigencies of the heavenly kingdom, if our graced actions are going to be human acts, this infused measure must function as a principle elevating an essentially human process of practical reasoning. However, the virtue of prudence must be infused with charity as a gift of God’s grace, because prudence is a virtue that disposes Dante’s practical intellect to judge and accept the proper means given from divine grace to attain the ultimate end of salvation.

⁸⁹ Boccaccio states: “Niuna altra cosa è che una poesia di Dio.” Giovanni Boccaccio, *Trattatello in laude di Dante*, ed. by Pier Giorgio Ricci (Milan-Naples: Ricciardi, 1974), 456.

Commedia and apply it to the theological realm, which runs through the pilgrim's enterprise towards redemption. In this upcoming passage, Dante the poet describes how rigorously he observes one major aspect of the New Testament, namely the Gospel: "De la profonda condizion divina / ch'io tocco mo, la mente mi sigilla / più volte l'evangelica dottrina" (Of this profound condition of God / that I have touched on, Gospel teaching / has often set the imprint on my mind [Par. XXIV.142-144]). Dante considers this "evangelica dottrina" (Gospel teaching [Par. XXIV.144]) in support of the doctrine of the Trinity, which is a spiritual truth and is entirely based on revelation: "Quest'è il principio, quest'è la favilla / che si dilata in fiamma poi vivace" (This is the origin, this is the spark / that then extends into a vivid flame [Par. XXIV. 145-146]). On the one hand, a Christian interlaces the three trinitarian aspects of Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, the theological interlacement between the three virtues and the art of memory absorbs a seemingly characterization of the trinitarian function because both of them occur through revelation.⁹⁰ Because Dante writes the poetry of God and refashions multiple verses from the Christian Bible, he reveals a theological instinct to include the pilgrim in the possibility of journeying into the divine.⁹¹ By adopting the language of God, Dante the pilgrim can journey into the divine and be its true manifestation. More precisely, the pilgrim can be an embodiment of God that invites others to realize their inherent divinity.⁹²

⁹⁰ Trinity is a spiritual truth revealed to Christians, and the three virtues are revealed to Dante the pilgrim through a spiritualized interrogation with the three apostles.

⁹¹ In reference to the pilgrim journeying to the divine, Ruth Chester argues that in Paradise, the soul is transformed beyond its human virtue or potential for perfection and is able to adopt its allotted cosmological place within the greater scheme of creation. In other words, Chester suggests that the soul goes from being an individual in search of moral perfection to being a perfect part of a perfect whole. Ruth Chester, "Virtue in Dante," in *Reviewing Dante's Theology*, ed. by Claire E. Honess and Matthew Treherne (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013), 242.

⁹² Dante chooses to inscribe this understanding of humanity through his reference to himself as a star in his profession of faith, hope, and love. The theological virtues are important because they shape the pilgrim's understanding of the divine, and they open up a horizon of speculations about the language of God, the way God speaks to Dante, and the way in which we speak about God.

Dante adopts a linguistic existence that is breathed into being by the source of all that is proper poetry. This same linguistic aspect characterizes one of the highest expressions in human language of the love that is the source of all being. Poetic language is presented by Dante as a truthful expression of the love for existence and for others that is at one with the source of all being. It is precisely insofar as human beings are directly related as embodied beings (art of memory) and as embodied elements (the three virtues) to God and to the language of God that is manifested through the love that is the source of all being. Dante's poetry symbolizes also the language that relates and reveals the relationship between divine and human, and Dante manifests this revelation to his audience in the tenth canto of *Paradiso*: "Leva dunque, lettore, a l'alte rote / meco la vista, dritto a quella parte / dove l'un moto e l'altro si percuote" (Then, reader, lift your eyes with me to see / the high wheels; gaze directly at that part / where the one motion strikes against the other [*Par. X.7-9*]). This invitation to the reader is to a feast of contemplation of the total order of *Paradiso*. The two motions are the diurnal and the annual revolutions of the sun, represented by the celestial equator and the celestial ecliptic. They strike, or cross, each other at Aries, in which constellation the sun is at the time of Dante's journey.

Furthermore, these lines from *Par. X.7-9* explore a series of parallels between the actions of the two humans (the pilgrim and the audience) and the heavenly motions that are contemplated (*cogitatio*). The language that Dante adopts is rigorously divine because of the opening Trinitarian proem of the canto (*Par. X.1-6*). The reader is being asked first to elevate his or her sight (v. 7), then to begin to gaze (v. 10), and finally to perceive (v. 13). The language of the *Commedia* issues from and as an action partaking in the love that is God, and for this reason, Dante's narrative poetry of the *Commedia* becomes one of the highest forms of human poetry and language. Most importantly, Dante the poet reveals the narrative poetry of his *Commedia* as

a legitimate mode of theological expression, of praising heavenly movements and the nature of the relationship between the divine and human existence.

III.5. Accounting for the Heavenly Boundaries

Besides partaking of the love that is God and revealing the praise of heavenly movements in the relationship between the divine and human existence, the language of the *Commedia* is what also makes the pilgrim refine and expand his perception of the heavenly boundaries.⁹³ Since God has no proper name and keeps changing (i.e., appearing through numerous figures, examples, metaphors, etc.), so does the sacred language that Dante uses in his *Commedia*. Because there is no proper name for God, and we only have words or languages that keep changing according to our own historical circumstances, Dante the poet continues changing his paradigmatic account about the status of the sacred language.

A case in point refers to one of Dante the poet's addresses to the reader, where at the beginning of *Paradiso*, Dante warns his audience of an upcoming change that will alter the course of the journey: "non vi mettete in pelago, ché forse, / perdendo me, rimarreste smarriti. / L'acqua ch'io prendo già mai non si corse" (do not attempt to sail the seas I sail: / you may, by losing sight of me, be left astray. / The waves I take were never sailed before [*Par.* II.5-7]). Dante the pilgrim's capacities have increased in accord with his proximity to God, which Dante the poet needs to manifest to his audience. If Dante the poet suggests that his pilgrim is about to embrace the untraveled sea of the poem and Dante's guides, this also implies that a major change in the language is about to occur. Dante the poet needs to use a language that allows him to

⁹³ For instance, future glory produced by God's grace in *Par.* XXV.67-69; the order of the Seraphim closest to God in *Par.* XXVIII.40-57, and future knowledge of becoming divine and learning of God and the universe *Par.* XXXIII.70-72.

conform to Christian values as well as to accommodate the rigorous instructions that divine grace bestows upon the pilgrim. Language remains an important component of Dante's *Commedia* because it is the map of our own distance from the divine. Language is a part of our own exilic predicament, and therefore all the language of theology and virtues that Dante has been describing is part of this longing of human beings partaking of and cooperating with the divinity (the pilgrim).

Dante the poet adopts the language of God, and since Dante is changing the language as he himself changes, this change in language also represents a symbol of future knowledge. Dante demonstrates that by adopting the language of God, Dante the poet is not only making possible the impossible for his pilgrim through language as a manifestation of this change (for a human to reach salvation), but Dante the poet is also outlining the theological course upon which he can determine the possibility of changing things. One example is by theologizing Dante the pilgrim's spirit, disposition, and everything around to proceed to the end of his journey. In this next passage, Dante the poet is hoping to be granted grace that would spawn his mnemonic functions of *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process) to operate onwards to the future generations of readers: "e fa la lingua mia tanto possente, / ch'una favilla sol de la tua gloria / possa lasciar a la futura gente" (and make my tongue so powerful that I / may leave to people of the future one / gleam of the glory that is Yours [*Par.* XXXIII.70-72]). It is the ninth invocation to God as light to grant humans the power to conceive the nature of His being. Dante is invoking this graceful light of God to reinstate and alter the insufficient status of language so the pilgrim can conclude the enterprise. The pilgrim can refashion the spirit of his mind by imbuing his "lingua" (tongue [*Par.* XXXIII.70]) in order to leave "una favilla sol de la tua gloria" (one gleam of the glory [*Par.* XXXIII.71]) for the future glory of other people. Through this change, the

pilgrim can renew his recognition of God. More precisely, it is the language of God that allows Dante the poet to expand and refine the heavenly boundaries for his pilgrim. Since Dante's memory has already abandoned the pilgrim (*Par.* XXXIII.55-57), the art of memory is one art form that is altered and theologized through this use of language, which becomes the result of Dante refining the celestial precincts. In other words, adopting the language of God allows Dante the pilgrim to embrace the knowledge of becoming divine and learning of God and the universe.

The boundaries that Dante must overcome concerns those barriers that he can approach only through his love for God (charity) and cannot be reconciled with the boundaries that either Ulysses or Adam has trespassed. In *Inferno* XXVI, Ulysses trespasses the gateway through the columns of Hercules because Ulysses wants to satisfy his capricious desire to see beyond what was permitted: "ma misi me per l'alto mare aperto / sol con un legno e con quella compagna / picciola da la qual non fui diserto" (Therefore, I set out on the open sea / with but one ship and that small company / of those who never had deserted me [*Inf.* XXVI.100-102]). Ulysses explains how he and his crew reach the gates of Hercules at the end of the known world. Ulysses is a metaphysician of sorts who is dealing with space and who does not know where exactly he is going. Ulysses' example corresponds to a case of defiance, and from one disobedient figure like Ulysses, Dante the poet integrates another case of disobedience, namely Adam in *Paradiso* XXVI: "Or, figliuol mio, non il gustar del legno / fu per sé la cagion di tanto essilio, / ma solamente il trapassar del segno" (My son, the cause of my long exile did not lie / within the act of tasting of the tree / but solely in my trespass of the boundary [*Par.* XXVI.115-117]). The loss of boundaries was the kind of knowledge that made Adam see that he could be divine, and his problem consisted of trespassing the boundary line. God's imposition of the boundary between the human and the divine was a way of letting Adam know his limitations.

Unlike Ulysses and Adam's form of knowledge, which involves an overstepping of boundaries, the idea of advancing without demonstrating any devotion for God can solely distance Ulysses and Adam from the divine realm of God. At the same time, Dante the pilgrim advances through the otherworldly boundaries of the Empyrean, but he does so with loving action. Dante the poet demonstrates to two important figures (Ulysses and Adam) that it is only possible to overcome and accept eschatological salvation by embracing fully the virtue of charity. In fact, if Dante the pilgrim absorbs charity as a virtue, making him a virtuous character, Dante the poet is simultaneously opening up to go beyond where humans have never experienced: the realm of divinity.

In a virtuous person like Dante, we observe one whose deliberation about means provides the basis for accurate decision-making and respect for the integrity of his enterprise. For instance, Beatrice indicates that Dante the pilgrim was singled out by God's stars at his birth and by His special grace, so that from his youth, he was destined for great things: "questi fu tal nella sua vita nova / virtualmente, ch'ogni abito destro / fatto averebbe in lui mirabil prova" (he, when young, was such – potentially – that any / propensity innate in him would have / prodigiously succeeded, had he acted [*Purg.* XXX.115-117]). When this happens, the virtuous person is ready to benefit from the full virtuousness of divine grace, namely the virtues like faith, hope, and love. The one who has been singled out by God's stars at his birth to do great things has been able to embrace the above-mentioned virtues. This highly qualified position to engage with great things characterize the attainment of a highly refined complicity within the scope of the theological realm. The virtues advance themselves and trace the art of memory in Dante through this theological realm because the art of memory reenacts the apprenticeship required for a life of excellence (*Par.* VII.64-66; & *Conv.* IV.xxii.18). The art of memory allows the pilgrim to

reenact his learned ability to pursue the evangelical perfection (*Par.* XXIV.142-147). While living this same theological experience as a human and a Christian, the virtues of faith, hope, and love carry out for Dante the pilgrim a deliberate and efficacious modification of a person's capacity for properly performing and adapting his faculties well (i.e., Godly Goodness from *Par.* VII.64).

According to one of Saint Augustine's letters, the eyes of the resurrected are spiritualized to see God not in any physical or earthly manner, but rather in a new heavenly, spiritual manner.⁹⁴ The eyes of the elect Dante in *Paradiso* show signs of future glory (*Par.* XXV.67-69), revivification (*Par.* XXIV.55-57), and the need to be spiritualized brought thereby from natural to spiritual: "Però ne la giustizia sempiterna / la vista che riceve il vostro mondo, / com'occhio per lo mare, entro s'interna" (Therefore, the vision that your world receives / can penetrate into Eternal Justice / no more than eye can penetrate the sea [*Par.* XIX.58-60]). The eagle's discourse touches on justice and thus approaches Dante the pilgrim's specific question as to whether earthly intelligence can no more penetrate eternal justice than a human eye can penetrate the ocean. However, the direct evidence of Dante's eyes expands from the metaphorical sense of his eyes extended to eternal glory under God's counsel. Whatever seeing God means, it cannot connote a God who is seen in the Empyrean with natural human eyes. It cannot mean either to absorb an art form like memory that does not conform to heavenly features or to a God who is seen as a physical object.

This is to say that no metaphysical aspects (like the art of memory in Dante) can proceed in the realm of divinity without becoming something other than philosophy. Christianity came into the world as a significant religion of salvation rather than a metaphysical system.

⁹⁴ Saint Augustine, *De vivendo Deo*, translated in Letters II/2 (100-155), trans. by Roland Teske (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2003), 147.

Consequently, the art of memory becomes Christianized because this art form represents a shapeless representation that sustains the path of revelation towards salvation, which means that also the art form speaks of God because it is a heavenly concept of art of memory. As the art of memory in Dante becomes a heavenly faculty, this will benefit, like Dante suggests in the fourth book of the *Convivio*, from the divine grace of God: “Per via teologica si può dire che, poi che la somma deitade, cioè Dio, vede apparecchiata la sua creatura a ricevere del suo beneficio, tanto largamente in quella ne mette quanto apparecchiata è a riceverne.” (With regard to the principles of theology, it may be said that when the supreme deity, God, sees his creature ready to receive his benefaction, he endows it with gifts in proportion to its readiness to receive those gifts [*Conv.* IV.xxi.11]). Ultimately, the art of memory in Dante must become a heavenly concept in order to be consistent with what Dante the pilgrim is about to see, namely a spirit and not a body. This last aspect corresponds to Dante’s deified eyes (symbolically speaking) while operating in spiritualized form in *Paradiso*.

This theologizing process aligns with Dante the pilgrim’s purpose to conclude the pilgrim’s enterprise towards redemption with a renewed confidence that thanks to his art of memory, Dante the poet reenacts that confidence in God’s merciful omnipotence. By renewing the spiritual ability to discern the presence of God, and by reenacting parts of his previous spiritual understanding of the virtues (i.e., *Par.* XXIV.55-57), Dante the poet refashions the reciprocal relationship between the divine and the human, namely between the pilgrim’s virtues and his trust in God (*Par.* V.123). The art of memory in Dante ultimately allows the pilgrim to renew his confidence and reveals precisely his spiritual ability to perceive the significance of the three theological virtues once the pilgrim has undergone each examination from each apostle: “e questo cielo non ha altro dove / che la mente divina, in che s’accende / l’amor che ‘l volge e la

virtù ch'ei piove" (This heaven has no other where than this: / the mind of God, in which are kindled both / the love that turns it and the force it rains [*Par.* XXVII.109-111]). Dante the poet describes the *primum mobile*, which is contained only by the Empyrean, the sphere of light and love whose place is the mind of God. This passage also indicates the notion of love empowering this same spherical motion in *Paradiso*. It shows how Dante the poet reenacts the virtue of love for God, which moves all other virtues and faculties, while love is properly directed to God. Additionally, this last aspect corroborates the function of the art of memory in Dante as an action of power or an act of potency along the *primum mobile*. Just like Dante the pilgrim, this art form is theologically filtered through the spiritual power and strength of faith, hope, and love.

III.6. Conclusions

Dante the pilgrim enters the *primum mobile* with a refashioned otherworldly aptitude in which the three theological virtues work in tandem to promote the overall constant striving towards the quasi-perfection of the individual as a rational agent (Dante the pilgrim).⁹⁵ These virtues incline Dante the wayfarer to employ his aptitude rightly with a specific morally good action. Through these same virtues, Dante the poet fundamentally strengthens the previously examined theological framework through the use of the language of God. Reenacting the pilgrim's spiritual knowledge (i.e., faith and divine trust) entails also reactivating his present state of being (near the closure of his enterprise). By doing so, Dante the poet is also reactivating abstract, spiritual, intangible concepts like the "sustanze sempiterno" (eternal beings [*Par.*

⁹⁵ To examine the notion of virtue perfecting other concepts, see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Ia-IIae q. 55, a. 1. Aquinas suggests that virtues signify the perfection of a power: "*virtus nominat quondam potentiae perfectionem.*" This means that virtue is the completion of an active power, and the perfection of power is what renders that power perfect for action.

XXVI.39]) that is carried out from the “primo amore” (first love [*Par.* XXVI.38]) of God and that Dante the poet has accumulated throughout the pilgrim’s entire journey.

Since Dante the poet believes that the pilgrim’s salvation needs to be theologically exercised through the Gospel (*Par.* XXIV), the *ars memorativa* in Dante shifts from an ontologically metaphysical truth (see Chapter Two) into a heavenly concept through this same theological exercise. Being a type of psychological empowerment that also allows Dante the poet to Christianize some aspects of metaphysics, this theological exercise empowers examination of the pilgrim’s standards of salvation from a purely metaphysical standpoint (first evolution of the art of memory in Dante) to a largely theological development (second evolution of the art of memory in Dante), namely the immanence of the divine.⁹⁶ If Dante the pilgrim’s salvation is tied to this theological exercise offered by the three apostles James, John, and Peter who respectively interrogated the wayfarer on the three virtues of faith, hope, and love, the art of memory in Dante simultaneously becomes part of this same theological framework.

Likewise, the theological element of the *ars memorativa* bestows upon Dante the poet with a potency that empowers the pilgrim’s perception in the face of the superior realm of images, including mental constructs (Godly Goodness), the cosmos, and *primum mobile*. This theologizing process aligns with Dante the poet’s purpose to accomplish the imminent future that occurs through the interconnectedness of the virtues and the art of memory in Dante. This same aspect also corroborates constant mnemonic advancement that corresponds to the constant pilgrim’s motion forward in relation to the progression of the journey. Employing this form of art (art of memory) along the theological scheme of virtues represents another step forward the full perception of the art of memory in Dante. Therefore, it is equally important to realize that this art

⁹⁶ Examples about the immanence of the divine are the three theological virtues enhancing the course of the *ars memorativa* in Dante through the celestial motion that the love of God produces constantly, rendering *imago dei* a close and fit perception for Dante the pilgrim to achieve in the end of his journey.

form will be thoroughly examined in the next and final chapter, where the impacts and influences of this heavenly concept of art of memory on the final phase of Dante's enterprise, as well as Dante's moral progress towards redemption will be fully analyzed.

Chapter 4

The Final Implications of the Heavenly Art of Memory in Dante

If juxtaposing the metaphysical memory (Chapter Two) with the three theological virtues (Chapter Three) allows Dante to operate more smoothly along the journey in *Paradiso*, the fourth and final chapter, which for the most part focuses on the last cantos of *Paradiso*, will be about manifesting the final significances that the heavenly art of memory has for Dante the poet, Dante the pilgrim, his natural memory, and the journey itself. Dante is finally advancing towards the ultimate realm of the Empyrean. His contiguous nature of this spiritual domain reverberates with the predominantly overpowering features like otherworldly ethereal blissfulness from angels and various saints' figures (Saint Bernard, etc.). As Dante the pilgrim simultaneously moves across the ultimate constraints, such as the mystic rose and the upcoming splendor of God, these unprecedented aspects of *Paradiso* trigger Dante's greatest debility of human faculties.

By beginning to examine the moment where Dante the pilgrim is faced with the "eterno lume" (Eternal Light [*Par.* XXXIII.43]) or "raggio de l'alta luce" (ray of the exalted light [*Par.* XXXIII.54]), Dante the pilgrim faces his greatest human debility. He will detach from his human senses (speech, etc.), and most importantly, the pilgrim's natural memory will ultimately

abandon him.¹ While the abandonment of memory and high fantasy (*alta fantasia*) reflect Dante's concept of human truth, the unceasing potency of Dante's heavenly concept of art of memory restores the pilgrim's awareness by means of *expectatio*, the transmuted desire (*disio*), and the will (*velle*). These three aspects are strongly present in the last verses of *Paradiso* XXXIII. They are tied to the three theological virtues because they all represent a vow. This is the promise to conclude his journey, which the pilgrim must reenact constantly to move forward. While the *expectatio*, the transmuted desire, the free will, and the three virtues sustain the art of memory in different ways, they mutually sustain Dante's remaking of his final image of salvation. As I consequently examine Dante's redemption from the inherency of the transmuted desire (*disio*) and the will (*velle*) to the explicit manifestation of the final reproduced image (*vista nova*), I shall ultimately seek to prove that the heavenly concept of the art of memory in Dante will subdue the pilgrim's conception of enfeebled memory.

IV.1. Dante's Natural Memory at the Final Crossroads

IV.1.1. Advancing Towards the Ultimate Constraints of the Emyrean

From the numerous cases where the pilgrim was faced with several ineffable situations,² Dante the pilgrim can neither describe nor define his intention about his visions or experiences. The temporary inability to decipher segments from his involvements with objects or characters is what entails Dante's ineffability, which is depicted through a series of unanticipated moments in

¹ The debility of Dante's natural memory was already present in Chapter One, where the abandonment of Dante's memory is barely mentioned. While the focus of Chapter One was mainly on the mnemonic shortcomings for Dante the pilgrim, this final chapter will instead focus on the final course of Dante's natural memory, which abandons the pilgrim before the end of his enterprise. In other words, I never examined the failure of memory in Chapter One, which is an important aspect that I discuss in Chapter Four.

² Some textual examples from the *Commedia* are the three beasts from *Inf.* III, Francesca's marginal experience from *Inf.* V, the cloud of smoke from *Purg.* XVI, etc.

the pilgrim's journey.³ For instance, in *Inferno* XXVIII, these moments generate issues with the inherent ambiguities of language, which entails the impossibility of Dante's decoding and deciphering what is being manifested in one statement as opposed to another:

“Chi poria mai pur con parole sciolte
 dicer del sangue e de le piaghe a pieno
 ch'i' ora vidi, per narrar più volte?
 Ogne lingua per certo verria meno
 per lo nostro sermone e per la mente
 c'hanno a tanto comprender poco seno.”
 (*Inf.* XXVIII.1-6)⁴

[Who, even with untrammelled words and many
 attempts at telling, ever could recount
 in full the blood and wounds that I now saw?
 Each tongue that tired would certainly fall short
 because the shallowness of both our speech
 and intellect cannot contain so much.]

Language is not adequate to describe the reality it wants to represent, and Dante emulates Virgil in his repudiation of the ability to describe the blood and wounds that surpass both words and memory: “And if I had a hundred tongues and as many mouths, along with a voice of iron, I could not put together all the shapes of crime nor run through all the catalogue of torments.”⁵ By adopting a similar assertion to that of Virgil, Dante the author strengthens the idea behind the pilgrim's insufficient idiom. Since Dante the pilgrim's mind has little capacity to comprehend so much of these tragic visions (i.e., “sangue e de le piaghe” *Inf.* XXVIII.2), his language would consequently collapse. In other words, all the dismemberments of bodies from old wars cannot come close to what he has seen in this realm. Since Dante the pilgrim is momentarily incapable

³ Ineffability is a conception that is concerned with ideas that cannot or should not be expressed in spoken words (or language in general), because they are often expressed in incomprehensible terms, space, or circumstance.

⁴ Along this line of thought, see also Giorgio Stabile, *Cosmologia e teologia nella Commedia*, 156.

⁵ Cfr. Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI, 625-627: “non mihi si linguae centum sint oraue centum, / ferrea vox, omnis scelerum comprehendere formas, / omnia poenarum percurrere nomina possim.” This passage was first cited by Pietro di Dante and is now a commonplace in the commentaries. See also Dante Alighieri, *canzone* II, 14-18 (in *Convivio* III.i.1-4): “Però, se le mie rime avran difetto / ch'entreran ne la loda di costei, / di ciò si biasmi il debole intelletto / e'l parlar nostro, che non ha valore / di ritrar tutto ciò che dice Amore.” [Wherefore if defect shall mark my rhymes, / which shall enter upon her praises, / for his le tour feeble intellect be blamed, / and our speech which hath not power / to tell again all that love speaketh.]

of recollecting what he has previously thought (*cogitatio*) about those tragic visions, the pilgrim's memory cannot consequently elucidate them in their present state by any linguistic means.⁶ It becomes continuously difficult for Dante to discuss matters that go beyond the human ability to understand because the act of *recordatio* (recollection) and that of reproducing linguistically mental images are insufficient.

This linguistic inadequacy relates to Dante's concept of *indicibilità* (indescribability), which is characterized through the notion of silence in a twofold implication.⁷ Dante's unspoken words can refer to the author's omission of words to proceed with the journey or to simply put Dante's intention temporarily to rest. Dante the poet's temporary suspense resonates from expressing his own intention in revealing either horrific creatures (i.e., Gerion from *Inf.* XVII) or indescribable moments of his journey (i.e., the unfathomable description of the gluttonous in *Purg.* XXIII). There are also examples of Dante characterizing a silent environment where silence itself governs above all. The pilgrim's silence corresponds to the fear that originates from his own biological remembrance of physical features. This silent manifestation occurs through the audacious move that the pilgrim embraces despite his lack of remembrance or *recordatio* in *Paradiso*. When Dante the pilgrim is close to the ascent to the Heaven of the Fixed Stars scale that will take him closer to God, silence becomes a synonym of ineffability: "Io stava come quei che 'n sé repreme / la punta del disio, e non s'attenta / di domandar, sì del troppo si teme." (I stood as one who curbs within himself / the goad of longing and, in fear of being / too forward, does not dare to ask a question [*Par.* XXII.25-27]). Saint Benedict is accompanied by two other

⁶ To further reconsider the numerous examples that have been analyzed on Dante's notion of ineffability, see pp. 82-87 from Chapter One.

⁷ The concept of *indicibilità* (indescribability) symbolizes an outcome that evolves as a result of this restraining ineffability and that gets characterized through the notion of silence. For instance, when someone writes or pronounces the word silence the immediate response indicates the idea of unspoken words. Whether Dante the pilgrim cannot recall or cannot reveal what he has thought or seen in the past, he communicates with silence by rather deviating from describing certain concepts than explicating their own causes. To reexamine the notion of silence in reference to the question of ineffability, see pp. 87-90 from Chapter One.

named monastics, Macarius and Romuald (*Par.* XXII.49), who are merely said to be here and must share a single verse. These same figures provoke slight fear in the pilgrim, and Dante's ability to turn and face what he fears is what his two guides both encourage in him. Yet, the protagonist, matching the spirit of this place, overrules "la punta del disio" (the goad of longing [*Par.* XXII.26]) and suppresses his desire to know who these spirits are with his own reticence. This last aspect simultaneously symbolizes the overwhelming decision that led the pilgrim to be silent in the event of his reaction.

The overwhelming decision to remain silent while suppressing his desire to talk to Saint Benedict symbolizes another aspect of the pilgrim's constraint. Because silence takes over, Dante is reticent, and he is not able to speak or say anything. This example demonstrates how silence and ineffability are two sides of the same coin. While silence and ineffability withstand the pilgrim's constraints, they also highlight the inadequate state of Dante's biological memory. Just like the previous examples of ineffable cases that moved Dante into a state of temporary disorientation (*Inf.* XXVIII.1-6), it is now the notion of silence that triggers the pilgrim's indescribable moments in the face of superior figures like Saint Benedict in this case (*Par.* XXII.25-27). From this same experience, we notice how Dante would rather contain these words within his memory than reveal them. He knows that his memory is fragile and cannot hold in check what the true reality of Saint Benedict or other examples represent. This is one of several reasons why Dante the pilgrim constantly faces the continuous inadequacy of biological memory and its mnemonic function in weakening as he moves towards salvation.

As Dante the pilgrim moves closer to the Empyrean, he faces more constraints, and unlike the previously cases of ineffability from Chapter One, the notions of ineffability and

indescribability become more intensely perspicuous.⁸ Dante the pilgrim advances towards the last stages of his otherworldly enterprise, and the number of obstacles becomes more explicitly vivid, mightily intense, and all pervading. Not only these obstacles intensify Dante's ineffable cases, but they will also directly impact and rigorously challenge Dante's human faculties. Dante the pilgrim understands faith as the foundation that underlies all things constituting a divine action on the part of the believer. He engages with hope which allows Dante to project the forthcoming redemption by participating in God as the source of these good deeds. The pilgrim employs charity that represents the love of God for God's own sake above all else and all others in God. Despite this spiritual advancement, Dante the pilgrim's human abilities, particularly his natural memory, come at the final crossroads. The pilgrim faces unprecedented visions such as exceptional lights, unexpected blindness, and unimaginable spaces. Dante the wayfarer absorbs incomparable theories such as learning about the final step through the wordings of Saint Bernard, which are triggered by the surroundings of the Empyrean and the Celestine Spheres.⁹

Once Dante reaches the Starry sphere and the Crystalline sphere in *Paradiso* XXVII, Dante's human faculties advance into a state of increasingly intense aggravation, including his natural memory. The pilgrim experiences moments of his journey where only through Beatrice's assistance can he move onwards. In *Paradiso* XXVII, Dante follows the upward flight as long as he can, and while Beatrice invites him to look down, the pilgrim feels constantly concerned that his redemption seems to be slipping away from him. Dante cannot physically change who he is and still needs to be human and work through the symbolic adjustments that Beatrice suggests and offers through her blissful entrance:

E come donna onesta che permane

⁸ To review and delve into the cases of ineffability and silence from Chapter One, see pp. 88-91.

⁹ In Chapter Four I will focus mainly on the abandonment of memory and other human senses as opposed to Chapter One, where I merely anticipate the weak side and the beginning shortcomings of natural memory.

di sé sicura, e per l'altrui fallanza,
 pur ascoltando, timida si fane,
 così Beatrice trasmutò sembianza;
 e tale eclissi credo che 'n ciel fue
 quando patì la suprema possanza.

(*Par.* XXVII.31-36)

[And like a woman who, although secure
 in her own honesty, will pale on even
 hearing about another woman's failing,
 just so did Beatrice change in appearance;
 and I believe that such eclipse was in
 the sky when He, the Highest Power, suffered.]

Dante the pilgrim faces souls that change color and appearance. They include Luke, John, Adam, and Peter, and thus anticipates the change of appearance in Beatrice. Dante is describing the transmutation of Beatrice in a starry sphere, which has no recognizable landmarks and completely uniform parts. The double simile is essential because it reprimands the lady blushing at another's fault. Consequently, Beatrice transmutes her appearance in comparison to an eclipse, namely the eclipse of Jesus's crucifixion. Dante's reference to the eclipse refers to Christ's Passion not only because Beatrice darkens and becomes pale in the face of indignation, but most precisely because of all the saints (Peter, Luke, John, etc.) of the Church gathered here in the starry sphere. This same transcendental motion of saints and their change in appearance (including Beatrice's) cause Dante to be unable to move on fully with his sole human abilities unless smiling Beatrice transcends her appearance by asking Dante to look down and helps him ascend to the ninth sphere (*Par.* XXVII.100-102).¹⁰

As Dante the pilgrim approaches the Crystalline Sphere with the poet using a simile of a man and looks back to see what is behind him, Dante turns back to see instead the reflection in Beatrice's eyes. This reflection leads the reader to think about Dante the poet presenting the smiling Beatrice transcending her appearance, which is impossible for the pilgrim to absorb on

¹⁰ Other textual examples that relate to the transmutation of Beatrice and other saints can be found in *Par.* XXIX.1-9 & 127-135.

his own (*Par.* XXVIII.1-12). If this reflection in the eyes of Beatrice relates to human ability in the face of the material and human impossibility to comprehend, Dante the poet declares his pilgrim to be in a greater paradisiacal realm. This corresponds to the blissful Crystalline Sphere where the pilgrim's eyes are struck by this extraordinary revelation:

E com'io mi rivolsi e furon tocchi
 li miei da ciò che pare in quel volume,
 quandunque nel suo giro ben s'adocchi,
 un punto vidi che raggiava lume
 acuto sì, che 'l viso ch'elli affoca
 chiuder conviensi per lo forte acume.
 (*Par.* XXVIII.13-18)

[And when I turned and my own eyes were met
 by what appears within that sphere whenever
 one looks intently at its revolution,
 I saw a point that sent forth so acute
 a light, that anyone who faced the force
 with which it blazed would have to shut his eyes.]

Dante the pilgrim is about to envision something that he has never seen before, namely the nine concentric circles of light where the nine orders of angels revolve around that point, which is God.¹¹ Meanwhile, Dante's vision is struck by this unprecedented sphere in which circling images are constantly moving and Dante feels the grandiose burden from an unparalleled form of light. This is a literary *topos* that has precisely been used in the beginning of *Paradiso*, where the pilgrim undergoes an ephemeral lapse of human reason while envisioning something that he has never seen before: "E se le fantasie nostre son basse / a tanta altezza, non è maraviglia; / ché sopra 'l sol non fu occhio ch'andasse" (And if our fantasies fall short before / such heights, there is no need to wonder; for / no eye has seen light brighter than the Sun's [*Par.* X.46-48]). If on the one hand, Dante describes the brightness that the pilgrim sees in these souls from the sphere of

¹¹ For more textual examples that relate to the higher realities of *Paradiso* and the extraordinary vision and ample presence of angels while surrounding and enhancing the image of God, see also *Par.* XXX.1-15 & 46-51; *Par.* XXXI.124-132; In this last passage, Dante the pilgrim faces a band of angels, each distinct from each other and surrounding Mary who, smiling with her beauty, brings joy to all the other saints and angels. Dante is having a vision that he has never experienced before that juxtaposes smiles, blissfulness, the whiteness of the angels, and the harmonious union of the angels surrounding Mary.

the sun, on the other hand, he cannot clearly define how these souls stand out from the sun with a brighter aspect than the brightest thing known to our mortal vision.

In *Par. XXVIII*, Dante refers precisely to the concentric circles of angels in constant motion that subvert Dante's human abilities. Dante the poet suggests that these circles also emulate the paradisiacal ambience of the angels constantly circling around the most powerful light, namely God. While Dante portrays the surface of the Primum Mobile as where the highest realities of all, including the sphere of the Sun, God and his angels in creation, the poet also underlines a major obstacle for the pilgrim to surmount. These same higher realities above-mentioned have a great impact on Dante's human abilities because the pilgrim's vision and language cannot manage to endure alone. In addition to that, the closer to the Empyrean Dante the pilgrim gets, the brighter everything and everyone is. Those lights prior to the Empyrean, such as the sphere of the Sun, etc., cannot be more blissful than the angelic circles around God, which subsequently explains why Dante's human senses and faculties suffer the most. The higher Dante the pilgrim ascends in the Empyrean, the less he can see and the more idiosyncratic his approach must be.

Dante the wayfarer's peculiar unparalleled bliss continues as he approaches Primum Mobile, and little by little his sight fades because he is so compelled to see nothing that his eyes can only be projected on the gaze of Beatrice (*Par. XXX.13-15*). In fact, the greatest moment of full inexpressibility occurs when Dante the pilgrim and Beatrice discuss about transcendental beauty. This notion of beauty reveals another aspect of Dante the pilgrim's mind, which is unable to properly perceive images received from different instances than the pilgrim has ever stored before. Dante the pilgrim is about to approach the transcendental beauty of Beatrice,

which becomes another form of defeat for Dante the pilgrim, whose human abilities cannot enable him to fully operate:

La bellezza ch'io vidi si trasmoda
 non pur di là da noi, ma certo io credo
 che solo il suo fattor tutta la goda.
 Da questo passo vinto mi concedo
 più che già mai da punto di suo tema
 soprato fosse comico o tragedo:
 ché, come sole in viso che più trema,
 così lo rimembrar del dolce riso
 la mente mia da me medesmo scema.
 (Par. XXX.19-27)

[The loveliness I saw surpassed not only
 our human measure – and I think that, surely,
 only its Maker can enjoy it fully.
 I yield: I am defeated at this passage
 more than a comic or a tragic poet
 has ever been by a barrier in his theme;
 for like the sun that strikes the frailest eyes,
 so does the memory of her sweet smile
 deprive me of the use of my own mind.]

Dante the pilgrim will see Beatrice once more after she resumes her seat in the Rose. Meanwhile, Dante the poet describes this type of beauty idiosyncratically as transcendental because “solo il suo fattor tutta la goda” (only its Maker can enjoy it fully [Par. XXX.21]). Dante the pilgrim can hardly perceive Beatrice’s beauty. He cannot absorb it in its entirety (or materialize it or cannot fully foster it) because it is a spiritual representation that goes beyond his human capacity to love. This, however, is his last attempt to describe her beauty, which increasingly intensifies from his second description of it that precedes it. In *Paradiso* IV, Dante the poet already sets the stage for this transcendental scenery between Beatrice and Dante the pilgrim, where Beatrice’s powerful radiance overpowers Dante’s sight and memory:

Beatrice mi guardò con li occhi pieni
 di faville d’amor così divini,
 che, vinta, mia virtute diè le reni,
 e quasi mi perdei con li occhi chini.
 (Par. IV.139-142)

[Then Beatrice looked at me with eyes so full
 of sparks of love, eyes so divine that my

own force of sight was overcome, took flight,
and, eyes downcast, I almost lost my senses.]

In the previous description of Beatrice's beauty from *Par.* XXX.19-27, Dante the pilgrim's senses are entirely devastated and as happened earlier in *Par.* IV, Dante cannot seem to find a grip upon being restored. This example is different from Dante's first description of Beatrice's beauty because Beatrice has already been retransformed into a more-than-human being. Beatrice becomes a pure soul, as it were, without the hindrance of human concerns that she has taken on for Dante's sake. Furthermore, Dante's mind cannot fully grasp what it experiences at the end of *Paradiso* because this transcends the human capacity for understanding. Despite facing these supernatural moments of bliss and transcendental beauty of Beatrice, Dante the pilgrim still operates with his human faculties. Like a mortal with weak eyes, who is unable even more than most to look directly at the sun, Dante the pilgrim finds his inner sight blinded by the transformed beauty of Beatrice. From this same textual example of *Par.* IV, readers realize that Beatrice's soul has in fact ascended to heaven and is too bright for Dante to behold.

Beatrice's words and expression become more difficult to absorb once Dante reaches the stage between the Starry Sphere and the Crystalline Sphere. The conceptions that Beatrice adopts to lecture Dante are paradisiacal theories for Dante to learn, which makes it more difficult for the pilgrim to recollect his past experiences and gather (without Beatrice's full assistance) what is needed to ascend upwards to the Empyrean. From a transmutation of physical appearance with the other saints Luke, John, and Peter, Beatrice next goes through a transmutation of language. It occurs through the adoption of unprecedented paradisiacal theories, which make Dante the poet aware of the pilgrim's upcoming, ending enterprise:

“Sempre l'amor che queta questo cielo
accoglie in sé con sì fatta salute,
per far disposto a sua fiamma il candelo.”
Non fur più tosto dentro a me venute
queste parole brevi, ch'io compresi

me sormontar di sopr'a mia virtute;
(*Par.* XXX.52-57)

[‘The Love that calms this heaven always
welcomes into Itself with such a salutation,
to make the candle ready for its flame.
No sooner had these few words entered me
than I became aware that I was rising
beyond the power that was mine.]

As indicated by the fact that Dante the pilgrim has internalized Beatrice’s words (i.e., *intellectus possibilis* or possible intellect), he seems to be fully equipped for the final stage of his journey. From a metaphorical standpoint, Dante the pilgrim symbolizes the “candelo” (candle [*Par.* XXX.54]) that must be gradually rendered able to bear the flame, that is, this vision that so exceeds normal human capacity. Thus, Beatrice’s words do not necessarily portray her as the previously examined “ammiraglio” (admiral [*Purg.* XXX.58]), because Dante the pilgrim undergoes a transformation to kindle this “novella vista” (new vision [*Par.* XXX.58]) that no human ability or Dante’s memory can fully recollect from his previous experiences. Beatrice’s metaphorical words are symptomatic of paradisiacal wisdom that enables the experience that Dante begins to have now. This is a heavenly elation that translates into a spiritual rapture far above any natural human power.¹²

Beatrice’s paradisiacal wisdom manifests the beginning point of the pilgrim’s delight in experiencing a closer vision to the Empyrean. The mystic Rose, whose blissfulness blinds the pilgrim in the most unprecedented way, intensifies what Beatrice has previously anticipated with words like “candelo” (candle [*Par.* XXX.54]). Dante sees this three-dimensional image (the Rose) which is formed by a ray reflected from the Primum Mobile, and in turn takes its movement and influence from it: “Fassi di raggio tutta sua parvenza / riflesso al sommo del mobile primo, / che prende quindi vivere e potenza” (All that one sees of it derives from one /

¹² To further examine the human inability to proceed without supernatural assistance like Beatrice, see *Par.* I.4-9, and *Epistle* XIII.78-82.

light-ray reflected from the summit of / the Primum mobile, which from it draws power and life [*Par.* XXX.106-108]). The beam of light that relates to the Rose represents the Godhead reflected upward from the convex surface of the Primum Mobile. Dante the pilgrim also sees the blessed systematically arranged in an immense white rose, which is like a hologram (*Par.* XXX.116-117).¹³ The image of this Rose and the final splendor of God from *Par.* XXX.97-102 & 118-123 resonate with these two aspects marking the pilgrim's full passage into the heavenly court.¹⁴

Most importantly, the correlation between the image of this Rose and the final splendor of God from *Par.* XXX.97-102 & 118-123 generate rigorous adversities for Dante the pilgrim. Unless Beatrice reverses the pilgrim's state of vulnerability by supporting his hope to be yet assisted in order to move onward to the final stage of his journey, this can also become irreversible for Dante the pilgrim. Beatrice warns Dante the pilgrim to keep sight of her and to keep his munificence alive in her: "La tua magnificenza in me custodi, / sì che l'anima mia, che fatt'hai sana, / piacente a te dal corpo si disnodi" (Do, in me, preserve your generosity, so that my soul / which you have healed, when it is set loose from / my body, be a soul that you will welcome [*Par.* XXXI.88-90]). Dante the pilgrim was temporarily distanced from Beatrice, who

¹³ This Rose represents the true home of all the blessed with God in the Empyrean, which is considered a heaven of pure light beyond time and space. It is a celestial rose that recalls large rose windows of Gothic cathedrals, many of which are dedicated to Mary. The image of the rose, often red, is also used to represent Christ or, in other contexts, earthly love. The White Rose is symmetrically structured according to various criteria, including belief, age, and gender. In the face of this white, giant Rose, the Virgin Mary represents the queen of the rose herself (i.e., *Par.* XXIII.73-74), where one half of the rose, already full, holds those who, according to Christian tradition, believed in Christ to come (the blessed of the Hebrew Bible). In the row below Mary appear women of the Hebrew Bible (Eve, Rachel, Sarah, Rebecca, Judith, Ruth, and unnamed others); Beatrice is seated next to Rachel, on the third row from the top. Opposite to Mary, John the Baptist heads a row of men containing Francis, Benedict, Augustine, and other Christian fathers. Mary is flanked by Adam (the first man) and Moses on one side, and Peter (the first pope) and John the Evangelist on the other. John the Baptist is flanked by Lucy on one side and Anna, the mother of Mary, on the other.

¹⁴ The above-mentioned final splendor of God begins with the eight invocations of the splendor of God. Although indirectly, the view of the celestial court is provided by the *lumen gloriae* through which God makes himself visible to man. Moreover, reflected from the surface of the Primum Mobile, the divine ray affords the pilgrim a view of the blessed in the Empyrean rose that reflects that light.

happens to be his only living existence to sustain him into the final stages of the journey. Dante can absorb what he has been taught in the past by Beatrice if he thinks about her image, which comes down undimmed by anything between (*Par.* XXXI.77-78). As Dante makes his way to the final stage of the heavenly court, Dante's human abilities (language, intellect, and memory) are at the final crossroads. As the poet has previously explained (*Par.* XXX.121-123), the usual physical laws to be activated and followed on earth through conventional human abilities are about to be strongly challenged once the pilgrim enters the Empyrean.

IV.1.2. The Journey Suddenly Turns Dark

As his journey is coming to an end, Dante is becoming more aware that his human faculties are soon to be banned and they will not be able to fully support his objective to reach redemption at the end of his journey. He is not in the world of sense, where the spheres move more swiftly in proportion to their distance from the center. Dante the pilgrim is now surrounded by the celestial circles that he now contemplates, and he moves more swiftly in proportion to their nearness to the center, which in this case is not earth, but God. Dante's view of the celestial court remains an important characterization of Dante's change in perception. Since Dante the pilgrim is about to envision the light of God, his perception must shift from a humanly perceptible understanding to a spiritual perceptive representation: "O isplendor di Dio, per cu' io vidi / l'alto trionfo del regno verace, / dammi virtù a dir com'io il vidi!" (O radiance of God, through which I saw / the noble triumph of the true realm, give / to me the power to speak of what I saw [*Par.* XXX.97-99]).¹⁵ With the revelation of the final splendor of God, and with

¹⁵ This aspect takes us back to Chapter Two, where I suggest that from the domain of humanly perceptible experiences (material past), Dante moves on with the state of immaterial perceptive experiences (immaterial sense of perception [*Par.* VII.64-66]).

Dante's unprecedented vision of the Empyrean, the pilgrim is facing a major change of setting for his final approach to the last stage of *Paradiso*.

Unlike the textual examples examined earlier that characterize temporary limitations for the pilgrim (*Par.* XXX.52-57), the adversities in the very last stages of *Paradiso* become permanently irreversible and can no longer be overcome by the pilgrim.¹⁶ Even Beatrice, who formerly looked down and helped the pilgrim ascend to the ninth sphere (*Par.* XXVII.100-102), she is not able to help Dante again in this last section of *Paradiso*. Beatrice cannot reverse Dante's state of vulnerability as she did before. Beatrice cannot support the pilgrim's hope to move onward with his human abilities (*Par.* XXXI.88-90). Dante the pilgrim still symbolizes, as we mentioned before, the "candelo" (candle [*Par.* XXX.54]) that must be gradually rendered able to bear the flame that is, this vision that so exceeds normal human capacity. However, the spiritual powers (generosity from *Par.* XXX.88) and the excessive power that paradisaical visions (radiance of God from *Par.* XXX.97) impose upon Dante's human faculties make them relentless and irrevocable. Despite Beatrice's words of paradisaical wisdom, Dante's human faculties have reached their ultimate limit, causing the pilgrim to lose his human senses permanently.

There is one clear example that characterizes the shift from a temporary to a permanent loss of human senses, which resonates with the permanent loss of Dante's memory. Dante the pilgrim is a human who has been constantly facing preliminary shortcomings of memory (i.e., Chapter One). At the same time, he has been also facing the upcoming and final mnemonic defeat of his entire journey, where Dante the pilgrim already savors this mnemonic defeat while gazing into Beatrice's eyes: "ché, come sole in viso che più trema, / così lo rimembrar del dolce

¹⁶ Textual examples of adversities that are merely momentary and where Dante's memory and his human senses are temporarily placed on hold occur with Dante temporarily losing his vision in *Purg.* XVI & *Par.* IV, his language in *Inf.* XXVIII & *Par.* XXIII, and his memory in *Purg.* XXXIII & *Par.* I.

riso / la mente mia da me medesimo scema” (for like the sun that strikes the frailest eyes, / so does the memory of her sweet smile / deprive me of the use of my own mind [*Par. XXX.25-27*]). Dante the poet is beginning to permanently separate the pilgrim’s memory from his mind. Since the pilgrim is unable to look directly at the sun, he is blinded by the memory of this last and transformed beauty in Beatrice. This last aspect shows that Dante’s memory has been permanently and irreversibly marred, and this same mnemonic damage will carry on. Dante the poet acknowledges his necessary mnemonic failure because despite all the lectures given by Beatrice (*Par. XXX.52-57*) and all the modifications made to his human faculties throughout the journey, Dante’s memory cannot now recall anything. His memory is not able to reenact what the mind did grasp at the time because his memory is progressively vanishing.

The aftermath of Dante’s concluding stage with his human faculties occurs particularly in *Paradiso XXXIII*, where Dante’s journey turns dark. While Dante the pilgrim is being subdued and confined by all the surroundings and spheres that he must face, he struggles with his vision, language, and memory. He is now in the Empyrean, and before the pilgrim explicitly manifests his human limits that cannot be reversed, Dante the pilgrim absorbs Bernard’s prayer to the Virgin, which has the authority and unity of a separate poem. This prayer adopts a poetic form of its own and is divided into five segments. It begins with the greetings where Mary’s womb was rekindled with the love that made the Rose (*Par. XXXIII.1-12*). The second aspect concerns the offer of grace and love for those who ask it, as well as mercy, pity, and munificence (*Par. XXXIII.13-21*). Third is the manifestation of the man who begs for grace to simply see God (*Par. XXXIII. 22-27*). Fourth is the reference to Bernard praying in himself (*Par. XXXIII.29-33*), and fifth is the expectation from which Dante the pilgrim preserves his affections after the vision of Beatrice (*Par. XXXIII.34-39*). Dante the pilgrim desperately asks Beatrice for full

assistance and to help him preserve the purity of his affections after such a vision (*Par.* XXXIII.35-36). That Dante's request is made to Beatrice indicates that without the help of continuing spiritual grace, the pilgrim could fall again.

A few verses after, Dante brings the ardor of his desire to conclude his journey at its highest intensity. Through the intensity of these upcoming verses, Dante the poet is describing the transition to the pilgrim's inward experience as a complex one: "E io ch'al fine di tutt'i disii / appropinquava, si com'io dovea, / l'ardor del desiderio in me finii" (And I, who now was nearing Him who is / the end of all desires, as I ought, / lifted my longing to its ardent limit [*Par.* XXXIII.46-48]). While the emphasis of these verses is on Dante participating fully in the intensity of the saint's prayer, mustering and focusing his own desire, Bernard says that Dante is on his own. Thus, the utterly unprecedented account of the vision struggling in full begins, and Beatrice's spiritual grace can no longer enhance Dante's human abilities. Bernard's prayer has reached the end, and he is constantly gazing at the pilgrim and signaling in his capacity as guide as to what Dante should be doing.

Furthermore, Dante the pilgrim was already undertaking exactly what Bernard expected him to do. The pilgrim's ardor anticipates Bernard's signal to look up, which is an anticipation of Dante's sight entering the ray of light: "Bernardo m'accennava, e sorridea, / perch'io guardassi suso; ma io era / già per me stesso tal qual ei volea" (Bernard was signaling – he smiled – to me / to turn my eyes on high; but I, already / was doing what he wanted me to do [*Par.* XXXIII.49-51]). Bernard sees and trusts the pilgrim's ability to look up at the majestic light of God because up to now Dante's powers of sight have improved such that he can finally see God's reflection in the universe perfectly. This same ability that Bernard perceives in Dante the pilgrim represents an ability that was far from his grasp when the poem began. The pilgrim's vision is about to shift

from reflection of God's glory up into the beam of light stemming from God. The experience of seeing God face-to-face is ineffable and indescribable, and the vision cannot be remembered in any of its details: "ché la mia vista, venendo sincera, / e più e più intrava per lo raggio / de l'alta luce che da sé è vera" (because my sight, becoming pure, was able / to penetrate the ray of Light more deeply / that Light, sublime, which in Itself is true [*Par.* XXXIII.52-54]). This passage indicates the gradual strengthening of visual acuity, where the faculty of sight in question is not the eye of the body but of the mind. While Bernard's prayers seemingly empower Dante's vision in the event of seeing God's reflection in the universe perfectly, the pilgrim's expressive and recollective powers fail.

The blissful abundance of lights and Bernard's profound words show the limit of Dante's human faculties. More precisely, Dante the poet manifests the failure of the pilgrim's memory as a series of expressions of the dual impossibility of expression. Language is the main form of poetic expression and memory is the foremost exercise for *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process). Both language and memory are unable to operate at the ultimate and final crossroads of Dante's journey: "da quinci innanzi il mio veder fu maggio / che 'l parlar mostra, ch'a tal vista cede, / e cede la memoria a tanto oltraggio" (From that point on, what I could see was greater / than speech can show: at such a sight, it fails / and memory fails when faced with such excess [*Par.* XXXIII.55-57]). The passage entails this permanent shortcoming of memory and of the inability to convey what is remembered. Dante the poet's struggle is a double one, that is to remember and to express. The idea behind these efforts falling short of full attainment is an important aspect that Dante the poet anticipates already at the beginning of *Paradiso*. In the first canto of the last canticle, Dante presents an instance of how memory fails the intellect when this faculty, which man shares with the angels, descends from a high fantasy:

Nel ciel che più de la sua luce prende

fu' io, e vidi cose che ridire
 né sa né può chi di là su discende;
 perché appressando sé al suo disire,
 nostro intelletto si profonda tanto,
 che dietro la memoria non può ire.

(*Par.* I.4-9)

[I was within the heaven that receives
 more of His light; and I saw things that he
 who from that height descends, forgets or can
 not speak; for nearing its desired end,
 our intellect sinks into an abyss
 so deep that memory fails to follow it.]

On the one hand, the natural memory is a faculty that corresponds to a form of understanding. This same memory is consequently reflected in traditions developed from Aristotle and Augustine to Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas. On the other hand, these same verses anticipate the permanently failing nature of memory in the last canto of *Paradiso*. More specifically, memory and intellect are interconnected (see pp. 98-102 from Chapter One),¹⁷ and when the human intellect comes near the beatific vision of God (as happens with Dante the pilgrim in *Paradiso XXXIII*), it so immerses itself in it that the memory and the mind are unable to contain it any longer.

With these verses from *Par.* I representing the poet's voice that speaks in the present tense and reaffirms what is declared at the beginning of the *Paradiso*, the failing memory at the end of *Paradiso* is the ultimate outcome whose course Dante the poet traces from the beginning of *Paradiso*. The desire that Dante expresses in the first canto of *Paradiso* repeats itself in the last canto. The vision of God symbolizes man's deepest desire but cannot be contained in human memory because we can only claim a memory of having had a memory. However, this same vision of God that Dante anticipates is now lost. It is a voice unspoken before it confirms this

¹⁷ See also an important aspect from Saint Augustine's *The Trinity*, where he underscores the interconnectedness of memory with other faculties: "Memory, intellect, and will, are not three lives but one life, nor three minds but one mind. It follows of course that they are not three substances but one substance. When memory is called life, and mind, and substance, it is called so with reference to itself; but when it is called memory, it is called so with reference to another." Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, 379.

human inability at the end of the journey. In the *Letter to Can Grande della Scala*, Dante portrays this fading memory when he himself states that he saw certain things for which the intellect is so engulfed in the very thing for which it yearns. Since Dante is alluding to God, Dante the author underlines how memory cannot follow:

Et postquam dixit quod fuit in loco illo Paradisi per suam circumlocutionem, prosequitur dicens se vidisse aliqua per recitare non potest qui descendit. Et reddit causam dicens quod intellectus in tantum profundat se in ipsum desiderium suum, quod est Deus, quod memoria sequi non potest (*Epist. XIII.xxviii.77*).¹⁸

[And after he said that he was in this place of Paradise through his circumlocution, he continues, saying that he saw some things that he who descends from there cannot tell. And he cites the reason, saying that our memory sinks so deep into its desire, which is God, that memory cannot follow it].

The idea that memory cannot absorb the deep desire to see God echoes the words of Saint Paul in the *Second Letter to the Corinthians*. This upcoming passage showcases the correlation between memory and vision, between the act of recollection and the act of perception. Saint Paul states that a man was raptured into *Paradiso* and heard hidden words that are not lawful for a man to utter: “And I know that such a person, whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat” (II *Cor.* 12:3-4).¹⁹ Saint Paul and Dante both face the inability to characterize their great desire to envision God. On the one hand, the man’s vision of God reveals to be as illicit or unlawful to Saint Paul. On the other hand, this same vision for Dante reinforces the cause of his constantly weakening memory. If Dante’s empowered sight resonates into a form of *excessus mentis*, Dante cannot have knowledge of what he is perceiving and all the lectures and prayers that could have been reenacted by the pilgrim to assist his motion onwards in the Empyrean are now impractical.

¹⁸ To further consider Dante’s idea of weak memory in the face of the great desire to envision God, see the longer passage from *Epist. XIII.xxviii.77-79 & xxix.83-84*.

¹⁹ This passage describes Saint Paul himself underscoring one ecstatic experience in which the third heaven, where Paradise is located, and heavenly journeys were a popular means of claiming divine authentication and were apparently used by Saint Paul’s opponents for this purpose.

Since the vision of God has a great impact upon Dante's speech, memory is not the only human faculty that abandons Dante the pilgrim. For instance, Dante is subdued to perfecting his intellect and will with Neptune's vision of the Argo (*Par.* XXXIII.94-99). A few verses later, Dante describes how the pilgrim finds himself in front of the changing Godhead in its three circles (*Par.* XXXIII.115-116). This precedes the moment after which Dante's speech will also fail him. It is in this same instance where Dante the poet describes the deep, transparent essence of the lofty Light that appears to the pilgrim in three circles with three different colors: "Ne la profonda e chiara sussistenza / de l'alto lume parvermi tre giri / di tre colori e d'una contenenza." (In the deep and bright essence of that exalted Light, / three circles appeared to me; they had three different colors, / but all of them were of the same dimension [*Par.* XXXIII.115-117]). What nurtures these three circles is a reciprocal reflection that resonates with Aquinas, which he calls a form of reflection in relation to divinity.²⁰ It is a divine relation because from the circle of the Father appeared reflected the circle of the Son, and from both was breathed forth equally the fire of Love, which is the Holy Spirit. This same divine relation to the three circles characterizes the moment of prior Dante's speech falling short immediately after: "O quanto è corto il dire e come fioco / al mio concetto" (How incomplete is speech, how weak, when / set against my thought [*Par.* XXXIII.121-122]). Dante the poet strives to depict his thoughts, but the power of language does not go far enough in such matters, and it becomes unthinkably unutterable. Thus, the irresistible joy of the mystery of the vision of God will reduce the pilgrim to silence because he is unable to say how far his thought fails to convey what he saw.

Consequently, memory and language are two sides of the same coin. Dante the poet implements how characteristically united speech is with memory right before Dante's language fails him. It occurs when a few verses after his memory already failed him, the pilgrim realizes

²⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 28.

that his words will fall even shorter than those of a nursing infant: “Omai sarà più corta mia favella, / pur a quel ch’io ricordo, che d’un fante / che bagni ancor la lingua a la mammella” (What little I recall is to be told, / from this point on, in words more weak than those / of one whose infant tongue still bathes at the breast [*Par.* XXXIII.106-108]). Having nearly completed a poem that has just reported having seen and understood the underlying principle ordering the entire universe, Dante the poet insists that his work is mere baby talk when compared to the truth of that vision. The metaphor that Dante uses of the little child who still needs his mother’s assistance to speak showcases how minimally impactful the pilgrim’s speech can be if the memory cannot fully contribute to what the vision of God entails without any form of *recordatio* (recollection). Since natural memory supports Dante throughout his journey, just like any other human faculty (speech, vision, etc.), the entire notion of Dante’s failing memory makes us readers reconsider the debility of human faculties.²¹ Therefore, the ultimate abandonment of human memory cannot be considered as a shortcoming examined earlier. The natural memory cannot empower Dante the pilgrim any longer in activating any form of *recordatio* (recollection) to remember images and lectures from Beatrice properly.

IV.2. The Unceasing Potency of the Heavenly Art of Memory in Dante

IV.2.1. Restoring Dante’s Awareness After the Failure of Natural Memory

The idea that memory cannot survive the otherworldly moments from the last stages of *Paradiso* has become the subject of numerous discussions among scholars of Dante.²² They all

²¹ The debility of human senses such as speech, vision, and memory as the face of many of Dante’s shortcomings throughout his journey is a topic that has been examined in Chapter One.

²² To review a list of Dante scholars in chronological order who have particularly engaged with Dante’s natural memory, see note #28 on p. 10 from the Main Introduction.

seem to consider Dante's failure of memory as a tangible representation of the ineffability from which Dante the pilgrim cannot reconstruct another path onwards with his solely human nature. For instance, Karlheinz Stierle believes that the abandonment of memory leaves Dante confused in between the divine sweetness ahead and the failed human sensibility in his present state.²³ The pilgrim's state of confusion seems to elicit other scholarly voices such as that of Maria Corti, who reintegrates Dante's loss of memory as a defeat of his human senses and a defeat for the rest of the journey.²⁴ Corti alludes to the notion of *excessus mentis* by taking into account the following verses, where Dante the poet spawns the exact descriptive outcome of his memory loss (*Par.* XXXIII.55-57). Corti takes the Augustinian approach to dream vision, from which once the memory abandons the pilgrim, the elements that sustain his dream vision consequently vanish.²⁵

This last aspect represents an important notion for Lina Bolzoni who depicts the failure of memory in the face of otherworldly figures like Beatrice and the symbolic figures from the White Rose. More specifically, Bolzoni considers the failure of memory as a defeat and a major downfall for Dante the human: "Dante's memory was trained to control the spaces of the mind, where it might build complex architectonic structures that would assist with meditation and the successful completion of an itinerary that would bring man closer to God."²⁶ By suggesting this,

²³ Stierle states: "Così l'iscrizione eterna nella memoria è superata dal suo estinguersi in quello stesso momento; in questo straordinario paradosso della memoria Dante concentra due esperienze che già si erano opposte nel Purgatorio: quelle della dolcezza divina e della dolcezza umana." Karlheinz Stierle, "Mito, memoria e identità nella Commedia," in *Dante: mito e poesia*, ed. Michelangelo Picone and Tatiana Crivelli (Florence: Cesati Editore, 1998), 198.

²⁴ In her volume *Il libro della memoria e i libri dello scrittore*, Maria Corti states: "Singolarmente remota da noi lettori d'oggi e quindi di particolare fascino a partire dagli ultimi canti del Purgatorio la situazione della memoria del pellegrino Dante nel suo progressivo accostarsi a Dio, che culminerà con l'*excessus mentis* e la perdita completa della memoria." Maria Corti, *Il libro della memoria e i libri dello scrittore*, 194.

²⁵ By arguing about these mnemonic elements which are vanishing in the face of Dante the pilgrim, Maria Corti states: "Il cedimento della memoria, per cui la visione è svanita, suggerisce a Dante agostinianamente la similitudine del sogno, dopo il quale a chi ha sognato spesso non resta nell'animo che una forte emozione, mentre i contenuti del sogno sono con esso svaniti." Maria Corti, *Il libro della memoria e i libri dello scrittore*, 196.

²⁶ Lina Bolzoni, *The Impassioned Memory in Dante's Divine Comedy*, 18.

Bolzoni takes the notion of mnemonic downfall to a greater extent. She claims that this human insufficiency to cope with the last stage of *Paradiso* remains permanently bound to the actual encounter with God because these human faculties cease to exist: “At the moment of the actual encounter with God, however, they cease to exist since they are linked to the specific condition of human nature, and therefore to its inherent weakness, its finite limits.”²⁷ Bolzoni precisely specifies that this mnemonic feebleness represents a major disadvantage for the pilgrim. It is a type of weakness that belongs to the predetermined parameters of human nature, which can be subdued only by the inexpressible dimension of *Paradiso*.

The notion that reconciles these scholarly views is the calamitous consequence Dante the pilgrim will have to face after his memory fails him. At the same time, there is also a line of scholarship that engages with the failure of memory in Dante’s verses from the last canto of *Paradiso* to a higher degree of interpretation.²⁸ This short list of scholarship takes into account not only memory and language as the human characteristics that Dante the pilgrim loses along the end of his enterprise, but also what the pilgrim has gathered thus far throughout his pilgrimage towards salvation. Giuseppe Mazzotta considers the failure of memory catastrophic because it represents the crucial metaphor for the process of gathering details needed for Dante the pilgrim to move forward: “The images of binding, gathering, and untying are the thematic frameworks which produce the perfection of the cosmos and within which Dante attempts to

²⁷ Ibid., 27.

²⁸ The order of scholars goes by the relevant impact that their approach has had for Dante and the art of memory: Spencer Pearce, “Dante and the Art of Memory,” *The Italianist* 61, no. 1 (1996): 20-61; Lina Bolzoni, “The Impassioned Memory in Dante’s ‘Divine Comedy,’” in *Citation, Intertextuality and Memory in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Medieval Culture*, Vol. II, ed. by Giuliano Di Bacco and Yolanda Plumley (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 18-29. There are also some more general studies about the art of memory: Paolo Rossi, *Logic and the Art of Memory: The Quest for a Universal Language*, trans by Stephen Clucas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Il Mulino, 2000); Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: The Bodley Head, 2014), 81-92. Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Mary Carruthers and Jan M. Ziolkowski, *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

recollect and enclose all he has seen and learned within the intelligibility of his language and mind.”²⁹ Since memory is the belly of the mind where things are rearranged and collected, this makes memory the pinnacle figure that operates as a didactic function. According to Mazzotta, memory becomes a representational stable basis from which the pilgrim could regain what he has learned in the substance of God’s vision. However, when memory fails, Mazzotta claims that the didactic function of gathering gets lost. Consequently, the mnemonic components of *recordatio* (recollection), *cogitatio* (thought process), and *imaginatio* (imagination) are also lost as a representational defeat before the end of Dante’s enterprise.³⁰

By keeping in check, the adversities that the pilgrim must still face and the inability to engage for the rest of his journey with his memory, readers are led to think of this endgame as a clear defeat for the pilgrim. From a scientific point of view, readers and most importantly scholars of Dante consider the end of memory as a catastrophic culmination primarily for the pilgrim, who suddenly finds himself without memory or speech. The failure of Dante’s memory is precisely catastrophic because it undermines also the “didactic act of gathering,” making the pilgrim unable to collect what he has learned from previous experiences.³¹ Taking into consideration this same assertion, it appears that Dante the pilgrim cannot engage with the otherworldly components that he has just absorbed without the mnemonic power of *recordatio* (recollection), *cogitatio* (thought process), and *imaginatio* (imagination). This lack of mnemonic engagement resonates also with the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity because they have been uncompromisingly exposed to human feebleness by the time Dante’s memory

²⁹ Giuseppe Mazzotta, “Allegory: Poetics of the Desert,” in *Dante, Poet of the Desert: History and Allegory in the Divine Comedy*, (Princeton: Princeton University, 1979), 260.

³⁰ By considering memory as the crucial metaphor in the face of failing Dante the pilgrim, Mazzotta states: “But memory, conventionally the mother of the Muses and a privileged metaphor because through it the images of the past survive and are given a renewed presence, fails the poet. It fails primarily because it cannot duplicate the world of reality.” *Ibid.*, 263.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 264.

fails him. These virtues, after all, belong to the line of spiritual conceptions that the pilgrim has recently collected and gathered. The three theological virtues are necessary because they help the pilgrim enhance his moral strength to proceed throughout the Empyrean.

The three theological virtues represent a perpetually undying conception in the Christian religion, and they must be considered eternal.³² These virtues neither become vulnerable in the event of human weakness as Corti suggested earlier,³³ nor suddenly disappear as Bolzoni previously proposed.³⁴ These virtues represent for Dante a special vow, a form of promise that needs to be ultimately and constantly hailed by Dante the pilgrim until the end of his journey. Dante the pilgrim needs to hold in place these virtues as a representation of his vow because he will also need to enable these virtues through some mnemonic operation when needed. Dante the poet describes moments along the journey where otherworldly aspects that have been absorbed by the pilgrim to enhance his path to salvation cannot be cancelled, but are instead preserved until the journey is accomplished:

Due cose si convegnono a l'essenza
di questo sacrificio: l'una è quella
di che si fa; l'altr'è la convenenza.
Quest'ultima già mai non si cancella
se non servata; e intorno di lei
sì preciso di sopra si favella.
(Par. V.43-48)

[Two things are the essence when one vows
a sacrifice: the matter of the pledge
and then the formal compact one accepts.
This last can never be annulled until
the compact is fulfilled: it is of this
that I have spoken to you so precisely.]

Dante the poet claims that in order to learn, one needs to fully engage with the mnemonic function of *recordatio*, which ultimately leads to full knowledge. More specifically, this passage

³² To reexamine the impact and the implications of the three theological virtues in the face of the art of memory in Dante, see pp. 195-207 from Chapter Three.

³³ Maria Corti, *Il libro della memoria e i libri dello scrittore*, 196.

³⁴ Lina Bolzoni, *The Impassioned Memory in Dante's Divine Comedy*, 27.

manifests exactly what Dante the poet writes about man making a pact with God. While the pilgrim is discussing the parameters of this path with Beatrice, Dante highlights how this course and the components leading to salvation cannot be cancelled but rather preserved and remembered when needed. Dante the poet suggests that no man is at liberty to shift the burden at his own pleasure because the vow is to God, and only God's representative can alter it (*Par.* V.57). Throughout Beatrice's lecture, Dante the pilgrim is able to employ the idea of the vow through the absolute will, which may never be acceptably relinquished.

Since the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity represent a form of pledge towards redemption, and that they may never be withdrawn but only preserved, these same virtues will be reinstated and reiterated as those virtues meant to enhance Dante's path towards salvation. Dante's human memory remains a constitutive and essential faculty because it provides the pilgrim with mnemonic techniques such as *recordatio* (recollection), *cogitatio* (thought process), and *imaginatio* (imagination). However, Dante's natural memory fails him for lack of superior power in the face of paradisaical forces. At the same time, the art of memory holds a shapeless representation of memory and can still hold in place the otherworldly experience of virtues as well as the mnemonic components of *recordatio* (recollection), *cogitatio* (thought process), and *imaginatio* (imagination).³⁵ The art of memory in Dante becomes considerably paramount in this last stage of Dante's journey because this art form absorbs a regenerative function that is needed to underscore important elements (i.e., desire, will, etc.) for the pilgrim to reach salvation. Regardless of any human failures like that of memory, the art of memory may never be relinquished because it is a heavenly concept that resonates with a vow that is tied to Dante's absolute will.

³⁵ To consider the coexistence of these mnemonic components in the art of memory further, see pp. 34-38 from Chapter One.

Giorgio Stabile talks about how intensely Dante the poet transmutes values that are central to the absolute notion of heavenly cosmos.³⁶ What was considered absolute in Aristotelian physics as a fatal cosmological destination results in a new nature for Dante. This same nature has unsettled the primitive order of the heavenly cosmos and the absolute law surrounding the history of salvation for a long time.³⁷ By challenging this Aristotelian solution, Dante the poet has fundamentally overcome the trauma of failing memory.³⁸ Even though it is inaccessible once it has failed, remaining unavailable for the rest of the journey, phenomena of substitution arise in its place, which overcome the inhibited version of memory through the act of *recordatio*. In the very moment of *recordatio* and in the movement from a failed memory to undo what recognition has done, Dante is able to grasp the past again in the present, and from the failed state it passes into the actual state.³⁹ Dante's objective of ending the enterprise gets refashioned by transmuting mnemonic values while leaving the failing memory as a latency or dormancy. This transmutation of mnemonic values allows the pilgrim to transition to a rejuvenated version of the art of memory that is precisely intrinsic to the higher realities of *Paradiso*.⁴⁰

³⁶ In reference to the heavenly cosmos, Giorgio Stabile states: "Dante, nel promuovere la struttura cosmologica ad elemento portante della *Commedia*, non si limitò a rilevare un modello descrittivo del cosmo ma, assieme ad esso, trasse dentro tutto il complesso di presupposizioni teoriche e mentali che la percezione di quel modello comportava." Giorgio Stabile, *Cosmologia e teologia nella Commedia*, 153.

³⁷ Giorgio Stabile states: "Dante sottopose queste presupposizioni all'ulteriore vaglio del proprio reticolato di valori, operando una consapevole contaminazione tra cosmologia pagana e teologia cristiana, attraverso la trasvalutazione dei significati fisici in significati religiosi." *Ibid.*, 153.

³⁸ Cfr. "Centrale, al riguardo, è appunto l'idea di un ecumene rovesciato rispetto all'orientamento assoluto del cosmo, che Dante carica di un profondo significato teologico e che legge alla luce di un evento preliminare a tutta la storia della salvezza [...] Quella che per la fisica aristotelica era una fatale destinazione cosmologica diviene, agli occhi di Dante il risultato di un rovesciamento di valori originari e mnemonici e il segno di una colpa che è intervenuta a viziare e sconvolgere l'ordine primitivo della natura." *Ibid.*, 154.

³⁹ See also Paul Ricoeur's work, in which he suggests a psychological approach to understand the notion of substitution of values with respect to mind and memory. Paul Ricoeur, "Forgetting," in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 436-445.

⁴⁰ To reconsider the difference between memory for the lower realities and art of memory for the higher realities, see pp. 139-141 from Chapter Two.

By transitioning to the highest reality of *Paradiso* (the White Rose in the Empyrean) and once his memory and speech have failed, Dante the pilgrim experiences the temporality and transience of human life with a new urgency.⁴¹ This transition to a regenerated version of the art of memory mirrors the consequences of Dante's course of salvation through the power of his *imaginatio* (or imaginative power). This imaginative power puts into motion the hidden residues of devotion towards Dante's vow of salvation which occurs through the absorption of *imagines agentes*. These are called in English images of memory, which are capable of lending concrete shape to abstract concepts.⁴² Lina Bolzoni states that such images must be closely associated with the object that is to be remembered and must be capable of striking the *imaginatio* (imagination) with great force, generating reactions of intense pleasure or profound horror.⁴³ However, as Lina Bolzoni suggests, the *imagines agentes* function also by producing a sense of extraneousness and striking the *imaginatio* of Dante with great force.⁴⁴ The image of Bernard smiling to Dante, who signals upward while letting Dante's sight rise higher and higher (*Par.* XXXIII.49-54), characterizes one example of *imagines agentes* that renders visible the nature and essence of the Empyrean by looking upward. This *imagines agentes* renders visible the similitude of this image of memory as a concept characterized by both the divine figure of Bernard and the divine hope of the pilgrim. It is from this concept of *imagines agentes* that Dante's itinerary (at least the last stages of the journey) can be connected to a new level of knowledge and moral transfiguration.

⁴¹ It is an operation that turns out to be the pilgrim's motivation to move on from a mnemonic delusion to the crossroads of *Paradiso*.

⁴² One of the main sources of the notion of *imagines agentes* is Saint Thomas Aquinas, who believed they were important element symptomatic of producing and reproducing images to predefined objectives. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, art.9 and II-IIae, q.49, at 2m.

⁴³ Lina Bolzoni, *The Impassioned Memory in Dante's Divine Comedy*, 22. Some examples from Dante's *Commedia* are the pilgrim facing several disfigured figures like Ciaccio (*Inf.* VI), Muhammed (*Inf.* XXVIII), and Count Ugolino gnawing on the skull of Cardinal Ruggieri (*Inf.* XXXIII).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

Through the notion of the *imagines agentes*, readers of Dante are able to see the images planted in a new knowledge of memory because *imaginatio* can help guide the pilgrim along the path that leads to ultimate spiritual delight. It is true that in the actual encounter with God, these images cease to exist or become inoperative because they are linked to human nature. However, there cannot be an end to the use of images because they are also attached to the previously discussed path of salvation. It is a path between the pilgrim and God, which symbolizes a form of vow or promise (*Par.* XXXIII.55-57). Memory and speech fail, but Dante the pilgrim's power of sight shows signs of difficulty without failing entirely. It is only a few verses later that Dante the poet makes a similar allusion to the power of sight: "cotal son io, ché quasi tutta cessa / mia visione, e ancor mi distilla / nel core il dolce che nacque da essa" (such am I, for my vision almost fades / completely, yet it still distills within / my heart the sweetness that was born of it [*Par.* XXXIII.61-63]). Through the remaining power of vision and sight that Dante still holds in place, he still needs a faculty that will sustain his sight and vision and images until the end of the enterprise. The concept of *imagines agentes* symbolizes those agents that allow the art of memory to recollect images and later recompose and reintroduce them in the realm of the journey (*cogitatio*).

In the third chapter of his book *Journey of Mind to God*, Saint Bonaventure notably states the importance and correlation between mind, memory, and imagination (or vision, in his case). It is a correlation that corresponds to the "generating mind, the word, and love existing in the soul as memory, intelligence, and will, which are consubstantial, coequal, equally everlasting, and mutually inclusive."⁴⁵ The memory that Bonaventure is here juxtaposing with the power of soul and intelligence (as a form of intellect) is not conventional and natural memory. It is rather a faculty with more enduring abilities that has the power to regenerate the divine image that shines

⁴⁵ Bonaventure, *The Journey of the Mind to God*, 18.

forth. Bonaventure suggests that when the image of the most Blessed Trinity appears in splendor (like the vision of God in *Par.* XXXIII.19), we are to think that this image is summoned itself to a more innovative memory. Since this image of God cannot be perceived through the bodily eyes, this same image can be perceived only through the eye of the mind.⁴⁶

Along this line of thought, Saint Bonaventure seems to repeat himself slightly differently in *Paradiso* XII. Saint Bonaventure, the main protagonist who is about to praise the order of the Dominicans and Saint Dominic the founder, provides an example which no human sight or memory can achieve: “non molto lungi al percuoter de l’onde / dietro a le quali, per la lunga foga, / lo sol talvolta ad ogne uom si nasconde” (behind the waves that beat upon the coast, / the sun, grown weary from its lengthy course, / at times conceals itself from all men’s eyes [*Par.* XII.49-51]). The sun hides itself from human sight at the summer solstice and sets beyond the sight of those on land because it has moved so far out over the Atlantic. The metaphorical image that Bonaventure adopts to depict the hidden sun is what triggers that ability to look over while the sun is out of sight. According to Bonaventure, the sun can be perceived solely through the power of mind and not the bodily eyes. Therefore, Bonaventure considers this ability to be a part of memory (which echoes with the art of memory in Dante) that retains the present by remembrance, by receiving things into itself, and the future by foresight.

To recall the *imagines agentes* in the face of the art of memory in Dante provides another instrument to explore the inexhaustible richness and the polysemic ambience of the *Divina Commedia*. Thanks to the *imagines agentes* cooperating with the art of memory, Dante still retains the principles and axioms of divinity, which are innate to salvation. If these *imagines agentes* allow Dante in reapproaching the higher realities in the last stages of *Paradiso* after natural memory fails, Dante cannot master only the teachings and the gifts (three virtues) that he

⁴⁶ Ibid., 20-21.

has been bestowed. Because the mnemonic values of *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process) can still transition around Dante through a reintegration of aspects from the past into their present state, restoring awareness after failing memory is possible.

The first way of restoring awareness occurs once the art of memory takes the lead to conclude the final course through the last stages of *Paradiso*. Dante is no longer preoccupied by the devastating fear generated by the bliss surrounding and blinding his human eyes, or by the troublesome sense of imminent defeat for his human memory. Through the renewed version of *recordatio* (recollection), Dante is able to reinstate the immanence of the human in the divine and of the divine in the human. It occurs in this next passage where Dante is equilibrated, centered, and sees the effigy of man imprinted in the circularity of the divine light:

Quella circolazion che sì concetta
pareva in te come lume riflesso,
da li occhi miei alquanto circunspetta,
dentro da sé, del suo colore stesso,
mi parve pinta de la nostra effige:
per che 'l mio viso in lei tutto era messo.
(*Par. XXXIII.127-132*)⁴⁷

[That circle – which, begotten so, appeared
in You as light reflected – when my eyes
had watched it with attention for some time,
within itself and colored like itself,
to me seemed painted with our effigy,
so that my sight was set on it completely.]

This is the third phase of the vision where the circle of the sun contains the image within itself like a reflected light.⁴⁸ From this same vision, Dante characterizes the union of the divine and human natures in Christ, who was made flesh and became a man. One important aspect that emerges from these verses is the conscious communion that Dante is able to recall and make with the divine, which occurs with the “lume riflesso” (light reflected [*Par. XXXIII.128*]). The

⁴⁷ The image described by Dante in this passage is a reference to Saint Paul’s *Letter to the Philippians 2:7*: “but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.”

⁴⁸ See also *Par. III.85-87*, where the phenomena or evidence of this moving into God are the classical Pauline and Augustinian phenomena of peace and of joy. Peace stands at the opposite pole from existential restlessness, and joy opposite from despair.

reflection of the light mirrors the image that Dante seemingly showcases when he says “pinta de la nostra effige” (painted with our effigy [*Par.* XXXIII.131]). Additionally, the image that Dante depicts in these verses is symbolic of Beatrice’s image, and Dante is able to restore it through the *imagines agentes* and by means of *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (composition scale).

If the first way of restoring awareness after Dante’s failing memory occurs because of a regeneratively recollective activity of Beatrice’s image, this same activity allows the second way to take place by tracing the course of his enterprise back through the act of *expectatio*.⁴⁹ This act form is a typical notion in the Middle Ages. Saint Augustine, for example, took *expectatio* as not only the motivator for major outcomes and results from human efforts, but also as a form of restoration after paramount downfalls.⁵⁰ There is a persevering force of uniting with God in Dante’s *Commedia* that occasionally needs to be reattained, particularly after Dante the pilgrim faces his greatest human defeat of losing faculties that cannot assist him anymore. The notion of *expectatio* is depicted through the passionate reactions in Dante the pilgrim. Such is the case in the next passage from *Paradiso* X, where Dante the poet describes the notion of wishing or longing for something unable to be immediately achieved: “Perch’io lo ‘ngegno e l’arte e l’uso chiami, / sì nol direi che mai s’imaginasse; / ma creder puossi e di veder si brami” (Though I should call on talent, craft, and practice, / my telling cannot help them be imagined; / but you can trust – and may you long to see it [*Par.* X.43-45]). This passage portrays how men long to see their primary objective (i.e., salvation in the case of Dante the pilgrim) and to make themselves fit to enter the highest realm of all, namely Heaven. Knowing that the pilgrim’s human faculties will not be able to assist him any further, Dante expresses his emotionally fervent reaction to

⁴⁹ The notion of *expectatio* in Chapter Three underscores the biblical perspective in which hope becomes an important virtue for Dante’s expectations. The notion of *expectatio* in Chapter Four, however, manifests itself differently because it becomes the means of Dante’s tracing back the course of his enterprise after his memory has failed.

⁵⁰ Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, IX.ii.346-353.

regain what he has cultivated. This is a form of *expectatio* because it resonates with the vow and promise of salvation.

Dante the pilgrim is able to restore his awareness because the act of *expectatio* has been traced back through the refashioned act of *recordatio*. *Expectatio* is an act that is innate to the course and the image of the journey (i.e., *imagines agentes*) and not necessarily to the idea of the senses. Furthermore, *expectatio* is the representational means of helping Dante conclude his enterprise, and without a mnemonic agent that allows *expectatio* to reemerge, Dante is not able to restore his previously suggested awareness. In the moment of *expectatio*, such as in the movement from the vision of the Seraph to its own reinstatement later in *Paradiso*, we also assist to a temporal reestablishment with the leading act of *recordatio*, which transmutes Dante's *expectatio* of accomplishing his enterprise from past (*Par.* X.43-45) to present: "E' mi ricorda ch'io fui più ardito / per questo a sostener, tanto ch'i' giunsi / l'aspetto mio col valore infinito" (I can recall that I, because of this, / was bolder in sustaining it until / my vision reached the Infinite Goodness [*Par.* XXXIII.79-81]). These lines introduce the significant motif and *expectatio* of the sharp power of the light, such that Dante cannot turn away from it and would be lost if he did so. The idea of keeping up with his *expectatio* strengthens his resolve to see more deeply, and at this point his gaze reaches God himself. In addition to that, this passage takes us back to the very moment of this refashioned *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process), where the art of memory reenacts what the pilgrim has cultivated through his *expectatio* of not losing track of "divina bontà" (Godly Goodness [*Par.* VII.64]). This same mnemonic process echoes the art of memory because it translates into an ingrained process of continuous research, and regardless of the loss of human faculties, Dante still holds the means of grasping the past again and restore it in the present.

IV.2.2. The Misshaping and Reshaping of Dante's Redemption

One pivotal aspect by which *expectatio* has led the pilgrim into a process of continuous research across his entire journey is the previously mentioned notion of salvation. Dante's main objective of redemption will not fade away like human faculties did. Salvation is ingrained in the realm of the pilgrim's journey, and it is entrenched into the poet's narrative of the otherworldliness. However, with Dante's last stage of his journey turning dark because of his abandonment of memory and speech, this temporarily complicates his idea of salvation. Dante the pilgrim is about to reach the end of his enterprise, and even if momentarily, Dante's final objective of redemption can still fade away. Thus, when Dante the poet describes the pilgrim particularly succumbing to the unprecedented vision (*Par.* XXXIII.57) that has left the latter without the support of human faculties and senses, Dante's objective of redemption inhabits in the *oblio* (forgetfulness).⁵¹

In this upcoming passage, Dante the poet adopts the exact aspect of forgetfulness to indicate how his views about the end of the pilgrim's journey can be suddenly and momentarily placed at rest. Dante's memory has abandoned him, and he demonstrates the effect (leaving an important memory like salvation in the *oblio*) that originates from an unprecedented cause, namely the unprecedented vision that led his memory fail: "Un punto solo m'è maggior letargo / che venticinque secoli a la 'mpresa / che fé nettuno ammirar l'ombra d'Argo" (That one moment

⁵¹ Aristotle states that the importance of forgetfulness resonates when one cannot properly be said to remember anything until one has a mental image of it impressed in memory, which one can then later recall: Aristotle, *On the Memory and Recollection*, 1.450a-b. Saint Augustine makes it clear that forgetting has its place in an examination of memory because forgetting is essentially to operate in relation to an art of memory: Augustinus Aurelius, *Confessionum*, X.8.12-14. Furthermore, Albertus Magnus believed that recollection begins with what is forgotten and seeks to reconstitute the ways to recover it. This description assumes that a memory, once laid down, is always in the brain, and so can be uncovered by reconstructing its tracks: Albertus Magnus, *Commentary on Aristotle's De memoria et reminiscencia*, trans. by J. Ziolkowski from Albertus Magnus, *Opera Omnia*, ed. A. Borgnet (Paris: Ludovicum Vives, 1890), 997-118.

brings more forgetfulness to me than / twenty-five centuries have brought to the endeavor / that startled Neptune with the Argo's shadow [*Par.* XXXIII.94-96]).⁵² Even if Dante the poet is not explicitly alluding to salvation, he is simultaneously referring to the previous "punto" (moment [*Par.* XXXIII.94]) that stunned the pilgrim.⁵³ This moment represents the result from the excess of the vision of God. Dante might have wanted to present himself as forgetting the greatest insight objective (salvation) while momentarily not being able to perceive it. It is for this reason that Dante the pilgrim's salvation has been temporarily misshaped. The pilgrim has been overwhelmed by an unprecedented experience that took away faculties that have nurtured his journey throughout the three canticles. In other words, Dante the pilgrim's status of redemption has been misshaped by this specific "punto" (moment [*Par.* XXXIII.94]) that lead him into a state of unfastened perception, which consequently was placed into a state of forgetfulness.⁵⁴

At the same time, the underlying assumption is that once memories of supernatural nature like a spiritual redemption have been constructed, they can be momentarily forgotten. However, these same memories cannot ever be obliterated. For instance, in *Paradiso* V we read about the pact with God that can never be annulled or cancelled for any reason until it is fulfilled with the

⁵² The term "letargo" (forgetfulness) is formed from the Greek word *lethe* (forgetfulness), as well as rhyming with "Argo". See also the notion of Lethe in *Purg.* XXXI.88-90.

⁵³ I am aware that *oblio* (forgetfulness) is a significant element with respect to the art of memory and that Saint Augustine claims in his *Confessions*, that both operate among each other. However, I only and briefly examine *oblio* in this case to enhance my argumentation about the shocking event that stunned Dante's idea of salvation. More exactly, I adopt *oblio* (forgetfulness) in my study as a means rather than a form of art. This aspect serves the purpose to momentarily store the pilgrim's idea of salvation, while letting the heavenly concept of the art of memory restoring salvation in Dante. Additionally, my argument on the art of memory resonates with a metaphysical making that consequently shifts into a theological framework, where the three virtues empower the heavenly concept of the art of memory in redeeming salvation and optimizing the pilgrim's perception with respect to the final image. Thus, by incorporating *ars oblivionalis* (art of forgetfulness) as the previous philosophers (Aristotle, Augustine, and Albertus Magnus) have suggested, this might have complicated the outcome of my entire argument, which rests mostly on the metaphysical and theological operations that this shapeless representation of memory entail.

⁵⁴ To consider a list of scholars who have engaged with the theory of *oblio* and *ars oblivionalis*, see: Paolo Rossi, *Il passato, la memoria, l'oblio*, (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1991); Harald Weinrich, *Lete: Arte e critica dell'oblio*, trad. Francesca Rigotti (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1997); Paul Ricoeur, "Forgetting," in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 436-445; Mary Carruthers, *Ars oblivionalis, ars invenienti: The Cherub Figure and the Arts of Memory*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

preliminarily purported objective, namely salvation: “Quest’ultima già mai non si cancella / se non servata” (This pact can never be annulled / until it is fulfilled [*Par.* V.46-47]). Whether it is a relentlessly enduring moment from the past or sustained by Beatrice’s preceding lectures or the absorption of the three theological virtues (as they are all representations in the event of Dante’s salvation), salvation represents a predestined contract with God that Dante needs to observe and embrace fully. Because the concept of salvation represents the beforehand examined vow or promise for the pilgrim to follow, Dante the pilgrim’s salvation symbolizes a predetermined concept activated by the time the pilgrim engages his otherworldly experience, beginning with the first canticle.

More precisely, Dante reveals salvation as a predetermined notion when Virgil is trying to comfort Dante. Virgil asks the pilgrim to embrace this journey towards salvation fully with faith and hope. Virgil further explains the nature of salvation for the pilgrim in the second canto of *Inferno* by underscoring how important the virtue of faith for the pilgrim is, and that without it, Dante will not be entitled to proceed: “Andovvi poi lo Vas d’elezione, / per recarne conforto a quella fede / ch’è principio alla via di salvazione” (Later, the Chosen Vessel went there / to bring us back assurance of that faith / with which the way to our salvation starts [*Inf.* II.28-30]).⁵⁵ Dante is alluding to Saint Paul’s heavenly journey while still alive. It was prior to Dante that Saint Paul narrates the importance of faith to reach salvation, and the apostle also recounts his experience when captured after being elected to experience the otherworld: “God knows, I was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat” (II *Cor.* 12:4).⁵⁶ Saint Paul is describing one ecstatic experience where heaven is located,

⁵⁵ To review how the three theological virtues will be confirmed by the three apostles Peter, James, and John from *Par.* XXIV-XXVI, see the entire Chapter Three.

⁵⁶ Saint Paul’s later audience does encompass *Gentiles*: “But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel’” (*Acts* 9:15).

and he adopts the heavenly journey as a popular means of claiming divine authentication. At the same time, Dante the poet underlines Saint Paul's claim about faith in salvation which cannot be sufficient to gain redemption, and that there is thus the need to adopt a form of action. Likewise, Dante the pilgrim aims at operating actively in the face of salvation by absorbing the unceasing willingness to recover and regain the nature of his predetermined and final objective for redemption.

If Dante's journey suddenly turns dark, Dante's salvation is best forgotten by being repositioned and relocated in other networks of associations. Since forgetfulness resonates with a form of art (*ars oblivionalis*) and results from an activity of art of memory, this same forgetfulness refreshes one's search networks. It is the pilgrim's idea of salvation, which has only been momentarily suppressed along the unprecedented vision that we previously examined. Moreover, by describing the "punto" (moment [*Par.* XXXIII.94]) that brings "maggior letargo" (more forgetfulness [*Ibidem*]) to the pilgrim from the river Lethe in *Purgatorio* XXVIII.127-130, a mnemonic refinement (heavenly art of memory) is needed for the pilgrim to enter the last stage of higher standards (*Paradiso*). While Dante the pilgrim absorbs a form of quixotic experience that he is having with a strikingly high level of exertion, he will redeem the provisionally obscured salvation. Dante the pilgrim will need to rely on additional strengths, by focusing on a power that fortifies Dante's *imaginatio* (imaginative power) to move on and redeem the search of his salvation out of the realm of forgetfulness (*Par.* XXXIII.94-95).

The notion of "fantasia" (fantasy [*Purg.* XVII.25]) not only sustains Dante's *imaginatio* (imagination), but also indicates the subsequent awareness that Dante regains after his memory and speech have abandoned him. Dante the poet offers an example of high level of imagination when he describes one aspect of wrath in *Purgatorio*: "Poi piovette dentro a l'alta fantasia / un

crucifisso, dispettoso e fero / ne la sua vista, e cotal si moria” (Then into my high fantasy there rained / one who was crucified; and as he died, / he showed his savagery and his disdain [*Purg.* XVII.25-27]). The notion of these visions as having rained down into the image-receiving faculty of his soul cements the claim made for them. The “fantasia” (fantasy [*Purg.* XVII.25]), which is also known as *imaginativa* (imaginative power) is superfluous because of the experience of a vision coming from such a source. The notion of fantasy is “alta” (deep [*Purg.* XVII.25]) in *Purgatorio*, but Dante clarifies that there is also the opposite: “E se le fantasie nostre son basse / a tanta altezza, non è meraviglia; / ché sopra ‘l sol non fu occhio ch’andasse (And if our fantasies fall short before / such heights, there is no need to wonder; for / no eye has seen light brighter than the Sun’s [*Par.* X.46-48]). Dante alludes to our powers of *imaginatio* (imaginative power) that in this life also receive images through the senses. However, the human sense of sight knows no brighter light than that of the sun.⁵⁷ Even if these low-key fantasies belong to the power of imagination, they indicate the inability to understand the intensity of the sphere of the sun, since no human can perceive such a thing.

If the low fantasy derives directly from the sense of sight, the high fantasy reveals through interior images that are directly perceived from God and without any interference with the senses. Since the “alta fantasia” (high fantasy [*Purg.* XVII.25]) is depicted as being in direct contact with divine reality while coping with supernatural aspects, this same type of imaginative power is characterized by a gnoseological function. This procedure is not only independent from any human senses, but also makes this fantasy one of the most supreme points of reference in the transmutation of the sensible (senses) to the spiritual, and from humanly perceptive experiences to supernatural perceptive experiences. For instance, Erminia Ardissino suggests that the *alta*

⁵⁷ To further consider the notion of low fantasy, see also: Mira Mocan, “La trasparenza e il riflesso sull’alta fantasia,” in *Dante e nel pensiero medievale*, (Milan: Mondadori, 2007), 108-115.

fantasia represents an intellectual faculty because it presides across the entire vision of Dante's poem, which belongs to an immaterial vision.⁵⁸ This is a point that Giuseppe Mazzotta had already anticipated by juxtaposing more closely the *alta fantasia* and *imaginatio* (imagination). Mazzotta suggests them to be a "complex, forever ambivalent, and protean faculty, which resonates with the portal to knowledge of reality exceeding the domain of material reality."⁵⁹ Furthermore, both scholars agree that Dante's *alta fantasia* (high fantasy) indicates the major source that sustains the transfiguration from human sensibility to divine reality.

At the same time, Dante's *alta fantasia* (high fantasy) fails him towards the very end of his journey. Dante the pilgrim faces a flash of blissful lights that make all plain at last. This same flash is what makes Dante's *alta fantasia* fail, causing it to vanish right before ending his journey: "se non che la mia mente fu percossa / da un fulgore in che sua voglia venne. / A l'alta fantasia qui mancò possa" (But then my mind was struck by light that flashed / and, with this slight, received what it had asked. / Here force failed my high fantasy [*Par.* XXXIII.140-142]). The pilgrim's wings are themselves not powerful enough to uplift him to the vision of the deepest mystery. However, divine grace now intervenes to raise the pilgrim's sight and comprehension to that transcendental point. Dante's mind and his power of vision are uplifted by a flash and by a lightning bolt from above. The desired vision and comprehension are given to him through the highest grace. To affirm that the high fantasy fails in its power at this point is equivalent to saying that Dante the pilgrim reaches the limit of his human capacity for vision, for the reception of images. This failure of *alta fantasia* (high fantasy) contributes to the ultimate

⁵⁸ In her book chapter, Ardissino refers particularly to the *alta fantasia* as a major element across Dante's poem: "L'alta fantasia è la facoltà che presiede a tutta la visione che costituisce il poema, e ad essa è riservata quell'attività poetica costituita dalle visioni, dunque anche il poema, che termina appunto quando cessa l'alta fantasia." Erminia Ardissino, "L'alta fantasia. Poesia e visione," in *L'umana Commedia di Dante*, (Ravenna: Longo, 2016), 118.

⁵⁹ Giuseppe Mazzotta, *Dante's Vision and the Circle of Knowledge*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 132.

adversity that the pilgrim will face, since the pilgrim can neither redeem his greatest spiritual truth (salvation) from the state of forgetfulness, nor can see that which he desires to see.

Seeing is a function of intellect and is, in Dante the pilgrim, a desire of the intellect that is at the moment unfulfilled. Dante references this same aspect of the juxtaposition of *alta fantasia* (high fantasy) and vision in reconciliation with the function of the intellect in the *Convivio*. Dante the author reveals the significant relevance of this parallel between intellect and imagination and that it needs to be fully contemplated:

Nostro intelletto, per difetto de la virtù de la quale trae quello ch'el vede, che è virtù organica, cioè la fantasia, non puote a certe cose salire (però che la fantasia nol puote aiutare, ché non ha lo di che), sì come sono le sustanze partite da materia; de le quali se alcuna considerazione sanza di quella avere potemo, intendere non le potemo né comprendere perfettamente (*Conv.* III.iv.9).

[Our intellect, by defect of that power whence it draws whatsoever it contemplates (which is an organic power, to wit the fantasy), may not rise to certain things, because the fantasy may not aid it, for it hath not wherewithal. Such are the substances distinct from matter, which, even though a certain consideration of them is possible, we may not understand nor comprehend perfectly.]

Because fantasy cannot comprehend the vision perfectly if certain things are derivative of earthly matter or human senses, Dante, in this passage from the *Convivio*, elucidates how limited the human intellect is. With Dante mentioning that the high fantasy cannot endure the superior vision that Dante the poet defines at the end of the journey twice (in *Paradiso* XXXIII and in the *Convivio*), this same setting seems to imperil Dante's enterprise. While Dante is able to regain awareness of his redemption after his memory and speech have failed, *imaginatio* (imaginative power) cannot sustain the pilgrim's vision of redemption at the very end of the journey.⁶⁰ The highest power (*alta fantasia*) that should have sustained Dante with the transmutation from human senses to divine reality cannot operate anymore. Additionally, the vision of his salvation is subsequently jeopardized because it apparently seems that no additional power is able to

⁶⁰ The idea of imaginative power unable to sustain the final stages of redemption is a topic that Dante states from the beginning of the enterprise (*Inf.* II.28-30).

fortify Dante's *imaginatio* (imaginative power) in redeeming the search of his salvation out of the realm of forgetfulness (*Par.* XXXIII.94-95).⁶¹

At the same time, Dante the pilgrim's awareness of his previous examinations of theological engagement with the three virtues enhances his notion of virtue as aiding man's ascent to God. This form of theological enhancement is also apparent in the role that Dante assigns to virtue in the process of man's attainment of happiness in the divine realm of *Paradiso*. Despite the failing senses that the pilgrim has recently faced (memory, speech and *alta fantasia*), these virtues still enable Dante the pilgrim to attain his ultimate state of happiness. In the central cantos of *Purgatorio*, Dante peculiarly states that Love represents the main celestial mover, which makes Love circular because it must be. Consequently, Love is far from hatred because the Love created by the primal love (God) can never be divorced from. This means that you can never hate God (Love), and your love will circulate around him: "Or, perché mai non può da la salute / amor del suo subietto volger viso, / da l'odio proprio son le cose tute;" (Now, since love never turns aside its eyes / from the well-being of its subject, things / are surely free from hatred of themselves [*Purg.* XVII.106-108]). It is a doctrine that removes two possible motivations from consideration: hatred of self or hatred of God, both of which are declared to be impossible. According to Dante it would be unbearable to hate God because the soul returns to Him, God, namely the love that was created by God: "Poi, come 'l foco movesi in altura / per la sua forma

⁶¹ This imaginative power is essential for our analysis because it sustains the metaphysical making of the art of memory in Dante as well as sustaining other elements of this study (i.e., the three theological virtues, etc.). However, there is a distinction to be made. This imaginative power is also connected to the highest type of imagination, an image-making faculty namely "alta fantasia" (high fantasy [*Par.* XXXIII.142]), which fails Dante at the end of *Paradiso*. I would like to reassure the reader that this failure of imagination (with follows the failure of Dante's memory and speech) will not jeopardize the course of art of memory in Dante. If on the one hand, this imaginative power is essential to craft this art form, and to outline its course to the otherworldliness, on the other hand, the art of memory can still stand until the end of Dante's journey because the art of memory is a self-subsistent principle (Chapter Two). The art of memory is not dependent upon imagination, because there is not a relationship of causality of art of memory and imagination. They can work in conjunction, and be interconnected throughout the course of this study, but they are not dependent clause.

ch'è nata a salire / là dove più in sua matra dura” (Then, just as flames ascend because the form / of fire was fashioned to fly upward, toward / the stuff of its own sphere, where it lasts longest [*Purg.* XVIII.28-30]). These last verses indicate the idea of natural desire, which according to Dante, draws everybody towards its natural place as toward its own perfection (God).

There is a specific passage in *Purgatorio* where Dante the poet enables the pilgrim to maintain a proper balance between using the physical world while not being bound by it. According to Dante, Love characterizes every type of virtue to enhance the system that Love produces. In this next passage from the central cantos of *Purgatorio*, Dante the poet entails his notion of virtue as aiding man's ascent to God, while employing virtue in the process of man's attainment of happiness in the divine realm: “Quinci comprender puoi ch'esser conviene / amor sementa in voi d'ogne virtute / e d'ogne operazion che merta pene” (From this you see that – of necessity / love is the seed in you of every virtue / and of all acts deserving punishment [*Purg.* XVII.103-105]). This balance is fully supported by Dante's first guide Virgil, who praises the love directed to God as a primordial aspect. Virgil is principally alluding to Love as the form of all loves. Love is the mover of celestial spheres, and the seed behind every single action, and every single virtue.⁶² Love resonates with celestial motion as shown from the mechanics of love in the middle of *Purgatorio* that moves the celestial heavens (*Purg.* XVI.89-90). Because Dante's notion of virtue refers to as a means of reaching excellence, the notion of virtue operates in the face of the greater splendor of God. Thus, the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and

⁶² This reasoning follows the verses *Purg.* XVII.91-93 because God is Love, and it comes from John 4:8. In reference to love ordering heavens, see also *Conv.* III.iii.25, for the love that the Creators' creatures have.

love become the indelible traits of character by means of which the Spirit teaches Dante how to trace salvation.⁶³

Since the representation of theological virtues begins through a doctrinal and theological examination that authorizes Dante the pilgrim to move on in his journey to redemption, faith symbolizes the first virtue through which God's divine plan for salvation is revealed to Dante. John Freccero suggests that while Dante has attained all that he sought, Dante's faith remains indelible, and his learning and his art cannot be forgotten as he seeks to recapture redemption in order to complete the enterprise.⁶⁴ Once Dante the pilgrim completes his examination with Saint Peter, who confirms the virtue of faith, this same virtue is ingrained in Dante's mind. Faith is about the moral and epistemic refurbishment of the soul by that divine power. Seemingly, this same virtue leads the pilgrim to the renewal of its spiritual ability to discern the presence of God and reenacts parts of his previous spiritual understanding: "poi mi volsi a Beatrice, ed essa pronte / sembianze femmi perch'io spandessi / l'acqua di fuor del mio interno fonte" (then turned to Beatrice, whose glance / immediately signaled me to let / the waters of my inner source pour forth [*Par.* XXIV.55-57]). While this passage employs an important metaphor, namely the "acqua" (waters [*Par.* XXIV.57]) welling from within the pilgrim's mind, there is also a metaphorical meaning in relation to the pilgrim's awareness about salvation. It is a type of

⁶³ To consider further the notion of virtue as a means to excellence, see also *Convivio* IV.xxii.18. Dante states more particularly the idea of intellectual virtue as opposed to moral virtue, but both operate towards the same objective, namely that of the superior beauty of God.

⁶⁴ Freccero states that faith endures throughout the journey and that until the last stages of the journey, Dante's faith is a virtue seeking completion: "Until the last stages of the pilgrim's journey, his was a faith seeking understanding: *fides quaerens intellectum*. Now that he has attained all that he sought, we must take the poetic fact on faith and seek an understanding of our own – which is to say that although we cannot follow the pilgrim to the heights, we can at least rise to the poet's compromise." John Freccero, *The Final Image*, 246.

knowledge that allows Dante to renew his confidence and precisely reveals his spiritual ability to discern the presence of God while conveying the significance of faith.⁶⁵

With the virtue of faith reshaping redemption for Dante after the failing *alta fantasia* (high fantasy), in *Paradiso* XXV, Dante writes that hope is the sure and certain hope of the Resurrection.⁶⁶ Dante the poet specifically defines hope as a theological virtue which is produced by divine grace and preceding merit: “Spene, diss’io, ‘è uno attender certo / de la gloria futura, il qual produce / grazia divina e precedente merto” (I said: ‘Hope is the certain expectation / of future glory; it is the result / of God’s grace and of merit we have earned [*Par.* XXV.67-69]). According to Dante, the virtue of hope inclines one to yearn for union with God as one’s true destiny and the source of complete fulfillment.⁶⁷ Similarly, the virtue of hope helps Dante the pilgrim to project his forthcoming redemption. Dante is a Christian poet, and he is not only enabled but also expected to manifest divine attributes before others on earth. In fact, Dante proceeds through the gift of hope by participating in God, the source of these good deeds, and is aware that he will in heaven participate even more fully and completely.⁶⁸ The “gloria futura” (future glory [*Par.* XXV.68]) from this same passage, which originates from divine grace, is what Dante will be attending and expecting to reach.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ It is a form of motivation that Beatrice has already mentioned prior to meeting with the apostle, where she depicts a reciprocal relation between the divine and the human, between the pilgrim’s faith and his trust in God: “Dì, di sicuramente, e credi come a dii” (Speak, speak with confidence, having faith in them as you would trust in gods [*Par.* V.123]). Beatrice excitedly urges Dante on in his increasing hunger for knowledge of heavenly things, which simultaneously motivates the pilgrim to “pour” out “the waters” welling from the source within the same pilgrim.

⁶⁶ Since the virtue of hope is possible only through divine grace, Dante’s ultimate goal of salvation requires divine assistance.

⁶⁷ Cfr. Peter Lombard, *The Sentences*, III.xxvi.i: “Est enim spes certa expectatio futurae beatitudinis, veniens ex Dei gratia et meritis praecedentibus” (Now hope is a certain expectation of future beatitude proceeding from God’s grace and antecedent merits). This definition of hope is drawn from the 12th-century handbook of Catholic theology from which every scholastic theologian made his debut by expounding on Peter Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum*.

⁶⁸ Cfr. Saint Augustine, *Sermons III/4 (94A-147A)*, 140.33.77.

⁶⁹ A Dantean scholar who has written precisely about the juxtaposition of hope and future glory is Peter Hawkins. One of his main points alludes to the Israelites’ return to the Promised Land, which also characterizes the way in which hope projects Dante’s return in future glory. Peter S. Hawkins, *Self-Authenticating Artifact*, 72-99.

Augustine suggests that while Christians are made partakers of goodness on earth, the degree of participation they enjoy is only a foretaste of the fullness still to be experienced.⁷⁰ Even if the forthcoming glory is in the future and will be eventually absorbed by Dante, the latter is saved in hope, for it is in hope that he has been made happy.⁷¹ Dante has embedded salvation, and if he aims for constant motion forward from the very beginning of his journey to the realm of salvation, this is because Dante programmatically links his poetry to hope in the Resurrection: “Dice Isaia che ciascuna vestita / ne la tua terra fia di doppia vesta: / e la sua terra è questa dolce vita” (Isaiah says that each in his own land / shall be vested in a double garment, / and their own land is this sweet life [*Par.* XXV.91-93]).⁷² This passage also manifests how Dante the poet chooses to communicate the divine message of salvation through divine action that continuously operates towards the previous revelations. Moreover, hope lays the groundwork for a narrative in which these revelations become structurally important to the pilgrim. In other words, Dante’s virtue of hope thus reappears as the driving force of Dante’s journey while reabsorbing salvation back from the previously stated forgetfulness (*Par.* XXXIII.94-95).

IV.3. The Regeneration of Dante’s Final Image

IV.3.1. Towards the Greater Vision

⁷⁰ Saint Augustine, *Sermons III/4 (94A-147A)*, 141.39.45.

⁷¹ To underscore the biblical perspective in which hope becomes an important virtue for Dante’s expectations, see Saint Paul, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans*, 8:24-25; Saint Paul, *The Letter of Paul to the Hebrews*, 6:19; lastly Saint Paul, “The Letter of Paul to the I Corinthians,” in *The Harper Collins Study Bible*, ed. by Harold W. Attridge (New York: HarperOne, 1989), 13:13.

⁷² We are already told at the beginning of the *Purgatorio* that Dante’s poetry aspires to speak truthfully of the realm of salvation (*Purg.* I.7). This tie between poetry and the Resurrection, sustained by the virtue of hope, corresponds to a biblical assertion from the Psalm: “And those who know your name shall put their trust in you (*sperant in te*)” [*Psalms*, 9:10]. The protagonist credits David (before the Apostle James) with being the first to instill hope in his heart and for having systematically prophesied the Incarnation of Christ in his *Psalms*.

By reopening the phase of the salvation from an unprecedented cause (the unprecedented vision that led his memory fail) that led the pilgrim's greatest insight objective (salvation) into a "maggior letargo" (forgetfulness [*Par.* XXXIII.94]), the persuasively cogent function of reshaping Dante's course of salvation begins even prior to the failed "alta fantasia" (high fantasy [*Par.* XXXIII.142]). The poem does not exactly end with the failure of the high fantasy, and there are still conclusive verses that nurture the mystical end to the journey.⁷³ In these last verses of *Paradiso*, the imperative concept and objective of salvation figuratively materializes through the greater vision that the pilgrim will need to embrace once he reaches the Empyrean. While the outcome of Dante's final vision occurs at the end of his journey where Dante the poet polishes the final vision in the final canto of *Paradiso*, Dante the poet underscores remnants of this final vision of God even prior to this.⁷⁴

In the sphere of the sun in *Paradiso* XIV, Solomon is explaining the varying degrees of brightness in the garment of light that surrounds the souls of the blessed: "La sua chiarezza séguita l'ardore; / l'ardor la visione, e quella è tanta, / quant'ha di grazia sovra suo valore" (Its brightness takes its measure from our ardor, / our ardor from our vision, which is measured / by what grace each receives beyond his merit [*Par.* XIV.40-42]). The meaning of this short passage is that the greater the vision, the greater the love, and the greater the love, the greater the brightness. This is a concept that Dante borrows from Bonaventure, who says the same in reverse order: "Tantum gaudebunt, quantum amabunt; tantum amabunt, quantum cognoscent" (They

⁷³ This last aspect aligns with Mazzotta's conception of renewing Dante's course of salvation until the last verses, where Dante will describe the outcome of his final vision in the Empyrean. Giuseppe Mazzotta, *Allegory: Poetics of the Desert*, 262-274.

⁷⁴ There is a textual distinction to be made between salvation and final image. On the one hand, Dante's salvation corresponds to a final objective, which is intrinsic to the *Comedy* as a poem and to the journey. On the other hand, the final image materializes Dante's final salvation because the pilgrim is able to envision his final objective, namely salvation, through this final image. This image of God in the Empyrean symbolizes the ultimate step that the pilgrim needs to take in order to reach the end of his enterprise towards redemption. The last section of this chapter resonates with an analysis of this final image that Dante has cultivated throughout *Paradiso*, which becomes greater through an analysis of elements like desire and will.

shall rejoice in proportion as they shall love; they shall love in proportion as they shall know).⁷⁵ The brightness of the garment of light shall be proportionate to the fervency of love in each soul, the love shall be proportionate to the distinctness of its vision of God, and that vision is a gift of Grace. The point that Dante wishes to make in the passage from *Par. XIV* is that the point of doctrine reflected in the sequential order of brightness and fervency of love is that both lead to the predestined final vision of God.

This final vision that the pilgrim is about to engage and, as I argue, has been powered prior to the last canto of *Paradiso*, represents in the last canto of *Paradiso* a greater vision that is conveyed in Dante's final image. Within the final canto, the new sight succeeds the image of the "luce eterna" (Eternal Light [*Par. XXXIII.124*]) of God, through which Dante's vision was entirely absorbed in it. Once his "alta fantasia" (high fantasy [*Par. XXXIII.142*]) fails him, Dante unveils what he has asked for. Dante undertakes a greater vision for his final plan to end his enterprise as a poet and as a character on this otherworldly journey. In these next few verses of *Paradiso*, Dante the poet announces to reproducing something else to complete his journey:

Qual è 'l geomètra che tutto s'affige
 per misurar lo cerchio, e non ritrova,
 pensando, quel principio ond'elli indige,
 tal era io a quella vista nova:
 veder voleva come si convenne
 l' imago al cerchio e come vi s'indova;
 (*Par. XXXIII.133-138*)

[As the geometer intently seeks
 to square the circle, but he cannot reach
 through thought on thought, the principle he needs,
 so I searched that strange sight: I wished to see
 the way in which our human effigy
 suited the circle and found place in it.]

In his commentary to Dante's *Paradiso*, Singleton claims that no poet other than Dante was ever more daring in his final simile in so long a poem, daring to bring the notion and image of the

⁷⁵ Saint Bonaventure, "Soliloquium," in *Doctoris Seraphici S. Bonaventurae opera omnia*, trans. Charles Singleton (x voluminal; Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1882-1902), IV.v.27.

geometer who studies the circle in an attempt to square it to this very end.⁷⁶ This simile suggests a peaceful and clear study of the greatest mystery of the Christian faith, namely the Incarnation. At the same time, the amazement of this suggestion arises from the geometrical abstractness of the final vision, or more precisely from the geometrical nature of the vision of God that ends such a long journey. With this passage representing the end of Dante's journey, Dante the poet ironically adopts the term "vista nova" (strange sight [*Par.* XXXIII.136]), which nearly helps Dante (after his memory fails him) to anticipate the upcoming and unprecedented sight.

In the face of such a "vista nova" (strange sight [*Par.* XXX.136]), Dante's sight is so strengthened that he can now behold that new sight, which is nothing less than God. The spiritual power of vision Dante had received at birth reaches its limit as the pilgrim actively joins his gaze with the "valore infinito" (Infinite Goodness [*Par.* XXXIII.81]). This is a type of goodness that with the language in *Paradiso* represents the supreme aim, hope, and promise implicit in the pilgrim's ascent. This promise is precisely to restore the unity and identity of knowing what will happen in the final vision or image, even if only for one momentary flash. According to Lino Pertile, Dante dramatizes this process of final vision, making the progressive acquisition of knowledge integral to the pilgrim's quest for fulfillment.⁷⁷

Additionally, this final sight or "vista nova" (strange sight [*Par.* XXXIII.136]) or vision needs to be conceived and realized as an enlivening, underpinning progression that is both spiritual and psychological. It is a vision that consequently affects the pilgrim's mind as much as his heart and *expectatio* to conclude his journey by reaching redemption. Thus, the "vista nova" (strange sight [*Par.* XXXIII.136]) becomes representative of an active exercise that will need to be satisfied finally through the pilgrim's joy of knowledge and fulfillment. Most importantly,

⁷⁶ Charles Singleton, *Paradiso 2: Commentary*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 581.

⁷⁷ Lino Pertile, "A Desire of Paradise and a Paradise," in *Dante: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Amilcare A. Iannucci, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 159.

Dante will feel fulfilled by an increase in his ability to withstand and engage with that sight that has been anchored to the beginning of *Paradiso*.

While Dante's memory has already failed, a new vision gets reproduced through the remnants of previous images of vision (*Par.* XI & XIV). This "vista nova" (strange sight [*Par.* XXXIII.136]) is indeed a new vision that gets reenacted with a threefold implication: through the image remaking (*Par.* VII.64-66), through a reactive mood to the pilgrim's failing memory (*Par.* XIV.49-51), and through the final bolt of lightning (*Par.* XXXIII.140-142). To begin with the image remaking, we should keep in mind that the "vista nova" (strange sight [*Par.* XXXIII.136]) represents one aspect in which Dante's "alta fantasia" (high fantasy [*Par.* XXXIII.142]) fails. This new sight is so delightfully extraordinary that Dante's high fantasy loses its power. At the same time, the pilgrim's mind continues to become more versed in the higher realities of *Paradiso*. Dante the pilgrim moves onwards towards the end of his journey by embracing higher matters and higher experiences and by simultaneously shifting his focus entirely towards universal and abstract ideas.

Since the poet engages with this symbolic shift at the last stages of *Paradiso*, Dante needs to shift the level of his artistry's creation to a higher degree of interpretation. Because he needs to contemplate this shift with full artistry, Dante the poet needs *cogitatio* (thought process).⁷⁸ If *cogitatio* (thought process) corresponds to a thought process whereby images are recomposed, this "vista nova" (strange sight [*Par.* XXXIII.136]) cannot be the result of a receptive faculty because this new sight conforms to Dante's course of salvation. Dante's new sight is the representation of the pilgrim who rises to an ultimate intellectual vision of God that transcends

⁷⁸ To reconsider the notion of artificiality as a form of creativity in the face of memory, see pp. 163-165 from Chapter Two.

images.⁷⁹ Thus, even if his “alta fantasia” (high fantasy [*Par.* XXXIII.142]) or image-making faculty fails Dante, the final image is reinstated into the present state of being. This process occurs through the faculty of *cogitatio* (thought process) which has been considered among the classics as an operation specific to human memory. However, *cogitatio* (thought process) allows the pilgrim to regenerate the final image because *cogitatio* (thought process) resonates with a composition process. Additionally, this same faculty is embodied within this art form of the heavenly *ars memorativa*, which only operates along with higher realities (i.e., the newness of the sound and the bright light from *Par.* I.82). This art form of memory symbolizes consequently a higher account of memory in the face of the greater vision, making the heavenly *ars memorativa* fully participatory in Dante’s artistry and his creation of the *Commedia*.

The second way to showcase how Dante is still reproducing a new vision at the end of the journey and with the remnants of previous images of vision (*Par.* XI & XIV) is through the idea of reactive mood. Dante still needs the scent of memory to reproduce something new right before the end of the journey that was already instilled prior to the failure of his memory. This also means that a form of disposition is powering the pilgrim’s purpose to move onwards while regenerating a new and final image. This activity of reenacting relates to the art of memory because the poet engages his pilgrim with the idea of reaction. For instance, in *Paradiso* XIV, only after Dante the pilgrim engages with the ardor of vision to which he has to offer the greatest measure to embrace, Dante the poet integrates the notion of beatitude as a form of increasingly reactive force in the face of this vision: “onde la vision crescer convene, / crescer l’ardor che di quella s’accende, / crescer lo raggio che da esso vene” (that light will cause our vision to

⁷⁹ Lino Pertile has also argued about the remaking of Dante’s final image. While Pertile refers to Dante’s transcendental power as the main force behind the reproduction of this final image and the greater vision of God, I argue instead that the art of memory in Dante is the main element behind this regenerative process. Lino Pertile, “Poesia e scienza nell’ultima immagine del Paradiso,” in *Dante e la scienza* (Ravenna: Longo, 1995), 133-148.

increase, / the ardor vision kindles to increase, / the brightness born of ardor to increase [*Par.* XIV.49-51]). These are the central lines of the twenty-four lines of Solomon's speech. God's grace consists of additional light and vision, now intensified by the additional light, and is again the innermost and basic aspect of beatitude.

With the light intensifying in the face of the pilgrim, he subsequently reacts by intensifying his eagerness to move onwards and through these higher realities as stated in *Paradiso* XIV. As this vision becomes greater in *Par.* XXXIII, Dante's reaction to his failing memory consists of a power transfer for the beatitude moving from outer (brightness and radiance) to inner (ardor, vision and grace), which makes the notion of beatitude increasingly engaged with the future vision of God.⁸⁰ What characterizes this beatitude's power transfer from outer to inner is an image which takes a symbolic literary representation that particularly flourishes and characteristically empowers Dante's "vista nova" (strange sight [*Par.* XXX.136]). It is a sparkly penetrating image of lightning which consequently generates a potent light that inspires ardor, grace, and eagerness in the pilgrim out of that brightness and radiance.

This potent light that manifests ardor and grace in the face of the pilgrim features the third way in which Dante refashions a new vision at the end of the journey. With the upcoming passage from the last canto of *Paradiso*, Dante considers the new sight as a form of divine absorption into the greater vision of God: "ma non eran da ciò le proprie penne: / se non che la mia mente fu percossa / da un fulgore in che sua voglia venne" (and my own wings were far too weak for that. / But then my mind was struck by light that flashed / and, with this light, received what it had asked [*Par.* XXXIII.139-141]). The pilgrim's own intellectual and "alta fantasia" (high fantasy [*Par.* XXXIII.142]), even as raised so far, are not sufficient to penetrate this supreme mystery. However, a final flash of illumination touches his mind like lightning, and

⁸⁰ Aristotle, *On the Memory and Recollection*, 291-297.

something else happens in this short verse. This literary metaphor of lightning serves the purpose of producing this process of final vision, making the progressive acquisition of knowledge integral to the pilgrim's quest for fulfillment.

By taking a closer look at the notion of "fulgore" (light [*Par.* XXXIII.141]) it seems rather clear that the wayfarer's "penne" (wings [*Par.* XXXIII.139]) are not by themselves powerful enough to uplift him to the vision of the deepest mystery. Furthermore, divine grace is now present and intervenes to raise the pilgrim's sight and comprehension to that transcendental point. For instance, Dante's mind is uplifted by a flash, which is represented by a lightning bolt from above. Divine grace has an impact on the pilgrim's last stages of his journey once he realizes that the desired vision and comprehension are given to him through the highest grace. This last aspect represents a symbolically literary representation of Dante's final vision. However, Dante adopts the metaphor of lightning, which tends to shake, to agitate, and yet allows the pilgrim to contemplate the final stages of the course to salvation. This "fulgore" (light [*Par.* XXXIII.141]) symbolizes the man's mind rapt by God in the contemplation of divine truth, and that "vista nova" (strange sight [*Par.* XXXIII.142]), the circular light that strikes his mind, is divine truth.

Consequently, this literary metaphor of lightning serves the purpose of revolving Dante's mind around God. It is a clear reference to the Pauline raptus, which is a function of the intellect.⁸¹ The result of this lightning could also be considered as the Franciscan representation of Dante falling in ecstasy through imaginary pictures because he just glanced at the light of

⁸¹ There are two arguments among scholars of Dante in reference to this final vision. One set of scholars argues that Dante's final vision corresponds to a Pauline raptus (with which I concur), and there is another group of scholars who instead argues that this vision of Dante relates to a Franciscan ectasis, which is a function of the affective capacity. I agree that the final vision of Dante resembles that of Saint Paul because it refers to a transcendental motion moving forward rather than merely being affected by the loss of senses and high fantasy.

divine truth, possibly God.⁸² However, the lightning's purpose of this shaking "fulgore" (light [*Par.* XXXIII.141]) also puts into motion Dante's transcendental course towards salvation. Even if the pilgrim cannot reach God, he can still contemplate the divine truth, and the previously examined new sight symbolizes the beginning section of this divine truth (which I consider Dante's salvation and redemption). If the lightning bolt strikes Dante's mind, it also awakens him again after his memory and speech failed, so he can better contemplate the essence and intelligibility of the divine truth. This lightning bolt allows Dante to contemplate divine truth through its intelligible effects (*Acts* 10:10-16) and in its essence (*Psalms* 115:11).⁸³

While the "fulgore" (light [*Par.* XXXIII.141]) can be considered a literary *topos*, the nature of the lightning reverberates with motion, which signals an upcoming event. In Dante's case, the bolt of lightning signals a transcendental and visually final motion towards salvation, which begins with the notion of "vista nova" (strange sight [*Par.* XXXIII.142]). Dante the poet has already activated this new sight by the time Dante the pilgrim enters the final configuration of the eternal beauty of the Empyrean. For instance, in *Paradiso* XXX, Dante's eyes begin to be tainted by the blissful lights of the angels (vv. 28-33). Meanwhile, a series of symbolic metamorphoses emerge because of other factors like the preliminarily studied notion of *trasumanar* (passing beyond the human) from *Par.* I.70-72. Dante is located on the edge of the Empyrean and is surrounded by a powerful light, which appears like a bolt of lightning by which Dante feels blinded: "Sempre l'amore che queta questo cielo / accoglie in sé con sì fatta salute, / per far disposto a sua fiamma il candelo" (The love that calms this heaven always / welcomes into Itself with such a salutation, / to make the candle ready for its flame [*Par.* XXX.52-54]). Beatrice explains that the strikingly blinding brightness of the Empyrean welcomes all

⁸² To examine further this difference between Pauline and Franciscan idea of final vision of God, see also Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 175, a. 3.

⁸³ The Pauline influence of the final vision appears also in *Revelations*, 4:1-11.

newcomers just as Dante is welcomed now, who is prepared to see God face-to-face and to burn with love for Him. This passage also showcases the significance of metaphorical language, which empowers the spiritual aspects of the higher vision to the ultimate vision.

Dante the pilgrim is metaphorically the “candelo” (candle [*Par.* XXX.54]) that must be gradually rendered able to bear the flame—that is, this vision that so exceeds normal human capacity. Thus, he undergoes a transformation and an enabling process from here to the end of his journey. In fact, in this next passage Dante highlights this new vision to a greater extent (which will be confirmed and awakened in the end of *Paradiso* XXXIII), which is incommensurable with the human dimension because it needs to sustain the greater vision of God. However, to engage with this vision, Dante will need to undergo a series of symbolic transmutations, just like he did beforehand through the notion of “trasumanar” (passing beyond the human [*Par.* I.70]), where the pilgrim feels symbolically lighter in the face of entering *Paradiso*. More specifically, the following passage introduces the idea of a new vision, a novel sight:

Non fur più tosto dentro a me venute
 queste parole brevi, ch'io compresi
 me sormontar di sopr'a mia virtute;
 e di novella vista mi raccessi
 tale, che nulla luce è tanto mera,
 che li occhi miei non si fosser difesi;
 (*Par.* XXX.55-60)

[No sooner had these few words entered me
 than I became aware that I was rising
 beyond the power that was mine; and such
 new vision kindled me again, that even
 the purest light would not have been so bright
 as to defeat my eyes, deny my sight.]

The experience Dante begins to have now through this new vision is that of rapture, which all theologians agree is far above natural human power.⁸⁴ Rapture is an experience that will be carried out through the conception of “vista nova” (strange sight [*Par.* XXXIII.136]), which, as already discussed, represents the climax of Dante’s greater vision. Erminia Ardissino suggests that the course of this new vision that culminates at the end of *Paradiso* can also be contemplated in terms of semantic significance by engaging with a series of terms and conceptions that open up a new dimension for the pilgrim.⁸⁵ However, this passage shows some implications from a semantic standpoint because the protagonist is now ready for the final stage of his journey, as portended by the fact that he has internalized Beatrice’s words. Dante the pilgrim is now transformed into a trans-humanized being who is able to see reality that cannot be accessible to the human mind or human eyes, and this vision cannot be engaged or depicted through the human senses.

If Dante the poet says that no sight can support this “vista nova” (strange sight [*Par.* XXXIII.136]) which has been traced back to *Paradiso* I and throughout the textual examples given earlier from *Par.* XIV and XXX, Dante still needs a mnemonic force to reactivate this new vision: “Qual è ‘l geometra che tutto s’affige / per misurar lo cerchio, e non ritrova, / pensando, quel principio ond’elli indige” (Like As the geometer intently seeks / to square the circle, but he cannot reach, / through thought on thought, the principle he needs [*Par.* XXXIII.133-135]). Dante alludes to a metaphor about the squaring of the circle being an insoluble problem. At the same time, it is significantly pivotal to see how the pilgrim strives to grasp the principle of what

⁸⁴ This aspect of rapture that goes above natural human power and senses is a fact declared in the opening verses of the *Paradiso* I.4-9 and in *Epistle* XIII.78-82.

⁸⁵ Erminia Ardissino discusses the notion of Dante’s final image of God where the pilgrim’s vision is subject to a series of symbolic transformations: “L’annichilamento dei sensi, per aprire la mente a una visione di altra natura, è dunque preceduto da una serie di termini che appartengono al campo semantico della vista (parere, vista in vista, parendo, veder, occhi, vedere, in *Par.* XXX.1-15) e sottolineano l’importanza di quello che il pellegrino sta vivendo.” Erminia Ardissino, *Ciascuna cosa qual ell’è diventa. L’essere in divenire*, 33.

he sees because he cannot do that through his own sight. These verses are the precise ones that precede the “vista nova” (strange sight [*Par.* XXXIII.136]). Thus, the only way to decipher one faculty that engages and embraces this vision for the pilgrim is the art of memory with its own act of potency.⁸⁶ If Dante’s memory, speech, and “alta fantasia” (high fantasy [*Par.* XXXIII.142]) have already vanished, and the literary metaphor of the “fulgore” (light [*Par.* XXXIII.141]) provokes a transcendental motion in Dante’s mind, a spiritual faculty allows the pilgrim to reenact to the present state that has just emerged with the bolt of lightning, namely Dante’s intention to resonate with the greater vision of God.

IV.3.2. Desiring the Extraordinary

In the last verses of *Paradiso*, Dante the poet juxtaposes the idea of Christian desire as one of the two enabling forces (*velle* or free will being the second) that empowers (through the active agency of the art of memory in Dante) the pilgrim’s salvation and the final image. The idea of Christian desire reverberates with the aspiration to fulfill the goal of understanding the vision of God. It is a Christian desire to envision God because only Christians and baptized ones

⁸⁶ The metaphysical idea of an “act of potency” originates from Thomas Aquinas, *In duodecim libros metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio*; and has been interpreted by John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being*, 156-166. The act of potency, which has been fully examined in pp. 139-142 from Chapter Two, reflects a form of action of the self, such as that of the angels whose existence relates to their own operation. It also resonates with a self-sustaining principle, whose nature and stigma originate from their own action. In metaphysical terms, the act of these intelligences is an act of potency that shows that while the intelligences (angels) are continuously in motion, they are also immaterial because they are not attached to any earthly senses or features. These intelligences (angels) are always linked to their sole act because their activity characterizes their uniqueness. This is what makes intelligences self-sufficient beings, just like non-finite beings. Both intelligences and the non-finite are represented by Dante as an act of potency that symbolizes the state of being to a maximum degree. The pilgrim begins to adopt this maximum degree because he too will continue to absorb the supreme principles of the non-finite, which will be free from matter. This act of potency from these beings in motion ultimately characterizes the divine domain of Dante the poet’s imaginative power, and despite considering Aristotle’s metaphysical concepts, Dante the poet still emerges with his idea of intelligences through his efforts.

can reach the final objective of salvation.⁸⁷ This same aspect echoes Virgil's narrative about the impossibility to deliver that same Christian desire because these pagans lack baptism, and they are consequently deprived of desiring the eternal vision of God:

Or vo' che sappi, innanzi che più andi,
 ch'ei non peccaro; e s'elli hanno mercedi,
 non basta, perché non ebbero battesimo,
 ch'è porta de la fede che tu credi;
 e s'è furon dinanzi al cristianesimo,
 non adorar debitamente a Dio:
 e di questi cotai son io medesimo.
 Per tai difetti, non per altro rio,
 semo perduti, e sol di tanto offesi
 che senza speme vivemo in disio."
 (*Inf.* IV.33-42)

[I'd have you know, before you go ahead,
 they did not sin; and yet, though they have merits,
 that's not enough, because they lacked baptism,
 the portal of the faith that you embrace.
 And if they lived before Christianity,
 they did not worship God in fitting ways;
 and of such spirits I myself am one.
 For these defects, and for no other evil,
 we now are lost and punished just with this;
 we have no hope and yet we live in longing.]

Due to these significantly missing aspects of Christianity (baptism and faith), these pagans, including Virgil, are somehow lost souls. This Christian desire that Virgil and Dante simultaneously allude to also shines in *Paradiso* XXIV with the beatitude of the future glory. It is a type of glory that cannot be earned because is the result of a free gift by God predicated on faith and hope in Christ: "Spene, diss'io, è uno attender certo / de la gloria futura, il qual produce / grazia divina e precedente merto" (I said: 'Hope is the certain expectation / of future glory; it is the result / of God's grace and of merit we have earned [*Par.* XXV.67-69]). The juxtaposition of these paradisial verses with the previously examined verses from Limbo showcases how the

⁸⁷ On the idea of desire as a goal for the sight of God, see I *Cor.* 13:12-13. This same notion gets depicted as a biblical notion of face to face as it has been stated about the souls in Heaven. Dante clearly states this in the *Epistle to Cangrande*: "Their true blessedness consists in the apprehension of Him who is the beginning of truth, appears from what John says: 'this is eternal life, to know you are the true God' [*John* 17:3] and from what Boethius says in his third book *On Consolation*: 'To behold you is the end'" [*Epist.* 13.89]).

future glory represents the final “merto” (merit [*Par.* XXV/69]) that only Christians can achieve. This achievement occurs by engaging with the ardor of vision to which Dante the pilgrim has to offer the greatest measure to embrace. Dante the poet outlines the course of this ardor of vision that needs to be embraced in *Paradiso* XIV: “onde la vision crescer convene, / crescer l’ardor che di quella s’accende, / crescer lo raggio che da esso vene” (that light will cause our vision to increase, / the ardor vision kindles to increase, / the brightness born of ardor to increase [*Par.* XIV.49-51]). The beatitude in this last canto is now intensified by God’s grace. This process of intensification implies additional light and vision, which in turn represents the innermost and most basic aspect of beatitude. By reenacting the previously suggested power transfer for the beatitude moving from outer (brightness and radiance) to inner (ardor, vision and grace), the notion of Christian desire makes the pilgrim increasingly engaged with the upcoming vision of God.

On the one hand, the beatitude represents an underlying characteristic that draws the pilgrim’s attention to the greater vision. On the other hand, Dante’s Christian desire is fundamentally intrinsic to Dante’s journey to salvation and consequently empowers the latter. Furthermore, Dante the poet continues to adopt literary metaphors that serve the purpose of strengthening the idea of “disio” (desire [*Par.* XXXIII.143]) as a motion upward towards the “gloria futura” (future glory [*Par.* XXV.68]), which also translates into a longing that needs to be unpacked. For instance, when Virgil digresses from the Exemplars of Wrath and the Angel of Mercy from *Purgatorio* XVII and begins his discourse on love, there is a section where Virgil closely argues about the mind in love. From this same juxtaposition of the mind in love, Virgil says that the mind is created to love, and it performs its loving if it is pleased. Dante the poet

describes the notion of desire as a love in action in *Purgatorio* XVIII, which continues by extending toward its goal and remaining in this state as long as it is inclined in its desires:

Poi, come 'l foco movesi in altura
 per la sua forma ch'è nata a salire
 là dove più in sua matera dura,
 così l'animo preso entra in disire,
 ch'è moto spiritale, e mai non posa
 fin che la cosa amata il fa gioire.
 (*Purg.* XVIII.28-33)

[Then, just as flames ascend because the form
 of fire was fashioned to fly upward, toward
 the stuff of its own sphere, where it lasts longest,
 so does the soul, when seized, move into longing
 a motion of the spirit, never resting
 till the beloved thing has made it joyous.]

Although it is a movement of the mind, the movement is not toward everything that pleases or the tangible aspect of an image, but rather its essence. This last aspect takes us back to the nexus of creator and creation, where the notion of God as the creator of artifice entails the notion of *non-esse* as a form of being.⁸⁸ This idea of desire represents a fundamental procedure that may signify the very act of essence, meaning that the act of operation of the being's actual existence arises solely within its own essence.⁸⁹ Desire is an ethereal representation which belongs to the divine self-operation of the act of potency. If Dante reveals that "loro essere è loro operazione" (their being consists of their activity [*Conv.* II.iv.3]), it is constantly in movement because the pilgrim's mind in love empowers this same "disio" (desire [*Par.* XXXIII.143]). By moving upward, Dante is moving towards the essence, which represents the quiddity of his own redemption. The desire that alludes to the movement of his mind in love becomes a substantial component that allows the pilgrim to contemplate fully redemption as a divine, ethereal representation.

⁸⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri De sensu et sensatio*, d. 19, q. 5, a. I. See also note #37 on p. 132 from Chapter Two.

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*.

The movement of the soul towards love symbolizes a form of inclination towards one who is loved (Beatrice in the case of Dante). The idea of a mind in love moving upward appears already in the central cantos of *Purgatorio*. Dante generates a symbolically mental image by adopting the metaphor of the fire because it moves upward with its flames: “Poi, come ‘l foco movesi in altura / per la sua forma ch’è nata a salire,” (Then, just as flames ascend because the form / of fire was fashioned to move upward [*Purg.* XVIII.28-29]).⁹⁰ The metaphorical use of fire in virtue is based on its form and tendency to move up. This is similar to the pilgrim’s soul’s desire to be united with Beatrice in the Empyrean and seek his final redemption. Furthermore, there is also a distinction to be made here, where the “foco” (fire [*Purg.* XVIII.28]) represents the material motion of which material things are burned and brought upwards. However, Dante’s Christian desire is a representation of the essence of redemption, which belongs to the spiritual world.⁹¹ In addition to that, the same movement that the “foco” (fire [*Purg.* XVIII.28]) brings is what translates into Christian desire, namely that God created this specific desire to return to Him. If on the one hand this movement is revealed by Dante in the *Convivio*,⁹² on the other hand, it seems also to resonate in *Paradiso* I. Beatrice mentions that there are creatures who are predestined towards the nature of the Good: “né pur le creature che son fore / d’intelligenza quest’arco saetta, / ma quelle c’hanno intelletto e amore” (Not only does the shaft shot from this bow / strike creatures lacking intellect, but those / who have intelligence, and who can love [*Par.*

⁹⁰ Cfr. Guido Guinizzelli, “Al cor gentil rempaira sempre amore,” in *La letteratura italiana delle origini*, ed. by Gianfranco Contini (Florence: Sansone, 2003), 152-155. In this canzone, Guinizzelli expresses his manifestation of poetic tendency, which will be later registered in Florence as the “Dolce stil novo” (Sweet New Style). There are also verses that resonate with the notion of fire whose tendency is to follow the virtue of love and move upward: “Amor per tal ragion sta ‘n cor gentile / per qual lo foco in cima del doplero: / splendeli al su’ diletto, clar, sottile;”

⁹¹ In reference to this distinction between fire and human soul, which is a medieval doctrine and a philosophical tradition, see *Conv.* III.iii.2.

⁹² In the third book of the *Convivio*, Dante states how significantly important it is that love be united with the proper soul towards the same objective: “Amore, veramente pigliando e sottilmente considerando, non è altro che unimento spirituale de l’anima e de la cosa amata; nel quale unimento di propria sua natura l’anima corre tosto e tardi, secondo che è libera o impedita.” *Conv.* III.ii.3. See also *Conv.* III.xii.2-4.

I. 118-120]). This last passage showcases how the mind (or intellect in this case) and love represent two sides of the same coin, from which Dante finds the moment to channel the pilgrim's Christian desire towards final redemption. This same passage from *Par. I* also indicates that the movement representing the symbolic desire of Dante the pilgrim only stops once the pilgrim has reached redemption.

When Beatrice explains the hierarchy of the angels to Dante, beginning with the first triad of Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones, she is essentially depicting the correlation between intellect and knowledge. More precisely, the following tercet showcases how knowledge and intellect precede love temporally, which also suggests that in the Christian world, they work together: “Quinci si può veder come si fonda / l'esser beato ne l'atto che vede, / non in quel ch'ama, che poscia seconda” (From this you see that blessedness depends / upon the act of vision, not upon / the act of love – which is a consequence [*Par. XXVIII.109-111*]). This tercet restates the importance of the principle of the primacy of the intellect, from which Dante refers to intellectual knowledge sustaining the desire of the pilgrim.⁹³ However, the disquisitions that Beatrice often proposes to Dante the pilgrim, they are meant to replenish Dante's desire of embracing the ultimate bliss from *Paradiso*.⁹⁴

While these same disquisitions from Beatrice rekindle Dante's desire towards the beatitude, they also represent a form of progressive adaptation to the upcoming elevation. It is a motion upwards to reach the quiddity of Dante's redemption (i.e., like the comparison with the fire from *Purg. XVIII.28-33*) that is essential if the pilgrim is to become capable of sustaining the ultimate vision of Truth. Once the pilgrim reaches the end of *Paradiso*, he also reaches the

⁹³ Lino Pertile, *A desire of Paradise and a Paradise of Desire*, 158-159.

⁹⁴ The conception of intellectual knowledge refers to the constant longing humans must know by advancing their practical intellect in the face of otherworldly experiences. On the idea of intellectual knowledge, see also: Erminia Ardissino, “Il cammino ‘al fine di tutt'i disii,’” in *L'umana Commedia di Dante* (Ravenna: Longo, 2016), 54-56.

point where vision disappears and desire emerges, that is the circle where intellect alone will not suffice for understanding (i.e., *Par.* XXXIII.133-141).⁹⁵ On the one hand, the need to know (intellectual knowledge) is a manifestation and expression of a Christian desire for God that can only be fully spoken and fulfilled beyond humanity. On the other hand, the exhilaration brought by time and by knowledge is an adumbration of the perfect joy that will finally come with the full revelation of the Godhead.

If Dante the poet traces this same Christian desire from the beginning of the pilgrim's journey, this desire operates on a regenerative motion. Just like the above-examined regeneration of Dante's awareness, this desire gets reenacted through a regeneratively recollective activity (art of memory). For instance, the first occurrence of Christian desire occurs with Beatrice in the second canto of *Inferno*, where she speaks to Virgil and adopts the paraphrased term of desire that anticipates what will follow in *Paradiso*: "vegno del loco ove tornar disio" (I come from where I most long to return [*Inf.* II.71]). Beatrice descends from heaven to sustain Dante the pilgrim, who is temporarily caught on the deserted sand. While Dante speaks to Beatrice in another moment in *Purgatorio* III, Dante knows the place from which Beatrice arrived, which is for Dante the place of full desire (i.e., *Purg.* III.40-42). In doing so, Beatrice is temporarily detaching Dante from the infernal place and letting the pilgrim enjoy a moment of the upcoming blissfulness of *Paradiso* through her voice. This repeats itself in *Purgatorio*, in which desire is offered and recommended to Dante the pilgrim as a form of love. This love is recommended to the pilgrim in order to reach the "spera suprema" (highest sphere [*Purg.* XV.53]), whereby according to Beatrice, this regenerated desire from *Inferno* will assist Dante in superseding the upcoming purgatorial obstacles: "ma qui convien ch'om voli; / dico con l'ale snelle e con le

⁹⁵ Another scholar who adopted a similar view to mine on the idea of intellect being supported by the desire for redemption is Edward Hagman, "Dante's Vision of God: The End of the Itinerarium Mentis," in *Dante Studies* no. 106 (1988), 1-20.

piume / del gran disio” (but here I had to fly / I mean with rapid wings / and pinions of immense desire [*Purg.* IV.27-29]). Dante is ascending in *Purgatorio*, where he states that the steepness of the path upwards is compared to that of the mountains in Italy. To enhance his intention about this steep path, Dante the poet also instills a metaphorical version of his desire in order to spur his concentration while climbing upwards.

In *Paradiso* XXII, Dante the poet defines the enduring path the pilgrim will need to engage with in order to reach the Empyrean: “Ond’elli: ‘Frate, il tuo alto disio / s’adempierà in su l’ultima sfera, / ove s’adempion tutti li altri e ‘l mio” (And he: ‘Brother, your high desire will be / fulfilled within the final sphere, as all / the other souls’ and my own longing will [*Par.* XXII.61-63]).⁹⁶ This passage along with those previously referenced (*Inf.* II.71 & *Purg.* IV.27-29) are examples that define the enduring path that Dante’s desire takes. Additionally, they are also of paramount importance to the pilgrim for reinstating fundamental desire as a form of anecdote that keeps his hope for redemption alive. The idea of Christian desire consists of a constant regeneration of Christian values from *Inferno* to *Paradiso* because desire, just like beatitude, is intrinsic to the journey. If Dante’s Christian desire symbolizes an underlying form that will be often reintroduced to the pilgrim or a mechanism like Ardissino proposes, then the notion of Dante’s desire will be constantly regenerated until redemption is reached.⁹⁷ The end of

⁹⁶ This is to also suggest that Dante is aware from the beginning of his journey that Beatrice does not represent an alternative to the desire for God in *Paradiso* because Beatrice is Dante’s desire: “La vista mia, che tanto lei seguio / quanto possibil fu, poi che la perse, / volsesi al segno di maggior disio” (My eyes, which watched her as long as they could, / turned, once she was lost to view, to the goal of their greater desire [*Par.* III.124-126]). Dante switches his eyes from Piccarda, who is withdrawing from the scene, and moves into Beatrice. Dante is entirely mesmerized by her splendor, which simultaneously stops his questioning. Beatrice represents Dante’s “maggior disio” (greater desire), and it has been like this from the beginning of his otherworldly experience.

⁹⁷ Ardissino alludes to a specific section from the central cantos of *Purgatorio*: “Il meccanismo del desiderio e del suo controllo è spiegato in *Purgatorio* XVIII, in uno dei canti centrali di tutto il poema, dedicato come gli altri due ad esso contigui ad aspetti cruciali per la definizione delle caratteristiche dell’essere umano, del suo cammino verso la salvezza.” Cfr. Erminia Ardissino, *Il cammino al fine di tutt’i disii*, 52.

his journey represents for Dante's desire the climax of its greatest intensity.⁹⁸ What Dante the poet narrates about that desire to conclude his enterprise (vision of God) is the desire that constantly yearns to fulfill the pilgrim's longing for redemption.

Since the notion of desire keeps Dante's hope for redemption alive until he reaches the "gloria futura" (future glory [*Par.* XXV.68]), this same desire gets regenerated and reinstated for Dante from Beatrice (*Inf.* II.71), Virgil (*Purg.* IV.27-29), Saint Benedict (*Par.* XXII.61-63) and Saint Bernard (*Par.* XXXIII.46-48). As a result of the regenerative procedure, this same notion of desire becomes the result of an ethereally remarkable reaction from the pilgrim's mnemonic and sensory wreckage to the blissful lights of *Paradiso* (i.e., the failure of Dante's memory from *Par.* XXXIII.55-57). Because the course of salvation has been traced throughout his journey and is his paramount objective (*Par.* X.43-45), Dante is able to find the persevering force of uniting with God through the activity of *expectatio* (expectation) which also represents the motivator for major outcomes,⁹⁹ as well as a form of restoration after downfalls.¹⁰⁰ Unlike Dante's natural memory, Dante's desire does not fail him because it is present until the end of his journey and occurs, as we have already seen, after his memory fails him: "ma già volgeva il mio disio e 'l velle" (but my desire and will were moved already [*Par.* XXXIII.143]).¹⁰¹ Dante's Christian desire does not fail him because this desire has been considered as a form of regenerative motion

⁹⁸ To reconsider the notion of desire from multiple perspectives in Dante's *Paradiso*, see Lino Pertile, "La punta del disio: Storia di una metafora dantesca," in *Lectura Dantis*, (3-28), No. 7 (1990).

⁹⁹ One example would be the result of a free gift by God predicated on faith and hope in Christ from *Par.* XXV.67-69.

¹⁰⁰ The temporal reestablishment with the leading act of *recordatio* transmuting Dante's *expectatio* of accomplishing his enterprise from past to present in *Par.* XXXIII.79-81.

¹⁰¹ It should be clarified that despite I quote "disio e velle" from *Par.* XXXIII.143, this does not necessarily mean that "disio" is dependent upon "velle", because "disio" is innate in the hearth. Even if I adopt the term "interconnectedness of "disio e velle", there is neither a relationship of causality, nor dependence among the two notions. They can work in conjunction, and be interconnected, but they are not dependent clause.

through *expectatio* and regeneratively recollective activity.¹⁰² This same desire resonates with Dante's salvation from the beginning of the journey, which makes the art of memory the main active agency behind this regenerative motion upwards.¹⁰³

IV.3.3. From Future Glory to Dante's Free Will

If God creates Dante's desire to return to Him and to meet the vision of God, Dante the poet is also aware that the pilgrim's salvation needs to be supported by the free will. Dante's free will represents the second of the two enabling forces (*disio* or desire being the first) that empowers (through the active agency of the art of memory in Dante) the pilgrim's salvation and to fulfill the goal of understanding the vision of God. Beatrice explains to the pilgrim what is hidden from those who have not been brought up in the flame of divine love, and she describes man's privileged position in the universe. Likewise, Beatrice's important indication refers to this willingness to do good as a concept that transcends other divine truths through the previously examined "divina bontà" (Godly Goodness [*Par.* VII.64-66]). It represents the form of the highest good existing within the divine man, which allows him to emerge with his will to tailor all characteristics according to the peripheral surroundings of the divine reality of salvation

¹⁰² One difference that should be highlighted is between *expectatio* and desire. While both notions represent a regenerative motion towards the pilgrim's salvation, they are also a little different. *Expectatio* is an act form that is innate to the course and the image of the journey (i.e., *imagines agentes*). *Expectatio* is mainly used in this analysis to restore Dante's previously suggested awareness. Desire represents the active component that constantly reminds Dante to reach out salvation and by reconciling important values such as intellect, love, and mind. On the one hand, *expectatio* represents the motivator for major outcomes and results from human efforts, and it is there to remind Dante to restore himself after paramount downfalls. On the other hand, desire is associated with the intellect pushing onwards towards love, which shows how active the desire is since it only stops once the pilgrim has reached redemption. Desire is more actively prone to reconcile important elements, such as intellectual knowledge, love, and virtues and tie them all through the longing that leads Dante to salvation. *Expectatio* symbolizes a form of expectation that still needs the actively pronounced agency of the longing element of desire, which prompts Dante's journey while motivating him to use his last strength to conclude his journey.

¹⁰³ Cfr. *Conv.* IV.xii.13-16. In reference to the notion of desire as an appeal to return to God, see the following *Rime* from Dante: *E m'incresce di me si duramente*, particularly vv. 43-92; *Amore e 'l cor gentil sono una cosa* in which desire for Dante originates from his powerful love towards Beatrice, which will drive him towards his final objective. See also *Lasso, per forza di molti sospiri*" particularly: *Gentil pensiero che parla di vui*, with attention to v. 11; *Quantunque volte, Lasso!, mi rimembra*, specifically v. 17.

in *Paradiso*.¹⁰⁴ This is to say that supporting this same divine reality of salvation is not only Dante's desire, but also his will.

Dante showcases that the will reflects the entire circular movement of the *Commedia* and that his will rests on love from beginning to end.¹⁰⁵ Dante's notion of "velle" (will [*Par.* XXXIII.143]) represents the spiritual constituent that propels this salvation onwards and needs to be considered as an outcome of this "Godly Goodness" (*Par.* VII.64).¹⁰⁶ This also means that the attainment of the free will is made possible to Dante the pilgrim from above by grace descending and thus matching the desire of the intellect.¹⁰⁷ More specifically, what sustains the pilgrim's perseverance and determination is the free will. It suggests Dante's aspiration to end his enterprise with unprecedented transcendence while making the end present to him who desires it.¹⁰⁸ For instance, Dante the poet showcases how the pilgrim needs to adopt free will to a greater power, upon which through his free will Dante nurtures the heavens and consequently conquers salvation:

Lo cielo i vostri movimenti inizia;
non dico tutti, ma, posto ch'i' 'l dica,
lume v'è dato a bene e a malizia,
e libero voler; che, se fatica
ne le prime battaglie col ciel dura,
poi vince tutto, se ben si notrica.

¹⁰⁴ Cfr. Boethius, *Philosophiae Consolatio*, III, m. ix, 4-6.

¹⁰⁵ The triad of dowries is also important to consider in this specific analysis because this same triad consists of will, desire, and both are fueled by the notion of love. In fact, charity/love, which is of the will, follows on seeing, and joy, which is the fulfillment of intellectual desire to see and of love resulting from the seeing, is that which completes the triad of dowries: "luce intellettuale, piena d'amore; / amore di vero ben, pien di letizia; / letizia che trascende ogni dolcezza" (light of the intellect, light filled with love, / love of true good, love filled with happiness, / a happiness surpassing every sweetness [*Par.* XXX.40-42]).

¹⁰⁶ In reference to the central notion of Love, see *Purg.* XVI.85-90; *Purg.* XVII.106-111; & *Purg.* XVIII.28-33. Earlier in *Purgatorio*, Dante underscores how God gave Love motion, and while Dante clarifies the significance of Love in the face of God, Dante also suggests that the idea of motion and turning to God reconnects with the idea of Love as the celestial mover (i.e., *Purg.* XVI.97-99 & *Purg.* XVIII.22-27).

¹⁰⁷ Cfr. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 3, a. 4, resp.

¹⁰⁸ Aquinas, who suggests that free will moves in harmony with God's cosmos, considered the notion of "velle" in relation to the idea of free will as such much earlier than Dante already. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 3, a. 4. However, there are some Dante scholars who think otherwise. For instance, John Freccero as well as Lino Pertile and Bruno Nardi believe that the object at the end of *Paradiso* can only mean God, at the center of the soul, whereas *velle* signifies the wheel itself. The singular verb denotes the essential unit of the two powers of the soul.

(*Purg.* XVI.73-78)

[The heavens set your appetites in motion
not all your appetites, but even if
that were the case, you have received both light
on good and evil, and free will, which though
it struggles in its first wars with the heavens,
then conquers all, if it has been well nurtured.]

The celestial spheres that form human tendencies incline us to various sumptuous and sensual characterizations. At the same time, no human should be forced to follow his/her desires, since the will directs his/her appetites. The notion of the “divina bontà” (Godly Goodness [*Par.* VII.64]) remains an important asset because it also strengthens the free will while winning over any bad impulses. While this disposition of free will in *Purgatorio* represents how to avoid the human error of abusing that same power, in *Paradiso*, this disposition of free will turns into a more mystical version, and Dante’s free will showcases as a divine mode.

God is the object of the soul’s most fundamental desire, and God is also the true object of intellect and of will determined by intellect. Through this same presence of God, Dante the poet is able to mystically refashion Dante’s “velle” (will [*Par.* XXXIII.143]). The notion of free will in *Paradiso* is mystical because it refers to a Christianized version of Dante’s determination to reach salvation. In his book *The Trinity*, Augustine dedicates an entire chapter to the nature of intellect through the process of the will. As he begins to discuss how the purpose of intellect is to look for itself and find itself, he also questions the origins of certain thoughts and objectives with which the intellect needs to engage.¹⁰⁹ Augustine explains how certain images and objectives and goals (salvation in Dante’s case) are not entirely related to “the sensible world, but instead the spiritual one, which not only requires a more supernatural effort to cherish those elements of

¹⁰⁹ Saint Augustine discusses the notion of will and intellect in juxtaposition with each other: “Let the mind and intellect then recognize itself and not go looking for itself as if it were absent, but rather turn on to itself the interest of its will, and thing about itself.” Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, 373.

intellect and will, but it also turns those elements into a mystical mode.”¹¹⁰ If on the one hand, Augustine showcases the significant determination needed to treasure the will, on the other hand, this motive is necessary for attainment of the will which is made possible from above by grace descending (thus matching the desire of the intellect).¹¹¹

A case in point for considering the notion of free will descended from fallen grace occurs in *Paradiso* V. Unlike *Purgatorio* XVI, where Marco Lombardo points out the dangers of abusing free will, Dante precisely stages how to manage free will properly and nurture it with devotion across *Paradiso*. Unlike *Purg.* XVI, the concept of free will receives its full exposition from Beatrice’s discourse, with a moment marked by heavy seriousness because this concept lies at the very core of any Christian moral assertion:

Lo maggior don che Dio per sua larghezza
fesse creando, e a la sua bontate
più conformato, e quel ch’è più apprezza,
fu de la volontà la libertate;
di che le creature intelligenti,
e tutte e sole, fuore e son dotate.
(*Par.* V.19-24)

[The greatest gift the magnanimity
of God, as He created, gave, the gift
most suited to His goodness, gift that He
most prizes, was the freedom of the will;
those beings that have intellect – all these
and none but these – received and do receive this gift.]

Beatrice speaks to Dante and talks about the greatest gift the pilgrim needs to embrace in the face of God. Beatrice is referring to God’s gift of free will to humankind, which needs to be attuned

¹¹⁰ Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, 374. In this same chapter, Augustine argues that the right way for the mind to think about itself is not for it to go looking for something else outside itself of which it might consist, but to distinguish itself from its images. Another scholar who engaged closely with this same argument is Erminia Ardissino, “Lo maggior don...la libertate’ volontà e libero arbitrio,” in *L’umana commedia di Dante*, (Ravenna: Longo, 2016), 73-89.

¹¹¹ Cfr. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 3, a. 4, resp.

to the goodness of God.¹¹² This shows that Dante's free will needs to be regulated by the above power that God offers to "le creature intelligenti" (those beings that have intellect [*Par.* V.23]), of which Dante is now the character exemplifying that role. In later verses, Dante explains free will to a greater extent and frames it in the Christian world. Besides free will, Dante will also need the audacity to let the Holy Scriptures determine the proper course towards salvation:

Siate, Cristiani, a muovervi più gravi:
 non siate come penna ad ogni vento,
 e non crediate ch'ogn'acqua vi lavi.
 Avete il novo e 'l vecchio Testamento,
 e 'l pastor de la chiesa che vi guida;
 questo vi basti a vostro salvamento.
 (*Par.* V.73-78)

[Christians, proceed with greater gravity;
 do not be like a feather at each wind,
 nor think that all immersions wash you clean.
 You have both Testaments, the Old and New,
 you have the shepherd of the church to guide you;
 you need no more than this for your salvation.]

In the first tercet, Dante clarifies how to steer their free will in the right direction. Christians who take vows without due consideration of their subsequent obligations should be cautious before reaching out for God's help. In the second tercet, Beatrice explains how to steer the free will within the scheme of Christian things. Beatrice clarifies that to save Dante's soul and to adopt free will, which flows from the grace of God, it is sufficient to follow God's commandments, Christ's precepts, and those of His church. Even if the word "salvamento" (salvation [*Par.* V.78]) occurs only here in the poem, this same notion of salvation becomes the enduring component that has been symbolically outlined by the numerous lectures that the pilgrim perceives from Marco Lombardo (*Purg.* XVI), Beatrice (*Par.* V), and Saint Benedict (*Par.* XXII). Thanks to these lectures that motivate the pilgrim into rightly nurturing his free will from

¹¹² Cfr. Dante Alighieri, *Epistle* V.viii.123-125: "Infatti, non sempre siamo noi ad agire, anzi talora siamo strumenti nelle mani di Dio, e le volontà umane, nelle quali è connaturata la libertà, talora agiscono anche immuni da passioni terrene e, soggette alla volontà eterna, spesso senza rendersene conto la servono come ancelle."

a Christian perspective, Dante's free will emerges for one last stretch along the divine and ultimate reality of the Empyrean: "ma già volgeva il mio disio e 'l *velle* / sì come rota ch'igualmente è mossa" (but my desire and will were moved already / like a wheel revolving uniformly [*Par.* XXXIII.143-144]). Furthermore, the notion of "*velle*" (will [*Par.* XXXIII.143]) conforms to the notion of free will, and the latter represents this longstanding component in Dante's *Commedia* and throughout the pilgrim's journey.

In Book X from *The Trinity*, Saint Augustine juxtaposes the will with memory as one force towards the divine truth: "As the will is bidden to know itself, it should not start looking for itself as it had drawn off from itself, but the will should draw off what it has added throughout the journey to the final objective of salvation."¹¹³ In the case of Dante, for instance, it would be the accumulation of "disio e 'l *velle*" (desire and will [*Par.* XXXIII.143]) to reach salvation. Dante's free will represents a form of Christianized determination that is motivated by a certain motion, which matures through the course of the three canticles. From avoiding the abuse of the free will (*Purg.* XVI.127-129) to Dante's proper use of free will to the advantage of reaching redemption for his soul and for humankind (*Par.* V.73-78), this shift represents an advanced version of Dante's free will. It is seemingly particular to this shift of free will from Rome and its church power to Dante's own journey. Dante's will is not attached to sensible things or images, but rather to something inward to the project, to the enterprise, and to the entire *Commedia*. This is a mystical will which is inherent in both the poet and the pilgrim.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, 373. In this same chapter, Augustine argues that the right way for the mind to think about itself is not for it to go looking for something else outside itself that it might consist of, but to distinguish itself from its images.

¹¹⁴ A scholar who also argues about the relevance between "*velle*" (will) and free will is Lino Pertile. He concludes that Dante's free will is needed to conclude the journey because free will resembles the process of how the humankind needs to proceed according to Christian dogma. Lino Pertile, *Poesia e scienza nell'ultima immagine del Paradiso*, 133-148. Boethius suggests that the platonic image of free will can be analyzed through the image of Ezekiel where we are to find a Christianized version of this same will. Peter Dronke, "Boethius, Alanus and Dante," in *Romanische Forschungen*, no. LXXVIII (1966), 119-125.

Since the free will exists from the beginning of the journey, in this last canto of *Paradiso* Dante rediscovers the end of the journey by adopting the notion of “*velle*” (will [*Par.* XXXIII.143]) as a form of “*gloria futura*” (future glory [*Par.* XXV.68]). More specifically, this will symbolizes a form of resurrection and revealed truth through the virtue of hope. Dante the poet writes that hope is the sure and certain hope of the Resurrection, produced by divine grace and preceding merit: “Spene, ’diss’io, ’è uno attender certo / de la gloria futura, il qual produce / grazia divina e precedente merito” (“I said: ‘Hope is the certain expectation / of future glory; it is the result / of God’s grace and of merit we have earned [*Par.* XXV.67-69]).¹¹⁵ The virtue of hope inclines one to yearn for union with God as one’s true destiny and the source of complete fulfillment, while helping Dante to project the forthcoming redemption. The “*gloria futura*” (future glory) from this same passage originates from divine grace and it is synonymous with the salvation that Dante will be attending and expecting to reach at the end of *Paradiso*.¹¹⁶ In fact, the virtue of hope in *Par.* XXV inclines us to seek union with the God we are designed for, but that full union is not yet present until Dante ultimately manifests his “*disio e ’l velle*” (desire and will [*Par.* XXXIII.143]).¹¹⁷ While the abovementioned “*gloria*” (glory [*Par.* XXV.68]) is in the future, it will be eventually absorbed by Dante because it is saved in hope. With the notion of “*velle*” (will [*Par.* XXXIII.143]) in this last canto of *Paradiso*, this glory is no longer a future assumption because through the acts of *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process) materializing the art of memory, the future glory exists in a present state of being.

¹¹⁵ Cfr. Peter Lombard, *The Sentences*, III.xxvi.i.

¹¹⁶ A scholar who has written precisely about the juxtaposition of hope and future glory is Peter Hawkins. One of his main points alludes to Israel’s return to the Promised Land, which also characterizes the way where hope projects Dante’s return in future glory. Peter S. Hawkins, *Self-Authenticating Artifact*, 72-99.

¹¹⁷ The virtue of hope is possible only through divine grace since the nature of that destiny for Dante is beyond our unaided comprehension. Therefore, remaining fixed on it as our ultimate goal requires divine assistance.

IV.3.4. *Disio, Velle, the Heavenly Art of Memory and the Final Vision of Truth*

The renewal of both “disio e ‘l velle” (desire and will [*Par.* XXXIII.143])¹¹⁸ faithfully resembles the biblical features that Dante has closely examined through the letters of Saint Paul: “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, the one who was created according to God.”¹¹⁹ The words from this passage characterize a symbolic reproduction of a new man according to God. Saint Paul continues to engage with a figurative language while highlighting the significance and the recognition of God in the next passage: “Putting off the old man, with his actions, put on the new who is being renewed for the recognition of God according to the image of him who created him.”¹²⁰ From both passages above-mentioned, Saint Paul is not solely highlighting how significant is the renewal from the old to the new man, but he is precisely underlining a correlation between the past (old man) and the present (new man). Dante the poet specifically absorbs the idea of reintegration from this renewal process which allows him to reintegrate a symbolically new man (the pilgrim) to finally conclude with his journey. To manifest how this Pauline renewal is integrated in these verses from *Paradiso* XXXIII, Dante the poet advances by revolving back both “disio e ‘l velle” (desire and will [*Par.* XXXIII.143]): “ma già volgeva il mio disio e ‘l velle / sì come rota ch’igualmente è mossa” (but my desire and will were moved already / like a wheel revolving uniformly [*Par.* XXXIII.143-144]). Just as in the letters written by Saint Paul, the juxtaposition of both desire and will corresponds to the significant reintegration of desire and will to renew the ultimate divine reality of salvation.

Aristotle offers another way for this juxtaposition of both notions of desire and will. In the book of *Metaphysics*, the Greek philosopher states that there is a clear distinction between the

¹¹⁸ For example, the desire consisting of a constant regeneration of values from *Inferno* to *Paradiso* and will maturing through the course of the three canticles in becoming a mystical notion.

¹¹⁹ Saint Paul, *The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians*, 4:23.

¹²⁰ Saint Paul, *The First Letter of Paul to the Colossians*, 3:9.

good and the true: “The good is something exterior to us (*in rebus*), while the true, on the other hand, is always within (*in mente*).”¹²¹ This same assertion entails a twofold implication. On the one hand, the will, whose object is the good and refers also to Godly Goodness (*Par.* VII.64), always disposes toward the exterior realm of things such as objects and matter. By the time the will enfolds those objects and matter in eternal completion, the will faces its challenge through objects and matter.¹²² On the other hand, there is the intellect (desire) that represents the object of desire. This same desire is challenged when it faces the truth at the very center of its being by a connaturality that is a mirror image of what it sees and of what it strives for (salvation in the case of Dante the pilgrim).

When Dante the pilgrim stands in the presence of the many superior figures in the Empyrean, he finds himself somehow both at the center of an action, outside the action, and at the center of a vision within: “sì come rota ch’igualmente è mossa” (like a wheel revolving uniformly [*Par.* XXXIII.144]). This short verse outlines the pilgrim’s reaction in the face of this wheel in motion. Most specifically, the pilgrim seems to uniformly follow the circular inclination towards the heavenly final ascent. This also goes with the objective of redemption that represents the main point of departure. Redemption moves Dante the pilgrim uniformly both from within and without like a wheel whose forward revolution is continuously and precisely proportional to its rotation because of its unchanging motion. This is to say that desire and will are ontologically one because the rotating and revolving wheel symbolizes them perfectly. The circularity

¹²¹ Cfr. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I, 4, 498a, 12. Aristotle takes the discussion between good and true to a greater extent. The Greek philosopher discusses the good in relation to specific objects that are often tangible. Since the true cannot be considered and characterized from the external aspect, the true relates to mind and can also be senseless.

¹²² Freccero examines a similar argument about the good and the true. However, he focuses particularly on the will as the form of good: “The will tends towards what is exterior to the object and is contended when it encircles its object in eternal fruition.” John Freccero, *The Final Image*, 254.

completes the movement of the soul in that it leads to God, and its uniformity of motion perfectly represents the exact proportion that exists between the two spiritual motions of the soul.¹²³

With both desire and will ontologically operating as one force empowering “*si come rota ch’igualmente è mossa*” (like a wheel revolving uniformly [*Par. XXXIII.144*]), the intellect reaches its most penetrating desire and is consequently most flawlessly itself when it coincides with God. Dante’s principle concerning the mind’s desire for God and the final fulfillment of that desire is also expressed in the fourth canto of the *Paradiso*:

Io veggio ben che già mai non si sazia
 nostro intelletto, se ‘l ver non lo illustra
 di fuor dal qual nessun vero si spazia.
 Posasi in esso, come fera in lustra,
 tosto che giunto l’ha; e giugner puollo:
 se non, ciascun disio sarebbe *frustra*.
 (*Par. IV.124-129*)

[I now see well: we cannot satisfy
 our mind unless it is enlightened by
 the truth beyond whose boundary no truth lies.
 Mind, reaching that truth, rests within it as
 a beast within its lair; mind can attain
 that truth – if not, all our desires were vain.]

The deepest satisfaction possible is what originates from early experience of God, which leads to the belief that the ultimate vision of God is the true and reachable goal. More specifically, these are the verses in which the word “disio” (desire [*Par. XXXIII.143*]) explicitly reverberates with intellectual desire, as it does in most of the poem. To understand why the word has this anagogic connotation and why both desire and will are ontologically one, we must turn to the first words of the philosopher in the *Metaphysics*: “*omnes homines natura scire desiderant*” (All men by nature desire to know).¹²⁴ Dante’s desire to reach salvation is supported by the determination of

¹²³ Despite I characterize this ontological aspect for both “disio” and “*velle*,” this does not necessarily mean that one is dependent upon the other. The explanation that I provide in this same paragraph, in fact, demonstrates that both notions of desire and will can operate side by side and for the same objective (salvation). However, their natures are distinct from each other.

¹²⁴ Cfr. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I, 1, 980a, 21.

the will that simultaneously supports Dante's mind reconciling with his first objective for salvation.

To further underscore both desire and will to be ontologically one, Dante in turn quotes Aristotle in the first lines of the *Convivio*: "Si come dice lo Filosofo nel principio de la Prima Filosofia, tutti li uomini naturalmente desiderano di sapere" (As Aristotle states at the commencement of his *Metaphysics*, all men by nature desire to know [*Conv.* I.i.41]). These lines represent Dante's first philosophy and so begin the quest that will take him beyond philosophy while embracing the vision of God. So, the "velle" (will [*Par.* XXXIII.143]) symbolizes the perfect act of fruition that always tends toward intellectual desire, which is contended only when it possesses the truth about salvation at the very center of its being. Through the light of the intellect, an objective (salvation in the case of Dante) is first seen, while through the will the objective is loved and possessed.¹²⁵ Like a penetrating dart, Love pertains to all and unites all by bringing consolation and serenity to the soul. Thus, as the angels spin around God in the circular pathway that is moved by love, the will of the pilgrim joins his intellectual desire and the rest of creation in a path of "gloria futura" (future glory [*Par.* XXV.68]) of redemption.

Like the souls of the blessed who are enlightened and warmed by the radiant happiness from the realm of divinity, so are Dante's "disio e 'l velle" (desire and will [*Par.* XXXIII.143]) that have now been united and revolved by God in the unchanging spherical motion of a flawlessly balanced wheel.¹²⁶ Both "disio e 'l velle" (desire and will [*Par.* XXXIII.143]) revolve by God because they are otherworldly values and ontologically one. Desire and will are reassessed for the pilgrim because they sustain the idea of reconciliation with the promise of redemption. In fact, this juxtaposition of desire and will reverberates the importance of keeping a

¹²⁵ Cfr. Bonaventure, *The Journey of the Mind to God*, 23.

¹²⁶ Cfr. Edward Hagman, *Dante's Vision of God: The End of the Itinerarium Mentis*, 17-18.

promise, where the pilgrim's vow to return to the final desire of salvation is constantly supported by the will to move onwards (*Purg.* XVIII.31-33). Desire and will represent a form of vow for the pilgrim. These are otherworldly aspects that have been absorbed by the pilgrim to enhance his path towards salvation and they cannot be cancelled (*Par.* V.43-48). Dante writes about man making a pact with God and suggests that no man is at liberty to shift the burden at his own pleasure, even if his memory and speech fail him, since the vow is to God, and only God's representative can alter it (*Par.* V.57). Through Beatrice's lecture, the pilgrim has been able to endure the idea of the vow through the absolute will, which at the end of *Paradiso* can finally disclose its result.

If both desire and will are ontologically employed towards the reconciliation with God, and since salvation for Dante has been planted by God (Dante the poet) prior to failing memory, Dante's salvation must represent a transcendently eternal idea.¹²⁷ Ideas like salvation are conceptions known to be beings that have been planted since birth across humankind and, most importantly, they are eternal.¹²⁸ In the case of Dante the pilgrim, salvation is manifested at first as a latent aspect. Salvation becomes symbolically dormant while the pilgrim is engaged with numerous otherworldly experiences, which range from infernal sinners to repentant souls to paradisaical images and visions (including the case of salvation fallen into a state of forgetfulness after Dante's memory fails). Once the pilgrim employs his paradisaical experience with greater effort, the pilgrim begins to feel reconciled with himself by absorbing lectures, by perceiving the

¹²⁷ A scholar that has fully engaged with the eternal ideas in the Christian world (even if he does not discuss Dante and his otherworldly journey and its salvation) is Harald Weinrich, *Letzte: Arte e critica dell'oblio*, trad. Francesca Rigotti (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1997), 37-38: "Sono le idee eterne, che Dio ha piantato nella memoria di tutti gli uomini anche senza che questi lo sappiano e lo vogliano. Esse sono presenti dapprima solo a uno stato latente, ma con sforzi appropriati, possono essere richiamate alla coscienza e mostrare così la strada della fede." See also John Took, "Dante and the Confessions of Augustine," in *Annali d'Italianistica*, (1990), Vol. 8, 360-382.

¹²⁸ Bonaventure, *The Journey of the Mind to God*, 30: "Hence, if God is the name of the being that is first, eternal, most simple, most actual, and most perfect, such a being cannot be thought not to be nor can it be thought to be other than one." See also Saint John, *Apocalypse*, 2:17.

theological virtues, and by engaging with heavenly visions. When all paradisiacal steps have been taken, Dante's spirit is made hierarchical so that it may continue upward in conformity with the heavenly truth and vision of God. The pilgrim contemplates the final stages of his course towards salvation through the "fulgore" (light [*Par.* XXXIII.141]) that symbolizes the mind rapt by God to the contemplation of divine truth.¹²⁹ Additionally, Dante the pilgrim will not only contemplate but simultaneously reconcile with the essence and intelligibility of the divine truth.¹³⁰

The pilgrim's final contemplation of divine truth, which operates behind this reconciliation with the final vision of God, cannot be yet activated unless there is a faculty, an active agency (the art of memory) that allows Dante the poet to reconcile time and eternity, desire and beatitude, motion and quiet. This agency reconciles the philosophical pursuit of the vision of God through knowledge with the contemplative approach of the mystic through love. The art of memory in Dante operates through the reconciliatory process of desire and will because they are inherent factors with respect to the eternal idea of salvation, which symbolizes the main vanguard procedure after Dante's failing natural memory. On the one hand, Dante's memory has failed him and cannot be renewed because it resonates with feeble human faculties and senses that cannot assist the pilgrim in overcoming the unprecedented visions and experiences of *Paradiso*. On the other hand, Dante's desire does not fail him because it is present until the end of his journey and occurs, as we already saw, after memory fails him: "ma già volgeva il mio disio e 'l velle / sì come rota ch'igualmente è mossa" (but my desire and will were moved already / like a wheel revolving uniformly [*Par.* XXXIII.143-144]). Since desire has been considered a form of regenerative motion, it also echoes with the pilgrim's course of salvation

¹²⁹ It is important to keep in mind that even if the pilgrim cannot reach God, he can still contemplate divine truth.

¹³⁰ The Pauline influence of the final vision appears also in *Revelation*, 4:1-11. This means that this lightning bolt allows Dante to contemplate the divine truth through its intelligible effects (*Acts* 10:10-16) and in its essence (*Psalms* 115:11).

from the beginning of the journey, which allows the art of memory to reenact the Christian desire that has been inherent in the entire journey. If this factor is inherent in Dante's salvation, it is also because it is not attached to sensible things or images, but rather to something inward to the project, to the enterprise, and to the entire *Commedia*. Moreover, this mystical will is inherent in both the poet and the pilgrim, and just as the poet invokes the notion of will throughout the poem, the pilgrim invokes lectures about free will to move onwards with his journey.¹³¹

With salvation representing an eternal idea supported by Dante's own desire and will to contemplate divine truth (redemption), the art of memory characterizes the heavenly faculty because is sustained by the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. The art of memory empowers the pilgrim's salvation from the faintly inherent feebleness of natural memory. It is a process that occurs through the act of *recordatio* (recollection) that in this case is a rational activity. Through this same art of memory, Dante the poet seeks to retrieve and reconstitute the ways to recover an objective that has been left dormant due to human activities that have left the pilgrim without natural memory. Hence, we assume that the art of memory represents an art form that operates to empower "disio e 'l velle" (desire and will [*Par.* XXXIII.143]) to redeem Dante's seed of salvation by reconstructing its tracks through the act of *recordatio* (recollection). To reconcile with the same objective that has been inherent in the entire journey entails reconstructing in order to strive towards eternity. This is a merely allegorical conception that requires the pilgrim's otherworldly experience to combine the divine and the human.

The symbolic representation of reaching divine reality resonates with an interior metamorphosis in Dante. This inner transformation is the principle that guides the pilgrim's journey towards ultimate perfection, namely the beatitude of the essence of being: "ma per la

¹³¹ To review other scholarly voices who have argued about the relevance between "velle" (will) and free will, see note #114 on p. 324 of Chapter Four.

vista che s'avvalorava / in me guardando, una sola parvenza, / mutandom'io, a me si travagliava” (but through my sight, which as I gazed grew stronger / that sole appearance, even as I altered, / seemed to be changing [*Par.* XXXIII.112-114]). The vision changes as the pilgrim's power of sight increases, and the transformation of what is seen results from further penetration. This principle of representative transformation is made explicit here for two reasons. First, the protagonist's immeasurably improved powers still have one more phase of visionary capacity to reach. It is one in which Dante the pilgrim will be able to experience the unchanging Trinity with his changed and transformed sight. Second, because this change in sight expresses the relation of God to his creation, this is also an external aspect that prepares the pilgrim for continuing changes in both the second and third stages of symbolic vision towards the divine truth of God.

While this interior metamorphosis in Dante is the principle that allows his journey to reach ultimate perfection, only through the reintegration of desire and will can Dante the pilgrim actualize all the possible innate aspects for the end of his journey. In the last canto of *Paradiso*, after the Virgin Mary accepts Dante's prayer and turns her eyes to God, Dante's ardor anticipates Bernard's signal to look up: “E io ch'al fine di tutt'i disii / appropinquava, si com'io dovea, / l'ardor del desiderio in me finii” (And I, who now was nearing Him who is / the end of all desires, as I ought, / lifted my longing to its ardent limit [*Par.* XXXIII.46-48]). Bernard is urging the wayfarer in precisely this sense, and the importance of the pilgrim's cooperation in the final act is stressed and continues to be stressed. From a semantic standpoint, the verse “l'ardor del desiderio in me finii” (lifted my longing to its ardent limit [*Par.* XXXIII.48]) cannot have its normal signification of bringing an end. The context requires that the meaning be the exact opposite and in reconciliation with the interior metamorphosis that will succeed this, namely that Dante's ardor of desire reaches its highest intensity. In fact, the desire is to attain the highest

possible vision of the Godhead, which implies a maximum effort on the part of the pilgrim who can only succeed if grace from above shines at every step. By following the desire for the vision of God, which is the end of all desires (*Par.* XXXIII.48), Dante the pilgrim considers himself a refashioned character, and the art of memory indicates one everlasting possibility of reconciling with God.¹³² Through the juxtaposition of “disio e ‘l velle” (desire and will [*Par.* XXXIII.143]), the heavenly concept of the art of memory allows the pilgrim to reintegrate the constant transformations needed for the final conjunction with God.

As memory and *alta fantasia* (high fantasy) have not been successful with Dante, desire and will can resound for the last time to declare that only now desire is at last fully realized, equal to being in harmony with God’s love. Both values of desire and will reinforce what the pilgrim has been striving for, namely salvation. In the *Convivio*, Dante reiterates the significant outcome that the pilgrim absorbs as his desire reaches its highest intensity:

che lo sommo desiderio di ciascuna cosa, e prima da la natura dato, è lo ritornare a lo suo principio. E però che Dio è principio de le nostre anime e fattore di quelle simili a sé, essa anima massimamente desidera di tornare a quello (*Conv.* IV.xii.14-15).

[the supreme desire of all things, and the one first given to them by Nature, is to return to the first cause. Now, since God is the cause of our souls and has created them in His image, the soul desire above all else to return to Him.]

If Dante’s desire is motivated by his will to return to the ultimate objective of salvation, once Dante the pilgrim reaches it, he also reaches the “fine di tutt’i disii” (the end of all desires [*Par.* XXXIII.46]). Ultimately, Dante the pilgrim considers himself a transformed figure with respect to the final vision of God. This can occur only by actively exercising his need to know that Dante’s desire to possess will be satisfied. In this case, it is a manifestation and an expression of a desire for God that can only be expressed fully and satisfied beyond humanity. This art of memory will support and empower Dante’s “disio e ‘l velle” (desire and will [*Par.* XXXIII.143])

¹³² Cfr. Erminia Ardissino, *Ciascuna cosa qual ell’è diventa. L’essere in divenire*, 38.

through the ever-increasing knowledge that will bring the bliss of knowledge outside the pilgrim by an intensification of light. The bliss of knowledge will also be brought inside him by an intensification in his ability to withstand and penetrate that light. A light that is indeed the peripheral expression of this internal process, which is an existing allegory of a spiritual mood that with desire grows strong enough to take in Dante's final stages of the journey.¹³³ Therefore, this is an operation that will bring perfect joy that finally comes with the full revelation of the Godhead and the vision of truth.

IV.4. Conclusions

In this revelation of the Godhead, Dante encounters the vision of truth, but not before he abandons the human senses, human faculties (memory and language), high fantasy, speech, and his overwhelming anxiety. If on the one hand these shortcomings allude to the cases of ineffability, on the other hand, Dante the pilgrim submits to a series of symbolic and internal transformations as he enters the realm of *Paradiso* (i.e., the notion of *trasumanar* from *Par.* I and the interior metamorphosis of Dante from *Par.* XXXIII). Yet, it is in this same contemplation of God that consists of the perfect illumination of his mind where Dante has been able to transcend himself and all things. The pilgrim has been able to ascend to the super essential gleam of the incommensurable divine realm of the Empyrean. For if an image or vision of divine truth (salvation) is an expressed resemblance, then when Dante's mind contemplates the image of the invisible God, Dante is so delightfully exalted and so unspeakably united. It is a sense of union

¹³³ Cfr. Lino Pertile, *Poesia e scienza nell'ultima immagine del Paradiso*, 156-159. Pertile claims that the pilgrim finds at last the satisfaction he craved all along (*Par.* XXXIII.140-141). In fact, the joy of knowledge is constantly represented outside the pilgrim by an increase of light and inside him by an increase in his ability to withstand and penetrate that light. See also Erminia Ardissino, *L'alta fantasia. Poesia e visione*, 37-38.

that Dante experiences while discusses the blissfulness of *Paradiso* and the last with Saint Bernard, with the highest reality (with the state of immaterial perceptive experiences and immaterial sense of perception) overcoming the lowest reality (with the domain of humanly perceptible experiences and material past [*Par.* VII.64-66]). It is a sense of union that has allowed Dante to reach perfection because the art of memory functions as a faculty that reenacts and enhances the values that the pilgrim is determined to achieve throughout his journey.

Conclusion

In his *Trattatello in laude di Dante*, Boccaccio states that on the occasion of his disputed visit to Paris, Dante proved himself to be a poet of significantly marvelous ability. More precisely, Boccaccio acknowledges how considerably paramount are Dante's memory and intellect in the course of a disputation held in the famous schools of theology.¹ Dante the poet is said to have discussed fourteen theses on distinctive topics proposed and opposed by numerous speakers with plentiful arguments for and against. Dante not only was able to repeat all the arguments in the order in which they had been presented, but he was also able to resolve all exertions involved while responding to all oppositions.² This story might sound uncertain, and yet it is rather meaningful. Infatuated by Dante's writings of the *Commedia*, Boccaccio records these mnemonic executions of Dante as just the sort of achievement a poet and scholar of Dante's importance could be expected to perform. Moreover, Dante's performance in Paris would be characterized by the assistance of a well-practiced technique and not necessarily because of some extraordinary natural gift. Dante lived during a period in which people were constantly engaging with a culture that prized memory as a habit of fundamental ethical value.

¹ Boccaccio states: "poeta di maravigliosa capacità e di memoria fermissima e di perspicace intelletto." Giovanni Boccaccio, *Trattatello in laude di Dante*, 611.

² *Ibid.*, 611-612.

What Boccaccio proposes in his *Trattatello* is a feat of that memory so cultivated in Dante's culture, which consequently makes Boccaccio's praise for Dante's memory and intellect easily credible in the light of the powerful mnemonic techniques known and practiced in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Given Dante's rhetorical training under the personal influence of Brunetto Latini (where he also read Albertus Magnus and Saint Thomas Aquinas), and the fact that the art of memory in the Middle Ages was conceived in and acquainted with the philosophical and theological literature of his day, it is virtually inconceivable that Dante should have been unfamiliar with the distinction between memory as a natural faculty and memory as a form of art.

This same distinction between memory as a natural faculty and memory as a form of art served the purpose of simplifying this study's analytical process of making the reader more straightforwardly aware of the inadequacy of Dante's memory (Chapter One). By understanding the purpose of highlighting the limitations of biological memory means also to underscore how subsequently these same limitations intensify after the notion of *trasumanar* from *Paradiso* I. The specific example of Dante advancing towards the ultimate realm of the Empyrean resonates with the contiguous nature of this spiritual domain and reverberates with overpowering features like ethereal blissfulness from angels and various saints' figures (Saint Bernard, etc.). The previous analysis of these above-examined aspects should have hopefully assisted the reader's understanding how the course of the natural memory as well as high fantasy (*alta fantasia*) was set with physical and symbolic shortcomings to the pilgrim throughout his otherworldly experience.

With the aftermath of Dante's failing memory at the end of his otherworldly journey in *Paradiso*, this study aimed to identify and examine the regenerative course of memory as an art

form that still operates, regardless of the pilgrim's failing natural memory. Through a metaphysical correlation between finite and non-finite beings and between the states of humanly perceptible experience and the pilgrim's imagination (*Epist.* XIII. v. 15 & *Mon.* III.xvi.3-4), this study showed how the art of memory does not die with the natural faculty of memory. This art form reverberates with a self-subsistent principle and through the understanding of non-sensible concepts (*Conv.* III.i.10). The results of the establishment of the *ars memorativa* (art of memory) in Dante operating in line with his natural memory demonstrate how a shapeless representation of memory can continue to function until the end of the journey (Chapter Two). This art form restores the pilgrim's awareness after the failure of biological memory and reproduces a course of study around the inherently regenerative power that occurs with the art of memory in Dante's final verses from the last canto of *Paradiso*.

Learning about the pilgrim's transition that we read from this study from one place to another means to learn how Dante the poet shifts from the reality of earthly features (lower reality) to divine reality (higher reality), or from corruptible to the incorruptible. It is from this series of shifts that the pilgrim will journey towards *Paradiso* by showcasing his status between the states of humanly perceptible experiences (lower reality) and the state of the pilgrim's imagination (higher reality). These are transitions from one reality to another and they serve the purpose of understanding the pilgrim's mnemonic advancement. It is a mnemonic progression that consists of a gradual development,³ which unlike the lower realities of *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, this advancement allows the pilgrim to absorb the supernatural, higher state of paradisiac forces even if his memory has failed.

³ An example occurs with the beginning of metaphysical memory through ontological truths like the correlation of soul, mind, and memory.

The consequences of analyzing metaphysical memory in the face of spiritual figures from *Paradiso* (Saint Bernard, Saint Bonaventure, Saint Thomas Aquinas, etc.) required this study to investigate the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and love (Chapter Three). Through the examination of these three virtues the reader has been encouraged to learn the art form of memory shifting from a purely metaphysical standpoint (first evolution of the art of memory in Dante) to a largely theological development (second evolution of the art of memory in Dante). The art of memory in Dante is subject to a Christianized metaphysics, and the results allow us to see more clearly and spiritually the ontological bond between the images of Dante's mind and being in the most exalted and spiritual sense of Dante's journey (faith, hope, and charity). It is a process that resonates with the poet's imaginative realm which is a representative vehicle of truth that generates not only the spiritualization of his art of memory, but also divinizes this truth. More specifically, this theologizing process allows Dante to expand his divine knowledge while evolving with the art of memory in Dante—that is, towards a heavenly concept of the *ars memorativa* in Dante. Since this study will consistently invoke the paramount nature of this form of art that can never perish in the face of otherworldly experiences, the outcomes indicate that it is embodied in the heavenly principles of Dante's poetry.

Further examinations of this metaphysically Christian understanding of the *ars memorativa* in Dante showcase the unceasing potency of Dante's heavenly concept of the art of memory, which restores the pilgrim's awareness by means of *expectatio*, the transmuted desire (*disio*), and the will (*velle*). Since the last section of this study aimed to juxtapose the art of memory in Dante with the three previously suggested aspects (*expectatio*, *disio*, and *velle*) which are subsequently tied to the three theological virtues, the results of this same juxtaposition of values represent a vow to conclude Dante's journey. They demonstrated how they mutually

sustain Dante's remaking of his final image of salvation (Chapter Four). Thus, whatever the grotesque figures and monsters have provoked by slowing down the pilgrim's progression on his journey (Chapter One), and whatever the constant cases of ineffability provoke in terms of Dante's psychology of survival (Chapter Two), the art of memory represents the shapeless representation and faculty that brings Dante into reconciliation with his own values. It is from this last reconciliatory function of the art of memory that while one mode of expression shuts down (i.e., natural and failing memory, which belongs to the past), another one surges (which belongs to the future, namely the art of memory), which ultimately corroborates the symbolic transition from natural memory to *ars memorativa*.

Through this theoretical exploratory investigation from which we are able to perceive the symbolic transition from natural memory to *ars memorativa*, we also come to realize that the art of memory in Dante represents a heavenly art form in which Dante's enigmatic God of knowledge and love can ultimately subsist. It is a symbolically spiritual procedure because certain images and objectives and goals (salvation in Dante's case) are not entirely related to the sensible world, but instead to the spiritual one.⁴ Hence, to understand the art of memory in Dante to a greater extent means to juxtapose this art form with the higher realities of the spiritual world of Dante's *Commedia*. By doing so, we are also encouraged to disengage from the static and conventional idea of memory in Dante. This same idea of memory has been attached uniformly to the biological nature of memory (Bolzoni, Corti, Antonelli, Carruthers), and whose outcome in the face of paradisaical forces seems rather inevitable (Freccero and Mazzotta). In other terms, this course from natural memory to art of memory should uphold the reader from considering

⁴ Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, 374. In this same chapter, Augustine argues that the right way for the mind to think about itself is not for it to go looking for something else outside itself of which it might consist, but to distinguish itself from its images. Another scholar who engaged closely with this same argument is Erminia Ardissino, *Lo maggior don...la libertate' volontà e libero arbitrio*, 73-89.

Dante's memory as a destabilizing element that disquiets the pilgrim right before reaching salvation, while espousing instead the overpowering saturation of the art of memory.

Dante ends the *Commedia* with the notions of “disio e ‘l velle” (desire and will [Par. XXXIII.143]) because they symbolize what is inherently present in the pilgrim (despite the failure of his memory) from the beginning canticle of *Inferno*. The heavenly concept of the art of memory allows the pilgrim to reestablish *expectatio*, desire, and free will which consequently renew and empower Dante's determination and conviction towards redemption. The words, the verses, the lyrics, and the rhymes from Dante's *Commedia* will ultimately cease to be, and Dante the pilgrim representatively completes his journey and transcendently achieves the supreme joy of the divine truth of God. Dante has proven that language cannot contribute any further in the face of otherworldly experiences. Dante the poet cannot articulate in words the supernatural achievements of rising for instance to the White Rose in the Empyrean because these examples are characterized through the virtue of faith. Dante's journey is a tantalizing impression of an image and a bliss that is unspoken and unknown, but with a specific focus in *Paradiso*, Dante's journey commensurably resonates with the art of memory that peacefully anchors the Christian poet Dante to the eternal love of divinity.

Glossary of Key Terms

The following glossary of terms and conceptions, which are listed in alphabetical order, they represent a particular domain of knowledge with the definitions for those terms. This glossary includes terms within my dissertation that are either newly introduced, uncommon, unfamiliar, or specialized. This glossary should most importantly simplify the readings of complex theories and philosophies, while enabling definition of philosophical and literary concepts, especially for newcomers to a language or field of study.

abstracted intelligible content: a representation of divine truth, which originates from the abstractive power through the principle of metaphysics (i.e., Godly Goodness).

abstractive power: a type of mental power that begins with an ontological type of truth which reinforces Dante's memory through the principle of metaphysics and from which we can interpret one side of memory detached from human senses.

act of potency: a form of action of the self like that of the angels whose existence relates to their own operation. It can also represent a self-subsistent principle, whose nature and stigma originates from their own action.

active agent: an active cause that allows Dante to reenact memories from past experiences.

alta fantasia (high fantasy): a term that Dante adopts in his *Commedia*, which originates from Greek, and is considered to be the highest level of human imagination.

ars memorativa (art of memory): an artificial understanding that translates from the metaphysical memory into the heavenly concept of *ars memorativa* in Dante. This art of memory consists of a mnemonic advancement whose gradual development allows the pilgrim to absorb the supernatural, higher state of paradisiac forces.

ars oblivionalis (art of forgetfulness): a Latin term that refers to the art of forgetfulness, which is embodied to the art of memory.

ars quadrata (square art): a subcategory of the artificial memory because it allows to perceive how images are reproduced internally.

ars rotunda (round art): a form of art that serves the purpose of identifying images whose shapes are round through the sense of vision.

artificiality: a derivative from the notion of artifice, which characterizes a concept of pure artfulness echoing creativity in this study.

authorial self-reflexivity: a procedure that relates to the author's reflection on his authorial account.

biological continuity: the idea that memory can be considered for the most part a biological faculty which cannot operate unless there is a body.

biological mechanism: a mechanism that resonates with the collective operations of natural memory.

biological representation: the way in which Dante the pilgrim's present state of being gets manifested through a combination of passion and pain.

Christianized metaphysics: a religious perception of metaphysics in which human mind can engage with both a theological and a philosophical discussion, providing for a fruitful engagement between the theological and the philosophical.

cogitatio (thought process): a thought process that relates to memory, which can be compared to a small-scale composition, and a bringing-together of various pieces from one's artistic inventory.

dimensional quantity: a mnemonic technique that refers to the position of a place, such as the ordering of parts in a whole spatial representation like a church or other physical aspects, as well as other aspects that are no less humanly perceptible.

disposition: a quality indicating what is good and infinite, which is moved by the same pilgrim's willingness to do good.

divina bontà (Godly Goodness): a concept that translates into Godly Goodness which represents the form of the highest good that refines the course of Dante's journey towards the Empyrean.

divine act of intellection: the result of a potential capacity to perceive through the intellect divine and otherworldly ideas (heavenly spheres, etc.).

divine action: a generic notion and an action symbolic of an internal aspect, as well as intrinsic progress to the divine moment that the pilgrim is experiencing while perceiving new divine realities of *Paradiso*.

divine artifice: a divine artfulness that relates to the element of artificiality, which is most relevant to God's creations.

divine awareness: a representation of the pilgrim's superior perception that occurs through the enhancement of divine science.

divine creations: creations that are directly created by God (i.e., angels, etc.).

divine essence: the core of each divine creation that derives from God.

divine grace: a spiritual element often recognized as love, which comes directly from God.

divine intellect: a reference to the human intellect that has been empowered with divine awareness by the understanding of God as the divine essence.

divine learning: a type of learning that the pilgrim perceives from Beatrice's lectures and guidance from Saint Bernard (among the few saints), which reflects the idea of divinity.

divine rule: a type of rule that empowers the doctrinal interconnectedness between the three virtues and the art of memory. This occurs through the representation of a theologizing factor that entails Christian conformation of imagination, faculties, and art form (i.e., art of memory) to Christian values (i.e., the three theological virtues and the three dowries).

divine science: an educative instruction through which the pilgrim will gain knowledge about several aspects within the realm of divinity.

doctrinal-theological element: a symbolic process that operates internally to illuminate the relationship between human and divine.

efficient cause: a cause that represents the main source (i.e., God) as the creator of his creations (Dante the poet and his creation, namely the *Commedia*).

ephemeral incommunicability: a process that relates to the question of ineffability, which poses Dante the pilgrim into a state of temporary marginality and among his doubts and adversities.

esse: a state of being that accompanies the simple nature of the being in the case of simple substances.

expectatio: a notion that underscores the biblical perspective in which hope becomes an important virtue for Dante's expectations. Saint Augustine, for example, took *expectatio* as the motivator for major outcomes and results from human efforts.

finite being: a tangible state of being that can be perceived through only human experiences.

geometrical exercise: a scientific process that entails the implication of techniques and forms of art (square art) to identify symmetrically the physicality of images.

habitus: a conception of the human person (Dante) as open to development and modification from both natural and divine causes (i.e., altering imagination – connected to memory).

heavenly art of memory: the final step towards the evolution of *ars memorativa* (art of memory) in Dante, which originates from the theological framework produced by the three theological virtues and the three spiritual dowries of light, love, and joy.

higher reality: a type of reality that refers to the immaterial, divine realm, which also characterizes an intangible experience.

humanly perceptible experience: the human ability to perceive solely by senses, where the experiences are more detectable, finite, spatiotemporal, and somewhat tangible.

imaginative power: a form of power that refers to Dante's representation and exemplification of abstract concepts in general, with much resourcefulness and inventiveness. This imaginative power is what sustains the metaphysical making of the art of memory in Dante as well as sustaining other elements of this study (i.e., the three theological virtues, etc.). On the one hand, this imaginative power is essential to craft this art form, and to outline its course to the otherworldliness. On the other hand, the art of memory is not dependent upon imagination, because there is not a relationship of causality of art of memory and imagination. They can work in conjunction, and be interconnected throughout the course of this study, but they are not dependent clause.

imagines agentes: images of memory, which is a concept capable of lending concrete shape to abstract concepts.

imago dei: an image of God, which refers to the image of He who created the human being as regards to the rational unity of mind, soul, and memory that is capable of recognizing God.

immanence of the divine: a divine status that pervades and sustains divine realities, such as the virtues of faith, hope, and love.

immaterial existence: types of spaces and objects such as cosmos and celestial bodies that trigger the pilgrim's intellectual crescendo into the immaterial realm of *Paradiso*.

immaterial experience: types of experiences that are relevant to the higher reality of Dante the pilgrim, including the meeting or the vision of angels, intelligences, and the paradisiac lights.

immaterial perception: a type of perception that relates to the metaphysical memory and in relation solely to immaterial experiences.

immaterial perceptive experience: the ability to exhibit more keen observation, which is characterized by inner understanding and insight and relates to the non-finite.

ineffability: a conception that is concerned with ideas that cannot or should not be expressed in spoken words (or language in general), because they are often expressed in incomprehensible terms, space, or circumstance. It is an expression that is commonly associated with not only literature and science, but also with philosophy and aspects of existence, as well as similar concepts that are inherently too great or too complex or too abstract to be adequately communicated.

intellectual absorption: an intellectual effort, from which the human mind is able to absorb metaphors, similes, and supernatural aspects that relate to the otherworldliness.

intellectual crescendo (or ascension): a form of intellectual expansion that occurs when Dante the pilgrim demonstrates to gradually craft a well-defined sense of the intangible existence in the event of celestial cosmos and bodies along his journey.

intellectual knowledge: a type of knowledge that refers to the constant longing humans have to know by advancing their practical intellect in the face of otherworldly experiences.

***intellectus possibilis* (possible intellect):** an internal power that conceptualizes the possible comprehensible content confined within from its individuating conditions and renders it actually intelligible and abstract.

interchangeability of memory: a special operation with the biological memory becoming accessible and adaptable to the nature of a quasi-divine man.

lower reality: a type of reality that refers to the corporeal, earthly features, which characterizes a tangible experience.

lower reality of perception: a type of perception that can be achieved through measurable space objects or creatures (Geryon, Cerberus, etc.).

marginal mnemonic procedures: a type of procedure from which memory operates through human perception in the face of passion and physical pain.

material and immaterial past: the material past refers to the tangible experiences on earth, and immaterial past reveals those experiences that cannot be juxtaposed to any earthly features because they did not originate from human senses, but imagination.

memory training: a mnemonic process that serves humans to educate and instruct their own faculty of memory by means of recollection and cogitation.

mental images: images that are created by the power of shaping sensory impressions into intelligible, and they are connected directly to the eyes.

metaphysical abstraction: a figure of speech, namely a philosophical concept without power or agency to move onward.

metaphysical memory: the beginning section of the art of memory in Dante, where a series of metaphysical aspects (finite, non-finite, *esse*, *non-esse*, Godly Goodness, *intellectus possibilis*) contribute to the advancement leading to the art of memory in Dante.

methodical rationalization: a systematic process by use of other art forms (*ars quadrata* and *ars rotunda*), which serve the purpose of efficiently order an image across the literary narrative.

methodical systematization of images: a systematic way of reading the pilgrim's mnemonic procedures through the souls and sinners' physicality and tangibility.

mnemonic advancement: a developmental procedure that resonates with memory because it concerns a progression from the natural memory to the metaphysical memory.

mnemonic febleness: another term that refers to the weakness of natural memory.

mnemonic perception: a type of perception pertinent to the metaphysical memory.

mnemonic sensibility: an intangible state of receptivity, where only abstract and divine experiences from the higher reality can be perceived.

mnemonic technique: a process in which memory operates through means like *recordatio* (recollection) and *cogitatio* (thought process).

moral rectitude: a type of moral act that triggers and traces the pilgrim's effort to reach eventually out for the salvation in the *Commedia*.

moral truth: a principle that belongs to Dante while making the right choices for the right reasons.

motion principle of the creaturely agency: a symbolic process that Beatrice embraces as the angelic figure in motion, and she represents the productive and emergent cause of such motion among angels.

mystical motion of values: a process that refers to a shift from metaphysics to moral theology, which also implicates the involvement of the art of memory in the theological exercise for the pilgrim's mind.

***non-esse*:** a state of being that seeks alternate and more complex experiences.

non-finite being: an intangible state of being, where only abstract and divine experiences form the higher reality can be perceived.

numerical identity: a technique of interpreting the entity of finite being because they are tangible and comprehensible.

oblio (forgetfulness): the purpose to momentarily store the pilgrim's idea of salvation, while letting the heavenly concept of the art of memory restoring salvation in Dante.

ontological truth/principle: one type of truth-claim, which can be manifested through experiences, thought processes, and imagination.

operatio (or moral act of potency): a moral action from which Dante is able to act upon the transcendental rather than merely speculating about it.

phantasia: a blend of perception and opinion, meaning that to imagine is to form an opinion exactly corresponding to a direct perception.

physiognomic aspect of memory: a process that becomes essential for the author who wishes to reveal what he has recollected or thought through an outward movement of faces or appearances. This sub-category of biological system (physiognomic indication) gets shaped when the result is the outcome from the pilgrim's response.

practical intellect: a type of intellect that operates as a material form that passes through the eyes to create a mental impression, which the commonsense fuses with images from the other senses to create the intention and likeness of the material form.

prolepsis: a procedure that embraces a movement forward and for a good reason.

quasi-divine man: the idea of Dante the pilgrim who can never reach or see God, or face directly the realm of divinity, thus manifesting his human limitations while still journeying through the otherworldliness.

reactive mood: a mode of reproducing something new right before the end of the journey and after the failure of Dante's memory.

recollective activity: a mnemonic operation through which the act of recollection gets activated, particularly in restoring awareness after Dante's failing memory occurs.

recordatio (recollection): an act of recollection that entails a mnemonic process by means of remembering and bringing back to present mental images, experiences, visions, otherworldly concepts and other forms of experiences related to human senses and imaginative power.

regenerative course of memory: a reproductive aspect of memory that indicates an art form, which still operates regardless of the pilgrim's failing natural memory.

scientific method: a method to analyze the faculty of natural memory by taking a schematic approach and by engaging with scientific values like the geometrical exercise of square art.

self-subsistent principle: a concept that emerges and exists on its own, without any attachment to human senses.

sense of urgency: an operation that turns out to be the pilgrim's motivation to move on from a mnemonic delusion to the crossroads of *Paradiso*.

sensus communis (common sense): Galen considers this as one of the five human faculties, which is located on the human forehead (Galen, *On the Natural Faculties*, 195-219).

separation of beings: the idea of the pilgrim's mind located between the world of realities filled with finite (*esse*) and the world of imagination (non-finite and *non-esse*).

shapeless representation of memory: an artificial theory, and most importantly an abstract principle that reveals to be the beginning course for the concept of *ars memorativa*.

shapeless representation of truth: a conception unrelated to human senses and functions, but only potentiates the abstractive power behind Dante's imaginative power.

spiritualization of art of memory: a process that entails the art of memory when juxtaposed to the theological framework produced by the three virtues of faith, hope, and love.

systematization of mnemonic operations: a development that operates through a mnemonic arrangement, which indicates the creation of a schematic form still tied to Dante the pilgrim's senses.

theological crescendo: a mental upsurge that begins when Dante the pilgrim embraces the first virtue of faith.

theological exercise: a spiritual practice that will guide Dante to the absorption of his own enduring desire, namely eschatological salvation.

theological framework (or structure): a framework that the three virtues of faith, hope, and love generate after the three individual examinations are offered to Dante the pilgrim.

theological interconnectedness: a mutual, spiritual interlacement that occurs between the three virtues of faith, hope, and love and the three dowries of light, love, and joy.

theological transcendence: a procedure that emerges through mutual interlacement leading to a theological interconnectedness between the three virtues and the art of memory.

theological understanding: a form of perception of the art of memory in Dante that relates to the moral theology aspect of the *Commedia*.

theologizing process (or factor): a symbolic shift from a purely metaphysical standpoint (first evolution of the art of memory in Dante) to a largely theological development (second evolution of the art of memory in Dante).

transcendental motion of the imagination: a characterization of the pilgrim's motion forward in his journey where he absorbs mental images that generate a transcendental experience.

truth-claim: an ontological expression of a shift from one principle to another or the representation of an abstract discipline like divine science.

vis aestimativa: opinion beliefs, which allow the human mind to provide an estimate according to the same opinion and belief.

vis imaginativa: the notion of imagination, which can precisely relate to imaginative power.

vis memorativa: the last of the five faculties in the human brain and it is located in the posterior part of the brain. It is also known as the power of memory.

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