When Dante meets Ciacco in *Inferno* VI he is curious to find out whether the political worthies of the early and mid-thirteenth century, Farinata degli Uberti, Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, Iacopo Rusticucci, Arrigo and Mosca de’ Lamberti also reside in Hell or if they have been saved. With Ciacco’s response that they are all in Hell, much deeper down than Ciacco, the reader is prepared for a group of episodes which will delineate these individuals as politicians. While it is obvious to the readers of the *Divine Comedy* that these individuals comprise a group because they are defined as such in *Inferno* VI, it is the thesis of this study that they are more of a group than had previously been realized.

The poet adopts formulas of linguistic repetition from one pertinent episode to the next and in so doing he accentuates their links in an indisputable yet not readily apparent manner. He introduces words or phrases in *Inferno* 6 which are repeated in the Farinata episode in *Inferno* 10, or in *Inferno* 16 with Tegghiaio and Iacopo. Then in a further instance when Dante meets Catalano and Loderingo in *Inferno* 23 linguistic formulas are also present. This encounter between Dante and the two hypocrites in *Inferno* 23 is the only one which *Inferno* 6 does not anticipate. Why were they not mentioned in *Inferno* 6? Because they were neither “degni” nor did they put their minds to “ben far” when they ruled Florence. Yet the presence of linguistic formulas here signals that the two souls are to be juxtaposed with the souls in the other *canti*. Finally, linguistic formulas are adopted which link the Catalano and Loderingo episode with *Inferno* 28 where Dante meets the last of the souls named back in *Inferno* 6, Mosca de’ Lamberti.

Early on in Dante’s encounter with the glutton Ciacco, Dante does not recognize him, due to his contrapasso, and asks:

"Ma dimmi chi tu se’ che ’n si dolente
loco se’ messo, e hai si fatta pena,
che, s’altra è maggio, nulla è si spiacente."\(^4\)

(6.46-48)
The poet repeats the verb “dire” plus the interrogative “chi” plus the “tu se’” in two other *canti.* It is used in *Inferno* 16, with only one variation: dir < dimmi, when Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, Iacopo Rusticucci and Guido Guerra (not mentioned by Dante in *Inferno* 6) wish to understand Dante’s identity. Iacopo begins:

... “Se miseria d’esto loco sollo
rende in dispetto noi e nostri prieghi,”
cominciò l’uno, “e ’l tinto aspetto e brollo,
la fama nostra il tuo animo pieghi
*a dirne chi tu se’,* che i vivi piedi
cosi sicuro per lo ’inferno freghi.”

(Inferno 16, lines 28-33)

In *Inferno* 23 Catalano and Loderingo also want Dante to identify himself:

Poi disser me: “O Tosco, ch’al collegio
de l’ipocriti tristi se’ venuto,
*dir chi tu se’* non avere in dispregio.”

(Inferno 23, lines 91-93)

What does this pattern of thematically unimportant words, repeated in *Inferno* 6, in *Inferno* 16 and in *Inferno* 23 communicate to the reader? It signals that these episodes are more closely linked than can be gleaned from Dante’s words to Ciacco alone, because a version of “dire” plus “chi” plus “tu se’” in this pattern is unique to these three *canti* in the *Divine Comedy.* Further on in *Inferno* 6 Ciacco answers Dante by identifying himself:

“Voi cittadini mi chiamaste Ciacco:
per la dannosa colpa *de la gola,*
come tu vedi, a la pioggia mi fiacco.
E io anima trista non son sola,
ché tutte queste a simil pena stanno
per simil colpa.” E più non fé *parola.*

(Inferno 6, lines 52-57)

I draw the reader’s attention to the genitive “de la gola” which ends line 53. Dante repeats this exact formula in *Inferno* 23 when Catalano and Loderingo with considerable curiosity observe Dante:

*mi rimiraron sanza far parola;*
poi si volsero in sé, e dicean seco:
“Costui par vivo a l’atto *de la gola;*
e s’è’ son morti, per qual privilegio
vanno scoperti de la grave stola?”

(Inferno 23, lines 86-90)

Dante employs this formula of repetition in only these two *canti* in the *Inferno.* Furthermore, in both cases the “gola” rhymes with another substan-
tival verse terminator “parola” in Inferno 6.57 and in Inferno 23.86. “De la gola” cannot be considered a thematic signifier since in Ciaccio’s episode “gola” means gluttony while Dante’s “gola” in Inferno 23 simply refers to his throat. I would rather talk in terms of circumstantial contexts, that is the use of the “gola” references as identifiers. In Inferno 6 the pattern, “de la gola” mobilizes Ciaccio into identifying himself and in Inferno 13 (again accompanied by “dire chi tu se’”) it impels Dante to do the same.

Ciaccio concludes his dialogue with Dante by stating his desire to be remembered when Dante returns to the world above:

“Ma quando tu sarai nel dolce mondo,
priegoti ch’a la mente altrui mi rechi:
piu non ti dico e piu non ti rispondo.”

(6.88–90)

The locative “nel dolce mondo” is repeated in Inferno 10 when the heretical Farinata refers to Dante’s return to the only world that matters, the “sweet world” above:

“E se tu mai nel dolce mondo regge,
dimmi; perché quel popolo è sì empio
incontr’ a’ mici in ciascuna sua legge?”

(10.82–84)

Thematically the passages are parallel. In each case a sinner is speaking to Dante with reference to his return to the world above, and in each case the contraction plus adjective plus noun pattern, “nel dolce mondo,” is employed, a pattern which is unique to these two episodes in the Divine Comedy.

The poet ties Inferno 6 more closely to Inferno 10 when five lines past “nel dolce mondo” in Inferno 6, just before Ciaccio falls back to where the other “ciechi” suffer, Dante describes Ciaccio’s last sight of the wayfarer:

Li diritti occhi torse allora in biechi;
guardommi un poco e poi chinò la testa:
cadde con essa a par de li altri ciechi.

(6.91–93)

The poet repeats the exact same pattern, “guardommi un poco e poi,” in Inferno 10. However the function of each formula is different. In Inferno 6 the formula closes the episode with Ciaccio now silent, while in Inferno 10 the formula opens the Farinata episode:

Com’io al piè de la sua tomba fui,
guardommi un poco, e poi, quasi sdegnoso,
mi dimandò: “Chi fuor li maggior tui?”

(10.40–42)

The particular pattern of this repetition, unique in the Divine Comedy, is
striking in its length and structure. It is the longest of its kind among the ones analyzed in these canti, as well as the most intricate (verb plus object pronoun plus indefinite article plus adverb plus conjunction plus adverb). The proximity of a second “un poco” in both cases, Inferno 6.102 and Inferno 10.45, is also worthy of notice.

As no other formulas of repetition are inaugurated in Inferno 6, I draw the reader’s attention to links between the other pertinent canti.

When Farinata overhears a fellow Tuscan traversing Hell while still in the flesh, he addresses him with the vocative:

“O Tosco che per la città del foco
vivo ten vai così parlando onesto,
piaccìati di restare in questo loco.”

(10.22–24)

The only other occasion in the Divine Comedy when “O Tosco” is adopted occurs in Inferno 23 when Catalano and Loderingo address Dante and wish to know his identity. They begin their address as Farinata had already done with “O Tosco”:

Poi disser me: “O Tosco, ch’al collegio
de l’ipocriti tristi se’ venuto,
dir chi tu se’ non avere in dispregio.”

(23.91–93)

The vocative “O Tosco” is the first pattern of repetition in this study whose significance has thematic import with explicit bearing on the action of these encounters, in so far as they deal with Florentine leaders.

In Inferno 16 when Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, Iacopo Rusticucci and Guido Guerra recognize a fellow Tuscan by his attire they shout after Dante to stop:

A le lor grida il mio dottor s’attesse;
volse ’l viso ver’ me, e “Or aspetta,”
disse, “a costor si vuole esser cortese.
E se non fosse il foco che saetta
la natura del loco, i’ dicerei
che meglio stesse a te che a lor la fretta.”

(16.13–18)

The imperative “aspetta,” along with Virgil’s “dissé,” is repeated in Inferno 23. When Catalano and Loderingo hear that Dante is Tuscan and one of them requests that he slow down, again Virgil reacts:

Onde ’l duca si volse e disse: “Aspetta,
c poi secondo il suo passo procedi.”
Ristetti, e vidi due mostrar gran fretta
de l’animo, col viso, d’esser meco;
ma tardavali ’l carco e la via stretta.
In each canto the past remote "volse" is adopted, then the past remote "disse," which follows the imperative in Inferno 16 and precedes it in Inferno 23, with the imperative "aspetta" as the verse terminator both times. Furthermore, the "aspetta" rhymes with the same verse terminator, "fretta," in both Inferno 16.18 and Inferno 23.82. There is not another instance in the Divine Comedy when the imperative "aspetta" is used by Virgil or Beatrice to request that Dante stop.

Just after the "aspetta" in Inferno 16, when Tegghiaio, Iacopo and Guido reach Dante and Virgil, the poet adopts the plus perfect of the verb "giungere," preceded by "quando":

Ricominciar, come noi restammo, ci
l'antico verso; e quando a noi fuor giunti,
fenno una rota di sé tutti e trei.

(16.19-21)

In Inferno 23 the moment is described when Catalano and Loderingo reach Dante and Virgil and again the plus perfect of "giungere" is employed, preceded by "quando":

Quando fuor giunti assai con l'occhio bieco
mi rimarono senza far parola;
poi si volsero in sé, e dicean seco . . .

(23.85-87)

The duplication of this formula in the Divine Comedy is unique to these two canti.

And what of Mosca de' Lamberti in Inferno 28? In a brief passage he presents himself:

E un ch'avea l'una e l'altra man mozza,
levando i moncherin per l'aura fosca,
si che 'l sangue facea la faccia sozza,
grido: "Ricordera'ti anche del Mosca,
che disse, lasso! 'Capo ha cosa fatta,"
che fu mal seme per la gente tosca."

(28.103-108)

The formula "per l'aura fosca" occurs in only one other instance in the Divine Comedy and that is in Inferno XXIII when one of the two hypocritical politicians recognized a fellow Tuscan, and here too it is a verse terminator:

E un che 'ntese la parola tosca,
di retro a noi gridò: "Tenete i piedi,
voi che correte sì per l'aura fosca!"

(Inferno XXIII. 76-78)
In both cases the “per l’aura fosca” rhymes with the feminine adjective “tosca,” which is unique to these two canti in the Divine Comedy. As well, in each passage the past remote “gridò” is used with reference to one who “shouted” in order to gain the attention of Dante and Virgil. While the very common form “gridò” is seen on numerous occasions throughout the Divine Comedy, the “gridò,” used as a verbum dicendi in the Catalano and Loderingo episode, is not repeated again until it is used to introduce: “Ricordera’ti anche del Mosca,” some five canti later.

In retrospect two types of formulas of repetition have been singled out in these canti. We have seen those with thematic significance such as “O Tosco,” “tosca,” and “nel dolce mondo” where the repetition indicates sinners still obsessed with their political life, that worldly life which had centered around Florence and which ultimately accounted for their spiritual downfall. Then there are the other more hidden formulas of repetition such as “dir chi tu se’,” “de la gola,” “guardommi un poco e poi,” “aspetta,” “fuor giunti,” and “per l’aura fosca” which function as linguistic signals. These seemingly banal signals are subtle clues, hitherto overlooked, to canti links as well as to some as yet little explored sides of the medieval mind that forged them.

University of Victoria

NOTES

1 Dante does not encounter Arrigo in the Inferno nor is there agreement among Dante scholars as to his identity. He will not be referred to again in this study.
2 “Ben far” recurr in Inferno 15.64 when Brunetto Latini refers to the kind of politics Dante practices. Dante, like the five politicians mentioned in Inferno 6, tried to be loyal to Florence over and above factional politics.
3 For further information on the relationship between Catalano and Loderingo and the three politicians in Inferno 16 see Howard.
4 All quotations of the Divine Comedy are taken from La Commedia a cura di Giorgio Petrocchi. The italics are mine.
5 The concordance used in this study is Lovera.
6 “Unimportant” that is to the key concern here which is political hypocrisy.

WORKS CITED