Language and Style in Dante. Seven Essays. Eds. John C. Barnes, Michelangelo Zaccarello. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013. Pp 234. ISBN 978-1-84682-253-7. \$ 70.

Language and Style in Dante features a collection of seven essays originating from a series of lectures forming part of the Dante Series at the University College Dublin in 1999 and 2000. The essays selected provide a variety of panoramic approaches to the complex notions of language and style in Dante's works. Through a consideration of the impact of such aspects as the commentary tradition, translation and reiteration – amongst others – on Dante's poetic oeuvre, each essay serves to demonstrate how Dante's words can be read and interpreted from multiple and distinct angles.

Zygmunt G. Barański evaluates how Dante read Horace by assessing the Roman poet's literary and cultural identity during the Middle Ages. Although Dante cites Horace relatively rarely in comparison to the other members of "la bella scola" (*Inf.* IV, 94), Barański identifies Horace as an *auctoritas* on poetic style. Barański acknowledges that Dante likely had little knowledge of Horace's works other than the *Ars Poetica*; yet he maintains that Dante's view of Horace is a complex one, fluctuating between accepting him as *magister* and, later, calling his authority into question in an attempt to diminish Dante's debt to him. Barański rightfully notes that modern Dante scholarship has generally ignored or, at the most, glossed over Horace's influence on Dante, and uses this essay as a launching point for further research on "Dante's constant return to and struggle with Horace" (60).

Antonella Braida assesses medieval concepts of translation within Dante's post-exile works. Her starting hypothesis addresses Dante's belief in the impossibility of translation in connection to his support of the vernacular over Latin. From this argument, Braida emphasizes Dante's awareness of the importance of translation in order to achieve the "emancipation of the Italian language from its linguistic fetters" (64). Braida also offers a unique allegorical perspective wherein she identifies the poet as a translator divinely assigned with the mission to attempt to decode God's signs, only to develop the understanding of the mutability and the untranslatability of language.

Cormac Ó Cuilleánáin focuses on instances of reiteration in the *Commedia* which act as "invisible threads" (86) that bring cohesion and harmony to the entire work. In the first half of the essay, Ó Cuilleánáin employs modern texts and cinematic works into his analysis in order to demonstrate how modern readers continue to relate and respond to repetition as a narrative device. The second half of the essay is devoted to how Dante uses a variety of techniques of reiteration to achieve the confirmation of knowledge as well as to create contrast. Ó Cuilleánáin arrives at two conclusions: first, that the patterns of organization within the *Commedia* and its representation of God's creations mirror the world's patterns of sameness and difference; and second, that repetition is imperative to understanding what we encounter in order to "build a reliable picture of reality" (109).

Jeremy Tambling delves into *Inferno* XXX for a discussion of how style in language is inherently linked to the ability to form identity. Tambling discusses identity as a concept dependant on its separation from what would contaminate it, addressing aspects of identity loss. Tambling offers the example of Maestro Adamo of *In-*

ferno XXX to demonstrate how the character uses language taken from the Book of Lamentations in order to differentiate himself from the other damned souls who surround him, thus illustrating the creation of identity through contrast. Throughout his essay, Tambling incorporates aspects of twentieth-century existentialism through the likes of Jacques Lacan and his psychoanalytic concept of the mirror stage, innovatively applying this modern concept to Dante's medieval work.

Michelangelo Zaccarello focuses his essay on the Tenzzone, the collection of six playful sonnets believed to have been exchanged between Dante and Forese Donati. Through a close reading of *Purgatorio* XXIII, Zaccarello notes the ambiguous link with the Tenzzone; he continues by suggesting the possibility that the sonnets may be apocryphal. However, Zaccarello also stresses the importance of clarifying the meaning of the Tenzzone's text first before considering *Purgatorio* XXIII in the analysis. As Zaccarello explains, only in this way may one avoid relying on predetermined interpretations as "universal reading guides" (155) and restore the individual identity of the text.

Robin Kirkpatrick highlights *Paradiso* VII as the key to understanding Dante's intellectual development and his approach to poetry. Rather than offering a narrative of providential events, Kirkpatrick explains that this canto is one centered on Christian doctrine, which more than any other of Dante's writings, showcases the poet's most direct consideration of the tenets of Christianity. Kirkpatrick further breaks down this canto as an exercise in humility and obedience which, according to Dante, are essential components for intellectual and spiritual life. Kirkpatrick refers to the twentieth-century interest in language and how modern-day thinkers conceive of themselves as "inhabitants of a world of words" (175), interestingly applying this modern concept to Dante's view of all men as social beings. Kirkpatrick uses this conviction to explain why Dante's *Convivio* begins with a defence of the vernacular as a replacement for Latin.

In the final essay, John Took approaches his reading of the *Commedia* through an ontological lens. Although a medieval text, Took asserts that the *Commedia* reveals a preoccupation with existence more so than any other of Dante's works. Took points to the priority of the image in all three canticles of the *Commedia*, wherein Dante employs the images as tools for both the elucidation and the affirmation of meaning communicated through the text. Took's essay acts as an appropriate ending for the book, tackling concepts of style and existentialism in Dante – concepts that run as linkages throughout the entire book – from a more holistic point of view and thus, bringing circularity to this collection of essays.

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La ricerca di Bernardina Moriconi è una miniera di informazioni, con molte sorprese. La fortuna dell'arcidiavolo Belfagor attraversa i secoli, dal Cinquecento al