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REASON, DECEPTION, AND FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY
IN *INFERNO* 26 AND 27

In *Inferno* 26 Dante encountered Fraudulent Counselors whose particular punishment was to be garbed in burning clothes. Among the sinners he saw Ulysses and Diomedes, the two Greek heroes famous for their exploits, which, during the Trojan War, combined astuteness and force. Although Dante recounted the story of Ulysses' tragic shipwreck, as the Greek hero ventured beyond the Pillars of Hercules into the unexplored western seas, he revised the classical myth, and utilized Ulysses' tragic story to confront one of the most crucial issues of the *Divine Comedy*¹: the limits of human knowledge. Unlike neoplatonic commentators who interpreted Ulysses' journey as a philosophical allegory of the *nastos*², Dante portrayed the Greek hero as a symbol of human knowledge's limitations – knowledge, which for the poet acquired value only when illuminated by divine grace because, as a gift from God, knowledge is a privilege that must be kept within bounds so that “non corra che virtù nol guidi [it not run where virtue does not guide]” (*Inf.* 26.22). Critics have long discussed the nature of Ulysses' “sin” in this canto, focusing especially on the question of whether he used his “orazion picciola [brief address]” to deceive his men and on the reasons for his punishment in the eighth “bolgia” of the *Inferno*³. Other fundamental themes in the canto remain unresolved: was Ulysses' voyage an act of folly, and thus a perversion of the human intellect? Did he resort to trickery to persuade his men to undertake the perilous voyage? And, if so, is there an obvious element of trickery in his speech?⁴ And, perhaps most critically of all, what was the true motivation for the speech? The pursuit of answers to these questions will shed further light on Dante's understanding of the limits of human knowledge, an understanding that was informed by Franciscan thought.

Although the sin for which Ulysses was punished in the eighth ditch of “Malebolge” is never explicitly named in the poem, the condemned sinners are referred to as “counselors of fraud.” The Devil reports in *Inferno*

27 that Guido of Montefeltro is being punished because "the counsel that he gave was fraudulent" (116). However, in *Inferno* 26, Virgil tells Dante that the Greek hero is being punished for three crimes, none of which include fraud:

Là dentro si martira
 Ulisse e Diomede, e così insieme
 a la vendetta vanno come a l'ira;
 e dentro da la lor fiamma si geme
 l'agguato del caval che fè la porta
 onde uscì de' Romani il gentil seme.
 Piangevisi entro l'arte per che, morta,
 Deïdamia ancor si duol d'Achille,
 e del Palladio pena vi si porta. (55-63)

[Within that flame, Ulysses
 and Diomedes suffer; they, who went
 as one to rage, now share one punishment.
 And there together in their flame, they grieve
 over the horse's fraud that caused a breach—
 the gate that let Rome's noble seed escape.
 There they regret the guile that makes the dead
 Deïdamia still lament Achilles;
 and there, for the Palladium, they pay.]

If the stratagem of the Trojan horse; the trick that incited Achilles to come out of hiding, abandon wife and child, and go to his death in the war against Troy, and the theft of the Palladium were the crimes that earned Ulysses a place among the counselors of fraud, how are we to interpret his "orazion picciola" which led his men by the power of his speech to their death? Is Ulysses then guilty of the three crimes listed by Virgil or is he guilty of giving his men fraudulent counsel with his speech? If the latter, where precisely is the fraud in the speech?

Scholars have been divided on the nature of Ulysses' sin. Early commentators of the *Comedy*, such as Francesco Buti regarded fraudulent counsel as the sin, while Benvenuto da Imola thought it as one of "astuteness and slyness." In *l'Ottimo commento*, the crime was labeled as "injury through hidden betrayal" and in Jacopo della Lana as "cunning." The early debate continued to engage modern commentators. Fubini and Pagliaro,⁵ for example, defined the sin as betrayal of others to enhance one's own political reputation. Anna Hatcher drew a distinction between Ulysses' fraud and that of Guido of Montefeltro in *Inferno* 27. She argued that Ulysses' exhortation to Achilles to take part in the Trojan war used "fraud

in giving advice,” making it the only event that can be related to fraud. Guido’s sin, instead, consisted in “advising the use of fraud.” Hatcher noted that many scholars have assumed inaccurately that Ulysses was punished for fraudulent counsel. Without the evidence of Guido’s speech in *Inferno* 27, commentators of *Inferno* 26 would be forced to rely solely on the evidence of Virgil’s list of three sins. The fact remains however, that the Devil does inform the reader of Guido’s sin, and Dante addresses fraud in this “bolgia.”⁶ As Giuseppe Mazzotta has pointed out, cantos 26 and 27 are connected and should be read as one. The link joining them is the poet’s challenge to the medieval logicians’ category of knowledge. In *Inferno* 27, Guido’s character, ironically represents the Franciscan attack against logic and speculative grammar⁷. But, if we try to read the two cantos as one, where can we find in *Inferno* 26 syllogistic reasoning depicted as sophistic argument? While we know that logic is a key component in *Inferno* 27 (115-12), where are we to detect the misuse of logic in *Inferno* 26?

The deeds of Ulysses and Diomedes in *Inferno* 26 recall those described in the *Aeneid*, the *Metamorphoses*, and the *Achilleid*. In book 13 of the *Metamorphoses*, during the dispute of Achilles’ armies, Ajax recalls Ulysses’ prowess, and his ability to fight more proficiently with deceptive utterances, *ficta verba*, than with arms.⁸ Stull and Hollander have suggested that in creating Ulysses, Dante was also influenced by Lucan’s *De bello civile*. In fact, they argued that the textual relationship between Dante and Lucan is closer than that between Dante and Virgil, pointing to the incident when Caesar’s men were left behind in Italy, unwilling to fight anymore and ready to mutiny. Caesar rushed back from Spain to quell the mutiny. In reminding his men of their responsibility, Lucan has Caesar say:

Bellorum o socii, qui mille pericula Martis
Mecum” ait “experti decimo iam vincitis anno,
Hoc cruor Arctoïis meruit diffusus in arvis
Volneraque et mortes hiemesque sub Alpibus actae? (I, 299-302)

[Men who have fought and faced with me the peril of battle a thousand times, for ten years past you have been victorious. Is this your reward for blood shed on the fields of the North, for wounds and death, and for winters passed beside the Alps?]

Dante’s language in Ulysses’ opening words comes closer to Lucan’s Caesar than it does to Virgil’s *Aeneid*:

O socii (neque enim ignari sumus ante malorum),
o passi graviores, dabit deus his quoque finem.
vos et Scyllaeam rabiem penitusque sonantis

accestis scopulos, vos et Cyclopia saxa
 experti; revoke animos maestumque timorem
 mittite. (I, 198-203)

[O comrades—for ere this we have not been ignorant of evils—O ye who have been borne a heavier lot, to this, too, God will grant an end! Ye drew near to Scylla's fury and her deep-echoing crags; ye have known, too, the rocks of the Cyclopes; recall your courage and put away sad fear.]

Although Stull and Hollander were on the right track, they failed to see an even closer correlation between Dante and Lucan: Ulysses' men presented him with a *de facto* mutiny much as Caesar's men had. The clue to the mutiny rests within the text of the "orazion picciola" and in the two tercets that follow the speech:

"O frati", dissi, "che per cento milia
 perigli sieti giunti a l'occidente,
 a questa tanto picciola vigilia
 d'i nostri sensi ch'è del rimanente
 non vogliate negare l'esperienza,
 di retro al sol, del mondo senza gente.
 Considerate la vostra semenza:
 fatti non foste a viver come bruti,
 ma per seguir virtute e conoscenza."
 Li miei compagni fec'io sí aguti,
 con questa orazion picciola, al cammino,
 che a pena poscia li avrei ritenuti;
 e volta nostra poppa nel mattino,
 de'remi facemmo ali al folle volo,
 sempre acquistando dal lato mancino. (112-126)

['Brothers,' I said, 'o you, who having crossed
 a hundred thousand dangers, reach the west,
 to this brief waking-time that still is left
 unto your senses, you must not deny
 experience of that which lies beyond
 the sun, and of the world that is unpeopled.
 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'.
 I spurred my comrades with this brief address
 to meet the journey with such eagerness
 that I could hardly, then, have held them back;
 and having turned our stern toward morning, we
 made wings out of our oars in a wild flight
 and always gained upon our left-hand side.]

In recounting his departure from Circe to Gacta, Ulysses tells Dante and Virgil that as an old man, he had convinced his crew to continue with the journey beyond the limits set by God, and that neither his fondness for his son, nor pity for his own father, nor the love he owed Penelope (94-96) stopped his thirst for knowledge. Then he delivered his famous “orazion picciola” that led them to their death. The unsuspected evidence that Ulysses was facing mutiny occurs in the verse “... e volta nostra poppa nel mattino [and having turned our stern toward morning]” (*Inf.* 26.124). “Nel mattino [toward morning]” has a long tradition of criticism. It has been interpreted as either referring to movement or to time. Sapegno argued that the expression implies movement because it refers to the East direction and it concurs with the verse “di retro al sol [of that which lies beyond / the sun]” (117), thus relating it to the apparent course of the sun, from east to west.⁹ Pagliaro instead thought that “in the morning” simply refers to the hour in which “il folle volo” began, and states that “di retro al sol” is the pre-dawn period before the sun arises, thus implying the time Ulysses delivered his speech to his men (408-411). I concur with Sapegno, for if we look at the verse “... e volta nostra poppa nel mattino [and having turned our stern toward the morning,]” and consider “volta [turned]” as an absolute use of the past participle, meaning “avendo volta [having turned,]” “nel mattino” implies movement and not time. This reading would suggest that the boat had been turned toward home before Ulysses delivered his “orazion picciola.” The change of direction to the East proves that the men had mutinied. Dante’s verses, “e volta nostra poppa nel mattino, / de’ remi facemmo ali al folle volo [and having turned our stern toward morning, / we made wings out of our oars in a wild flight,]” mean that having turned their stern toward the East, “nel mattino,” with the prow toward the West, they made wings out of their oars in their “folle volo.” Thus, if Ulysses’ crew turned the stern toward the East, then the position of the boat before the “orazion picciola” must have been reversed: stern to the West and prow to the East, i.e. “nel mattino:” the direction then was homewards toward Greece. Seen in this light, Dante’s lines portray Ulysses’ speech to his crew as critically important for the continuation of the journey. Before analyzing the “orazion picciola,” and the reason why, in my opinion, Dante depicted Ulysses as a fraudulent counselor, it helps to understand the metaphorical use of the sea voyage in the Middle Ages.

Ocean voyages in the writings of Gregory the Great serve as emblems of prideful human disquiet, as a flaw of a soul dominated by restlessness. In the *Moralia*, Gregory states that the sea’s metaphor indicates the sad

anxiety of our minds. The tempestuous movement of human actions agitates worldly life, averting the tranquility and the stability of internal wisdom. Knowledge for Gregory is serene, calm, fixed *in eterno*, unlike human anxiety, which is characterized by the turbulent, restless sea (XVIII 43).¹⁰ The metaphor of sailing in the writings of Albert the Great, and Thomas Aquinas represents human enterprise. In poetry and rhetoric, the sea serves often as a symbol for the universe of writing. Thus, sailing is both philosophical and anti-philosophical when it symbolizes both the quest for intellectual knowledge and the human propensity for intellectual speculation with its potential to lead away from truth and faith.¹¹ Dante used the metaphor of the sea voyage in both the *Comedy* and the *Convivio*.¹² In *Purgatory* 1 the poet described the small boat of his intelligence as it embarked on a better journey:

Per correr miglior acque alza le vele
 omai la navicella del mio ingegno,
 che lascia dietro a sé mar sì crudele;
 e canterò di quel secondo regno
 dove l'umano spirito si purga
 e di salire al ciel diventa degno. (1-6)

[To course across more kindly waters now
 my talent's little vessel lifts her sails,
 leaving behind herself a sea so cruel;
 and what I sing will be that second kingdom,
 in which the human soul is cleansed of sin,
 becoming worthy of ascent to Heaven.]

In the *Convivio*, the poet juxtaposed the imagery of sailing with that of the noble soul, which in the last stage of life returns to God:

Poi ne la Quarta parte de la vita ... ella ritorna a Dio, sì come quello porto, onde ella si partio quando venne ad entrare nel mare di questa vita; l'altra si è che ella benedice lo cammino che ha fatto, però che è stato diritto e buono e senza amaritudine di tempesta (IV.xxviii.1-2).

[And then in the fourth phase of life ... it returns to God as to that port from which it departed when it came to enter into the sea of this life; the other is that it blesses the journey that it has made, because it has been straight and good and without bitterness of storm.]

He further compared natural death to the harbor of repose:

La naturale morte è A noi porto di lunga deviazione e riposo. Ed è così come lo buono marinaio me esso appropinqua al porto, cale le sue vele, e soavemente, con debile conducimento, entra in quello; così

noi dovemo calare le vele de le nostre mondane operazioni e tornare a Dio con tutto nostro intendimento e cuore, sì che a quello porto si vegna con tutta soavitate e con tutta pace. ... Rendesi dunque a Dio la nobile anima in questa etade, e attende lo fine di questa vita con molto desiderio e uscir le pare de l'albergo e ritornare ne la propria mansione, uscir le pare di cammino e tornare in cittade, uscir le pare di mare e tornare a porto. O miseri e vili che con le vele alte correte a questo porto, a là ove dovrete riposare, per lo impeto del vento rompete, e perdetes voi medesimi là dove tanto camminato avete! (IV.xxviii.3-8)

[Natural death is ... for us a port and site of repose after our long journey. And it is this way, for just as a good sailor lowers his sails as he approaches port and, pressing forward lightly, enters it gently, so we must lower the sails of our worldly preoccupations and return to God with all of our mind and heart, so that we may reach that port with perfect gentleness and perfect peace. ... The noble soul, then surrenders itself to God in this age of life and awaits the end of this life with great desire, and seems to be coming back from a journey and returning to the city, seems to be coming in from the sea and returning to port. O you miserable and debased beings who speed into this port with sails raised high! Where you should take your rest, you shipwreck yourselves against the force of the wind and perish at the very place to which you have so long been journeying!]

In *Inferno* 26, as he recounts his story to Dante, Ulysses used the same nautical symbolism of the "ultima età:"

Io e' compagni eravam vecchi e tardi
quando venimmo a quella foce stretta
dov' Ercule segnò li suoi riguardi
acciò che l'uom più oltre non si metta;
da la man destra mi lasciai Sibilia,
da l'altra già m'avea lasciata Setta. (106-111)

[And I and my companions were already
old and slow, when we approached the narrows
where Hercules set up his boundary stones
that men might heed and never reach beyond:
upon my right, I had gone past Seville,
and on the left, already passed Ceŭta.]

Ulysses' lines recall Dante's description in the *Convivio* and point to Guido of Montefeltro's speech in *Inferno* 27:

Quando mi vidi giunto in quella parte
di mia etade ove ciascun dovrebbe
calar le vele e raccogliet le sarte,

ciò che pria mi piacëa, allor m'increbbe,
 e pentuto e confesso mi rendei;
 ahi miser lasso! e giovato sarebbe. (79-84)
 [But when I saw myself come to that part
 of life when it is fitting for all men
 to lower sails and gather in their ropes,
 what once had been my joy was now dejection;
 repenting and confessing, I became
 a friar; and—poor me—it would have helped.]

The focus of these lines and those of the *Convivio* on nautical imagery, the lowering of the sails as one heads for port, highlights Dante's sense of the correct use of old age.¹³ Thus, were not Ulysses' men, "vecchi e tardi, [old and slow]" eager to get home? Did they not feel the desire to "calar le vele e raccoglièr le sarte [lower sails and gather their ropes]?" Realizing that they were old and tired, they decided to turn the boat around and head for home, thereby presenting Ulysses with a *de facto* mutiny. In this context, Ulysses' speech to the mutinous crew becomes critical to understanding why he is urging that the voyage must continue.

With his "orazion picciola," Ulysses rhetorically seduced his companions. The speech, as Mazzotta has argued in "Ulysses: Persuasion versus Prophecy," is marked by hyperbole, but its rhetoric is an empty fiction in Dante's Christian world (353). However, scholars have been unable to discern any trickery in the speech itself and have relied on classical sources to explain the hero's craftiness (*Enciclopedia dantesca*, 5:805). But if we look closely at the "orazion picciola," Ulysses' own words constitute the final deception. After his men's mutiny, the Greek hero had to convince them to turn the "stern" to the East and the "prow" to the West, as the verse, "e volta nostra poppa nel mattino," shows. Specifically, Ulysses claims that without the "orazion picciola," he could not have stopped his men:

Li miei compagni fec'io sí aguti,
 con questa orazion picciola, al cammino,
 che a pena poscia li avrei ritenuti. (121-123)

[I spurred my comrades with this brief address
 to meet the journey with such eagerness
 that I could hardly, then, have held them back.]

Ruggero Stefanini saw the "orazion picciola" as the means by which Ulysses seduced the intelligence of his companions with a high-flown exhortation. Stefanini also argued that the "orazion" has the cogency of a syllogism and that the Greek hero becomes, in effect, a theoretician of deceit (338). Stefanini, however, provided no formal analysis to show how

the speech works as a syllogism. If we analyze the content of the two premises and the conclusion of the “orazion picciola,” we can finally uncover evidence of fraud, for the speech bears the form of a syllogism, albeit a false one Ulysses used to deceive his men. The speech’s first premise, “O brothers, you who have arrived at the western limits, (thus the known world) through hundreds of dangers,” proceeds to the second premise, “Do not deny yourselves the experience in the world without people (the world that rests at the end of the sun’s journey),” to conclude, “Consider your origins – you were not created to live like beasts or animals, but to pursue virtue and knowledge.” The deductive reasoning of the formal syllogism fails to hold in the second premise where Ulysses exhorted his men not to “deny [themselves] the experience of the world without people.” What kind of experience could the crew possibly have had in a world that Dante thought to be formed only of water and thus devoid of people? Although medieval anthologies refer to the Atlantic archipelagos, the ocean was not a source of new lands and discoveries for Dante and his contemporaries. Dante knew that the Vivaldi brothers, Ugolino and Valdino de’ Vivaldi, and later Sorleone, son of Ugolino, had traveled to the Straits of Gibalter and never returned home (Nardi 153-154.) For Dante, the “mondo senza gente,” was that part of the globe forbidden to the living, where the only terrestrial feature was the Mountain of Purgatory. In the *De situ et forma aque et terre*, a treatise on the relationship of the earth to the ocean, Dante violently attacked those who sought knowledge outside the limits set by God:

Desinant ergo, desinant homines querere que supra eos sunt ... Et denique audiant propriam Creatoris vocem dicentis: “Quo ego vado, vos non potestis venire.” Et hec sufficient ad inquisitionem intente veritatis (XXII.)

[They must stop thus. Men must stop looking for that which is above their reach. ... And they should ultimately listen to the voice of the Creator when he says: “Where I go, you cannot come.” And this should be sufficient to the search for Truth proposed to us.]

Therefore, since the “mondo senza gente” represents the limits imposed by God, there is no physical experience to be sought as Ulysses falsely leads his men to believe. At the end of the “orazion picciola,” Ulysses tells his men to pursue virtue and knowledge – virtue and knowledge, however, that are philosophical and not theological in nature, and which Dante, through the use of a false syllogism, portrays as the seductive dangers of disobedience and transgression.¹⁴ Thus, Ulysses’ speech is

deliberately misleading. In turn, however, Dante ironically portrays the Greek hero admitting his fraud, for the reader knows that Ulysses becomes a prisoner of his own self-deception when he succumbed to the false literalness of his own language, trapped by his own tongue (Mazzotta, "Ulysses: Persuasion versus Prophecy" 355).

Dante used the same kind of rhetorical cleverness in *Inferno* 27 to trick Guido of Montefeltro, a friar who betrayed the ideals of Saint Francis of Assisi. In this canto Dante addressed Guido's false rhetoric. Guido was an important Ghibelline leader and shrewd soldier who reconciled himself to the Church and became a Franciscan friar in 1296. Legend reports that in 1298 Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303) persuaded Guido to advise him on how to reduce the stronghold of Palestrina, held at that time by the Colonna family. Dante, on the basis of this story—whether real or invented—placed Guido in the "bolgia" of the fraudulent counselors. In Dante's representation of Guido's sin, we learn that the Franciscan friar tried to evade Boniface's request to advise fraud (98-99), but the pope argued from his own authority, delegated to him by Christ (100-104). Guido found the pope's argument compelling since, as a Franciscan friar, he was bound by his oath of obedience to higher authority:

Allor mi pinser li argomenti gravi
là 've 'l tacer mi fu avviso 'peggio,
e dissi: 'Padre, da che tu mi lavi
di quell peccato ov'io mo cader deggio,
lunga promessa con l'attender corto
ti farà triunfar ne l'alto seggio.' (106-111)

[Then his grave arguments compelled me so,
my silence seemed a worse offense than speech,
and I said: "Since you cleanse me of the sin
that I must now fall into, Father, know:
long promises and very brief fulfillments
will bring a victory to your high throne.]

The canto ends with a struggle between Saint Francis and the Devil over Guido's soul:

Francesco venne poi, com'io fu' morto,
per me; ma un d'i neri cherubini
li disse: 'Non portar; non mi far torto.
Venir se ne dee giù tra 'miei meschini
perché diede 'l consiglio frodolente,
dal quale in qua stato li sono a'crini;

ch'assolver non si può chi non si pente,
né pentere e volere insieme puossi
per la contradizion che nol consente.
Oh me dolente! come mi riscossi
quando mi prese dicendomi: 'Forse
tu non pensavi ch'io löico fossi!' (112-123)

[Then Francis came, as soon as I was dead,
for me; but one of the black cherubin
told him: 'Don't bear him off; do not cheat me.
He must come down among my menials;
the counsel that he gave was fraudulent;
since then, I've kept close track, to snatch his scalp;
one can't absolve a man who's not repented,
and no one can repent and will at once;
the law of contradiction won't allow it.'
O miserable me, for how I started
when he took hold of me and said: 'Perhaps
you did not think that I was a logician!']

How are we to read and connect Guido's speech to that of Ulysses? Giuseppe Mazzotta argued in his *Dante's Vision* that in this particular scene of *Inferno* 27, Dante not only addressed the betrayal of Franciscan piety, but, like the Franciscan intellectuals of his time, also challenged the logician's category of knowledge. The Devil in his argument used logic only rhetorically, allowing syllogistic reasoning to become a sophistic argument. Furthermore, Dante also portrayed Guido as a logician who drew the wrong logical inferences from his actions. Guido, as a Franciscan, should have known that pharisaic formulas such as "Father, since you do wash me of that sin into which I now must fall" (72) would not work within Franciscan spirituality. According to Francis, the order's spirituality was nurtured by intellectual pursuits aimed toward a living faith and not by rhetorical speculation. Although he referred to himself as *simplex et idiota*, Francis also inspired the theology of those Franciscans in the University of Paris who disputed Aristotelian logic in the 1230s.¹⁵ In laying down the principles in which Franciscan spirituality and study would thrive, Francis advocated a language obedient to the Word of God, not one that would lose itself in sophistic rhetoric.¹⁶ In a letter to Anthony of Padua, Francis affirmed:

Placet mihi quod sacram theologiam legas fratribus, dummodo inter huius studium orationis et devotionis *spiritum non exstinguas*, sicut in regula continetur (55).

I am pleased that you teach sacred theology to the brothers providing that, as is contained in the Rule, you “do not extinguish the Spirit of prayer and devotion during study of this kind (107).

More importantly, however, Guido should have known that obedience to the voice of conscience was and remained the ideal of Franciscan spirituality. In chapter X of *The Later Rule*, Francis stated:

Fratres, qui sunt ministri et servi aliorum fratrum, visitent et moneant fratres suos et humiliter et caritative corrigant eos, non praecipientes eis aliquid, quod sit contra animam suam et regulam nostram. Fratres vero, qui sunt subditi, recordentur, quod propter Deum abnegaverunt proprias voluntates. Unde firmiter praecipio eis, ut obediant suis ministris in omnibus quae promiserunt Domino observare et non sunt contraria animae et regulae nostrae (179).

[Let the brothers who are the ministers and servants of the others visit and admonish their brothers and humbly and charitably correct them, not commanding them anything that is against their souls and our rule. Let the brothers who are subject, however, remember that, for God's sake, they have renounced their own wills. Therefore, I strictly command them to obey their ministers in everything they have promised the Lord to observe and which is not against their souls or our Rule (105)].¹⁷

In repenting and becoming a friar (*Inferno* 27, 79-84), had not Guido promised the Lord to observe all, including that which was not against his conscience? Unlike the apostles who began to preach the Word of God, Guido used faulty logic and fell into the hands of the Devil who saw through his flawed confession and outwitted him, but not Saint Francis.¹⁸ Ironically, now in Hell, Guido was trapped in a tongue of fire, a symbol of the misuse of his Pentecostal gift.¹⁹

In both Ulysses and Guido's speeches, then, Dante portrayed the abuse of true logic, which rests only in the Word of God. In *Paradise* 24, the poet specified that the proper use of logic lies in the power to distinguish that, which was determined by God. In other words, the use of logic is justified only if it is inspired by God, for the human mind possesses vestiges of truth that can only be partially deciphered through vision and faith.²⁰ Dante expressed this sentiment when he professed his faith before Saint Peter:

.... “Le profonde cose
che mi largiscon qui la lor parvenza,
a li occhi di là giù son sí ascose,
che l'esser loro v'è in sola credenza,
sopra la qual si fonda l'alta spene;

e però di sustanza prende intenza.
 E da questa credenza si convene
 silogizzar, sanz' avere altra vista:
 però intenza d'argomento tene." (70-78)
 [...]"The deep things that on me bestow
 their image here, are hid from sight below,
 so that their being lies in faith alone,
 and on that faith the highest hope is founded;
 and thus it is that faith is called substance.
 And it is from this faith that we must reason,
 deducing what we can from syllogisms,
 without our being able to see more:
 thus faith is also called an evidence."]

To which Saint Peter responded:

... "Se quantunque s'acquista
 giù per dottrina, fosse così 'inteso
 non li avria loco ingegno di sofista." (79-81)

[... "If all one learns below
 as doctrine were so [well] understood, there would
 be no place for the sophist's cleverness."]

For Dante, Faith becomes the vision through which human beings deduce what they can of God's Truth from true syllogisms. In these verses, the poet recalled Bonaventure's paradigms of seeing and perceiving from the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*: "Tertio modo apectus *ratiocinabiliter investigantis* videt, quaedam tantum *esse*, quaedam autem *esse et vivere*, quaedam vero *esse, vivere et discernere*"²¹(298) [in the third way of seeing, he who investigates with his reason sees that some things merely exist, that others exist and live, that still others exist, live, and discern]"²²(45). Moreover, in Question Four of the *Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ*,²³ Bonaventure sought to understand how human reason can reach certainty in a world where mental faculties are fallible and objects are mutable. Bonaventure held that only those who are able to enter into that innermost silence of the soul (*ad intimum silentium mentis*) come to see God's Immutable Truth, a Truth accessible only to the supreme lover of eternity (*qui est summus amator aeternitatis*), not to the sinner. Lovers of eternity attain to reason with wisdom:

Aliter enim attingit illas rationes *sapiens*, et aliter *sciens*: sciens attingit illas ut *moventes*, sapiens vero ut *quietantes*; et ad hanc sapientiam nemo per-

venit, "nisi primo per fidei iustitiam emundetur." ... quia attingere rationes illas non facit sapientem, nisi quis in eis quiescat et sciat, se illas attingere, quod quidem spectat ad sapientem. Huiusmodi enim rationes attinguntur ab intellectibus *scientium* ut *ductivae*, sed ab intellectibus *sapientium* ut *reductivae* et quietativae (24-26).

The person of wisdom (*sapiens*) attains to the reasons in one way and the person of knowledge (*sciens*) in another. The person of science attains to them as to the principles that move the mind. The person of wisdom attains to them as that in which the human spirit finds rest. And no one arrives at this wisdom "except those who are first purified by the justice of faith." ... Attaining to these [eternal] reasons does not make anyone wise unless that person is aware of attaining to them and finds repose in them. This is, indeed, the mark of the wise person. For the intellects of people of science attain these reasons as principles that move the mind, while the intellects of the wise attain these reasons as principles by which they are lead back to a point of repose (137-141).²⁴

For Bonaventure, this knowledge requires the lovers of eternity to want to return their knowledge to its source and not to appropriate it merely for their own perfection. Thus, the lover of eternity comes to silence in front of the Word of God, which is, in Mazzotta's words, a "syllogism that establishes the truth in such a way that in comparison to it every demonstration is dull" (*Dante's Vision* 189). Dante recalled the relationship between the person of wisdom and the person of knowledge in *Paradise*—a relationship that lies in the symbiosis between what is immanent and what is transcendental (what is already visible and what is the potential of the human being beyond the physical), and not in the use of logic for logic's sake. For human knowledge must understand that ultimate Truth lies in the plurality of divine Ideas, which is but one Idea, as Dante put it in *Paradise* 13:

"... Ciò che non more e ciò che può morire
non è se non splendor di quella idea
che partorisce, amando, il nostro Sire;
ché quella viva luce che si mea
dal suo lucente, che non si disuna
da lui né da l'amor ch'a lor s'intrea,
per sua bontate il suo raggior aduna,
quasi specchiato, in nove sussistenze,
etternalmente rimanendosi una." (52-60)

["... Both that which never dies and that which dies
are only the reflected light of that

Idea which our Sire, with Love begets;
because the living Light that pours out so
from Its bright Source that It does not disjoin
from It or from the Love intrined with them,
through Its own goodness gathers up Its rays
within nine essences, as in a mirror,
Itself eternally remaining One.”]

In *Inferno* 26 and 27 Dante portrayed the dangers of syllogistic reasoning that traps the human being and blocks human transcendence. In *Paradiso* 11, he made a clear reference to “false syllogisms” and linked the false nature of Ulysses and Guido of Montefeltro’s false logic:

O insensata cura de’ mortali,
quanto son difettivi silogismi
quei che ti fanno in basso batter l’ali! (1-3)

[O senseless cares of mortals, how deceiving
are syllogistic reasonings that bring
your wings to flight so low, to earthly things!]

Now, how can we relate Ulysses and Guido’s misuse of logic to the Franciscan notion that human pursuits should rest in a living faith and not in rhetorical speculation? The *Assisi Compilation* relates a story about a spiritual man and a Doctor of Sacred Theology who visited Francis and asked him to comment on the words of Ezechiel (3:18) “[*Si non annuntiaveris impio impietatem suam, animam eius de manu tua requiram* [If you do not warn the wicked man about his wickedness, I will hold you responsible for his soul.]]” Francis replied,

“Si verbum universaliter debet intelligi, taliter ego accipio, quod *servus Dei* sic debet vita et sanctitate in se *ardere*, ut *luce exempli* et lingua *conversationis* omnes impios reprehendat. Sic, inquam, splendor vite eius et odor fame ipsius omnibus *annuntiabit iniquitatem eorum* (1509-1510.)

[If that passage is supposed to be understood in a universal sense, then I understand it to mean that a servant of God should be burning with life and holiness so brightly, that by the light of example and the tongue of his conduct, he will rebuke all the wicked. In that way, I say, that the brightness of his life and the fragrance of his reputation will proclaim the wickedness to all of them.]

The man went away edified and said to his companions, “Fratres mei, theologia viri huius, puritate et contemplatione subnixa, est *aquila volans*; nostro vero scientia *ventre graditur super terram* (1510). [My brothers, the the-

ology of this man, held aloft by purity and contemplation, is a *soaring eagle*, while our learning *crawls on its belly on the ground*.” While Francis’ spirituality reflects a word, which returns to the Word of God, Dante has Ulysses and Guido of Montefeltro’s misuse of words engulf them in tongues of fire.

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NOTES

¹For the Italian passages of the *Divina Commedia*, see Petrocchi, (*La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*); for English citations, see Mandelbaum (*The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*).

²In “Ulysses: Persuasion versus Prophecy,” Mazzotta describes the *nastos* as “the return of the soul to its place of origin after its descent into the dross of materiality and its subsequent laborious purification from it” (349).

³For comprehensive bibliographies on Dante’s Ulysses, see Cassell; and for a review of critical viewpoints see (Mazzotta, *Dante Poet of the Desert* 66-106).

⁴Scholars have posited that Ulysses’ speech does not contain any element of trickery and that the only transgression of which he was guilty was the act of curiosity. See Nardi (165).

⁵See the complex debate summarized by Fubini in *Enciclopedia dantesca* 5:803-9.

⁶For a detailed summary of the nature of Ulysses’ in *The Comedy*, see Mazzotta (*Dante, Poet of the Desert* 61-106); and Barolini (48-58).

⁷For a lengthy discussion of Franciscan anti-Aristotelianism and the use of logic, see Mazzotta (*Dante’s Vision* 56-74).

⁸For a general discussion of the relationship between Dante and Ovid, see Padoan.

⁹See Sapegno’s commentary on *Inferno* 26 in his *La Divina Commedia*.

¹⁰Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Latin and Italian are mine.

¹¹For a study of the sailing metaphor see Corti (34-35.)

¹²For a general discussion of the shipwreck metaphor in the *Commedia*, see Lansing.

¹³For a detailed discussion of old age in *Inferno* 26 and 27, see Kay.

¹⁴In *The Undivine Comedy*, Barolini reads Ulysses’ sin as pivotal for understanding pride as the sin most capable of bringing the life-voyage to disaster (51.)

¹⁵See Francis of Assisi, *Letter to the Entire Order* (96-105). All Latin citations from Francis of Assisi’s works come from *Fontes Franciscani*; all English citations come from *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*. Although Francis did not directly

contribute to the school of Franciscan thought in Paris, he did contribute to its work when he imbued the Franciscan movement with his desire to realize the Gospel's ideal in a very radical way (Monti 23). Franciscans such as Alexander of Hales, Saint Bonaventure, and Duns Scotus challenged Aristotelian logic's theory of abstract reasoning and its doctrine that the universe was a logical system. (Mazzotta, *Dante's Vision* 71).

¹⁶In his *Regula Bullata*, Francis promoted a language that is cautious, chaste, and obedient to the Word of God.

¹⁷The requirement to observe one's own conscience is made even more explicit in *The Earlier Rule* where Francis stated: "Ideoque animas vestras et fratrum vestrorum custodite; quia *horrendum est incidere in manus Dei viventis*. Si quis autem ministrorum alicui fratrum aliquid contra vitam nostram praeciperet vel contra animam suam, non teneatur ei obedire; quia illa obedientia non est, in qua delictum vel peccatum committitur (189) [If anyone of the ministers commands one of the brothers something contrary to our life or to his soul, he is not bound to obey him because obedience is not something in which a fault or sin is committed]" (67). And again in the *Admonitions*, he affirmed: "Ille homo relinquit omnia, quae possidet, et perdit corpus suum, qui se ipsum totum praebet ad obedientiam in minibus sui praelati. Et quidquid facit et dicit, quod ipse sciat, quod non sit contra voluntatem eius, dum bonum sit quod facit, vera obedientia est (27). [That person who offers himself totally to obedience in the hands of his prelate leaves all that he possesses and loses his body. And whatever he does and says which he knows is not contrary to his will is true obedience, provided that what he does is good]" (130).

¹⁸I believe that Guido lies to Dante and Francis does not come to rescue him.

¹⁹For a discussion on the gift of the Pentecost, see (Mazzotta, *Dante's Vision* 70, 254.) Also, for a detailed analysis on the subject of the tongues of fire in *Inferno* 26, see Bates and Rendall, and Alison Cornish.

²⁰For an enlightening reading of the relationship between faith in and reason in *The Comedy*, see (Mazzotta *Dante's Vision* 174-196).

²¹Latin citations for Bonaventure's works come from *Opera omnia*.

²²English citations for the *Itinerarium* follow Boehner's translation.

²³In medieval universities Disputed Questions were formal lectures with fixed content that were intended to treat a particular subject in depth and for a restricted audience, see (Kretzmann 22). Bonaventure delivered these lectures during his tenure in Paris.

²⁴English citations for the *Disputed Questions* follow Hayes' translation.

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