

**FROM CASELLA TO CACCIAGUIDA:
A MUSICAL PROGRESSION TOWARD INNOCENCE**

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The essay draws an arc between the episodes of Casella and Cacciaguida under the sign of music. It explores the symmetry between the brief encounter with the minstrel who sings lines from Dante's poetry, and the extended episode with Dante's ancestor, who instructs him about his destiny. The symmetry is at once biographical, as the two scenes are among the most personal in the *Commedia*, theoretical, as they exemplify the relations between poetry and music expounded on in *De vulgari eloquentia* and *Convivio*, and theological, in a sense consistent with the writings of Augustine and Boethius. If Mars is a mimetic presence in the Casella scene, that heaven aligned with music is the realm where Dante will learn from Cacciaguida of the absolute relativity of earthly matters, a realization that frees him to progress toward the innocence of the final heavens.

Keywords: Casella, Cacciaguida, Music, Poetry

1. In *De vulgari eloquentia*, Dante articulates the relationship between poetry and music by integrating the technical terms of the musical art—number, rhythm, and harmony—with those of meter, versification, and poetic structure. A poet's choice of lexis and syllabation, tone and figures, results in effects analogous to those produced by music.¹ And in *Convivio* 2.13, Dante writes of music as the art of relation, able to mediate and harmonize differences, and thus to attract to itself the human spirit:

¹ The terminology Dante arrives at in *De vulgari eloquentia*, especially in his metrical doctrine for the *canzone*, demonstrates an awareness of the conditioning relationship between metrical schemes and musical ones. See Dante Alighieri, *Literature in the Vernacular*, trans. Sally Purcell (Manchester, UK: Carcanet), 1973, 49 [ed. orig. *De vulgari eloquentia* in *Opere di Dante*, vol. 6, Florence: Le Monnier, 1938]: "Next must be discussed whether *cantio* is said of the composition of words set to music, or of the music itself. To this we say that the latter is never called *cantio*, but *sonus*, or *tonus*, or *nota*, or *melos*. For no flautist or organist or lutanist calls his melody *cantio* except insofar as it is united to some song; while those who compose words in harmony call their works *canzoni*; and such words, even when they are on paper and not being performed, we call *canzoni*."

la Musica [. . .] è tutta relativa, sì come si vede ne le parole armonizzate e ne li canti, de' quali tanto più dolce armonia resulta, quanto più la relazione è bella: la quale in essa scienza massimamente è bella, perché massimamente in essa s'intende. Ancora, la Musica trae a sé li spiriti umani, che quasi sono principalmente vapori del cuore, sì che quasi cessano da ogni operazione: sì è l'anima intera, quando l'ode, e la virtù di tutti quasi corre a lo spirito sensibile che riceve il suono.²

Identified with the heaven of Mars, whose heat is a sign—among other things—of the mortality of civilizations, music is the one science capable of integrating all the others and thus, in a certain sense, to preside over them.³

Dante's poetry is the best illustration of these principles, as we see in the *Commedia*, where there is a remarkable range of tonalities and styles that vary according to the place one is in. In *Inferno*, a place of disorder and stasis, true music is not present and the references to music are generally parodical and ironic. In *Purgatorio*, where change and order are the lymph that drives the spirits upward, music is intrinsic to the journey, with hymns and psalms and other representations of a liturgical character. In *Paradiso*, where Dante replaces mimetic representation with a poetics of metaphor and analogy, music is all-pervasive and assumes the epistemological importance of the science of mediation, proportion, and order Dante wrote of in *Convivio*, also expressing itself in the intense musicality of the verse.

Dante's trust that language, through its sensory aspect, can express the truth was connected to the idea of the congruence and correlation of the forms of the real, and thus to the thematics of the Pythagorean harmony of the spheres as based on number and music. His most direct source for this is Augustine, who in *De Musica* defines the universe as the poem of God; but he also drew on Boethius, whose *De institutione musica* was widely diffused in the Middle Ages. Boethius proposed three interrelated categories of music: "cosmic" music, caused by the movements of the celestial bodies; "human" music, being the harmony of body and soul composed within the person by means of the humors; and

² Dante Alighieri, *Convivio*, ed. Piero Cudini (Milan: Garzanti, 1980), 112.

³ See Alighieri, *Convivio* 2.13, 111–112: "E lo cielo di Marte si può comparare a la Musica per due proprietadi: l'una si è la sua più bella relazione, ché annumerando li cieli mobili, da qualunque si comincia o da l'infimo o dal sommo, esso cielo di Marte è lo quinto, esso è lo mezzo di tutti, cioè de li primi, de li secondi, de li terzi e de li quarti. L'altra si è che esso Marte, [. . .] dissecca e arde le cose, perché lo suo calore è simile a quello del fuoco; e questo è quello per che esso pare affocato di colore, quando più e quando meno, secondo la spessezza e raritade de li vapori che 'l seguono."

“instrumental” music, to which Boethius dedicates most of his attention.⁴ In addition, Dante incorporated into his thinking the theories of Aristoxenus, who had gone beyond pure theory by conducting research on acoustics and musical taste.⁵ With these ideas in mind, I will draw an arc in this paper between the episodes of Casella in Ante-Purgatory and Cacciaguida in Paradise. Both episodes occur under the influence of Mars, both are deeply personal and mark key transitions for the “I” figure and both concern the deeper structural and semantic importance of music to the poem.

2. As Dante and Virgil await the angel who will deliver them from the beach of the Tiber to the mountain of Purgatory, the sun is in the constellation of Aries:

Ed ecco, qual, sul presso del mattino,
per li grossi vapor Marte rosseggia
giù nel ponente sovra 'l suol marino,
cotal m'apparve, s'io ancor lo veggia,
un lume per lo mar venir sì ratto,
che 'l muover suo nessun volar pareggia. (*Purg.* 2.13–19)

The word “vapor,” as seen in the cited passage from *Convivio*, relates to the human spirits that occupy the heaven of Mars. As in that heaven, here on the beach of Ante-Purgatory, the souls are drawn to the affective force of music.

When Dante pilgrim sees his deceased friend, the musician Casella, he is emotionally moved and embraces him three times. When Casella asks why Dante is here, the pilgrim utters his first words in the canticle (including the strong personal pronoun “mio”):

⁴ As Mario Pazzaglia writes in *L'armonia come fine: conferenze e studi danteschi* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1989), 4–5, in *De Institutione Musica*, a work widely known and diffused in the Middle Ages, Boethius proposed to discuss three types of music: (1) the “cosmic” music caused by the circular movements of the celestial bodies, which are inaudible and express the perfect harmony of the world; (2) the “human” music, that is the harmonious music of the soul that is composed within the person and registers one’s physiological humors (being, like the cosmic music, largely a metaphor); (3) and finally, the “instrumental” music, to which Boethius dedicates the entirety of his unfinished treatise, never returning to explore the cosmic and human music enunciated in the introduction.

⁵ See Emma Pistelli Rinaldi, *La musicalità di Dante* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1968), 76: “[Aristosseno] aveva modificato la rigida teoria precedente, e favorito i diritti dell’orecchio, dimostrando così una squisita sensibilità musicale e un notevole sviluppo nel gusto.”

“Casella mio, per tornar altra volta
là dov’ io son, fò io questo viaggio,”
diss’ io; “ma a te com’ è tanta ora tolta?” (*Purg.* 2.91–93)

Once Casella has explained the delay of his passage, after death, to this place, Dante asks him to sing. When Casella complies, the pilgrim and Virgil and all the surrounding souls are rapt in pleasant forgetfulness:

E io: “Se nuova legge non ti toglie
memoria o uso a l’amoroso canto
che mi solea quetar tutte mie doglie,
di ciò ti piaccia consolare alquanto
l’anima mia, che, con la sua persona
venendo qui, è affannata tanto!”
‘Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona’
cominciò elli allor sì dolcemente,
che la dolcezza ancor dentro mi suona (*Purg.* 2.106–114)

Dante’s self-citation is of great importance. This *canzone*, written after Beatrice’s death and later included in the *Convivio*, is an example of the post-*Vita Nuova* development of the *dolce stil nuovo* in a philosophical-theological direction. As such, it is the perfect vehicle for the “amoroso canto” of Casella, who has remembered this poem in death, as is also evident from his speech, which repeats several key lexemes and rhymes from the *canzone*.⁶

In his *lectura* of Canto 2, Giovanni Pascoli describes this encounter as taking place in a “*lucus*,” or clearing, that is synonymous with life itself: “La marina del Tevere per Dante significa la vita.”⁷ As to why Casella’s passage over the water was delayed for three months, Pascoli explains this in moral terms that relate to the concept of a good death and the “*cupio dissolvi*,” or desire of the Christian to die in order to meet God.⁸ The angel who decides

⁶ See Pistelli Rinaldi, *La musicalità di Dante*, 90, for whom the lines in Casella’s speech “sono [. . .] essi stessi musica blanda, piana, soave, con accenti chiari e dolcissimi, con ritmi cadenzati e rime delicate per affinità di suoni ‘anto-anto, ente-ente, enti-enti,’ è un seguito di assonanze che potremmo intonare se lo conoscessimo . . .” Thus for Pistelli Rinaldi, Casella’s song serves to exemplify the qualities of music enunciated in *Convivio* 2.13.24 (cited above), p. 112: “la Musica trae a sé li spiriti umani, che quasi sono principalmente vapori del cuore, sì che quasi cessano da ogni operazione: sì è l’anima intera, quando l’ode, e la virtù di tutti quasi corre a lo spirito sensibile che riceve lo suono.”

⁷ Giovanni Pascoli, *Il canto secondo del Purgatorio*, in *Opere*, ed. Maurizio Perugi, 2 vols. (Milan: Ricciardi, 1980), 2, 1628–29.

⁸ Seemingly for Pascoli, Catone is an expedient and cannot rival Casella and Virgil in the conveying of affect, love and pathos. For Pascoli, Catone’s interruption of Casella’s song is of little significance in a place that is all music; see *ibid.*, 105: “Il monte

when each soul will pass over has waited for the moment when Casella's desire is complete.

Casella is the living sign of the desire for expiation, a manifestation of the spirit that has departed from the flesh while retaining its affective values of love and sweetness. When he states "'Così com'io t'amai / nel mortal corpo, così t'amo sciolta [. . .]'" (*Purg.* 2.88–89), he establishes a continuity between earthly friendship and divine love, between this life and the next.⁹ In this sense, Casella is similar to Catone—who interrupts the minstrel's song in order to urge the travellers on, to leave behind the "scoglio," or dross, of their earlier customs. Catone too is a threshold figure: He desired death in order to gain freedom and here draws a connection between the ideals of pre-Christian Rome and Christianity.

The focus in this scene is on the beauty of Casella's voice; his name itself is musical, characterized by the lyric *dulcedo* Dante attributed to the "combed words" of the high lyric.¹⁰ As Mario Pazzaglia writes of this passage: "La poesia insiste sull'apparire di questa bellezza come prima *manifestatio* del bene o intuizione germinale del mondo redento dall'amore."¹¹ We might say that Casella conveys for the first time in the pilgrim's otherworldly experience the capacity of vernacular poetry to express the spontaneous goodness of love.¹²

è tutto un canto, da questa spiaggia sino al fuoco dove cantano i poeti italiani e provenzali, sino alla foresta dove salmeggia Matelda." Virgil too is moved by Casella and symbolizes, in Pascoli's view, the love that joins Dante, the lover, to Beatrice, the beloved, a trinity that mirrors that of the Holy Trinity.

⁹ As against the notion that Catone's remarks signify a dismissal of the philosophical-theological content of Dante's *canzone*, Ignazio Baldelli, "Linguistica e interpretazione: l'amore di Catone, di Casella, di Carlo Martello e le canzoni del *Convivio* II e III," in *Miscellanea di studi linguistici in onore di Walter Belardi*, eds. Palmira Cipriano, Paolo di Giovine, Marco Mancini (Rome: Il Calamo, 1994), vol. 2, 554, writes: "Si ritiene dunque del tutto schematica e moralistica l'idea (assai diffusa) che con il canto di Casella Dante abbia inteso, in un qualche modo, liquidare le rime per la 'donna gentile' . . ." We share Baldelli's disapproval of the moralistic interpretations of the episode, as they tend to ignore the *moral* interpretation (put into relief by Pascoli) of Casella as a figure of Christian love. To rely on the former interpretations is inconsistent with the personal warmth and affect of the episode and its essential support of the continuity of Dante's poetics from the *Convivio* through the *Commedia*.

¹⁰ See Alighieri, *Literature in the Vernacular*, 48: "We call those combed, which are trisyllables, or as near as possible to trisyllables, without aspiration, without acute or circumflex accent, without double *x* or *z*, without two liquid sounds together or a liquid immediately after a mute, words planed of all roughness which leave the speaker with a feeling of sweetness, such as *amore, donna, disio, vertute, donare, letitia, salute, securtate, defesa*." (2.7.5).

¹¹ Pazzaglia, *L'armonia come fine*, 15–16.

¹² See *ibid.*, 16: "[Per] ora conta questa ritrovata alacrità e purezza dell'animo e delle cose, che Dante esprime in una sorta di imitazione della musica in quanto epifania

In the *Convivio*, Dante extols the virtues of the vernacular language, stating not only that it was the path by which he gained access to Latin—the language of the sciences and theology—but that it was indispensable to his understanding of his origins, his being and his art:

Questo mio volgare fu congiugnitore de li miei generanti, che con esso parlavano, sì come 'l fuoco è disponente del ferro al fabbro che fa lo coltello; per che manifesto è lui essere concorso a la mia generazione, e così essere alcuna cagione del mio essere. [. . .] Ciascuna cosa studia naturalmente a la sua conservazione: onde, se lo volgare per sé studiare potesse, studierebbe a quella; e quella sarebbe, acconciare sé a più stabilitade, e più stabilitade non potrebbe avere che in legar sé con numero e con rime. E questo medesimo studio è stato mio, sì come tanto è palese che non dimanda testimonianza. Per che uno medesimo studio è stato lo suo e 'l mio; per che di questa concordia l'amistà è confermata e accresciuta.¹³

Not only is the vernacular able to deal with the intimate and personal aspects of life, but it is morally good and a friend to the poet who seeks to bind together, in meter and rhyme, the truths it generates. In fact it is precisely vernacular poetry's ability to relay affective truths, not least by virtue of its musicality, that underlies the self-citation Dante places in the mouth of Casella. While a certain doctrinaire position maintains that "Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona" represents a secular message to be dispatched to the past, since the musical consolation that lies ahead will be sacred in character, this viewpoint tends to suppress the *canzone's* treatment of the relation between wisdom and divine love, and its status as perhaps the most beautiful of Dante's allegorical *canzoni*.¹⁴ Seen in this light, there is a continuity between the *canzone* and the other music heard in this *canto*, the psalm of the Hebrew

dell'armonia che il pellegrino incomincia a ritrovare in se stesso, nella natura e nella vita."

¹³ Alighieri, *Convivio* 1.13, 46–47.

¹⁴ See Irma Brandeis, *Ladder of Vision: A Study of Dante's Comedy* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1961), 72. She cites Augustine (*Confessions* 10.34) in order to characterize the presence of Dante's *canzone* here as a "toy." "[H]ere where the work of returning to the source of beauty and wisdom begins, [the *canzone*] figures as one of those 'toys' which men have made 'for the delight of the eye, copying the outward forms of the things they make, but inwardly forsaking him by whom they were made and destroying what they themselves have been made to be.'" See Bruno Nardi, *Dal 'Convivio' alla 'Commedia' (Sei saggi danteschi)* (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 1992), 11: "In questa *canzone* che, nel gruppetto delle allegoriche, è la sola veramente bella per l'onda musicale che la pervade, il velo dell'allegoria è diventato così trasparente che appena s'avverte."

exodus from Egypt “In exitu Israel,” and the music of subsequent cantos.

Casella (who naturally hears the psalm as well) marks the beginning of a process of self-recognition in Dante that will reach its culmination with Cacciaguida. As *Purgatorio* progresses, its internal musical scansion will be provided by songs, psalms, and hymns that are part of the canonical mass. As Ilaria Gallinaro demonstrates, the order of hymns that demarcate the terraces of purgatory has a precise relation to the mass—with the parts of the mass presented in an inverted order—all as a sustaining musical force in the poem’s continuity.¹⁵ For Pazzaglia, the largely choral music of Purgatory—a pervasive expression of heavenly love—is a manifestation of Boethius’ conception of *musica humana*:

La *musica mundana*, e soprattutto quella *humana*, messe in ombra sul piano concettuale, dalla dottrina aristotelico-scolastica, ritornano attuali sul piano dell’immaginario come metafora del risentirsi dell’uomo nel grande poema dell’essere che comprende anche la ristabilita *proportio* della persona redenta, la sua rinnovata fraternità con gli altri e col mondo.¹⁶

By the end of the second canticle—which has assimilated the earthly landscape and time—this human music will exceed the realm of worldly representation and be identified with the cosmic myth of metamorphosis that is basic to Paradise.

3. In the first lines of *Paradiso* 2, Dante warns those readers who may not be prepared for the rigors to come: “non vi mettete in pelago, ché, forse, / perdendo me, rimarreste smarriti” (*Par.* 2.5–6). The readers that do proceed will receive a complex lesson in the relations between intellect, affect, and psyche, in which music plays a critical role. The syntactic and rhythmic patterns in *Paradiso* resemble those of the Gregorian chant, “per lo sviluppo ascensionale dei melismi o certe arcate melodiche che ugualmente si

¹⁵ See Ilaria Gallinaro, “‘Guidavaci una voce che cantava’. Il *Purgatorio* cantica musicale,” draft paper courtesy of the author, Università della Svizzera Italiana, 2013, 11: “Tenendo presente la struttura della messa Dante usa cinque elementi in questo ordine: l’*Agnus Dei* (XVI 19), il *Gloria in excelsis* (XX 136), l’*Osanna* (XXIX 49), il *Benedictus qui venis* (XXX 19) e l’*Asperges me* (XXXI 97). L’*Agnus Dei* e il *Gloria* nel *Purgatorio*, *Osanna*, *Benedictus* e *Asperges* nel paradiso terrestre. Tenendo conto del fatto che il salmo *Asperges* accompagnava l’aspersione di acqua benedetta prima della messa domenicale, si deduce che il cammino musicale previsto da Dante disegna una sorta di messa al contrario, rigorosamente in latino, dall’*Agnus Dei* al *Benedictus* (in ordine inverso rispetto alla struttura tradizionale della messa) con la conclusione su un rito che tradizionalmente precedeva la messa.”

¹⁶ Pazzaglia, *L’armonia come fine*, 17.

chiudono su se stesse, secondo modi polifonici che si esprimono attraverso il movimento piuttosto che la semplice sensazione acustica.”¹⁷ In addition, Dante adopts a more complex syntax and a greater verbal redundancy:

In Dante la ridondanza è dovuta, in primo luogo, alla necessità di adottare, per un mondo fortemente omogeneo, la tecnica wagneriana dei *Leit-motive*: cioè la ripetizione costante di una serie di temi, di rituali fisici e metafisici, di nuclei iconici e musicali, in corrispondenza di certi oggetti o personaggi.¹⁸

In combination with these technical changes, the heavens of Paradise are dominated by grand figurations, keyed in to the sort of leitmotifs that Pasquini discusses. Let us consider in that regard the opening of Canto 13 (1–24), where, in a single 24-line period resembling the form of a *ballata*, Dante describes the double corona of stars—“la doppia danza” (*Par.* 13.20)—circling overhead in the heaven of the Sun. For Fredi Chiappelli, these two circles spinning in opposite directions exhaust the representation of time and space and carry Dante to the absolute limit of abstraction, beyond which the semiotic force of figuration is reborn in the sign:

I due cerchi giranti in senso inverso, che esauriscono la rappresentazione del tempo e dello spazio, [. . .] sono il colmo dell’astrazione; il limite oltre il quale per la via dell’astrazione non si può procedere. A questo punto si pone dunque il problema della rinascita della figura e del significato nel segno.¹⁹

As befits the quality of maximum abstraction symbolized by the double dance of stars, the Sun is a heaven dominated by rational thought. Here Dante is schooled on matters of theology. Once his passage through the heaven is nearly complete, he will have one remaining question to posit to King Solomon, and this concerns the disposition of the body after the resurrection of the flesh. Not coincidentally, Solomon (the putative author of the Song of Songs), will resolve the matter “musically,” after which Dante is free to pass over into the heaven of Mars, where his illustrious ancestor Cacciaguida awaits him.²⁰

¹⁷ Emilio Pasquini, *Dante e le figure del vero. La fabbrica della “Commedia”* (Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 2001), 235–236.

¹⁸ Pasquini, *Dante e le figure del vero*, 231.

¹⁹ Fredi Chiappelli, *Il legame musaico*, ed. Pier Massimo Forni with Giorgio Cavallini (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1984), 114.

²⁰ See Pazzaglia, *L’armonia come fine*, 26: “È la ‘musica’ (ci si consenta la metafora) del trionfo sulla morte, dell’armonia indissolubile della persona (la *musica humana* di

If in the heavens leading up to Mars one saw the concrete figures of the world rarefied for the sake of abstraction, now that process is reversed.²¹ Mars represents a return to concreteness and the world, and to music as a form of consolation. Here under the grand figuration of the Cross begins “la reintegrazione di significati in apparenze,” as well as the reintegration of history and theology, affect and intellect.²² Upon entering this heaven, which celebrates the historical martyrs of the Church and the virtue of strength, Dante hears the hymn of the resurrection, in which he discerns only the words “Resurgi” and “Vinci.”²³

E come giga e arpa, in temprata tesa
di molte corde, fa dolce tintinno
a tal da cui la nota non è intesa,
così da' lumi che lì m'apparinno
s'accogliea per la croce una melode
che mi rapiva, senza intender l'inno.
Ben m'accors' io ch'elli era d'alte lode,
però ch'a me venìa “Resurgi” e “Vinci”
come a colui che non intende e ode (*Par.* 14.118–126).

The presence of instrumental metaphors in this passage is typical of Mars, which contains more such metaphors than any other heaven.²⁴ In the opening of Canto 15 the indescribable music of Mars is compared to that of a lyre, which then grows silent, setting the stage for the encounter with Cacciaguida:

Boezio), che durerà eterna, non più insidiata dalla deviazione e dal peccato. Nella certezza di questa vittoria, il discorso di Salomone acquista una tonalità epica, di canto spiegato, monodico e, insieme, corale. Ma insieme al trionfo del corpo redento si afferma quello dei semplici affetti umani, del povero tempo, terrestre, spazio di contingenza e corruzione, ma anche di fondazione dell'eternità.”

²¹ See Chiappelli, *Il legame musaico*, 115: “È da qui che le forme astratte cominciano ad essere superate dai significati, che esigono anche un elemento di concretezza. Il problema della sintesi personale, una volta che è orientata verso lo splendido punto d'arrivo della persona-luce, fa ricominciare la storia dell'umanità.”

²² *Ibid.*, 116.

²³ See Pazzaglia, *L'armonia come fine*, 25: “Qui, quasi a rendere omaggio al Cielo assimilato nel *Convivio* alla musica, si ode un coro, che è inno di vittoria e di resurrezione.”

²⁴ See Pistelli Rinaldi, *La musicalità di Dante*, 71: “Esclusivamente vocale infatti, e ciò non è senza significato, è la musica della *Commedia*. La musica strumentale vi figura solo ricordata nelle similitudini . . . Neppure nel *Purgatorio* e nel *Paradiso*, vero regno della musica, i Beati e gli Angeli suonano (anche se il Beato Angelico li rappresentò con arpa, liuto e tromba); e degli strumenti sono ricordati, ovviamente, soltanto quelli più nobili: la lira (*Par.* XV, 4 e XXIII, 100), l'organo (*Purg.* IX, 144 e *Par.* XVII, 44), l'arpa (*Par.* XIV, 118); però non sono mai presentati, né se ne ode neppure il suono reale.” It is noteworthy that three of the five references here are from Mars.

Benigna volontade in che si liqua
sempre l'amor che drittamente spira,
come cupidità fa ne la iniqua,
silenzio puose a quella dolce lira,
e fece quietar le sante corde
che la destra del cielo allenta e tira (*Par.* 15.1–7).

Through his meeting with his great-great-grandfather, who stands in the Cross along with other martyrs, Dante will learn of his lineage and his destiny. This is a lengthy process that begins with Cacciaguida urging Dante to speak boldly, to proclaim his desire and his will (where “volontà” repeats the “volontade” of the *canto*'s opening line just cited):

“[. . .] la voce tua sicura, balda e lieta
suoni la volontà, suoni 'l disio,
a che la mia risposta è già decreta!” (*Par.* 15.67–69)

The encounter continues with Cacciaguida's praise of the archaic Florence of his day. Then at the close of Canto 15, he recalls his martyrdom, repeating the same words employed in Canto 10 to describe Boethius's death: Both men left “il mondo fallace” and were delivered to “questa pace:”

“[. . .] Dietro li andai incontro a la nequizia
di quella legge il cui popolo usurpa,
per colpa d'i pastor, vostra giustizia.
Quivi fu' io da quella gente turpa
disviluppato dal *mondo fallace*,
lo cui amor molt' anime deturpa;
e venni dal martiro a questa pace.” (*Par.* 15.142–148)²⁵

The verbal echoing of the figure of Boethius is that of another paternal figure of Dante's. The fact that Boethius' exile is mentioned—“e da essilio venne a questa pace” (*Par.* 10.129)—recalls the liturgical theme of exile in *De consolatione philosophiae*, along with Psalm 113 sung in *Purgatorio* 2, and it anticipates the figural completion of the prophecies concerning Dante's exile by Cacciaguida in Canto 17.

In addition to being a martyr of the Church Militant, Cacciaguida is a singer, “l'elegiaco cantore della mondana caducità.”²⁶

²⁵ *Par.* 10.124–129: “Per vedere ogne ben dentro vi gode / l'anima santa che 'l *mondo fallace* / fa manifesto a chi di lei ben ode. / Lo corpo ond' ella fu cacciata giace / giusto in Cieldauro; ed essa da martiro / *e da essilio venne a questa pace.*”

²⁶ Fiorenzo Forti, “Cacciaguida,” in *Enciclopedia dantesca*, 6 vols. (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1970), 1: 738.

In his voice, which ranges over many tones and registers, one has a confirmation of Dante's identification of poetry and music. If in the passage just cited Cacciaguida spoke in the lower register, as suitable for the "gente turpa" who defiled Florence, in Canto 16 he employs the high register for his threnody on the death of kingdoms:

Se tu riguardi Luni e Orbisaglia
come sono ite, e come se ne vanno
di retro ad esse Chiusi e Sinigaglia,
udir come le schiatte si disfanno
non ti parrà nova cosa né forte,
poscia che le cittadi termine hanno.
Le vostre cose tutte hanno lor morte,
sì come voi; ma celasi in alcuna
che dura molto, e le vite son corte (*Par.* 16.73–81).

In the process of educating Dante about his ancestry, Cacciaguida delivers a list of Florentine family names that resonate with the historical immanence of language, almost as emblems—or pure signifiers—of the bygone era:

Grand' era già la colonna del Vaio,
Sacchetti, Giuochi, Fifanti e Barucci
e Galli e quei ch'arrossan per lo staio.
Lo ceppo di che nacquero i Calfucci
era già grande, e già eran tratti
a le curule Sizzii e Arrigucci (*Par.* 16.100–108)

In Canto 17 Cacciaguida prophesies Dante's exile (completing the numerous earlier discourses on that subject in *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, including that of Brunetto Latini, the only figure other than Cacciaguida referred to as "paternal"). To begin with, Dante must understand the nature of causality: while events in the future are known to God, God does not cause them to happen, just as a boat floating downstream does not derive its necessity from the eye that observes it. Thus, says Cacciaguida, he is able to see Dante's destiny before his eyes as naturally as his ears are able to hear the music of an organ:

Da indi, sì come viene ad orecchia
dolce armonia da organo, mi viene
a vista il tempo che ti s'apparecchia. (*Par.* 17.43–45)²⁷

²⁷ This passage is emblematic of the convergence in the third canticle of metaphors and similes; here, as Pasquini notes, a simile becomes an analytical metaphor in order to convey the relation between time and music. See Pasquini, *Dante e le figure del*

As Cacciaguida's discourse intensifies, Dante is apprised of his own historical innocence: Like Hippolytus, falsely accused when driven out of Athens, Dante was innocent when exiled from Florence. Knowing this, Dante is free to receive his investiture, to carry forward this innocence from the venues of history—made transparent by Cacciaguida—to the discourses of eternity. Dante now possesses the unity of character needed to proceed upward through the final heavens and confirm the ultimately eschatological and theological character of that innocence.²⁸

It is perhaps this area in Dante's thinking, comprising the nexus of music, eschatology and messianic prophecy, that is hardest for modernity to grasp, not least because of the proliferation of metaphors in the third canticle. It is useful analysis in that regard to recall the Boethian concept of *musica humana*, being the inaudible harmony arrived at in the individual through a symmetry of body and soul.²⁹ As Dante moves forward in possession of this inner music, he arrives at a critical moment of retrospection at the end of the heaven of Saturn, as he gazes from the constellation of Gemini to earth, "L' aiuola che ci fa tanto feroci" (*Par.* 22.151). Then in the following *canto*, in the heaven of the fixed stars, he witnesses the Triumph of Christ and the smile of Beatrice enmeshed in a "circulata melodia:"

Così la circolata melodia
 si sigillava, e tutti li altri lumi
 facean sonare il nome di Maria (*Par.* 23.109–111).

This circulating melody is a vibrant image as well as an established musical genre (similar to a round), another of the genres that Dante embeds in his poem. Indeed it is precisely through the musical iteration of verbal patterns such as this that Dante is able to achieve in *Paradiso* the figural completion of his palindomic poem.

vero, 208: "il paragone diventa una metafora analitica e la metafora un paragone sintetico."

²⁸ Giorgio Petrocchi, *Il Paradiso di Dante* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1978), 107: "Il poeta è consapevole d'essere innocente vittima della sopraffazione delle parti politiche e delle discordie cittadine."

²⁹ As Boethius writes, *Fundamentals of Music*, trans. Calvin M. Bower, ed. Claude V. Palisca (New Haven: Yale University Press), 10: "Whoever penetrates into his own self perceives human music. For what unites the incorporeal nature of reason with the body if not a certain harmony and, as it were, a careful tuning of low and high pitches as though producing one consonance? What other than this unites the parts of the soul, which, according to Aristotle, is composed of the rational and the irrational? What is it that intermingles the elements of the body or holds together the parts of the body in an established order?"

4. In summary, as one considers Dante's personal trajectory in the *Commedia* under the sign of music, and especially in terms of the *musica humana* theorized by Boethius, two figures stand out, Casella and Cacciaguida. One appears at the beginning of *Purgatorio*, the only canticle organized in terms of time, a domain where the *mise en scène* involves music in a mimetic and functional way. The other appears at the center of *Paradiso*, a timeless realm in which the role of music is symbolic and ontological in character. In contrast to the monophonic music of *Purgatorio*, with its structured references to liturgy and the mass, the music of *Paradiso* is polyphonic and dislodged from mimetic correspondences.³⁰ Music in the third canticle speaks to the inscribed awareness of historical and personal mutability, allowing for mediation between a wide range of registers and themes.³¹

When Dante meets Casella he is a newcomer to Purgatory. One gathers from the scene that his encounters with persons he knew in life will now have a positive cast, unlike *Inferno*, where even a dear friendship, such as that with Brunetto, is tinged by moral reproach and warning. What the protagonist has gained by passing through Hell is the capacity to discern this moral difference. Now in the realm of positive change and expiation, Dante's first words are to Casella. When that minstrel gladly accedes to Dante's request to sing his poetry, one has a confirmation of the sacred value of friendship (including the "amistà" of one's native tongue) and of the integral role that music will play in the second canticle. This is a profoundly autobiographical moment in which the self-citing of the Italian poem reminds the reader of Dante's convictions about the capacities of the vernacular. When Catone interrupts Casella's song, one is reminded of the need not to tarry in this place of penitence and atonement; by the same token, the lingering sentiment that Dante preserves from this encounter is that of sweetness. Casella's song serves to validate the *canzoni* of the *Convivio* whose philosophical-theological content remained pertinent to the Dantean character's Bonaventuran itinerary.

³⁰ See Guido Salvetti, "La musica in Dante," *Rivista italiana di musicologia* 6, (1971): 160-204, regarding polyphony's uniqueness to *Paradiso*, p. 192: "Ma dobbiamo osservare che [. . .] le ultime e le piú alte parole della musica nel Poema sono affidate al canto polifonico: l'unico capace di partecipare all'estremo rarefarsi ed al sublime intellettualizzarsi dell'ispirazione nella Terza Cantica."

³¹ See Pazzaglia, *L'armonia come fine*, 54: "Dante tenta spesso una mimesi suggestiva della modulazione del canto, esprimendo questa *imitatio musice* nell'impasto dei suoni, nella struttura metrica e agogica del verso, con pause e iperbatì intesi a imitare la pronuncia rallentata e sospesa delle parole che Boezio diceva propria del canto."

Intrinsic to that itinerary is a progression through stages of understanding in which the affect retains its centrality to the life of the soul. It is not a coincidence that the ambience of the Casella episode is provided by Mars, the planetary heaven—dominated by the affect—that Dante aligns with music, or that the heaven of Mars will be the site of the encounter with Cacciaguida. In that meeting Dante is empowered to comprehend the *musica humana* of his soul, such that after leaving Mars he can assume the role of the ascendant hero of the poem, with all the necessary humility.³² In the subsequent heavens the personae of poet and pilgrim will effectively converge. For this profound change to occur, an older Dante was required, a Dante beyond the partisan struggles of his past and finally residing with his children in Ravenna. It is fitting that the imagery of the mother and of Mary are prominent as the now unified persona embarks on the final heavens, where the path toward innocence is suggested by the large number of metaphors focused on the mother and the child.³³

³² See Petrocchi, *Il Paradiso di Dante*, 106: “[Dante] immette nella sua *factio poetica* un elevato e orgoglioso ideale messianico. Non più il Veltro o un Messo celeste, ma egli stesso, Dante, sarà colui che recherà al mondo, attraverso il messaggio della *Commedia*, le parole di redenzione e di rinnovamento.”

³³ As I have written in Thomas Peterson, “Verso l’infanzia: Contemplazione e apprendimento in *Paradiso* XXIII-XXXIII,” *Rivista di studi italici* 1, no. 1/2 (1997): 43–61, the end goal of this learning is innocence, a destination figured by Dante with repeated images of the state of childhood, the time of one’s biological life before sin. See also Thomas Mussio, “Toward the Innocence of a Child? The Cluster of Child Similes in *Paradiso*,” *Dante Studies* 130 (2012): 215–233. While the major movement of this simulation of the babe is toward images of the mother, in the cantos of Cacciaguida it is “la paterna festa” (*Par.* 15.84), which must be seen as unifying the son and father, historically and theologically.