The Envious Eye: Echoes of *Inferno* XIII in *Purgatorio* XIII (the Figures of Pier della Vigna and Sapia)

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‘For God created man incorruptible, and to the image of his own likeness he made him. But by the envy of the devil, death came into the world’ (Wisdom 2:23-24).

‘There are some […] emotions whose very names connote baseness, e.g. […] envy’ (Aristotle, *Ethics* ii.6 [1107a]).

Mindful of envy’s destructive power in a social context, in the sixth century Pope Gregory I assigned envy second ranking, after the sin of pride, in his schema of the seven deadly sins (or capital vices): pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice, gluttony and lust. Since classical times, envy has been associated with images of darkness and a state of mind that brings continual suffering to the one who is envious of the good fortune of others. There are also two biblical passages that have imagery connected with darkness, spiritual blindness and the sin of envy: ‘They shall meet with darkness in the day, and grope at noonday as in the night’ (Job 5:14) and ‘he that hateth his brother, is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth; because the darkness hath blinded his eyes’ (1 John 2:11). Although in the *Inferno* the sin of envy (invidia) has no circle assigned to it, and no specific contrapasso, Dante-poet affirms that Hell has its origins in envy; ‘là onde ’nvidia prima dipartilla’ (Inv. I, 111), and he offers pertinent examples of its destructive effects in the *Commedia*. On three occasions, the Poet identifies the city of Florence as a seat of envy, and also of pride and avarice. In the meetings with Ciacco (Inv. VI) and Brunetto (Inv. XV), Dante underscores the major social ills that have degraded the citizenry of Florence: ‘superbia, invidia e avarizia sono / le tre faville c’hanno i cuori accesì’ (VI, 74-75); ‘gent’ è avara, invidiosa e superba’ (XV, 68). In a venomous invective against the
city, Foulquet in *Paradiso* IX declares that Florence has sprung forth from the envious seraph: 'La tua città, che di colui è pianta / che pria volse le spalle al suo fattore / e di cui è la 'vidia tanto pianta' (127-129). According to Aquinas: 'when the devil tempts us to envy, he is enticing us to that which has its chief place in his heart' (*Summa Theologica*, 2-2, Q. 36, a. 4).\

In *Inferno* XIII, the encounter with the metamorphosed soul of the self-mutilated Pier della Vigna in the Wood of the Suicides provides a special focus also on envy. Although Pier's sin is not envy, his spiritual state on earth, where he displayed an excess of self-pride and ambition, eventually led him to commit suicide, for which he is punished in Hell. The encounter with Pier in *Inferno* XIII vividly articulates, for the Pilgrim, the insidious nature of envy and the effects on Pier of the envy of the imperial courtiers. Later in the journey, up on the Cornice of Envy, the Pilgrim is overcome with emotion at the sight of the blind, mutilated figures of the penitent envious. During the course of this encounter with the Envious in *Purgatorio* XIII, the self-mockery of Sapia, a former practitioner of envy, provides a lively foil to the clever courtier in *Inferno* XIII. Pier della Vigna claims to have been the innocent victim of the envy practised by others, resulting in his delamission and loss of honour. Pier is the imperial spin-doctor *par excellence* and his monologue is a cry of despair for the loss of earthly glories and honours and the trappings of high office. He presents himself as an exemplary citizen in the emperor's service and his glossy speech is a make-over in which he clothes himself, metaphorically speaking, in his former resplendent robes of office. However, it is a masking over, a gilding of a life lived for self alone. Conversely, the envious sinners in the Second Cornice, who narrowed their range of charitable actions during their time on earth, are commuting their debt of sin in a transitional place of spiritual purification whose genesis was the direct result of Lucifer's fall.

This paper will attempt to trace a number of echoes and contextual links that provide a counterpoise between the representation of Pier in *Inferno* XIII and the portrayal of the once-envious Sapia in *Purgatorio* XIII. The aim of the comparison is to highlight how the verbal resonances, allusions and visual cues in both episodes constitute an intratextual moral paradigm by means of which Dante traces the pernicious effects of envy in human society.

Envy is the result of the soul's refusal to reach out to others in a gesture of love and support. In this respect it is the opposite to the experience of sharing enjoyed by the blessed in Paradise, who increase one another's bounty of love. Aquinas examines the question of envy in four articles in the *Summa Theologica* (2-2, Q. 36, a. 1-4). In article 3 he comments: 'envy according to the aspect of its object is contrary to charity, whence the soul derives its spiritual life'. Significantly, 1 Corinthians 13:4 states: 'Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up'.

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hardness and bare rock whose colour is symbolic of envy ('col livido color de la petraia', Purg. XIII, 9). The monochromatic setting, with its mortified souls leaning together against a harsh livid stone in the full midday, brings the Wayfarer to tears and to an outpouring of grief and compassion. The envious souls in Purgatory inhabit a blind world because, for their penance, their eyes are sewn over with iron wire, in the manner of falcons whose eyes are sealed with waxed silken thread while in training.\(^6\) In this manifestation of divine justice, the souls are deliberately prevented from using the faculty of vision, since they lacked charity, which can be understood as spiritual sightedness, in keeping with the traditional etymological association of invidia with an abuse of vision.\(^7\) One notes the synchronisation of classical myth and Christian belief, by means of which the Ovidian echoes in the episode (Metamorphoses, 708-832) are transmuted: for example, the vivid colours of the rocky topography of the Cornice of Envy recall Aglauros' transformation into stone ('Io sono Aglauro che divenni sasso', Purg. XIV, 139), while the classical personification of Envy, who smiles at the suffering of others, may be compared to Sapia, who once experienced pleasure in watching the misfortune of others: 'fui de li altrui danni / piu lieta assai che di ventura mia' (Purg. XIII, 110-111) and 'veggendo la caccia, / letizia presi a tutte altre dispari' (Purg. XIII, 119-120). As Francesco Tateo observes: 'secondo un metodo consueto in Dante, la dipendenza dal modello classico viene corretta dall'integrazione cristiana e dall'actualizzazione del messaggio morale'.\(^8\) In spite of the physical manifestation of blindness, the invidiosi have recognised their spiritual error and have learned to value the importance of mutual trust.\(^9\) Moreover, they are secure in the knowledge that their present condition is transitory. Virgil's apostrophe to the sun to guide the two travellers on their journey, 'O dolce lume' (16), anticipates the envious souls' desire to see the resplendent light of God ('gente sicura [...] di veder l'alto lume', Purg. XIII, 85-86), suggesting a surety of heavenly reward, a sense of confidence and of overcoming obstacles, and greater clarity of thought and self-knowledge.

The major figure among the Envious in Purgatorio XIII is the outspoken Sapia, who is concerned with the effects of unwise decision-making at the public level, using the example of her own former bitter feelings against the Sienese at the battle of Colle Val d'Elsa (June 1269) and extending this outwards to incorporate the notion of irresponsibility at the civic level. Sapia is keen to highlight the actions that she identifies as evidence of the overreaching ambitions of those in public office. Sapia's admission of her fault demonstrates a candor that is lacking in the discourse of Pier della Vigna. The scene recreated through Pier's memory is one of personal rivalry as the imperial courtiers vie for political advancement. His concerns in Hell display an earthly orientation, as he recalls the favours and prestige that he enjoyed as the Emperor's logothete and trusted confidant.\(^10\) Pier's desire for self-advancement is evident in his boastful words, 'Io son colui che tenni ambo le chiavi / del cor di Federigo' (Inf. XIII, 58-59).
Furthermore, he portrays himself as a victim of the envy of members of the court of Frederick II, with Envy personified as a harlot casting her wanton looks around the imperial court: 'La meretrice che mai da l'ospizio / di Cesare non torse li occhi putti' (64-65). His plea to Dante involves a recognition of the blow that envy has dealt him: 'confondi la memoria mia, che giace / ancor del colpo che 'vidia le diede' (77-78). Lucifer's envy had caused him to turn his beautiful face away from God's eternal light and, in Dante's Hell, he is sentenced to eternal darkness and disfigurement. In the case of Pier, envy by courtiers has caused the loss of earthly honours, and he has committed suicide. In Hell he experiences the eternal darkness of his mutilated condition. Images in Inferno XIII that are linked to mutilation, entrapment and the notion of unnatural or evil plants reappear in the lowest depths of Hell. Whereas Satan's fall is recalled at various moments during the Commedia, in Inferno XXXIV the Devil is represented as a grotesque, winged creature who is wedged tightly at the centre of the Earth. Cast as an impotent Prince of Darkness, Satan presides over a spectral frozen court. In close proximity to him, the treacherous sinners in Hell's innermost circle are blind and mutilated because their vision is sealed off by 'i duri veli' (Inf. XXXIII, 112). In their immobility and confinement to a sterile, icy wasteland, they enact their tragic nature as 'le frutta del mal orto' (Inf. XXXIII, 119), reminiscent of Matthew 7:19: 'Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cast down, and shall be cast into the fire'. The Poet imagines that the soul of the suicide Pier della Vigna is fashioned by God's ineluctable judgment into a seed. The latter subsequently germinates into a plant-like form that never bears fruit and remains a 'spirito incarcerato' (87). Pier's soul is thus an organic entity that emits 'parole e sangue' (44). Through the disfacimento that has produced 'an ersetz body', his evil seed is represented as blind and imprisoned, because through sin it is disenfranchised and deprived of its liberty: 'Solo il peccato è quel che la disfranca / e falla dissimile al sommo bene' (Par. VII, 79-80).

Comparisons between Inferno XIII and Purgatorio XIII reveal similarities that suggest Dante-auctor is weaving threads from the first of these two episodes in which invidia features as a key theme, and is presenting, through allusion, wordplay, echoing rhymes, puns, contrasting and mirror-like images, a nuanced portrayal of the sin through the encounters with Pier della Vigna and Sapia. Most striking at the outset of both stanzas is the visual representation of a desolate landscape: 'Noi ci mettermo per un bosco / che da neun sentiero era segnato' (Inf. XIII, 2-3) and 'Noi eravamo al sommo de la scala [...] Ombra non hì è né segno che si paia' (Purg. XIII, 1, 7). This is matched by the sombre condition of the individual souls: the Suicides have become 'aspi sterpi' (7), while the Envious are indistinguishable as they huddle against the rock, all wrapped in cloaks of the same coarse texture and colour: 'ombre con manti / al color de la pietra non diversi' (47-48). In both episodes Dante uses a monotinted palette to suggest a sterile, barren landscape: 'Non fronda verde, ma di color fosco' (Inf. XIII, 4) and 'parsi la via scorrere manifesti / e vede in persona e non però visi, /Costui ch'è mai di cui n'è / la risposta' (Purg. XIII, 67-69).

At this point in Purgatorio, the tension in both books is heightened by the alliteration: veni, visti, voce, volti, voleo, voci, voci, visti, visti, voce, volti, voci, voci. The correspondence of names and clustering consonants introduces a sense of imprisonment by the name. 'Vesti, vesti, colli e visi umani' (Inf. XXXIV, 109) is a morir fuggir diritto.

The themes of Pier della Vigna, who has suffered to be the lowest of the high-favoured, and Pirro of Augusta (67-69), who has suffered to be 'condur si vuol di qui / dalla ripa erano' (Inf. XXXIV, 107). The themes of Pier della Vigna, who has suffered to be the lowest of the high-favoured, and Pirro of Augusta (67-69), who has suffered to be 'condur si vuol di qui / dalla ripa erano' (Inf. XXXIV, 107).
'parsi la via schietta / col livido color de la petraia' (Purg. XIII, 8-9). As Dante and Virgil make their way through the bleak surroundings, their auditory senses detect a clamour of disembodied voices: 'io sentia d'ogne parte trarre guai / e non vedea persona che 'l facesse' (Inf. XIII, 22-23) and 'verso noi volar furon sentiti, / non però visti, spiriti parlando' (Purg. XIII, 25-26).

At this point in the narrative the Poet has been building up the dramatic tension in both cantos by using word-clusters displaying strong consonantal alliteration: verrai, vedevrai, vedeca, voci (in Inf. XIII, 19-26) and voglia, verso, volar, visti, voce, volando, Vinum (in Purg. XIII, 24-29). There are further onomatopoeic correspondences by means of which the soundscape produced by consonantal clustering conveys the harshness of the setting and the torment of the souls imprisoned by the effects of sin: for example, in Inferno XIII, 'Alì hanno late, e colli e visi umani' (13); 'Cred'io ch'ei credette ch'io credesse' (25); 'credendo col morir fuggir disdegno' (71), and in Purgatorio XIII, 'L'arco suo più tosto piega' (6); 'Costui ch'è meco e non fa motto' (141); 'calcì la terra di Toscana' (149). The repetition of lexical items, particularly verb forms in individual or successive verses may also be compared. The examples from Inferno XIII are well known for their high-floated, rhetorical flair: for example, 'e li 'nfiarmati infiammar si Augusto' (67-68), or the palindromic 'ingiusto fece me contra me giusto' (72). In Purgatorio XIII, the lexical repetition has a more muted quality: 'parsi la ripa e / parsi la via schietta' (8); 'per lo novo cammin, tu ne conduci' / dicea, "come condur si vuol quinc'entro"' (17-18); 'e l'un sofferia l'altro con la spalla, / e tutti da la ripa eran sofferiti' (59-60).

The themes of pity and human compassion are alluded to in both episodes as Pier della Vigna states: 'non hai tu spirito di pietade alcuno? [...] ben dovrebbe esser la tua man più pia' (36, 38), and the Wayfarer declares in Purgatorio XIII: 'Non credo che per terra vada ancoi / omo si duro, che non fosse punto / per compassion' (52-54). These observations find their release in Dante-agents' strong emotional reaction to the scenes he is witnessing. In the Wood of the Suicides his heart is filled with pity: 'tanta pieta m'accora' (84), while on the Cornice of Envy he bursts into tears: 'per li occhi fui di grave dolor munto' (57). The tears that the envious souls weep in Purgatory must force their way through the sewn eyelids: 'per l'orribile costura / premevan si, che bagnavan le gote' (XIII, 83-84). One is reminded of Pier's painful emission of blood when a part of his plant body is torn: 'Perché mi schianto?' (33). In both episodes, Virgil employs the imperative parla in order to spur his charge to speak: 'non perder l'ora; / ma parla' (Inf. XIII, 80-81) and 'Parla, e sie breve e arguto' (Purg. XIII, 78). In the case of Pier, an inducement of personal fame to be revived among the living is offered. In Purgatorio XIII, the Pilgrim offers the possibility of benefices that will enhance the spiritual journey of the penitents: 'e forse lei sarà buon sì l'appara' (93). In Inferno XIII, Pier gives a lucid account of the final fate of the damned in the 'mesta selva' (103-108), while in Purgatorio XIII, in what John Scott terms 'a unique moment.
of self-accusation. The Pilgrim considers his own fate after death: 'già lo 'ncazzo di là giù mi pesa' (138).

Present throughout both episodes is the theme of petrification, the hardening of the will of the sinner who resists the illumination of God's light, together with the concomitant link to St Peter, the rock on whose foundation the Church is built. In Inferno XIII, hardness is suggested by the 'petrified' sterile branches that are 'nodosi e 'nvolti' (5), whereas in Purgatorio XIII the setting is a rocky landscape. One notes the repetition and ironical wordplay associated with the name Pier/Pietro. In an obvious allusion to the Apostle Peter, Pier della Vigna, the self-styled 'Imperial Vicar', portrays himself as keeper of the keys to the Emperor's heart because of his powerful influence in office, depicted as a 'glorioso offizio' (Inf. XIII, 62). As Martin McLaughlin makes evident, the linking of the vine and Pier's contrapasso is articulated by St Peter in the eighth heaven when he comments on the degeneracy of the priesthood by juxtaposing a vine and a thornbush: 'a seminare la buona pianta / che fu già vite e ora è fatta pruno' (Par. XXIV, 110-111). In Purgatorio XIII, Saint Peter, fisherman and apostle, Christ's Vicar on earth who assumed the burden of office in order to care for the Christian brethren, is specifically named in the course of the litanies uttered by the spirits on the Cornice of Envy: 'udia gridar: "Maria, ora per noi"); / gridar "Michele" e "Pietro" e "Tutti santi"' (50-51). The reader notes the contrasting element of the two characters named Pier, that is, Pier della Vigna and Pier Pettinaio, the one self-aggrandising and rhetorical, the other humble and prayerful. Pier Pettinaio, Peter the Combseller, is a holy man of the people and a simple hermit who offers his prayers to help others. Aided by the prayers of the living, the contrite souls in Purgatory are purging themselves of misdirected love, and Sapia's time is shortened by the goodwill of Pier Pettinaio, an exemplum of the virtue of charity.

There is further irony in the selection of names: Pier della Vigna (Pietri de Vinea de Campania) is transformed into a barren plant. In a moment of self-realisation, Sapia makes a pun on her name, 'Savia non fui, avvegna che Sapia / fossi chiamata' (Purg. XIII, 109-110), because she lacked the wisdom of her mature years (già discendendo l'arco di 'miei anni', 114). She admits to a rash act that sought to weaken the social and familial bonds governing human society and promoting concord. In Purgatory she has begun the process of acquiring wisdom in order to acknowledge the eternal nature of the relationship between the spiritual self and God.

The ritualistic nature of the episode in Inferno XIII is in keeping with what Stefania Benni has stated is 'uno sviluppo narrativo quasi teatrale'. Both cantos contain allusions to popular culture, specifically to the coming of spring. In presenting a scenario connected to forest imagery, Dante makes use of symbolism associated with ancient fertility cults, whereby natural objects possessed a spirit. In Hell, Pier is a figure of the demonic underworld, tormented by the primitive Harpies. However, his descent to the underworld and his generation from a seedling to a thornbush signifies an inversion of this. The merlo tale also contains an inversion. The merlo tale signals the end of the simplicità of this individual. Act hardy and premature beyond family ties and community moral standpoint of a person. The lesson of charity. A vine is a stripping back of his rashness and following. The empty satisfaction with God. A tree will climb the seven hills, and the letter 'P' traces the path which he will be. The vine whose seven 'peccati mortali' unburdened, too. The view of the barren vine, will look. ‘rifatto sì come pruno, / salire a le stelle’

Dante's representation of energies are being combined knowledge and skill in the warning the reader against the gestures of the citizens. Sapia does perform (Purg. XIII, 122) and good-will. Goodwill, the performance performed by Piere, the communal ritual, is subsumed into the image of / a la mensa d'ogni / sufragio mortuo / individual soul's death.
seedling to a thorn-bush confers sterility upon him, and he may thus be seen as an inversion of the leaf-clad nummer of ancient spring festivals. Sapia’s speech also contains an artefact from community folklore connected with spring rites. The merlo tale is an old fable from popular culture in which the boastful blackbird, on a sunny winter’s day, mistakenly believes that spring has arrived and signals the end of winter: ‘come fe l’merlo per poca bonaccia’ (123). The simplicity of this image demonstrates Sapia’s candid acknowledgment of her foolhardy and premature reaction to events as, with her overriding envy, she betrayed family ties and country. Moreover, she now interprets her experiences from the standpoint of a penitent soul who is keen to help others and who is learning the lesson of charity. In Purgatory Sapia is unmasking her former earthly self. There is a stripping back of the psychological traits, the boasting triumphal nature, the rashness and folly, in order to begin the process of expiation after the realisation of the empty satisfactions of her life. Hers is the language of spiritual reconciliation with God. As Dante-protagonist, in the company of Virgil, begins his arduous climb up the seven cornices of the Mount of Purgatory, he carries the burden of the letter ‘P’ traced on his forehead seven times, once for each of the wounds from which he will be purged prior to arriving at the Terrestrial Paradise. The Pilgrim, whose seven ‘peccati’ (Purg. IX, 112) are removed from his forehead, will be unburdened, too, from the effects of sin, and, in contrast to Pier della Vigna, the barren vine, will be like a plant reborn, a fulfilment of the springtime motif: ‘rifatto si come piante novelle / rinovellate di novella fronda, / puro e disposto a salire a le stelle’ (Purg. XXXIII, 144-145).

Dante’s representation of Sapia communicates the positive way in which her energies are being redirected towards a spiritual goal through the effects of self-knowledge and sincere remorse. Her portrayal is charged with a political message warning the reader to reflect on the consequences of individual action mitiating against the general good of the community. In her envy towards her fellow-citizens, Sapia declared that she no longer feared God: ‘Omai piu non ti temo!’ (Purg. XIII, 122). In that moment she abandoned all sense of community, kinship and good-will. On an individual level, she now promotes the charitable work performed by Pier Pettinario. At a collective level, Sapia’s soul participates in a communal ritual of meditation and expiation where individual personality is subsumed into the unified need to embrace the virtue of charity, ‘spiriti parlando / a la mensa d’amor cortesi invitati’ (Purg. XIII, 26-27). Sapia’s dialogue demonstrates her ability to review aspects of her former self and offers a message of hope to the living regarding God’s infinite saving power, including the doctrine of the suffragia mortuorum and the special and exclusive relationship experienced by the individual soul with its Divine Creator.

Sapia is scathing about the Sienese with regard to their ambitious civic projects, which included numerous attempts to locate the mythical subterranean river consecrated to the goddess Diana and the purchase of the harbour of Talamone.
The harbs are directed against those who give support to the untenable prospect of transforming Siena into a formidable maritime power, rather than concerning themselves with the general good of the people and the proper management of the city's financial affairs. Her discourse vividly recreates the political tensions and rivalries of the day: the folly of the Sienese, their doomed civic projects, and the machinations, territorial jealousies and bloodshed that resulted from rivalry between urban centres such as Pisa, Genova, Florence and Siena. In this respect, although she is purging herself of the effects of her former sin of envy, Sapia maintains a sense of civic pride that leads her to disparage the irresponsible schemes of 'quella gente vana' (Purg. XIII, 151). As Peter Hawkins observes, Sapia 'continues nonetheless to bear the imprint of the civitas terrena'.

In opposition to envy is the virtue of charity, which promotes the well-being of all citizens regardless of wealth or social standing. Through common elements in the treatment of the two cantos, Inferno XIII and Purgatorio XIII, such as the thematic correspondences and rhythm patterns, the representation of landscape, Pier's self-exaltation and Sapia's re-evaluation of the worldly self, Dante creates his own unique context for underscoring the damaging consequences of envy in the community of the living. Sapia's recognition of her fault within the context of her civic identity underscores the importance of the message that the Pilgrim will take back to the leaders of those urban centres where the good of the wider community is being sacrificed to the petty ambition of the few. The cross-references, parallels and counter-examples evident in these episodes highlight the negative consequences of the sin of envy, and, in Sapia's frank discourse, allude to the broader implications of the loss of community values when self-interest is placed before civic responsibility.

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Notes

All quotations from the Commedia are from La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata, Giorgio Petrocchi (ed.), Florence: Le Lettere, 1994.

1. 'Inserire l'invidia tra i vizi capitali fu per Gregorio nello stesso tempo una necessità e un modo per richiamare l'attenzione sulla diffusa e continua presenza di questo vizio nella società', Carla Casagrande & Silvana Vecchio, I sette vizi capitali: Storia dei peccati nel Medioevo, Turin: Einaudi, 2000, p. 37.

2. See, for example, Ovid, Metamorphoses, 708-832.


4. All biblical quotations are from The Holy Bible, translated from the Latin Vulgate (Douay-Rheims version), London: Herder, 1955.


6. This reference to the allegedly blinded is taken from the workings of the humbling fall from grace, which led to his morbid self-loathing in Purgatorio, medieval sport of mortification and the divine light of Purgation and he wrote: In vade (I see with the penitents group at the end of the present century).

7. Francesco Tato, "Sapia nel Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatorio: 'Vexar me Deus' and the Purgatio

6. This reference to blindness applies also to Pier, and points up similarities. Pier was allegedly blinded in prison on the orders of Emperor Frederick II, as a consequence of the workings of others' envy. However, Pier was spiritually blind long before his humiliating fall from the emperor's favour, and before his own despairing action that led to his morphing into the sightless, vegetal creature of Dante's poem. In a grisly twist, in Purgatory Sapia's penance is that her eyes are sewn up in the manner of the imperial sport of hawking, but her spiritual remission will eventually lead her to the divine light of Paradise. Frederick II was renowned for his expert knowledge on hawking and he wrote a treatise on falconry, De arte venandi cum avibus.

7. *Invidio* (I see with malice). When the Pilgrim and Virgil arrive on the Cornice of Envy, the penitents grope blindly under a midday sun, recalling Job 5:14.


9. Maria Francesca Rossetti makes the following observation about the envious souls in the *Purgatorio*: 'While in utter helplessness they realize the need of mutual support and assistance, their evil eye, the seat of their sins, learns in blindness and torture to look no more askance on gifts bestowed on each for all'. *A Shadow of Dante, Being an Essay towards Studying Himself, his World and his Pilgrimage*, Port Washington, NY/London: Kennikat Press (1901), Reissue 1969, p. 116.

10. Pier della Vigna's political influence is underscored by the imposing title that was created specifically for him in 1247, *imperialis aulae protonotarius et regni Siciliae logotheta*.

11. This in contrast with biblical examples such as the following: 'And he shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit, in due season. And his leaf shall not fall off: and all whatsoever he shall do shall prosper' (Psalms 1:3); 'The just shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow up like the cedar of Libanus. They that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in courts of the house of our God' (Psalms 91:13-14); 'Then shall all the trees of the woods rejoice before the face of the Lord, because he cometh: because he cometh to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with justice, and the people with his truth' (Psalms 95:12-13).


13. Paul Shaw has mapped out a parallel structure in the *Commedia* and, as regards Cantos XIII, he attests to the 'dynamic of self-division, personal and communal union' apparent in *Inferno XIII* and *Purgatorio* XIII and resolved in *Paradiso XIV* which deals with union through the expression of song and dance. 'A Parallel Structure for the *Divina Commedia*', *Stanford Italian Review*, VII, 1-2 (1987), 70. With regard to the purgatorial souls, Joan Ferrante comments: 'The sense of community among these souls is in sharp contrast to what was seen in Hell, and Dante underscores that change by contrasting individual souls with infernal counterparts. He emphasizes the qualities essential to the good society by reminding us at the beginning of *Purgatory* of the antisocial effects of their opposites', *The Political Vision of the Divine Comedy*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1984, p. 211.

15. William A. Stephey, Pier della Vigna's Self-Fulfilling Prophecies: The "Eulogy" of Frederick II and "Inferno" 13, Traditio, XXXVIII (1982), 195.


18. For this action she has been compared to Farinata and Vanni Fucci. See Albino Zenatti, 'Il canto XIII del Purgatorio', Lectura Dantis, Florence: Sansoni, 1909, p. 18 and Emma Boghen-Conigliani, La Divina Commedia: Scene e figure, Turin-Palermo: Carlo Clausen, 1894, p. 107. Reto Roedel, Lectura Dantis: Letture e saggi, Bellinzona: Istituto Grafico Casagrande, S. A., 1965, p. 115, places Sapia alongside the figures of Mirra and Taide. In opposition to these claims, Francesco D'Avino, 'Delle figure femminili della Commedia', Lectura Dantis Octavianensis, Sala Consiliare del Comune di Ottaviano, 18 marzo 1986, p. 16, remarks that Sapia is 'consapevole e contrita' and furthermore 'non è l'incarnazione della vecchia stolta, invidiosa, stizzosa, sprezzante di Dio e degli uomini che tanta critica romantica e post-romantica ha preteso di individuare'.


22. Stephany's analysis of the self-reproving Sapia states: 'When Dante offers to act on her behalf, she reads this from her new-won perspective of "caritate" as an opportunity to help others rather than herself: by telling her story, Dante will demonstrate to others, especially to others in the grip of envy, that it is not too late to rewrite the narrative of their lives', William A. Stephey, 'Purgatorio 13', Lectura Dantis, 9 (Fall 1991), 85. The article reappears in Lectura Dantis, 12: Supplement, Dante's Divine Comedy, Introductory Readings II: Purgatorio, ed. Tibor Wlassics, Lectura Dantis Virginiana, vol. II (1993), 183-200.


24. The attempt to establish a great maritime centre at Talamone, in order to rival the ports of Genoa and Pisa, and the equally misguided attempts to find a subterranean source of water were a drain on public funds. In both instances the expensive engineering proposals resulted in failure.


26. See Giovanni Piscicelli, ‘La tecnica dell'episodio di Sapia’, Ch. 4 of *Tematica dantesca*, Rome: Edizioni Uber, 1955, pp. 67-71. The critic notes, for example, 'lo spirito di fazione in Siena era meno nocivo che in Firenze, in quanto, magari essendo intimamente contrari, i cittadini sapevano trovare il necessario accordo nei frangenti più difficili e riuscivano così a far fronte - sovente vittoriosamente - alla più potente e ricca Firenze' (pp. 69-70).


29. Bernard Stambler asserts: 'Envy, then, like the other major sins is a social sin – it consists in doing the opposite of what one ought to be doing for the welfare of one's family, one's townspeople, one's fellow-men', *Dante's Other World, The 'Purgatorio' as Guide to the 'Divine Comedy*', New York: New York UP 1957, p. 153.

Works cited

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I n the nearly seven scant lines of this courteous and expansive introduction, Glenn’s recent work concentrates on the Pia story in the Tuscan Maggiore today. How have some significant changes occurred?