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‘Perché mi vinse il lume d’esta stella’

Giovanni Giudici’s Rewriting of Dante’s *Paradiso* for the Theatre

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ABSTRACT: Transforming a text — narrative or poetic — into a play, made of dialogues and organized into scenes, has been one of the most frequent forms of literary transcodification both in the past and in the present. We can find examples of this procedure at the very origins of Italian theatre, which indeed began as the rewriting of earlier texts, both in the sacre rappresentazioni and in the profane field: the Bible in the first case and the Ovidian mythologies in the second. Poliziano’s *Fabula d’Orfeo e Cefalo e Procri* by Niccolò da Correggio are the first well-known examples of this process. / Thus, the metamorphosis of a text into a dramatization has many models in the history of theatre and literature. It would be of great interest to start with an overview of the different types, aims, and forms of transcodification of texts that are enacted in order to create dramatizations capable of being performed on stage. It is impossible to do this here, but I will nonetheless attempt to offer an introduction to my study of Giovanni Giudici’s play about Dante’s *Paradiso* with a brief discussion of three different practices of theatrical transcodification. I will look at three pièces written at the request of the Italian scenographer Federico Tiezzi between 1989 and 1990 as stage productions of the three cantiche of the Divine Comedy. Although they belong to the same project, are inspired by the same person, and share a unified aim, the three pièces created by Edoardo Ganguineti, Mario Luzi, [...]

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Erminia Ardissino

Transforming a text – narrative or poetic – into a play, made of dialogues and organized into scenes, has been one of the most frequent forms of literary transcodification both in the past and in the present. We can find examples of this procedure at the very origins of Italian theatre, which indeed began as the rewriting of earlier texts, both in the *sacre rappresentazioni* and in the profane field: the Bible in the first case and the Ovidian mythologies in the second. Poliziano’s *Fabula d’Orfeo* and *Cefalo e Procri* by Niccolò da Correggio are the first well-known examples of this process.

Thus, the metamorphosis of a text into a dramatization has many models in the history of theatre and literature. It would be of great interest to start with an overview of the different types, aims, and forms of transcodification of texts that are enacted in order to create dramatizations capable of being performed on stage. It is impossible to do this here, but I will nonetheless attempt to offer an introduction to my study of Giovanni Giudici’s play about Dante’s *Paradiso* with a brief discussion of three different practices of theatrical transcodification. I will look at three *pièces* written at the request of the Italian scenographer Federico Tiezzi between 1989 and 1990 as stage productions of the three *cantiche* of the *Divine Comedy*. Although they belong to the same project, are inspired by the same person, and share a unified aim, the three *pièces* created by Edoardo Sanguineti, Mario Luzi, and Giovanni Giudici show three different approaches to the task of transcodifying a text in order to produce a drama – the task, in Genette’s words, of creating a theatrical palimpsest.

I will begin with a few words about Tiezzi and his project of transforming Dante’s poem. When he started to work on it, the practice of reading Dante’s verses in Italian churches or squares had not yet begun.¹

Tiezzi's aim was not to use the theatre in order to spread knowledge of Dante's poem, but rather to use Dante's work in order to improve the quality of the theatre itself. Drawing from Pasolini the idea of a 'cinema di poesia'² and combining it with Eliot's concept of 'poetic drama',³ he intended to create a 'teatro di poesia' which would rouse theatre from its sleep through the power of poetic language: 'Il teatro che dorme aspettava un risveglio', he wrote in the introduction to Sanguineti's *pièce*.⁴ The power of the verbal experience of poetry would be, Tiezzi thought, healthy both for the actors and for the audience: every word would be like a bullet ready to enter the heart of the listener and penetrate his senses.⁵ Eliot regarded poetic drama as an art form capable of distancing theatre from its mimetic function. A dramatization, he thought, could be a work of art only if it aimed to achieve the same intensity as poetry and other forms of art.

Pasolini's suggestions were at the very heart of Tiezzi's project. In the mid-sixties, at a time when the media industry expanded greatly, Pasolini proposed the creation of a cinema of poetry ('un cinema di poesia'), which would preserve the value of the 'word' that was in danger of being destroyed by the multiplication of messages. Recognising two grammars of expressivity, one logical and the other analogical – that is, based on poetic association – he saw cinema as having the same visionary power as poetry.

Although he knew Pasolini only slightly, Tiezzi was strongly affected by his project and decided to apply to the theatre what Pasolini intended for the cinema. His aim, therefore, was not to create a theatre which staged works of poetry, but instead to stage plays using the same means as those used by poetry: a true poetic theatrical production.⁶ Each component (acts, scenes, and voices) should have (according to Tiezzi) a poetic value and should be laden with the poetry of space, of light, of acts, and of words. The visuality of theatre should be 'visionality', in the sense that it should elicit mental images. A play should be analogous to a literary text. Tiezzi's project for the staging of the *Divine Comedy* entered into this theoretical framework and involved prominent Italian poets of the time. In particular, Tiezzi wanted to achieve an expressive and authentic language and to create a play capable of stimulating the audience 'analogically' through images.

The responses of the three poets, Sanguineti, Luzi, and Giudici, to Tiezzi's request were not only interesting but also original.⁷ Following different criteria for converting Dante's text into drama, each of the

three resulting works represents a different conception of the transcoding of a poem into a play. Luzi's *Purgatorio* shows the greatest respect for the original *cantica*, reducing it to a size suited for performance, without making any serious changes either by eliminating parts or by inserting extraneous elements. Luzi declared that Dante's text seemed to him to be an unassailable entity and that it therefore already constituted the main substance of the play. It could not be subjected to manipulation or interpolation or to the addition of extraneous elements. The *cantica* itself had sufficient dramatic elements, which were evident, and Dante's word already created its own theatrical event, which the dialogue and the interaction among the characters completed.⁸

The *Commedia dell'Inferno*, Sanguineti's *pièce*, is an extensive remake of the original text, a transformation into something new and different from Dante's *cantica* – although still very much inspired by it. Sanguineti chose to stress Dante's language and prosodic elements, working with them in order to emphasize the poet's expressionism and plurilingualism more than the overall message of his text. Sanguineti told to Tiezzi that he intended to 'avvicinare Dante per allontanarlo nei significati, per renderlo profetico nei significanti'.⁹ In this way, the meaning of Dante's verse 'si sarebbe allontanato: il significante ritmico sarebbe venuto in primo piano'.¹⁰

The third *pièce*, which I will analyse here, Giudici's *Paradiso*, is, like Sanguineti's work, a complete rewriting of the original text. But, unlike Sanguineti, Giudici primarily focuses on Dante's themes, allowing us to consider his criterion of transcoding as the reverse of Sanguineti's. To invert Sanguineti's phrase, one can say that Giudici's work was intended to 'avvicinare Dante per allontanarlo nei significanti, per renderlo profetico nei significati'. Indeed, Giudici's work sometimes appears to be a linguistic pastiche, a mixture of texts taken from very different sources, but coherent in its aim of investigating topics already present in the original poem. In his *Notizia*, a presentation of his drama, Giudici underlines the violence that is implicit in the transcoding of a text – and especially of the *Paradiso*, where Dante often stresses the incapacity of human language to recount the experience of a place in which communication does not require language. Thus Giudici, in rewriting the third *cantica* of the *Divine Comedy*, has an aim similar to that of Dante: to represent what is not representable, because paradise, Giudici says, 'is a non-place, more precisely a metaphor of a non-place

and a non-time, where every form of action, and therefore of event, is scarcely thinkable, as is also every form of normal dialogue'.¹¹

According to Giudici, a poet who rewrites is in a similar position to a poet who writes; writing Dante's third *cantica* for the stage obliged him to imagine himself in the theatre of paradise, in a personal theatre of paradise.¹² Giudici wrote: 'I thus discovered a play of mirror images, where the ray of the poem (like God's ray on the faces of saints) came to radiate in my mind and from there it reverberated in the direction of a yet inexistent scene, not without becoming contaminated in a further dust, that of my cultural debris, of my historical and private individuality, of my descendent and satellite position in relation to the Dantean sun.'¹³ This statement is a clear explanation of the main structure of Giudici's *Paradiso* and of the frequent insertion of other authors' texts, an aspect which lends a contemporary air to Giudici's *pièce*.

The presence of characters such as Kafka (as the 'Uomo del Pubblico'), Pound and, above all, the 'Letterato Moderno' in the play emphasizes its topicality. The Letterato Moderno is not really an *alter ego* of the poet (Giudici), but is rather a kind of modern reader. In fact the Continian dichotomy of Dante as poet and pilgrim, *Viator* and *Auctor*, is echoed in the division of the reader into two characters, the Letterato Moderno and the Chierico. In the *Notizia*, Giudici states that he himself felt split into two different characters: he is at once a reader of the poem who is respectful of its traditional interpretation and a poet and reader of other texts – i. e., a creative reader.¹⁴ The function of many of Giudici's characters is to provide a critical perspective, to discuss the main questions posed by Dante, and to present different points of view on the suggestions offered by the text.

The other characters present in Giudici's drama are mainly those of Dante's *Paradiso*, whom we meet in the order given by Dante: Piccarda, Justinian, Carlo Martello, Cunizza da Romano, Folquet de Marselha, St Thomas Aquinas, St Bonaventure, Solomon, Cacciaguida, the Eagle – who is one character both in the poem and in Giudici's drama – St Peter Damian, St Benedict, St Peter, St James, St John, Adam, and St Bernard. They embody the episodes chosen by Giudici to reconstruct Dante's journey to God. Beatrice, of course, is also present, but she does not have as prominent a role as she does in Dante's poem. There are also a few other characters who are justified by the peculiar concerns of the new text. For example, the reference to St Augustine is justified by the fact that Giudici considers him to be very important to Dante. Others in

this category are Tiresias, the foreteller of the future; the Sibyl, whose voice closes the play; and various other voices, including the 'Voci Fuori Campo' (a kind of Greek Chorus), the 'Coro di Voci Chiare', and the 'Voce Femminile'.

The cultural recollections scattered throughout the text come from Giudici's reading and interests, and they represent one of the more interesting aspects of this play. There is a wide range of implicit or explicit references, including many biblical quotations¹⁵ and passages from Augustine's *Confessions*,¹⁶ corresponding to Giudici's own theological interests as manifested in his poetry. There are verses taken from the Occitan poets Sordel and Folquet de Marselha, which appear in the scene that corresponds to the cantos of the heaven of Venus, creating a background setting that also contains a quotation from Dante's *Rime*.¹⁷ Sordel is quoted when Cunizza mentions her love for the Mantuan poet. While the character Ezra Pound reads his Canto XXIX (in Italian)¹⁸ telling Cunizza's story, the Chierico interrupts him and quotes three verses of Sordel's *Atretan dei ben chantar finamen*, comparing a woman to a rose: 'd'invern com fatz d'estiu [...] | quar la rosa sembra lei de cui chan, | aultresi es la neus del sieu senblan [...]' (31). Folquet is quoted a few lines later, when the *Viator* questions him before narrating his life: 'E pos Amor mi vol honrar | tant que'l cor vos mi fai portar, | per merce us prec que l gardetz de l'ardor, | qu'ieu ai paor [...]'. These verses are from the song *En chantan m'aven a membrar*.¹⁹ These medieval references, especially the ones to Occitan poets, reflect Giudici's return to those origins of Western poetry which inspired his collection *Salutz* and *Beatrice* (modelled on Trobadoric poetry and German *Minnesang*). From the Middle Ages, Giudici also uses Dante's *Convivio*,²⁰ St Francis's *Cantico delle Creature*, and a poem by François Villon. St Francis's *Cantico* is, of course, referred to in the scene corresponding to Canto XI of Dante's *Paradiso*, when St Thomas starts his eulogy. The entire poem is spoken by the 'Voce fuori campo'. Quite surprisingly, in contrast, François Villon's verses are also cited: 'Finablement, en escripvant, | dictant ce laiz et descripvant, | j'ois la cloche de Serbonne, | qui tousjours à neuf heures sonne | le Salut que l'Ange predit [...]'. These lines are recited by the Chierico when, in the scene *Il nome del bel fior ch'io sempre invoco*, the *Auctor* recites verses 94–96 of *Par. XXIII*, which concern the crown descending upon and surrounding the Virgin: 'Un suono di campane, un *Ave Maria*, un *Angelus*. Entrano il Chierico e il Letterato Moderno. CHERICO: Ricordate François Villon?'.²¹

Giudici's *Paradiso* is, by his own definition, a 'satura', a theatrical genre consisting of a mixture of prose and verse. It also contains allusions to a wide range of modern writers, from Eliot to Pound,²² Antonio Machado to Coleridge,²³ Franz Kafka²⁴ to Robert Frost, Walter Benjamin²⁵ to Giacomo Noventa.²⁶ Finally there are references to Petronius²⁷ and Plotinus,²⁸ as well as a few well-known phrases such as *Gott mit uns* and other similar short excerpts in other languages.²⁹ Giudici's own verses are also included among this assortment of sources.

A quotation may be just a recollection of the character mentioned, derived from his work or explaining his biography, or it may be used for the discussion of a certain idea, such as the ineffability of the final vision and its nature, the essence of paradise, or how faith can be used to support a dangerous ideology. These quotations create the horizon of Giudici's dramatisation; it is the world of a modern Dantean reader that articulates the transcodification. The quotations are intended as a bridge between Dante's poem and each reader, proving the long-lasting character of the poem. The poem remains topical because the reader links it to his other readings.

The structure of the play is clear from the sequence of its nine scenes, a choice which respects Dante's numerology. Each scene has as its title a verse taken from the corresponding canto. The drama is constructed like a *mise en abîme*, and the play starts with the *Auctor* at the moment when he stops writing at the end of the poem, saying that human words cannot describe what he has seen. The first speech in fact is a repetition of the one made in the closing verses of the *Divine Comedy* (*Par.* XXXIII, 106–45) and states the main problem of the play: the construction of the poem, the very act of writing. After the Prologue scene, 'Oh quanto è corto il dire e come fioco', Giudici follows Dante's poem, thereby remaining faithful to the idea of the ascent to God.

The first scene, 'Beatrice in suso, e io in lei guardava', concerns the journey to paradise, followed by a series of other scenes determined by the various heavens: 'Ogne dove in cielo è paradiso' (heaven of the moon and of Mercury), 'Perché mi vinse il lume d'esta stella' (heaven of Venus), 'L'un fu tutto serafico in ardore' and 'Anzi che fosser sempiternie fiamme' (heaven of the sun, one scene for Francis's eulogy and the other for Solomon's speech), 'Oh fronda mia io fui la tua radice' (heaven of Mars and Cacciaguida's speech), 'Il nome del bel fior ch'io sempre invoco' (heaven of the fixed stars and the Virgin Mary's tri-

umph), ‘Lo ben che fa contenta questa corte’ (Dante’s three theological examinations), and ‘In forma dunque di candida rosa’ (the Empyrean and the final vision). Only in the scene concerning the *spiriti amanti* in the heaven of Venus do all the characters presented by Dante appear: Carlo, Folchetto, Cunizza, and Raab. In the other heavens, generally only the main character is used by Giudici. The third heaven is, of course, of great importance and gives Giudici’s play its title, a title which is intended to emphasise that paradise is the world of love, both divine and human.

Giudici gives meticulous stage directions, which tightly intertwine words and scenery; for example, the first stage direction states that the set must suggest the idea of growth and ascent, but also of a *Holzweg* or path in the forest (which may correspond to the original forest in the first canto of the *Inferno*). This path represents ‘un punto di arrivo oltre il quale non è dato procedere: il “non esserci”, la “luce dello zero”’ (13). But most of the visual elements and gestures are considered by Giudici to be a matter of staging and are left to the set designer’s choice. Sometimes it is not easy to follow Giudici’s indications: what is the ‘light of zero’? Is it darkness? For example, in the 1991 production in Cividale, the stage set for paradise was situated in the Dome in front of the altar, which was covered with a golden cloth, and the entire church was immersed in a white light. But the text seems to make it clear that Giudici’s *Paradiso* continually questions the idea of nothingness, of darkness, recalling negative theology. Giudici places the existence of paradise on the border of shadow and inexistence, underlining (without any particular reference) Dante’s dependence on Pseudo-Dionysius’s idea that the mystical encounter with God can only happen in darkness, because God is an hidden entity.³⁰

In the Prologue, the main theme revolves around the questions ‘What is paradise?’ and ‘What is final knowledge?’ Quoting St Paul, Giudici writes: ‘Il cielo intellettuale, dove l’intendere è conoscere simultaneo, non *in parte*, non *in enigma*, non *attraverso uno specchio*, ma totalmente, per via d’evidenza, *faccia a faccia*, non ora questo ora quello, ma ... un conoscere tutto in una volta, senza prima né poi ... ?’ (17). The reference to St Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians is clear.³¹ The stage of perfection is the perfection of knowledge: ‘Videmus nunc per speculum in enigmate, tunc autem facie ad faciem.’ Moreover, the play ends with the Sibyl’s wish, ‘Morire, morire’, and thus closes with

images not of light but of obscurity which, according to negative theology, supply the only means to reach true and divine knowledge.

Most of the new text is made up of Dante's verses which Giudici uses freely. That is to say, in Giudici's text it is possible to find the following cases: a long quotation with no changes, a combination of verses of one canto in the correct order from which some verses are omitted, or a mixture of verses, taken in some cases from different cantos. In this way, although the resulting pastiches always have a meaning, the prosody is not always respected. The effect is the creation of a new prosody with a rhythm not unlike that of the *terzina dantesca*, but which is not a simple repetition. It is also quite normal to find elided allocutives and textual references which might be hard to understand when first heard.

As I mentioned earlier, the play opens as the *Auctor* falls asleep at his table while he is writing (or finishing) the poem. Verses by Machado (in Spanish) suggest the nature of the vision, to which Dante has drawn the reader's attention several times, stating that he visited the other world not in a vision, in a dream, or in spirit, but in the flesh.³² 'Ayer soñé' seems to set the vision in the oneiric realm, where Dante could have talked to God, seen God, and been heard by God:

Ayer soñé que veía
a Dios y que a Dios hablaba;
y soñé que Dios me oía ...
Después soñé que soñaba.

Ma nulla si dà che sia
compiuto del sogno umano:
nel vuoto c'è un volto, una via,
si aggrappa al nulla una mano. (14)

Machado's verse 'Después soñé que soñaba' questions the previous verses: the dream itself could have been in a dream, or the poet's doubt could perhaps have been a dream, making the encounter a real experience. Giudici's subsequent verses suggest that paradise is a human aim, an unfulfilled desire of every human being. The parts of the body mentioned here (a face, a hand) give the impression of a scattered condition, which is not whole or in proportion; it is not a paradisiacal condition, only a path, an attempt, an effort, without any positive end.

The Prologue introduces the main question of Giudici's drama: 'what is paradise?'. A quotation from the *Convivio* is the *Auctor's*

first answer: it is the Aristotelian celestial world, organized into nine stars.³³ But since the chapter of Dante's philosophical treatise combines the Greek philosophical tradition with that of the Bible, and specifically mentions Psalm 8, a second possibility is introduced: paradise is a manifestation of God's greatness.³⁴ Neither ancient philosophy nor the Bible seems sufficient, for the Chierico suggests that we look to poetry, because poetry is the 'materia l a un tempo del silenzio e del discorso', confirming that matter is again the confrontation of totality and nothingness, word and silence, perfectly synthesized by poetry:

CHIERICO Ma perché non chiedere soccorso
alla poesia che è materia
a un tempo del silenzio e del discorso? (16)

This suggestion leads the Letterato Moderno to recall Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Kubla Khan, or a Vision in a Dream*. This is the reply of a desacralized culture, which considers paradise to be a perfect prodigy, a combination of opposites (ice and sun). But even this reply is a failure, for the Chierico says that paradise is not the dream of a culture, whether Islamic or Indian ('non è l il paradiso un posto musulmano, l Né felice terreno di caccia indiano'). Nor is it anything belonging to this world: 'nulla che sia di questo mondo gli pertiene' (16).

Augustine's appearance provides an opportunity to continue the search. It is to him that the Chierico addresses his question, indicating the limits of human knowledge:

La vostra lezione, Maestro,
vogliate di grazia impartire
al nostro non sapendo non vedere
al nostro non vedendo non sentire ...
Conoscere dove sia
il cielo di questi cieli che noi vediamo
sovrastanti alla Terra apparire
ai nostri futili sensi
al nostro non toccando non scoprire ... (16)

If we do not know, we do not see; if we do not see, we do not hear; if we do not touch, we do not discover. This series of negatives suggests that paradise implies that it is knowledge which directs the senses, the only means of acquiring knowledge for human beings. But the senses are, in this case, useless ('futili'), of no help and no importance.

The quotation from Augustine's *Confessions* 12.2.2 which follows takes into consideration these limits and turns the question into a prayer: 'God made the sky we see and the earth we tread, but where is the true sky?'³⁵ The answer is in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, again quoted alongside a passage from *Confessions*: the true heaven is the intellectual one, where knowledge is simultaneous with the act of seeing, where human beings will not see partially or enigmatically, or as in a mirror, but face to face, with everything together. Giudici has Augustine conclude his speech with a reference to the philosopher Plotinus who, in discussing eternity, distinguished the sensible world from the intelligible one, while maintaining that all reality is a unity. The intellectual heaven, Augustine suggests, is the only One, a unity of space and time, which has no past and no future, but which always is: 'ed è di un essere che è sempre' (17).

This is not the only point in the play where the essence of paradise is questioned. In the very last scene, the ninth, 'In forma dunque di candida rosa', when the *Viator* is already in the Empyrean, a final dialogue between the Chierico and the Letterato Moderno questions the most terrestrial of paradises, the one promised by the political doctrine of historical materialism. When the final vision approaches, the Chierico wonders how one could ever find words for what is not visible, in order to summarize all history in that which has no dimension, to give a form to what is a 'zero infinito'. The Letterato Moderno then recalls these verses from the first canto: 'vero è che, come forma non s'accorda l molte fiata a l'intenzion de l'arte', not only because 'la materia è sorda', but also because writing has lasted too long: 'per troppo lunga impresa o sia col travestire l da tediosa beatrice la vaga Teologia' (77). In this way, Giudici highlights the persistence of theological perspectives in an age of secularism. Recalling Benjamin and Frost, he seems to be accusing Marxism of being in reality a kind of religion, with its own theology. While Marxists would like to free human beings from superstructures, including religions, this ideology is as rigid as churches and confessions, even though it bears a name that would seem to refute them: 'Che importa il nome? Importante è la cosa che lo genera, la realtà dalla quale discende e con la quale coincide' (77).

Afterwards the scene reaches the culmination of Dante's journey, with the dialogue between the *Viator* and St Bernard encompassing the vision of the Trinity (*Par.* XXXIII, 124–26). But Giudici's variation con-

cludes with an image, enhanced by a well-known Dantean simile, of a vision scattered like the leaves of the Sibyl:

Una pioggia di foglie, un turbine, la Sibilla a un tavolo china su un globo di vetro, un coro di voci chiare.

CORO DI VOCI CHIARE Σίβυλλα τί θέλεις?

Che cosa vorresti, Sibilla?

SIBILLA Ἀποθανεῖν θέλω.

Morire, morire ... (81)

The Sibyl is certainly introduced here because of Dante's simile, but I would suggest that Giudici also uses this mythological figure because she is destined to live forever. Since she was granted immortality, she will never be able to know paradise. She is condemned to see the future forever with no intellectual knowledge. All her knowledge is confined to the crystal sphere, to a limited path of history, which will never reveal the truth. Like a mirror, the crystal will never solve the enigma and will never give a vision of God, face to face, which represents at the very end the happiness of human beings. In her case, paradise will always remain an unfulfilled desire.

Once again, totality derives from negation, revelation from closed eyes, life from death. The very end of Giudici's drama is prefigured, from the beginning, by the *Holzweg*, 'un punto di arrivo oltre il quale non è dato procedere: il 'non esserci', la 'luce dello zero'. And it is certainly no coincidence that the last action is exactly like the first one insofar as the Sibyl is bent over a table just as the *Auctor* was bent over his manuscript: 'In un angolo, chino ad un tavolo, un vecchio uomo scrive' (13).

NOTES

- 1 Following a series of commentaries on the *Divine Comedy* broadcast between 1987 and 1992, Vittorio Sermonetti began his readings of Dante in the Basilica of Saint Francis in Ravenna in 1995. Only in 2002 did Roberto Benigni start his successful readings of Dante's cantos on Italian television.
- 2 Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Cinema in forma di poesia*, ed. by Luciano De Giusti (Pordenone: Cinemazero, 1979).
- 3 T.S. Eliot, 'Possibility of a Poetic Drama', in *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), pp. 50–59.

- 4 Federico Tiezzi, 'Introduzione (teatrale) a commedia (cinematografica)', in Edoardo Sanguineti, *Commedia dell'Inferno* (Milan: Costa e Nolan, 1989), p. 5. See Franco Prono, 'La *Divina commedia* in teatro e in video', in *Dialoghi con Dante: Riscritture e ricodificazioni della 'Commedia'*, ed. by Erminia Ardisino and Sabrina Stroppa Tomasi (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2007), pp. 107–13.
- 5 In the Introduction to Sanguineti's *pièce*, Tiezzi says: 'Berberianamente ribobolano le parole dei versi di Sanguineti nel cavo orale dell'attore: li divengono proiettili pronti per addensarsi al cuore e ai sensi dell'ascoltatore. Come nuove revolverate lucinesche. Il teatro, mi dicevo sempre andando, ha bisogno di questa analisi per scuotersi dal suo sonno.' Tiezzi, 'Introduzione (teatrale)', p. 6.
- 6 On Tiezzi's 'teatro di poesia', see Lorenzo Mango, *Teatro di poesia: Saggio su Federico Tiezzi* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1994).
- 7 For an analysis of the three works, see Ronald de Rooy, 'Divino teatro e umana poesia: La trilogia teatrale dantesca e la presenza dantesca nella poesia di Edoardo Sanguineti, Mario Luzi e Giovanni Giudici', in his '*Il poeta che parla ai poeti*': *Elementi danteschi nella poesia italiana e anglosassone del secondo Novecento* (Florence: Franco Cesati, 2003), pp. 85–158.
- 8 'Il presentarsi del testo come entità inattaccabile è già l'essenza dello spettacolo. Era esclusa per forza qualunque manipolazione, interpolazione, commistione di elementi estranei. Il drammatico della cantica si pronunziava in sé, e con mezzi propri. [...] il protendersi della parola dantesca scandiva già un evento teatrale che il dialogo o il contrasto tra le persone completava'. Mario Luzi, 'Notizia', in *Teatro* (Milan: Garzanti, 1993), pp. 491–93 (p. 492).
- 9 Tiezzi, 'Introduzione (teatrale)', p. 11.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 7.
- 11 'Il Paradiso non è un luogo, ma piuttosto la metafora di un non-luogo e di un non-tempo, dove ogni forma di azione e perciò di evento è scarsamente pensabile, e così pure ogni forma di normale dialogo, [...] tra parola e pensiero non v'è intervallo, ma trasparenza assoluta vige nel popolo dei beati, unica lingua è una luce di letizia'. Giovanni Giudici, 'Notizia', in *Il Paradiso: Perché mi vinse il lume d'esta stella. Satura drammatica* (Milan: Costa e Nolan, 1991), p. 84. All translations from Giudici's work are mine; subsequent references are given parenthetically in the text.
- 12 '[...] mi imponeva, nel leggere o rileggere, anche l'immaginarli simultaneamente un teatro: il teatro, appunto, del *Paradiso*, ma un teatro quasi mio [...]'. Giudici, 'Notizia', p. 85; italics in the original.
- 13 'Scopro così un gioco di specchi, per cui il raggio del poema (come il raggio di Dio sul volto dei beati) veniva a raggiare nella mia mente e da questa si riverberava in direzione di un'ancora inesistente scena, non senza contaminarsi in un ulteriore pulviscolo, quello (dico) dei miei detriti culturali, della mia individualità privata e storica, della mia condizione di postero e satellite rispetto al sole dantesco.' *Ibid.*, p. 86.
- 14 'Alla dicotomia Auctor-Viator che nel copione è stata operata sul personaggio Dante (*personaggio* in entrambe le situazioni) è venuta a corrispondere, col pro-

cedere del lavoro, quasi una mia propria dicotomia: tra un me stesso lettore, devotamente arreso alla tradizione del poema, e il me stesso sentimentalmente e criticamente impegnato non tanto nell'espugnarne l'irrepresentabilità quanto nel trascinarci dietro quei reperti emotivi e culturali che mi si venivano esponendo nel corso delle mie ripetute ricognizioni (il me stesso autore di certi versi, compresi alcuni improvvisati ad hoc; il me stesso lettore di certi altri poeti o serale frequentatore della Bibbia e di quell'Agostino che, forse per l'importanza del suo debito, Dante nel *Paradiso* nomina appena, ecc.).' *Ibid.*, p. 85.

- 15 Passages from Scripture generally appear when a character is involved. This is the case for Rahab; passages concerning her are quoted from the Italian translation of Josh. 1. 2–15 and 6. 16–17 (Giudici, *Il Paradiso*, pp. 33–34). For David, passages are quoted from 2 Kings 11. 2–3 in Latin and 3 Kings 1. 1–4 in Italian (56–57). For the episode of Jacob's Ladder, Gen. 18. 12–3 is quoted in Italian (57–58). A sentence about faith is taken from Gen. 15. 6 in Italian: 'Abramo ebbe fede e questo gli fu accreditato come giustizia' (66). Christ's words from the Cross, entrusting his mother to his disciple and vice versa, are quoted from John 19. 26–27 when John is introduced. Paul's letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 13. 12) is quoted when the vision is discussed (see the following note) and again (1 Cor. 13. 4–8) when the *Viator* is questioned on charity (70).
- 16 Augustine's *Confessions* are quoted at the beginning of the prologue in order to explain the inadequacy of human language to express beatitude. The character Agostino recites: 'Confitetur altitudini tuae humilitas linguae meae, quoniam tu fecisti caelum et terram; hoc caelum, quod video, terramque, quam calco, unde est haec terra, quam porto; tu fecisti. Sed ubi est caelum caeli, Domine, de quo audivimus in voce Psalmi: *Caelum caeli Domino; terram autem dedit filiis hominum?* Ubi est caelum, quod non cernimus, cui terra est hoc omne, quod cernimus?' (from *Conf.* 12.2.2; Giudici, *Il Paradiso*, pp. 16–17). A second quotation appears in the discussion of the final vision, when the Chierico says: 'E non soltanto Agostino, ma anche Paolo di Tarso, che lo aveva scritto tre secoli prima di lui! Videmus nunc per speculum in enigmate, tunc autem faciem ad faciem nunc cognosco ex parte tunc autem cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum ... Però Agostino riassume tutto in due parole, da vero poeta: *nosse simul, nosse simul*, conoscenza simultanea, al cui confronto il *real time* del più potente fra i vostri computer è più lento che il più lento dei pachidermi!' (23; italics in the original). *Nosse simul* is from *Conf.* 12.13.16: 'Sic interim sentio propter illud *caelum caeli*, caelum intellectuale, ubi est intellectus nosse simul, non *ex parte*, non *in aenigmate*, non *per speculum*, sed ex toto, in manifestatione, *facie ad faciem*; non modo hoc, modo illud, sed, quod dictum est, nosse simul sine ulla vicissitudine temporum, et propter invisibilem atque incompositam terram sine ulla vicissitudine temporum, quae solet habere modo hoc et modo illud, quia ubi nulla species, nusquam est hoc et illud.'
- 17 The Chierico quotes the first three verses of Dante's poem LXVI: 'Per una ghirlandetta l'ch'io vidi, mi farà l' sospirare ogni fiore' (30); cf. Dante, *Rime*, ed. by Domenico De Robertis, 3 vols (Firenze: Le Lettere, 2002), III, p. 288.

- 18 ‘... e sesta figlia Madonna Cunizza | dapprima sposa a Riccardo si San Bonifacio | poi da Sordello sottratta al marito | E con lui giacque in Treviso | finché lui non ne venne cacciato | E lei scappò con Bonio che era un soldato | pazza d’amore | e andò da un posto all’altro | spassandosela assai | spendendo e spandendo | Finché Bonio fu ucciso una domenica | e lei passò a un signore di Braganza | e infine mise su casa in Verona ...’. See Ezra Pound, *The Cantos* (London: Faber & Faber, 1964), p. 147; Italian translation as *I Cantos*, ed. by Mary de Rachewiltz (Milan: Mondadori, 1989), pp. 278–79.
- 19 Cf. Marco Boni, *Sordello, le poesie* (Bologna: Libreria Antiquaria Palmaverde, 1954), p. 15; Folquet de Marselha, *Le poesie*, ed. by Paolo Squillaciotti (Pisa: Pacini, 1999), pp. 285–86.
- 20 The passage from *Conv.* II, iii, 8–11, where Dante defines the order of the heavens, is quoted at the very beginning of the first scene by the Chierico, as he talks about the nature of Paradise (14–15). *Convivio* is quoted again in relation to *Par.* XXVII, 4–5: ‘Ciò ch’io vedeva mi sembiava un riso | de l’universo ...’, recited by the *Auctor*, who goes on to say: ‘E che è ridere se non una corruscatione de la dilettazone de l’animo, cioè uno lume apparente di fuori secondo sta dentro? ...’ (73).
- 21 Cf. François Villon, *Œuvres*, ed. by Auguste Longnon and Lucien Foulet (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1932), p. 9; Giudici, *Il Paradiso*, p. 62.
- 22 While Ezra Pound is a character in the play, T.S. Eliot is only quoted in the scene concerning Cacciaguida, after Dante’s request regarding his future (*Par.* XVII, 13–27). In the verses that Dante devotes to the pagan predictions, before Cacciaguida’s answer (*Par.* XVII, 37–35), Giudici inserts part of the third canto of *The Waste Land*, ‘The Fire Sermon’; see T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, ed. by Michael North (New York: Norton Company, 2001), p. 13. In particular, Giudici quotes Eliot’s lines about Tiresias (lines 218–38 and 247–51, using lines 243–44 as a conclusion). Eliot’s poem is loosely translated into Italian (Giudici, *Il Paradiso*, pp. 51–52).
- 23 Antonio Machado’s verses ‘Ayer soñe que veía | a Dios y que a Dios hablaba; | y soñe que Dios me oía ... | Despues soñé que soñaba’ are taken from ‘Proverbios y cantares’ XXI, in Manuel y Antonio Machado, *Obras completas* (Madrid: Editorial Biblioteca Nueva, 1994), p. 834. They represent the first modern text introduced into Giudici’s *Paradiso* (13). In the same scene of the Prologue, Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s *Kubla Khan, or a Vision in a Dream* is also quoted, only two lines in the original language and the rest in Italian translation: ‘In Xanadu did Kubla Khan | a stately pleasure-dome decree | Era un prodigio di rara maestria: | Antri di ghiaccio e cupola solatia! | Potessi in me resuscitare | quel suo canto e melodia ...’ (15). See Samuel T. Coleridge, *La ballata del vecchio marinaio–Kubla Khan*, ed. by Alessandro Ceni (Milan, Feltrinelli, 2002), pp. 58–60; Coleridge, *Poetical Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 297.
- 24 As we have seen, Kafka is a character in the play, and there are quotations from the Italian version of the *Quaderni in ottavo*, where he discusses the nature of Eden and of the Fall: ‘Noi fummo cacciati dal paradiso, che però non venne distrutto. La cacciata dal paradiso terrestre fu, in un certo senso, una fortuna,

- perché, se non ne fossimo stati cacciati, lo si sarebbe dovuto distruggere. Con la nostra cacciata il paradiso fu salvato dalla distruzione...’ (Giudici, *Il Paradiso*, 72); cf. Franz Kafka, *Quaderni in ottavo*, ed. by Italo Chiusano (Milan: SE, 2002), p. 58.
- 25 Walter Benjamin and the poet Robert Frost are mentioned by the ‘Letterato Moderno’ in the same episode in the last scene, ‘In forma dunque di candida rosa’, in the discussion about congregations supported by faith (which can be considered churches) and the function of theology. After verses 52–56 and 79–90 of *Par. XXXI*, which describe the ‘candida rosa’, the text returns to *Par. I*, 127–31, where the poet declares the impossibility of following the ‘intenzion de l’arte’ and the gap between writing and its result. One effect of the gap is to display the mask of a boring beatrice (no capital letter, as in Giudici’s collection of poems *O beatrice*) given to ‘pleasant’ theology. So the Chierico and the Letterato Moderno comment: ‘CHIERICO La teologia, che secondo il grande Walter Benjamin, sarebbe oggi piccola e brutta e non dovrebbe farsi scorgere; ma che nell’interminabile partita a scacchi della storia è la tremenda alleata grazie alla quale arriva alla vittoria il fantoccio da lei guidato, il cosiddetto ‘materialismo storico’ [...] LETTERATO MODERNO Materialismo storico? CHIERICO Che importa il nome? Importante è la cosa che lo genera, la realtà dalla quale discende e con la quale coincide [...] Conosci Robert Frost? | A che scopo abbandonare una fede | Soltanto perché cessa di essere vera? | Ad essa atteniamoci a lungo abbastanza, e non v’è | Dubbio che tornerà vera, perché così succede’ (Giudici, *Il Paradiso*, 77). The quotations are taken from Robert Frost, ‘The Black Cottage’ (‘Il villino nero’), in *Conoscenza della notte e altre poesie*, trans. by Giovanni Giudici (Turin: Einaudi, 1965), pp. 70–71. Benjamin’s quotation is taken from the Italian translation of the first fragment of his *Thesis on the Philosophy of History*: ‘Vincere deve sempre il fantoccio chiamato “materialismo storico”. Esso può farcela senz’altro con chiunque, se prende al suo servizio la teologia, che oggi, com’è noto, è piccola e brutta, e che non deve farsi scorgere da nessuno.’ Walter Benjamin, *Angelus Novus: Saggi e frammenti*, ed. by Renato Solmi (Turin: Einaudi, 1995), p. 75.
- 26 Giacomo Noventa’s poem ‘No più longo i rii ...’ in Venetian dialect is recited by a ‘Voce Femminile’ when Cacciaguida recalls the old Florentine inhabitants, so modest and humble: ‘No’ più longo i rii, le serenadine, | No’, sotto i balconi, rispèti d’amor, | No’ più tresse d’oro, no’ scale de seda, | No’ più marinieri che vien da lontàn ... | No’ prima del nascer le fedi promesse, | No’ i usi dei veci che ne destinava | Le noze e le guerre e un altro ideal ... | (La zente, a quei tempi, no’ se improvisava, | I morti gavéva, e el nome, un valor)’; Giacomo Noventa, *Versi e poesie* (Milan: Mondadori, 1960), p. 93.
- 27 The play ends with the image of the ‘foglie [...] di Sibilla’ (*Par. XXXIII*, 65–66): ‘Una pioggia di foglie, un turbine, la Sibilla a un tavolo china su un globo di vetro, un coro di voci chiare. CORO DI VOCI CHIARE | Σιβύλλα τί θέλες? | Che cosa vorresti, Sibilla? | SIBILLA Ἀποθανεῖν θέλω. | Morire, morire’ (81). The words are a quotation from Petronius, *Satyricon* XLVIII, which is, incidentally, also quoted by Eliot in his dedication of *The Waste Land* to Ezra Pound.

- 28 Plotinus, *Enneads*, III, vii, 3 (Giudici, *Il Paradiso*, p. 17).
- 29 *Gott mit uns*, an old phrase later appropriated by the Nazis, is used twice by Giudici: once when evaluating St Dominic's crusade against the Albigensians (42) and a second time in Italian when talking about human 'churches': 'Fare universo e intero | di quel che fu una Chiesa un Dio-con-noi' (77). Giudici's Cacciaguیدا starts his speech in Latin ('O sanguis meis [...] reclusa', *Par.* XVII, 28–30) and continues in an incomprehensible mixture of languages: 'Houyhnhnm, houyhnhnm ... yahoo....hhuun, hhuun... | Nate, o nate, remember me, oh pardon... | El major alcade said the Thing which is not | Yahooo... My skill is prognosticks... | Dej pozor, dej pozor.... | Adios, izar ederra, adios izarra! | Zenbatt maite zaitudan ez duzu pensatzen!' (49). Here one can identify Spanish, Latin, Czech, Basque, and English phrases.
- 30 On Dante and the Pseudo-Dionysius see Diego Sbacci, *La presenza di Dionigi Aeropagita nel 'Paradiso' di Dante* (Florence: Olschki, 2006); Marco Ariani, 'Metafore assolute: emanazionismo e sinestesia della luce fluente', in *La metafora in Dante*, ed. by Marco Ariani (Florence: Olschki, 2009), pp. 193–219.
- 31 1 Cor. 12. 13.
- 32 See *Par.* I and II and the *Letter to Cangrande*.
- 33 'CHIERICO (*leggendo*) Ed è l'ordine del sito questo, che lo primo cielo che numerano è quello dove è la Luna; lo secondo è quello dov'è Mercurio; lo terzo è quello dov'è Venere; lo quarto è quello dove è lo Sole; lo quinto è quello di Marte; lo sesto è quello di Giove; lo settimo è quello di Saturno; l'ottavo è quello de le stelle; lo nono è quello che non è sensibile se non per questo movimento che è detto di sopra, lo quale chiamano molti Cristallino, cioè diafano, o vero tutto trasparente... *Il Chierico invita per cenni il Letterato Moderno a subentrargli nella lettura che risulterà, nel tono, piuttosto incerta.* LETTERATO MODERNO Veramente, fuori di tutti questi, li cattolici pongono lo cielo Empireo, che è a dire, cielo di fiamma o vero luminoso; e pongono esso essere immobile, per avere in sé, secondo ciascuna parte, ciò che la sua materia vuole. E questo è cagione al Primo Mobile per avere velocissimo movimento; ché per lo ferventissimo appetito che ha ciascuna parte di quello divinissimo ciel quieto, in quello si risolve con tanto desiderio' (Giudici, *Il Paradiso*, 14–15).
- 34 In fact the *Auctor* ends the quotation from *Convivio* with Dante's biblical reference: 'Questa è quella magnificenza della quale parlò il Salmista, quando dice a Dio: Levata è la magnificenza tua sopra i cieli' (Giudici, *Il Paradiso*, 15); see *Conv.* II, iii, 11.
- 35 See above note 16.

Erminia Ardissino, “Perché mi vinse il lume d’esta stella: Giovanni Giudici’s Rewriting of Dante’s *Paradiso* for the Theatre”, in *Metamorphosing Dante: Appropriations, Manipulations, and Rewritings in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries*, ed. by Manuele Gragnolati, Fabio Camilletti, and Fabian Lampart, *Cultural Inquiry*, 2 (Vienna: Turia + Kant, 2011), pp. 137–52 <https://doi.org/10.25620/ci-02_09>

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