

Dante as Political Theorist

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Reading Monarchia

Edited and with an Introduction by

Maria Luisa Ardizzone

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INTRODUCTION

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In 1921, the sixth hundred anniversary of Dante's death, Pope Benedict XV (1914–1921) promulgated the Encyclical, *In Praeclara summorum*, addressed to “Dilectis filiis doctoribus et alumnis litterarum artiumque optimarum orbis catholici”. In the Encyclical, the only intellectual recalled and praised as one of the highest geniuses of the Catholic faith, was Dante Alighieri. His works were quoted, and his fight with the papacy was minimized or deleted. The Encyclical, recalling or citing some of Dante's works, among them the *Monarchia*, intended to show how respectful the poet was of the Church, and how his Christian learning, which was influential, made him the perfect model of an intellectual and a poet. But nothing was said about the troubled history of the *Monarchia* and the contention with the Church that this work brought on its author.¹ Placed on the Index in 1559 at the time of the Counter-Reformation, Dante's *Monarchia* had a contentious past. The contention started immediately after the death of the poet, when the Pope John XXII and Cardinal Bertrand of Pujet condemned the book, which, according to Boccaccio, was publically burnt. Later, around 1327, Guido Vernani, a Dominican friar from Rimini, theologian, and supporter of the Church's temporal power, discovered traces of Averroism in the book and opposed Dante's philosophical and political positions in his *De reprobatione “Monarchiae” compositae a Dante Aligherio Florentino*.

The events of the 14th century, however, did not hinder the reading and interpretation of Dante's political treatise, which was, at that time, already well-known. Around the middle of the 14th century, Cola di Rienzo, the Roman Tribune friend of Petrarch and admirer of Dante, gave his own lecture on the Latin treatise, writing a commentary on it, in which he

¹ Benedict XV, *In Praeclara summorum*, encyclical letter, Vatican website, April 30, 1921, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xv/la/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xv_enc_30041921_in-praeclara-summorum.html.

stressed the role of the Emperor, the Roman roots of the Empire, and the Roman virtues, as celebrated by the Latin treatise, as well as opposing the temporal claims of the Church. Later, in the 15th century, Marsilio Ficino, the translator of Plato and leader of the Platonic Academy of Florence, made a vernacular translation of the treatise. The philosophical ground of *Monarchia* and Ficino's Platonism may have prompted Ficino's interest in the political treatise. But probably the translation (made at the request of Bernardo del Nero and Antonio da Tuccio Manetti) was determined by ideological reasons in an attempt to propose a theory of an absolute State, which was mostly synchronic with Florence's cultural and political climate under the Medici. Due to the fact that the treatise cost Dante the accusation of heresy (as noted by Boccaccio and Bartolo of Sassoferrato), it was not in Italy but in the Protestant Basilea that the *Monarchia*'s first printed edition appeared in 1559, published by Giovanni Oporinus (a humanistic pseudonym for Johannes Herbst). That Dante's political work, although rooted in the medieval debates, anticipated in some ways the spirit of Reform is suggested not only by its troubled reception but also by the work itself. The decision of the Tridentine Concilium to place the *Monarchia* on the Index—its reception, contents, and theses being responsible for this decision—comes as no surprise. Dante's *Monarchia* remained on the Index of prohibited books until the end of the 19th century.

Assumed by some readers to be a utopian treatise that looks at the restauration of the feudal sacred Roman Empire, and thus a re-evaluation of the role of nobility and its historical meaning, the *Monarchia* has as its antecedent the critique of nobility of birth and heritage in his canzone, *Le dolci rime d'amor ch'io solia*, and later in the fourth treatise of *Convivio*. This critique, a common topic in Dante's age, shared by poets like Guido Guinizzelli and Guittone D'Arezzo, became more prevalent in Florence at the time of Giano della Bella *Ordinamenti di Giustizia* (1293). It was used as an object of reflection in Dante, which *Monarchy* reshapes in order to show a different perspective.

The Crisis and the Reshaping of the Notion of Excellence

Read (as it must be) in continuity with the *Convivio*, it is evident that Dante, while addressing the *Monarchia* to people able to read Latin and thus experts in the field of politics, history, and law, intends to establish a new basis for the idea and role of nobility. The importance of family inheritance is no longer denied, and individual virtue gives worth to the excellence of the noble tradition.

Since *Le dolci rime d'amor ch'io solia*, Dante, in his criticism of the nobility of birth, began to transform a theory of *censo* and inheritance and thus *pretium* into an ethical value². The canzone, *Poscia ch'amor del tutto m'ha lasciato*, implies a reflection on what is named and assumed as a value, *leggiadria*, in the attempt to establish what the true *leggiadria* is. Between the fourth book of *Convivio* and *Monarchia* we may follow Dante's attempt to give voice to a new historical sense, which corresponds to a transformation of perspective expressed at first in the vernacular of the *lingua del sì* and, afterwards, in Latin. *Monarchia* seems to respond to crucial issues of an historical crisis, as witnessed in the *Convivio*; this is particularly evident in the fourth treatise.

This signalled a double crisis affecting two historical categories: nobility of birth and the aristocracy of the intellect. One had been rooted in European history since the time of barbaric invasions and the genesis of feudal society; the other in the entrance of Aristotle and Aristotelianism beginning in the 12th century. Both Platonism and Aristotelianism, in different ways, established intellectual excellence as something divine in the human being. In Dante's time, both issues were at the center of a heated debate. The *Convivio*, in the first three treatises, attempted to discuss and establish human intellectual activity in its power and its limits. But the final treatise of the *Convivio* expresses the crisis of both: that of nobility of birth and intellectual aristocracy. Under scrutiny was the notion of excellence.³ In the fourth treatise, Dante utilizes ethics to show that earthly human happiness is built not on the intellectual virtues but on the *metron* of the right medium or mean. Intellectual happiness, we read, is the highest form of happiness but does not belong to earthly life. In a way that mysteriously parallels this idea, aristocracy of birth is criticized, and a new idea of nobility is introduced: nobility is a gift that is received from God as *grazia*, an intellectual gift. Thanks to this gift, human beings are able to choose the right medium. In light of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, the treatise establishes the practice of the *mezzo* (the Greek *mesotes* and Latin *mediocritas*) as a way to live, according to the eleven ethical virtues (*Convivio* 4.18). In the same treatise, when Dante discusses the intellectual virtues, he is assuming a position that is not purely Aristotelian, but implies a Christianized re-reading of Aristotle. It is true that intellectual virtues are more excellent than the moral ones, but Dante here assigns the

² "Ne la selva erronea." *Dante's Quaestio about Nobility. The Criticism of Materialism as a Pathway to the Inferno*. In *Dante's Convivio: Or How to Restart a Career in Exile*. Edited by F. Meier. University of Leeds Press, 2018, pp. 34-65.

³ Maria Luisa Ardizzone, *Reading as the Angels Read: Speculation and Politics in Dante's Banquet* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), pp. 321-359

practice of the highest of them, contemplation, to eternal life (*Convivio* 4.22). In this solution, he signals the decline of the highest intellectual excellence that he attempted to establish in the first three treatises of the *Convivio*. This decline comes out in continuity with the historical crisis of the feudal idea of nobility based on the privilege of birth, on the inheritance of riches and aristocratic tradition.⁴ What takes place is a reshaping of the notion of excellence.

If in *Convivio* 4 the inheritance of family tradition based on material goods was opposed and replaced by the individual value of virtue, in the *Monarchia* the idea of excellence is built on a new basis: it is individual virtue that must empower the tradition of nobility. As we read, virtue must be proper both to the individual and to his ancestors. In other words, Dante stresses the ethical value of the individual and establishes a coincidence between ethical and historical nobility. Here he re-evaluates the role of family tradition and ancestors. Therefore, he says, “the reward of a position of authority is appropriate to the nobles by reason of the cause of their nobility” (2.3.4-5).⁵ While confronting the discourse on nobility and intellection, Dante actually was participating in the public debate of his time.⁶

Since the *Convivio*, and his falling in love with the *Donna gentile*, Dante was wearing the garb of philosopher, and his poetry and prose were explicitly linked to philosophy and doctrine. Doctrinal poetry and moral poetry both answered and were a part of a circulating debate. Dante as poet and intellectual takes on the garb and practice of the public philosopher and starts openly, from the time of *Convivio*, to educate his

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ I quote from Prue Shaw, trans., *Monarchy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁶ Since the first chapter programmatically Dante makes manifest his intent: “intemptatas ab aliis ostendere veritates” to reveal truths that have not been attempted by others (1.1.3) and explains that: “Cumque, inter alias veritates occultas et utiles, temporalis Monarchie notitia utilissima sit et maxime latens et, propter non se habere immediate ad lucrum, ab omnibus intemptata, in proposito est hanc de suis enucleare latibulis”. (Now since among other truths which are hidden and useful, a knowledge of temporal monarchy is both extremely useful and most inaccessible, and since no one has attempted to elucidate it (on account of its not leading directly to material gain), I propose to draw it forth from where it lies hidden). He has an aspiration non only to be useful to the world, but also to gain glory and recognition: “tum ut utiliter mundo pervigilem, tum etiam ut palmam tanti bravii primus in meam gloriam adipiscar” (so that my wakeful nights may be of benefit to the world, and so that I may be the first to win for my own glory the honor of so great a prize) (1.1.5).

reader.

Dante's Commitment as a Public Philosopher

Dante's inclination to intellectual militancy is not hard to understand. Since his Florentine years, some lyric texts, for instance *Poscia ch'amor del tutto m'ha lasciato* or *Doglia mi reca nello cor ardire*, show that he is involved in a debate and anticipates issues to which he will return in *Monarchia*. Thus, works like the unfinished *Convivio*, which never circulated in Dante's life, or the *De vulgari eloquentia*, also left unfinished, were thought by Dante as to be influential for his time and society. Dante is not an academic, and his intellectual militancy is mostly active in his years of exile, when he lives at the court of statesmen, and in some cases collaborates with a few of them. Some of Dante's Epistles document this. No doubt, *Monarchia* is part of a debate on the idea and praxis of sovereignty. But Dante participates in it in a way that is peculiar. While *Convivio* shaped an educational project, in *Monarchia* Dante enters the political synchronic debate taking his own position on crucial political issues. Along with sovereignty and power, Dante focuses on the natural necessity of State, the natural condition for the human beings in the City, which must be a universal City. He gives a special role to a new subject of political reality, *humanitas*, *genus humanum*, *Universitas*. By detaching the Emperor from the Church and establishing that the Emperor depends directly on God, Dante organizes an idea of Empire that offers a new perspective; he includes *humanitas* as a new subject of history and affirms human happiness as the goal of Empire. A philosophical-pragmatic issue shapes a political endeavor and both are aimed at temporal Monarchy, a theme that, according to what we read, is *intemptatum*, though of great utility. The reception of this work shows how powerful its impact was, and also how dangerous it was assumed to be. The way in which Dante presents his arguments through syllogistic reasoning and the relational field he creates makes his political treatise more powerful as a means to proof and science. But what seems most peculiar to him is *temporalization*, that is, his attempt to transfer values traditionally rooted in metaphysics to what is in time. (On this issue see Quagliioni's perspective in his essay in this volume pp. 150-165). I use the word *temporalization* to stress the tendency to temporalize metaphysical values mostly derived from medieval Platonism and its rereading of Plato's theory of ideas. This temporalization takes form in parallel with the importance that Christology assumes in his discussion of universal Empire. The event that is basic for this end is the Incarnation.

Dante's *Vita nuova* was the first vernacular document written by an intellectual that implied the value of what belongs to the world and to time, leading to the assessment of the human being as a living being endowed with a divine component. A new way to conceive love was one of the manifestations of this idea.⁷ The Incarnation and the importance of what belongs to time are, in Dante's view, intertwined, and in *Monarchia* his discussion about Empire is part of it. What Chiesa and Tabarroni have re-proposed in their edition, which is of a progressive in time compilation of the work,⁸ could perhaps explain the difference between the first treatise and the other two. One of most interesting aspects of temporalization is the way Dante discusses the idea of "one". No doubt the one is identified with the divine being, and the Emperor as one is conceived in the likeness of God who, we read, likes most what resembles him. However, the *Monarchia* encloses the importance of the one in time. Rather than evaluating the metaphysical value of what is in time, *Monarchia* attempts to bring into time values regarded as metaphysical, for instance, when the one is related and identified as the "form" of order we must evaluate "form" in this way, where "form" is a model that enters time.⁹ This happens, for instance, when the relationship among parts is the order of

⁷ I have stressed these themes in Maria Luisa Ardizzone, *Dante :Il paradigma Intellettuale. Un'inventio degli anni fiorentini* (Florence: Olschki,2011) especially in the first part of the book devoted to Dante's *Vita nuova*, pp. 1–114.

⁸ See the introduction to *Monarchia*, ed. Paolo Chiesa and Andrea Tabarroni, vol. 4 of Dante Alighieri, *Le Opere* (Rome: Salerno, 2013), LXVI.

⁹ " Et sicut se habet pars ad totum, sic ordo partialis ad totalem. Pars ad totum se habet sicut ad finem et optimum: ergo et ordo in parte ad ordinem in toto, sicut ad finem et optimum. Ex quo habetur quod bonitas ordinis partialis non excedit bonitatem totalis ordinis, sed magis e converse [...]Unde si forma huius ordinis reperitur in partibus humane multitudinis, multo magis debet reperiri in ipsa multitudine sive totalitate per vim sillogismi premissi, cum sit ordo melior sive forma ordinis; sed reperitur in omnibus partibus humane multitudinis, ut per ea que dicta sunt in capitulo precedenti satis est manifestum: ergo et in ipsa totalitate reperiri debet". And as a part stands in relation to the whole, so the order in a part stands to the order in the whole. A part stands in relation to the whole as to its end and perfection: therefore the order in a part stands to the order in the whole as to its end and perfection. From this it can be deduced that the goodness of the order in a part does not exceed the goodness of the order in the whole, but rather the reverse[...]So if this second kind of order is discernible in the constituent parts which make up the human race, then with all the more reason must it be observable (by the force of our earlier syllogism) in the human race considered as a whole or totality, given that it is a better order or kind of order; but it *is* found in all the parts which make up the human race, as is quite clear from what was said in the previous chapter: therefore it must be observable in the totality (1.6.1–4).

things in relation to the one.¹⁰ Also words like *humanitas* and *universitas* represent the value of one in time and space. They, in fact, indicate a collectivity that is one and is an historical reality.

Temporalization

At the beginning of *Monarchia*, Dante introduces his discourse on what he calls *Monarchia temporalis*, a discourse that is *intemptatum*. Explaining the meaning of *temporalis* he says that the word refers to that which is measured in time.¹¹ Time in *Convivio* (4.2.6), following Aristotle's *Physics*, was something that measures motion according to the before and after ("il tempo è numero di movimento secondo prima e poi"). Everything we read in *Monarchia* must be seen in this context and, therefore, within nature and time. Dante's discussion seeks to transfer into time what has its roots in a transcendent dimension. As the discussion about the one has its roots in the metaphysics of the One, in the same way the Emperor's power derives from God. Also, the foundations of *ius* are metaphysical, because they are in the mind of God, and nature has a metaphysical basis. In fact, it, too, is said to be in the mind of God (*Monarchia* 2). This paradigm, which has its source in the ancient-medieval theory of the ideas in the mind of God and which the *Convivio* had introduced powerfully,¹² shows that *Monarchia* has, as one of its goals, the temporalization of a patrimony of metaphysical ideas. Dante's effort which aims to consider inside the laws of time things that find their value in their transcendent origin, is one of the aspects most worthy of reflection. That the Incarnation heralds that the *verbum* (word and action) takes things out of eternity and brings them into time is part of the meanings that the birth of Christ establishes. Here Dante's method of exploration and construction must be taken into consideration. Earthly human happiness, as the true aim of the book, is part of Dante's project. Chapter 1.12.6 of *Monarchia* opens the idea of intellectual freedom as possible under the World Ruler and of happiness; thereby, distinguishing

¹⁰ See *Monarchia*. "Ordo partium ad unum est melior" (1.6.2). See also Chiesa-Tabarroni, ed., note p.30, and Nardi's long explanation in his edition. *Monarchia*, ed. Bruno Nardi, in Dante Alighieri, *Opere minori*, vol. 5, tomo II, in *La letteratura italiana: Storia e testi* (Milan: Ricciardi, 1979) notes, pp.312–315.

¹¹ "Est ergo temporalis Monarchia, quam dicunt 'Imperium', unicus principatus et super omnes in tempore vel in hiis et super hiis que tempore mesurantur" (1.2.1).

¹² This is an issue generally neglected by scholars, that I have introduced in Ardizzone, *Dante: Il paradigma intellettuale*; and again in Ardizzone, *Reading as the Angels Read*, pp.114–189.

happiness in life, where the individual is “happy as man”, from that of Paradise, where souls are happy “as gods”.¹³

Dante introduces duality as a tool, which involves acknowledging the existence of two diverse dimensions. There are two forms of happiness because there are two lives, eternal and terrestrial, and *Monarchia* deals with the earthly one. There are two powers, that of the Emperor and that of the Pope, but only one, the Imperial, presides over human temporal life, while the other belongs to the soul’s eternal life. These diverse authorities that can be reduced to one as men, cannot however to be reduced to one for what belongs to their different roles as Pope and Emperor (3.12). So not only reduction *ad unum* but also duality is part of Dante’s idea about political discourse.¹⁴ Earthly things are *per se* reality. It is an autonomous discourse as result of an autonomous condition. *Monarchia* distinguishes what is in time from what is eternal, where the human being is like the horizon between infinite and finite (3.16). This returns when Dante distinguishes the *philosophica documenta* from the *documenta spiritualia*.¹⁵ Duality, which implies a binary dimension, is the result of

¹³ quia per ipsum hic felicitamur ut homines, per ipsum alibi felicitamur ut dii. since by virtue of it we become happy here as men, by virtue of it we become happy elsewhere as gods.(1.12.6).

¹⁴ “Propter quod opus fuit homini duplici directivo secundum duplicem finem: scilicet summo Pontifice, qui secundum revelata humanum genus perduceret ad vitam eternam, et Imperatore, qui secundum philosophica documenta genus humanum ad temporalem felicitatem dirigeret.” It is for this reason that man had need of two guides corresponding to his twofold goal: that is to say the supreme Pontiff, to lead mankind to eternal life in conformity with revealed truth, and the Emperor, to guide mankind to temporal happiness in conformity with the teachings of philosophy (3.15.10)

¹⁵ “Duos igitur fines providentia illa inenarrabilis homini proposuit intendendos: beatitudinem scilicet huius vite, que in operatione proprie virtutis consistit et per terrestrem paradysum figuratur; et beatitudinem vite eterne, que consistit in fruitione divini aspectus ad quam propria virtus ascendere non potest, nisi lumine divino adiuta, que per paradysum celestem intelligi datur. Ad has quidem beatitudines, velut ad diversas conclusiones, per diversa media venire oportet. Nam ad primam per philosophica documenta venimus, dummodo illa sequamur secundum virtutes morales et intellectuales operando; ad secundam vero per documenta spiritualia que humanam rationem transcendunt, dummodo illa sequamur secundum virtutes theologicas operando, fidem spem scilicet et caritate. Has igitur conclusiones et media, licet ostensa sint nobis hec ab humana ratione que per philosophos tota nobis innotuit, hec a Spiritu Sancto qui per prophetas et agiographos, qui per eius discipulos supernaturalem veritatem ac nobis necessariam revelavit, humana cupiditas postergaret nisi homines, tamquam equi, sua bestialitate vagantes “in camo et freno” compescerentur in via.” Ineffable

Dante's strong intuition of a new space and method of inquiry. It heralds the view that a dimension we may call temporal *perseitas* enters the field of politics.

Dante announces this at the beginning of the treatise, when he presents his discourse as focused on something never before attempted, namely, temporal Monarchy, which insures temporal beatitude in life and the well-being of the human race. Temporalization is a goal that inscribes itself in the results of a work that goes beyond what Dante himself perhaps intended to activate. One aspect of Dante's public political commitment (as is well known) is *Monarchia's* detachment of the political from the ecclesiastical power. As noted above, according to Dante the Emperor depends not on the Pope but directly on God (*Monarchia* 3.15-16). This detachment, once considered in relation to the human being, locates within the individual a stronger responsibility. What presides over human earthly life and over the goal of this life not only has its center in the political organization; human desires and ends are also inscribed in the state, which is regulated by the Emperor, who is directly linked to God.

In fact, if the Emperor depends directly on God and the political State depends on Him, earthly human life depends on the Emperor and on God, and because God is within the human being, a new dimension seems to be delineated which stresses the role of interiority. Dante emphasizes the drama of human responsibility in the *Commedia*. This drama is shaped on free will, which is central in the *Monarchia* as well. This leads to the consideration of how Dante as political theorist shapes his discourse.

providence has thus set before us two goals to aim for: happiness in this life, which consists of the exercise of our own powers and is figured in the earthly paradise; and happiness in the eternal life, which consists in the enjoyment of the vision of God (to which our own powers cannot raise us except with the help of God's light) and which is signified by the heavenly paradise. Now these two kinds of happiness must be reached by different means, as they represent different ends. For we attain the first through the teachings of philosophy, provided that we follow them putting into practice the moral and intellectual virtues; whereas we attain the second through spiritual teachings which transcend human reason, provided that we follow them putting into practice the theological virtues, i.e. faith, hope and charity. These ends and the means to attain them have been shown to us on the one hand by human reason, which has been entirely revealed to us by the philosophers, and on the other by the Holy Spirit, who through the prophets and sacred writers, through Jesus Christ the son of God, co-eternal with him, and through his disciples, has revealed to us the transcendent truth we cannot do without; yet human greed would cast these ends and means aside if men, like horses, prompted to wander by their animal natures, were not held in check "with bit and bridle" on their journey *Monarchia* (3.16.7-9)

It is a book on Monarchy. But more than addressing kingship, Dante speaks about the goal of humanity. He postulates a new use of power, not the right of the Sovereign, as it was established for instance by the jurists of the Diet of Roncaglia (1154 and 1158), which was centered on a feudal perspective of power and on the rights of the Emperor. Rather, the new subject and true goal of Monarchy is the well-being or happiness of human beings. A reversal of perspective seems to be active.

Perhaps a kind of political pamphlet dealing with issues debated at the time, *Monarchia* is a realistic work. But its realism is built on a perspective that is proper to Dante: what is real temporalizes an ideal dimension and thus brings value to what is in time and space. Actually, the way in which his discourse is shaped shows a perspective at once realistic and utopian. But the reader of the discourse on temporal Monarchy who perhaps is a man of politics and thus learned and able to read in Latin, and to deal with the essential principles of law, justice, and politics must be aware of the fact that human life and its goal is rooted in time and space. To such a man the *Monarchia* is directed, perhaps as a kind of pamphlet to support the election of the Emperor. As Chiesa-Tabarroni and Quaglioni write, Dante has a peculiar approach to politics: he is a theorist of something real, and his discourse is pragmatic. But it is possible to detect that utopia here works together with praxis, and the idealization of the Empire is something hard to deny. Many of Dante's assumptions are in fact gratuitous. Universalism in an age of political fragmentation, absence of greed in the Emperor, miracles as proof of the rightness of the Empire willed by divine Providence are all parts of the same utopian vision partially still grounded in theology. But other aspects can be considered as part of, or as an anticipation of an idea that is not only realistic and pragmatic but which also paves the way for the consideration of politics as a science *per se*.

The One and the Many: The Plural One

In the first chapters of the political treatise, Dante confronts the crucial issue of the universal goal of human beings. He declares in fact what his project of *inquisition* is: "Nunc autem videndum est quid sit finis totius humane civilitatis" 1. 3.1.¹⁶ The answer that he offers, after a series of clarifications and distinctions, is the following: "Patet igitur quod ultimum de potentia ipsius humanitatis est potentia sive virtus intellectiva" (It is

¹⁶ We must therefore now see what is the purpose of human society as a whole (1.3.1).

thus clear that the highest potentiality of mankind is his intellectual potentiality or faculty (1.3.7-8). Due to the fact that such power cannot be “*tota*” “*simul*” actualized by just a man or a single community, there needs to be a vast number of individual people in the human race, through whom the whole of this potentiality can be actualized (1.3.8).¹⁷ Summarizing, he says: “*Satis igitur declaratum est quod proprium opus humani generis totaliter accepti est actuare semper totam potentiam intellectus possibilis, per prius ad speculandum et secundario propter hoc ad operandum per suam extensionem*” (1.4.1).¹⁸ Dante’s discourse on Monarchy focuses, right from the beginning, on the ends and desires of the *humanum genus*. According to the above quoted fragments, it is evident that Dante assigns one goal for the whole humanity, which he considers as one. Here there begins to take form a one-to-one correspondence that can be better understood if we follow Dante’s line of thought in relation to a subtext which is recalled in chapter 1. 3: i.e., Averroes’ *De anima* (see Brenet’s essay in this volume pp. 59-80). Introducing the notion of the possible intellect, whose potentiality can be actualized only by all human beings,¹⁹ Dante organizes his own pathway. What interests him is not the notion of the intellect as separated but rather the idea that all human beings think best if they think together.²⁰ In fact, the possible intellect to be actualized needs the whole *humanum genus*. Utilizing expressions like *humanum genus* or words like *humanitas*, or *universitas*, he creates the sense of a plurality that works as one, or of a unity that is plural, because it is made

¹⁷ “*Et quia potentia ista per unum hominem seu per aliquam particularium comunitatum superius distinctarum tota simul in actum reduci non potest, necesse est multitudinem esse in humano genere, per quam quidem tota potentia hec actuatur*” And since that potentiality cannot be fully actualised all at once in any one individual or in any one of the particular social groupings enumerated above, there must needs be a vast number of individual people in the human race, through whom the whole of this potentiality can be actualized.(1.3.8).

¹⁸ Now it has been sufficiently explained that the activity proper to mankind considered as a whole is constantly to actualise the full intellectual potential of humanity, primarily through thought and secondarily through action, as a function and extension of thought (1.4.1).

¹⁹ *Patet igitur quod ultimum de potentia ipsius humanitatis est potentia sive virtus intellectiva. Et quia potentia ista per unum hominem seu per aliquam particularium comunitatum superius distinctarum tota simul in actum reduci non potest, necesse est multitudinem esse in humano genere, per quam quidem tota potentia hec actuatur* (1.3.7-8).

²⁰ In order to explain this passage, 1.4.1 Nardi recalls John of Jandun who says that human beings are “intelligent” and not “divisive” but “collective”. See Nardi, ed., *Monarchia*, p. 302.

by many. Such unity, which is primarily intellectual, provides the natural basis for the universal Empire.

Names that are singular and can be followed by verbs in the singular or in the plural according to grammar but which enclose the universality of human beings, become key words in Dante's idea of Empire. In *Monarchia*, they are new subjects of history and this perspective is evident from the first book of the treatise. Here what seems to be suggested is that human beings think together: a view that is perhaps influenced by the theory that the possible intellect is one. In fact, if the actualization of the possible intellect *semper* requires entire humanity and this intellect is recalled only in the singular, Averroes' theory, may be filtered through his readers, penetrates. However, what is certain is that Dante does not deal with the field to which Averroes' theory of the unity of intellect is bounded. The intellect is said to be actualized in virtue of the many, or better by all human beings. From this derives a most interesting aspect: the being of one is one and plural at once. Such plurality, which is also one, seems to be one of the foci of the *Monarchia* that Dante stresses by introducing a strong awareness of terminology and vocabulary. More than focusing on the notion of *reductio ad unum* in the *Monarchia*, what seems most evident is the correlation Dante introduces between the one and the many. More than seeing them as contraries (as in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* 10), the *Monarchia* considers them as correlative. A new idea in politics seems to arise in which a new space is considered and open for the plurality, once this plurality is seen as one and plural at once.

The idea that human beings share an intellectual activity is the foundation for Dante's idea of temporal Monarchy. Rather than insisting on the Averroistic roots of this idea, it is more appropriate to stress the way in which Dante organizes the issue. The perspective offered is that all humanity collaborates in the activity of thinking, which is the highest act of human beings. The political treatise formulates an idea of excellence in the unity, which is reached when human beings think together.²¹ Quoting

²¹ Dante organizes a pathway in which the fact that human beings think together parallels the idea of Monarchy as the government of just *unus princeps*. I quote a fragment of the pathway that is organized in the first book of *Monarchia* and that starts with: "Et quia presens tractatus est inquisitio quedam, ante omnia de principio scriptandum esse videtur in cuius virtute inferiora consistant... Cum ergo materia presens politica sit, ymo fons atque principium rectorum politiarum, et omne politicum nostre potestati subiaceat, manifestum est... quod est finis universalis civilitatis humani generis, erit hic principium per quod omnia que inferius probanda sunt erunt manifesta sufficienter: esse autem finem huius civilitatis et illius, et non esse unum omnium finem arbitrari stultum est (1.2.4-8).

Aristotle's *Politics*, 1.2.1252a32 in chapter 3 of the first book, it is said that men of vigorous intellect naturally rule over others (1.3.10). Human actions and arts are part of the things that are active in the city, but they are under the dominion of the people able to use the intellect. *Politeia*, which implies a ruled society in its positive meaning, as in Aristotle's *Politics*, offers to the plurality of human beings a role in the *intemptatum* discourse on *temporal* Monarchy.

***Nominatio*: Grammar and Logic**

To establish this new dimension of the one as both plural and one, Dante follows a path that is not only philosophical. He seems to be strongly aware of logical-grammatical notions that help him. Collective names that he utilizes have introduced the sense of a singular that is plural, ever since the canzone *Amor che nella mente mi ragiona*. In this poem, we must note that Dante uses the word *gente* to introduce the idea that a plurality has a power to know that is superior to that of the individual. The prose of *Convivio* 3 was partially constructed on this problematic issue.²² Dante's interest in this issue—i.e., collectivity as one and plural—also appears in the *De vulgari*, where the ideal *typus* of language (Spitzer), the *vulgare illustre*, creates a *koinè*, which represents a unified plurality.²³ The *vulgare illustre* has as its background a political scenario, the court of the Emperor

At 1.7.3 a parallel is established in cosmological terms between “unum principium” and “unicum principem”: “ad ipsum universum sive ad eius principem, qui Deus est et Monarcha, simpliciter bene respondet per unum principium tantum, scilicet unicum principem.” And since this present treatise is a kind of inquiry, we must at the outset investigate the principle whose truth provides a firm foundation for later propositions... Now since our present subject is political, indeed is the source and starting-point of just forms of government, and everything in the political sphere comes under human control it is clear ... therefore whatever constitutes the purpose of the whole of human society will be here the first principle, in terms of which all subsequent propositions to be proved will be demonstrated with sufficient rigour; for it would be foolish to suppose that there is one purpose for this society and another for that, and not a common purpose for all of them... for its parts are well adapted to it in relation to a single principle, and so absolutely speaking it too is well adapted to the universe (or to its ruler, who is God and Monarch) in relation to a single principle, i.e. one ruler. (1.2.4–8; 1.7-3)

²² I discuss this issue in Ardizzone, *Reading as the Angels Read*, chapters 3–4. See also my essay in this volume, pp.222-246.

²³ Leo Spitzer, “La ‘tipologia ideale’ nel *De vulgari eloquentia* di Dante”, in *Scritti Italiani*, ed. Claudio Scarpati (Milan: Vita e pensiero. Pubblicazioni dell'Università Cattolica, 1976), pp.191–212

Frederick the Second and of his son Manfredi, in this court there were active poets who were great intellectuals and with them start the vernacular of Italy. Dante writes the court is dispersed but the new unifying principle is, according to Dante, in the *vulgare illustre*. Different texts create a unity derived from poets belonging to different geographies and territories. Dante attempts to create a new ideal unity. The court is dispersed, but the vernacular *illustre* which is also *aulicum* and *curiale* creates a new *koinonia*. The poetic body is one but is constituted by many, and among them Dante himself and his friend Cino da Pistoia. If the *koine* of *vulgare illustre* was made by poets and their poetry, the *Convivio* attempted to establish a new *koine*, philosophical and scientific, based on the old and new learning formulated in Italian. Not just poetry, as part of *trivium* and *quadrivium*, but, also, philosophy, sciences, and theology were now at the center of the new attempted *koine*. The various fields were neither opposed nor conciliated but instead were brought on the same page so that the reader might know and confront them. The *Convivio* has an educational goal, and the true aim of the treatise is the formation of his reader. The entire educational canon as circulating after the entrance of Greek-Arabic learning—philosophy, science, cosmology—was rethought and was addressed primarily to people who were not able to read Latin but were naturally hungry for knowledge. The readers of the doctrinal vernacular work, whose identity is not established but who are certainly not limited to women and Barons, Dante recalls in the first treatise. These readers to be formed are in some ways an anticipation of the *humanitas* of *Monarchia*, which aims to show how human beings can be happy in life in continuity with the *Convivio*'s attempt (see my essay in this volume, pp. 222-245).

The word *typo* (type), as modeled in *Monarchia*, is used, for instance, at 1.2.1 in order to describe the ideal peculiarities of temporal Monarchy. According to the indications of the treatise, it is in it that the human genus can reach earthly fulfilment, that is, well-being and happiness. To this *typus* of temporal Monarchy there corresponds an ideal-real earthly happiness. In this discourse, many words are introduced to shape new meanings. I have underlined the word *humanitas*, which, as Dante uses it, must be considered in light of the various meanings of the word. The meaning of the word in fact is not *paideia*, nor *benevolentia*, but *comitas*: a collective name, a singular that encloses a plurality. This meaning of the word was widely accepted in the years of the late Empire (Balbi).²⁴ In the

²⁴ “mutual connection among men [...] the *humanitas* as a mutual connection implies that the men have a common nature.” Andrea Balbo, “*Humanitas* in

same way, the word *universitas*, as Dante uses it, has nothing to do with the sense of a legal recognized community (Michaud Quantin) but rather suggests the sense of a unified goal, in which social unity is thought in agreement with that of the universe. As we read, *universum unum principium unicum principem*, it implies a link between *principium* and *princeps* in relation to the universe (1.7). Moreover, both the *Convivio* and *Monarchia* start with an adjective that implies collectivity: “*Tutti gli uomini*” in *Convivio* 1.1, and “*omnium hominum*” in *Monarchia* (1.1). These phrases indicate a subject that is a collective one and is constituted by the many who share something. In the *Convivio*, this is the desire to know that is naturally shared by all human beings. In *Monarchia*, we find a further unifying principle in the *Omnium hominum*, namely, a natural inclination among humans to use their energies to the advantage of posterity. Here the unifying factor is primarily the love of truth, which continues the work of the ancients. The word *ditati* implies the wealth of cultural capital that is to be used for the foundation of the *res publica*.

The *humanitas* of *Monarchia*, whose possible intellect works better because it is actualized by all human beings together, reveals the natural basis on which to build the best conditions for human life. The answer that Dante offers is in some way tautological. In fact, in light of this anticipation, the best form of government—that is, Monarchy—guarantees the best form of life, because it is natural to human beings who think together to live together in the superior unity of Monarchy. *Pace* and *Concordia* enter as necessary conditions for the accomplishment of human goals. Both words imply unity and plurality. Dante stresses the plural-one meaning of the word *Concordia*.²⁵

Dante’s position, usually seen as derived from the field of philosophy, suggests something more, namely, that a logical-grammatical awareness is part of his discussion. Grammar and logic are natural, because both are related to the *logos*, which is a natural human endowment (*De vulgari*, 1). Dante has a strong sense of vocabulary, of which the *De vulgari* offers an example. But it is not limited to what we read in it. The making of the

Imperial Age: Some Reflections on Seneca and Quintilian”, *The Journal of Greco-Roman Studies* 42 (2012): pp. 76–77.

²⁵ Que quidem radix apparebit, si natura vel ratio concordie summatur: est enim concordia uniformis motus plurium voluntatum; in qua quidem ratione apparet unitatem voluntatum, que per uniformem motum datur intelligi, concordie radicem esse vel ipsam concordiam”. (What this root is will appear if we consider the nature or meaning of concord, for concord is a uniform movement of several wills; from this definition it is clear that unity of wills, which is what is signified by “uniform movement”, is the root of concord or indeed is concord itself) (1.15.5).

singular which is plural as *genus humanum*, or *humanitas* or *universitas*, and *Ecclesia*, one and plural at once, opens a new space that is logical and political at once and no doubt philosophical, too. But the fact that the universal empire establishes the earthly goal of human beings as the true goal of State, and because human beings have as natural goal happiness, establishes that the natural happiness rules the natural idea of State.

Politics and Nature

As is well known, Dante's Empire has a solid basis in the fact that it is a natural organization—natural because it corresponds to human nature—which *Convivio* 4 had defined as *compagnevole*²⁶, following Aristotle's *Politics*, perhaps filtered by a medieval reader. The *Monarchia*, however, signals a further step, since the Empire guarantees a political universal unity, thus allowing the best way for human beings to live. This best way is primarily intellectual; due to the fact that human beings think better when they think together (actualization of the possible intellect), the intellectual nature of the human beings needs a political organism that allows them to be happy together. The political state is natural, also because it fulfils the intellectual nature of human beings. Natural means is that corresponds to the nature of human beings. Aristotle in the *Politics* has indicated in the *logos* the natural necessity of the polis-state. The political state is a natural one because the human being is endowed with *logos*, which implies universal reason and speech: *logos* in Ancient Greek includes "relation".²⁷ Dante stresses the Aristotelian idea that *logos* is universal by following a stoic idea as interpreted by Christianity. The first book of *Monarchia*, chapter 16, introduces the coincidence between the birth of Christ and that of Empire. The importance of Christ in the Monarchy is thus part of the political discourse.

Dante follows Aristotle's *Politics*: the origin of society is based primarily on biology, love, and, therefore, family and friendship, which are in fact archetypical forms of society. Human nature is fulfilled within a society. The Emperor and the Pope are the two traditionally ruling powers. Close to them Dante sets out a one that is both one and plural: *Humanitas* or *Universitas*. Marsilius of Padua will identify in this *humanitas* the sources of democracy. Dante, instead, establishes a correlation with the

²⁶ *Convivio*, 4.4.1

²⁷ Giovanni Reale, *Per una nuova interpretazione di Platone. Rilettura della Metafisica dei grandi dialoghi alla luce delle "Dottrine non scritte"* (Milan: Vita e pensiero, 1991), p. 233.

principle of one, in which *pluralitas* and *unitas* are associated and virtually coincident. This plural unity was part of the 13th century intellectual debate, as confirmed by an article condemned in Paris in 1277, which states, *Humanitas est no forma rei, sed rationis*.²⁸ Stigmatized by the censor it confirms that this new element of politics is the result, perhaps, of a philosophical idea, the intellectual unity of human beings, that becomes a real operative thing that penetrates in history.

The Christological Implant

The historical dimension that governs the treatise implies a pathway that Dante organizes and that demands our attention. We note that the work is highly Christological. The temporal coincidence of the birth of Empire under Augustus and that of Christ is not accidental, given the importance that the God-man signifies and announces for the human beings: salvation implies the importance of earthly life and leads to the possibility of happiness in this life. Such happiness takes place in an earthly universal political organization that is naturally predisposed to a common thinking or, as Dante indicates, to the actualization of the possible intellect as the result of human beings thinking together. Universal Monarchy forges a link between the universal *logos* considered in time in light of the Incarnation and the possible intellect actualized because human beings think better when they think together: i.e., in the universal State or Monarchy, historically created by Augustus. A terminology rooted in Aristotelianism postulates the universal thought of human beings. But the *verbum incarnatum*, word and action, is an element of great importance. It is the Word made flesh that lives among human beings and that will establish a new sense of earthly life. If this link does exist, the field of Aristotelianism is confronted with the Gospels, in particular the Gospel of John. But the importance that the scribe of the life of Christ, Luke assumes in *Monarchia* (2. 2) shows the relevance of God as man. Dante relates it to the birth of Empire under Augustus. *Concordia* (universal peace) delineates an earthly paradise, to which the Incarnation points.

The Christological dimension of *Monarchia* does not oppose temporalization; on the contrary, the value of time is stressed. *Monarchia*, while aware of the theological center of Medieval culture, stresses a theology linked to an historical human perspective and goal. In this perspective, the Incarnation plays a crucial role, which the reader is called

²⁸ Roland Hissette, *Enquête sur les 219 articles condamnés à Paris le 7 Mars 1277* (Paris: Publications Universitaires, 1977), p. 201: prop. 124.

upon to evaluate and understand.

Political power becomes stronger and acquires a sacred dimension because it is willed by Divine Providence. But this sacred dimension, of course reminiscent of the Holy Roman Empire, grounds its sacredness not in the Church but directly in God. Dante contributes to this idea when he associates the Divine as one to the Emperor as one. In the same way that he establishes the identification between one and *bonum* as good (1.15), Dante attempts to show how much this oneness is also part of time and history. *Humanitas*, *Universitas*, Peace, and Concord, are all variants of the same idea: what is one is the best, but it can be constituted by the many. *Concordia* is one of the modes of the one in time.

Justice and Ius: Utopia and the Value of Temporal Things

What the temporal dimension implies in the *intemptato* discourse on Monarchy can be better understood if we recall the way Dante introduces and discusses justice and *ius*. Both, in different ways, are conceived in relation to a model of perfection. This confirms how much reality and the ideal world are related. A chapter not yet written on the criticism of *Monarchia* should map the uncharted territory of how what is real in time and space is measured in its goodness on an archetype and by an archetype. This is a form of Platonism, which in *Monarchia* establishes the necessity of an ideal dimension as a utopia, the true focus of which is the temporal. In *Monarchia*, *iustitia* is *quaedam rectitudo sive regula*, which, in its perfect being, is compared to the abstract notion of whiteness, of which the white, a composite, is the imperfect realization. In this context Dante introduces the word “form”, thereby distinguishing its abstract being from the contingent and the *Magister of the Six Principiorum* is recalled. What is indicated as the more and the less is refuted. Justice rejects the oblique, a dimension expressed in geometrical terms, to which Dante opposes the right.²⁹ This allows him to speak about the difference

²⁹ “Ad evidentiam subassumpta sciendum quod iustitia, de se et in propria natura considerata, est quedam rectitudo sive regula obliquum hinc inde abiciens: et sic non recipit magis et minus, quemadmodum albedo in suo abstracto considerata. Sunt enim huiusmodi forme quedam compositioni contingentes, et consistentes simpliciter et invariabili essentia, ut Magister Sex Principiorum recte ait. Recipiunt tamen magis et minus huiusmodi qualitates ex parte subiectorum quibus concernuntur, secundum quod magis et minus in subiectis de contrariis admiscetur”. To clarify the minor premise, it must be understood that justice, considered in itself and in its own nature, is a kind of rectitude or rule which spurns deviation from the straight path to either side; and, thus, it does not admit of

and distinction between an abstract idea of justice and an applied one. Justice seems to be perfect in its abstract form, just as whiteness is an abstract dimension, of which white is the imperfect realization. Justice is perfect only in its abstract being, and this abstract perfection, however, seems to be the canon or measure on which to measure its concrete value, because it is by approaching such an abstract dimension that something is just.

Perfection is an ideal inspirational principle. The perfect white is whiteness: an abstract being. The ideal presides over the real, as a necessary utopia. Introducing the more and the less, Dante's discussion takes into consideration that human justice deals with the category of quality, of which the more and the less ("magis et minus") are parts. Quality, greater and less in Aristotle's *Categories*, belong to the world of accidents and thus of physics (*Categories* 8). Justice is linked to measure, because we deal with an applied Justice. Here we have another glimpse of Dante's method of temporalization, and imperfection is part of this dimension. Therefore, justice is at its strongest where there is least of what is opposed to justice, both in the disposition and in the actions of an agent. Justice is the result of the will and power of someone who has power. As Dante writes, justice is at its strongest only under a Monarch; therefore, the best ordering of the world requires Monarchy or Empire (1.11).

The same abstract or archetypal dimension is active in the discussion about *ius*. *Ius* derives from God, it is (we read) in the mind of God: "Ex hiis iam liquet quod ius, cum sit bonum, per prius in mente Dei est" (right, being a good, exists firstly in the mind of God). Such *ius* penetrates in nature: i.e., in things that are in space and time (2.2–3). Dante does not explain in which way but he says that *natura* is in the mind of God and then in celo as in the instrument by means of which the image of eternal goodness is set forth in fluctuating matter: "Est enim natura in mente primi motoris, qui Deus est; deinde in celo, tanquam in organo quo mediante similitudo bonitatis eterne in fluitantem materiam explicator".³⁰ In line with that *ius* is in nature (2.2.5), the suggestion should be to look at

a more and a less: just like whiteness considered in the abstract. There are forms of this kind, in fact, which are to be found in composites, but which in themselves consist of a simple and unchangeable essence, as the Master of the Six Principles rightly says. Such qualities are present to a greater or lesser degree depending on the subjects in which they are given concrete form, according as these subjects contain more or less of their opposites (1.11.3–5).

³⁰ For nature is in the mind of the first mover, who is God; then in the heavens, as in the instrument by means of which the image of eternal goodness is set forth in fluctuating matter (2.2.2-3).

nature as an *auctoritas* because it derives from the mind of God and in the mediation of the heavens moved by the angelic intelligences.

Dante focuses here on what occurs in nature and, therefore, implies that the *auctoritates* that organize the historical *ius* have their archetype in nature and in its model in the mind of God. Dante writes that since it is a good, *ius* is willed by God, and the Empire too is willed by God. The Empire is therefore built on *ius*: from that the idea of state based on *ius* and on the rights of human beings. Whoever looks to the *bonum* of the State looks at the aim of *ius*, and every *ius* is a common good (2.5.2). The Romans, in conquering the world, aimed at *ius*. The fundamentals of *ius* are in things. Nature has located these foundations in things, and *ius* is natural “et illud quod natura ordinavit de iure servatur” (2.6.1).³¹

Following a medieval line of thought, *ius* is in the mind of God but also exists in nature. The archetypes are ideal, but Dante intends to focus on their presence in the world. Nature is created by God; in fact, it is as model in the mind of God, and *ius* is both in the mind of God and in nature, which is in time and is time. A platonic trace is active in both the ways in which Dante considers nature and *ius*. This is part of a method Dante had displayed in the *Convivio* and which the *Monarchia* confirms. When he writes in the *Commedia* that Christ is an idea (Paradiso,13.53), he follows Augustine and his medieval tradition but implies that the Incarnation brings the ideas into the world.

It seems evident that in what Dante indicates as temporal monarchy and in its *intemptata* discussion what is assumed to be ideal and divine archetypes are presented in their earthly dimension as well. One of the efforts of *Monarchia* is a rethinking of a patrimony of learning which is an ideal brought into time; the other is to rethink what is in time according to its idealistic pattern. In other words, Dante shows how the ideal becomes real. The meaning of the Incarnation implies the temporalization and spatialization of the ideal, which becomes real in history. Here, what I have termed the Christological implant of Monarchy is extremely important.

³¹ “ Propter quod patet quod natura ordinat res cum respectu suarum facultatum, qui respectus est fundamentum iuris in rebus a natura positum. Ex quo sequitur quod ordo naturalis in rebus absque iure servari non possit, cum inseparabiliter iuris fundamentum ordini sit annexum: necesse igitur est ordinem de iure servari.” From this it is clear that nature orders things according to their capacities, and this taking into account of their capacities is the basis of right established by nature in the created world. From this it follows that the natural order in the created world cannot be maintained without right, since the basis of right is inseparably bound up with that order: the preservation of that order is therefore necessarily right (2.6.3-4)

Law as Dante discusses it is part of temporalization, Dante's discussion deals with universal law and local laws. In *Monarchia*, we read that the Monarch is the one who best is able to govern the world and, in this context, he confronts and recalls both universal law and particular laws. In chapter 14.4–7 of the first book, while pointing out the importance of the Monarch and his universal government and law, Dante recalls the small political entities, showing his attention to what comes out from different peoples and their everyday lives and geographies. Law is universal but must also consider local identities and their expressions. Temporalization is an imperative that urges us to take into consideration differences among people. The universal is perfect, but what is needed also is the particular and concrete. If law does not consider the local identities it is partially empty. *Monarchia* introduces the Aristotelian *Epieikeia* (N.E. 5) that Dante reads, perhaps aware of Gratianus' canonical *ius* and of the importance that local laws have in his *Decretum*.³²

The Empire is universal, but different peoples have different needs, according to their traditions and local realities. What is particular is the result of the history and geography of the local, singular identities of various human communities. This creates the exception within the universal. When he speaks about *vicinia* previously in the *Convivio* 4 and then in *Monarchia* 1.5, Dante considers the collective organizations of collective goods held by a community. The *vicinie* (*Monarchia* 1. 5) are in fact rural aggregations regulated by *pacta* of administrative nature among private citizens.³³ They are consortia of an administrative nature (i.e. economics) but they anticipate the rural communes that arise at a later time.³⁴

Dante opens spaces that he proceeds to fill sometimes in different texts. Temporalization, a dimension that I have attempted to stress, cannot be understood, however, without evaluating the economic element which Dante offers as a glimpse in his discourse on Monarchy. In the next section, I will discuss what I indicate as the principle of economics in order to show the continuity that Dante establishes between a logical principle and a principle more properly economic. At the center of this principle we find nature, as we will see, because this economic principle

³² Maria Luisa Ardizzone, "The *Vicinia* and its Role in Dante's Political Thought," *Dante Studies* 130 (2012): pp.163–182.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Starting with book 4 of *Convivio* Dante evaluates the old *vicus* in its becoming and in virtue of such becoming a new word is introduced, "*vicinia*" (*Convivio* 4). *Vicinia* is a latin word but in *Convivio* Dante uses it as a vernacular one. See Ardizzone, "The *Vicinia*", pp. 163–182.

has its *auctoritas* in nature.

Politics and a Logic of Economics

As previously said at the beginning of his political treatise, Dante informs his readers that his subject is *Monarchia temporalis*, which he further explains as follows: “Est ergo temporalis Monarchia, quam dicunt 'Imperium', unicus principatus et super omnes in tempore vel in hiis et super hiis que tempore mensurantur.”³⁵ He continues to state that this is an *intemptatum* discourse. The word *Monarchia*, as he discusses it, has not just one meaning but essentially three: as a political organization of State, as the principle or government of the one, and finally the one as an archetype, that is, something perfect and thus a model on which to shape and rule. While the first meaning is clear, the other two make Dante’s discourse complex by suggesting nuances and meanings that enter in his discussion of Empire. But *Monarchia* as *monos–arche* (the principle of one), or the one as archetype or model, includes a logical meaning. This logic appears to be grounded not just on the metaphysics of the one but also on nature. When Dante in the first book establishes the principle of his discussion on operation (because the goal is practical), what is suggested is that the principle of his inquiry is the goal of an action that exists in time (1.2.6–7).³⁶ At the center of Dante’s treatise there is, therefore, what Alfarabi indicated in his *De scientiis*, chapter 5, which is devoted to politics, as accidents, that is, things that happen in time and

³⁵ “Est ergo temporalis Monarchia, quam dicunt 'Imperium', unicus principatus et super omnes in tempore vel in hiis et super hiis que tempore mensurantur”. Temporal monarchy, then, which men call “empire”, is a single sovereign authority set over all others in time, that is to say over all authorities which operate in those things and over those things which are measured by time (1.2.2).

³⁶ “Cum ergo materia presens politica sit, ymo fons atque principium rehtarum politiarum, et omne politicum nostre potestati subiaceat, manifestum est quod materia presens non ad speculationem per prius, sed ad operationem ordinatur. Rursus, cum in operabilibus principium et causa omnium sit ultimus finis—movet enim primo agentem—consequens est ut omnis ratio eorum que sunt ad finem ab ipso fine summatur.” Now since our present subject is political, indeed is the source and starting-point of just forms of government, and everything in the political sphere comes under human control, it is clear that the present subject is not directed primarily towards theoretical understanding but towards action. Again, since in actions it is the final objective which sets in motion and causes everything—for that is what first moves a person who acts—it follows that the whole basis of the means for attaining an end is derived from the end itself (1.2.6–7).