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978-0-521-04462-2 - Dante and Difference: Writing in the Commedia

Jeremy Tambling

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Dante and Difference

This book presents a new approach to Dante's *Divine Comedy*, drawing on medieval theories of reading and understanding a text, and comparing them with modern critical theories of hermeneutics and approaches to the text associated with the work of Derrida.

Dr Tambling rejects any attempt to identify a fundamental unity of thought in the poem, and stresses instead the importance of opposition and divergence. This leads him to react against reductively 'allegorical' readings, and to ask in what way Christianity can be said to be articulated within the work. He claims that the *Commedia* is concerned with its own modes of signification, and the different kind of discourses opened up by the classical world on which it draws, and the poetic principles of the *dolce stil*.

In a detailed study of selected cantos in *Inferno*, *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, supported by many textual examples, Dr Tambling shows how Dante's writing involved a process of critical revision which reveals differences between intention and realisation and results in a kind of fissuring. This important new interpretation will be of value to all students and scholars of Dante, as well as to those whose work lies in the fields of general medieval literature, comparative literature, and critical theory.

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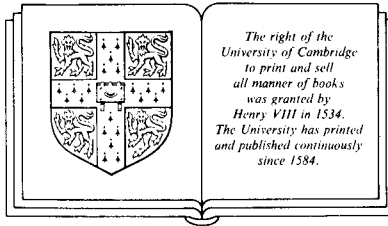
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New York New Rochelle Melbourne Sydney

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521342421

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First published 1988
This digitally printed version 2007

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Tambling, Jeremy.
Dante and difference: writing in the Commedia / by Jeremy
Tambling.

p. cm. – (Cambridge studies in medieval literature)

Bibliography: p.

Includes index.

ISBN 0 521 34242 2

1. Dante Alighieri, 1265–1321. Divina commedia. 2. Dante Alighieri. 1265–1321 – Technique. I. Title. II. Series.

PQ4399.T36 1988

851'.1–dc19 87–17351 CIP

ISBN 978-0-521-34242-1 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-04462-2 paperback

Cambridge University Press

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For my parents, Richard and Elizabeth Tambling
per quei di là molto s'avanza

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Acknowledgements

I want to acknowledge the real help given by many people in the course of writing this book. I first studied Dante with Alan Charity and with Philippa Tristram at York, and have still a strong sense of the arguments and discussion generated then in and after seminars. At Nottingham, while researching in quite another area, it was good to continue with Dante in the readings given by Barbara Reynolds. When I decided to work on Dante at Essex, where a substantial part of this book formed the thesis for a PhD, I found what I wished to say given much useful criticism by Jonathan White, who supervised the work, pushed it forward, suggested the title 'Vo significando', and improved many pages with his comments. Michael Podro, from the art history department at Essex suggested I looked at Sven Sandstrom's work; and in the course of writing I found help from Gerry Hughes of Heythrop College, on Aquinas, from Marjorie Reeves in correspondence on Joachim, and from Colin Hardie, whose enthusiasm in conversation and correspondence has led to many revisions of thought. He will not agree with much that is here, but that is no mark of lack of appreciation on my part for someone about whom Kenelm Foster, in an article in *Italian Studies* in 1965, surveying the work on Dante done in Britain this century, could write that he provided 'the most impressive body of work on Dante put out by an Englishman since 1921'. Foster's work itself, of course, is crucial, and his comments as examiner for the thesis and in subsequent conversations have firmly increased a sense of how much Dante studies have owed to him. My friend and former colleague Tony Wells has been enlivening on points connected with medieval history. Tadeusz Rachwal, staying at our house for a month on an exchange visit from the University of Silesia, brought many ideas about Derrida with him. Pauline, my wife, lived with the project with good humour and her working made it possible to go forward at all, initially, with the thesis. Robin Kirkpatrick read the work for CUP and his comments and suggestions have entailed firm improvements. To him, to Arthur Terry, and to Kevin Taylor at CUP, my thanks are due.

For details of the texts used in the book, the reader is referred to the Bibliography. Translations from the Italian are mine. Biblical quotations have been given out of the Authorised (King James) Version. Classical quotations have been given in accessible translation, my aim being throughout intelligibility.