Botticelli's Illustrations of Dante's *Paradiso*: The Construction of Conjoined Vision

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THE NOTION OF READING with Sandro Botticelli is one that has intrigued scholars for some time.[1] This essay explores the illustrations of Dante's *Paradiso* as, first and foremost, readings of the poem, suggesting that Botticelli, as a particularly "sophisticated" reader (to use Vasari's loaded term), engages Dante's most challenging invitation to those who take up this canticle.[2] This is the invitation to imagine the possibility of what I am calling "conjoined vision," a mode of vision that Dante describes in the *Paradiso* as the privilege of the blessed.[3] Botticelli's engagement with this visionary challenge enables the viewers of his illustrations to reflect on and imaginatively expand their own modes of vision through a series of techniques that include the illustration of a plural gaze, the affective presentation

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1. See, e.g., Francis Ames-Lewis, *The Intellectual Life of the Early Renaissance Artist* (New Haven, CT, 2002). On Botticelli as a reader of Dante, see Deborah Parker, "Illuminating Botticelli's Chart of Hell," *MLN* 128 (2013): 84–102; Cornelia Klettke, "Mistica del *Paradiso* al limite del non rappresentabile, *Par*. XXX: *Word-Painting* dantesco e disegno botticelliano—analisi di un intercambio mediale," *Quaderns d'Italià* 17 (2012): 113–47; Max C. Marmor, "From Purgatory to the *Primavera*: Some Observations on Botticelli and Dante," *Artibus et Historiae* 24, no. 48 (2003): 199–212.

2. Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' piu eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori*, 3 vols. (Florence, 1568), 1:472, comments that on his return to Florence, Botticelli "per essere persona sofistica commentò una parte di Dante: & figurò lo inferno." Hein-Thomas Schulze Altcappenberg's opening essay, "'Per essere persona sofistica': Botticelli's Drawings for the *Divine Comedy*," in *Sandro Botticelli: The Drawings for Dante's Divine Comedy*, ed. Hein-Thomas Schulze Altcappenberg (London, 2000), 13–35, takes its title from that quote and considers the nature of Botticelli's engagement with Dante. For Vasari, the term implies the ostentation of learning, or presumption.

3. On "invitations" to the reader in the *Commedia* as a broader mode that goes beyond the much-studied "addresses to the reader," see Katherine Powlesland, "Invitations to Participate: Bernard's Sign," *Le tre corone* 4 (2017): 97–115. For a more complete discussion of Dante's depiction of "conjoined vision," see my *Dante's Persons: An Ethics of the Transhuman* (Oxford, 2016), chap. 5.

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of multiple foci of devotion, and the opportunity to see or read the poem, aided by Botticelli's illustrations, in a synchronous mode.

There has been much discussion about the precise dates of Botticelli's illustrations of the *Commedia*. What is clear, however, is that they emerge during an important decade for Florentine commentary of Dante's poem, the 1480s.[4] The printed edition of Cristoforo Landino's 1481 commentary included, in fact, a series of nineteen engravings of cantos of the *Inferno* after Botticelli's designs.[5] Vasari states that Botticelli "commentò una parte di Dante" (commented on a part of Dante), which might lead us to believe that Botticelli's drawings themselves were taken as a form of commentary for the poem.[6] Recent work on the illustrations, such as that by Deborah Parker and Cornelia Klettke, has termed the illustrations a "remediation," suggesting that rather than working as commentary, the illustrations take on an independent life of their own, a life that no longer needs the text as support.[7] At the same time, it seems most likely, even on the scant evidence that we have, that the drawings were always intended to be viewed with the text.[8] Botticelli executed one page of illustration for each canto of the *Commedia* (with a few exceptions), with the text of the previous canto inscribed on the hair side of each vellum sheet. Peter Dreyer's 1986 facsimile edition assumes binding along the long side of the page, so that the image would appear above the text of the canto illustrated.[9] Certainly, the image has not been subordinated to the text but is presented as at least an equal partner, if not the privileged one. Botticelli used the flesh side of

4. Schulze Altcappenberg, "'Per essere persona sofistica,'" 28, suggests that Botticelli must have begun ca. 1480 and ceased work on the drawings by ca. 1494–95. See pp. 23–28 on the difficulties with dating the drawings.

5. On Landino's commentary as a pivotal moment in the Florentine cult of Dante, see Simon Gilson, *Dante and Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge, 2005), 161–230.

6. Vasari, *Le vite*, 1:472. Damien Dombrowski, "Botticelli and the Construction of the Spirit: The Dante Drawings and the Limitations of Cultural History," in Schulze Altcappenberg, *Sandro Botticelli*, 298–305, 302, takes this more literally, believing that Botticelli may have executed a written commentary that has since been lost. He sees the drawings not as manifesting a scholarly understanding of the individual features of allegories and metaphors within the poem but instead as illustrations that aim to reconstruct Dante's universe.

7. Parker, "Illuminating Botticelli's Chart of Hell," 85; Klettke, "Mistica del *Paradiso*."

8. The drawings were executed before the text was added, on 102 sheets of vellum, on the softer flesh side, in pen and brown ink over colorless tracing and metalpoint (lead and tin alloy) underdrawings. Doris Oltrogge, Robert Fuchs, and Oliver Hahn, "*Finito* and *Non finito*: Drawing and Painting Techniques in Botticelli's *Divine Comedy*," in Schulze Altcappenberg, *Sandro Botticelli*, 334–41, 338–40.

9. Peter Dreyer, ed., *Dantes Divina Commedia mit den Illustrationen von Sandro Botticelli, Codex Reg. Lat. 1896, Codex Ham. 201 (Cim. 33)*, 2 vols. (Zurich, 1986). Schulze Altcappenberg, "'Per essere persona sofistica,'" 28–29, has wondered whether the illustrations could have been intended for wall panels or to be displayed on a sequence of small tables, thus allowing the narrative sequences to unfold

the vellum, and the illustrations are granted as much physical space as the text. This is a significant amount of space with a large potential area for the illustrations. The vellum measures approximately thirty-two by forty-seven centimeters. When opening the book, the reader-viewer would see a single canto presented in both text and image.[10]

For the purposes of my investigation, I accept Dreyer's hypothesis, considering Botticelli's illustrations as a version of the *Paradiso*, but as a version of the *Paradiso* that assumes the copresence of the text.[11] Reader-viewers thus have a multiplicity of possibilities for engagement with the *Paradiso*: they can, for instance, view the illustrations without reading, or they can allow the illustrations to direct their reading, offering, as I will suggest, sites for meditation prompted by the text.[12] I will argue that the illustrations offer us the chance to witness Botticelli personally working through the devotional and hermeneutic possibilities invited by the text and that this individual instantiation of contemplative visualization may serve as a cue or prompt for our own patterns of engagement.

In order to reflect on Botticelli as a reader, and his illustrations as acts of reading, it may be helpful to set out the few notions we have of Botticelli's knowledge of the text. It is possible that, in addition to the primary text, he was working with commentaries such as Landino's, although this is difficult to prove, and the evidence that has been brought forward so far is tenuous. It is also entirely plausible that some of his sense of the poem comes from conversation with people in the circle of Lorenzo il Magnifico, such as Antonio di Tuccio Manetti, who was a source for Landino. But we may also need to think of Botticelli as fundamentally an autodidact Dantista, as one who somehow spent significant time with the poem and developed his own reading of it.[13] The *Inferno* illustrations, which have been scrutinized the most fully by Dante scholars, show "astonishing familiarity" with

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visibly in discrete blocs, uninterrupted by textual interludes. He suggests that they might be read as a "commedia pauperum," self-explanatory and self-contained.

10. Oltrogge, Fuchs, and Hahn, "*Finito* and *Non finito*," 340.

11. Sven Thorsten Kilian, "'Non sanza prima far grande aggirata': Turning the Pages in Dante and Botticelli," *Dante e l'arte* 1 (2014): 227–40, 232, suggests that there are aesthetic links between image and text (upper page and lower page), such as towers and groups of figures illustrated in canto 8 that correspond with the columns of text that would be on the page below.

12. Lucia Battaglia Ricci's essay "Guido da Pisa's 'Chantilly' Dante: A Complex Exegetical System," in *Interpreting Dante: Essays on the Traditions of Dante Commentary*, ed. Paola Nasti and Claudia Rossignoli (Notre Dame, IN, 2013), 180–206, suggests various ways of thinking about the relationship between Francesco Traini's illustrations of the *Inferno* and Dante's text, including the notion of substitution and the directing of reading.

13. For discussion of the various hypotheses of Botticelli's engagement with contemporary Dante commentary, see Parker, "Illuminating Botticelli's Chart of Hell," 88–89, and Schulze Altcappenberg, "'Per essere persona sofistica,'" 32. Marmor, "From Purgatory to the *Primavera*," 204, is sure that

Figure 1. Giovanni di Paolo, Yates Thompson 36, fol. 129. (© British Library Board.) Color version available as an online enhancement.

the poem, as Deborah Parker puts it.[14] In many ways, Botticelli's version of the *Commedia* is remarkably faithful not only to the details of the text but also to its textual and narrative moods and modes.

Botticelli's remediations often willfully take their own particular path with respect to the existing tradition of illustrating the *Commedia*. This particularity becomes most apparent when Botticelli turned to the *Paradiso*. Many illustrators of that canticle choose to illustrate myths and mythological figures referenced in the *Paradiso*, such as Giovanni di Paolo, illustrator of the *Paradiso* canticle in the Yates Thompson 36 of the British Library (1438–44). In the miniature for canto 1, the illustrator has inserted Marsyas, Apollo, and Parnassus into the scene with Dante (fig. 1; in Dante's text, of course, Marsyas, Apollo, and Parnassus are referenced in *Paradiso* 1, not described as present).[15] Botticelli, instead, tends to depict only Dante, Beatrice, and a minimal selection of what Dante describes as having directly experienced throughout his *Paradiso*, as is immediately evident when his version of canto 1 (fig. 2) is compared to Giovanni di Paolo's.

The *Paradiso* drawings are notable for their absences, not only with respect to Dante's vast range of reference, as we have already seen here, but also in terms of

Botticelli read Landino's commentary, having probably also heard Landino's lectures in the years before its publication. See also Arthur Field, "Cristoforo Landino's First Lectures on Dante," *Renaissance Quarterly* 39 (1986): 16–48.

14. Parker, "Illuminating Botticelli's Chart of Hell," 90.

15. These illustrations fulfill a function outlined by Sylvia Huot in another context: highlighting important images while not directly fulfilling a narrative function. See Sylvia Huot, "Visualization and Memory: The Illustration of Troubadour Lyric in a Thirteenth-Century Manuscript," *Gesta* 31, no. 1 (1992): 3–14.

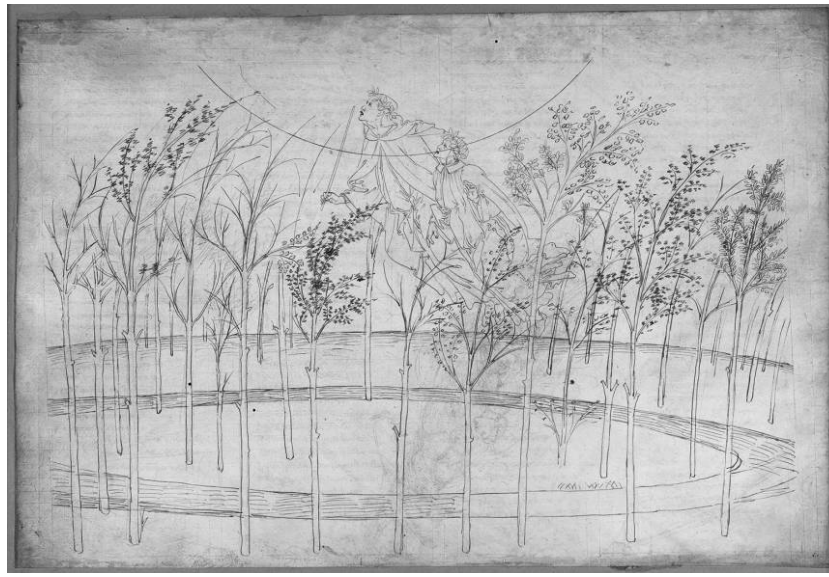

Figure 2. Sandro Botticelli, *Paradiso* 1, Codex Hamilton 201. (© Kupferstichkabinett. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.) Color version available as an online enhancement.

those few iconic images that are depicted as visible in the realm, such as the cross in the heaven of Mars or the eagle in the heaven of Jupiter. While it is possible to simply assume that the *Paradiso* drawings are the most incomplete of a series of illustrations in a "wide variety of degrees of completion," from fully colored pictures to faint preliminary sketches, it may be more productive to consider what we do have available to us.[16] Botticelli's "figurative commentary," as Schulze Altcappenberg calls it, works by means of "a variety of rhythmical schemes and relations between figures and space, sequences of movement, eloquent gestures and facial expressions."[17] It is, in fact, the acts of looking, gesturing, and communicating that Botticelli has chosen to feature in his drawings. Whether or not he might have wished one day to return to these illustrations to add detail, it is clear that Botticelli's reading leads him to begin with what he understands as central.

16. Schulze Altcappenberg, "'Per essere persona sofistica,'" 19. From Condivi to Vasari to the present day, we have a line of thinking for Michelangelo that alludes to the *non-finito* as a gesture toward a sublime idea that lies outside the reach of human hands. I am suggesting that we might take a similar line for thinking through absences in Botticelli's illustrations. For a thorough discussion of understandings of the *non-finito* in Michelangelo, see Juergen Schulz, "Michelangelo's Unfinished Works," *Art Bulletin* 58 (1975): 366–73.

17. Schulze Altcappenberg, "'Per essere persona sofistica,'" 32.

In the condensed, focused rhythm of Botticelli's illustrations of *Paradiso*, Beatrice's gaze, along with her gestures and postures, is the main protagonist of the canticle. If we compare the size of the figures for the *Paradiso* illustrations with the size of the figures in the densely populated *Inferno* or *Purgatorio* illustrations, we see Botticelli's desire to zoom in on Beatrice's body and face as the narrative arc. Moving beyond the continuous narration mode of the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* illustrations, Botticelli changes scale for this canticle, allowing the viewer to perceive and react to the subtleties of gaze and gesture he illustrates with greater facility.

Sally Korman has suggested that the drawings "open up the narrative to an active, almost spiritual mode of reading. In a sense, they function as memory-images in the manner recommended by Savonarola: by 'reminding' us of significant moments in the text, they act as the catalyst for a personal meditation on Dante's journey."[18] But what sort of reminders would these be? We are not being reminded of the "events" of *Paradiso*, such as they are, or even of the imagery. So what is understood to form the basis of our meditation? As the subject matter of the illustrations reveals, each significant moment of the *Paradiso* for Botticelli is a relational exchange in the dyad Dante-Beatrice or the triad Dante-Beatrice-viewer. Botticelli focuses on the careful elaboration of gestural encounters between Dante and Beatrice, encounters that often include the viewer, whether implicitly or explicitly. The illustrations of the *Paradiso* impel us, as observers, to adjust our modes of engaging with the illustrations as they have been established for the previous two canticles and to alter our perception of our relationship to both text and image. The images urge the reader-viewer toward a more active, affective, and spiritual mode of engagement than that employed for the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, in which the sheer quantity and directness of narration allow the viewer of Botticelli's illustrations to simply follow along. Botticelli's illustrations of *Paradiso* 5, 20, and 24 offer useful examples, I will suggest, of the ways in which visual prompts for enhanced viewer engagement function as readings of textual prompts for readerly engagement in the *Commedia*.

Dante's text sets up the character of Dante the pilgrim as a mediator of the narrated experience, focusing on the pilgrim's reaction to what he sees as a model for our own immersive reading of the text. Many of Dante's bodily states as described

18. Sally Korman, review of the exhibition "Sandro Botticelli, pittore della *Divina Commedia*: Scuderie Papali al Quirinale; Rome, 20 September–3 December 2000," *Renaissance Studies* 15 (2001): 538–44, 541. Korman also notes that varying levels of finish in different areas of each drawing show Botticelli's attention to gesture and expression, while other areas are only sketched in or indeed are left out (541).

in the poem relate to attentiveness: actions like turning, looking, pausing, and stopping. This is true throughout Dante's *Commedia* and is visible throughout Botticelli's remediation. But this modeling of attention becomes all the more central in the *Paradiso*, where both text and illustration admit the impossibility of showing what Dante sees and focus instead on Dante's reaction to that vision. Korman notes that Botticelli's *Paradiso* illustrations deliberately underscore Dante's response to what he sees rather than the thing viewed, setting him up as an "intermediary whose gestures and gazes frame the experience of Paradise for the viewer."[19] If Dante thus may be understood to be nudging readers to focus on their own response and agency as he brings them along from *Purgatorio* to *Paradiso*, I then suggest that Botticelli's reading takes this transfer of responsibility even further by effectively leaving out the visions of *Paradiso* and showing us the viewing instead.

In the *Commedia*, the question of who is looking, and how, comes to the fore in the Earthly Paradise, a transitional space that prepares the way for the alterity of *Paradiso*. When Beatrice finally appears to Dante, after such lengthy journeying and suffering, he turns away from Beatrice ("volsimi a la sinistra"; *Purg*. 30.43) toward Virgil, to talk about the apparition before him.[20] Rather than choosing to face Beatrice directly, he turns, perhaps from force of habit, toward his male companion, with whom he can discuss, parse, and analyze the effects of her presence, held at a distance and mediated through an established homosocial bond. But it is at this moment that Dante's name erupts into the text as Beatrice calls Dante, in her own voice, to face her without Virgil. As Beatrice then affirms her presence, "Ben sem, ben sem Beatrice" (I am, truly, I am Beatrice; *Purg*. 30.73), Dante cannot look her in the face:

> Quali fanciulli, vergognando, muti
> con li occhi a terra stannosi, ascoltando
> e sé riconoscendo e ripentuti,
> tal mi stav' io; ed ella disse: "Quando
> per udir se' dolente, alza la barba,
> e prenderai più doglia riguardando."
>
> (*Purg*. 31.64–69)

19. Korman, "Sandro Botticelli," 542.

20. Citations to the *Commedia* are taken from Dante Alighieri, *La Divina Commedia*, ed. Anna Maria Chiavacci Leonardi, 3 vols. (Milan, 2008). Translations are from *The Divine Comedy*, trans. and ed. Robin Kirkpatrick, 3 vols. (London, 2006–7).

> [As little boys who stand there dumb with shame, / eyes on the ground and listening to what's said, / aware—very sorry—of what they are, / so I, too, simply stood. And she said: "Since / you grieve at what you're hearing, raise your beard / and, looking up, you'll feel still greater pain."]

Beatrice's reference to Dante's beard rather than his face, Chiavacci Leonardi suggests, is lightly veiled criticism of Dante's schoolboy-like shame and downcast eyes.[21] Here the "donna angelicata," the one who has been the object of so much delight for the male poet to behold and to describe to his male companions, is instead the one who is looking at Dante. The mention of the beard, along with Dante's own name, reveals the acutely penetrating nature of Beatrice's gaze as beholder upon Dante and Dante as beheld. I suggest that it is from this point on in Dante's work that Beatrice is no longer presented as something to be simply contemplated. She is abruptly transfigured from the sort of object of adoration we so often meet in lyric poetry to an agent that gazes and names what it sees.[22] The reader is startled into reconceiving Beatrice as uncomfortably active, no longer something that one can simply look at in the mode of spectator.[23] The Beatrice of the Earthly Paradise and Paradise proper is one who has the power to see and to name her viewer. While Botticelli waits until *Paradiso* 1 to change scale in order to feature Beatrice's gaze, from that illustration on, his Beatrice too becomes the transformative agent of viewership.

At the opening of *Paradiso* 2, readers are made even more uneasy when Dante suggests sorting them into "voi che siete in piccioletta barca" (You in that little boat; 1) and "Voialtri pochi che drizzaste il collo / per tempo al pan de li angeli" (You other few who have already stretched, / straight-necked, through time to reach for angel-bread; 10–11), explaining that only the latter group should continue following his recounted journey. Of course the critical discussion of this passage has been immense, as scholars have wondered for centuries what the necessary characteristics are for readers who might wish to continue.[24] I will not rehearse those discussions here but will simply, for the purposes of the current

21. See, e.g., Chiavacci Leonardi's gloss on line 75.

22. Virgil describes Beatrice in *Inferno* 2, but this is the first time she appears directly to Dante in the text, unmediated by Virgil's speech.

23. For analysis of the jarring effect that Beatrice's voice has had on critics, see Teodolinda Barolini, "Notes toward a Gendered History of Italian Literature, with a Discussion of Dante's Beatrix Loquax," in her *Dante and the Origins of Italian Literary Culture* (New York, 2006), 360–78.

24. See the opening of chap. 4, "Independence and the Reader of the *Paradiso*," in Robin Kirkpatrick, *Dante's "Paradiso" and the Limitations of Modern Criticism: A Study of Style and Poetic Theory* (Cambridge, 1978), particularly 108–14.

analysis, note that the first, excluded, group seems to be made up of passive listeners, simply "desiderosi di ascoltar" (listening hard, / . . . from desire to hear; 2). A gestural reading of the second group, straining their necks toward the bread of angels, suggests an active reaching toward knowledge, an intellective, spiritual, and affective engagement with the canticle that follows. Dante's ideal readers of the *Paradiso* are likely to be readers who will also supplement their reading with prayer or meditation.[25] Botticelli's drawings could offer, as Korman suggests, specific, textually prompted opportunities for such meditation, beginning with the shift in modes that occurs between *Purgatorio* 33 and *Paradiso* 1. It is crucial to note that these are not the usual "objects" of meditation, like the visage of a well-known saint featured in *Paradiso* or an image of Christ's face isolated on the page. Instead, each opportunity for meditation is a dynamic exchange mediated by Beatrice.

Given Beatrice's prominence in these drawings, it becomes all the more striking when her gaze falls upon the viewer. Her gazing face and gesturing body thwart our intention to spectate by drawing us inexorably into the dynamics of the *Paradiso*. If we look, for example, at the illustration of *Paradiso* 20 (fig. 3), we may note that Botticelli shows us only Beatrice and Dante in his illustration of this canto.[26] The more expected solution for an illustration of the heaven of Jupiter might be the one that we see in the Yates Thompson 36 (fig. 4), in which the eagle dominates the scene. But Botticelli opts for an entirely different solution. Even if he intended to return to this illustration to add an eagle, the centrality and the size of the figures of Dante and Beatrice show clearly that their interaction is what holds Botticelli's interest, not the pictorial challenge of an eagle composed of blessed souls.[27] As Dagmar Korbacher writes, "Beatrice not only delights Dante but also the viewer with the hint of a tender smile," citing a reference to the thirteenth verse of the canto, "O dolce amor che di riso t'ammanti" (Love, which in laughter sweetly clothes itself).[28] Of course, in Dante's text, that line refers to the "vive luci" (lights, so vividly alive; *Par*. 20.10) of the eagle, not to Beatrice. Botticelli has condensed all of the emotional and devotional material of Dante's exchange with the multitude of

25. For Helena Phillips-Robins, "'Cantavan tutti insieme ad una voce': Singing and Community in the *Commedia*," *Italian Studies* 71 (2016): 4–20, the reader might stop and not only pray but also sing.

26. Another example of this may be seen in the illustration for *Paradiso* 13. But see also Phlegyas in *Inferno* 8 and 9 (cf. Schulze Altcappenberg, "'Per essere persona sofistica'").

27. In Egerton MS 943 in the British Library, dating from the first half of the fourteenth century, fol. 160 gives equal space in the illustration of this episode to the eagle's head made up of human heads on the right and Dante and Beatrice on the left. Dante and Beatrice do not interact, but both gaze upon the eagle.

28. Dagmar Korbacher, ed., *Botticelli and the Treasures from the Hamilton Collection* (London, 2016), 138.

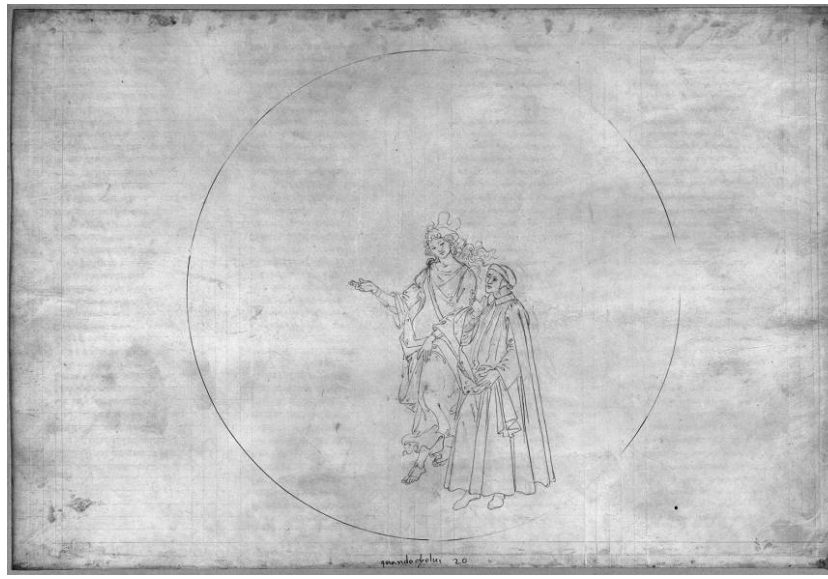

Figure 3. Sandro Botticelli, *Paradiso* 20, Codex Hamilton 201. (© Kupferstichkabinett. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.) Color version available as an online enhancement.

souls that comprise the eagle into one exceptionally dense encounter between Beatrice, Dante, and the viewer.

The Courtauld Gallery show of 2016 directed viewers of the *Paradiso* 20 illustration to Botticelli's painting of the *Trinity with Saints Mary Magdalene and John the Baptist, the Archangel Raphael and Tobias* (1491–94) in order to show the parallel between Beatrice's figure and gaze and that of John the Baptist.[29] Like John the Baptist, Beatrice's gaze reaches out from the page and invokes the attention of the viewer, drawing us into the vision at hand with a gesture that both indicates and includes. For Botticelli, the practice of having a figure look out from the painting was common. The practice was theorized by Alberti, who explains: "In an *istoria* I like to see someone who admonishes and points out to us what is happening there; or beckons with his hand to see; or menaces with an angry face and with flashing eyes, so that no one should come near; or shows some danger or marvellous thing there; or invites us to weep or to laugh together with them."[30] But there

29. Korbacher, *Botticelli and the Treasures*, 138, notes the reference to baptism in lines 127–29 of canto 20.

30. "E piacemi sia nella storia chi ammonisca e insegni a noi quello che ivi si facci, o chiami con la mano a vedere, o con viso cruccioso e con gli occhi turbati minacci che niuno verso loro vada, o dimostri qualche pericolo o cosa ivi maravigliosa, o te inviti a piagnere con loro insieme o a ridere."

Figure 4. Giovanni di Paolo, Yates Thompson 36, fol. 162. (© British Library Board.) Color version available as an online enhancement.

is also something more in the illustration of *Paradiso* 20 than what we see in the *Trinity* painting: Beatrice's gaze enfolds both Dante and the viewer. While John the Baptist looks straight out of the canvas, Beatrice's gaze is more complex: she looks at Dante even as she looks at us.

Might we imagine that quadrant of circle beyond Beatrice's gesturing hand to be one that we the viewers must, with Dante, fill for ourselves with a textually prompted visualization? Furthermore, to what degree is it necessary that we imagine an eagle, exactly? The dialogue with the eagle at this point in the *Paradiso* concerns the inscrutability of divine justice and salvation. The form of the eagle, made up of the luminous souls of the blessed, is meant to point toward the mystery of divine justice. Our response to that indication of a truth that exposes human shortsightedness and limitation must be, the text suggests, a sense of loving humility, a mirrored response to that "dolce amor che di riso t'ammanti" (Love, which in laughter sweetly clothes itself; *Par*. 20.13).[31] Such a response might perhaps be even better conjured by Beatrice's gesture toward the invisible, paired with her gentle smile and enfolding gaze. Beatrice's indicating hand is already a response to Dante's questioning hand, impelling in its turn humble attention from the reader. Apart from that indicating right hand, her body, propelled from the knee as her

Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*, trans. John R. Spencer (New Haven, CT, 1966), 78; *Della pittura*, bk. 2, chap. 42, in *Opere volgari*, ed. Cecil Grayson (Bari, 1973).

31. For a recent reading of justice and concord in *Paradiso* 20, see Alison Cornish, "Music, Justice, and Violence in *Paradiso* 20," *Dante Studies* 134 (2016): 112–41.

graceful left hand seems to lift the folds of her clothes, turns gently. Her left foot extends delicately forward, echoing Botticelli's Flora figure in his *Primavera* painting.[32] That smile and that pose position themselves between response to Dante's linear, squared figure and the unrepresented vision that lies beyond them both. In so doing, Beatrice's body and face make space for the viewer, who finds herself tantalizingly placed at the vertex of a figure that includes a missing point, that unrepresented vision.[33]

Katherine Powlesland argues that the sort of work of active representation and active response that I am suggesting might be prompted by Botticelli's drawing is work that is asked of the reader of the *Paradiso* with increasing frequency as we move through the canticle. She finds a similar sort of reaching out from the text to the viewer in the "interaction manqué," as she puts it, with Bernard in *Paradiso* 33: "Bernardo m'accennava, e sorridea, / perch' io guardassi suso; ma io era / già per me stesso tal qual ei volea" (Now Bernard, smiling, made a sign to me / that I look up. Already, though, I was, / by my own will, as he desired I be; *Par*. 33.49–51). If Dante is already looking into the divine light, who sees that gesture and that smile? Singleton reads this as a slip in maintaining point of view, but Powlesland sees it as consciously constructed dissonance, by which Dante invites keen readers to sharpen their attention and powers of imaginative vision on that which the protagonist is meant to be beholding. In other words, Bernard is gesturing at the reader, inviting the reader to look.[34]

If we then consider the fact that Dante's is a text that frequently reaches out verbally, through explicit addresses to the reader like the aforementioned challenge of the opening of *Paradiso* 2, "O voi che siete in piccioletta barca, desiderosi d'ascoltar" (You in that little boat who, listening hard, / . . . from desire to hear me through; 1–2), and many more nonexplicit "invitations to the reader," then it makes perfect sense that Botticelli, reading in that spirit, would build a mode of invitation into his illustrations of the *Paradiso*. Having relieved these illustrations of the burden of dense narrative and architectural reference that fills his illustrations of *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, Botticelli crafts an intimate but inclusive *Paradiso*, with

32. This echo is noted in the commentary on this drawing by Hein-Thomas Schulze Altcappenberg, "Paradiso," in Schulze Altcappenberg, *Sandro Botticelli*, 256, who also suggests that Beatrice's figure forms a sort of bodily response to the eagle's message in the text.

33. Dombrowski, "Botticelli and the Construction of the Spirit," 304, notes that as early as in the Chigi Madonna, Botticelli was providing his compositions with a dramatic focal point even as he incorporated future temporalities in the present. Dombrowski also discusses optical communication among figures as a key feature in Botticelli's art.

34. Powlesland, "Invitations to Participate," 97–115; Charles S. Singleton, commentary on *Paradiso* 33.49–51, Dartmouth Dante Lab, http://dantelab.dartmouth.edu.

a spare economy of faces, bodies, and gestures. It is Beatrice's multiple modes of facing in Botticelli's illustrations that create the architecture of the realm, an architecture that is based entirely on gesture and invitation, built to show something of "divinity realized in human encounter," as Vittorio Montemaggi so aptly puts it.[35]

We might consider the pictorial technique of having a character look directly out of the frame at the viewer as a visual parallel to Dante's explicit addresses to the reader. But in the illustration for *Paradiso* 20, Beatrice does not break her encounter with Dante, even as she includes the viewer. Elsewhere, she faces both Dante and the divine light. I suggest that these depictions of plural facing constitute another form of invitation to the viewer to reconsider her own modes of viewing and contemplating, a reconsideration that is again first prompted in Dante's text and then further prompted in Botticelli's illustrations.

In the illustration for *Paradiso* 5 (fig. 5), we see what seems to be the artist's hesitation between Beatrice's face turned upward toward the divine light and downward toward Dante. The drawing shows the way in which the artist "subjected the posture of individual figures, and with it the precise moment of the narrative, to intense deliberation," as Korbacher puts it. In what Korbacher calls a "strikingly dense underdrawing," Beatrice's face "originally," in Korbacher's judgment (or we might say *also*), points upward, as is clearly visible in the metalpoint sketch. Korbacher assumes that this original version was abandoned but that certain elements remained incorporated into the later inked-in version, such as the "upward orientation" of the gesturing hands and the floating body. The inked-in lines would suggest emphasis on the conversation and eye contact between Dante and Beatrice. But as Korbacher notes, the "elaboration of the gown . . . remained as an underdrawing."[36] Doris Oltrogge, Robert Fuchs, and Oliver Hahn maintain that all the illustrations were eventually intended to be colored, thus obscuring any erasures or underdrawings.[37] But as it is my intention to consider Botticelli as reader, it is entirely productive to think of the other face of Beatrice here as a trace of Botticelli's reflective process in action. The upturned face coexists alongside the downturned one, revealing two visible readings.

After all, Beatrice's double posture, both engaged, downwardly inclined toward Dante and upwardly mobile, rapt, perfectly captures the mood of *Paradiso* 5. This is the canto of the "trasmutar sembiante" (changing look; 88) transition from the

35. Vittorio Montemaggi, *Reading Dante's "Commedia" as Theology: Divinity Realized in Human Encounter* (New York, 2016).

36. Korbacher, *Botticelli and the Treasures*, 134.

37. Oltrogge, Fuchs, and Hahn, "*Finito* and *Non finito*," 338.

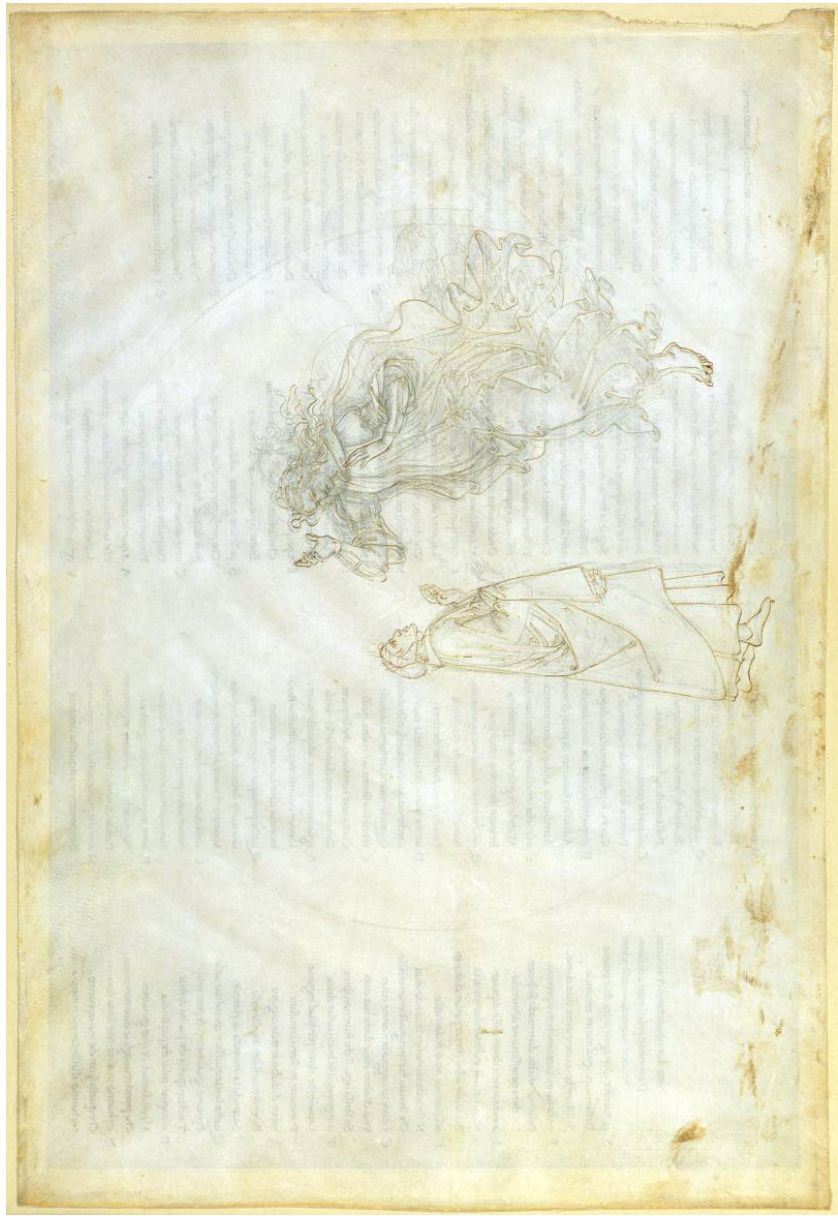

Figure 5. Sandro Botticelli, *Paradiso* 5. (© Kupferstichkabinett. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.)

moon to Mercury, a canto that begins with Beatrice's declaration of a love that responds in generosity to love, "Io veggio ben sì come già resplende / ne l'intelletto tuo l'etterna luce, / che, vista, sola e sempre amore accende" (Already I see well in your own mind / the mirrored splendour of eternal light / which seen will kindle—only, always—love; 7–9), and that also describes Beatrice's face turning up but not away in that love, "poi si rivolse tutta disïante / a quella parte ove 'l mondo è più vivo" (And then she, all desiring, turned once more / to where the universe shines liveliest; 86–87).[38] This is not a turning away from Dante, who shines with that same light that she sees above, but a turning with Dante, in a reconception of love that is not based on the bare reciprocity that an infernally entrapped Francesca might suggest. It is not an "Amor, ch'a nullo amato amar perdona" (Love, who no loved one pardons love's requite; *Inf*. 5.103) but is instead a love that declares itself in its infinite power to increase as it is shared: "Ecco chi crescerà li nostri amori" (Look there! He'll make our many loves grow more; *Par*. 5.105). Beatrice's transmuted appearance then embraces both Dante and "quella parte ove 'l mondo è più vivo" (where the universe shines liveliest; *Par*. 5.87).

The sort of plural, multiply inclined facing that Beatrice displays in Botticelli's illustration is, I suggest, a concept that could have been reinforced by numerous descriptions of this kind of facing, viewing, and encounter in *Paradiso*. In *Paradiso* 21, Dante shows Beatrice's vision as plural: "Per ch'ella, che vedëa il tacer mio / nel veder di colui che tutto vede, / mi disse" (So she who saw my silence in the sight / of Him who sees the all of everything / said now; *Par*. 21.49–51). In this triple use of *vedere* in the space of two lines, we see Beatrice's vision as multiply present, even in the way that it appears physically in the layout of Dante's lines. Dante's descriptions of plural vision in *Paradiso* are particularly complex in the Empyrean, in which the blessed are represented in a celestial rose, all focused (but not singly focused) on the vision of God: "Questo sicuro e gaudïoso regno, / frequente in gente antica e in novella, / viso e amore avea tutto ad un segno" (That realm—its *gaudeamus* free of strife— / where chosen, past and new, such crowds resort, / aims all its love and seeing at one sign; *Par*. 31.25–27). For these souls, "Lume è là sù che visibile face / lo creatore" (There is, above us there, a light that makes / the All-Creator in creation seen; *Par*. 30.100–101). But this absorption in the visible creator does not mean that the souls do not also enjoy the vision of one another. Anne, for instance, is described as "tanto contenta di mirar sua figlia, / che non move occhio per cantare osanna" (Anne, / so happy as she wonders at her child /

38. For a reading of vision and love in this episode, see Mira Mocan, *La trasparenza e il riflesso: Sull' "alta fantasia" in Dante e nel pensiero medievale* (Milan, 2007), 33–56.

she does not move her eyes to sing "Hosannah"; *Par*. 32.134–35). While Dante scholars have worried about Anne's absorption in her daughter rather than the direct vision of God, I offer that we might look elsewhere in the *Paradiso* to reconceptualize what it means to see for the blessed. Peter Damian describes his mode of vision to Dante in *Paradiso* 21 as follows:[39]

> Luce divina sopra me s'appunta,
> penetrando per questa in ch'io m'inventro,
> la cui virtù, col mio veder *congiunta*,
> mi leva sopra me tanto, ch'i' veggio
> la somma essenza de la quale è munta.
> (*Par*. 21.83–87, emphasis mine)[40]

> [Divine light drives its point upon me here. / And, penetrating that in which I'm wombed, / its virtue, joined with my own powers of sight, / lifts me so high above myself, I see / on high the essence where that light is milked.]

This level of vision that is "congiunto," or conjoined, is what characterizes, to varying degrees, the vision of the blessed.[41] The divine virtue conjoins itself to the vision of the blessed, allowing them to see, in some limited sense, with God. Such conjoined vision affords a simultaneous multiplicity of facing in which time, distance, and directionality of objects are irrelevant. No matter the direction of Anne's gaze, she has the capacity to see with God.

Another later but enormously insightful visualization of Anne's capacities of vision can be found in Leonardo da Vinci's work, *Sant'Anna, la Madonna e il Bambino con l'agnello*. Mary and Jesus are face to face, in an active, ethically engaged, dynamically inclined position.[42] But Anne, who shares maternal love both for

39. See Charles S. Singleton, commentary on *Paradiso* 32.133–35, Dartmouth Dante Lab, http://dantelab.dartmouth.edu; and Richard Kay, "Dante's Empyrean and the Eye of God," *Speculum* 78 (2003): 37–65, for discussion of the ways in which Anna might contemplate both her daughter and God at the same time.

40. On Peter Damian's statement in the context of thirteenth-century discussions of the beatific vision, see Tamara Pollack, "Light, Love and Joy in Dante's Doctrine of Beatitude," in *Reviewing Dante's Theology*, ed. Claire E. Honess and Matthew Treherne, 2 vols. (Oxford, 2013), 1:263–319, 304–11.

41. It is true that, to a very limited extent, those in *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* are also granted some vision beyond the human, into some aspects of the future. But it is the souls in *Paradiso* who enjoy a plenitude of sight that varies but participates in the divine vision that sees "legato con amore in un volume, / ciò che per l'universo si squaderna" (bound up and gathered in a single book, / the leaves that scatter through the universe; *Par*. 33. 86–87).

42. Adriana Cavarero, *Inclinazioni: Critica della rettitudine* (Milan, 2014), 238–40, offers an illuminating reading of this pose.

Mary and for the infant Jesus, also shares, with her poignant half-smile, in some divine vision or foreknowledge of the great and terrible destiny the infant faces, visible in the lamb who gazes back. Leonardo has painted her so that her gaze enfolds Mary and Mary's gaze upon the infant, even to the lamb, just as her generous lap holds her daughter and thus the whole cascade of mother, child, and lamb. It is through Mary's body, as mother and as daughter, as beheld and beholding, at the center of the painting that this layered notion of vision becomes possible. Frank Zöllner describes it as follows: "In the *Virgin and Child with St Anne*, Leonardo again employs a sequence of interconnected figures—almost as if St. Anne and Mary have the same body, portrayed in two different positions."[43] Such a description almost allows for the notion that Leonardo's Anne and Mary are in some way descendants of Botticelli's multiple-bodied and plural-gazing Beatrices. The depiction of conjoined vision, or vision that enfolds multiple foci across multiple temporalities, requires visual solutions such as these.

The asymmetries between Dante's limited capacity to see and to understand and Beatrice's divinely participatory capacity are represented in Botticelli's drawings, not only in the depiction of the gaze but also as extended into the depiction of bodies, the poses of which, as we have already seen, amplify depictions of viewing and the apprehension of the vision. As Dombrowski notes, the contrast between Dante's "block-like profile" and Beatrice's fluid outline is particularly stark in the *Paradiso* drawings.[44] The asymmetry between Beatrice and Dante is visible in each of the drawings in the way in which Beatrice is always dynamically inclined toward Dante. Her body displays relationality as movement, as inclination toward the other.[45] Just as Leonardo will later opt in his *Sant'Anna* painting for the unusual solution of a baby Jesus who faces not the viewer but his mother, so Botticelli impels his viewers to navigate a set of interactions internal to the composition.[46] The prompt for spiritual meditation thus arises from observing a relationship of inclined affection, of acts of viewing that make space for multiple objects of devotion.

When one considers the *Paradiso* drawings in sequence, it becomes clear that Botticelli pushes his viewer in the direction of conjoined vision in an earthly mode, by moving from depictions of Beatrice's plural gaze to offering the viewer multiple

43. Frank Zöllner and Johannes Nathan, *Leonardo da Vinci, 1452–1519: The Complete Paintings and Drawings* (Cologne, 2003), 105.

44. Dombrowski, "Botticelli and the Construction of the Spirit," 302.

45. See Cavarero, *Inclinazioni*, 137, on Leonardo's *Sant'Anna* painting: "Proprio l'asimmetria, modulata sull'inclinazione, si traduce così nella messa in movimento di una relazionalità che riflette l'esperienza quotidiana del materno piuttosto che la monumentalità del sacro."

46. Cavarero, *Inclinazioni*, 137.

foci of devotion to engage with. After twenty-two canto illustrations that emphasize only the relationship between Dante and Beatrice, it is in canto 23 that Christ's face appears and is made an object of focus for the next three cantos as well.[47] That Botticelli might show Christ in *Paradiso* 23 is certainly not unexpected, but after Dante describes what commentators normally understand as Christ's "withdrawal" in lines 85–87 of *Paradiso* 23, "O benigna vertù che sì li 'mprenti, / sù t'essaltasti per largirmi loco / a li occhi lì che non t'eran possenti" (You, Generous Strength! You leave your imprint here. / To open this arena to my eyes (powerless / to see You otherwise) You rose on high), it is a surprise to find Christ's face inserted in each of the drawings of the so-called examination cantos 24, 25, and 26.[48]

It may be that Botticelli takes his cue from a textual prompt in Dante's *Paradiso* 31. In that canto, Dante evokes Christ's face as it appears on the Veronica veil in Rome, offering this reference as an invitation to a site of pilgrimage (whether embodied in geographical, visual, or visionary terms), so that readers might have the capacity to enter into an earthly form of conjoined vision. The reference to the Veronica in the *Commedia* comes after Bernard of Clairvaux gives his name in *Paradiso* 31: "Qual è colui che forse di Croazia / viene a veder la Veronica nostra" (like someone coming from Croatia, say, / to view our Veil—the Saint Veronica; *Par*. 103–4). But the first mention of this visual object of pilgrimage in Dante's work as a whole is in the *Vita nova*, when Beatrice's untimely death has recently left Florence bereft of her beatific presence:[49]

47. On seeing Christ in the *Paradiso* and related discourses of ineffability, see Giuseppe Ledda, "Teologia e rettorica dell'ineffabilità nella *Commedia* di Dante," in *Le teologie di Dante: Atti del Convegno internazionale di Studi*, ed. Giuseppe Ledda (Ravenna, 2015), 261–92.

48. See also the Yates Thompson 36, in which Christ is depicted in illustrations for cantos 25 and 27 (fols. 174, 178). This makes sense since the Yates Thompson illustrations often include things referenced and not understood to be experienced by the pilgrim. But elsewhere in *Paradiso*, Botticelli has limited himself to what Dante the character sees directly.

49. "Qual è colui che forse di Croazia / viene a veder la Veronica nostra, / che per l'antica fame non sen sazia, / ma dice nel pensier, fin che si mostra: / 'Segnor mio Iesù Cristo, Dio verace, / or fu sì fatta la sembianza vostra?'" (Like someone coming from Croatia, say, / to view our Veil—the Saint Veronica— / who still can't satisfy the age-old ache / and, while the image is displayed to him, / will murmur in his thoughts: 'My Lord, Christ Jesus, / was this the way, true God, you looked on earth?'; *Par*. 31.103–8). See Rachel Jacoff, "Lectura Dantis: *Paradiso* XXXI," *Quaderns d'Italià* 16 (2011): 103–14, on the nature of the parallel between Bernard and Christ via the Veronica. On the importance of the Veronica in Dante's time, see Jane Garnett and Gervase Rosser, *Spectacular Miracles: Transforming Images in Italy from the Renaissance to the Present* (London, 2013); Gervase Rosser, "Turning Tale into Vision: Time and Image in the *Divina Commedia*," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 48 (2005): 106–22; Alessandro Vettori, "Veronica: Dante's Pilgrimage from Image to Vision," *Dante Studies* 121 (2003): 43–65; Steno Vazzana, "Il giubileo del 1300 nel poema dantesco," *L'Alighieri* 13 (1999): 75–90; Gerhard Wolf, "'Pinta della nostra effige': La Veronica come richiamo dei Romei," in *Romei e giubilei: Il pellegrinaggio medievale a San Pietro (350–1350)*, ed. Mario D'Onofrio (Milan, 1999), 211–18; Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago, 1994), 208–24,

> Dopo questa tribulazione avvenne, in quel tempo che molta gente va per vedere quella imagine benedetta la quale Geso Cristo lasciò a noi per essemplo de la sua bellissima figura, la quale vede la mia donna gloriosamente, che alquanti peregrini passavano per una via, la quale è quasi mezzo de la cittade ove nacque e vivette e morio la gentilissima donna. (*VN* 40.1)[50]
>
> [After this period of distress, during the season when many people go to see the blessed image that Jesus Christ left us as a visible sign of his most beautiful countenance (which my lady beholds in glory), it happened that some pilgrims were going down a street which runs through the center of the city where the most gracious lady was born, lived and died.]

The pilgrims are traveling to see the image of the face that Beatrice looks upon in glory; in other words, they have set out, unknowingly, to see what she sees. What troubles the poet here is that they do not know of Beatrice; they are unaware that they are passing through the space of Beatrice's historical life to reach a place where they will share in some aspect of her vision:

> Questi peregrini mi paiono di lontana parte, e non credo che anche udissero parlare di questa donna, e non ne sanno niente, anzi li loro pensieri sono d'altre cose che di queste qui, ché forse pensano de li loro amici lontani, li quali noi non conoscemo. (*VN* 40.2)
>
> [These pilgrims seem to come from distant parts, and I do not believe that they have ever heard this lady mentioned; they know nothing about her—in fact, their thoughts are centered on other things than what surrounds them; perhaps they are thinking of their friends far away whom we cannot know.]

Dante's "Deh peregrini" (Ah pilgrims; *VN* 40.9) wishes to impose a sense of presence on the pilgrims. If they can be led to comprehend Beatrice's loss for the city of Florence—"Ell'ha perduta la sua Beatrice" (lost is the city's source of blessedness; *VN* 40.9, line 12)—they will understand what it means to look upon the image of Christ's face in Rome as a version of the same one that Beatrice sees: "quella benedetta Beatrice, la quale gloriosamente mira ne la faccia di colui *qui est per omnia secula benedictus*" (that blessèd Beatrice, who in glory contemplates the

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541–44; Arsenio Frugoni, "La Veronica nostra," *Humanitas* 5 (1950): 561–66, repr. in *Pellegrini a Roma nel 1300: Cronache del primo Giubileo*, ed. Felice Accrocca and Chiara Frugoni (Casale Monferrato, 1999), 83–95.

50. Citations to the *Vita nova* are taken from Dante Alighieri, *Le opere*, ed. Enrico Malato et al., 8 vols. (Rome, 2012–). Translations are from *Dante's "Vita nuova": A Translation and an Essay*, trans. Mark Musa (Bloomington, IN, 1973).

countenance of the One *qui est per omnia secula benedictus*; *VN* 42.3). They will, in some way, be looking with her, as they contemplate the *vera icona*, the Veronica veil that is, substantially, the face of Christ. For Dante, the Veronica offers not only the possibility of seeing an image of Christ's face but also, and perhaps above all, the possibility of looking together with Beatrice. As the goal of pilgrimage, the veil offers the opportunity to see this image of the face of God with other pilgrims but also, as an imprint of the divine, seeing with those loved ones who have already died, forming a transmortal network of attention.[51]

When he invokes the Veronica again in *Paradiso* 31, Dante presumes that those hearing or reading the poem would be capable of producing, at that moment in their reading of the text, their own mental or physical copy of the Veronica. Dante is inviting his readers to access a shared visual resource, assuming that "la Veronica nostra" (our Veil—the Saint Veronica; *Par*. 31.104) is present to all of his readers in an immediate and perhaps even tangible way. Dante is offering his readers a site in his text in which one may enter into a community of viewers. We are asked to recognize that as we mentally or physically access our version or copy of the Veronica, we are looking at the same thing that Beatrice beholds. We are asked to look upon the face of Christ as it is available to us and to do so in recognition that we are looking with the blessed in an earthly version of conjoined vision, a mode of vision that is aware of its continuity across space and time, aware of its plurality.

I would like to suggest that Botticelli finds ways to help the reader in this shared act of facing or looking. Botticelli did not illustrate *Paradiso* 31 but used the vellum destined for that illustration to complete his two-page Satan of *Inferno* 34.[52] So he does not illustrate the Veronica there. Instead, in cantos 23, 24, 25, and 26, Botticelli shows us Christ's face, depicted as a sort of Veronica. Christ has thus not "withdrawn" in any strict sense, in Botticelli's sensitive reading, but remains available to be faced by the reader or viewer and can be faced directly as well as with and through Beatrice. In *Paradiso* 24 (fig. 6), Beatrice and Dante look together upward to the flame labeled "piero" and beyond as well, to the face of Christ as sun. We might see the relationship between St. Peter and Christ, and the way in which Beatrice and Dante face both of them, as an apt depiction of the "bel giardino / che sotto i raggi di Cristo s'infiora" (the garden where, / beneath Christ's rays, such

51. For a more complete discussion of the creation of a transmortal community in *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, see my *Dante's Persons*.

52. For an illustration of *Paradiso* 31 in which the face of Christ does appear, in a Veronica-like guise, see Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, It.IX.276, fol. 75r.

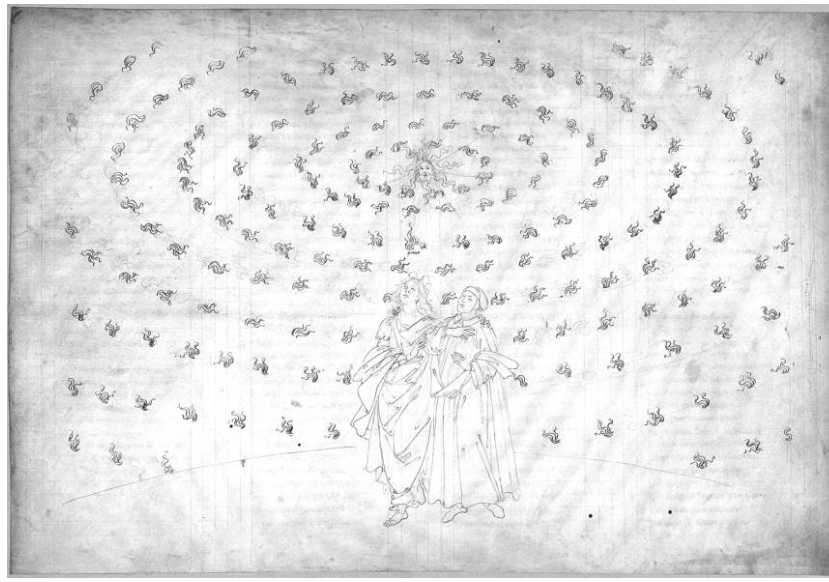

Figure 6. Sandro Botticelli, *Paradiso* 24. (© Kupferstichkabinett. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.) Color version available as an online enhancement.

beauty is en-flowered), as described in *Paradiso* 23.71–72. The illustration of *Paradiso* 24 thus draws on *Paradiso* 23, in a narrative mode that Schulze Altcappenberg refers to as the translation from diachronic literary images to synchronic visual images.[53] But I would push this further and suggest that Dante's literary text is seeking throughout the *Paradiso* to transcend the diachronic and show the synchronic in new ways, such that this illustration is another faithful reading or remediation that takes up the invitation to think of the space-time unity of the *Paradiso* in nonnarrative terms. Similarly, Klettke suggests that in Botticelli's drawing of *Paradiso* 30, we see something of Beatrice's return to the celestial rose, a transition that is not registered in Dante's text until *Paradiso* 31.[54] While the notion of a single illustration per canto sets up certain expectations of one-to-one correspondence, we see here that Botticelli's synchronic transposition reads beyond the frame of the individual canto to depict a different sort of temporality.[55]

In her study of Botticelli's chart of hell, Parker discusses the way in which the viewer's eye moves between individual detail and the overall structure of hell,

53. Schulze Altcappenberg, "Paradiso," 266.

54. Klettke, "Mistica del *Paradiso*," 140–41.

55. Teodolinda Barolini and Manuele Gragnolati have both emphasized the play on temporalities in the textuality of *Paradiso*; for Barolini, *Paradiso* shifts us from a "narrative" mode to a "lyric" mode,

"what we might call the work of reading—the recollection of past events and the anticipation of future incident—is here made manifest and inescapable."[56] For the *Paradiso* illustrations, it is Christ's presence that thus overflows textual reference in Botticelli's reading, appearing where his face might invite the viewer to share in contemplation with Dante and Beatrice. We are offered the opportunity to look with Dante and to look with Beatrice as Beatrice's gestures and modes of facing point us upward toward that face. As in Bernard's gesture in Dante's canto 33, Botticelli's canto 26 shows Beatrice gesturing to a Dante who does not see her; he is covering his eyes. Who, then, is the gesture for? While in this case, Beatrice's eyes look toward Dante, her hands are facing the viewer. It is we who can look up and see the face of Christ as a Veronica, present here as it is in the text by means of a reading that has transformed our notions of viewing from single focus to a mode of encounter that embraces simultaneity and plurality and that conjoins our individual gaze with that of the blessed. Ultimately, Botticelli's illustrations stand with the text, offering themselves to be held alongside the *Commedia* as another mode for enabling the conditions for shared viewership or an earthly version of conjoined vision. Botticelli has responded to the invitations in Dante's text by offering devotional encounters in his illustrations.

while for Gragnolati, *Paradiso* performs a "queer temporality" that resists teleologies, the progressive, and the linear. For a summation of both approaches, see Teodolinda Barolini, *The Undivine Comedy: Detheologizing Dante* (Princeton, NJ, 1992), 194–217; Manuele Gragnolati, *"Amor che move": Linguaggio del corpo e forma del desiderio in Dante, Pasolini e Morante* (Milan, 2013), 156–57.

56. Parker, "Illuminating Botticelli's Chart of Hell," 97–98. Schulze Altcappenberg, "'Per essere persona sofistica,'" 31–32, notes that the *Inferno* illustrations move "beyond the bounds of the canto" they illustrate, functioning as a section of a larger, unified space. He notes that this contributes to a sense of slowness, which is contrasted with the speed of the *Paradiso* sequences, all focused around a centralized structure or single dialogue.