TWO MUSICAL SETTINGS OF UGOLINO: TRAGEDY, IRONY, AND THE HERMENEUTICS OF DANTE

by

DAVID ALEXANDER HEINSEN

(Under the Direction of Susan Thomas)

ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to merge the discourses of music theory (semiotics and narrative) and Dantean literary hermeneutics through the analysis of two musical adaptations of the character Count Ugolino (*Inferno*, Canto XXXIII). The adaptations, composed by Gaetano Donizetti and Francesco Morlacchi, are first discussed within the frame of their sociocultural context and corresponding critical reception. An analysis of the Morlacchi setting aligns with a tragic reading, and thus fits squarely into the 19th-century Italian understanding of the character, while the Donizetti can only be read ironically, yielding an interpretation that explores Ugolino through the lens of religion and morality.

INDEX WORDS: Dante, Inferno, Ugolino, Gaetano Donizetti, Francesco Morlacchi, Musical Semiotics, Musical Narrative Theory, Hermeneutics

TWO MUSICAL SETTINGS OF UGOLINO: TRAGEDY, IRONY, AND THE HERMENEUTICS OF DANTE

by

DAVID ALEXANDER HEINSEN

B.M., James Madison University, 2007

M.M., University of Georgia, 2010

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2017

TWO MUSICAL SETTINGS OF UGOLINO: TRAGEDY, IRONY, AND THE HERMENEUTICS OF DANTE

by

DAVID ALEXANDER HEINSEN

Major Professor: Susan Thomas

Committee: David Haas
Emily Gertsch

Electronic Version Approved:

Suzanne Barbour
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
May 2017

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my committee members – Dr. Susan Thomas, Dr. Emily Gertsch, and Dr. David Haas– for their support and encouragement from the initial planning through the finals stages of writing this thesis. Dr. Thomas, your brilliant insights and regular feedback were instrumental to the success of this project, not only for the cogency of my arguments, but also for the clarity and economy of my writing. Dr. Haas, your classes and seminars encouraged me to think outside of the box and promoted the importance of writing about musical structure in an engaging and detailed way. Dr. Gertsch, your guidance into the field of musical meaning has been invaluable, both to this project and, more importantly, my future. Your recommendations of articles and books, as well as our regular conversations, have completely changed the way I think about music and was the catalyst for shifting my career trajectory towards music theory.

In addition, Dr. Emily Frey, although you were only at UGA for a short time, I am grateful for our regular talks about the field of musicology and your feedback on research papers. Furthermore, to the whole musicology department at the University of Georgia, thank you for taking a risk on this euphonium player that found himself drawn towards academic music scholarship, but was completely unsure of his own career path.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Robin, for her patience during these last few months. I tend to develop blinders to real life when threatened by impending deadlines, but your understanding and management of my quirks enormously helped in the writing and research process – it would have been impossible without you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS iv

LIST OF TABLES vi

LIST OF FIGURES vii

CHAPTERS

1 INTRODUCTION 1

2 DANTE AESTHETICS AND RECEPTION IN 19TH-CENTURY ITALY 27

3 THE TRAGIC UGOLINO: MORLACCHI'S SETTING AS AN EPISODIC READING 49

4 THE IRONIC UGOLINO: DONIZETTI'S SETTING AS A SERIAL READING 84

CONCLUSION 119

BIBLIOGRAPHY 124

LIST OF TABLES

Page

Table 1.1: Narrative Archetypes, Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*.....18

Table 3.1: Text and Temporal Descriptions of Canto XXXIII, lines 1-15.....62

Table 3.2: Order and Transgression Chart for Morlacchi's Adaptation.....65

Table 3.3: Paradigmatic Analysis of Morlacchi's "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno".....66

Table 4.1: Paradigmatic Analysis of Donizetti's "Il Conte Ugolino".....95

Table 4.2: Order and Transgression Chart for Donizetti's "Il Conte Ugolino".....103

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

Figure 1.1: Dantean Reading Typologies, Hede, *Reading Dante* 13

Figure 1.2: Semiotic Model for Expressive Meaning, Hatten, *Musical Meaning* 16

Figure 3.1: Morlacchi, "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno," mm. 1-31 55

Figure 3.2: Morlacchi, "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno," mm. 48-54 58

Figure 3.3: Morlacchi, "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno," mm. 76-89 (reduction) 68

Figure 3.4: Morlacchi, "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno," mm. 88-96 71

Figure 3.5: Morlacchi, "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno," mm. 117-128 73

Figure 3.6: Morlacchi, "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno," mm. 129-143 75

Figure 3.7: Morlacchi, "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno," mm. 228-239 78

Figure 3.8: Morlacchi, "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno," mm. 253-263 80

Figure 4.1: Donizetti, "Il Conte Ugolino," mm. 8-20 93

Figure 4.2: Donizetti, "Il Conte Ugolino," mm. 363-407 (reduction) 97

Figure 4.3: Donizetti, "Il Conte Ugolino," melody comparison 98

Figure 4.4: Donizetti, "Il Conte Ugolino," mm. 136-147 (reduction) 104

Figure 4.5: Donizetti, "Il Conte Ugolino," mm. 330-344 (reduction) 106

Figure 4.6: Donizetti, "Il Conte Ugolino," mm. 191-204 112

Figure 4.7: Donizetti, "Il Conte Ugolino," mm. 236-241 112

Figure 4.8: Donizetti, "Il Conte Ugolino," mm. 205-228 114

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

From its medieval origins through our postmodern age, the *Divine Comedy* of Dante Alighieri has presented intellectual challenges to legions of students and scholars. On its surface, this tripartite metaphorical journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise traces the transcendence of sin towards purification and salvation, but abundant complexities within its content and formal structure thwart the construction of further meaning. Dense webs of literary, theological, and political allusions lie within the narrative content, often obscuring the protagonist's linear journey. The intricate structural topography of the three canticles provide additional analytical obstacles, as the nine circles of Hell, seven terraces of Purgatory, and ten heavens of Paradise do not clearly align sins with their corresponding virtues and thus obscure thematic parallels and contest the underlying logic of the poem. These complexities, among many others, have been examined through a rich tradition of literary hermeneutics that attempts to interpret the *Divine Comedy* in order to decipher its "enigma of meaning."[1] Interpretative efforts have led to a "veritable ocean of exegesis . . . an interminable and ever-growing mass of hermeneutics"[2] that has become both the fountainhead and bulwark of Dante studies and collegiate Italian departments. Despite their academic ubiquity, Dantean hermeneutics are surprisingly insular, existing only within the bubble of literary and rhetorical scholarship, and

[1] Jesper Hede, *Reading Dante* (United States of America: Lexington Books, 2007), 1.

[2] Gianfranco Contini, "Philology and Dante Exegesis," *Dante Studies, with the Annual Report of the Dante Society*, no. 87 (1969): 1.

very rarely crossing disciplinary lines. This is most unfortunate in consideration of the extraordinary number of artistic adaptations that the *Divine Comedy* has inspired – settings which have been examined in the scholarly discourses of art, music, and theater, but remain detached from the insights of literary criticism.

From the infernal sculptures of Auguste Rodin to Franz Liszt's symphonic setting of the poem, the creative potential embedded within the *Divine Comedy* has encouraged centuries of diverse and thoughtful adaptation. Dante's vivid descriptions of his demonic and angelic environments, as well as the myriad of compelling characters and personal narratives found within them, have been prime subject material for painters, writers, composers, and dramaturgists. Scholarly discourse on these adaptations, however, has focused primarily on surface representations of the character or concept depicted, resulting in two-dimensional, superficial perspectives that do not attempt to place the artistic rendering within the field of hermeneutic possibility. This is particularly problematic in musicological discourse (treated in the general sense here to include both historical study and musical analysis), where a number of analytical methodologies are employed to study the musical settings of the *Divine Comedy* but few incorporate extant criticism of the literary text. Not only do these restricted views of Dantean concepts ignore the alternative perspectives offered by hermeneutics, they also frequently undervalue the semiotic capabilities of the music in signifying complexities beyond surface representations. Is it possible for a musical adaptation to encode a literary interpretation within its structure that reaches deeper than just superficial characteristics? How might the critic, analyst, or listener perceive this interpretation based on their own understanding of Dante? If we allow extant literary criticism to guide our path of research, we can go beyond the what, when,

and where that often dominates this brand of musicological discourse, and move into the how and why of its signification processes.

This thesis, first and foremost, seeks to incorporate Dantean literary hermeneutics into musicological discourse. While the separation of these two realms of academia have bared much fruit in the past, only through their integration can we dig below the musical surface of *Divine Comedy* adaptations to discover new ways of listening and understanding. Adopting this interdisciplinary framework as my "Virgilian guide," this paper will analyze two small song settings of the Dantean character Count Ugolino, from Canto XXXIII of *Inferno*, composed by Gaetano Donizetti (1828) and Francesco Morlacchi (1832). These roughly contemporaneous works are similar in both size and scope – they preserve Dante's original text in an identical musical setting for bass voice and piano – yet, their compositional style and critical reception are vastly different. As such, they circumscribe two divergent approaches to understanding the tale of Ugolino.

Beginning in the early 19th century, the tale of Count Ugolino became the subject of considerable fascination among both scholars and artists for its provocative images of cannibalism and overwhelming sense of pathos. Most importantly – for the purposes of this project – it was subjected to many diverse and rich literary interpretations. The character's story can be summarized as follows: Dante the pilgrim encounters Ugolino in the ninth circle of Hell – reserved for the wicked sin of treachery – where the latter is partially encased in ice, vengefully devouring the head of his own betrayer, Archbishop Ruggieri. Flabbergasted by this act of cannibalism, Dante requests an explanation for this unimaginable sin, which incites Ugolino to recount his own personal narrative in the form of an extended monologue. In his attempt to consolidate political power, Count Ugolino chose to betray his own Guelph faction and allied

himself with the Ghibellines and Archbishop Ruggieri, thereby gaining complete control over the Italian city of Pisa. Ruggieri then turned on Ugolino and provoked the citizens to rebel against him, imprisoning Ugolino and his four sons in the famed "Tower of Hunger."[3] In perhaps the most poignant depiction of pathos in the entire *Divine Comedy*, Ugolino then watches his children die one by one as they succumb to starvation, ultimately perishing himself.

The musical subjects of my study suggest divergent understandings of the Ugolino character through their interaction with early 19th-century Dantean aesthetics – a shifting paradigm that altered the way in which Dante was read. The concurrent trends of Italian Romanticism (both cultural and musical) and the Risorgimento promoted an understanding of Ugolino that was colored by emotional extremes, a nationalistic fervor, and the ostensible sacrosanctity of Dante's written word.[4] This shifting aesthetic painted the Morlacchi adaptation as the epitome of what an Ugolino setting should ideally be: a work with "liberal harmonic experimentation . . . and an anxious, instable tonality" that is "serious, weighty and inspired, never vulgar and always noble in character;"[5] and a composition that focused on the tragic "character of Ugolino and remained faithful to Dante's text, making the music secondary to the words."[6] Morlacchi's setting played on the sympathy of the audience and therefore was praised,

---

[3] Like many of the characters presented in *Inferno*, Ugolino is not a fictional construction, but rather is based on a true story. For a more comprehensive description of the real Ugolino as well as Dante's recontextualized character please see: Frances A Yates, "Transformations of Dante's Ugolino," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 14, no.1/2 (1951): 92-117.

[4] Italian Romanticism, as an aesthetic concept, should not be confused with the fascination of idealized beauty, transcendence, and inner subjectivity that is indicative of German Romanticism. Romantic writers of Italy emphasized the truth and reality of the everyday world – a far more humanist and utilitarian perspective than their German counterparts.

The Risorgimento was a political and social movement in 19th-century Italy calling for the unification of the many nation-states of the Italian peninsula. This was fueled by a burgeoning national consciousness that took pride in its language, art, and literature – therefore, re-popularizing Dante not only as a literary hero, but as a political and religious role model. See Chapter Two for a more comprehensive discussion of these socio-cultural factors.

[5] Maria Ann Roglieri, *Dante and Music: Musical Adaptations of the Commedia from the Sixteenth Century to the Present* (England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2001), 117.

[6] Maria Ann Roglieri, "Le Rime Aspre e Chiocce to la Dolce Sinfonia di Paradiso: Musical Settings of Dante's Commedia," *Dante Studies, with the Annual Report of the Dante Society* 113 (1995): 179.

not for its presentation of Ugolino as a didactic warning against treachery, but rather a poignant tale that resonated with the aesthetic sensibilities of 19th-century Italy.

Donizetti's adaptation, on the other hand, was (and still is) castigated by critics. While many felt that Donizetti's melodic, bel canto style could not capture the pathos of Ugolino, others attacked its fidelity to Dante's text. Maria Ann Roglieri states that the famous opera composer "saw his piece as purely an exercise and, as such, he showed no real concern for the Dantean text he used."[7] Musicologists Pierluigi Petrobelli and William Ashbrook describe the cantata, respectively, as "(showing) no real concern for the cultural value and significance of the text"[8] and a "superfluous addition to great poetry."[9] Although these scholars make it explicitly clear that his text setting leaves more to be desired, its dismissal as a mere "compositional exercise" discredits Donizetti's own appreciation of Dante. This is especially odd when considering the research of J. S. Allitt, who portrays Donizetti as a true "Dantista," having extensively studied the *Divine Comedy* upon its foundations of religion and morality.[10] Should we preemptively label this setting as an "uninspired" musical composition that fails to achieve the loftiness of Dantean thought and the pathetic nature of Ugolino? Should this new paradigm of Dante reception be the only parameter we use to judge this work? While further historical evidence fails to align Donizetti's musical portrayal with a specific interpretation of the Ugolino character, my close reading of the adaptation – informed by a structural music analysis and literary criticism – suggests an ironic interpretation, or a subversion of the 19th-century Italian perspective on Ugolino (one that worked favorably in the Morlacchi adaptation). Instead of

---

[7] Roglieri, *Dante and Music*, 114.

[8] Pierluigi Petrobelli, "On Dante and Italian Music: Three Moments," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 2, no. 3 (November 1990): 231.

[9] William Ashbrook, *Donizetti and His Operas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 224.

[10] John Stewart Allitt, *Donizetti: In the Light of Romanticism and the Teaching of Johann Simon Mayr* (Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element Books Ltd, 1991).

provoking a sympathetic response to the tragic character, my reading resituates Ugolino into the moral geography of Dante's *Inferno*, thereby exposing his sinful nature and Christological failings that were often ignored by Romantic readers.

This document thus aims to examine the cultural milieu in which both Morlacchi and Donizetti set the Ugolino tale to music. More importantly, it seeks to create a methodology for deciphering literary interpretation through musical structures themselves. While the historical evidence cited above might tenuously suggest an interpretation, only through the analysis of music can this hypothesis be strengthened or denied. Using an amalgamation of theories that contemplate musical meaning, primarily that of semiotics and narrative, I will discuss the interaction between Dante's text and the musical syntax and semantics of each setting. These conclusions will then be placed within a larger conversation of the tragic and ironic modes of Bryon Almén's theory of musical narrative and Jasper Hede's Dantean reading typologies, which form the crux of my theoretical methodology discussed below.

Methodology

In order to understand the Morlacchi and Donizetti settings through the lens of literary criticism, we must first accept that these works are not merely the preservation of text with arbitrary musical accompaniment, but rather a reading where its textual interpretation is evinced through the discourse of music – necessitating an analytical separation between the adaptation and its source. If we assume this divide between the text and the musical setting, we can begin to treat both as individual artistic entities, denying the text itself axiomatic superiority over the setting and freeing the adaptation to develop its own hermeneutic path. The adaptation, therefore,

is "a derivation that is not derivative . . . a work that is second without being secondary."[11] This division, which forms the bedrock of adaptation theory, breaks the assumption that the setting's primary point of identification must derive from the original source and instead places value on its own intrinsic merit and originality.

Theories of Adaptation

Linda Hutcheon describes adaptation as "three distinct but interrelated perspectives"[12] forming a product and two processes. Adaptation as a *product* involves the formation of an artistic entity that undergoes an extensive transposition, or shift in medium, in this case from poem to song. This transference of medium is always paired with a change in context and perspective,[13] designating the act of adaptation as creative and interpretative – a *process* of creation (or re-creation). Preservation and true fidelity to a text, therefore, is an impossibility, as the sheer act of adaptation temporally and contextually distances the work from its original source, which significantly alters the product.[14] Adaptation is also considered a *process* of reception, a form of intertextuality where we perceive these works through the memories of others. This would not only include the original source (if the listener is familiar with it) but also other music, literature, or criticism that resonates with the perceiver due to similarities in concept or genre. Intertextual engagement with these Ugolino settings allow for the creation of correspondences between both adaptations, additional settings of Dantean characters, further

[11] Linda Hutcheon and Siobhan O'Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation,* 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2013), 8-9.
[12] Ibid., 7.
[13] Recognition of this change in context might not occur by the creator or perceiver, yet subtleties within the work hint at these alterations. See Bakhtin's concept of re-accentuation below.
[14] This idea about the impossibility of an adaptation attaining fidelity to an original source is especially important in the later discussion of the Morlacchi setting, where its positive critical reception is clearly linked to perceived fidelity to Dante's text. See Chapter Two for a more comprehensive examination of this issue.

works from the composers' oeuvre, as well as the wealth of hermeneutic writings on the *Divine Comedy*.

Roger Stam further develops these last two *processes*[15] in his discussion of novel-to-movie adaptations, particularly with the trope of adaptation as a "reading" of the source. He states that a "literary text is not closed, but an open structure to be reworked by boundless context. The text feeds on and is fed into an infinitely permutating intertext, which is seen through ever-shifting grids of interpretation."[16] This multitude of possible interpretation engenders artistic readings that are "inevitably partial, personal, and conjectural – suggests that just as any text can generate an infinity of readings, so any novel can generate any number of adaptations."[17] This implies that the understanding of adaptations cannot exist within a vacuum, through either itself or in conjunction with its original source, but rather should be perceived through the multiplicity of perspectives that invariably color a reading and its subsequent adaptation.

Stam's "boundless context" shapes both the creation and reception of an adaptation, but, to be more specific, it is the social, historical, and cultural forces at play that shape the context itself. Mikhail Bakhtin, in his dense essay "Discourse and the Novel," examines this concept through his own idea of heteroglossia, as "an understanding of the dialogue of languages as it exists in a given era" [18] which forms "the base condition governing the operation of meaning in any utterance."[19] Central to this neologism is the importance of a "profound understanding of

---

[15] In this case, Stam's discussion revolves around novel-to-movie adaptations, but his arguments are also salient in literature-to-music adaptations.

[16] Roger Stam, "Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation," in *Film Adaptation,* ed. James Naremore (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 57.

[17] Ibid., 62-63.

[18] Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 417.

[19] Ibid., 428. In his glossary definition of heteroglossia, Bakhtin continues the previous statement: "It is that which insures the primacy of context over text. At any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of

each language's socio-ideological meaning and an exact knowledge of the social distribution and ordering of all the other ideological voices of the era."[20] To simplify this rather complex notion, the meaning of an utterance is different depending on the time, place, and other conditions in which it was made. In relation to the transfer of literary images (as utterances) to other genres, these ideas play a significant role in the meaning of a work and how it is received by its own contemporaneous culture and those that are anachronistic to it.

Bakhtin theorizes two processes of transformation as it relates to literary images and their contextual background. The first, canonization, "hardens a literary image in place and prevents free growth."[21] Here, heteroglossia is ignored in favor a specific and narrow meaning of an image: it does not change with the ideological development of the society, nor absorb the ideals of a new culture upon locational displacement. Such was the case with the image of Ugolino, where a stubborn 19th-century tragic interpretation continued to distort the reception of the character into the following century. The second, re-accentuation, "loosens literary images and guarantees them a long life by embedding them in new contexts."[22] The socio-cultural background in which we interpret an image has changed, fostering a dialogue that uncovers newer aspects of meaning; "their semantic content literally continues to grow, to further create out of itself."[23] Through the re-accentuation of older images in literature, new images often arise through the movement from one interpretative register to another, i.e. from the comic to the tragic. However, this transformational process does have its dangers, as Bakhtin explains:

---

conditions – social, historical, meteorological, physiological – that will insure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different that it would have under any other conditions; all utterances are heteroglot in that they are functions of a matrix of forces practically impossible to recoup, and therefore impossible to resolve."

[20] Ibid., 417.

[21] Caryl Emerson, "Bakhtin and Intergeneric Shift: The Case of Boris Godunov," *Studies in 20th Century Literature* 9, no. 1 (1984), 145.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," 421.

> Within certain limits the process of re-accentuation is unavoidable, legitimate and even productive. But these limits may easily be crossed when a work is distant from us and when we perceive it against a background completely foreign to it. Perceived in such a way, it may be subjected to a re-accentuation that radically distorts it. Especially dangerous is any vulgarizing that oversimplifies re-accentuation and that turns a two-voiced image into one that is flat, single-voiced.[24]

The transformation of a Dantean character from the 14th-century poem into two 19th-century musical adaptations infers a re-accentuation in both cases. While many Dante scholars praise the Morlacchi setting for its fidelity and preservation of the character's spirit, these attributes cannot be objectively granted due to the significant differences in their own heteroglossia and that of Dante's. In fact, it can be argued (as I will endeavor to do in later chapters) that this Romanticized version of Ugolino that is proposed in Morlacchi's setting is a distortion of the character, an "oversimplification" that turns a multi-voiced image – a didactic character with moral and religious flaws – into a single-voiced pathos-inspired tale. Whereas Donizetti's setting aims to subvert this tragic re-accentuation through an ironic discourse that presents Ugolino as a far more nuanced subject.

Dantean Reading Typologies

If adaptations of the *Divine Comedy* can be contemplated as hermeneutic readings of the poem molded by contextual re-accentuations, their understanding of Dantean concepts will differ greatly according to the circumstances of their composition. Despite the multiplicity of interpretations that are possible, the diverse ways in which we can read the poem stem from a central question regarding the problematic structure of Dante's afterlife: how do sins in the nine circles of *Inferno*, roots of sinfulness in the seven terraces of *Purgatorio*, and the cardinal and theological virtues in the nine celestial spheres of *Paradiso* correspond to each other?

[24] Ibid., 420.

Essentially, the acceptance or dismissal of an underlying logic – and thus a thematic coherence – of the poem's organization determines how one interprets the entire *Divine Comedy*, as well as any of its constituent parts – like the tale of Ugolino that is in question.

In both his article, "Ranking Types of Reading," and monograph, *Reading Dante*, Jesper Hede explores this central question through a descriptive typological system that divides the interpretation of the *Divine Comedy* into four different methods (See bottom row of Figure 1.1).[25] Hede claims two higher-order reading typologies for analytical hermeneutics (middle row of the aforementioned figure). The first is a segmental approach, which focuses on "the meaning of the different segments or elements of the poem in their local narrative context."[26] This type of reading does not suggest any thematic linkages between the three canticles, and tends to treat the basic divisions and subdivisions of Dante's afterworld as self-contained entities. There is, however, a large spectrum of interpretation possible within a segmental reading, which Hede classifies as either episodic or serial. An episodic reading focuses on distinct episodes within the text, effectively "a microanalysis of particulars of the poem"[27] that ignores much of the surrounding material. Charles Singleton describes these readings as deriving from their own center of inspiration,[28] viewing any semblance of context as purely superfluous. A serial reading broadens the area of analysis to include larger segments of the poem – often based on a theme, sin, virtue, or structural subdivision. These two submethods of reading are particularly important for this thesis as they delineate the fundamental strategies for interpreting individual characters.

---

[25] I focus only on the "descriptive" reading typology that aims to understand the complex structure of the *Divine Comedy*. Other types of readings presented by Hede, such as epic or Christological, do not directly affect my analyses, but could very well be appropriated in other musical analysis work.

[26] Hede, *Reading Dante*, 18.

[27] Robert Hollander, "Dante and His Commentators," in *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, ed. Rachel Jacoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1993), 232. Via: Hede, *Reading Dante*, 24.

[28] Charles S. Singleton, *Dante Studies I: Elements of Structure* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), 30. Via: Hede, *Reading Dante*, 6.

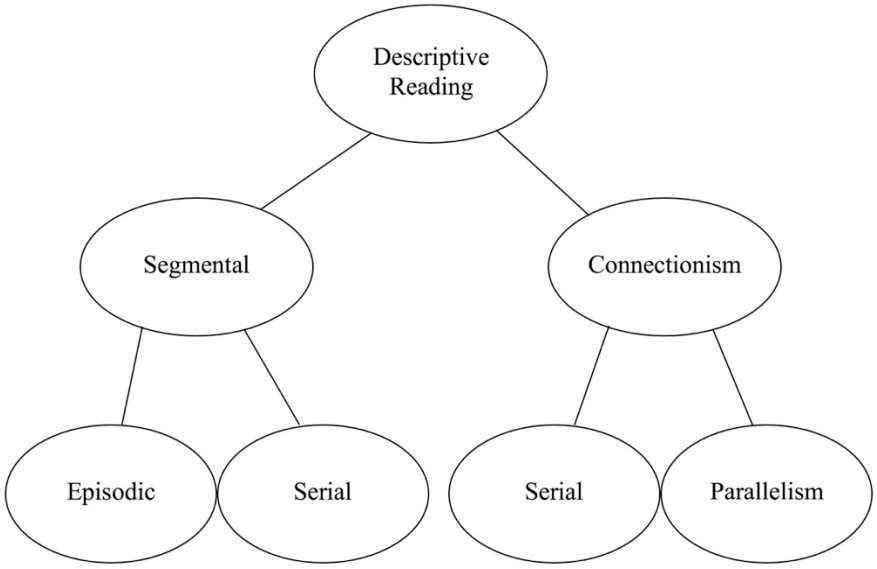
Treating the tale of Ugolino as a self-contained entity ignores his overall location within the moral geography of Hell, as well as the experiences of Dante the pilgrim that occur before and after his encounter with Ugolino. This episodic reading confines our understanding of the character to a very narrow interpretative frame and severs our ability to understand Ugolino within a larger context. Moving towards a serial reading, however, we can zoom out from this individual tale to incorporate the ninth circle of hell and the sins of pride (as well as his position one canto from Lucifer), location within the overarching sins of bestiality, connection to other characters (including Francesca da Rimini), and finally within the overall structure of *Inferno*. As will be made explicit later in this thesis, hermeneutic analyses of Ugolino can align with episodic readings, as well as the various stages of serialism.

The second higher-order method for reading Dante, as described by Hede, is termed connectionism, or the "kind of reading that tries to connect the themes and structural elements of Dante's vision in order to come to terms with the global meaning of the poem."[29] This involves the contemplation of all three canticles, often aligning themes that connect the punished sin in *Inferno* with its purgation in *Purgatorio* and corresponding virtue in *Paradiso*. Connectionism readings can also be divided into two submethods: serialism and parallelism. Serial perspectives on connectionism lie near its segmental counterpart as both are read within a self-contained manner, but here corresponding cantos within each canticle are connected to their sin-virtue relationship. Parallelism forms a more cumulative reading, as the insight gained by the punishment and purgation of the sin elucidates the significance of the virtue. As Hede describes it, "the serial reading is like the flow of a river; the parallel reading is like a dam that collects the flowing water into a lake."[30] While these connectionist readings seem likely to transcend the

[29] Hede, *Reading Dante*, 18.
[30] Ibid., 23.

capabilities of musical settings of single Dantean characters, hermeneutic writings that exhibit this global understanding can be an insightful lens in which to view Ugolino adaptations – forming perceptual connections to the prideful in *Purgatorio*'s first terrace and the virtue of humility in *Paradiso*.

Figure 1.1: Hede, Dantean Reading Typologies from *Reading Dante*



Musical Analysis

How can the interpretative strategies of literary hermeneutics (in particular the segmental-episodic and segmental-serial Dantean reading typologies) manifest themselves in the musical adaptations of Count Ugolino? While traditional formalist analysis might elucidate insights into the inner workings of both compositions, the methodologies and theories that deal with the formation of musical meaning grant us a clearer path to merge these seemingly disparate disciplines. Much of my approach to this task takes its inspiration from Nattiez's tripartition of semiotic analysis, or the segmentation of the processes of musical meaning into the poietic, neutral, and esthetic levels.[31] The poietic level refers to the composer's creation of the musical

[31] Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse*, trans. Carolyn Abbate, 3rd ed. (United States: Princeton University Press, 1990).

work that was informed by the sociocultural context in which it was written. The neutral level is the work itself, an objective analysis of its musical patterns and structures. The esthetic level deals with the listener's response to the music, including its perception, cognition, reception, and interpretation. My desire with this project is to move among all three levels of the tripartition, particularly from the neutral level outwards to both the poietic and esthetic level. In other words, analysis of the musical text (neutral) will be placed into the context of its compositional history and contemporaneous Dantean reception (poietic), but also interpreted according modern hermeneutic readings of Ugolino (esthetic).

Analyzing the neutral semiotic level of 19th-century musical texts is often a challenge due to the highly individualized styles of Romantic composers. Kofi Agawu, in his monograph *Music as Discourse*, offers strategic suggestions for the analysis of Romantic music that provides the tools to "formulate description of its material content and modes of organization that captures its essence as an art of tone within . . . the effervescent, evanescent, and ultimately plural signification of Romantic music."[32] He provides six rubrics that assist in the identification of salient musical features that can be considered to carry meaning: topics (short musical figures that carry semiotic value); beginnings, middles, and endings (temporal location and valuation of formal functions); high points (musical moments of great intensity, extreme tension, or profound resolution); periodicity (processes of continuation and closure within both large-scale and small-scale formal units); three modes of enunciation (differentiation of speech, song, and dance modes); and narrative (emplotment of musical events in temporal succession).[33] The signification processes that I will discuss later in this thesis often involve the layering of several of these

[32] Kofi Agawu, *Music as Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music* (United States: Oxford University Press, 2009), 41.
[33] Ibid.

analytical rubrics – particularly topics and narrative – in order to narrow the specificity of their meaning.

Due to the through-composed nature and long length of these Ugolino settings, my analyses can potentially become unwieldly. When engaging with works that defy conventional norms of form and contain few organizational markers for the listener, a paradigmatic style of analysis is most effective. As discussed by Agawu,[34] a paradigmatic analysis divides a work into subdivisions (termed *Units*) that are defined by musical similarities in key, texture, and melodic material, and circumscribed by strong cadences in either the key that the Unit began in or a modulated tonal area. This allows the work to be interpreted as both a chronological form, as in a succession of musical events, and a logical form, an atemporal tracing of repetitions, divergences, and associations of the musical material. Investigations into the latter can reveal the richest relationships among the various Units and can guide our process of (re)constructing meaning from a seemingly amorphous musical structure.[35]

Beyond the strategies and tools for analysis that are mentioned above, my theoretical framework employs several concepts from Robert Hatten's monograph *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation*,[36] where he addresses meaning in music through the adaptation of linguistic theories. Forming the nexus of his semiotic system of analysis, Hatten applies his theory of markedness to examine oppositions in musical structure. The author describes markedness as an asymmetrical relationship between two opposing structures that share similar constructs, i.e. modes, chords, harmonic function, or motivic

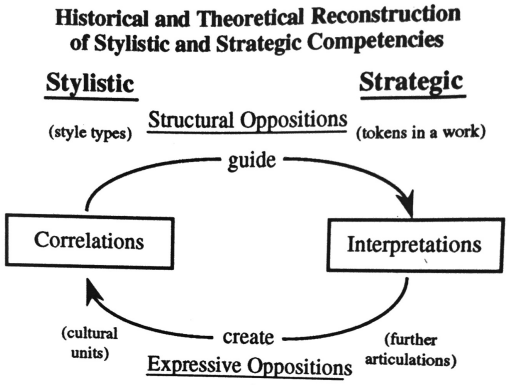
[34] Ibid., 163-207.

[35] The paradigmatic analysis is not necessarily a tool to clarify meaning in a musical composition. It does, however, open up the *possibility* of meaning that must be interpreted by the analyst. I address this hermeneutic gap by utilizing literary criticism in order to examine the implications of the music's structural relationships.

[36] Robert Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

content.[37] Marked entities occur less frequently than their unmarked opposites and, therefore, are imbued with greater semiotic potential. In addition, the mapping of expressive meaning to these structural oppositions rely on the interaction between *stylistic correlations* and strategic *interpretations*. Hatten defines *stylistic correlations* as the mapping of expressive oppositions onto their corresponding structural oppositions, as well as the mapping of expressive states onto stylistic types.[38] *Strategic interpretations* map these expressive oppositions onto musical structures, but only reference a specific token in a singular work.[39] This interaction between structure and meaning can clearly be seen in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2: Robert Hatten's model of the interaction between stylistic correlations and strategic interpretations, with respect to expressive meaning in music.[40]



In the same monograph, Hatten also makes an invaluable contribution to the theorization of topics and topical fields. His work in this area is especially important to my project, as the analysis of the topical field of tragedy forms the initial point of departure for both hermeneutic arguments in Chapter Three and Four. In order to match the intense suffering and pathos of the Ugolino's tale within their respective adaptations, Morlacchi and Donizetti both employ pervasive minor keys, lower tessitura vocal lines, sigh motives, diminished and augmented

[37] Ibid., 34.
[38] Ibid, 29-30.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid, 30. This chart was extracted straight from Hatten's text.

sonorities, and wandering tonality with frequent modulations – musical structures that suggest the appropriation of tragic topics. Leonard Ratner, as one of the first scholars to theorize topics, describes these musical features as stylistic references that carry meaning associated with affect, class, and social occasions.[41] When viewed from the perspective of a complete movement or entire piece, these topics can be perceived as an overarching topical field. As defined by Hatten, topical fields are "larger areas such as the tragic, the pastoral, the heroic, and the *buffa* that are supported by topical oppositions."[42] In the case of the Ugolino adaptations, the tragic topical field provides the unmarked foundation in which marked salient oppositions – including contrasting topics, ambiguities of harmonic syntax, and distinctive key relationships – can suggest meaning.[43] This acquisition of signification may occur in isolated contexts or through various marked interactions during the temporal unfolding of the work – the latter of which can be traced through the implementation of musical narrative theory.

As an adaptation of the literary narrative models conceived by Northrop Frye and James Jakób Liszka, Byron Almén's theory of musical narrative traces the emplotment of musical events within the syntactical level of a composition.[44] By assessing the characteristics of these events in both isolation and in context, we can understand how similar elements musically influence and define each other, as well as communicate meaning. Almén describes musical narrative as "the process through which the listener perceives and tracks a culturally significant transvaluation of hierarchical relationships within a temporal span."[45] Essentially, a work

---

[41] Leonard Ratner, *Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980).

[42] Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 295.

[43] Please note that I purposefully do not employ Hatten's concept of expressive genres here. I have chosen to track the accrual of meaning using tenets of narrative theory set against the topical field of tragedy, not through the change-of-expressive-state schema that link to expressive genres.

[44] Almén's theories were first delineated in an article: Bryon Almén, "Narrative Archetypes: A Critique, Theory, and Method of Narrative Analysis," *Journal of Music Theory* 47, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 1-39. And later in his monograph: Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).

[45] Almén, "Narrative Archetypes," 12.

establishes a network of musical relationships that manifest themselves as binary oppositions between unmarked structural orders and marked transgressions. This process relies on two principles: *markedness* examines the relative value of the marked transgression in relation to the unmarked order and *rank* assesses the comparative value of the characteristics of each semantic and cultural unit in relation to other units in the signifying system.[46] Once the markedness and rank values yield a hierarchical relationship among the musical oppositions, the listener imbues a positive or negative value to either side of this relationship (i.e. viewing the order positively and the transgression negatively). Subsequent changes within the temporal unfolding of the work then instigate a crisis between the order/transgression binaries that are resolved in a number of different ways. These resolutions, in conjunction with the placement of the listener's sympathy, result in the mapping of the work onto one of four narrative archetypes[47] – comedy, romance, irony, tragedy – which are shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Almén, Narrative Archetypes from *A Theory of Musical Narrative*[48]

Emphasis on Victory
- Comedy – victory of transgression (positive) over order (negative)
- Romance – victory of order (positive) over transgression (negative)
Emphasis on Defeat
- Irony/Satire – defeat of order (positive) by transgression (negative)
- Tragedy – defeat of transgression (positive) by order (negative)

Just as the literary plot of Canto XXXIII deals with the inevitable defeat of the tragic character, my analyses of both settings focus on a musical narrative emplotment which emphasizes defeat. Appropriating the latter two archetypes of irony and tragedy, however, becomes problematic when placed in a dialogue with complex literary interpretations. Here, the

[46] Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*, 49.

[47] He describes narrative archetypes as "narrative organizational patterns [that] are formed by the conflict between two or more hierarchically arranged elements within a [musical] system; this conflict results in a revaluation of the constituent elements." Almén, "Narrative Archetypes," 12.

[48] Ibid., 18.

rigidity of an archetype-driven investigation limits the hermeneutic goals of my analyses – therefore, necessitating the extension of the archetype's narrative premises. With the Morlacchi adaptation, Ugolino's defeat involves a positively-valued transgression that is initially oppressed by a negatively-valued order, insinuating a tragic archetype. However, the valuation of the transgression becomes negative over time and leads to a double defeat of both sides of the order-transgression binary. While I argue for a *flawed tragic archetype* in my analysis, we can nevertheless place this reading within the contemporaneous reception of Dante and connect it to Hede's segmental-episodic typology. Conversely, with the Donizetti adaptation, structural transgressions undercut the musical order and suggest an ironic archetype. However, the mapping of all the order-transgression relationships onto an ironic emplotment substantially restricts the more subtle interactions between these opposing structures. In lieu of a by-the-book ironic archetype, I expand upon Almén's conception by loosening its rigid methodology and incorporating a more flexible "ironic reading strategy," as was suggested by Michael Klein in his 2009 article, "Ironic Narrative, Ironic Reading."[49] Klein relies on the analyst's intuition to locate an ironic musical event that subverts a previously established topical field and seeks to trace the unfolding narrative through this lens of irony. As the author avoids the assignment of value to musical structures and presents several different order-transgression pairings, Klein does not force his analysis into Almén's archetype. Instead, he advises the opening up of an ironic interpretative space where we can track musical structures that can retrospectively explain the ironic musical event. Using this strategy, we can read Donizetti's adaptation of the tale of Ugolino as a subversion of the 19th-century understanding of Ugolino and connect it to the modern hermeneutic conception of the character. As such, our interpretation here is not as

[49] Michael Klein, "Ironic Narrative, Ironic Reading," *Journal of Music Theory* 53, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 95-136.

narrow as in the Morlacchi, facilitating a stronger connection to the "zoomed-out" segmental-serial typology.

Literature Review

Scholarly literature that examines both Dante and music has one of two emphases, either music and musical imagery in Dante's poetry, or musical adaptations inspired by Dantean literature. The former – which deals with the lamentations of sinners, the hymns of the repented, and the resplendent yet incomprehensible music of the angels – consists of a large body of scholarship ranging from 14th-century commentaries to present-day monographs.[50] This collection of research dwarfs the musicological work done in the latter category, which is unfortunate considering the hundreds of extant adaptations that have yet to be considered for in-depth study. The minimal research that has been published, however, focuses on either the documentation and surface discussion of the complete oeuvre or single work-centered analyses.

The work of Maria Ann Roglieri forms the most significant contribution to the former category. Her monograph and series of articles, wherein she catalogues the many *Divine Comedy* settings and examines the poem's popularity among composers, remains an invaluable tool for future research.[51] While this literature provides a suitable point of entry into future Dantean scholarship, the brief descriptions of adaptations borrow from highly subjective extant criticism, and, as such, tend to dismiss many of the works in favor of those that truly capture the essence of

[50] For further reading in this particular field, please see: Arnaldo Bonaventura, *Dante e la musica* (Livorno: Raffaello Giusti, 1904). Francesco Ciabattoni, *Dante's Journey to Polyphony* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).

[51] Maria Ann Roglieri, *Dante and Music: Musical Adaptations of the Commedia from the Sixteenth Century to the Present* (England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2001). Maria Ann Roglieri, "Le Rime Aspre e Chiocce to la Dolce Sinfonia di Paradiso: Musical Settings of Dante's Commedia," *Dante Studies, with the Annual Report of the Dante Society,* 113 (1995): 175-208. Maria Ann Roglieri, "Twentieth-Century Musical Interpretations of the 'Anti-Music' of Dante's Inferno," *Italica* 79, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 149-167.

Dante. This tone is unfortunate and discourages further study of lesser-known works in the Dantean oeuvre. Nevertheless, Roglieri's publications are the most comprehensive and useful of all adaptation surveys.[52]

Beyond these general examinations, numerous work-centered analyses tend to focus on the more popular Dantean musical adaptations, especially Franz Liszt's *Dante Symphony* and *Aprés une lecture de Dante (Fantasia quasi sonata)*.[53] While many of these writings seek to analyze chromatic harmony and its effect on the dissolution of perceived tonality,[54] various other methodologies have also been applied. The journal *19th-Century Music* published two articles regarding the *Dante Sonata*: Sharon Winklhofer provides a historiography of the work, notably how the composition reflected Liszt's evolving understanding of Dante; David Trippett, on the other hand, analyzes score fragments of the sonata to examine how the composer navigated improvisational and traditional composition techniques.[55] William Lipke's dissertation places the sonata into a larger conversation about Liszt's philosophical and literary influences, but makes few connections between these important points and his subsequent musical analysis.[56] Jess Tyre moves beyond a narrow analysis of the *Dante Symphony* by forming intertextual connections to other Dante adaptations, like Riccardo Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini*, and contemporaneous

---

[52] Others include: Richard Cooper, "Dante on the Nineteenth-century Stage," in *Dante on View*, ed. Antonella Braida and Luisa Cale (England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007) 23-37. Jean-Pierre Barricelli, "Dante in the Arts: A Survey," *Dante Studies, with the Annual Report of the Dante Society* 114 (1996): 79-93. And the appendices of: Arnaldo Bonaventura, *Dante e la musica* (Livorno: Raffaello Giusti, 1904).

[53] For the purposes of this literature review I will not discuss many of works that fall outside of the 19th century. This is not meant as an insult to the great writing about the many Renaissance madrigals that incorporated Dante's text (see Einstein's three volumes, *The Italian Madrigal*) and the several articles on Dallapiccola's *Ulisse*.

[54] John Williamson, "Liszt and Form: Some Thoughts on the First Movements of the Dante Symphony," *New Hungarian Quarterly* 27, 104 (Winter 1986): 213-220. Ellen Knight, "The Harmonic Foundation of Liszt's Dante Symphony," *Journal of the American Liszt Society* 50, 10 (1981): 56-63.

[55] Sharon Winklhofer, "Liszt, Maria d'Agoult, and the 'Dante' Sonata," *19th-Century Music* 1, no. 1 (1977): 15-32. David Trippett, "Après Une Lecture De Liszt: Virtuosity and Werktreue in the 'Dante' Sonata." *19th-Century Music* 32, no. 1 (2008): 52-93.

[56] William Lipke, "Lizst's Dante Fantasia: An Historical and Musical Study," DMA diss., University of Cincinnati (1990).

classical works, like Richard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*.[57] Beyond this Liszt-centered scholarship, few other Dantean adaptations have been subject to analysis. Catherine Coppola's article on Tchaikovsky's *Francesca da Rimini*, also from *19th-Century Music*, provides a compelling analysis of the work's form and motivic development, but haphazardly connects it to her own misinformed reading of the Dantean character.[58] Galliano Ciliberti, in one of the few scholarly articles to discuss Ugolino adaptations, compares the philological methods of Donizetti, Morlacchi, and Zingarelli in their corresponding settings of Dante's text, but does not investigate the work beyond these surface textual comparisons.[59]

While the research discussed above is by no means inclusive of all the work that has been done in this sub-discipline, I believe that in each case a more interdisciplinary approach would have yielded a far richer perspective on the individual compositions. Although the Winklhofer and Trippett articles provide convincing historical data, they avoid thorough engagement with the musical texts. Alternatively, the research of Tyre, Coppola, and Ciliberti offer astute observations of musical form and semantics, but they never attempt to explain structural phenomena through a literary lens. I do not point this out as a means to devalue their research – as each scholar unmistakably fulfills the goals of their arguments' corresponding objectives – only to suggest that the inclusion of a more diverse methodological discourse, as delineated in

[57] This unpublished paper, "Conversations with Francesca: Tchaikovsky, Liszt, and Wagner (and Zandonai, and Granados, and Rachmaninov) Go to Hell," was presented at the Dante and Music conference hosted by University of Pennsylvania, in 2015.

[58] Catherine Coppola, "The Elusive Fantasy: Genre, Form, and Program in Tchaikovsky's 'Francesca da Rimini,'" *19th-Century Music* 22, no. 2 (1998): 169-189. Her hermeneutic argument derives from her own understanding of Francesca, which is shaped by the 19th-century tragic perspective that similarly affects readings of Ugolino. Her motivic argument could easily fit an alternative literary reading that views Francesca as a purposeful manipulator of Dante's sympathy.

[59] Galliano Ciliberti, "La produzione giovanile di Morlaccchi," in *Francesco Morlacchi e la musica del suo tempo*, ed. Biancamaria Brumana and Galliano Ciliberti (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1986): 297-336.

the previous section of this paper, may yield novel perspectives on the signification processes of these musico-literary adaptations.

Additional literature on Dantean reception can be further divided into three subcategories, ranging from general context to canto-specific criticism. First, the cultural and musical aesthetics of 19th-century Italy, as seen through the concurrent trends of Romanticism and the Risorgimento, are given their most thorough treatment by David Kimbell.[60] He presents the two movements as a product of contemporaneous literary trends and demonstrates how these writings affected political, religious, and social thought of the burgeoning country. Joseph Rossi also stresses the significance of the Italian poets and novelists to its cultural development, but, more specifically, deconstructs the multiplicity of meanings within Romanticism – thereby providing a far clearer understanding of its Italian construction.[61]

The 19th-century Italian revival of Dante is well documented through a number of diverse scholarly perspectives. Andrea Ciccarelli focuses on writings of nationalistic Italian authors, such as Manzoni, Foscolo, Mazzini, and Leopardi, and how their identity resonated with Dante's own political history.[62] Charles Davis moves beyond the political perception of Dante and unpacks the religious and moral implications of the poet's writings and how they fit within the Risorgimento movement.[63] Stefano Jossa's essay also accounts for Dante's profound effect on

---

[60] David Kimbell, *Italian Opera* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1991).

[61] Joseph Rossi, "The Distinctive Character of Italian Romanticism," *The Modern Language Journal* 39, no. 2 (February 1955): 59-63. Other research on Italian Romanticism that informed this paper includes: Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (California: University of California Press, 1989). Gary Tomlinson, "Romanticism and Opera: An Essay in their Affinities," *19th-Century Music* 10, no. 1 (Summer 1986): 43-60.

[62] Andrea Ciccarelli, "Dante and Italian Culture from the Risorgimento to World War I," *Dante Studies with the Annual Report of the Dante Society*, no. 119 (2001): 125-154.

[63] Charles T. Davis, "Dante and Italian Nationalism," in *A Dante Symposium: In Commemoration of the 700th Anniversary of the Poet's Birth (1265-1965),* ed. William de Sua and Gino Rizzo (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1965): 199-213.

nationalistic ideals, however, he alludes to a distortion of the poet's writing, which forces the interpretation of Dante into a frame that is often misappropriated.[64]

Literary criticism of Canto XXXIII of *Inferno* can be separated into two main schools of hermeneutic thought. Francesco De Sanctis circumscribes the 19th-century tragic interpretation of Ugolino where the reader sympathizes with the heart-wrenching circumstances of the character – which can also be seen in numerous *Divine Comedy* commentaries from the same time period.[65] More modern critical writings on Ugolino expose his moral and religious failures. Robert Hollander utilizes intertextual connections to Virgilian and Biblical writings to demonstrate the prideful nature of the Dantean character.[66] Giuseppe Mazzotta reads this canto through a rhetorical analysis, which reveals Ugolino's manipulative attempts to embellish and conceal the truth.[67] Though their arguments take different forms, T. K. Seung and John Freccero both focus on the tale's cannibalism trope – thus, presenting the story as an inversion of the Last Supper and a didactic warning against the sins of pride.[68]

Within this document, a discussion of literature pertaining to Francesco Morlacchi and Gaetano Donizetti is included in both analysis chapters. Unfortunately, the former composer is

---

[64] Stefano Jossa, "Politics vs. Literature: The Myth of Dante and the Italian National Identity," in *Dante in the Long Nineteenth Century: Nationality, Identity, and Appropriation*, ed. Aida Audeh and Nick Havely (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): 31-69. For other research on Dante in the 19th-century, please see: Nick Havely, ed. *Dante in the Nineteenth Century.* Bern: Peter Lang, 2011. Ugo Foscolo, *Studi su Dante* (Firenze: Felice le Monnier, 1981). Tom O'Neill, "Foscolo and Dante," in *Dante Comparisons,* ed. Eric Haywood and Barry Jones (Ireland: Irish Academic Press Limited, 1985): 109-36. Francesco De Sanctis, *History of Italian Literature*, trans. Joan Redfern (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931).

[65] Francesco De Sanctis, *De Sanctis on Dante*, ed. Joseph Rossi and Alfred Galpin (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957), 110-128. Additional commentaries are extracted from the online *Dante Lab Reader*, which was programmed and compiled by faculty at Dartmouth College (http://dantelab.dartmouth.edu); the commentaries I discuss in Chapter Two include Gabriele Rossetti (1826-1827), Niccoló Tommaseo (1837), Luigi Bennassuti (1864-1868), and Gregorio di Siena (1867).

[66] Robert Hollander, "Inferno XXXIII, 37-74: Ugolino's Importunity," *Speculum* 59, no. 3 (July 1984): 549-55.

[67] Guiseppe Mazzotta, *Reading Dante* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

[68] T. K. Seung, *Fragile Leaves of the Sibyll: Dante's Master Plan* (Westminster: Newman Press, 1962). John Freccero, "Bestial Sign and Bread of Angels: Inferno XXXII and XXXIII," in *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion,* ed. Rachel Jacoff, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986): 152-66.

under-researched, with only a few sources truly elucidating his musical output and personal life. Most notably, a conference proceedings journal, *Francesco Morlacchi e la musica del suo tempo*, contains a large collection of articles regarding his early training, fusion of Italian and German styles, and operatic output.[69] (The aforementioned Ciliberti article that examines three Ugolino settings through a philological analysis can also be found in this volume.) Donizetti and his oeuvre, on the other hand, have been frequently studied by many scholars. William Ashbrook's two biographies on the composer present an objective, chronological profile of his life and trace the development of Donizetti's compositional style through each of his operas.[70] As a purposeful deviation from the research of Ashbrook, John Stewart Allitt addresses Donizetti's work through the context of religion, politics, and aesthetics – primarily, via his mentorship with Simon Mayr and interactions with literary Romanticism.[71]

Thesis Outline

The remainder of this document contains three further chapters. Chapter Two discusses the reception and aesthetics of Dante in 19th-century Italy, considering how the concurrent movements of Romanticism and the Risorgimento fostered a re-popularization of Dantean

---

[69] Biancamaria Brumana and Galliano Ciliberti, ed., *Francesco Morlacchi a la musica del suo tempo (1784-1841)* (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1986). Also see: Biancamaria Brumana, "Morlacchi, Francesco," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera,* 3: 470-1.

[70] William Ashbrook, *Donizetti* (London: Cassell & Company Ltd, 1965). William Ashbrook, *Donizetti and His Operas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). For a similar angle that incorporates more information about the cultural settings where Donizetti composed, please see: Herbert Weinstock, *Donizetti and the World of Opera in Italy, Paris, and Vienna in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Octagon Books, 1963).

[71] John Stewart Allitt, *Donizetti: In the Light of Romanticism and the Teaching of Johann Simon Mayr* (Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element Books Ltd, 1991). John Stewart Allitt, *Donizetti and the Tradition of Romantic Love: A Collection of Essays on a Theme* (England: Cotswold Press, 1975).

literature. The latter part of this chapter narrows our focus to just Canto XXXIII of the *Inferno*, presenting the tale of Count Ugolino through of a variety 19th-century literary commentaries.

Chapter Three focuses on Francesco Morlacchi's adaptation of Ugolino, entitled "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno." After a brief background of the work's composition and reception history, I present an analysis that aligns its musical structure with an extension of Almén's narrative archetype of tragedy. Additionally, I connect this analytical reading with the 19th-century conception of Ugolino, as well as Hede's segmental-episodic typology for reading the *Divine Comedy*.

Chapter Four examines Gaetano Donizetti's adaptation, entitled "Il Canto XXXIII della Divina Commedia di Dante." This chapter also begins with a brief background on its compositional history and reception, but is followed by a discussion of Donizetti's familiarity with Dante and his epic poem. I commence the analysis section very much in the same way as the aforementioned Morlacchi adaptation, in order to demonstrate that this work fails to align itself to a tragic interpretation – due to structural contradictions that never quite allow the listener to sympathize with Ugolino. Instead, I propose an ironic reading of the work that subverts both the structural and ideological expectations of a 19th-century setting of this Dantean character. My analysis examines deeper structural underpinnings of this composition where we can form connections between salient musical features and extant Dantean criticism, thereby suggesting an interpretation of Ugolino colored by a moral and religious perspective. This reading will then be connected to Hede's segmental-serial typology.

In the conclusion to this document, I recapitulate my arguments and posit further ideas for studying literary interpretation in musical structure that can be applied to programmatic works both inside and outside of Dantean musical adaptations.

CHAPTER TWO

DANTE AESTHETICS AND RECEPTION IN 19TH-CENTURY ITALY

The musical adaptations of the tale of Count Ugolino composed by Francesco Morlacchi and Gaetano Donizetti were written during a tumultuous period of cultural, political, and ideological change in Italy. In the first half of the 19th century, the Risorgimento movement fostered a burgeoning national consciousness which shaped a unique brand of Romanticism far different than that of its northern European neighbors: one defined by its humanistic ideals that aimed to regenerate a whole society. As part of this movement, Italians searched for an artistic identity by probing the glories of its past – including medieval literature and the poems of Dante – and applied them to the goals of their desired future. This chapter aims to examine the sociocultural context surrounding the composition of the two Ugolino adaptations through three gradually narrowing frames of reference: the ideals of Italian Romanticism, the revival and re-accentuation of Dantean literature, and the interpretation of the tale of Ugolino as seen through contemporaneous scholarly commentaries and writings.

Italian Romanticism and the Risorgimento

Following the fall of the Roman Empire, the Italian peninsula consisted of many fragmented states and kingdoms. The germinal concept of a national unification, or Risorgimento, came to the attention of its people during the Napoleonic conquests that began in 1803, where much of the peninsula, excluding the southern Neapolitan and papal states, were

annexed into the larger Kingdom of Italy. This emerging national identity was intensified following the defeat of Napoleon and the decree of the 1815 Congress of Vienna to restore the peninsula to its original state, thus returning much of northern region to the Austrian empire. Although the Austrians repressed the growing nationalistic sentiment, a strong desire for Italian unification quickly spread throughout their many lands, primarily through the mediums of art and literature. As an emerging nation that has always taken pride in its cultural achievements, it was "in the realms of the spirit and the imagination that unification became a reality."[72]

The Italian conception of Romanticism is inseparable from Risorgimento values; in fact, both ideological movements grew in parallel and significantly influenced the development of art and culture in 19th-century Italy. As defined by Milanese novelist and poet Alessandro Manzoni, Italian Romantic art should reveal "the useful for its end, the true for its subject, the interesting for its means."[73] Essentially, Manzoni exhorted an aesthetic that is pragmatic and humanist – one that finds its expressed purpose in fostering political awareness, but is also useful for its social function, to emotionally and spiritually sustain the needs of the Italian people. This Romantic aesthetic is not an art that would appeal to the cultivated aesthetes of Italy, but rather the multitude of its masses.

Manzoni's appeal for artistic truth also dismissed the tenets of 18th-century Classicism. The poet writes that the most distinctive mark of Italian Romanticism was the rejection of "mythology, the servile imitation of the classics, [and] rules based on . . . the authority of rhetoricians."[74] Vincenzo Monti declared that, "these gods [of the Classic past] are dead which

[72] Kimbell, *Italian Opera*, 391.
[73] Ibid. See Manzoni's "Lettera sul romanticism" (1823). The original Italian reads: "l'utile per iscopo, il vero per soggetto, l'interessante per mezzo."
[74] Ibid., 395. See Manzoni's "Lettera sul romanticism."

used to lead mortals to the sweet founts of delight, amiably veiling truth in beauteous forms."[75] In lieu of mythological narratives, balanced literary structures, and beauty as the direct goal of art, a preference for a natural and direct style of expression emerged. Writers sought inspiration from the Italian masterpieces of Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, and Tasso that provoked a sense of emotional honesty and artistic truth.[76] Beyond the Italian poets, Shakespeare and his dramas of individualism "taught Italians to see 'truth' more clearly, and to speak the language of the heart more directly than ever before."[77] Manzoni commended Shakespeare's emphasis on "naturalness and spontaneity, the free flow of idea and expression, uninhibited by rules and formalities."[78] Italian writer and political activist Giuseppe Mazzini praised Shakespeare for his creation of moving characters, imbuing them with "life and movement as if they came from the hands of God . . . they bring to the stage life and character in the most real, the most true."[79] Romantic Italian literature, such as Manzoni's 1827 novel *I promessi sposi*, took inspiration from these writers of the past and sought to capture this idealized truth through realistic social scenarios, politically sensitive characters, and a generally looser prose style.

While this Romantic ideal of truth was first expounded in the fictional literature and political treatises of the early 19th century, music was also expected to emphasize its own truth – not one that was cherished for its sheer aesthetic beauty, but rather for its depiction of reality. Composers were encouraged to break with the constraining rules of the musical past and embrace a new "sacred" mission. In his *Filosofia di musica*, Mazzini writes:

> The art which you practice is holy . . . and you, if you would be its priests, must likewise be holy. The art which is entrusted to you is intimately connected with the progress of

[75] Ibid., 396. See Monti's *Sulla mitologia* (1825).
[76] Rossi, "Italian Romanticism," 61.
[77] Kimbell, *Italian Opera*, 396.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid. See Mazzini's *Edizione nazionale degli scritti di Guisseppe Mazzini*, vol. 8 (1910).

> civilization, and can be its spirit, its soul, its sacred perfume, if you draw your inspiration from the affairs of progressive civilization, not from arbitrary laws.[80]

Here, the author encourages movement away from the expectations of 18th-century Classical structure towards music that was shaped by political truth. This, however, was not the final goal of Italian music. If a new Italy was to be created, then the music must be a "worthy descendant" of the rich traditions of the past, notably the art of the Renaissance, Middle Ages, and Antiquity.[81] By placing one foot in the glorified past and the other in the politically aware present, composers could address the real objective of Italian Romanticism, what scholar David Kimbell defines as "a transfigured humanity" – the creation of "true" Italians in order for Italy to become whole.[82]

At this point, it should be clear to the reader that the form of Romanticism delineated above was far different than that of its northern European manifestations. While the Germanic and French forms of this aesthetic movement were also shaped by their own nationalistic undercurrents, their fascination with sublimity, the supernatural and grotesque, mystical transcendence, and the cult of the genius were not values shared by Italy.[83] As stated by Manzoni, the "mishmash of witches and ghosts, a systematic disorder, a recherché extravagance, and abdication of common sense" did not appeal to the social needs of the Italian people.[84] Yet, Italian Romanticism did not exist in a cultural vacuum away from the rest of the continent. The concepts of sensibility and subjectivity, which were at the heart of northern European Romanticism, trickled down into the Italian aesthetic. The burgeoning patriotism inspired by the

---

[80] Ibid., 392. See Mazzini's *Filosofia di musica* (1836).
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] This was true up until the late-19th century, where the macabre aspects of Romanticism could easily be seen in Italian literature.
[84] Kimbell, *Italian Opera*, 344. See Manzoni's "Lettera sul romanticism."

Risorgimento acted as a "catalyzer of all turbid romantic emotions,"[85] embracing a national sensibility that was "overwrought . . . carried away by a single emotion"[86] – what Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder described as the "utter submersion of the spirit in the surging torrent of feelings."[87] These capricious affections found their breeding ground in the realm of subjectivity, especially artistic depictions of internal struggle and tragedy. As stated by Kimbell, "the first Romantic generation in Italy. . . sought intoxicated states of soul, passions driven to violent extremes, tangles of characters which sped protagonists to an irrational doom."[88] Thus, in a somewhat paradoxical way, the political optimism that spread throughout the country facilitated the popularity of a tragic mode of artistic discourse that directly appealed to Italy's emotional conscience.

As Italy's sympathy for "dark, schizoid, melancholy, [and] exalted mental states"[89] grew, the mood of musical settings became increasingly somber. In particular, tragic endings in operas became far more common – creating "tableaus of terror" that explored humankind's fascination with "death, devastation, and despair."[90] As clearly articulated in the Italian periodical, *La fama*, "The extinction of life is expressed by singing that has the tints, the shuddering, of death itself; it is like a trampled narcissus that bows its head, and in whose bosom the transient echo weeps and laments."[91] These grim images were not founded upon the horrors or grotesqueries of northern European Romanticism, but rather the romanticizing of mortality and suffering itself. The operatic oeuvre of Donizetti offers a prime example of this shift in aesthetic preference. While many of the composer's early works adhered to the comic genre, a significant departure towards

---

[85] Rossi, "Italian Romanticism," 62.
[86] Kimbell, *Italian Opera*, 398.
[87] Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 16.
[88] Kimbell, *Italian Opera*, 409.
[89] Dalhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 26.
[90] Kimbell, *Italian Opera*, 409.
[91] Ibid. See *La fama* (1844).

the tragic began in 1830 with *Anna Bolena* and continued with the rest of the "Tudor" trilogy – of course, culminating in the notorious *Lucia di Lammermoor* in 1835. It was not just opera, however, that experienced this fascination with the tragic; instrumental music also explored the depths of suffering and internalized struggle. For instance, Saverio Mercadante's symphonic poem *Il lamento del bardo* traced the collapse of an artist after his onset of blindness. Critic Francesco Florimo writes of the work, it is the "expression of grief at his new state of suffering . . . in this sad and grand composition he depicts himself, the anxious state of his soul, and the *idée fixe* (fisso pensiero) of his true misfortune."[92]

Manzoni's conception of Italian Romanticism embraced the "useful, true, and interesting"[93] as a means for politicizing art and uniting the Italian culture. The emotions that this patriotism inspired, however, also led to a fascination with the tragic mode. While these ideas might seem incompatible, it is precisely this paradox that encouraged the revival of Dante in Risorgimento Italy.

The Politicization and Revival of Dante

As we discussed above, many Risorgimento writers delineated a form of Romanticism that sought to unify the spirit of the Italian people. In the absence of economic, militaristic, and political similarities, it was this contemporary literature that catalyzed the emergent bonds between the fragmented states of the peninsula – a form of literary education for its burgeoning patriots. Looking towards the future, however, did not mean ignoring the past. Risorgimento writers saw the great literary figures of Italian history as "venerated . . . teachers and prophets; as

[92] Ibid., 399. See de Napoli's *La triade melodrammatica altamurana* (1931).

[93] Paraphrase of Manzoni's quote: "the useful for its end, the true for its subject, the interesting for it means." See Manzoni's "Lettera sul romanticism" (1823).

interpreters of the best thought of their own time and as seers who foretold the coming of a new era."[94] This was especially true of the great Italian poet Dante Alighieri, whose surge of popularity in the 19th-century was the direct result of contemporary writers identifying with Dante's moral example. The poet's demands for the restoration of political power and reformation of the church – as seen in his *Divine Comedy*, but more so in his earlier writings of *Convivio* and *De Monarchia* – resonated with Risorgimento ideology and, thus cemented his new role as a political icon.

The germination of this Dantean revival can be historically understood through the shifting literary aesthetics that led to the initial decline of the poet's popularity and its subsequent reemergence. Perhaps it is superfluous to state the obvious, but Dante had a profound impact on his own contemporary culture and remained popular throughout both the 14th and 15th century. It was his *Divine Comedy*, in particular, that thoroughly reflected the values of the late-Middle Ages – as seen in the resolute faith and opportunity for redemption that was clearly characterized by the poem's overt messages of atonement and spiritual purification. With the onset of Renaissance humanism, however, Dantean literature was criticized for its lack of "grace and charm . . . [which] confused styles and linguistic registers."[95] While still viewed as great literature from the past, its inability to conform to a new aesthetic of poetic structure forced a devaluation of its moral purpose and possible philosophical interpretation. Beyond these aesthetic issues, the Catholic church also discouraged the reading of Dante's oeuvre and censored many of its controversial passages that questioned church doctrine and the ethics of its leadership.[96] Instead of Dante's poetry, the lyricism of Petrarch nourished the aesthetics of

---

[94] Davis, "Dante and Italian Nationalism," 199.
[95] Roglieri, *Dante and Music*, 4-5.
[96] Ibid., 5. This was especially true in the 17th-century, where Catholics read Dante as anachronistically extolling many Lutheran ideologies.

Italian society for centuries;[97] his sonnet form and romanticized ideal of an endless search for perfection suited the amorous inclinations and artistic output of the period.

Toward the late 18th century, however, the Petrarchan perspective no longer met the sociological needs of the Italian people. Civil interests became of primary concern as the search for a national identity set the early groundwork for the Risorgimento movement and eventual Italian unification.[98] Nationalistic authors – including Alfieri, Foscolo, Leopardi, and Manzoni – expounded a moral reading of Dante as more accurately reflecting the Italian condition: life is a hopeful journey where a "thirst for discovery and the urgency to communicate it"[99] can be projected to bear a fruitful future existence. This idealization of Dante did not concern itself with the "poet" in his literary style, structure, or allusions, but rather with the "man" in his personality and moral beliefs – a "deliteralization" in favor of a "politicization."[100]

Historian Charles T. Davis claims that much of the initial attraction to the poet lays in Risorgimento resonances to Dante's literary and cultural achievements. Through his poetry, Dante "furnished a linguistic standard which could serve as a basis for developing cultural unity;"[101] his use of the Tuscan dialect became the vehicle for which the Italian national language was standardized. In his *Convivio* and *De vulgari eloquentia*, Dante extolled the glories of the Italian vernacular which had the "means of creating the common imagination and the common rhetoric . . . to make them feel part of the same history and the same community."[102] Besides embracing the full potential of the vernacular, *De vulgari eloquentia* also recognized the distinctiveness of the Italian civilization especially in relation to her Germanic and Hellenic

---

[97] Ciccarelli, "Dante and Italian Culture from the Risorgimento to World War I," 127.
[98] Ibid., 128.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Jossa, "Politics vs. Literature," 31.
[101] Davis, "Dante and Italian Nationalism," 200.
[102] Jossa, "Politics vs. Literature," 33.

neighbors. While these factors certainly inspired a kinship between Dante and his Risorgimento scion, the core of the poet's paternity was neither in the literary or cultural realm, but rather "in his exemplary life as a heroic fighter for Italy's freedom."[103] Dante lamented Italy's political disorder and fragmentation and yearned for the union of all the Italian states under an honorable emperor and a virtuous church. Dante's famous digression in Canto VI of *Purgatorio*, the second cantica of the *Divine Comedy*, captures his disputatious beliefs on the current state of Italy. It begins as follows:

Ahi serva Italia, di dolore ostello,
nave sanza nocchiere in gran tempest,
non donna di province, ma bordello! (*Purgatorio* VI, 76-78)

(Ah, Italy enslaved, abode of misery, pilotless ship in a fierce tempest tossed, no mistress over provinces but a harlot!)[104]

After this opening invective against his country, Dante continues to denounce the weak leaders of Italy (in a long metaphor about a horse without a bridle), the unchecked power of the Papacy, and laments the continued violence between the Guelph and Ghibelline political parties. He insinuates a need for reform: to challenge the status quo, to pass laws in order to effect change, to put the responsibility of Italian life onto one's own shoulders.

It was powerful writing like this (along with many other examples beyond the *Divine Comedy*) that cultivated a new image of Dante – one founded on a patriotic, bellicose, and reformist identity. This politicized image emerged early in the 19th century in the sonnets and canzones of the Risorgimento writers like Vittorio Alfieri and Giacomo Leopardi, but it was Giuseppe Mazzini who was ultimately credited with the reification of literary Dante into a

[103] Ibid., 38. Many Risorgimento writers read Dante through an imperialistic lens. The poet's calls for a larger and stronger empire where often misconstrued to support illegitimate colonialist expansion – a reading of Dante that was appropriated by the Italian fascist ideologies of the early 20th century.

[104] Excerpt and translation is from: Dante Alighieri, *Purgatorio,* trans. by Robert Hollander and Jean Hollander (United States: Anchor Books, 2004).

political icon.[105] Mazzini writes, "It must be said and insisted upon, that this idea of national greatness is the leading thought in all that Dante did or wrote . . . never man loved his country with a more exalted or fervent love; never had man such projects of magnificent and exalted destinies for her."[106] Mazzini saw Dante's love for Italy not just in some idealized static form, but demonstrated in the poet's physical actions and polemical writing; he believed that Dante's integrity spawned from his refusal to make moral compromises with both secular and religious institutions of power.[107] As we see in his *Apostolato italiano*, Mazzini holds Dante up as an exemplar what it means to be an Italian:

> Italian workers, do you wish to honor the memory of your great men and to give peace to the soul of Dante Alighieri? Give substance, then, to the dream which burdened him in his terrestrial life . . . And when you have become worthy of Dante in love and in hate, when your land is yours and not another's, when the soul of Dante can behold you without grief, joyful in the holiness of Italian pride, we will raise the statue of the poet on the loftiest eminence of Rome and inscribe on its base: To the Prophet of the Italian Nation [from] the Italians worthy of him.[108]

Mazzini's later writings connected the ideological qualities imbued on Dante to the burgeoning generation of Risorgimento writers, building a respect and trust for contemporary literature that was certainly one of the key factors in the success of the Risorgimento movement.

Dante's glorification as a national icon by Risorgimento writers infused Italian culture with his literature and ideas. The great poet became the pinnacle of what it meant to be Italian and was revered by the people fighting for their independence: copies of his poems were brought to war by soldiers, read by convicted prisoners, and quotations were extracted for battle cries and

---

[105] Reception of Dante, at this point in history, is often split into two camps: the Neo-Guelph position led by writers such as Vincenzo Gioberti and the lay-Ghibelline position with Mazzini. For the purposes of this paper, I choose not to discuss the Neo-Guelph interpretation and its support of orthodox Christianity due to its far more subdued effect on the identity formation of the Italian people.

[106] Jossa, "Politics vs. Literature," 38-39.

[107] Ciccarelli, "Dante and Italian Culture from the Risorgimento to World War I," 126.

[108] Davis, "Dante and Italian Nationalism," 208.

dedications for awards, monuments, and ships.[109] The movement developed into a sort of mania, as the poet "was cooked in every sauce, served hot and cold, broiled and in jelly, whole and in croquettes, . . . prepared for strong stomachs and weak, for female taste and male, for children in kindergarten and for those in second childhood in the academies."[110] This ubiquitous expansion of Dante was accompanied by the incredible popularity of his *Divine Comedy*, a source of pride for the Italian people. The publication of editions, translations, and commentaries on the poem rose steeply throughout the 19th century. With *Inferno* alone, there were 135 different editions by the end of the century, compared to only 29 at the beginning of the Risorgimento period.[111] It was not only Dante who achieved this transcendent level of a political icon, but his most popular poem attained this same status. Italian engineer Bernardino Zendrini writes, "The *Comedy* was to us, like the Bible to the Jewish wanderers, the symbol of fatherland and nationality during the years of foreign domination."[112] Through the lens of Risorgimento politics, the poem was read as a "historical illustration of the communes and the struggle between the empire and the papacy."[113] To say the least, the concepts of atonement and spiritual purification that once formed the hermeneutic bedrock of Dante's poem took a backseat to this hegemonic political interpretation.

As noted by historian Stefano Jossa, the patriotic excesses of Dantean reception turned the poet into an ideologically distorted version of his former self: Dante was viewed through a narrow secular lens and therefore other aspects of his work, like poetic nuances and religious overtones, became underappreciated. The original aesthetics of a poem like the *Divine Comedy*

---

[109] Ibid., 209.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Roglieri, *Dante and Music*, 6.
[112] Davis, "Dante and Italian Nationalism," 209.
[113] Roglieri, *Dante and Music*, 6.

were lost; in lieu of an intellectual recuperation of its artistic and spiritual ideals, politically salient moments – like the aforementioned episode from *Purgatorio* Canto VI – were cherry-picked from the poem and made to stand as a synecdoche for Dante's entire philosophical doctrine. Returning to one of Bakhtin's theories from this paper's Introduction, the politicization of Dante's seminal poem and the extraction of specific moments in order to support a spirit of unification is essentially a re-accentuation, or a loosening of the literary image due to a change in its heteroglossia. While processes of re-accentuation are beneficial to the understanding of literature in certain adaptable contexts, this example dangerously simplifies the reading of the *Divine Comedy* by ignoring the complexity of ethical and religious issues that permeate the entire poem.

This process of oversimplification also holds true for the reception of the two tragic-orientated cantos of *Inferno* – the passionate tale of Francesca da Rimini from Canto V and internal anguish of Count Ugolino from Canto XXXIII.[114] While the politicization of Dante and the admiration of the *Divine Comedy* brought these cantos to the public's attention, their subsequent popularity is the direct result of the previously discussed burgeoning fascination with tragedy that trickled down from northern European Romanticism. Both in Italy and abroad, Dante was considered a "romantic poet par excellence" who was particularly adept at portraying the passion of suffering.[115] The Romantic interpretation of Francesca and Ugolino avoided any moral and theological arguments (much like the aforementioned Risorgimento bias), preferring instead a reading that addressed their painful demise in the physical world and continued misery

[114] The tale of Francesca da Rimini was the most popular of all the Dantean episodes in the 19th century, inspiring over 100 music adaptations. While Romantics perceived Francesca as the innocent victim of lust (similar to the sympathy granted to Ugolino for his tragic familial losses), a sin that can be easily committed (if not accidentally committed), modern Dante scholars frame this tale as the dangers of misreading literature – how a text can inspire marital infidelity if not read in an intentionally allegorical light.

[115] Roglieri, *Dante and Music*, 6-7.

in the afterlife. The next section provides a comprehensive analysis of the 19th-century reading of the Ugolino canto, one that was shaped by both Risorgimento and Romantic undercurrents.

A 19th-Century Interpretation of Count Ugolino

This section will discuss the narrative of the historical figure Count Ugolino as well as his literary depiction in the *Inferno*. I will then connect contemporaneous literary commentary on the canto with the 19th-century political and tragic perspectives outlined in the previous section. The chapter will conclude with the formulation of a *binary of suffering* that circumscribes the two types of tragic pain experienced by Ugolino– a binary that also governs the musical structure of Francesco Morlacchi's adaptation as presented in Chapter Three.

Ugolino (c. 1220-1289) was born into the noble della Gherardesca family, whom held great power in the Tuscany region and were leaders of the Ghibelline party in Pisa.[116] Through early political victories, he was named *podestà* (chief magistrate of the city state) of Pisa, earning a reputation of altering his allegiance among varying parties and city states to further his own political power. In 1271, in order to protect Pisa from the threat of hostile neighbors, Ugolino formed an alliance with the Visconto family of the opposing Guelph party despite worries from his own Ghibelline supporters. This alliance ended poorly for Ugolino as he was arrested for plotting against the Pisan government and subsequently exiled from his native city. Soon thereafter, Ugolino began scheming with the Guelph factions of Florence and Lucca, and spearheaded a takeover of Pisa, eventually being reinstated as *podestà* following a failed naval battle with Genoa (where members of his city's current leadership were imprisoned). He

[116] 13th-century Italy saw constant struggle between two political parties: the Guelphs (who supported the Church and Papacy, as well as self-governing city states) and the Ghibellines (who supported the Holy Roman Empire and their apparent right to rule Italy). The Ugolino family had heritage drawing back to early Germanic origins and gained much of their power through alliances with the Hohenstaufen dynasty.

continued to share power with the Visconti family, until an attempted coup – organized by the latter as well as the minority-party Ghibellines – led to the banishment of the entire Visconti contingent. Now as the sole leader of Pisa, Ugolino faced rising political turmoil with Genoa and grave economic conditions: the populace grew bitter and riots became common. The Archbishop of Pisa and an ally of the Visconti's, Ruggieri degli Ubaldini, accused Ugolino of treachery and incited its citizens (particularly the remaining Pisan Ghibellines) to rebel against his rule. Ugolino, his two sons, and two grandsons were then captured and imprisoned within the "Tower of Hunger," where all five family members were abandoned and starved until their deaths.

Dante positions Count Ugolino in Canto XXXII and XXXIII of *Inferno* – in a region called Antenora, which is the second subsection of the ninth Circle of Hell (reserved for traitors who betrayed their homeland or political party). The poet describes his encounter in grisly detail:

Noi eravam partiti già da ello,
ch'io vidi due ghiacciati in una buca,
sì che l'un capo a l'altro era cappello;
e come 'l pan per fame si manduca,
così 'l sovran li denti a l'altro pose
là 've 'l cervel s'agiugne con la nuca: (*Inferno* XXXII, 124-129)

(We had left him behind when I took note of two souls so frozen in a single hole the head of one served as the other's hat. As a famished man will bite into his bread, the one above had set his teeth into the other just where the brain's stem leaves the spinal cord.)[117]

As is the case with many characters encountered throughout the *Divine Comedy*, Dante's interest is peaked upon discovering Ugolino in this *contrapasso*[118] state and the poet asks him to recount the story that led to these cannibalistic actions. The Count seems hesitant at first – reluctant to relive the memories of his past – but finally concedes to Dante's request:

Tu dei saper chi'i' gui conte Ugolino,
e questi è l'arcivescovo Ruggieri:

[117] Hollander, *Inferno*, 594-595.

[118] A *contrapasso* is a type of afterlife punishment that fits the sinner's wrongdoing. Each type of sin in the *Inferno* has a corresponding *contrapasso*, with certain significant characters given unique punishments.

or ti dirò perché i son tal vicino.
Che per l'effetto de' suo' mai pensieri,
fidandomi di lui, io fossi preso
e poscia morto, dir non è mestieri; (*Inferno* XXXIII, 13-18)

(Take note that I was Count Ugolino, and he Archbishop Ruggieri. Let me tell you why I'm such a neighbor to him. How, as consummation of his malicious schemes, after I'd lodged my trust in him, he had me seized and put to death, there is no need to tell.)[119]

The literary audience of the early 14th century would have known the story of Ugolino quite well. Due to this familiarity, Dante did not need to recapitulate the series of treasons and betrayals that led to the death of Ugolino and his sons.[120] It is important to note, however, that at no point in this introduction does the character admit to any wrongdoing, instead he immediately casts blame onto the "infamous fruit" and "malicious schemes" of Archbishop Ruggieri.

The remainder of the Ugolino episode is a rollercoaster of suffering and despair. Ugolino recalls an allegorical dream, where a wolf and his cubs (Ugolino and his children) are hunted by well-trained hounds (Ruggieri and his Ghibelline supporters) – eventually resulting in a massacre of the former. As Ugolino awakens and hears the nailing shut of the tower door, he realizes that the dream is in a fact a portent of his dismal reality. Over the course of the next seven days, his children plead for bread and cry for help, but eventually succumb to starvation. At the same time, Ugolino deteriorates both emotionally and physically; agonizing over the loss of each child and going blind from hunger before perishing himself. As Ugolino finishes his monologue in an outpouring of grief, Dante responds with a verbal denunciation of Pisa and blames the city for facilitating this egregious act.

[119] Ibid., 604-605.

[120] Dante changes one small detail here: instead of the imprisonment and starvation of Ugolino's two sons and two grandsons, it is simplified to only four sons – supposedly, due to the more tragic nature of four younger boys dying.

Risorgimento interest in this canto should not be surprising: the historical Ugolino is a miniature of Italy's own troubled past. From political factionalism and warring city states to back-stabbing and the death of the innocent, the biography of Ugolino encompasses many of the problems that plagued Italy until its unification movement. Numerous scholarly commentaries from 19th-century Italy pay particular attention to Ugolino's political background, often providing an intensive summation of events that led to the demise of the della Gherardesca family.[121] Politically-driven commentary on the text itself tended to focus on two different ways in which blame for this tragedy was assigned. First, Dante's castigation of Pisa at the end of the episode ignores Ugolino's diatribes against Ruggieri, and instead places the weight of responsibility on Pisa for unnecessarily enabling the death of four innocent children. Commentators noted that this act was not a dismissal of Ugolino's suffering, but rather turned the ethical lens onto the character of the Italian people. Whether they were part of the imprisonment or stood by as non-confrontational bystanders, these acts of violence among factions and petty acts of revenge were indicative of the social disease that rotted this country – and only by addressing this issue could the Italian people cultivate a unified spirit.

Second, while both Ugolino and Ruggieri were guilty of the deeds of treason against country and party, 19th-century commentators were disposed to transfer the blame away from Ugolino and towards the Archbishop, essentially transforming the Count from the carnal sinner into the pathetic victim. Francesco de Sanctis writes, "In Ugolino it is not the traitor who speaks but the one betrayed."[122] Gabriele Rossetti takes a different angle by connecting Ruggieri's silence to the nature of his treacherous crimes: "Throughout the monologue of Ugolino, the

[121] These commentaries include those written by Gabriele Rossetti (1826-27), Niccoló Tommaseo (1837), Luigi Bennassuti (1864-68), and Gregorio di Siena (1867).

[122] Bloom, *Dante*, 48.

subject Ruggieri does not move and does not moan: terrible immobility and taciturnity, that shows the profound understanding of his wrongdoing . . . what does his silence and state of being tell us?"[123] This is not to say that commentators ignored Ugolino's sins, as his crimes were always well documented and often discussed – Ruggieri just seemed to be a more villainous target. Perhaps this was the byproduct of the anti-Catholic readings of the *Divine Comedy* common in the Risorgimento period. Or maybe it was basic human nature to more heavily condemn treason that results in the loss of innocent life over that which only shifts the placement of political power. To focus too heavily on these two reasons, however, obscures the central tenet of all the commentators' interpretations – Ugolino is exculpated from his own sins and the grotesque act of cannibalism due to a sympathetic response from the reader.

Catalyzed by a nascent fascination with tragic genres and the struggle of the inner self, 19th-century Italian readers were hard pressed to refuse Ugolino sympathy for the profound suffering that he endures. This was a pain that transcended the physical body and beset the soul. Commentator Gregorio di Siena writes, "How cruel was my [Ugolino's] death. Here is the key that unlocks for us the secret of this narrative. Everyone already knew that cruel nature of the death of Ugolino who perished of hunger; although he expired of starvation, the atrocity of his death is more complex. He suffers an ineffable inner spiritual torment throughout . . ."[124] Niccoló Tommaseo expands upon this conception of personal anguish:

---

[123] Gabriele Rossetti (1826-1827), *Dante Lab Reader*, http://dantelab.dartmouth.edu/reader. The translation is mine; original Italian is as follows: "In tutto il monologo di Ugolino, il sottoposto Ruggieri non fa mossa e non dà gemito: immobilità e taciturnità terribile, che tutto appalesano il profondo sentimento del suo torto . . . di quel che faccia il tacere e lo stare di costui."

[124] Gregorio di Siena (1867), *Dante Lab Reader*. The translation is mine; original Italian is as follows: "Come la morte mia fu cruda. Ecco la chiave che ci apre il segreto di questa narrazione. Ognuno già sapeva che cruda dovette'essere la morte di Ugolino perito di fame; egli dunque più che alla fame, ad altre cose riferisce l'atrocità della sua morte. Concorrono a rendere ineffabile lo strazio tutto intimo e spirituale . . ." Please note that the use of the term *spirit* here is not in an overtly religious sense, but refers to an internalized pain that was felt both on Earth and in the afterlife.

> . . . we will note in this Canto, in which Dante must have put more care in than others, the verses are candid: You gods know that I was Count Ugolino (line 13), and the eight lines that follow, which indicate the dreadfulness of things to come. If you do not make observations between the similar nature of the civilized and savage, you cannot enter the human soul to which the domestic affections are evil pretext and foments; that they look forward to rest on external hatreds, and consolations to remorse, and refuge from the terror of himself. Now think of this man, wounded pride and death with the domestic affections which he fiercely embraced: and you will be able to somehow imagine the torment he experienced through the pain of the four souls [his sons] multiplied. The soul of Ugolino, his agony, all intimate and spiritual. . .[125]

Tommaseo believes that the dreadful acts committed by Ugolino in the afterlife are the direct result of his spiritual agony, acts that any human is capable given similar tragic circumstances.

Furthermore, commentators found two specific events in this episode particularly moving. First, in the moment that the door to the tower is nailed shut, Ugolino "turned to stone," fully realizing the morbid fate that was in store for him and his children. Although his children cried and asked their father what was wrong, Ugolino remained silent and "shed no tear." Here, commentators were struck by the strength of the character's will to control his emotions, but also by the nature of strong passions and how they manifest as physical actions. Rossetti discusses the scene as follows:

> At that noise, the father looks into the face of his children without a word; but, that look he gave them! Here is the fatal vision come true! And he does not cry, but turns to stone inside his chest and his heart moved; although the miserable weep around him . . . This is far more than can be said with the antithesis: 'Trivial cares speak, great ones are speechless,' 'Small is the sorrow that permits weeping.'[126]

---

[125] Niccoló Tommaseo (1837), *Dante Lab Reader*. The translation is mine; original Italian is as follows: ". . . noteremo in questo Canto, a cui Dante deve aver posto più cura che ad altri, gli schietti versi: Tu dèi saper ch'i' fui 'l conte Ugolino (v. 13), e gli otto che poi vengono, i quali a lui non parvero indegno apparecchio alla terribilità delle cose seguenti. Le quali non s'intendono a fondo se coll'osservazione di nature simili, tra incivilite e selvagge, non s'entri nell'anima d'uomo a cui gli affetti domestici sono al male pretesto e fomite; che in essi cerca ansiosamente riposo agli odii esterni, e consolazione ai rimorsi, e rifugio dal terrore di sè. Ora si pensi uomo tale, ferito a morte nell'orgoglio insieme e negli affetti domestici a cui si teneva furiosamente abbracciato: e si potrà a qualche modo imaginare il tormento che straziò nell'agonia, per quattro anime moltiplicata, l'anima d'Ugolino. Di questo strazio, tutto intimo e spirituale . . ."

[126] Rossetti, *Dante Lab Reader*. The translation is mine; original Italian/Latin is as follows: "A quello strepito il padre guarda nel viso i suoi figliuoli senza far motto; ma quello sguardo oh quanto ha detto! ecco avverata la funesta visione! Ei solo non piange, sì impietrò dentro al petto il cuor commosso; ma piangon tutt'i miserelli intorno a lui . . . Questo è ben altro che dire con concertate antitesi: 'Curae leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent,' 'Picciolo è il duol quando permette il pianto.'"

Luigi Bennassuti agreed with Rossetti that Ugolino's stoic reaction was, in fact, emotionally powerful:

> Crying is an outpouring of grief; but the pain of Ugolino at that time was lacked this relief . . . An immense pain is one that is not able to vent with tears. – Yes, turn to stone inside. It is clear why Ugolino does not cry: I was not crying because the strength of my internal pain was such that threat of tears made me turn to stone, before they could escape from my eyes.[127]

The second narrative event of interest occurs the following day, after Ugolino notices painful expressions fixed to the faces of his children. In response, he tells us "the sorrow of it made me gnaw my hands" – this was not a reaction out of hunger, but rather one of pure grief. Instead of just stony silence, as in the previous scene, Dante depicts Ugolino with a memorable physical action that represents the inner turmoil of the character. Both his devastating emotions and strength of will prohibit him from informing the children of their eventual starvation, so instead he suppresses his sorrow in the self-infliction of pain. Gregorio di Siena is captivated by this moment: "Here's a verse proud and beautiful, of a harmony that feels to the depths of life, and a profound color that would be a single brushstroke which paints Ugolino as desperate."[128] The expressiveness of this act is amplified even further by his children's response:

ed ei, pensando ch'io 'l fessi per voglia
di manicar, di sùbito levorsi
e disser: 'Padre, assai ci fia men doglia
se tu mangi di noi: tu ne vestisti
queste misere carni, e tu le spoglia.' (*Inferno* XXXIII, 59-63)

[127] Luigi Bennasutti (1864-1868), *Dante Lab Reader*. The translation is mine; original Italian is as follows: "Il pianto è uno sfogo del dolore; ma il dolore di Ugolino in quel momento mancava sin di questo refrigerio. . . Proprietà di un immenso dolore si è il non poterlo sfogare col pianto. – Sì dentro impietrai. Rende ragione, perchè non piangesse: io non piangeva perchè la forza del mio interno dolore era tale che m'impietrò di botto le lagrime, prima che potessero uscire pegli occhi."

[128] Gregorio di Siena, *Dante Lab Reader*. The translation is mine; original Italian is as follows: "Ecco un verso fiero, bellissimo, di un'armonia che si sente al fondo dell'anima, e d'un gran colorito, che d' una sola pennellata ti fa la pittura del disperato Ugolino. . ."

(And they [the children], imagining I was doing this from hunger, rose at once, saying: 'Father, we would suffer less if you feed on us: you clothed us in this wretched flesh – now strip it off.')[129]

A surface reading of these five lines through a religious lens would easily connect the children's sacrificial offer to the Catholic Eucharist – an offer of the body and blood of Jesus Christ to spiritually nourish its disciples. Quite surprisingly, none of the Risorgimento-era commentaries I encountered discussed this line through these glaring religious overtones, choosing instead to connect the "gnawing of hands" and the "stripping of flesh" to Ugolino's cannibalistic revenge on Ruggieri. This bring us to our final point – the nature of Ugolino's afterlife vengeance.

Let us now recall the original scene description: the perfidious pair are both encased in ice with Ugolino hunched over Ruggieri, the former ferociously eating the latter's head. While this grim depiction might seem redundant to mention once again, Dante's delineation of the *contrapassi* are significant. To begin, the frozen, permanent state of both sinners is a *contrapasso* in and of itself, in that their fixed location prohibits them from making any political "moves" to further their own power. Ruggieri's punishment lies in his own physical suffering at the hands (or mouth) of the one he has betrayed. Ugolino's *contrapasso*, however, is more difficult to establish conclusively, as its reception context determines its interpretation. Francesco de Sanctis eloquently summarizes the 19th-century Italian perspective of Ugolino's afterlife in an article published in *Nuova Antologia*.[130] Like many of the other commentators discussed earlier, the author spotlights Ugolino's own suffering as the central focus of the story and further exculpates Ugolino through the transformation of the grotesque act of cannibalism into a demonstration of

[129] Hollander, *Inferno*, 608-609.

[130] The article is taken from a December 1869 issue of *Nuova Antologia* and later translated in the following source: Francesco De Sanctis, *De Sanctis on Dante*, ed. Joseph Rossi and Alfred Galpin (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957), 110-128. An excerpt of this article is featured in: *Dante: Comprehensive Research and Study Guide*, ed. Harold Bloom (Broomhall: Chelsea House Publishers, 2001), 47-49.

the "sublimity of horror."[131] de Sanctis believes that while we see Ugolino's desire for vengeance in his ferocious gnawing of Ruggieri's head, the act is justified due to the atrocious actions that were committed upon him. He further states that "Ugolino is more savage than his deed, he is revealed by that gesture but not appeased by it, like an unsatisfied artist who cannot find his ideal expressed in his work, and despairs of ever achieving it. Ugolino's grief is 'desperate,' not sated, not placated by that vengeance."[132] It is not only that the character is unable to attain true retribution (since he cannot starve Ruggieri's own children), but his current vengeance can never fuller assuage his grief or equal his hatred. His "preternatural expression of immense hate"[133] is timeless, a horrifying act that will never reach an inevitable conclusion – allowing the reader to "conceive the infinite."[134] Essentially, de Sanctis concludes that Ugolino's *contrapasso* is in effect the same as his form of vengeance. Just as there is no point of termination for Ruggieri's own painful circumstances, there is no finite end to Ugolino's suffering – in fact, the very nature of his perpetual "meal" compounds his suffering through the constant reminder of his past anguish.

The tragedy of the story, therefore, lies not only in the unimaginable experience of watching your own children starve to death and the immense grief that is its direct byproduct, but also in the impossibility of attaining true closure in this miserable existence. It is this binary between the anguish of the painful past and implacability of the vengeful present that is most important here. It resonated with the tragic and subjective inclinations of the 19th-century Italian reader and delineated the interpretative norm for many contemporaneous critical commentaries. In regards to musical adaptation, the Ugolino binary provides a concrete path to composing out

[131] Ibid., 48.
[132] Ibid., 49.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.

the internal struggle of the character. As we will see in the next chapter, Morlacchi's setting can be perceived as a tonal drama that circumscribes this binary – one that ends in tragedy, but never gave us hope in the first place. Conversely, the tragic binary can be subverted by ironic musical constructs – as in the Donizetti adaptation – thus, condemning Ugolino for his sins instead of sympathizing with his tragic experiences.

CHAPTER THREE

THE TRAGIC UGOLINO: MORLACCHI'S SETTING AS AN EPISODIC READING

As we discussed in the previous chapter, a confluence of Risorgimento ideology and Italian Romantic aesthetics stimulated a Dantean revival in 19th-century Italy. While the interpretation of the *Divine Comedy* took on a new political slant, specific cantos from the *Inferno* were extracted from the grand poem and subsequently shaped through a nascent fascination with tragedy and suffering – such was the case with Canto XXXIII and the tale of Count Ugolino. Italian readers ignored the deceitful sins of the character and sympathized with the overwhelming pathos of Ugolino's internal struggle that emanated so vividly from Dante's poetry. Francesco Morlacchi's musical adaptation of this tale was (and perhaps still is) considered by many critics to be the only Ugolino setting that truly captured this tragic perspective.[135] In order to understand this response, this chapter will examine Morlacchi's work through the analytical lens of tragedy and, therefore, concisely link it to the 19th-century episodic interpretation of the character.

In Part I of this chapter, I will discuss the compositional background and reception history of the Morlacchi adaptation and then link it to the expectations of a pathos-inspired reading. Part II explores the ways in which tragedy can be embedded within musical structure, beginning with an examination of tragic topical elements on the adaptation's musical surface and ending with a speculation on how the tragic archetype of musical narrative (as theorized by

[135] See Roglieri, *Dante and Music*, 114-9.

Byron Almén) might manifest itself through this work. As we discovered in the final section to Chapter Two, however, the complex nature of Ugolino's tragic circumstances – the anguish of his painful past and implacability of his vengeful present – problematizes the rigid use of musical narrative when a pervasive literary narrative is also at play. In Part III, therefore, I map the Ugolino binary onto the salient topics and key relationships of this adaptation, positing a drama of tonality that redefines the emplotment of tragic events. Finally, in Part IV, I theorize a new subcategory of the tragic musical archetype and link this analysis to Hede's episodic reading typology.

Part I: Compositional Background and Reception History

The first section of this chapter seeks to provide a simple background to the Ugolino adaptation in order to properly situate it within its appropriate social and cultural context. Francesco Morlacchi, in comparison to the celebrated Gaetano Donizetti (who will be discussed at length in the next chapter), was a far less popular composer whose work stood at the stylistic intersection of Neapolitan opera and the various strands of Italian and German Romanticism. A brief foray into the biography of the composer and the circumstances that sprouted the Ugolino setting will allow the reader to better connect the work's tragic intent with its forthcoming analysis.

Italian composer Francesco Morlacchi was born in 1784 and received his musical training in Loreto, Perugia, and Bologna. His youthful production of comic operas, farces, and *opere serie* gained the composer much attention in the first decade of the 19th century; these successes led to multiple commissions from the leading opera houses in Rome and Milan, including La

Scala.[136] After premiering his cantata *Saffo* with the contralto Marietta Marcoloni in 1809, Morlacchi travelled to Dresden with the singer, where she introduced him to several ministers of the Saxon Court. In 1810, these connections secured him the position of assistant to the Kapellmeister at Dresden's Italian Opera and he took over the top job the following year. Morlacchi held the position of Kapellmeister and Director from 1811 to the dissolution of the Italian Opera house in 1832.[137] As an Italian transplanted into a German city, his work in Dresden required an astute sensitivity to a variety of musical styles and influences. Morlacchi's compositional output ranged from Latin sacred works to cantatas and oratorios to a diverse range of operas (in both the *buffa* and *seria* genres); at the same time, this job required him to write and stage operas that navigated a delicate balance between the preservation of the Neapolitan opera style, the burgeoning *bel canto* (as seen in the works of Bellini and Donizetti), as well as the elements of German Romanticism.[138] While in Dresden, he adapted his compositional style to meet the musical aesthetics of the early-19th century German audience, yet he never lost touch with his Italian roots. Morlacchi continued to write Italian operas for premieres in Genoa and Venice, and was particularly proud of his "expressive and pleasing melodies combined with lively and varied harmonic writing" – words that would not necessarily describe the style of his German contemporaries like Louis Spohr or Carl Maria von Weber.[139]

Morlacchi composed two musical works that set the text of *Inferno* Canto XXXIII. The first was written in 1805 as a compositional exercise during his musical studies at the Liceo Filarmonico di Bologna. His teacher, Nicola Zingarelli, also wrote a Ugolino setting that same year for four sopranos, violin, viola, and cello; we can assume the young composer was

[136] Brumana, "Morlacchi, Francesco," 470-1.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid.

encouraged to emulate his teacher's setting as they both utilized the same instrumentation.[140] The second adaptation, which forms the focus of this chapter, was written by Morlacchi in 1832 and eventually published in 1834. Written at the behest of Dantean scholar and translator Prince Giovanni Nepomuceno (Duke of Saxony), the composer completely rewrote his older Ugolino setting to create an ostensibly new work.[141] This was no longer a composition that attempted to imitate Zingarelli, but its new instrumentation (bass voice and piano), substantial harmonic experimentation, and inclusion of Prince Giovanni's new German translation (underneath the original Italian poetry) indicated a much more mature composition.[142]

Morlacchi describes his "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno" as a "declamato di musica" (recitation with music), thus making the music secondary to the words. In a letter to his associate, Antonio Mezzanotte, Morlacchi expressed his concern with those who might sing or listen to his setting: "I advise you that this music is not for everyone: only those who truly know and understand Dante will be able to appreciate it."[143] While the composer does seem to rely on Italians that have studied Dante to correctly understand his piece, he does suggest that some Germans are capable of this as well. From the same letter, the composer writes: "Here [In Dresden, my Ugolino] produced a great sensation. Who would have ever believed that in the middle of Germany, in Dresden, there existed a Dante Society that meets every Tuesday for readings, that knows and admires Dante probably even more than the Italians themselves!"[144]

Morlacchi found his audience of learned Dantean readers in the work's critical reception. Both musicologists and Italian scholars praised the adaptation for its faithfulness to Dante's text.

---

[140] Roglieri, *Dante and Music*, 114.
[141] Ibid., 117.
[142] Ibid. Morlacchi even provided *ossia* melodies to fit any changes in syllable count with the German translation.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid., 118.

Arnoldo Bonaventura described the work as "serious, weighty and inspired, never vulgar and always noble in character."[145] Maria Ann Roglieri believed that the composer's use of shifting rhythms and dynamics thoughtfully fit the cadence of the text, a trait that no other setting demonstrated.[146] Other critics commended the work for its musical features that preserved the pathetic essence of Ugolino. Maria Caracci Vela celebrated Morlacchi's adaptation for its harmonic instability, chromaticism, and frequent modulations that were attuned to the struggle of the character.[147] Roglieri described it as musically creative and focused on several surface features that she felt amplified Ugolino's painful experiences.[148]

While these endorsements all admired Morlacchi's setting, none of them provide enough concrete evidence to justify their complimentary readings. What about this work upholds the sacrosanctity of Dante's poetry? How exactly does the musical structure demonstrate the anguish of Ugolino? As we will see in the following sections, the answer lies in the unfolding of the work's tragic elements.

Part II: Ugolino as Musical Tragedy

How might tragedy manifest itself within musical structure? In the Morlacchi adaptation, we can read tragedy in two different ways: topical associations that consolidate into an overarching tragic topical field and the narrative emplotment of tragedy through the interaction of opposition in the temporal unfolding of the work. This section will begin with a discussion of the former in order to decipher the music's compelling ability to communicate despair and

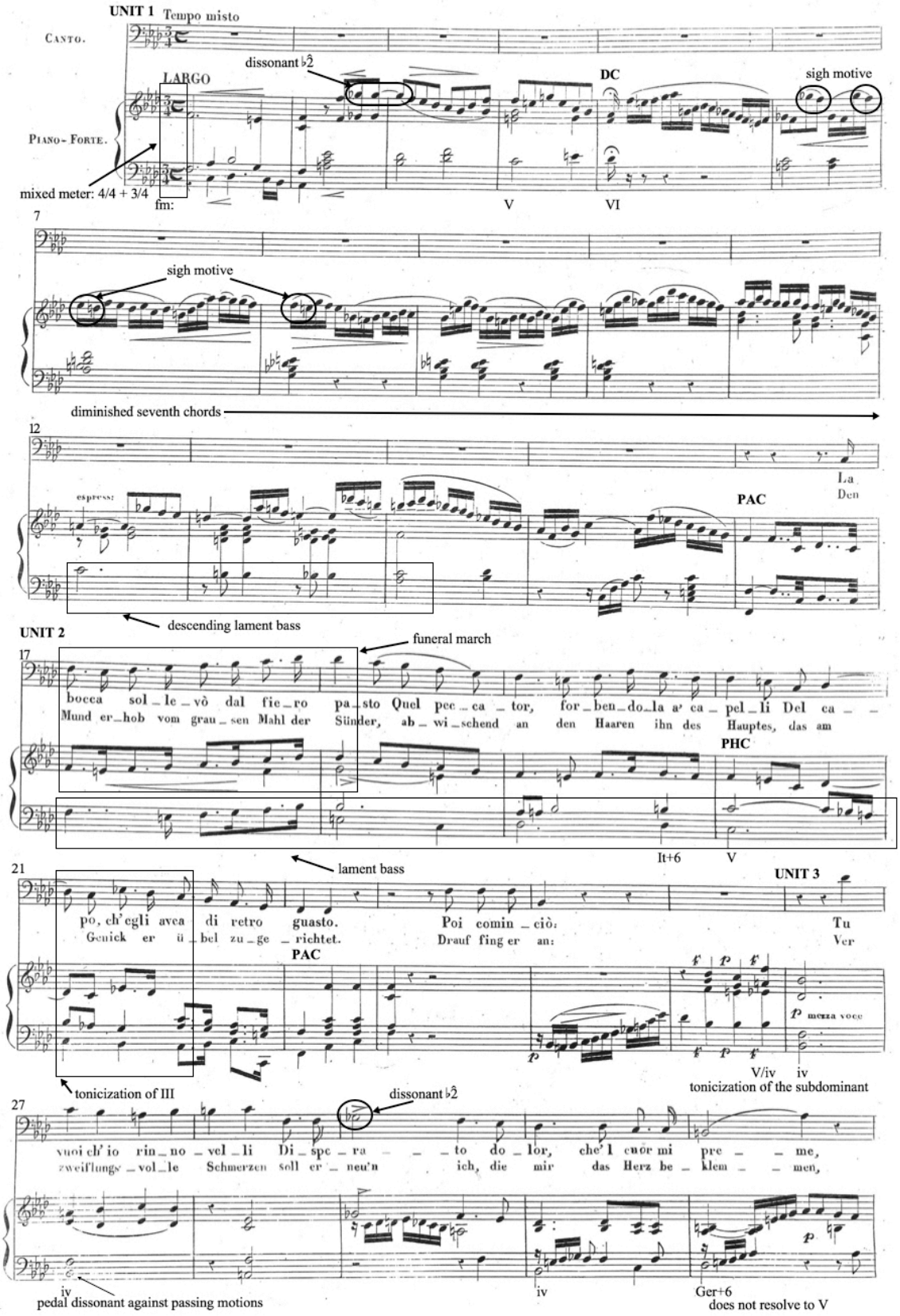
[145] Ibid., 117. Via: Bonaventura, *Dante e la Musica*, 269.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid. Via: Maria Caracci Vela, "Il 'tragico colorito' della Musa zingarelliana dalla cantata da camera alla romanza da salotto," 437.
[148] Ibid.

pathos. The end of this section will turn to a discussion of tragic narrative archetypes and their hypothetical fit within this Ugolino setting – a process which necessitates a far more complex argument.

Critics like Arnaldo Bonaventura believed that the Morlacchi adaptation was the epitome of what a Ugolino setting should be: a veritable musical translation of the tragic interpretation of the character that was expounded in 19th-century Italy.[149] Critics and scholars have noted a variety of different musical features that delineate the tragedy of the character, mostly addressing its minor key, harmonic unpredictability, and metrical ambiguities. While these elements all assist in constructing a specific mode of expressive discourse, they are just the tip of the iceberg – a small sample of the abundance of topics that Morlacchi utilizes to convincingly establish the tragic atmosphere. From the very beginning of the work, the composer provides a complex weaving of music elements that signify a state of suffering (see Figure 3.1). The slow *Largo* tempo, F minor key, and lower register initiate a general sense of sadness in the opening measure, but this is immediately resignified into anguish as the right-hand melody adds a sudden upper-octave F5 and a piercing G♭5 – a chromatic pitch that is suspended over the bar line, antagonizing the opening triadic harmonies. The foreign pitch ♭$\hat{2}$ leads to an undulating eighth-note melodic line that descends to the original register in order to find a temporary resolution, but the lower voices defy this expectation. In mm. 4-5, the left hand refuses to resolve the leading tone to the tonic F and instead descends by an augmented second to D♭. This unforeseen deceptive cadence then begins a long passage of wandering diminished seventh chords that underlie a recitative-like melody whose newfound rhythmic freedom is only strengthened by the mixed meter (alternating between quadruple and triple beat groupings). This subsection suggests

[149] Bonaventura, *Dante e la Musica*, 269.

Figure 3.1: Morlacchi, "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno," mm. 1-31



an accompanied-recitative style, a feature often connected to the expression of a singing voice's inner turmoil. The tragic aspect, however, is still on display as the return of the G♭ pitch in m. 6 and its subsequent fall to F resembles a sigh motive; this same descending half step occurs throughout the running sixteenth-passage, most notably between E♭ and D in m. 7, as well as F and E in m. 8.[150] As the melody fragments in mm. 12-13 and the emotional intensity of the line increases, the bass begins a lamenting chromatic descent from a C4 to A♭3 which is broken off by the cadential function moving into mm. 15-16. Just in this introductory section, Morlacchi provides a pervasive web of musical topics that can be associated with tragedy. The minor key, mixed meter, slow tempo, diminished harmonies, chromatic inflections (especially ♭$\hat{2}$), sigh motives, lament bass, and accompanied-recitative style unambiguously establish this introduction as a tragic topical field, therefore preparing the listener for the entrance of the voice and the declamation of the pathetic tale.[151]

In the following phrase (starting in m. 17), where the bass voice begins singing the text that describes the cannibalistic scene of Ugolino and Ruggieri, Morlacchi expands upon his use of topics to further craft this expressive field. A funeral march topic commences the section, as defined by the continuation of the minor key and slow tempo in addition to the dotted-eighth-sixteenth rhythmic figures and doubling of the melody in octaves. While the dotted rhythms continue, another descending lament bass (this time outlining the harmonic minor scale) connects the tonic to the lower dominant pitch, which launches a Phrygian half cadence in m. 20. This is preceded by the first augmented-sixth harmony of the work, attributing further tension to

[150] These are particularly salient versions of the sigh motive since they both incorporate chromatic tones outside the key signature and offer a brief moment of dissonance before falling back to the diminished seventh harmony.

[151] It is worthwhile to mention here, that these musical elements also align with what Clive McClelland (2001) defines as the *ombra* topic, in this case not so much a representation of the supernatural, but rather of an infernal dramatic setting.

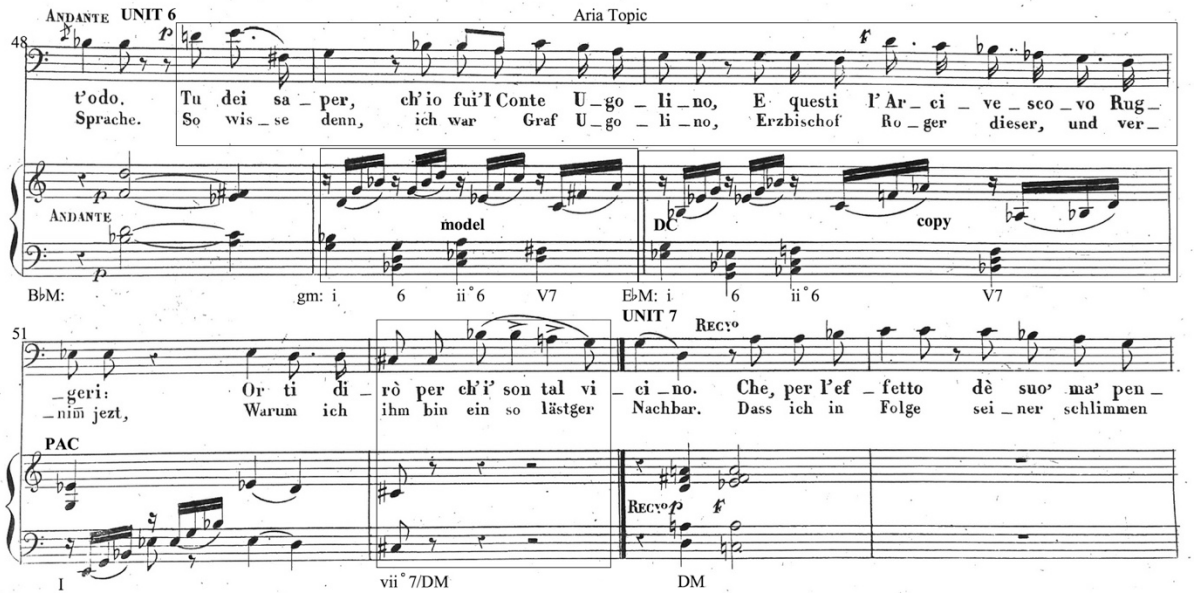
the musical surface. Following the half cadence, a brief tonicization of the relative major key suggests a harmonic trajectory that might break up this tragic topical field, but it is instead dismissed for a strong authentic cadence in F minor – the more you struggle against this "quick sand" of tragedy, the stronger its hold becomes. In m. 23, a deafening beat-and-a-half of silence leads to a contrast in texture: a simple melodic motive leaps down by a fifth followed by a surge of sixteenth-notes reminiscent of the previous recitative section. Dramatic volume changes follow as the block chords played on the piano alternate between soft and loud volume levels. The unexpected silence and strident chordal outbursts convey a sense of unpredictability, that perhaps the suffering of Ugolino is more complex than how it might seem on the surface.

While this amalgam of tragic associations continues throughout much of the work, Morlacchi's use of harmonic discord deserves another look. In the previous two sections, diminished and augmented-sixth harmonies have been applied as passing or neighboring chords, as well as non-functional expressive color during moments of recitative. The composer also uses these jarring chords as a way to dismiss any semblance of tonal stability that is produced following a strong cadence. For example, Figure 3.2 begins in B♭ major and quickly modulates away from this key through a harmonic sequence that falls in thirds (B♭ major to G minor to E♭ major) and sets up a perfect authentic cadence in E♭ major (m. 51).[152] After two rapid arpeggiated motions in the bass, the current tonic of E♭ descends through a D to a C♯, which assumes a diminished seventh sonority with the subsequent melodic pitches in the voice (m. 52). We can temporarily treat the C♯ diminished seventh harmony as a leading tone to the D major chord that follows, however, the function of the latter harmony is unclear. It is not until m. 59 (not included in Figure 3.2) that the D chord is revealed as a secondary dominant for an eventual

[152] The change in musical topic and key here will be addressed in the next section.

modulation to C minor. Therefore, between the cadence in E♭ in m. 51 and the distant modulation to C minor, which ultimately occurs in mm. 63-64, the listener is stuck wallowing in harmonic ambiguity. Looking back to the preliminary modulations from B♭ to G to E♭, the subsequent cadence occurs so quickly that we expect some form of stability and continuation within the new key. Instead, the diminished seventh sonority completely negates the impression of tonal stability, for which it is not recovered for many measures afterwards. Morlacchi uses this device to evade tonal stability in numerous places throughout the work;[153] this evasion is especially prominent in moments where the listener grows accustomed to a key. We can read this harmonic device as a signifier for emotional turmoil. Longer periods of tonal stability assume focus on a specific idea or emotion, but these singularities are continually negated and redirected to something new. This fits the psyche of Ugolino quite well, as the character is constantly reconciling feelings of sorrow, anger, despair, and grief throughout his monologue.

Figure 3.2: Morlacchi, "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno," mm. 48-54



[153] For another example of this evasion of tonal stability, please see the final German augmented-sixth chord in m. 31 of Figure 3.1. The dissonant chord is expected to resolve to the dominant of F minor after a brief tonicization of a iv harmony, but instead subverts harmonic function and resolves to a vii°7, a less dissonant dominant-functioning chord that does not allow the tense chord tones of the German augmented-sixth harmony to resolve.

The powerful ability of Morlacchi's composition to communicate pathos lies very much in its pervasive use of topics, yet this tells us very little about the nature of Ugolino's internal struggle. The 19th-century Italian reader sympathized with Ugolino due to what I described in Chapter Two as the binary of suffering: the pain felt by the character as he recounted the deaths of his children and a denial of the permanence of his afterlife revenge. These are concepts that unfold over the course of *Inferno* Canto XXXIII and, as such, are similarly revealed in contemporary musical settings of Dante's text. Therefore, an analysis of the adaptation's musical narrative (temporal unfolding of the work) will yield a clearer understanding as to how Morlacchi might have perceived these elements of suffering.

From a strictly musical perspective, Morlacchi's adaptation offers a fertile ground for the application of Almén's musical narrative theory. Beyond the topical signifiers of tragedy already mentioned, several other contrasting topics can be found in the work, including major-key aria-style melodies and brilliant-style displays of virtuoso technique. While topics by themselves are relatively static in terms of their signification processes, the juxtaposition of dissimilar topics indicate a more dynamic process. In addition, the use of harmonic discord as a method to force digressions from expected tonality and incite regular modulations generates a wide variety of key centers throughout the work. When viewed globally, a tonal plan (of sorts) emerges, where the tonic key (and its dominant) can be placed in opposition to the subdominant key (and its associated tonal and harmonic motions). This distinction is especially salient once the contrasting topics are mapped onto the opposing key relationships. By analyzing the locations, frequency, and interactions of these oppositions, each side can be imbued with certain markedness and rank values, and then placed within the Almén's Order-Transgression binary.[154]

[154] From this point onwards, I will capitalize the Almén terms of "Order" and "Transgression" in an attempt to differentiate it from more common usages.

Due to the tragic fate of Ugolino in Dante's literary depiction, we can also assume that a tragic narrative archetype might be operating within the music. This would involve the negotiation of several moving parts of Almén's analytical methodology: first, an unmarked structural Order and marked Transgression must be identified; second, according to the cultural rank values that can be placed upon these musical elements, the oppressive structural Order must be negatively valued and the Transgression must be positively valued; and third, as the work unfolds these structures are placed into conflict and the Order eventually defeats the Transgression. Since the transgression is sympathized with, the final result indicates a failure of the tragic hero in his attempts to overcome defeat.

However, the mapping of this narrative-archetype trajectory onto the Morlacchi adaptation is problematic. Although the literary narrative is clearly tragic, at no point does it suggest a positive outcome. Ugolino's fate as an eternally-suffering sinner is implied when Dante first encounters him in his *contrapasso* state and his tragic end is definitively established by the conclusion of the character's monologue – there is no escape or happy ending possible for him. Therefore, how can we positively value a musical Transgression when the literary narrative does not allow for such possibilities? Likewise, if a positively-valued Transgression cannot exist, how can it come into conflict with the negatively-valued Order? And does this negate the possibility of a definitive tragic outcome? In the following section, I present a reading of the Morlacchi adaptation that posits a flawed form of the tragic narrative archetype – one that allows for the modification of the Transgression's valuation (from positive to negative) and a conclusion that results in the double defeat of the Order-Transgression binary.

Part III: A Drama of Tonality and Topic

An analysis of musical narrative traces a conflict between a structural Order and Transgression, as well as its eventual resolution. When placed within a preexisting literary interpretation, it becomes possible to map these opposing musical structures onto specific concepts embedded within the literary reading. In this section, I seek to align the Ugolino binary of suffering within the musical unfolding of the Order-Transgression opposition. While the initial values that are placed onto this opposition indicate a negatively-valued Order and a positively-valued Transgression, I will trace the devaluation of the structural Transgression as the value system is transformed and the Transgression is revealed to be negative. Furthermore, I will discuss the ensuing conflict between these two negatively-valued structures that finally resolves with a resigned acceptance of both sides.

Establishing the Order and Transgression

As we discussed in Chapter Two, the Ugolino binary circumscribed the 19th-century Italian interpretation of the tragic character. Readers sympathized with the two sides of his eternal suffering: the anguish of his painful past (recalling the tragic memories of his children starving to death in the "Tower of Hunger") and implacability of his vengeful present (his afterlife revenge on Ruggieri is his *contrapasso*, as the cannibalistic act could never satiate his anger and grief). While these two types of pain manifest themselves in different ways over the course of the literary narrative, the delineation of their temporal properties is most significant here – the suffering of his *past* as opposed to that of his *present*. This temporal distinction finds a resonance to the narrative structure of Canto XXXIII: Dante's description of the infernal scene and direct correspondence with Ugolino occurs in the *present* while Ugolino's own monologue is

a reminiscence of previous events that occurred in the *past*. Table 3.1 plots the first 15 lines of Canto XXXIII, demarcating the narrative movement between the two temporal frames. The opening tercet is a scene description in the present that transitions to Ugolino's first words addressed to Dante in the following three lines. While this conversation occurs in the present, the mention of "[reviving] the desperate grief that racks my heart even in thought" suggests a recollection of the past. The following two tercets reference the present, as they return to direct conversation with Ugolino questioning Dante's presence in Hell. In the last tercet, the first line switches to past tense and is followed by the formal beginning of Ugolino's monologue, both of which imply a past temporal frame.

Table 3.1: Text and temporal descriptions of Canto XXXIII, lines 1-15. Includes corresponding key/harmony information for Morlacchi's "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno."

Text	Temporality	Key
He raised his mouth from his atrocious meal, that sinner, and wiped it on the hair of the very head he had been ravaging.	Present	F minor
Then he began: 'You ask me to revive the desperate grief that racks my heart even in thought, before I tell it.	Present (but suggests the Past)	F minor with a tonicization of B♭ minor
But if my words shall be the seeds that bear infamous fruit to the traitor I am gnawing, then you will see me speak and weep together.	Present	F minor
I don't know who you are, nor by what means you have come down here, but when I listen to you speak, it seems to me you are indeed from Florence.	Present	F minor
Take note that I was Count Ugolino, and he Archbishop Ruggieri. Let me tell you why I'm such a neighbor to him.'	Past	Modulation to B♭ major and E♭ major

If we set this temporal description against the opening of Morlacchi's musical adaptation (see last column of Table 3.1), the work's tonic key of F minor aligns to the textual present, while the tonicization and modulation to B♭, as well as the subsequent motion to E♭ major, aligns with the past. These latter two keys can be linked to the tonic through a subdominant relationship, i.e. B♭ is the subdominant of F minor, while E♭ is the subdominant of B♭ or two

compounded subdominant motions from F minor.[155] Linking this tonal motion of a fourth to a temporal past is not a new idea in musical analysis. In Michael Klein's theorization of musical temporality, he correlates the tonic key with the present or a static state, motions to a "dominant with movement toward the future (time as experienced rushes forward), and the subdominant with looking toward the past (time as experienced turns back)."[156] Tonal or harmonic shifts to the subdominant, in particular, are strongly associated with the evocation of the past or the contemplation of an event that has already transpired. Furthermore, the compounding of these subdominant motions sends the listener deeper into the past as if they are getting lost in a reminiscence and ignoring the true reality of the present.[157] As we see in Table 3.1, these temporal shifts manifest themselves clearly in the tonal movement of the opening section, which are further strengthened through their alignment with the fluctuating temporality of the text. The opposition of the tonic key of F and the subdominant of B♭ can be correlated to the binary of the present versus the past, thereby establishing the first step in our Order-Transgression relationship. When fused with their corresponding topical associations, this binary can be further elucidated.

The vocal melody that begins in m. 16 (see Figure 3.1) sets the grotesque opening apostrophe in F minor and thus is entrenched in the present. The tragic mode of discourse that was described earlier is on full display here, most notably the funeral march topic. The dotted-eighth sixteenth rhythms, conjunct motion, and octave doubling with the right-hand of the piano amplify the tragic expressive genre that was established in the earlier introduction. In

[155] The modulations to B♭ major and E♭ major are highly marked in their relationship to F minor, as the former keys are expected to appear as their minor counterparts (since these are naturally occurring in the minor tonic key).
[156] Michael Klein, "Chopin's Fourth Ballade as Musical Narrative," *Music Theory Spectrum* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 39-40.
[157] Ibid., 42-43.

comparison, the first emphatic statement in a subdominant key occurs in m. 48 (see Figure 3.2). The brief modulation to a major key (B♭) and quickening of the tempo (transition from *Largo* to *Andante*) already mark this section as the first major structural deviation in the work, but it is the shift to an aria-style topic that is most significant. The melodic line becomes more limited in range (an octave versus a thirteenth), subsumes a descending contour, and includes several ascending larger intervals typical of operatic vocal writing. The piano further strengthens this topical association as it takes on an accompanimental role to the vocalist (as compared to the octave doubling in the funeral march) with its gentle soft block chords in the left hand and rolling arpeggios in the right. The aria topic which is already in the subdominant key advances the tonal motion to E♭ major, thus taking us further into the past as Ugolino begins his monologue and evokes memories of transpired events.

The linkage of the funeral march and aria-style topics to the tonic and subdominant key areas, respectively, formalizes our assignment of musical structures to the Order and Transgression binary (Table 3.2 delineates this mapping). The structural Order – represented by the key of F minor and its dominant of C, narrative temporality of the present, and funeral march topic – constitutes the initial grounds of the value hierarchy. The structural Transgression – represented by the key of B♭ and E♭ (as well as other subdominant shifts), narrative temporality of the past, and the aria-style topic – forces a transvaluation in which the rank value of the transgression is raised.[158] The lyrical and hopeful characteristics of the Transgression can be retroactively compared to the tragic topical field of the structural order. Accordingly, the Order assumes a negative valuation, which is logical due to the textual description of Ugolino's present

[158] Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*, 231. Almén quotes Liszka in defining transvaluation: "a rule-like semiosis which revaluates the perceived, imagined, or conceived markedness and rank relations of a referent as delimited by the rank and markedness relations of the system of its signans and the teleology of the sign user."

state of suffering. The Transgression, conversely, derives its meaning as a foil to the structural Order. It is imbued with a positive value as the cultural associations of its musical components insinuate a relief from the overwhelming tragedy – perhaps the pain of present-day suffering can be quelled by a return to fond memories of his children.

Table 3.2: Order and Transgression Chart for Morlacchi's "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno"

	Order	**Transgression**
Key	F minor (tonic) and C (dominant)	B♭ and E♭ (subdominant tonal and harmonic relationships)
Temporality of Literary Narrative	present	past
Topics	funeral march	aria
Initial Value Hierarchy	Valued Negatively	Valued Positively

Throughout the course of the work, the structural order and transgressions interact in a variety of fascinating ways. Table 3.3 charts the entire adaptation through a paradigmatic analysis, where the formal organization, salient musical features, literary narrative, and musical narrative are accounted for. I divide the entire work into individual musical Units (see column two) that account for similarities in tonal, harmonic, melodic, and topical properties; their corresponding measure numbers are listed in the following column.[159] The key areas are listed in column four; particular attention should be given to those written in bold-face or underlined type. Bold-face tracks the key areas that are categorized as transgressive and can be organized according to subdominant tonal motions. The underlined type references the two digressive key areas which will be discussed later in this chapter. Column five provides a brief summarization of Dante's text that corresponds to each musical Unit. Column six lists salient musical features

[159] This type of paradigmatic analysis is informed by the methodology laid out in: Agawu, *Music as Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music*, 163-207.

Table 3.3: Paradigmatic Analysis of Morlacchi's "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno"

Large Sections	Unit	Measure #'s	Key Area(s)	Text Description	Musical Features	Musical Narrative
Present	1	mm. 1-16	f	No text	piano introduction: establish tragic topical field	Order: Keys of F and dominant movement (C); funeral march topic; negative valuation
	2	mm. 16-26	f	Dante describes scene with Ugolino and Ruggieri	funeral march topic introduced	
	3	mm. 26-34	***b♭***	Ugolino responds to Dante	tonicization of iv (insinuation of past)	
	4	mm. 34-42	f	Ugolino implores Dante for sympathy	dialogical gestures	
Past	5	mm. 43-47	***B♭***	Ugolino assumes Dante is from Florence	accompanied recitative	Transgression: Keys of B♭ and subdominant movement (E♭); aria topic; positive valuation
	6	mm. 48-53	***B♭ to E♭***	Introduces himself and Archbishop Ruggieri	aria topic introduced	
	7	mm. 53-59	N/A	speaks of Ruggieri's treachery	accompanied recitative	
	8	mm. 60-64	c	continue to transfer blame	interruption: Ruggieri is blamed (recall the present)	
	9	mm. 64-72	c to ***E♭ to b♭***	dream begins; Tower of Hunger introduced; dreadful dream to portend the future	aria topic with harmonic sequences	
	10	mm. 72-76	***b♭ to E♭***	introduce wolf/cubs which represent Ugolino/children	sequenced aria continues in different key	
	11	mm. 77-89	f to ***b♭***	Hounds (Ruggieri) make chase, Wolf/cubs get eaten by hounds	interruption: introduce hounds (surrogate for Ruggieri/recall the present)	
Digression #1	12	mm. 89-98	***b♭*** to D♭	Wake up from dream; children are weeping and hungry	aria; subdominant motions circumscribed by concentration of ♭VI	Transgressive valuation overturned! Hope is dashed as the portenous dream becomes reality; The past is revealed to be as painful as the present
	13	mm. 99-107	***D to g***	To Dante: "if you do not weep, what can make you weep"	portentous dream begins to fuse to reality	
	14	mm. 107-122	***B♭*** to D♭	Children troubled by dream; door to the tower is nailed shut	forced use of brilliant-style topic	
Digression #2	15	mm. 122-128	f♯	Children weep, but Ugolino "turns to stone"	aria; subdominant completely liquidated by ♭ii area	
	16	mm. 128-156	G to a to f♯	Anselm questions his father; Ugolino continues to not "shed a tear and made no answer"	fragmented aria; long bass pedal on E	
	17	mm. 156-167	f♯ to C	Next day arrives; children match Ugolino's expression	accompanied recitative	
Conflict	18	mm. 167-180	d	Ugolino gnaws his hands; children prepare plea	prevents return of dominant	Order and Transgression conflict according to textual references; wide variety of negative emotions
	19	mm. 181-196	d to c to f	Ugolino's children speak: spiritual offer of sacrifice	sequence cycles through keys	
	20	mm. 196-213	f to ***B♭*** to C♭	Repeated text; Ugolino remains silent after children's pleas	tonic saturated with digression bleeding; tonicization of transgression	
	21	mm. 213-223	C to ***E♭*** to f	Oh hard earth, why did you not engulf us; introduce Gaddo	no stable tonality here, transgression is clearest key center	
	22	mm. 223-230	f	Gaddo asks for help, and then dies	insecure tonic return	
Synthesis	23	mm. 230-245	***b♭ to e♭***	remaining children die; Ugolino blindly crawls over bodies	jarring move to the past w/ funeral march; digression bleeding; e♭ rejected	Order does not defeat Transgression; merges heterogeneous elements; resigned acceptance
	24	mm. 245-253	c to f	fasting (hunger) had more power than grief; Ugolino dies	tonic key is reestablished	
	25	mm. 253-259	f	Dante takes over narration and describes Ugolino's continuation of his feast on Ruggieri;	pervasive subdominant harmonies merge into f minor key; weak resigned final PAC	
	26	mm. 259-263	f	Dante chastises Pisa	funeral march over plagal motion	

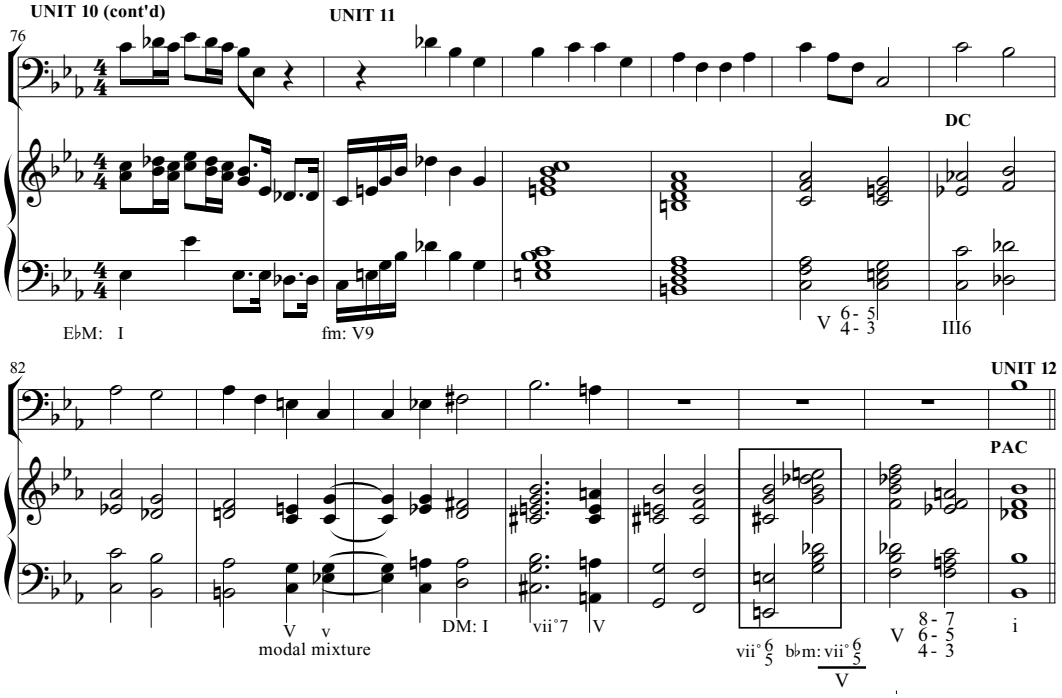
that are important to the topical field or narrative emplotment. The last column describes the unfolding of the musical narrative, particularly how the Order and Transgressions interact throughout the work. Lastly, the very first column organizes the whole setting into six large sections according to its general narrative properties.

As we can see in column one of Table 3.3, the first two large sections of Morlacchi's adaptation delineate the musical present and past. Although each section is mainly composed of its corresponding Order or Transgression, brief interruptions of their oppositions commence a conflict that is immediately resolved – yet, the presence of these interruptions can be justified by the literary text. For example, we discussed earlier that the tonicization of the subdominant in Unit 3 (mm. 26-34; see Figure 3.1) was embedded within the tragic discourse of F minor. In setting Ugolino's line, "you ask me to revive my desperate grief," Morlacchi provides a brief glimpse of the subdominant area — that insinuates the eventual tonal motion to the key of B♭ and the beginning of Ugolino's "trip down memory lane."

Similarly, Unit 11 features a sudden modulation to F minor that is encapsulated on either side by the Transgressive past, in this case aria topics in E♭ major and B♭ minor. Figure 3.3 shows the final measure (m. 76) of Unit 10 and a reduction of Unit 11. The aria topic of Unit 10 ends with sweet-sounding parallel thirds that embellish the tonic chord of E♭ major, but a march-like descending line sets up a double-octave C which flourishes upwards, outlining a dominant ninth chord in F minor. The dominant-functioning chord is re-voiced in the following two measures before a cadential function anticipates a tonic resolution to F. This never occurs, however, as the third and fifth of the dominant chord resolve chromatically outwards leading to a deceptive III harmony. F minor is destabilized even further at the end of m. 83 as modal mixture on another dominant pitch facilitates a tonicization of D major and a modulation back to the

Transgressive B♭ minor through the respelling of a diminished seventh harmony. The interruption of F minor, in this case, occurs during Ugolino's recollection of a portentous dream, where hounds (a metaphorical surrogate for Ruggieri) attack and tear the flesh from the wolf cubs (Ugolino's children). These lines, therefore, recall the present as they refocus the attention towards Ruggieri and suggest a gruesome attack that elliptically references Ugolino's own cannibalistic actions.

Figure 3.3: Morlacchi, "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno," mm. 76-89 (reduction)



Transgression Value Shift

A brief glance at Table 3.3 indicates that the Transgressive subdominant keys and aria topics occur far less frequently as the work progresses; in their place, the structural Order flexes its hegemonic muscle and seems to dominate the tonal trajectory. This, however, does not provide a complete picture of the narrative unfolding of the work – and most importantly, it fails to account for the shift of the Transgression's valuation from positive to negative.

Recall from earlier that the marked Transgressions of the past were positively valued due to the opposing tragic topical field that saturated the unmarked and oppressive Order. In musical narrative's system of cultural valuation, structures that recollect memories of the past or induce moments of nostalgia tend to have positive connotations.[160] But as we know from the end of Chapter Two, Ugolino's monologue does not end positively. While the music initially indicates that Ugolino retains a small glimmer of hope – that perhaps the imprisonment is temporary or his children will continue to be fed regularly – this hope is not sustainable and inevitably transforms into an onslaught of fear, grief, anguish, and anger as he and his children are starved to death. This shift begins at the conclusion to Ugolino's portentous dream when he first realizes that his vision of suffering will in fact become reality. Morlacchi sets this slow realization of tragic fate to two different tonal digressions, both of which function as a sort of commentary on the structural Transgression and eventually overturn their initial valuation.

From a purely organizational standpoint, the significance of the two tonal digressions cannot be overstated. As the first eighty-nine measures of the work focus primarily on tonic- and subdominant-related keys, the digressions to D♭ major (♭VI) and F♯ minor (enharmonic re-spelling of the Neapolitan ♭ii) are highly marked in regards to their distant chromatic relationship to the original tonic.[161] Yet, these tonal motions are more than just irrelevant modulations or harmonic "pit stops" on the way back home; instead, the digressions encompass three Units each and are circumscribed by strong authentic cadences both in their initial appearance and subsequent return. Furthermore, their role as musical commentary upon the structural Transgressions are reified by expressive changes in the assignment of topics. Both digressions

[160] While not always true, the oppositions of topics (funeral march versus aria) suggest this positive valuation.

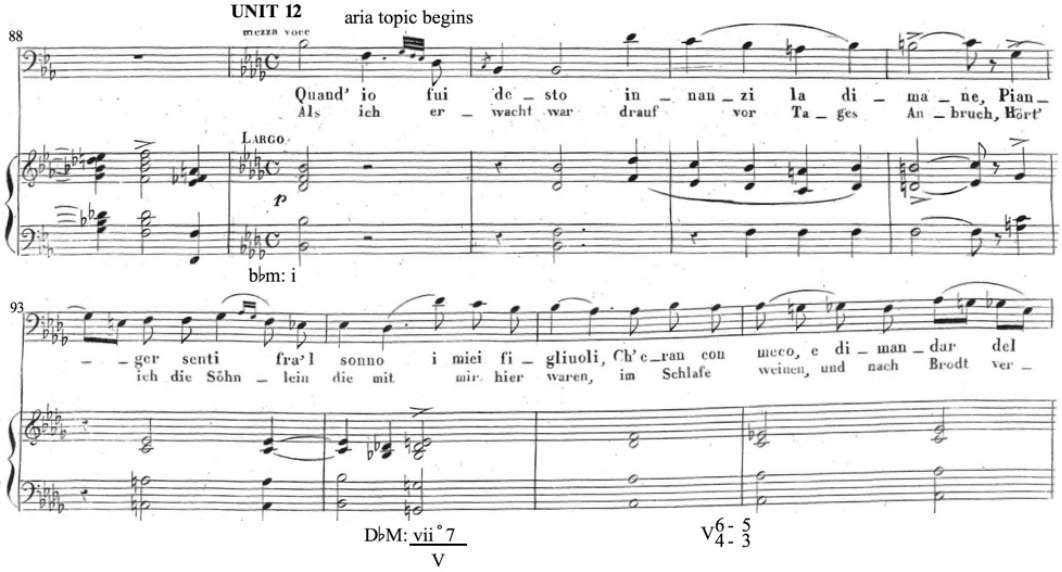
[161] We can assume that Morlacchi chose to compose this Neapolitan digression in F♯ minor instead of G♭ minor due to practical key signature concerns: three sharps are certainly easier for the musicians to read than five flats and two double-flats!

begin with an aria topic which is undercut by a stylistically opposing topic when that same key center returns. (And surely it is no coincidence that ♭VI and ♭ii are related by a Transgressive subdominant motion!)

The first digression to the ♭VI tonal area begins in Unit 12 and ends in Unit 14. An aria topic in B♭ minor (m. 89; see Figure 3.4) suggests a continued reinforcement of the positively-valued Transgression, but a modulation to D♭ major occurs on the second bar of the consequent phrase (m. 94) leading to a perfect authentic cadence in m. 98 (not shown in Figure 3.4). Syncopated octave D♭s in the left hand facilitate another modulation to the jarring key of D Major; this half-step ascent greatly increases the emotional tension of the section. The lyrical aria topic continues here as it meanders through another deceptive cadence that resolves on a B♭ major chord (m. 105) and shifts to a G minor key area. The transformation is notable for two reasons: first, the B♭ major chord is a ♭VI harmony in D (the localized submediant motion therefore reinforces the global ♭VI key area); second, the keys of D and G are related by a subdominant motion – elements of the transgression and digression are seemingly fused together. A return to B♭ major follows shortly thereafter, which is pushed through a descending-third harmonic sequence whose goal is a dominant sonority in D♭ major. While the return of the ♭VI tonal area is a gratifying resolution after enduring a gauntlet of rapid harmonic transitions, the topic that arrives with the key return is by no means the same aria style. For a short two measures (mm. 117-118; see Figure 3.5), a virtuosic display of technique surges to the musical surface: the rhythm of the left-hand accelerates to consecutive sixteenth notes moving through a rapid series of arpeggios as the right hand plays an even faster succession of ornamented rhythms with a hastily ascending melodic contour. Both piano voices land on an emphatic dominant chord (m. 118) before a compressed sixty-fourth note gesture collapses to the lower register. Rapid

passages of this nature suggest a brilliant-style topic, which can convey a sense of theatricality and dazzle.[162] Here, however, its sudden onset and catastrophic collapse implies that the topic is forced – an ill-planned display of power to gain control that ultimately fails. This negative resolution is reinforced by the sheer resignation of what follows. In m. 119, the musical texture thins and rhythmic activity becomes passive. The vocal melody presents two long and anguished descending sighs that are temporarily suspended over the bar line. The vocalist searches for and eventually finds a tonic resolution, but the piano withholds immediate harmonic support. Despite the return to the familiar D♭ key area and its major mode, the digression ends on a note of tragedy due to these textural and rhythmic subtractions.

Figure 3.4: Morlacchi, "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno," mm. 88-96



The musical development of this flat-submediant digression adheres to Dante's literary narrative. Ugolino wakes from his portentous dream and slowly realizes that these nightmarish events might come true, yet he refuses to immediately accept this reality. Morlacchi sets this text

[162] Roman Ivanovitch, "The Brilliant Style," in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, edited by Danuta Mirka (United States of America: Oxford University Press, 2004), 330-54. Ivanovitch expresses the signification of the brilliant style through a core set of tendencies: "a propensity for high registers over low, execution over expression, the instrumental over the vocal, the public over the private, the theatrical over the intimate, the superficial over the substantial, the routine over the characteristic, the difficult over the easy. . ." (333).

with a restatement of the positively-valued subdominant key and aria topic which is quickly forced into the flat-submediant tonal area – a key that Susan McClary connects to a "never-never-land."[163] She describes the musical use of this prolonged harmonic excursion as an "arcadian recollection, the imaginary sublime, or a dream of utopia . . . but it can never be reality."[164] If we appropriate this tonal association to Ugolino's mental state, it seems that he has cast off these portentous thoughts and searches for a glimmer of hope within this imaginary realm. However, just as a series of violent modulations push us away from D♭, Ugolino is confronted with the truth of reality, that he cannot escape his fate and that hope is pointless. In a final effort to return to "never-never-land" and to express optimism to his children, Ugolino makes a powerful statement (read: the brilliant-style topic) that attempts to reignite hope, but it ultimately fails. As the doors to the tower are nailed shut, the flat-submediant achieves a resigned resolution as it no longer can signify hope, only an inevitable tragic fate.

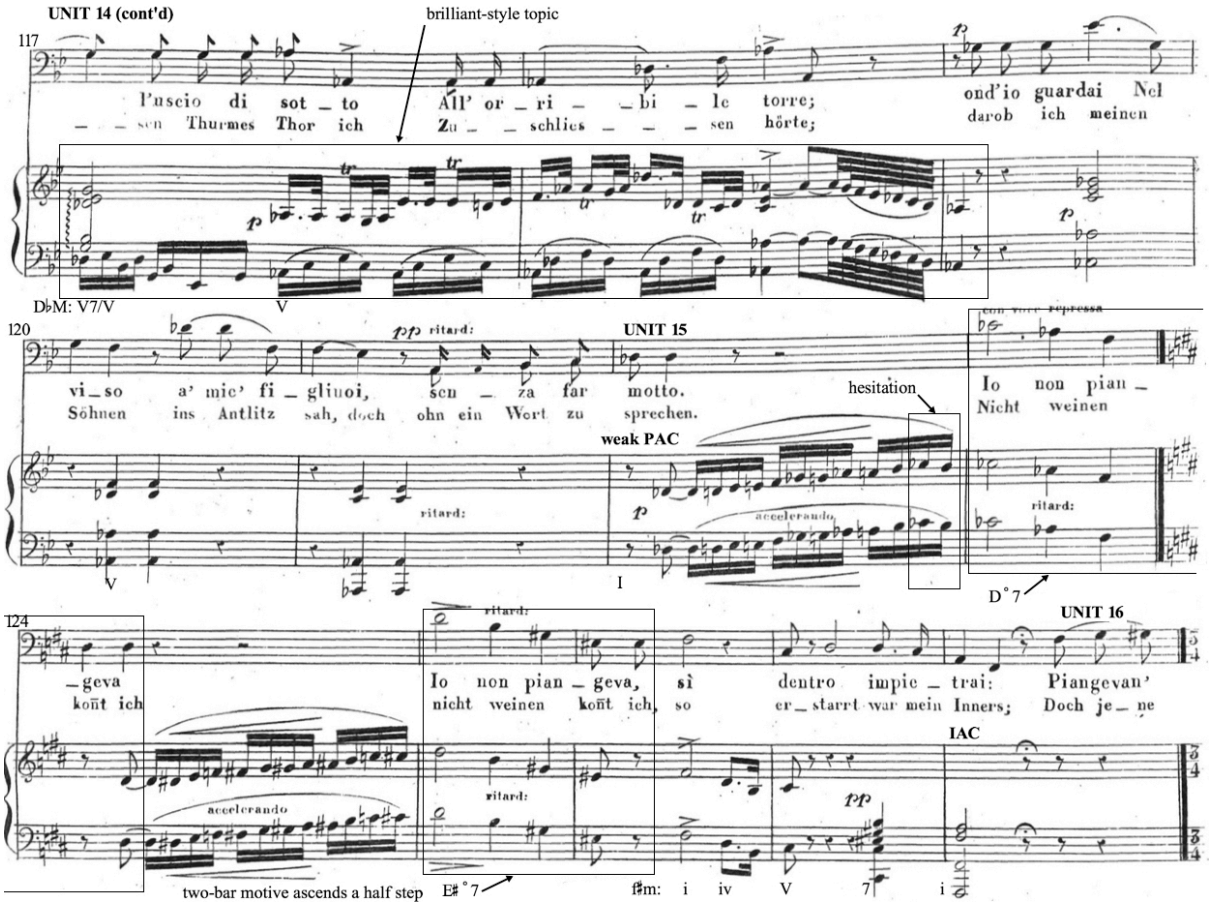
In numerous salient ways, this digression begins to overturn the positive valuation of the structural Transgressions. The subdominant key is consumed by the flat-submediant, which seems to initially offer hope through its signified association, but is exposed as semantically worthless. The same is true of topics: the brilliant-style attempts to re-grasp a positive outcome as a way to redeem the aria, but falls tragically short. In addition, this is the first moment in the literary narrative that the temporal past is unambiguously revealed as the site of suffering. The initial attribution of positive value onto these Transgressions, therefore, is put into doubt – the scales of value are now in flux. As we will see below, by the conclusion of the second digression, doubt is transformed into an absolute denial of this misplaced positive valuation.

---

[163] Susan McClary, *Conventional Wisdom: The Content of Musical Form* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 123.

[164] Ibid. She also describes the flat-submediant: "It offers an image of a world in which pleasure is attainable without thrusting desire, where tenderness and vulnerability are virtues rather than fatal flaws."

Figure 3.5: Morlacchi, "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno," mm. 117-128



The second digression to the minor Neapolitan key area occurs between Units 15 and 17. After the resigned cadence in D♭ major (m. 122), a surge of chromatic sixteenth-notes is adjoined to a torpid descending diminished-seventh arpeggio played in unison by all three voices (see Figure 3.5). This contrast in rhetorical gestures is repeated a half step higher in the following two measures, which then facilitates an authentic cadence in F♯ minor. Let us pause for a moment to explain this striking transition. Here, Morlacchi sets the memorable line, "I did not weep as I was so turned to stone."[165] While hope is shattered and their tragic fate is all but confirmed, Ugolino internalizes his pain and does not cry. As we discussed in Chapter Two, this singular tragic line

[165] Hollander, *Inferno*, 607.

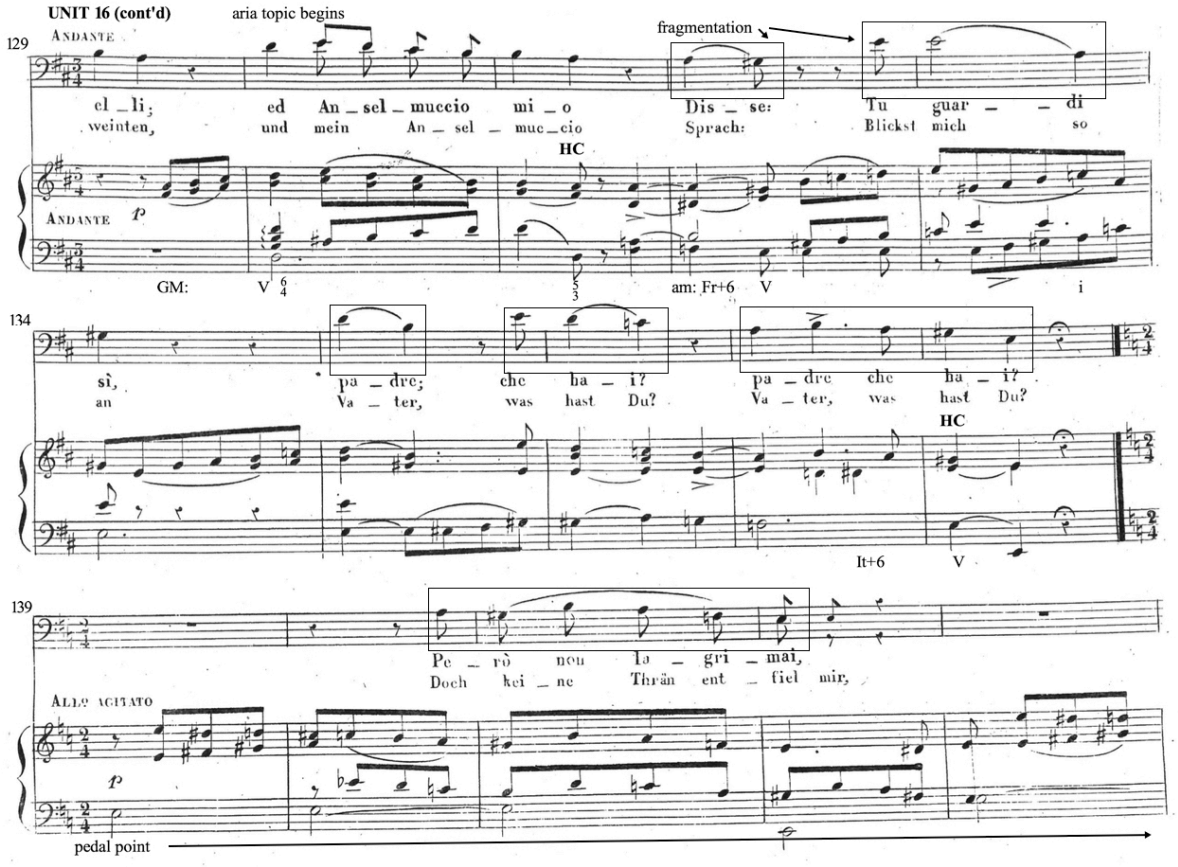
resonated with 19th-century Italian commentators, as it defined an appropriate physical reaction to tremendous internal suffering. To recall Rossetti, "Trivial cares speak, great ones are speechless."[166] In Morlacchi's setting, the surge of chromatic sixteenth notes seem to represent Ugolino's tumultuous emotions that are then choked back by the deliberate slower durations. The transposition by an ascending half step only increases this emotional tension that is unable to find its corresponding catharsis. While the cadential resolution that follows seems to be counterintuitive to these vacillating expressions of despair, the shift to the minor Neapolitan is significant. Klein describes these marked modulations as signs of *ombra*, involving associations with the infernal or ominous.[167] Additionally, he attributes a distinct meaning to the key of F♯/G♭ in the early 19th century, as it was coupled with concepts of the remote or the profound.[168] Besides this semantic baggage, the Neapolitan shift also recalls the grating G♭ pitches over the F minor melody in Unit 1 (see Figure 3.1) that assisted in signifying the pain of the present. Thus, the union of both the melodic content that mirrors Ugolino's constrained emotions with the modulation that evokes the infernal suffering of the present amplifies the despair of the tragic character – but most importantly, continues to upend the positive valuation of Ugolino's Transgressive past.

As the opening of the second digression casts negative light on the subdominant motion from D♭ to F♯ (enharmonic of G♭), the rest of this section ruptures the last remaining structural element of the positively-valued Transgression, that of the aria topic. Following the aforementioned cadence in F♯ minor, the piano plays a lyrical gesture in parallel thirds that reinstates the aria topic once the voice joins the melodic line in m. 130 (see Figure 3.6). This

[166] Rossetti, *Dante Lab Reader*.
[167] Klein, "Chopin's Fourth Ballade as Musical Narrative," 37.
[168] Ibid., 41-2. Klein quotes Hugh MacDonald (1998) here.

occurs over the sudden onset of a half cadence in G major – which is perceptually shocking considering the previous F♯ cadence – and an elided modulation to A minor using common tones in the following measure. These disturbing, abrupt tonal changes fracture the aria topic's generally longer phrase lengths into short sighing utterances as the aria attempts to align itself with each dominant resolution. Yet, even as the new key of A minor is stabilized until m. 153 (where we return to F♯ minor), the topic remains irrevocably fragmented – limited to short motives with descending contour. It seems that the aria can no longer maintain its composure after being subject to the tumultuous whirlwind of Ugolino's despair.

Figure 3.6: Morlacchi, "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno," mm. 129-143



Consequently, the undermined topic turns out to be the so-called final "straw that broke the camel's back" – each element of the positively-valued Transgression has been overturned

and proven to be negative. The Transgressive elements of the temporal past, subdominant tonal motions, and aria topics that once hid behind a glimmer of hope, have now been unveiled for their true tragic nature. It is now apparent that both sides of the Order and Transgression binary encode suffering into their musical structures, albeit from different painful sources. Therefore, the remainder of Morlacchi's adaption will be less about unveiling the nature of the Ugolino's torment and more about his ability to reconcile the anguish of his painful past with the implacability of his vengeful present.

Conflict and Resolution

Now that both the Order and Transgression are negatively valued, the musical narrative places them back into conflict. These structural interactions facilitate two significant occurrences: first, they elucidate the meaning of two poignant lines from Dante's text; and second, they trace a tragic array of emotions as Ugolino reconciles both sides of his binary of suffering. The conflict, however, does not lead to a victory by either the Order or Transgression, rather the music suggests a resigned acceptance of the binary through the synthesis of its heterogeneous elements.

Besides the "turn to stone" text from earlier, two other Dantean verses in the Ugolino canto resonated with 19th-century Italian commentators: "the sorry of it made me gnaw my hands" (Ugolino's self-infliction of pain as a physical suppression of his inner turmoil) and "you clothed us in this wretched flesh, now strip it off" (the children's offer to assuage Ugolino's hunger).[169] As we discovered in Chapter Two, both of these lines were read for their allusions to cannibalism and were thematically connected to Ugolino's gruesome revenge on Ruggieri.

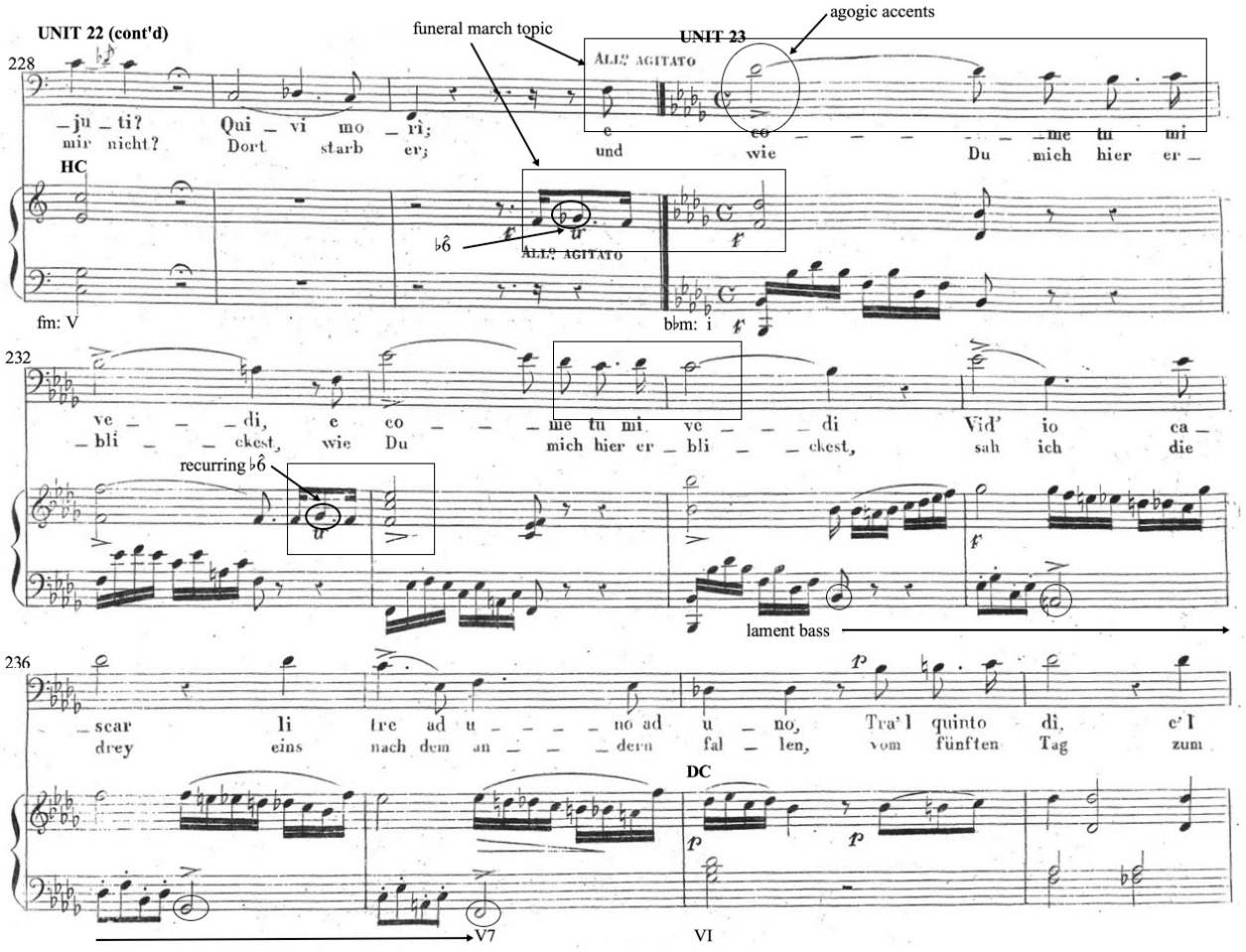
[169] Hollander, *Inferno*, 609.

Similarly, Morlacchi treats these two lines in Unit 18-20 using musical elements of the Order. The former text is set within a funeral march topic in a minor key (mm. 170-173), while the latter is treated twice: first in the dominant key of C minor and then in the original tonic of F minor (mm. 192-204). The use of these musical structures in this way clearly reference the temporal present and Ugolino's *contrapasso*, but also restore the basic elements of the Order which have been absent throughout both digressions. By placing the structural Order back into the musical narrative conversation, Morlacchi is not only able to make a connection to the cannibalistic literary allusion, but he reinstates the conflict between the Order-Transgression binary.

The following four Units (20-24) place the structural elements of the Order and Transgression in frequent opposition to each other. As suggested earlier, Unit 20 repeats the same text as Unit 19, but within the key of F minor. A long-awaited perfect authentic cadence in the tonic key is reached in m. 205, but is immediately dismissed by the addition of an E♭ to the F minor chord. This creates a secondary dominant movement to the subdominant harmony and a tonicization of the Transgressive key of B♭. Just as quickly as the subdominant interjected into the musical surface of the Order, it is then denied. In Unit 21, surging grief – as depicted by a slowly ascending chromatic bass line – negates the previous tonicization and builds to turbulent cascading figures in all three voices beginning in the key of C (read: Order). These figures angrily ascend up the chromatic scale until another tonicization of the Transgressive E♭ minor in m. 216. A short section of accompanied recitative follows until the arrival of Unit 22 in the unambiguous key of F minor. Here, the anger of the previous section has subsided into a sense of helplessness. The vocal melody once again fragments into three-to-five-note descending utterances over a harmonic progression reminiscent of Unit 1. Following a half cadence in F minor and the death of Ugolino's first child, Unit 23 is forced into the key of B♭ minor with an

unprepared direct modulation and a complete overhaul of the previous mood. Let us now take a closer look at this section.

Figure 3.7: Morlacchi, "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno," mm. 228-239



While the sudden transition to the key of B♭ places Unit 23 squarely within the continued conflict of the Order-Transgression binary, it signifies something more critical to the musical narrative. Here, we see the first occurrence of the fusion (or confusion) of musical elements from both sides of the binary (see Figure 3.7). The Transgressive key of B♭ is presented within the topical field of tragedy, most notably utilizing the Order-specific funeral march topic – suggested by strong agogic accents, multiple dotted-eighth-sixteenth rhythms, and a descending lament

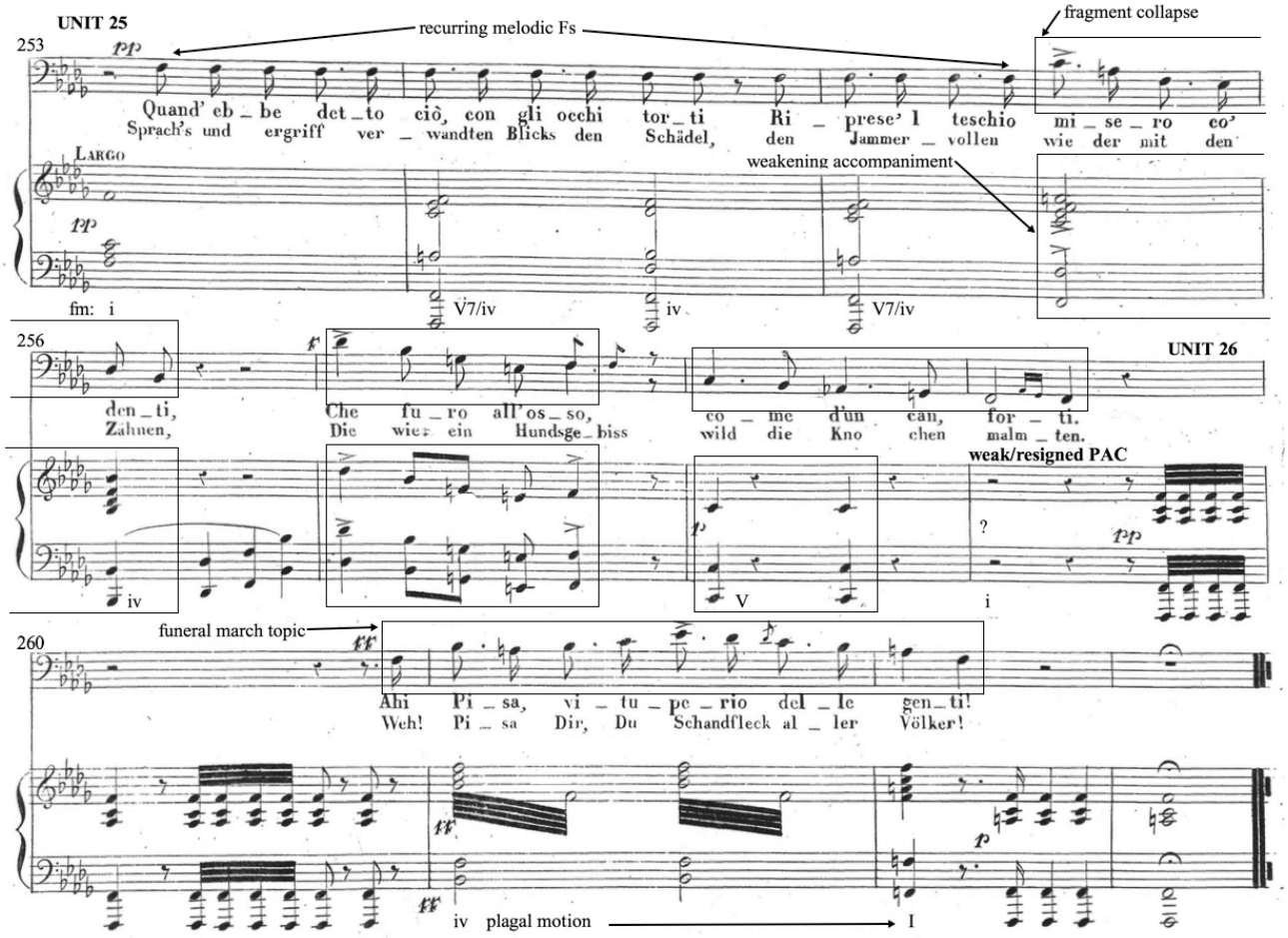
bass line starting on the consequent phrase in m. 235. This salient topic, combined with a thundering volume, agitated sixteenth-note runs in the piano, and the dissonant ♭$\hat{6}$ to $\hat{5}$ motion (recontextualized ♭$\hat{2}$ to $\hat{1}$ from Unit 1), provide the most striking and visceral moment of the work. This should be no surprise considering that the vocal melody here sets the deaths of Ugolino's three remaining children. Despite its poignancy, the synthesis of elements from both sides of the Order-Transgression binary suggest that the pain of his past and suffering in his present are running together, which is logical since Ugolino's monologue is nearing its tragic end.

The final two Units (25 and 26) of Morlacchi's adaptation reinforce the above reading by definitively synthesizing the heterogeneous elements of the Order-Transgression binary (see Figure 3.8). On the surface, it might seem that the return to F minor insinuates a sort of hegemonic shift towards the Order, especially as Dante's text describes Ugolino's resumption of his treacherous meal in the temporal present. However, a closer look at its underlying harmonies reveals an abundance of Transgressive subdominant chords. Immediately after establishing the F minor tonic on the downbeat of m. 253, inner-voice neighbor motions tonicize the B♭ subdominant chord twice: the first time occurs within the span of a single measure and the second is stretched to include two measures. In addition, Dante's castigation of Pisa in m. 261 is vocally set to a funeral march topic, but is presented over a piano tremolo on a subdominant B♭ harmony. This plagal motion is further marked by its boisterous declamation at a fortissimo volume level and the appearance of the subdominant in root position, in lieu of the standardized second inversion. While the individual occurrence of these subdominant moments might not seem odd in isolation, their near concurrence is no coincidence.[170] After spending the majority of

[170] This is especially true due to the odd location of the subdominant emphasis. Generally, early-Romantic-era compositions will focus on the tonic-dominant relationship at the end of a work to instill greater closure.

the composition within two different spatial and temporal realms – and often at conflict with one another – the Order-Transgression binary has been resolved through the absorption of the Transgression (as represented by the subdominant harmony) into the Order (tonic key and funeral march topic). However, there is one more component at play.

Figure 3.8: Morlacchi, "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno," mm. 253-263



Compared to Unit 23's forceful synthesis of the opposing elements of the binary, these latter two Units seem to more naturally fuse the subdominant chords with the F minor tonic. This is due to a general sense of resignation found within Unit 25. The two-and-a-half measures of

Morlacchi's emphasis on the tonic-subdominant relationship, however complicates the final closure and demands a closer reading.

recurring melodic F3s (mm. 253-5) seem to signify utter exhaustion. When the melody is finally able to break away from this single tone, it wills itself up a fifth to C4 only to collapse back downward to the lower range. Another desperate attempt follows in m. 257 as the melody reaches one scale degree higher, but the same result ensues. The final attempt in m. 258 shows barely an effort at all: the melody relinquishes itself to a C3 and slowly descends to the tonic pitch F2. Likewise, each melodic fragment is adjoined to a gradually weakening accompaniment: full-sonority block chords on the subdominant, followed by an arpeggiated diminished seventh chord played in octaves, and finally two single pitches on the dominant. In fact, the sense of resignation is so profound, that the final tonic resolution of the vocal melody is not even accompanied by the piano. This last opportunity to provide a strong authentic cadence is therefore abandoned – in its place, only silence.

In conjunction with the synthesis of the Order-Transgression binary, I read this final moment as Ugolino's resigned acceptance of his eternal suffering. Neither the Order of the present nor the Transgression of the past are revealed as victors here, rather a fusion of the binary's negatively-valued oppositions indicate a coexistence of two varieties of pain – the anguish of his past and implacability of his vengeful present. Ugolino, however, does not accept this pain willingly. After much struggle to reconcile the two, the final musical moments suggest that the tragic character has resigned himself to this suffering, therefore surrendering to an eternity of painful memories without any hope of catharsis.

Part IV: A Flawed Tragic Archetype and the Dantean Episodic Reading

In my preceding analysis of Morlacchi's adaptation, I extend the boundaries of Almén's tragic narrative archetype in order to trace a different type of tragic emplotment in music – what

I would like to describe as a *flawed tragic archetype*. According to Almén's theory, tragedy should unfold through the opposition of a negatively-valued Order with a positively-valued Transgression, whereby the eventual outcome lies in the Order's defeat of the Transgression. The addition of a preexisting literary narrative, however, complicates the application of this relatively rigid archetype, as the 19th-century Italian interpretation of Ugolino does not generally suggest the presence of positively associated values. Nevertheless, by at first privileging the work's musical narrative over its literary counterpart, the structural Transgression establishes itself as positively-valued due to its opposition of tragic topics and insinuation of hope. This, of course, is not sustainable: the two digression sections shift the value of the Transgression to negative after the past is also revealed to be a temporal site for intense suffering. While both sides of the binary are now negatively valued, their corresponding musical structures are still placed into conflict. At this point in a musical-narrative analysis, Almén's theory would predict the unfolding of a resolution in a "manner significant to the culturally informed listener – a welcome confirmation of that initial hierarchy, its partial or complete overturning, an unwelcome re-imposition, or its corrosive undermining."[171] Essentially, all of these outcomes, regardless of their valuation, infer a victory of one specific side of the binary. But as we discovered in the analysis above, the heterogeneous musical elements of the Order-Transgression binary were synthesized together, suggesting Ugolino's resigned acceptance of his painful past and insatiable present. My reading of Morlacchi's "Parte del Canto XXXIII dell'Inferno" as a *flawed tragic archetype* aims to expand upon Almén's own conceptualization of tragedy. In this type of analysis, the Order-Transgression binary is clearly established in the beginning of the work and is predicted to

[171] Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*, 41.

unfold as a tragic archetype, but the "devaluation" of the Transgression and the complete synthesis of the binary prevent the original archetype from attaining its expected resolution.[172]

Even though this reading of Morlacchi's adaptation does not align with conventional musical-narrative concepts of tragedy, I do not believe that this detracts from its affective potential; in fact, the *flawed tragic archetype* expresses a sense of heightened pathos. By placing the suffering of Ugolino at the center of his adaptation, Morlacchi constructs a composition that amplifies the internal struggle of the tragic character and thus compels the listener to sympathize with his insurmountable pain. We find ourselves captivated by this overwhelming sense of pathos and, as a result, overlook Ugolino's treacherous sins and political misdoings. We are so moved by the story that our spatial awareness is broken; Ugolino becomes a stand-alone tale whose actual location in the moral geography of the *Inferno* seems almost arbitrary. Hede would classify this type of reading within his segmental-episodic reading typology: *segmental* references a particular structural subdivision within the *Divine Comedy*; and *episodic* narrows the area of analysis to a single character episode or canto without the acknowledgement of any external factors.[173] This form of interpretation, which was common in 19th-century Italy, focuses exclusively on Ugolino's suffering while ignoring the nature of his sins, placement within Hell, and relationship to stories and characters found elsewhere in the poem – making literary context virtually superfluous. The next chapter, conversely, offers a musical reading of Donizetti's adaptation that seeks to resituate Ugolino into the moral geography of Dante's great poem.

[172] Or to put it another way, the anguish of the past, suffering of the present, and the final somber resignation could even propose a triple tragic archetype!

[173] Hede, *Reading Dante*, 1-39.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE IRONIC UGOLINO: DONIZETTI'S SETTING AS A SERIAL READING

In the previous chapter, I provided a reading of the Morlacchi adaptation where a 19th-century Italian perspective of Ugolino was mapped onto a drama of tonality and topic – yielding an interpretation that sympathized with the character as he accepted the coexistence of his painful past and torturous present. Donizetti's adaptation of the same text, on the other hand, seems to superficially agree with these similar tenets, but structural contradictions prevent the listener from fully sympathizing with Ugolino, thus resisting the pathos-inspired binary of suffering. Is it possible for a musical adaptation of literature to challenge its contemporary interpretative aesthetics instead of aligning with them? If so, how would this subversion manifest itself within musical structures and how might this suggest a different understanding of the narrative?

This chapter aims to answer these questions by treating the Donizetti setting as a reaction against the dominant contemporary interpretation of Ugolino. In Part I, I provide a brief background of the adaptation's composition as well as a comprehensive discussion of its critical reception. Because much of the negative criticism launched against this work questions Donizetti's respect for and understanding of Dante, I will then address the composer's relationship with the great poet through Donizetti's correspondence with his childhood teacher, Simon Mayr, and the research of J.S. Allitt. In Part II, I build upon the most recent theorizations

on musical narrative archetypes by Byron Almén[174] and Michael Klein[175] to propose an ironic reading of Donizetti's "Il Conte Ugolino" that subverts both the structural and ideological expectations of a 19th-century setting of this Dantean character. Here, irony is not the interpretative endgame, but instead opens up an ideological space for a richer hermeneutic understanding. In Part III and IV, I analyze the deeper structural underpinnings of this setting, where we can connect salient musical features to extant Dantean criticism, thereby suggesting an interpretation of Ugolino colored by a moral and religious perspective. Finally, in Part V, this new perspective is aligned with Hede's serial Dantean reading typology which allows us to reframe the character and his role in the moral geography of the *Inferno*.

Part I: Critical Reception and Background

As stated above, structural contradictions within Donizetti's adaptation suggest a divergent interpretation of the tale of Ugolino. While much of this chapter will be devoted to unpacking a possible reading of these musical anomalies, I would like to begin by examining the vital background of Donizetti's work. This should not be viewed as a perfunctory duty, but rather as a necessary step to understanding its compositional ambiguities. With a reception history that is largely disparaging set against a compositional background that insinuates a thoughtful treatment of Dantean poetry, the work seems to be a paradox. How could Donizetti value his Ugolino composition when critics attribute no redeeming properties to it? As we will see below, it is precisely this paradox that suggests the validity of a reading that diverges from 19th-century Dantean aesthetics.

[174] Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*.
[175] Klein, "Ironic Narrative, Ironic Reading."

In his biography of Gaetano Donizetti, musicologist William Ashbrook sequesters "Canto XXXIII della *Divina Commedia*: Il Conte Ugolino" to a mere footnote, describing the adaptation as a rather "curious composition."[176] The ostensible curiosity of the work, according to the author, lies in its peculiar position within the composer's esteemed oeuvre – he believed that the work did not represent Donizetti at his finest, since it failed do justice to its textual source and had little musical merit. This critique was supported by multiple generations of musicologists and Dante scholars. Maria Ann Roglieri stated that Donizetti "saw this piece purely as an exercise; he showed no real concern for the Dante text he used."[177] Rolgieri's indifference draws from the early 20th-century scholarship of Arnaldo Bonaventura, who described the setting as dull, derivative, and completely void of character, as well as "failing to achieve the loftiness of Dantean thought."[178] Pierluigi Petrobelli also castigated the work for "(showing) no real concern for the cultural value and significance of the text."[179] Furthermore, Ashbrook returned to criticizing the work in a later publication, where he described it as a "superfluous addition to great poetry"[180] and lacking all but an "occasional dramatic impetus."[181]

The denunciations cited above seem to suggest a rather sanctified view of Dante and his poetry – a perspective that can easily be traced in scholarly literature beginning with the politicization of Dante in the Risorgimento period.[182] Composers that set his text were expected

---

[176] William Ashbrook, *Donizetti* (London: Cassell & Company Ltd, 1965), 102.
[177] Roglieri, *Dante and Music,* 114.
[178] Ibid. Drawn from the following source: Arnaldo Bonaventura, *Dante e la musica* (Livorno: Guisti, 1904).
[179] Petrobelli, "On Dante and Italian Music: Three Moments," 231. Petrobelli also connects Donizetti's adaptation to a superficial early-Romantic artistic trend: "his version of Count Ugolino's lament is a precise musical counterpart of the '*romanzo storico'* – historical novels by Tommaso Grossi, Massimo D'Azeglio, and others – or of the large historical paintings of Francesco Hayez." These comments suggest that Donizetti was more concerned with romanticizing a historical event with a surface depiction of tragedy, than truly understanding the pathetic nature of Dante's words (as seen in the nuanced Ugolino *binary of suffering* presented in Chapter Two).
[180] Ashbrook, *Donizetti and His Operas,* 224.
[181] Ashbrook, *Donizetti,* 102.
[182] See previously discussed articles by Andrea Ciccarelli, Charles T. Davis, and Stefano Jossa.

to treat it with the utmost care and respect, and in the case of tragic character settings, provide a musical atmosphere that both amplifies the poignant words of the poet and the inner struggles of Ugolino. As seen by the above criticisms, however, the expectations that solidified in the early 19th century continued to shape reception history into the following century, especially for those musicologists that continued to read characters like Ugolino from a singular tragic interpretation instead of broadening their understanding into differing periods of literary criticism. To use Bakhtin's terminology, the expectations of an Ugolino musical setting were canonized: the literary image of the tragic, suffering character was hardened in the public consciousness and refused to absorb divergent opinions. As we discovered in Chapter Three, Morlacchi's adaptation fit this canonized aesthetic like a glove; his utilization of tragic musical topics, pervasive cadential digressions, and meaningful tonal relationships constructed a work that became the epitome of what an Ugolino musical setting should be.[183] Donizetti's work, on the contrary, failed to meet these overtly tragic parameters, precipitating its dismissal as an uninspired "compositional exercise." Unfortunately, these anachronistic attitudes have prevented an understanding of the adaptation that could be conditioned by its own terms – letting its compositional background speak for itself. In what follows, I will discuss the work's original purpose and Donizetti's familiarity with Dantean literature.

Donizetti wrote the "Canto XXXIII della *Divina Commedia*: Il Conte Ugolino" in January 1828 shortly after the premiere of *L'esule di Roma* at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples. The small song setting written for bass voice and piano was dedicated to the celebrated singer Luigi Lablache (who was currently playing Murena in *L'esule*) as a symbol of gratitude for his

[183] This can be easily seen in Roglieri's *Dante and Music* and Galliano Cilibert's "La produzione giovanile di Morlaccchi."

splendid performances.[184] Donizetti greatly admired Lablache, as evidenced by frequent references in his letter correspondence[185] and the assignment of the famed *basso profundo* to several of Donizetti's future operas – including the lead role in the 1843 inaugural production of *Don Pasquale*.[186] This Dantean musical gift also had a practical purpose as it was to be premiered, among other operatic arias and showpieces, at a benefit concert hosted by the singer.[187] If this work were a true "compositional exercise," as described by Roglieri, would it not have insulted Lablache and impaired Donizetti's public reputation?

Besides Donizetti's desire to impress the celebrated singer, the composer seemed to be relatively proud of this adaptation. In a letter from Donizetti to his well-respected teacher Simon Mayr (dated May 15, 1828), the student searched for feedback on his new compositions:

> I do not live for money but for honour and I assure you that if I could compose a *Medea* [one of Mayr's more popular operas] I would be content afterwards to die. I am making you a little *Souvenir* of my music, including *L'esule* and various other parts of operas that have pleased in Naples. Among these is *Ugolino* of Dante. I have received some sympathy for it, and I want yours.[188]

Donizetti aspired to attain the same level of compositional mastery as his successful teacher, whom he viewed as a father figure and mentor.[189] In this letter, Donizetti describes his music with modesty and requests constructive criticism in order to improve upon his skills, but the

---

[184] Ashbrook, *Donizetti and His Operas,* 613.

[185] Lablache is referenced in 31 different letters from Zavadini's seminal compilation of Donizetti correspondence: Guido Zavadini, *Donizetti: Vita, Musiche, Epistolario* (Bergamo: Istituto Italiano D'Arti Grafiche, 1948).

[186] "Don Pasquale," *San Diego Opera*, https://www.sdopera.com/Operapaedia/DonPasquale.

[187] Ian Caddy, "Donizetti's Cantata Canto d'Ugolino," from Donizetti Society Website, http://www.donizettisociety.com/Articles/articlecantodugolino.htm.

[188] Allitt, *Donizetti: In the Light of Romanticism and the Teaching of Johann Simon Mayr*, 33. Original quote translated from the Italian from Zavadini, *Donizetti*, 260.

[189] This relationship can be clearly seen in an 1837 from Donizetti to Mayr: "Most worthy master, how to thank you I do not know – there are so many great and eternal obligations I owe you – just to mention them alone is a hard task. Silence under such circumstances says more than the usual gratitudes – I can only offer myself to you for life, to your commands, and I ask of you a million forgivenesses if from time to time I trouble you – Oh! My dear benefactor." Quote and translation from: Weinstock, *Donizetti and the World of Opera*, 18.

sheer fact that he presented this work to his teacher implies a level of contentment with the composition. Again, it would seem unlikely that a mere "compositional exercise" that was void of musical merit would be viewed by Donizetti in such a positive manner.

The negative criticisms grow stranger when set against Donizetti's own familiarity of and training in Dantean literature. From the age of nine to seventeen, the composer attended the Lezioni caritatevoli di musica in Bergamo, a local training school for church choristers, studying under schoolmaster and eminent composer Simon Mayr. Mayr's theological training and loyalty to Enlightenment philosophies generated a school curriculum rooted in classical studies, including the disciplines of mythology, Christian mysticism, art history, and literature; this form of education was appropriated to stimulate the imaginative capabilities of his students. Although encompassing a wide range of academic subjects, J.S. Allitt posits that the knowledge imparted on Donizetti was primarily articulated through Catholic Christianity. Mayr was discouraged by the lack of theological thought in the early 19th century and sought to reawaken these spiritual sensitivities in his students. The main principle of this education was "through enlightenment, the created order becomes to the beholder a mirror in which the Divinity may be held."[190] Thus, created order – in this case, artistic invention – is a reflection of the divine; a definitive link between spiritual and aesthetic creation. Accordingly, the *Divine Comedy* became the fountainhead for the school's literary studies as it complemented and transformed this natural order. Dante's three-tiered metaphorical journey reflected the religious evolution of the spirit: the search for atonement in the hopes of salvation. This penetration of the poet's spiritual process necessitated a comprehension of the epic poem that diverged significantly from the political and pathos-inspired readings common in Risorgimento Italy.

[190] Allitt, *Donizetti*, 15.

After leaving Mayr's tutelage, Donizetti continued to read and study Dante, thus continuing his fascination with the *Divine Comedy*. Upon receiving a 1497 edition of the poem as a gift, Donizetti thanked his former student, Adelson Piacezzi: "Of what a gem you have made me the possessor. I always have loved (if not understood) Dante, but with your gift you have doubled that affection and veneration. I should have accused you of cruelty if it had fallen into other hands."[191] The composer also turned to the *Divine Comedy* on many occasions for musical inspiration. Besides his Ugolino adaptation, Donizetti wrote four small songs that set text extracted from the poem: "Amor che a nullo amato" (1843) and "O anime affanate" (1843) from Canto V of *Inferno*, as well as "Ave Maria" (1837) and "Ave Regina" (1844) from Canto XXXIII of *Paradiso*. In addition, his 1837 opera, *Pia de' Tolomei* focused on another Dantean character from the *Divine Comedy*, the eponymous sympathetic figure from Canto V of *Purgatorio*.[192]

Furthermore, Allitt traces elements of Dante's poetic verse in the composer's own writing style. In an 1843 letter to Mayr, Donizetti writes: "E siccome gufo presi il mio volo portando a me stesso or triste or felice presagio."[193] Allitt believes that the cadence, internal rhymes, picturesque language, and allusions to nature are remarkably similar to a famous line in *Inferno*:

E come li stornei ne portan l'ali
nel freddo tempo, a schiera larga e piena. *Inferno*, Canto V, 40-41

(And as their wings to startling's swarm uphold, when thick they fly and winter frets the plain.)[194]

---

[191] Weinstock, *Donizetti and the World of Opera*, 213.

[192] Pia was considered the lustful counterpart to *Inferno* V's Francesca. However, Pia was relatively virtuous in the mortal world and pled for forgiveness on her death bed, thus was placed by Dante in *Purgatorio*. Donizetti's setting, while certainly inspired by the poetic tale, did not set much of Dante's text, instead he adapted the 1836 play *La Pia de' Tolomei* by Giacinto Bianco.

[193] Allitt, *Donizetti*, 3-4. Original correspondence from: Zavadini, *Donizetti: Vita, Musiche, Epistolario*, 496. Translation by Allitt: "And like an owl I took my flight, drawing to myself now a sad, now a happy fate."

[194] Ibid., 4. Allitt quotes and translates Dante here.

It seems unlikely that this curious resemblance in writing styles would have resulted from a casual understanding of Dante. Rather, the parallels in cadence, particularly eloquent in this informal letter to his teacher, are indicative of extensive Dantean study.

In consideration of the information discussed above, it would be illogical to assume that the Ugolino adaptation written by Donizetti was hastily conceived or haphazardly set Dante's text. The nature of this composition – as an ingratiated dedication, publically performed work, and sample of Donizetti's musical acumen – suggests a setting that would have been carefully written to fulfill the goals of its purpose. In addition, Donizetti's own understanding of Dante – informed by his teacher's religious insights and tracked in writing similarities and musical inspiration – suggests a respectful and thoughtful appropriation of the iconic poetry. These ideas, somewhat paradoxically, set the work's compositional background in direct opposition to its reception history, thus raising more questions than producing answers. In drawing this comparison, my intent is to present a dissonance between two realms that cannot be clearly reconciled. In doing so, I wish to advance the possibility that Donizetti's setting does not have to be read as a failed composition that never attained its tragic ideal, but rather allow its compositional background to propose potentially novel interpretations that diverge from the 19th-century norm. This, by no means, guarantees a historically accurate truth that can reveal Donizetti's true intent. On the contrary, it casts doubt on the validity of its prior readings that were dictated by rigid canonized beliefs, and opens a more flexible space for further interpretation. Returning to the opening of this section, if we retrospectively unpack Ashbrook's description of this "curious composition," we should not interpret it as *strange curiosity* within an otherwise powerful oeuvre, but rather a composition that *expresses curiosity*, that seeks

meaning, and implores us as listeners to uncover that meaning. To enable this new understanding, we now turn to musical analysis.

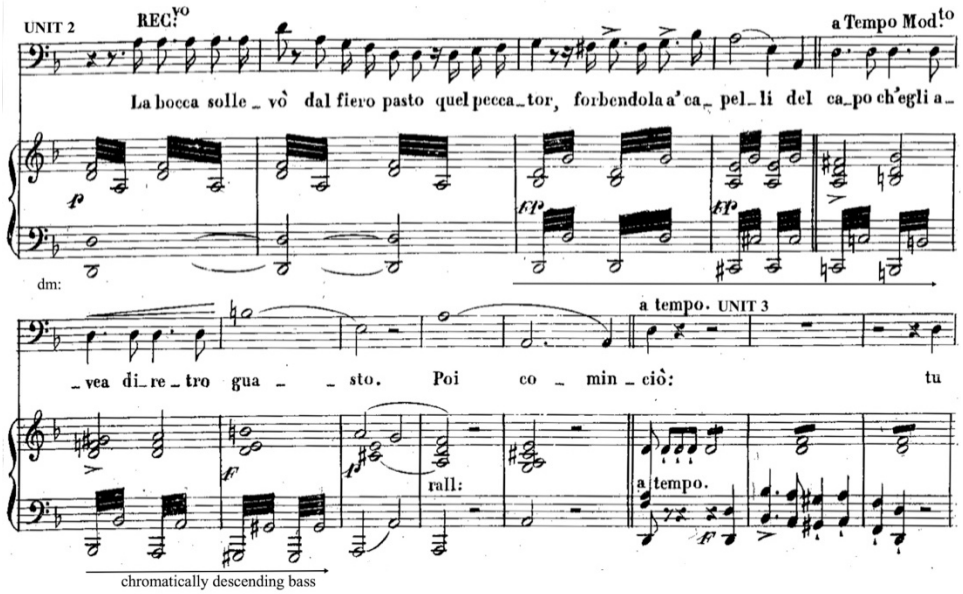
Part II: Ironizing Ugolino

The ability to access divergent meanings in a musical text depends on the semiotic potentialities of its musical structures placed within a specific sociocultural context. In this section, the Donizetti adaptation is situated within the confines and expectations of the tragic 19th-century reading of Ugolino – a context that is subsequently rejected by an ironic musical event near the end of the work that forces the listener to withhold sympathy for the character. As we will see, this structural subversion can be treated as a signifier that shapes the analytical and hermeneutic discourse employed for the entire song setting, and thus encourages the analyst to reach back to the composition's immediate past to explain the significance of its ironic ending.

How might a 19th-century Romantic interpretation of Ugolino be set to music? Much like its Morlacchi counterpart, we can assume that the pathos-saturated nature of this story would suggest an alignment to the tragic topical field; an expressive musical surface saturated in minor keys, sigh motives, low registers, harsh chromaticism, and wandering tonality that depicts the inner suffering of Ugolino's world. Donizetti's setting immediately aligns itself to the topical expectations of this morbid tale (see Figure 4.1). The piano part begins with low tessitura tremolos outlining the key of D minor. These tremolos are transferred to the right hand in m. 8 as the left hand sets up a chromatically descending bass line, harmonized by secondary dominants and augmented-sixth chords, signifying the lament bass feature. Meanwhile, the recitative-style vocal part displays an anxious, almost tense mood with its wavelike melodic contour and

chromatic inflections. This beginning offers a predictable alignment to the tragic topical field which sets Dante's gruesome opening rhetoric and offers few surprises.[195]

Figure 4.1: Donizetti, "Il Conte Ugolino," mm. 8-20



Beyond this surface representation, the Romantic listener would also expect a temporal unfolding of musical events that tracks the downfall of Ugolino as he recounts the deaths of his children and is denied the permanence of revenge. If we assume a tragic narrative archetype,[196] one of the four musical organizational patterns theorized by Almén,[197] the composition would present the defeat of a musical transgression by the structural order which facilitates his downfall. While we place our sympathy with Ugolino and his grief and suffering, the temporal unfolding of the composition should confirm the character's fate, which ends in great catastrophe. As we will see below, these expectations are not met by Donizetti's composition.

[195] Here, the tragic topical field works by delineating the separate tragic elements, those topics that oppose the comic or nontragic genre, into a unified expressive entity.

[196] This should not be confused with the tragic topical field. As explained by Almén, "narrative tragedy is a strategy of signification in which temporality is implicit and full recognition requires the unfolding of the piece in its totality. By contrast, one can perceive the effects of a tragic *topos* within the first measure or two of a piece, as befits an essentially static significative process." Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*, 130.

[197] Archetypes are "narrative organizational patterns [that] are formed by the conflict between two or more hierarchically arranged elements within a [musical] system; this conflict results in a revaluation of the constituent elements." Almén, "Narrative Archetypes," 12.

In order to examine the temporal and formal elements of Donizetti's "Il Conte Ugolino" as a through-composed work, I divide the composition by the narrative's textual partitions and subdivided into smaller units motivated by similarities in harmonic, motivic, melodic, and periodic properties.[198] Table 4.1 charts the formal organization according to the parameters mentioned above. The first column indicates a large-scale ABCBA structure, or arch form, where Dante's descriptions and reactions to Ugolino (A) circumscribe the tragic character's monologue (B) and the portentous dream interruption (C). The second and third columns form the subdivisions of the larger structures (termed *Units*)[199] and their measure numbers, respectively, which are generally delineated by authentic cadential arrivals or modulations. These reinforcements or changes in key are stated in the fourth column and are followed by short summations of Dante's text in the fifth column. The final column is reserved for moments of importance within the musical narrative, which I will return to later in this chapter. Lastly, select Units and Unit groups are bold-outlined for their salience to my forthcoming arguments.

While the abundant periodic divisions and shifting tonalities recorded in Table 4.1 might suggest further alignment to our expectation of tragedy, a contradictory musical event near the end of the work (Unit 26) denies the pathetic resolution that we assumed was inevitable. As I will argue below, by subverting the tragic topical field and narrative archetype this musical moment operates as Klein's master signifier of irony,[200] which forces the perceiver to actively seek an explanation within the subsequent musical material.

---

[198] This type of paradigmatic analysis is informed by the methodology laid out in: Agawu, *Music as Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music*, 163-207. Please note that this chart divides the work differently than the Morlacchi adaptation, primarily due to the lack of salient tonal interactions. Here, I rely more on textual partitions to organize the chart.

[199] The term *Unit* is used by Agawu (in *Music as Discourse*) in its literal sense: one of the many meaningful subdivisions of the musical composition that are defined by musical similarities in key, texture, and melodic material. Most of the units that I delineate in this chapter end with a strong cadence, either in the key the Unit begins or into a modulated tonal area.

[200] Klein, "Ironic Narrative," 98.

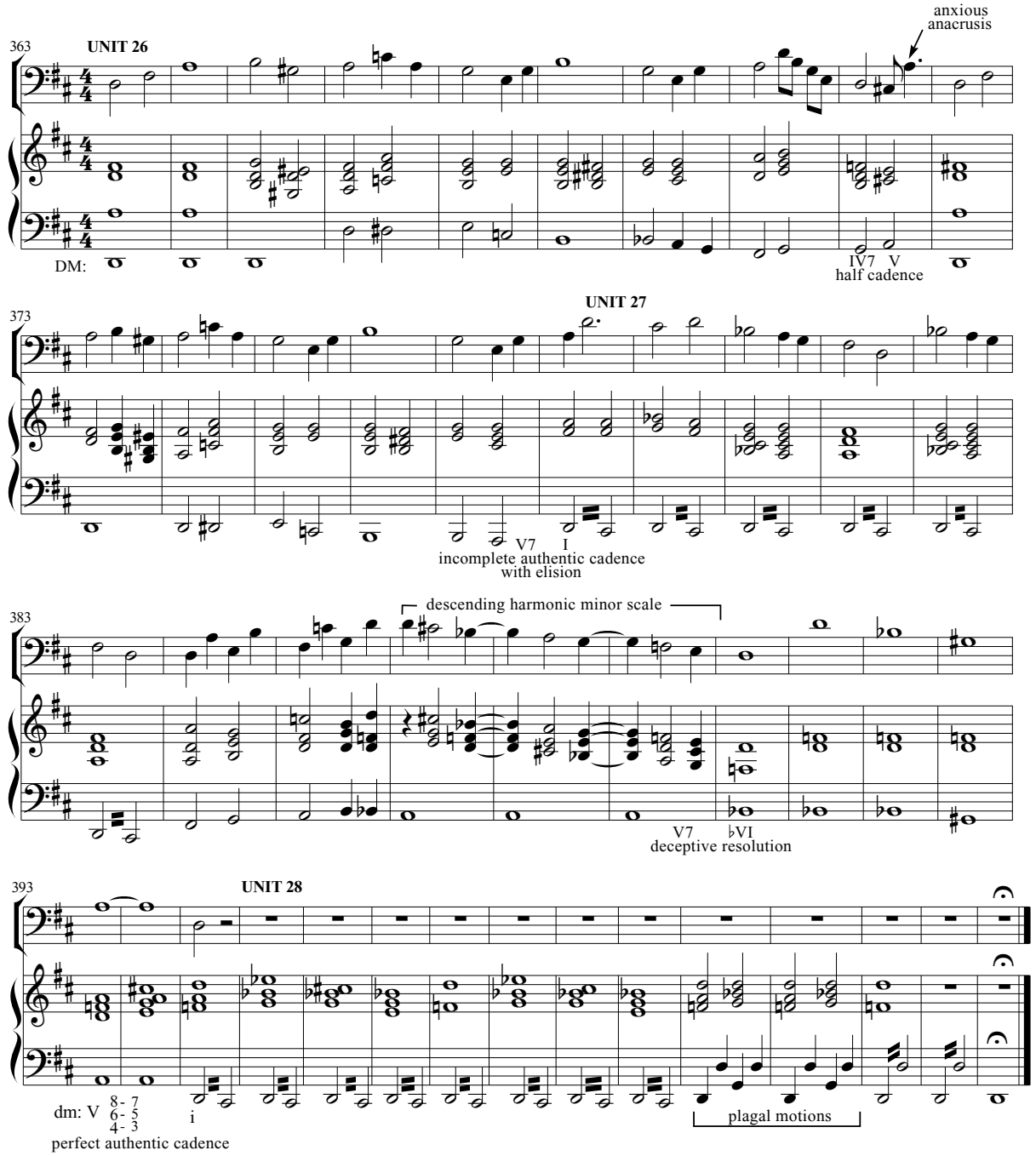
Table 4.1: Paradigmatic Analysis of Donizetti's "Il Conte Ugolino."

Section	Unit	Measures	Key	Text Description	Musical Narrative
A: Dante/Ugolino mise-en-scene	1	mm. 1-7	D minor	No text	**Order #1:** Establishment of tonal center and sense of expectation to return at end
	2	mm. 8-18	D minor	Dante describes scene with Ugolino and Ruggieri	
	3	mm. 18-28	D minor	Ugolino responds to Dante	
	4	mm. 29-41	D minor	Ugolino implores Dante for sympathy	**Order #1:** Ugolino Melody to be transformed
B: Ugolino's prologue	5	mm. 42-54	F major	Ugolino assumes Dante is from Florence	
	6	mm. 54-67	F major to A major	Introduces himself and Archbishop Ruggieri	
	7	mm. 67-80	A major to A♭ major	speaks of Ruggieri's treachery	Marked modulation (unmarked is third-based modulation)
	8	mm. 80-95	A♭ major to C minor	continue to transfer blame	parallel octaves; call-and-response
C: Ugolino's Portentous Dream	9	mm. 95-105	C minor	dream begins; Tower of Hunger introduced	
	10	mm. 106-116	C major	dreadful dream to portend the future	
	11	mm. 117-126	A minor	introduce wolf/cubs which represent Ugolino/children	
	12	mm. 126-136	A major to E major	Hounds (Ruggieri) make chase	
	13	mm. 136-147	E major to F♯ minor	Wolf/cubs get eaten by hounds	Highly marked section: **Transgression #2** (deceptive cadence); **Trangression #3** (forced cadence after VI chord)
B: Ugolino's prologue continues	14	mm. 147-162	F♯ to A major	Wake up from dream; children are weeping and hungry	Dream ends a TT higher in key than where it had begun
	15	mm. 162-175	A major to C major	To Dante: "if you do not weep, what can make you weep"	modal mixture; ♭VI use; sudden modulation
	16	mm. 176-194	C major	Children are troubled by dream	two wandering harmonic sequences
	17	mm. 194-206	C minor to A major	Children weep, but Ugolino "turns to stone"	**Trangression #4:** Melody stays on A♭ while harmonies wander beneath it. Whole-tone bass line. Harmonic motion in thirds.
	18	mm. 206-232	A major to F♯ minor to A major	Anselm questions his father; Ugolino continues to not "shed a tear and made no answer"	**Trangression #4:** Emotional "stone" is signified now in bass line dominant pedal over six measures. **Transgression #3**: dominant pedal becomes III (tonic substitute) in A major forced cadence.
	19	mm. 232-259	A major to F minor (but through keys of B♭ and C)	Ugolino gnaws his hands; children prepare plea	**Trangression #4** in Unit 19b
	20	mm. 259-279	F minor	Ugolino's children speak: spiritual offer of sacrfice	**Transgression #4:** Several bass note pedals each present for four-measure sustains
	21	mm. 280-295	F minor to F major	Ugolino remains silent after children's pleas	**Transgression #4**
	22	mm. 295-309	F major to D minor [through A prolongation]	"Oh hard earth, why did you not engulf us"	**Transgression #4:** Prepares $\hat{3}$ in F major as V for return to D minor. Use of three as the pivot for large harmonic shifts.
	23	mm. 310-326	D minor	Gaddo asks for help, and then dies	**Order #1:** Return of tonic. **Transgression #4:** repeat of dominant pedal; questions stability of tonic
	24	mm. 326-344	D minor	remaining children die; Ugolino blindly crawls over bodies	**Transgression #3:** two tonicizations of predominant areas lead to a brief sequence which ends on a VI of D minor (tonic substitute as PD). **Transgression #2:** half cadence in G minor before sequence.
	25	mm. 344-362	D minor	"fasting (hunger) had more power than grief"; Ugolino dies	**Transgression #2:** Deceptive cadence at high point of phrase.
A: Back to mise-en-scene and Dante's chastisement of Pisa	26	mm. 363-378	D major	Dante takes over narration and describes Ugolino continue his feast on Ruggieri; moves into Pisan chastisement	**Transgression #1:** Shift to D major and return of Unit 4 melody (in transformed major mode). **Trangression #2**: Pisan chastisement begins on a half cadence ellided into next phrase; another elision leads to Unit 27.
	27	mm. 378-395	D major with final PAC in minor	Dante expresses extreme anger towards the citizens of Pisa for the death of the children	Still in **Trangression #1** key. **Trangression #2:** Deceptive cadence on ♭VI before final resolution to D minor.
	28	mm. 395-407	D minor	No text	**Transgression #2:** Coda ends with two repeated plagal motions to final D minor chord.

Donizetti's composition begins in D minor, which accompanies both Dante's mise-en-scene and Ugolino's initial response, and cycles through a diverse assortment of keys (mostly organized in thirds) before the expected tonal return in m. 310 near the end of Ugolino's speech. However, at the pivotal moment in the poem where Ugolino ends his tragic monologue and narrator role returns to Dante (Unit 26, m. 363), something bewildering occurs that directly contradicts both the previously established tragic topical field and the assumed tragic archetype (see Figure 4.2). Where a tragic, Romantic reading might suggest a somber musical reaction to the brutality and misfortune of Ugolino's narrative, Donizetti sets Dante's response with an unexpected shift from the D minor tonal center of the work to the parallel major. This startling effect is compounded with a recapitulation of a minor-key melody, originally stated in Unit 4 (mm. 29 to 41), now transformed into D major – a melody that is not only marked for its unique status as the lone recurring phrase of the entire through-composed setting, but also the first periodic melody used by Ugolino earlier in the composition (See Figure 4.3).[201] The conjunction of these two musical events subverts our tonal, melodic, and narrative expectations; nothing that preceded Unit 24 seemed to suggest this upending of tragic topics and narrative trajectory. It is as if Dante is mocking Ugolino and in turn disparaging the listener for their lack of foresight. Our pre-existing idea of tragedy, therefore, is held up for scrutiny by this strange occurrence as the music denies a sympathetic reaction to Ugolino in the exact moment where one is expected.

[201] Donizetti is well-known for using recurring melodies in his compositions, as it proves to be fertile ground for creating or altering meaning. The immediate example that should come to mind is Lucia's mad scene from *Lucia de Lammermoor*, where a theme from a love duet (as played by the glass harmonica) is resignified to represent the character's schizophrenic imagination and psychological deterioration.

Figure 4.2: Donizetti, "Il Conte Ugolino," mm. 363-407 (reduction)

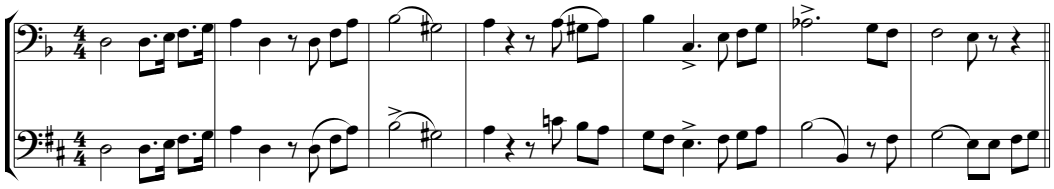


How should we read this strange occurrence? Michael Klein describes these curious moments as ironic, a contradiction of previously established musical conventions and narrative progress,[202] which performs several perceptual functions. First, the ironic musical event acts as a

[202] Klein, "Ironic Narrative," 98.

distancing device which separates the listener from the music in order to view the culmination of the narrative action. Second, the ironic reading subverts the conventional, exposing the musical code of tragedy as a hollow expression. Third, it forms an ironic commentary on the ideology of sympathy and the expectation of tragedy.[203] By perceiving Ugolino within this frame, the contradictory musical event aspires to disprove what had come before it; to poke holes in the 19th-century tragic interpretation of Ugolino that was suggested by the topical field and predicted archetype. It, therefore, subsumes the role of a master signifier[204] – in the ironic form of an abrupt mode change and melodic return – and opens up an ideological space that allows the listener to question the tragic conventions and pursue a clearer meaning from the musical structures surrounding this ironic musical event.[205]

Figure 4.3: Donizetti, "Il Conte Ugolino," melody comparison. Top line is from Unit 4 (mm. 29-35) and bottom line is from Unit 26 (mm. 363-9).



If this structural subversion yields a new interpretative strategy, then the purpose of the last three Units (26-28) is also called into question. To begin, several marked features further reinforce the significance of the master signifier and add further meaning to its ironic frame. While the majority of the composition uses clearly defined periodic phrases with frequent perfect

[203] Ibid.

[204] Ibid. Klein borrows the Lacanian terminology here. He defines the master signifier as "a sign that organizes our interpretation of a text . . . [which] restructures the narration of the past, making it readable in another, new way." Quote from Klein, "Ironic Narrative," 99.

[205] Unlike in Chapter Three, where I extended Almén's tragic musical narrative archetype to fit my analysis, I do not intend on aligning this chapter's argument to his ironic musical archetype. The majority of analytical and interpretative strategies I use in this chapter mostly rely on Klein's methodology of reading music ironically, which is a reaction to Almén's somewhat rigid system.

authentic cadences (thus, unmarked cadences), the final A section (Unit 26-28) features four different cadential oddities (see Example 4.2): a half cadence in m. 371, an elided incomplete authentic cadence in m. 378, a deceptive resolution to a ♭VI harmony in m. 389, and a final plagal motion in mm. 403-404. Although these features are not uncommon in the harmonic language of Donizetti, their relative absence earlier in the work and their condensed presentation here suggest a highly transgressive section of music.

Unit 26 forms a parallel period where the first half cadence in D major occurs in m. 371 and an imperfect authentic cadence in m. 378, yielding an unbalanced antecedent phrase (nine measures) and consequent phrase (seven measures). The consequent begins on an anxious anacrusis over the text "Ah Pisa." The cadential function at the end of the consequent phrase is also compressed, and elided into the beginning of Unit 27. Both of these features create the impression of urgent necessity, but as it continues into the next Unit this urgency is transformed into anger. A left-hand piano tremolo and a grating series of seventh chords and diminished harmonies leads to a syncopated descending D harmonic minor scale in the melody. The melodic resolution to D3 in m. 389 occurs over a ♭VI deceptive resolution. With harsh accented whole notes, the melody hammers past this chromatic chord into a return to D minor and the final perfect authentic cadence in m. 389. This musical progression from mocking (our ironic event) through agitation to anger delineates Dante's reaction to the monologue of Ugolino. When read with the text, starting from the half cadence in m. 371, a clearer meaning emerges:

Ahi Pisa, vituperio de le genti
del bel paese là dove 'l sì suona,
poi che i vicini a te punir son lenti,
muovasi la Capraia e la Gorgona,
e faccian siepe ad Arno in su la foce,
sì che'elli annieghi in te ogne persona! *Inferno*, Canto XXXIII, 79-84

(Ah Pisa, how you shame the people of that fair land where 'sì' is heard! Since your neighbors are so slow to punish you, may the islands of Capraia and Gorgona move in to block the Arno at its mouth and so drown every living soul in you!)[206]

This text clearly functions as an allocation of blame towards the people of Pisa, as Dante chastises the Italian city for their role in the deaths of Ugolino and his children. If we read this alongside the aforementioned musical transition of emotional states, Dante moves from mocking Ugolino and denying him a sympathetic reaction to a sense of dismay and anger towards Pisa. The anger, however, is not in reaction to Ugolino's death, but rather for the unnecessary deaths of the children. As noted by Robert Hollander, "Dante's apostrophe of Pisa, 'new Thebes,' blames the city not for killing Ugolino, which it had a reason to do (if not perhaps a correct one), but for killing the children. All of Dante's sympathy is lodged with the children, none with Ugolino."[207] The displacement of sympathy away from Ugolino and towards the children is further reinforced in Dante's subsequent lines:

Che se 'l conte Ugolino aveva voce
d'aver tradita te de le castella,
non dovei tu i figliuoi pore a tal croce. *Inferno*, Canto XXXIII, 85-87

(Even if Count Ugolino bore the name of traitor to your castles, you still should not have put his children to such torture.)[208]

Donizetti, however, ends his Ugolino adaptation with line 84 of the poem ("sì che'elli annieghi in te ogne persona!") and does not set line 85 through 87 to music. While I do not hope to speak for Donizetti in regards to his compositional choices, ending the setting on "sì che'elli annieghi in te ogne persona!" instead of "non dovei tu i figliuoi pore a tal croce." seems to be an aesthetic choice – favoring the powerful condemnation of Pisa over the specific reasoning for that placement of blame. We can, however, read lines 85-87 as a literary coda over Unit 28, the final

[206] Hollander, *The Inferno*, 608-609.
[207] Ibid., 620-621.
[208] Ibid., 608-609.

thirteen measures of the work. After two tonal reaffirmations of D minor, moving through a Neapolitan and fully-diminished seventh harmony,[209] two plagal motions are heard in mm. 403-404 that resolve to the final tonic chord (see Figure 4.2). As mentioned earlier, these plagal motions are absent from the rest of the setting and are marked in relation to the ubiquitous authentic cadential progressions. While much of this coda seems perfunctory, the plagal harmonic motion signifies a feeling of reverence, or perhaps a eulogy for the deceased children. Dante's anger towards Pisa is now reduced to a quiet resignation as he recalls the innocent victims of this terrible tragedy and solemnly memorializes their unintentional sacrifice.

To briefly review, a master signifier undercuts a 19th-century interpretation of Ugolino and forces a closer reading of the subsequent material, which clearly displaces a sympathetic response away from Ugolino and towards his children. How then should we view the character of Ugolino? Why is he unworthy of our sympathy? And by what analytical method can we read these possible meanings into the rest of the musical work? In the case of an ironic musical event challenging the logical emplotment of a narrative, Klein advises the use of a retrospective analysis to search for clues that point to this derailment of fulfilled expectation.[210] To use Frank Samarotto's terminology, the *retrospective causality* of a master signifier – a logic of continuation that explains the unexpected – facilitates the identification of features of initially minor importance that are now imbued with *retrospective incipience*.[211] Adapted for our understanding of Ugolino, we can retrospectively search Donizetti's setting for musical clues as to why the Dantean character does not deserve our sympathy.

---

[209] These chords, within the context of the coda, seem to function as a recapitulation of the tumultuous harmonies that are pervasive throughout Ugolino's monologue. However, just like the previous D minor key that was subverted by D major in Unit 26, these chromatic chords are undercut by the subsequent plagal motion – upending the harmonic order that we have become accustom to.

[210] Klein, "Ironic Narrative," 99.

[211] Frank Samarotto, "Determinism, Prediction, and Inevitability in Brahms's Rhapsody in E-flat major, op. 119, no 4," *Theory and Practice* 32 (2007): 76.

In order to employ this strategy, we need to move beyond the surface characteristics embedded in the semantic level of the music and pursue meaning within the deeper syntactic layer. Almén more thoroughly examines these layers of semiosis within his theory of musical narrative through the binary oppositions of unmarked structural Orders and marked Transgressions.[212] By assessing the characteristics of musical events in both isolation and in context, we can understand how similar elements musically influence and define each other. The assignment of these musical structures to the opposing poles of this dichotomy, therefore, allows the analyst to more thoroughly describe the capabilities of the structures to communicate meaning or infer a narrative emplotment. As seen in Table 4.2, a retrospective analysis of the musical Units preceding the master signifier reveal the following structural oppositions:[213] clear perfect authentic cadences vs. elided and deceptive cadences, standard approaches to predominant harmonies vs. tonic substitute chords as a predominant function, and melodic and harmonic wandering vs. moments of stasis. The Unit location of the structural Order and Transgressions, when appropriate, can be found in Table 4.2 in the musical narrative column. Part III and IV will unpack these structural dichotomies and reveal two musical tokens of *retrospective incipience*. When these tokens are connected to literary hermeneutic readings of Ugolino, a clearer understanding of the character becomes apparent.

[212] Almén "A Theory of Musical Narrative," 47-50. I only mention Almén's work here as I appropriate his methodology in defining the relationships between structural Orders and Transgressions; the following analysis does not attempt to follow Almén's description of an ironic archetype in its labelling of positive and negative valuations. However, just as the transgression defeats the order in an ironic archetype, each musical token *of retrospective incipience* that I discuss does defeat/undercut the previously established order, albeit temporarily. Also, please note that I have capitalized all subsequent uses of "Order" and "Transgression" to avoid confusion with the more standard meanings of these words.

[213] I have included the master signifier in this list of Order and Transgressions for posterity.

Table 4.2: Order and Transgression Chart for Donizetti's "Il Conte Ugolino"

	Order	Transgression	Literary Slant
1)	**D Minor:** tonal center of work	**D Major:** Return/stability in D Minor at the work's close is interrupted with sudden shift to parallel major when Ugolino ends his tragic monologue and Dante begins his scene description; this is paired with a **return of one of Ugolino's first melodies**	**Master signifier of Irony:** anti-sympathetic response; catalyst for retrospective search for meaning
2)	**Clear perfect authentic cadences**: Repeated, almost trite, use of the prototypical PAC motions to establish key centers/modulations	**Deceptive and ellided cadences** breaks patterns of expectations; **Plagal motions** after final PAC	**Ugolino the Insincere Narrator:** mistrust the words of Ugolino; intertexts to canto V and Virgils's *Aeneid*; dramatic monologue as a ficitionalization of self
3)	**Standard approaches to cadences using pre-dominant harmonies.**	**"Tonic substitute" (III and VI) chords** used for **pre-dominant function** before substantial PACs; cadences sound forced and insincere	
4)	**Melodic and harmonic wandering:** labelled as an unmarked feature in this context due to ubiquity of volatile pitch content	**Moments of stasis**: melodic repetitions of the same note through several measures; exaggerated use of pedal point	**Paternal Failings**: "turn to stone;" failure as a father and as a Christian; Biblical intertexts; true sinful nature of pride

Part III: The Insincere Narrator

If we trace the *retrospective causality* of our ironic master signifier, a pair of highly marked Units (13 and 24) emerge that contain two of the aforementioned structural Transgressions: marked cadences that divert a phrase's tonal trajectory (Transgression #2) and tonic substitute chords that incorrectly function as predominant harmonies within an authentic cadence (Transgression #3). Both of these structural Transgressions suggest a failure of musical syntax, as the harmonic progression towards tonal closure is somehow undermined. When aligned with some of the most pathos-inspired language and grim narrative details of the entire setting, these Transgressions expose Ugolino as an insincere narrator incapable of attaining sympathy from the reader.

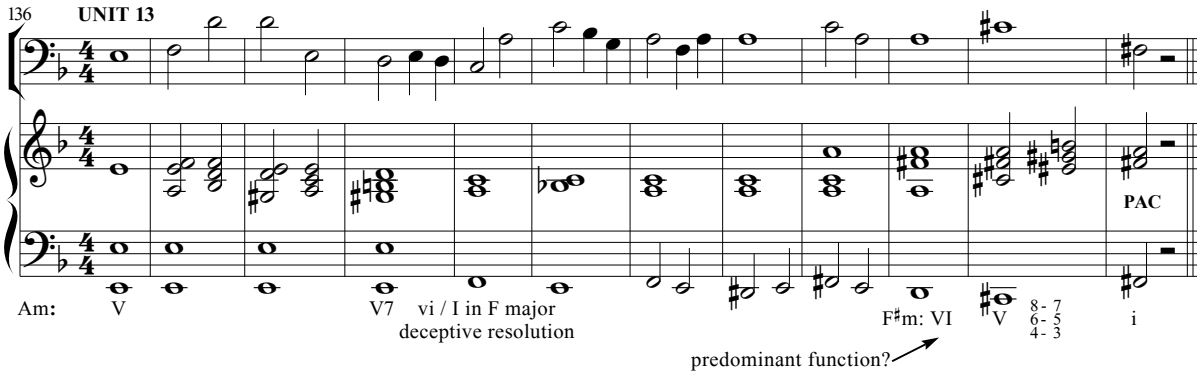
Unit 13 (mm. 136-147) occurs at the end of Ugolino's portentous dream (Section C). Here, the Dantean character dreams of his eventual demise, as symbolic representations of Ugolino (wolf) and his children (wolf cubs) are brutalized by Ruggieri (hunter and his hounds). The text set within Unit 13 is as follows:

In picciol corso mi parieno stanchi
lo padre e 'figli, e con l'agute scane
mi parea lor veder fender li fianchi. *Inferno*, Canto XXXIII, 34-36

(Father and sons, after a brief pursuit, seemed to be flagging, and it seemed to me I saw the flesh torn from their flanks by sharp incisors.)[214]

This violent imagery is matched by an equally transgressive musical setting. The key of E major is emphatically stated at the end of Unit 12, but the harmonic center is quickly altered at the beginning of Unit 13 (see Figure 4.4) through the use of bare open octaves in m. 136 and, in the following two measures, the repurposing of the bass E2 within a dominant seventh harmony in the key of A. The expectation of a resolution to an A chord is dashed, however, as the bass E2 slides upwards to an F2, deceptively resolving to a vi chord and the new key of F major. This moment can be marked as the first cadential Transgression (#2). Up to this point in the composition there has been a frequent, almost trite, use of perfect authentic cadences to reinforce the tonal center or facilitate modulations. This deceptive cadence, in relation to the ubiquity of authentic cadences featured before this, dashes the expectations of the listener as we are forcibly pushed into a new tonal area.

Figure 4.4: Donizetti, "Il Conte Ugolino," mm. 136-147 (reduction)



After a brief lower neighbor motion to a dominant chord, the harmony once again becomes ambiguous starting in m. 142. The vocal melody and right hand of the piano outline the pitches of an F major triad while the bass voice descends to a chromatic D♯2, forming a

[214] Hollander, *The Inferno*, 606-607.

dissonant common-tone diminished seventh chord, and then back up to an F♯ instead of the presumed resolution to an F. This descending third motion is repeated again in the bass with the newly stated F♯ moving to a D in m. 145, the same descent as before just now a half step higher. The resolution of this third-based motion to the bass D2, which is now stated within a D major harmony, is followed by an authentic cadence in the key of F♯ minor. The D major chord, therefore, is now obliged to function within the role of a predominant harmony, although it can be retroactively labelled as a VI chord and thus a tonic substitute function in the new key. As a result, the cadence in F♯ minor sounds forced and unprepared by the musical events that preceded it. This sudden cadence that uses a tonic substitute chord as a functional predominant harmony can also be read as a marked Transgression (#3). Since earlier authentic cadences have always been preceded by a standard IV or ii predominant harmony, this musical event signifies a veering from the path of expected harmonic functionality.[215]

Unit 24 (mm. 326-344) features Transgressions #2 and #3 within a similar literary and musical context to that of Unit 13. On the fifth day of his imprisonment, Ugolino describes the death of his son Gaddo and then painfully watches the other three children succumb to starvation, thereby fulfilling the morbid predictions of the preceding dream. Often considered the narrative climax of the entire canto, the text set within Unit 24 is as follows:

Quivi morì; e come tu mi vedi,
vid' io cascar li tre ad uno ad uno
tra 'l quinto dì e 'l sesto; ond' io mi diedi,
già cieco, a brancolar sovra ciascuno, *Inferno*, Canto XXXIII, lines 70-73

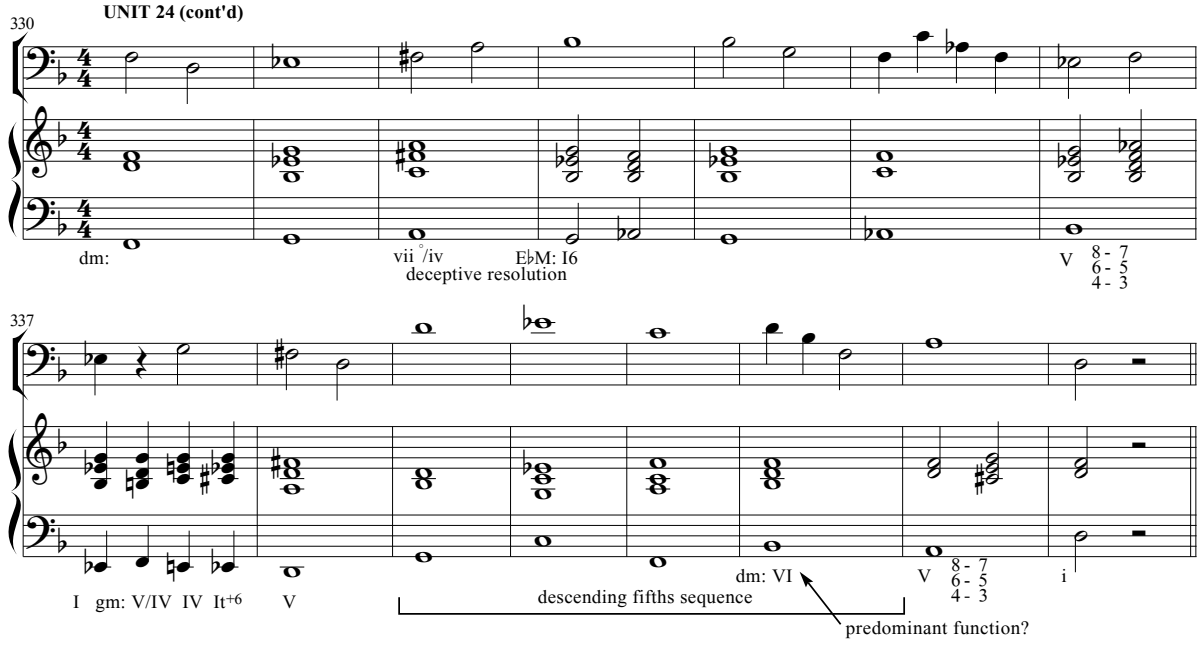
(There he died; and even as you see me now I watched the other three die, one by one, on the fifth and the sixth. And I began, already blind, to grope over their bodies,)[216]

[215] It is important to note that the tonic substitute chord in place of a predominant harmony is not an uncommon occurrence in both the works of Donizetti or in Romantic harmony. Here, this musical event becomes marked only due to the consistent use of predominant functions throughout the setting.

[216] Hollander, *The Inferno*, 608-609. The first clause of this excerpted text is set in Unit 23, not Unit 24.

As evident in Figure 4.5, Donizetti's setting of these words begins after a cadential reaffirmation of the tonic key of D minor followed by the return of a short motive from Unit 3.[217] In m. 330, a five-note melodic idea in the bass is sequenced upwards where the last iteration, harmonized by a secondary diminished chord, suggests a resolution to the subdominant, but instead deceptively resolves to the Neapolitan area of E♭ major. A descending melodic motion in m. 335 reinforces the ♭II tonic with a perfect authentic cadence in the following two measures. This tonal stability, however, is short lived as an abrupt increase in harmonic motion leads to a tonicization of G minor (iv of D minor) with a strong half cadence arrival on m. 338; this is the subdominant resolution of the Neapolitan interruption from m. 333. Similar to the deceptive cadence in Unit 13, the half cadence in G minor is a marked Transgression (#2), not only in its avoidance of a tonic resolution, but for its sudden, unexpected appearance after the Neapolitan interruption.

Figure 4.5: Donizetti, "Il Conte Ugolino," mm. 330-344 (reduction)



[217] This motive is not included in the musical reduction of Unit 24.

Following the half cadence in G minor, increased eighth-note motion in the piano part leads to a descending-fifths sequence connecting the G minor tonic harmony with the sequence goal of B♭ major. This is immediately succeeded by a perfect authentic cadence in D minor in mm. 343-344, thus bringing about a tonal return of D minor through the two predominant areas of ♭II and iv. The problem, however, lies in the transition from the sequence goal of the B♭ major chord to the D minor cadence. The former harmony seems to act as a modulatory pivot between the preceding key of G minor and the return to D, and therefore can be labelled as either a III or VI chord, respectively. In either case, this chord suggests a tonic substitute function although it is placed within a location where a predominant harmony should occur. This Transgressive musical event (#3) is analogous to its Unit 13 counterpart. In both circumstances, a tonic substitute chord is forced to act in a predominant role while the subsequent authentic cadence seems almost artificial and trite since it is not approached through its standard harmonic trajectory.

How can we read these structural Transgressions as tokens of *retroactive incipience*?[218] In other words, what can these marked syntactical elements tell us about the character of Ugolino and our refusal to grant him sympathy? In both Unit 13 and 24, marked deceptive and half cadences hastily divert the tonal trajectory away from its harmonic foundation. As they progress toward a sense of closure, in the form of perfect authentic cadences, there is only a half-hearted attempt to fully attain this resolution; both harmonic progressions stall on a tonic substitute chord instead of continuing to the cadence through a predominant. When paired with two sets of poignant texts that should present Ugolino in his most persuasive and passionate state, the music falls short – whatever motivation that compels Ugolino in his act of story-telling is rendered ineffective.

[218] Samarotto, "Determinism, Prediction, and Inevitability," 76.

The failure of musical syntax to communicate this tragic story can be read in parallel to the failure of Ugolino to attain sympathy from the reader or listener. While these failures occur during the most gripping sections of Dante's text (starting in Section C), it is not necessary to begin our interpretation of his faults that far into the monologue. In fact, many Dante scholars believe that we should withhold our sympathy and mistrust the words of Ugolino by closely reading his very first utterance:

Poi cominciò: 'Tu vuo' ch'io rinovelli
disperato dolor che 'l cor mi preme
già pur pensando, pria ch'io ne favelli.' *Inferno*, Canto XXXIII, 4-6

(Then he began: 'You ask me to revive the desperate grief that racks my heart even in thought, before I tell it.')[219]

Even taken in isolation, Ugolino declares his pathetic state and seems to search for sympathy. These words, however, should not be interpreted by themselves, but rather read as an intertext with the Aeneas's opening speech to Dido, from Virgil's *Aeneid* – "infandum, regina, iubes renovare dolorem," ("You command me, O queen, to renew my unspeakable grief,")[220] which was already paraphrased by the lustful sinner Francesca da Rimini[221] earlier in Dante's poem:

E quella a me: 'Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Ne la miseria; e ciò sa 'l tuo dottore.' *Inferno*, Canto V, 121-123

(And she to me: 'There is no greater sorrow than to recall our time of joy in wretchedness – and this your teacher knows.')[222]

---

[219] Hollander, *The Inferno*, 604-605.

[220] *Aeneid*, II, line 3. Via: Robert Hollander, "Inferno XXXIII, 37-74: Ugolino's Importunity," *Speculum* 59, no. 3 (July 1984): 550.

[221] Francesca da Rimini is located in the second circle of Hell, punished for her sin of lust. She is murdered by her husband after she is caught kissing Paolo, her husband's brother, during a moment of passion while reading the story of Lancelot and Guinevere. This is another highly sympathetic character, but in this case Dante does succumb to his own pity and faints at the end of the canto.

[222] Hollander, *The Inferno*, 98-99. The reference to "your teacher" is of course Virgil, which should further reinforce this intertext to the *Aeneid*.

All three characters quoted here reference their tremendous grief when asked to recount their story, but it is Francesca's words that are most significant in relation to Ugolino – as they extract the greatest sympathy from Dante.[223] The keen reader, however, notes Dante's regret in exhibiting this sympathy and does not get deceived by the similar rhetorical opening in Canto XXXIII. Robert Hollander believes that Dante insinuates these intertexts in order to read Ugolino as an "self-exculpating narrative just as we have gradually learned to read Francesca's similarly distorted and self-serving version of her history . . . we should distance ourselves from this last 'sympathetic sinner' in Hell."[224]

Through this awareness of Ugolino's insincerity and our own emotional distance from his pleas, we can see Ugolino as a character that ignores his own sin and only narrates the crimes committed against him as to more effectively receive sympathy. Giuseppe Mazzotta describes this act as a *fictionalization of self*, "they deceive themselves into thinking that the reality they construct will be everybody's accepted reality."[225] If the reader believes this "fictionalized" account of suffering, Ugolino's tragic tale is remarkably effective. Conversely, if we read between the lines and detect the intertextual relationship to Canto V, Ugolino's monologue becomes deceitful; he crafts a story that uses some of the most powerful language in the *Inferno* for a singular, selfish reason – to enable a sympathetic reaction.

Within Units 13 and 24 of Donizetti's adaptation, we can read the musical Transgressions that underlie the textual climaxes as a signification of Ugolino's insincere nature. Just as the musical syntax fails to convincingly achieve cadential closure, Ugolino also fails to represent himself truthfully and thereby falls short in garnering our sympathy. This musical token of

[223] Dante faints after Francesca finishes her tale.
[224] Hollander, "Ugolino's Importunity," 550.
[225] Guiseppe Mazzotta, *Reading Dante* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 111.

retroactive incipience supports the presence of the ironic master signifier and justifies our initial displacement of sympathy away from Ugolino and towards the children. Nevertheless, our understanding of the nature of Ugolino's sin cannot be addressed through these particular structural Transgressions. For this reason, we must move onto the more pervasive marked feature that alludes to the religious and moral failings of this Dantean character – that of structural stasis.

Part IV: The Failings of a Father

The second musical token of *retroactive incipience* lies in Transgressive occurrences of structural stasis which is marked against the highly volatile use of pitch throughout the setting. As claimed in Part II, Donizetti adheres to the expectations of a tragic topical field throughout the majority of his adaptation. This is exemplified in his use of erratic melodies with frequent large intervallic leaps, chromatically jarring harmonies, and a constantly shifting sense of tonality.[226] All three of these structural elements suggest intense emotional change, paralleling the grief-stricken and unstable psyche of Ugolino. There are musical moments, however, where this dynamic topical field is subverted in favor of one that is far more static. These moments of stasis (Transgression #4), which manifest themselves through single-note melodic repetitions and bass pedal points, are densely packed in between Unit 17 and Unit 23, corresponding with the onset of the children's suffering and ending with their inevitable deaths. From the surface these structural features all seem to reference a single line of text: in response to his children's cries of hunger and pleas for help, Ugolino states "Io non piangëa, sì dentro impetrai" ("I was so turned to stone inside I did not weep").[227] The stoic reserve exhibited by Ugolino can easily be

[226] These features can be easily found in any of the musical examples discussed in this paper so far, with the latter also noticeable in the key column of Table 4.1.

[227] Hollander, *The Inferno* 606-607. This is from Canto XXXIII, line 49.

translated into music through the simple text painting of the word "stone." But, as we will see below, the relative frequency of these static occurrences and their interaction with the location of the titular text suggest an interpretation that goes beyond this literal text setting.

The first moment of stasis occurs eight measures before the aforementioned "turn to stone" and foreshadows the imminent emotional stagnation. Unit 17 (mm. 194-206; Figure 4.6) begins with an aggressive, accented bass motive in C minor that is harshly repeated two measures later outlining a secondary diminished chord of the subdominant harmony. While the bass does resolve to the IV chord as expected, the vocal line descends to an A♭3 in m. 200 and then obstinately repeats for a full four measures (the A♭ is enharmonically respelled as a G♯ in m. 203). The stationary A♭s are clearly marked from a melodic perspective, but they are counteracted with volatile harmonic motion. The bass descends in a whole-tone scale[228] – F, E♭, C♯, B – while the harmonization of this seemingly atonal moment ascends by thirds – F minor, A♭ major seventh, C♯ minor, E major. While the progression is indeed functional, as it facilitates a modulation to A major in m. 204, the surface affect is that of emotional reconciliation – the stoic outer voice at war with the tumultuous inner voice.

A similar musical event occurs in Unit 19 beginning in m. 237 (see Figure 4.7). The stoic melody is frozen on A3, but has now permeated the accompaniment with octave tremolos between A4 and A5. Instead of the volatile harmony from Unit 17, there is utter harmonic ambiguity as the chromatically ascending bass is the only voice that moves. The thin texture and lack of harmonic motion here creates the impression of emptiness – now the tumult has succumbed to the stoic.

[228] We can also read the whole-tone scale as a form of stasis since it subverts prototypical harmonic trajectory towards tonic through its avoidance of half-step resolutions.

Figure 4.6: Donizetti, "Il Conte Ugolino," mm. 191-204

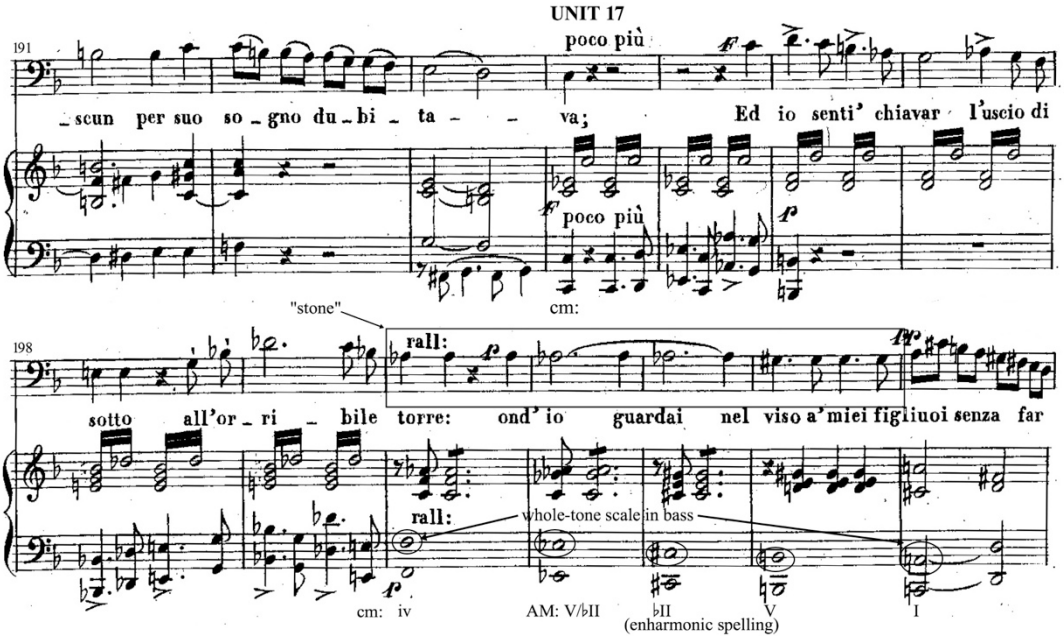
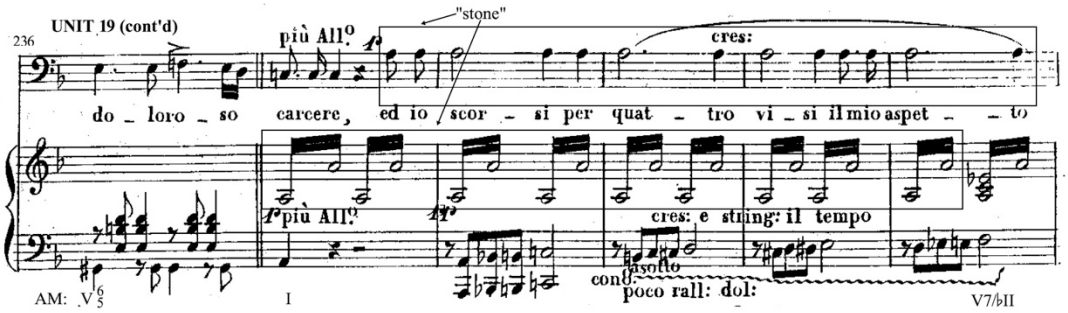


Figure 4.7: Donizetti, "Il Conte Ugolino," mm. 236-241



The musical depiction of "stone" also manifests itself as bass pedal points, functioning both as tonic and dominant prolongations. As seen in Figure 4.8, Unit 18 (mm. 206-232) begins in A major with an A2 in the bass serving as a tonic prolongational pedal point over the titular text "Io non piangëa, sì dentro impetrai." Meanwhile, the melodic line seems oblivious to the meaning of this stoic text, as the vocalist quickly leaps up a fourth and down an octave in m. 209, encompassing the wide range of an eleventh by the end of the phrase. The bass note A2 achieves temporary reprieve in m. 211 as it ascends to a C♯3, but it once again becomes frozen, only this time functioning as a dominant pedal in the relative minor key of F♯. This pedal point is

unrelenting; besides the upper neighbor motions in mm. 216-218, the C♯ is fixed as a bass pedal through m. 227 even as the underlying chords move away from its prolongation of the dominant harmony.[229] The melodic line continues its previous agitated character, most notably with its rapid, forceful descents starting in the high bass voice tessitura: C♯4 in m. 213 and D4 in mm. 220 and 224. While this Transgression is present throughout the entirety of Unit 18, it seems that the active melody and underlying harmonic shifts within the bass prolongations seek to the obscure the incessant repeating bass pedal– attempting to deny the importance of the stoic reaction within the musical narrative.

Moving past the three examples from Unit 17, 18, and 19, the static musical Transgression tenaciously persists. Unit 20 features tonic and dominant prolongations in F minor with bass pedal points. Unit 21 contains an eight-measure bass tremolo on C2 over a modulatory chord progression. The Transgression's final appearance is similar in Unit 22 and 23. In the former, a pounding eighth-note bass pedal on A2 and A3, $\hat{3}$ of F minor, is respelled as a dominant prolongation in the dramatic return to the home key of D minor. The latter features the same bass pedal as a temporary tonicization of A minor, but quickly returns to D minor.

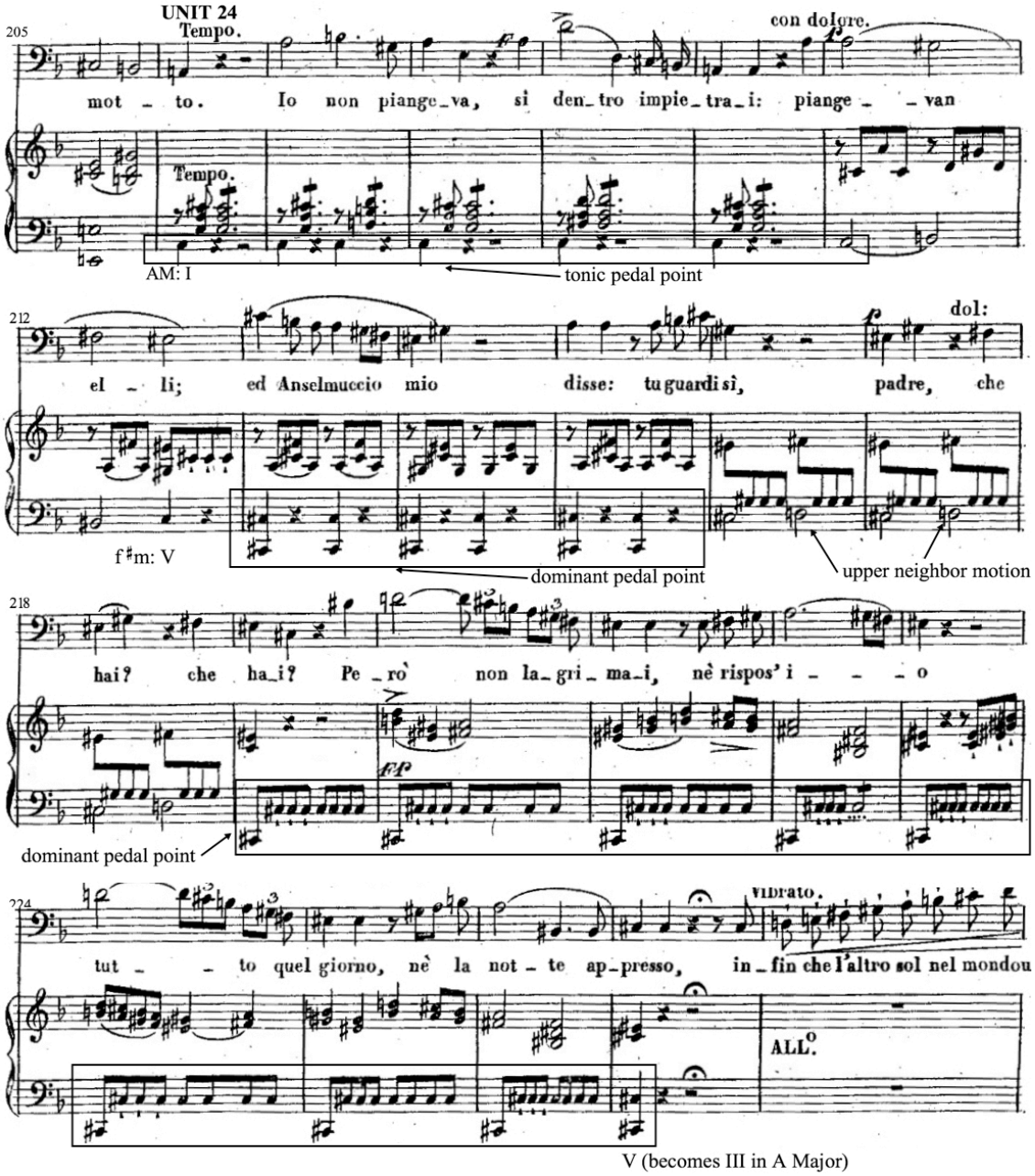
While the text "turn to stone" is relegated to only a single utterance in Unit 18, the musical structure that underlies Units 17 through 23 obstinately refuses to move past this signification of stoic reserve. The sheer abundance of single-note melodic repetitions and bass pedal points forces the listener to recall Ugolino's detached response to his children's pleas until the death of the first child in m. 325.[230] The significance of this musical Transgression, therefore, surpasses its use as a clichéd appearance of text painting and demands an interpretation that

[229] It is also important to note that the final dominant C♯ in m. 227 is followed by a forced cadence in A major. The C♯, therefore, can be respelled as a III chord in the new key – once again yielding a tonic substitute harmony in place of a traditional predominant (transgression #3).

[230] Ugolino's musical reaction to the death of his children was discussed in Part III.

explains its widespread presence and unpacks the textual meaning. What do the children actually ask of Ugolino? How can we then read his response, or lack thereof?

Figure 4.8: Donizetti, "Il Conte Ugolino," mm. 205-228



Returning to Dante's poem, Ugolino's stony silence is in response to two preceding events: the nailing shut of the doors to the "Tower of Hunger" (line 46-48) and the children's request for bread. The latter is stated in the following text:

Quando fui desto innanzi la dimane
pianger senti' fra 'l sonno i miei figliuoli
ch'eran con meco, e dimandar del pane. *Inferno*, Canto XXXIII, lines 37-39

(When I awoke before the dawn of day I heard my children, in that prison with me, weep in their sleep and ask for bread)

The close proximity of children asking for "bread" and Ugolino's turn to "stone" connects this Dantean tale to a key passage in Luke's Gospel, 11:5-13, Christ's parable of the importunate friend. In this story, a friend requests bread from a baker in order to feed his houseguest. The baker is in bed and his children are already asleep, so he refuses to comply to his friend's request. Jesus Christ comments on the parable, that if the friend perseveres in his importuning, he will eventually receive his bread: "If a son shall ask for bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? (Luke 11:11). Beyond the shared vocabulary, the similarities between the parable and Canto XXXIII are striking. Dante saw in Luke 11 a source of inspiration and reversed the narrative to fit Ugolino's story: the children are now the importuners, seeking bread from their father; the friend that knocks at the door are Ruggieri's unseen agents that nail the door shut; and Ugolino, as the recipient of the children's importuning, remains as stone-hearted as the baker.[231] Whereas the baker eventually gives in to the friend's request, Ugolino gives his children only stony silence.[232]

While Ugolino is powerless to give his children the physical nourishment they wanted, we should not assume that they were asking for "bread" in the literal sense. The similarities to Christ's parable suggests that it was a spiritual bread that the children craved. As stated by Robert Hollander:

> Ugolino fails to acknowledge the only antidote to his and his children's spiritual malaise held out to him by Scripture. He could have, for instance, told the children that he was

[231] Hollander, "Ugolino's Importunity," 553.

[232] Yet, ironically it is Ugolino who importunes Dante for sympathy throughout his tragic monologue, as we discussed in Part III.

> grieved to have been the unwilling cause of their torment (he rather pointedly does not do so). He also could have urged them to believe that their suffering would be only momentary, that they should hope for a better end, one that might be achieved if only they would pray.[233]

Ugolino's inability to understand the true meaning of his children's words and provide them the spiritual bread that they so desired is indicative of his own paternal failings. His "turn to stone" should not be viewed as a stoic reserve or a tragic dignity, but rather the failings of a father to provide physical and spiritual comfort to his children in the last moments their lives. In regards to Donizetti's setting, we can read the pervasive musical Transgressions of stasis as Ugolino's continued refusals to provide his children the spiritual bread they asked for and certainly deserved. Despite their apparent suffering, the children are met with nothing but the static disregard of fixed pitch melodies and bass pedal points. It is no wonder that these structural Transgressions disappear once the children succumb to starvation, as only then could Ugolino escape the obligations of paternal responsibility.

Part V: Reading Irony as the Serial Typology

In our search for the *retrospective causality* of the ironic master signifier, two musical tokens of *retrospective incipience* have emerged: a fusion of marked cadences and tonic substitute chords that function as predominant harmonies suggest Ugolino's insincere, deceitful nature; and the pervasive use of musical stasis elucidates Ugolino's paternal failings. While these tokens clearly delineate the moral and religious reasons why Ugolino does not deserve our sympathy, they also direct our attention to a larger idea about our understanding of the Dantean character. The actions of Ugolino, whether in his political treason, fictionalization of self, or neglect of his children, converge upon the true nature of his sin – that of a proud will. While he

[233] Hollander, "Ugolino's Importunity," 554.

is being punished in the second Ring of the ninth Circle of Hell (Antenora), a location reserved for the treacherous, Ugolino is not just guilty of switching sides in a politically divided Pisa. His pride facilitates his own self-serving political maneuvers, fuels his unrelenting desire to feed on sympathy, and hardens his emotional response in the time of his children's greatest need.
In this way, Donizetti's adaptation presents the character as a prideful archetype, one that represents the entire ninth Circle of Hell, not just the second Ring of the final Circle or Canto XXXIII.[234] This narrative "zooming-out" places Ugolino back into the moral geography of the *Inferno*, separating itself from the episodic and tragic reading that was common in the 19th-century.

According to Hede's Dantean reading typologies, this interpretation can be classified as a segmental-serial type: *segmental* references a specific structural subdivision within the *Divine Comedy*; and *serial* broadens the area of analysis to include narrative features located outside of a single character episode.[235] By offering an interpretation that rejects a sympathetic reaction to the pathetic tale, the perceiver is forced to acknowledge the flaws of the character and situate him within the Dantean framework of sins and their punishments. As a listener, we become consciously aware of Ugolino's placement in Antenora for his traitorous acts, the Ninth Circle of Hell for his sins of pride, and (possibly) the entire infernal landscape, due to the intertextual warning to mistrust the traitor's words in Canto V. This segmental-serial reading treats Ugolino as just one sinful story within the grand architecture of the *Inferno* – a holistic perspective that

[234] Consequently, if pride is the root of Ugolino's sins, then our understanding of his *contrapasso* would need to shift as well. In Chapter Two, we noted that the tragic interpretation of the tale generated a *contrapasso* founded upon Ugolino's inability to satiate his hunger for revenge. This reading would no longer be valid. Instead, we are forced to see the character's pride as a catalyst for his attempts to force sympathy from Dante, presumably to encourage the poet to restore Ugolino's reputation in the mortal world. Dante's unsympathetic reaction, therefore, is a sign that the sinner's torment will continue as his tarnished reputation will not be mended.

[235] Hede, *Reading Dante*, 1-39.

relies on a thorough understanding of the canticle through a religious and moral lens, not just through the tragic tint of Risorgimento Italy.

The ironic reading of Donizetti's "Il Conte Ugolino" that is presented here is not just about unpacking structural contradictions or tracing the failure of a sympathetic reaction, but rather how the subversion of a cultural ideology can open a rich interpretative space primed for further analysis. By merging the analytical ideas of Klein, Almén, and Samarotto with Dantean literary criticism we can move towards a better understanding of a musical adaptation that can transform a superficial reading into one of hermeneutic clarity.

CONCLUSION

To understand a musical adaptation of literature without a proper knowledge of its literary source is to run the risk of superficiality or misinterpretation. The goal of this project, first and foremost, was to incorporate Dantean literary hermeneutics into musicological discourse, in order to study how we might read literary interpretation through the analysis of musical structure. The methodology that I have proposed in this thesis seeks to bridge this gap through the appropriation of the analytical concepts of Jesper Hede (Dantean reading typologies) and Byron Almén (theory of musical narrative), as well as Robert Hatten and Michael Klein. By fusing these concepts together, we were able to trace the emplotment of musical events that aligned with particular classifications of interpretation. I applied this methodology to the analysis of two small song settings of the character Count Ugolino from Canto XXXIII of the *Inferno*, composed by Gaetano Donizetti (1828) and Francesco Morlacchi (1832) – revealing two highly divergent interpretations.

In Chapter Two, I examined three different layers of sociocultural context surrounding the composition of the Ugolino adaptations: the ideals of 19th-century Italian Romanticism, the revival and re-accentuation of Dantean literature, and the interpretation of the tale of Ugolino as seen through contemporaneous scholarly commentaries. Through these discussions, I proposed the notion of Ugolino's *binary of suffering*, a tragic interpretation of the Dantean character that sympathized with the eternal pain of his past and present. In Chapter Three, I presented an analysis of Morlacchi's adaptation that aligned with this 19th-century interpretative binary. By

proposing a flawed form of Almén's tragic archetype, I connected Morlacchi's musical conception of Ugolino to what Hede would describe as an episodic reading of the *Inferno* (a microanalysis of the character that ignored his sin and location in the underworld's moral geography). In Chapter Four, I discussed the complications of reading Donizetti's adaptation within the same interpretative frame as the Morlacchi, and instead offered an analysis that subverted this tragic understanding. Here, I appropriated music-analytical ideas from Almén, Klein, and Samarotto to track an ironic unfolding of the musical narrative. This allowed me to link the ironic musical structures to modern critical interpretations of Ugolino, thus exposing his sinful nature and paternal failings that were often ignored by Italian Romantic readers. This interpretation resituated Ugolino into the moral geography of the *Inferno* and aligned with Hede's serial typology (a "zoomed-out" perspective of the character that acknowledges the nature of his sin, punishment, location, and connection to other subdivisions of the poem).

Future Applications

This project forms the beginning of what I hope will become a more extensive inquiry into musical adaptations of Dantean literature. As I alluded to above, the musicological discipline has for far too long tried to understand these works separate from the rich literary criticism and hermeneutics of Dantean scholarship. In the two analytical chapters, I offered various methods to bridge this gap: viewing Morlacchi's adaptation through 19th-century Italian commentaries and reading Donizetti's work through modern critical interpretations that elucidate ironic musical structures. Whether we filter the interpretation of a musical adaptation through its contemporaneous understanding or possibly one that is anachronistic to it, we are uncovering

ways to more thoroughly comprehend the literature and, as such, reveal a far richer musical meaning.

Besides the adaptations studied in this project, most of musical settings of Canto XXXIII that were written during the 19th century have been lost to history. Fortunately, extant adaptations of Francesca da Rimini from *Inferno* Canto V are plentiful; these range from small song settings to full-scale operas and ballets. Further research here could include a comparative study of 19th- and 20th-century Italian operatic settings of Francesca and how they align with the corresponding commentaries of their era,[236] or how the choice of genre might affect the musical language used to depict the character. Beyond Italian adaptations, several Russian composers turned to Francesca for musical inspiration, such as Tchaikovsky, Napravnik, and Rachmaninoff. While there is a dearth of Russian critical commentaries on Dante, a closer analysis of these works might resonate with literary trends of its own country, or specific Italian or English schools of Dantean thought.

This fusion of literary and musicological work could also be applied to singular composers. In Chapter Four, I mentioned several other Dante-inspired works that were written by Gaetano Donizetti. A closer examination of those compositions might yield further insight as to how the composer might have read Dante and how this might have changed over the course of his career. Similarly, composers like Franz Liszt and Riccardo Zandonai wrote several Dantean musical settings; an analogous line of inquiry here could also yield fruitful results.

Beyond the analysis of music inspired by Dante, the methodology outlined in this thesis can be extended to other literature-based musical adaptations. This is especially true with literature that already has a rich hermeneutic history that the analyst can draw from. For

[236] I would be particularly interested in the operas of Saverio Mercadente (1828) and Riccardo Zandonai (1914).

example, the literary scholarship surrounding the tragedies and comedies of William Shakespeare is prolific and can readily be applied to our understanding of the countless musical adaptations inspired by the great English poet. The same can be said of Goethe's *Faust* and musical settings of Biblical stories. A particularly interesting extension to this research could involve in an in-depth analysis of Richard Strauss' settings of Nietzchean philosophy.

Finally, in the scholarship of musical analysis, very few theories address the simultaneous contemplation of both musical and literary narrative. While Almén's theories were invaluable to each of my analyses, its rigid methodology and implicit desire to impose an archetype onto a programmatic work is problematic. This is especially true when the analyst must reconcile a literary interpretation that is superimposed onto a musical narrative – you cannot examine just one or the other, but both in tandem. In these cases, to effectively employ this methodology we must rely on our own intuition to determine an archetype and then *flexibly* apply Almén's methodology to support the analytical argument – which might take on different forms depending on the challenges of the work. In Chapter Four, I appropriated Almén's Order-Transgression system of oppositions to organize my analysis, but felt that the ironic archetype was too restricting to properly explicate my argument. Instead, I followed Michael Klein's ironic reading strategies to unfold the musical narrative. A different set of challenges presented itself in Morlacchi's adaptation. Both the literary and musical narrative suggested a tragic archetype, but its rigid construction did not properly align with the values and structural emplotment of the work. By presenting a more malleable version of the archetype that allowed valuation shifts and atypical resolutions, a far more nuanced and compelling reading emerged. I believe that Almén's theory of musical narrative is still vital for the analysis of musical adaptations of literature, but with the complicated addition of literary interpretation we must be able to appropriate it as

flexibly as possible. To reference a critical axiom of musical analysis, we must let the music speak for itself or run the danger of distorting its ability to communicate.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbate, Carolyn. *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Agawu, Kofi. *Music as Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music*. United States of America: Oxford University Press, 2009.

—. *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music*. United States of America: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Alighieri, Dante. *Inferno*. Translated by Anthony Esolen. United States: Random House, 2003.

—. *The Inferno of Dante*. Translated by Robert Pinsky. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994.

—. *The Inferno*. Translated by Robert Hollander and Jean Hollander. United States: Anchor Books, 2000.

—. *Purgatorio*. Translated by Robert Hollander and Jean Hollander. United States: Anchor Books, 2004.

Allitt, John Stewart. *Donizetti: In the Light of Romanticism and the Teaching of Johann Simon Mayr*. Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element Books Ltd, 1991.

—. *Donizetti and the Tradition of Romantic Love: A Collection of Essays on a Theme*. England: Cotswold Press, 1975.

Almén, Byron. *A Theory of Musical Narrative*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008.

—. "Narrative Archetypes: A Critique, Theory, and Method of Narrative Analysis," *Journal of Music Theory* 47, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 1-39.

Almén, Byron and Edward Pearsall (ed). *Approaches to Meaning in Music*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.

Ashbrook, William. *Donizetti*. London: Cassell & Company Ltd, 1965.

—. *Donizetti and His Operas*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

—. "Donizetti, Gaetano." in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*. 1: 1206-21.

Bakhtin, Mikhail Mikhailovich. “Discourse in the Novel.” In *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, edited by Michael Holquist, translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, 259-422. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

Balthazar, S.L. “Mayr, Simon.” In *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 16:178-83.

Barblan, Guglielmo. “Donizetti in Naples.” *The Donizetti Society Journal*, no. 1 (1974): 105-19.

Barricelli, Jean-Pierre. “Dante in the Arts: A Survey.” Dante Studies, with *The Annual Report of the Dante Society* 114 (1996): 79-93.

Benfell, V Stanley. *The Biblical Dante*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011.

Black, John. “Donizetti and his Contemporaries in Naples 1822-1848: A Study in Relative Popularity.” *The Donizetti Society Journal*, no. 6 (1988): 11-27.

Bonaventura, Arnoldo. *Dante e la musica*. Livorno: Raffaello Giusti, 1904.

Bosco, Umbero (ed). *Enciclopedia dantesca*. Six volumes. Rome: Instituto dell Enciclopedia Italiana, 1970-6.

Brumana, Biancamaria and Galliano Ciliberti (ed.). *Francesco Morlacchi a la musica del suo tempo* (1784-1841). Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1986.

Brumana, Biancamaria. “Morlacchi, Francesco.” In *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, 3:470-1.

Caddy, Ian. “Donizetti’s Cantata Canto d’Ugolino.” *Donizetti Society Website*, http://www.donizettisociety.com/Articles/articlecantodugolino.html (accessed November 20, 2015).

Cassaro, James P. *Gaetano Donizetti: A Guide to Research*. New York: Garland Publishing, 2000.

Ciabattoni, Francesco. *Dante’s Journey to Polyphony*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010.

Ciccarelli, Andrea. “Dante and Italian Culture from the Risorgimento to World War I.” *Dante Studies with the Annual Report of the Dante Society*, no. 119 (2001): 125-154.

Ciliberti, Galliano. “La produzione giovanile di Morlaccchi.” In *Francesco Morlacchi e la musica del suo tempo*. edited by Biancamaria Brumana and Galliano Ciliberti, 297-336. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1986.

Cone, Edward T. “Words into Music: The Composer’s Approach to the Text.” In *Sound and Poetry*, edited by Northrop Frye, 3-15. New York: Columbia Press, 1957.

—. *The Composer’s Voice*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.

Contini, Gianfranco. “Philology and Dante Exegesis” *Dante Studies with the Annual Report of the Dante Society*, no. 87 (1969): 1-32.

Cooper, Richard. “Dante on the Nineteenth-Century Stage.” In *Dante on View*, edited by Antonella Braida and Luisa Cale, 23-37. England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007.

Coppola, Catherine. “The Elusive Fantasy: Genre, Form, and Program in Tchaikovsky’s ‘Francesca da Rimini.’” *19th-Century Music* 22, no. 2 (1998): 169-189.

Curtius, Ernst Robert. “Dante.” In *Modern Critical Interpretations: Dante’s Divine Comedy*, edited by Harold Bloom, 3-12. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987.

Dahlhaus, Carl. *Nineteenth-Century Music*. Translated by J. Bradford Robinson. California: University of California Press, 1989.

Dante Lab Reader. http://dantelab.dartmouth.edu/reader (accessed November 24, 2015)

Davis, Charles T. “Dante and Italian Nationalism.” In *A Dante Symposium: In Commemoration of the 700th Anniversary of the Poet’s Birth (1265-1965)*, edited by William de Sua and Gino Rizzo, 199-213. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1965.

De Sanctis, Francesco. “On Ugolino.” In *Dante*, edited by Harold Bloom, 43-8. New York, Chelsea House, 2001.

—. *History of Italian Literature*. Translated by Joan Redfern. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931.

Donizetti, Gaetano. “Il Canto XXXIII Della Divina Commedia Di Dante (Il Conte Ugolino),” Antologia Classica Musicale. In Gazzetta Musicale di Milano. Milan: Ricordo, 1843.

Emerson, Caryl. “Bakhtin and Intergeneric Shift: The Case of Boris Godunov,” *Studies in 20th Century Literature* 9, no. 1 (1984): 145-167.

Falkeid, Unn. “Petrarch in the Footsteps of Dante.” In *Dante: A Critical Reappraisal*, edited by Unn Falkeid, 187-96. Norway: Oslo Academic Press, 2008.

Foscolo, Ugo. *Studi su Dante*. Firenze: Felice le Monnier, 1981.

Freccero, John. “Bestial Sign and Bread of Angels: Inferno XXXII and XXXIII.” In *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion*, edited by Rachel Jacoff, 152-66. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986.

Godt, Irving. "An Essay on Word Painting." *College Music Symposium*, vol. 24, no.2 (Fall 1984): 118-29.

Gossett, Philip. *Anna Bolena and the Artistic Maturity of Gaetano Donizetti*. England: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Hatten, Robert S. *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004.

—. *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Havely, Nick (ed). *Dante in the Nineteenth Century*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2011.

Hede, Jesper. "Ranking Types of Reading: Descriptive and Epic Readings in Dante Studies." In *Dante: A Critical Reappraisal*, edited by Unn Falkeid, 69-89. Norway: Oslo Academic Press, 2008.

—. *Reading Dante*. United States of America: Lexington Books, 2007.

Hollander, Robert. "Inferno XXXIII, 37-74: Ugolino's Importunity." *Speculum*, vol. 59, no. 3 (July 1984): 549-555.

—. *Dante: A Life in Works*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

Hollander. "Ugolino: Dante's Last Sympathetic Sinner." *YouTube*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yq1xrDU5eXM (accessed November 24, 2015).

Hutcheon, Linda and Siobhan O'Flynn. *A Theory of Adaptation*, 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Ivanovitch, Roman. "The Brilliant Style." In *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, edited by Danuta Mirka, 330-54. United States of America: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Jacoff, Rachel (ed). *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, 2nd edition. United States: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Jossa, Stefano. "Politics vs. Literature: The Myth of Dante and the Italian National Identity." In *Dante in the Long Nineteenth Century: Nationality, Identity, and Appropriation*, edited by Aida Audeh and Nick Havely, 31-69. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Kimbell, David. *Italian Opera*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Klein, Michael. "Chopin's Fourth Ballade as Musical Narrative." *Music Theory Spectrum* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 39-40.

—. “Ironic Narrative, Ironic Reading.” *Journal of Music Theory* 53, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 95-136.

Lipke, William. “Lizst’s Dante Fantasia: An Historical and Musical Study.” DMA diss., University of Cincinnati (1990).

Longyear, R.M. and Rodobaldo Tibaldi. “Zingarelli, Niccolò.” In *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 27:844-6.

Longyear, Rey M. *Nineteenth-Century Romanticism in Music*. United States: Prentice Hall, 1988.

Mazzotta, Guiseppe. *Reading Dante*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.

—. “Why Did Dante Write the Comedy? Why and How Do We Read It?” In *Dante Now: Current Trends in Dante Studies*, edited by TJ Cachey Jr, 63-82. United States of America: University of Notre Dame, 1995.

McClary, Susan. *Conventional Wisdom: The Content of Musical Form*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000.

Miller, James. *Dante & the Unorthodox: The Aesthetics of Transgression*. Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005.

Morlacchi, Francesco. “Parte del Canto XXXIII dell’Inferno nella Divina Commedia di Dante.” Milan: Ricordo, 1834.

Nattiez, Jean-Jacques. *Music and Discourse*. Translated by Carolyn Abbate, 3rd ed. United States: Princeton University Press, 1990.

O’Neill, Tom. “Foscolo and Dante.” In *Dante Comparisons*, edited by Eric Haywood and Barry Jones, 109-36. Ireland: Irish Academic Press Limited, 1985.

Osborne, Charles. *The Bel Canto Operas of Rossini, Donizetti, and Bellini*. Great Britain: Methuen, 1994.

Parker, Roger. “Opera, The 19th Century.” In *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 18:434-44.

Peretti, Paolo. *La divina commedia in musica: dante e i compositori marchigiani nell’ottocento e primo novecento*. Ancona: Studio Picena, 2013.

Petrobelli, Pierluigi. “On Dante and Italian Music: Three Moments.” *Cambridge Opera Journal*, vol. 2, no. 3 (Nov. 1990): 219-249.

Plantiga, Leon. *Romantic Music: A History of Musical Style in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. New York: WW Norton & Company, 1984.

Princeton Dante Project. http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/pdp (accessed November 24, 2015).

Raffa, Guy P. *The Complete Danteworlds: A Reader's Guide to the Divine Comedy*. United States: University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Ragg, Lonsdale. *Dante and his Italy*. New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1973.

Ringer, Alexander (ed). *The Early Romantic Era Between Revolutions: 1789 and 1848*. United Kingdom: Macmillan Press, 1990.

Roglieri, Maria Ann. *Dante and Music: Musical Adaptations of the Commedia from the Sixteenth Century to the Present*. England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2001.

—. "Le Rime Aspre e Chiocce to la Dolce Sinfonia di Paradiso: Musical Settings of Dante's Commedia." *Dante Studies, with the Annual Report of the Dante Society*, 113 (1995): 175-208.

—. "Twentieth-Century Musical Interpretations of the 'Anti-Music' of Dante's Inferno," *Italica* 79, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 149-167.

Rossi, Joseph. "The Distinctive Character of Italian Romanticism." *The Modern Language Journal* 39, no. 2 (February 1955): 59-63.

Samarotto, Frank. "Determinism, Prediction, and Inevitability in Brahms's Rhapsody in E-flat major, op. 119, no 4." *Theory and Practice* 32 (2007): 69-99.

Seung, T. K. *Fragile Leaves of the Sibyll: Dante's Master Plan*. Westminster: Newman Press, 1962.

Singleton, Charles S. "Two Kinds of Allegory." In *Modern Critical Views: Dante*, edited by Harold Bloom, 11-19. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986.

Smart, Mary Ann and Julian Budden. "Donizetti, Gaetano." In *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 7:471-97.

Smart, Mary Ann. *Dalla tomba uscita: Representations of Madness in Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera*. Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1994.

—. Mimomania: Music and Gesture in Nineteenth-Century Opera. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Stam, Roger. "Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation." In *Film Adaptation*, edited by James Naremore, 54-76. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000.

Taruskin, Richard. “Music in the Nineteenth Century.” *The Oxford History of Western Music*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Tomlinson, Gary. “Romanticism and Opera: An Essay in their Affinities.” *19th-Century Music*, vol. 10, no. 1 (Summer 1986): 43-60.

Trippett, David. “Après Une Lecture De Liszt: Virtuosity and Werktreue in the ‘Dante’ Sonata.” *19th-Century Music* 32, no. 1 (2008): 52-93.

Van Vechten, Carl. “On the Relative Difficulties of Depicting Heaven and Hell in Music.” *The Music Quarterly*, vol. 5, no. 4 (Oct. 1919): 553-60.

Weinstock, Herbert. *Donizetti and the World of Opera in Italy, Paris, and Vienna in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Octagon Books, 1963.

Williamson, John. “Liszt and Form: Some Thoughts on the First Movements of the Dante Symphony.” *New Hungarian Quarterly* 27, 104 (Winter 1986): 213-220.

Winklhofer, Sharon. “Liszt, Maria d’Agoult, and the ‘Dante’ Sonata.” *19th-Century Music* 1, no. 1 (1977): 15-32.

Yates, Frances A. “Transformations of Dante’s Ugolino.” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 14, no.1/2 (1951): 92-117.

Zavadini, Guido. *Donizetti: Vita, Musiche, Epistolario*. Bergamo: Istituto Italiano D’Arti Grafiche, 1948.