

# On Some Aspects of the Poetic of *ri* in Dante's *Divine Comedy*: Possibilities of Semantic Clustering

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this article is to examine aspects of the poetic of the syllable *ri* in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The textual unit *ri*, prevalent as a pure syllable, but in some cases modified by a preceding consonant or consonants or by a following vowel or consonant, appears approximately 2000 times in the texture of the entire work. However, this study will focus on cases where the occurrences of *ri* possess rhythmic and/or semantic relevance. First, a brief exploration of *De vulgari eloquentia*, Dante's own treatise on language and poetry, will determine whether the poet theorises rhythm and sound semantics in this work, and whether he considers smaller textual units than the word. Next, examples will be presented of poetic research that examines the reiteration of seemingly asemantic linguistic elements related to a specific theme, name, or textual position, while considering how such repetitions, alongside rhythm, contribute to textual semantics. The examples of the poetic of *ri* will primarily be drawn from the frames of the three canticles of the *Divine Comedy*, as it is within these frames that the modelling codes of the entire work are provided.

Keywords: textual poetics, semantics of sound and rhythm, (re)semanticisation of disseminated recurrences of minor textual elements

1. In *De vulgari eloquentia*,<sup>1</sup> Dante outlines general principles of the ideal language, which he calls the illustrious vernacular (*vulgare illustre*),<sup>2</sup> along with rules regarding language and metrics in poetry, especially in the *canzone*, which must be written in high style. He considers the choice of lofty topics and the suitability of styles to these topics (II, ii and iv), the number and combination of syllables (II, v), the construction of phrases (II, vi), as well as the lexical choices and their combinations (II, vii). In *DVE* II, vii, when discussing lexical choices, Dante expresses a somewhat “masculist” attitude toward

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<sup>1</sup> Henceforth *DVE*. As to the text, I use *De vulgari eloquentia*, a cura di Nicola Maggi, in Dante Alighieri, *Tutte le opere* (1993).

<sup>2</sup> *DVE* I, xvii–xviii.

the classification of words: “infantile”, “womanish” and “virile”.<sup>3</sup> The virile words are divided into “rustic” and “urbane”, with the latter further arranged into “combed” (*pexa*) or “glossy” (*lubrica*), “shaggy” (*yrsuta*) or “unkempt” (*reburra*) words. What is interesting, however, is that the truly “sublime” (*grandi*) words – worthy of being part of the *vulgare illustre*, prove to be both “combed” and “shaggy”, whereas the “glossy” and the “unkempt” possess the “superfluity of resonance”. We can see that it is the dramatic, contrasting nature of the lexical choices that makes great poetry – tragic poetry. Dante also hints at the phonic character of words. The *combed* words are mostly trisyllabic and without aspiration, acute or circumflex accent. But again, according to Dante, the combination of the combed and shaggy words (the “necessary” monosyllabic and especially the “decorative” polysyllabic words) give harmony to the poetic structure. In the same chapter (II, vii), Dante also promises to demonstrate later in the treatise how the combed and shaggy words should be combined; however, he never fulfils this promise, likely because the work remains unfinished.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it is difficult to fully exemplify the principles by which Dante considers sound quality when he defines poetry as rhetorical, poetical and musical fiction (*fictio rethorica musicaque poita*).<sup>5</sup> Of course, in the remaining chapters of Book 2, Dante addresses many other questions: the musical qualities of the *canzone*, the various ways of arranging its stanzas, the syllabic structure, the rhythm achieved through different types of metrical repetition (mainly hendecasyllabic lines and the *settenari*), and so on. However, he never discusses the semantics of the sound and rhythm as a result of repetitions, let alone the reiteration of smaller textual units than the word.

Yet, even the brief and preliminary remarks in the *DVE* suffice to show that Dante was well aware of the importance of poetic sound and its rhetoric which becomes evident in the *Divine Comedy*. I imagine that, although Dante did not theorise the semantic aspects of sound and rhythm in his treatise in the way modern verse theoreticians have done,<sup>6</sup> he used in his poetic masterpiece

<sup>3</sup> *DVE* II, vii. The English terms are from *De vulgari eloquentia*, translated and edited by Stephen Botterill (1996).

<sup>4</sup> The treatise finishes abruptly in chapter xiv of Book 2, wherefore many questions, especially those concerning the lower forms such as the *ballata* and the sonnet, but also several questions concerning the *canzone*, remain undiscussed.

<sup>5</sup> *DVE*, II, iv.

<sup>6</sup> See for example Roman Jakobson's *Linguistics and poetics* (1987 [1958]), and Juri Lotman's *The Structure of the Artistic Text*, ch. 6 and 7 (1977 [1970]).



The examples given are all based on the dissemination of either full words and their diverse forms or words of the same paradigm, rather than morphemes observed together with typically asemantic elements – as is the case of the syllable *ri*. True, this syllable may often have the function of a prefix (*ri-*), but it very often occurs just as a simple syllable inside different lexical units, contributing even so to the (re)semanticisation of an entire line or lexical area.

Before I discuss the concrete cases of *ri*, I shall briefly outline a few general guidelines to argue the necessity of this kind of study. First, it is worth considering that the Italian *ri-* as a prefix has a great many semantic possibilities: repetitive and reduplicative value, intensifying and emphatic value, as well as oppositional, rearranging and transformative value in reference to a previous state of affairs (see, for example, Treccani Online Vocabolario). Jacques Derrida has pointed out both the Latin root *iter* in the noun “iterability” and its possible derivation from the Sanskrit *itara* (“other”), which refers to “anew but in a different way”. The morpheme *ri* (in its vast array of polysemy) serves as a vivid example that testifies to the validity of this statement. Derrida’s critical reflections on the (im)possibility of simple and clear linguistic communication focus on its (un)success, specifically on the explosive dissemination of meaning throughout the text (Derrida 1988). While ambiguity and the manifoldness of intentions may be interpreted as unsuccess in non-poetic texts, they may be regarded as the opposite in poetic works. Umberto Eco has distinguished three distinct intentions in a poetic text: *intentio auctoris*, *intentio operis* and *intentio lectoris* (Eco 1990: 50–51). In my study, I shall part from the *intentio operis*, considering the textual coherence and the underlying signification system. However, I am also aware of acting as an interpretant upon both the immediate object (Dante’s text) and the dynamic object (Dante’s intention) within the framework of Peircean semiotics.<sup>10</sup>

We can never know if Dante himself, even while composing his *Comedy*, considered linguistically asemantic elements constitutive of his poetic. It is my intention, however, to demonstrate how the syllable *ri* tends to acquire additional, or even distinct, semantic value in his text – thanks to certain rhythmical positions and connections with other textual elements.

2. Research based on this approach to textual transformation through a dominant element in the text is by no means novel. For example, Henri Meschonnic has demonstrated (Meschonnic 1999: 245–257) how outwardly asemantic textual elements become semanticised by other semantically relevant textual units

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<sup>10</sup> On the interpretant’s relation to the immediate and dynamic object in Peirce see Pisanty 2015.

through sound and rhythm. Meschonnic argues that the name Ophelia, which does not have any meaning (let it be observed that because of the long [i:] there is no connection with *philia*), tends to acquire semantic traits precisely through repetitive sounds and rhythms. In Meschonnic's opinion, the [f] and [i:] sounds in Ophelia's name attract similar sounds in other words, word combinations and rhythmic patterns, for example in "fair Ophelia", "fear it, Ophelia", but also "farewell", "feel", "grief" etc. Altogether, Meschonnic refers to twenty cases which tend to render Ophelia's name meaningful. I shall quote just one example in which Laertes warns his sister: "Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister / And keep you in the rear of your affection. / Out of the shot and danger of desire" (*Hamlet* I, 3, 33–35). Apart from the [f] and the [i:], other factors contribute to a specific rhythm in which monosyllabic words gain particular importance. For example, the [iə] diphthong in "fear" attracts other words containing the same or similar diphthong, as is the case for "dear" and "rear", and in turn, "dear" attracts the alliterative "danger" and "desire". Therefore, it can be said that the joint semantics of these elements (Meschonnic prefers to situate the function of such units between designation and signification)<sup>11</sup> might suggest a reading in which Ophelia is seen as the scapegoat in Hamlet's tragedy.

I have conducted similar research on the poetics of diminutive endings in Giorgio Bassani's *Il giardino dei Finzi-Contini*. The name Giannina, that of a young girl who contests adults' ideas of the remoteness of the Etruscans and their tombs for living people, demonstrates how a name can attract a significant cluster of textual elements – in this case diminutives as well as "false" diminutives, which merely appear to belong to the category.

The list of diminutive units disseminated in a relatively small portion of prose text (about thirty lines; Bassani 1962: 12–13) includes: *bimbeta* ("a small girl"), *mulinelli di sabbia* ("whirls of sand"), Giannina, *guancine* ("small cheeks"), *finestrino* ("car window"), *trentina* ("about thirty"), *stradetta* ("a small road"), and *serpentina* ("a sinuous auto route"). Some of these, like *mulinello* (a derivative of *mulino* – "a mill") and *serpentina* (related to the adjective *serpentino*), possibly along with *finestrino* ("car window" – not a small window), are false diminutives. Nevertheless, they function as diminutives in the sound sequence as the dominant Giannina focusses their sound quality rather than other qualities. The sound and the rhythm of the *-ina/ine* sequence (*Giannina*, *guancine*, *finestrino*, *trentina*, *serpentina*), combined with *bambina*

<sup>11</sup> Meschonnic says that these units are no longer linguistic units but units of a unique discourse. A text therefore is the system of its own discourse. In some cases we deal with semantics without semiotics which Meschonnic considers to be (sic!) a poetic (247).

(“girl”) and *malinconia* (used three times) closely after, suggest tenderness and remembrance. The episode of the Etruscan tombs serves as a catalyst for the first-person narrator’s recollection of his youth, his love for Micòl, and his memories of the other members of the Finzi-Contini family. Specifically, he is reminded of their tombs in the Ferrara cemetery where only a few family members lie buried, while the others – sent to concentration camps – were perhaps never buried at all.

3. Similarly, in studying the poetic of *ri* in Dante’s *Comedy*, I shall also highlight several densely populated *ri*-areas, paying particular attention to reiteration, rhythm and possible semantics. Regarding rhythm, it is especially interesting to consider the *ri* syllable in strong, accentuated positions. In Dante’s verse (as is well known), these positions generally fall either on the 6th and the 10th syllables (*endecasillabo maggiore*), the 4th, 8th and the 10th syllables (*endecasillabo a minore 1*), or the 4th, 7th and the 10th syllables (*endecasillabo a minore 2*). In the case of *endecasillabo a maggiore*, strong positions may sometimes also include other accentuated syllables.

We come across the first heavily populated *ri* area at the very beginning of the *Comedy*. Here, I shall undertake a brief analysis of the recurrence of *ri* in the first thirty lines of Canto 1, where the syllable *ri* appears altogether ten times.

Inf I 4–6	Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita mi <b>ri</b> trovai per una selva oscura, ché la <b>di</b> ritta via era smarr <b>ri</b> ta.
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Inf I 4–6	Ahi quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte che nel pensier <b>ri</b> nova la paura!
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Inf I 10–12	Io non so ben <b>ri</b> dir com’ i’ v’intra <b>ri</b> , tant’ era pien di sonno a quel punto che la verace via abbandonai.
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Inf I 16–18	guardai in alto e vidi le sue spalle vestite già de’ raggi del pianeta che mena <b>dr</b> itto altrui per ogne calle.
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Inf I 22–24	E come quei che con lena affannata, uscito fuor del pelago a la riva, si volge a l'acqua perigliosa e guata,
Inf I 25–27	così l'animo mio, ch'ancor fuggiva, si volse a retro a rimirar lo passo che non lasciò già mai persona viva.
Inf 28–30	Poi ch'èi posato un poco il corpo lasso, ripresi via per la piaggia diserta, sì che 'l piè fermo sempre era 'l più basso.

Five instances involve *ri* functioning as a prefix: *ritrovai* (“I (re)found myself”), *rinova la paura* (“renews the fright”), *ridir* (“to say again”), *rimirar* (“to look again”), and *ripresi via* (“I retook my way”).

Even though the commentators overwhelmingly agree that *ritrovai* should be interpreted as *trovai* (“I found myself”), i.e. without the repetitive value, we cannot neglect its redundant sound quality in the *ri*-series. The power of the prefix *ri-* is further emphasised by the occurrence of the *ri* syllable in strong positions (*diritta* and *smarrita*, v 1; *riva*; v 23). But what can we make of these recurrences? I suggest that they should be (re)viewed in relation to two distinct subjects: the subject of perception and the subject of analysis and narration – that is, Dante the personage and Dante the narrator and commentator. Dante the personage sees, hears, smells, feels and experiences, while Dante the narrator takes a step back to observe, narrate and comment on these actions. There is a gap between perception and narration, and this gap is precisely what *ri* suggests. *Mi ritrovai* (“I (re)found myself”) is expressed *a posteriori*. Similarly, *che nel pensier mi rinova la paura* (“which renews my terror when I think of it”) demonstrates the distance between the act of perception, its reflection, and the possible new panic. A peculiarity can be noted in *Io non so ben ridir com' i' v' intrai* (“I cannot (re) tell well how I had got inside”). Here, the *ri* in *ridir* has an emphatic character, much like in *ritrovai*, again suggesting remoteness and distance.

The fourth occurrence of the iterative form presents another peculiar case. Unlike the previous examples, which contrast the perceiving I with the narrating I, this instance highlights the distancing of Dante's soul: *così l'animo mio, ch'ancor fuggiva, / si volse a retro a rimirar lo passo* (“likewise my soul, which was still fleeing, turned back to review the path”).

Finally, the fifth instance highlights the distance between the I-personage's previous action and a subsequent one, though it is clearly reflected by the narrator: *ripresi via per la piaggia diserta* (“I retook my road along the deserted slope”).

4. The reiterative, reflective and re-evaluative character of the *ri* occurrences in the *incipit* of Canto 1 find an important, although seemingly less accentuated, resonance in the final cantos of both the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*. As such, they are a significant characteristic of the frames<sup>12</sup> of the canticles, and illustrate different semantic weights. The last verses of the *Inferno* are as follows:

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| Inf XXXIV 133–135 | Lo duca e io per quel cammino ascoso<br>intrammo a <b>ri</b> torнар nel chiaro mondo;<br>e senza cura aver d'alcun <b>ri</b> poso, |
| Inf XXXIV 136–138 | salimmo sù, el <b>ri</b> mo e io secondo,<br>tanto ch'i' vidi de le cose belle<br>che porta 'l ciel, per un pertugio tondo.        |
| Inf XXXIV 139     | E quindi uscimmo a <b>ri</b> veder le stelle.  |

The overall value of the three *ri*- prefixes lies in their representation of the retrieval of the *status quo*, the exit from the dark underground of the *Inferno* and the revision of the sky. This movement is exposed in *a ritornar nel chiaro mondo* (“return to the world of light”) and *uscimmo a riveder le stelle* (“we came out to see again the stars”), which are further accompanied and strengthened by *senza cura aver d'alcun riposo* (“without caring for any refreshment, any rest”). Meanwhile, the impure *ri* in *ri*mo serves as a minor repetitive sound of less importance.

In comparison to the value of *ri* in the frame of the *Inferno*, the *ri* in the final canto of the *Purgatorio* has a different significance:

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|---------------------|---|
| Purg XXXIII 136–138 | S'io avessi, lettor, più lungo spazio<br>da <b>ri</b> scrivere, i' pur cantere' in parte<br>lo dolce ber che mai non m'avria sazio; |
| Purg XXXIII 139–141 | Ma perché piene son tutte le carte<br>ordite a questa cantica seconda,<br>non mi lascia più ir lo fren de l'arte.                   |
| Purg XXXIII 142–144 | Io <b>ri</b> tornai da la santissima onda<br><b>ri</b> fatto sì come piante novelle<br><b>ri</b> novellate di novella fronda,       |
| Purg XXXIII 145     | puro e disposto a salire a le stelle.   |

<sup>12</sup> For the functions of the frame see, for example, Lotman 1977 [1970]: 212–217.



The overall value of the triple prefix *ri-* is that of renewing, reshaping, and transformation: *rifatto sì come piante novelle / rinovellate di novella fronda* (“remade like the fresh plants / renewed with new foliage”). Here, it is evident that Dante is highly conscious of the semantics of the prefix *ri-* in this context. Regarding the impure *scri* in *scrivere* (“to write”) and the *ri* in *lo dolce ber che mai non m'avria sazio* (“the sweet drinking of which I would never be saturated”), it is worth recalling that Dante the personage is first dipped into the waters of Lethe to forget the bad, and then into Eunoë to remember the good. A vague connection to renewal might thus be established. Although, it must be noted that the *ri-* in *avria* should rather be read together with the following vowel *-a* as *ria* (with stress on the first syllable, *av*), for the sake of maintaining the proper hendecasyllabic metre.

5. In the *incipit* of the *Paradiso* we encounter both the repetitive and the transformative functions of *ri*:

Par I 1–3	La gloria di colui che tutto move per l'universo penetra, e risplende in una parte più e meno altrove.
Par I 4–6	Nel ciel che più de la sua luce prende fu' io, e vidi cose che ridire né sa né può chi di là sù discende;
Par I 7–9	perché appressando sé al suo disire, nostro intelletto si profonda tanto, che dietro la memoria non può ire.
Par I 10–12	Veramente quant' io del regno santo ne la mia mente potei far tesoro, sarà ora materia del mio canto.
Par I 16–18	Infino a qui l'un giogo di Parnaso assai mi fu; ma or con amendue mè uopo intrar ne l'aringo rimaso.

In the first occurrence, *risplende* (“shines”), the prefix suggests repetition. In the third, *ridire* (“re-tell”), *ri-* suggests the impossibility of exact repetition, again marking the distance between the act of seeing and that of verbalising things seen.

It is also noteworthy that these *ri-* words occupy final positions in the verse lines which carry stronger semantic stress, although they do not fall on the tenth syllable (a strong position in endecasyllabic metre). In this case there

are no accentuated verse positions to strengthen the *ri*- prefixes. However, the different semantic quality of the prefix *ri*- anticipates, in a way, what is postulated in the final canto of the work. This is where Dante the narrator observes that the quality of God's light never changes; what changes is our perception thereof and the ways in which we articulate what we see. The function of *ri* in the incipit of the *Paradiso* is therefore quite clear; however, we do not encounter an opulent *ri* poetic, as the two potential *ri* units (in v 9 and in v 12) are better read as *ria* – and do not fully qualify. Regarding the double *ri* in *aringo rimaso* (“the arena that remains”), the first instance falls in a strong position (7th syllable), while the second does not. Even though not overly conspicuous, these elements – together with the two unstressed *ria* syllables in *memoria* and *materia*, contribute subtly to the overall poetic of *ri*.

Another case of the *ri* poetic in the initial canto of the *Paradiso* is related to Beatrice's name:

Par I 46–48	quando Beatrice in sul sinistro fianco vidi <b>ri</b> volta e <b>ri</b> guardar nel sole: aguglia sì non li s'affisse unquanco.
Par I 49–51	E sì come secondo raggio suole uscir del <b>pr</b> imo e <b>ris</b> alire in suso, pur come <b>pe</b> legrin che tornar vuole, così de l'atto suo, per li occhi infuso ne l'immagine mia, il mio si fece e fissi li occhi al sole oltre nostr'uso.
Par I 55–57	Molto è licito là, che qui non lece a le nostre virtù, mercé del loco fatto per proprio de l'umana spece. .....
Par I 64–66	Beatrice tutta ne l'etterne rote fissa con li occhi stava; e io in lei le luci fissi, di là sù <b>ri</b> note.

Beatrice (the name is repeated twice) gazes into the Sun, and Dante looks into her eyes to ascend to the Heavens. Whether the syllable in Beatrice is *ri* or *tri* matters little, for the steadiness, intensity and far-reaching quality of Beatrice's gaze is captured by four distinct occurrences of *ri*: *rivolta* (“turned towards”), *riguardar nel sole* (“to look intensely and steadily, again and again inside the sun”), *risalire in suso* (“to rise intensely and steadily upwards”), and *letterne ruote [...] di là sù rimate* (“the eternal wheels [...] up there far away”). Beatrice is the one who enchants and renders others blessed – as the name

suggests, while the *ri* in its repeatedness suggests bliss in constancy, intensity and far-reaching quality. The *ri* (although impure) in *pelegrin* (“pilgrim”) further semanticises Dante’s yearning. The parade of intense gazes toward the remote is crowned at the final line of Canto 1 (145): *Quinci rivolse inver’ lo cielo il viso* (“And then she turned her gaze again towards the sky”). Curiously, the beginning of Canto 2, which warns readers against attempting to follow the arduous example of Dante the personage’s celestial journey, applies the poetic of *ri* in an entirely contradictory sense:

Par II 4–6	tornate a <b>r</b> iveder li vostri liti: non vi mettete in pelago, che forse, perdendo me, <b>ri</b> marreste smarriti (turn back to revisit the coasts that you know: do not sail into the open because perhaps if you lose my track, you may go astray.)
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We witness the diametrically opposite usage of the poetic of *ri* in Cantos 1 and 2: one characterised by venturing towards the open and the unknown, and the other by a return to the familiar and the secure.

6. The next (and final) two *ri* areas that I wish to discuss appear in the last canto of the *Paradiso*. In the first, the poetic of *ri* intertwines with the syllable *prie*, found in the substantive *priego* (“prayer”) and specific forms of the verb *pregare* (“to pray”), such as *priego* and *prieghi*. This combination intensifies and reinforces the constancy and power of the Virgin Mary – to whom Dante’s last guide, St. Bernard, prays to secure Dante’s final ascent to contemplate God in his light – as well as the unwavering dedication of Beatrice, who, from her resting place in the Rose of the Blessed, joins her prayers with St. Bernard’s for Dante’s success.

In describing the virtues of the Virgin Mary, St. Bernard employs terms such as *caritate* (“charity”, 11), *misericordia* (“mercy”, 19) and the verbal form *ricorre* (“turns to”, 13). Between verses 28–45, variations of the noun and verb forms of “prayer” containing the syllable *prie* appear five times: *tutti miei prieghi* (“all my prayers”, 29), *e priego* (“and I pray”, 30), *ancor ti priego* (“I also pray”, 34), *i devoti prieghi* (“the devout prayers”, 42), and, connecting Bernard with the Virgin Mary and Beatrice: *Vedi Beatrice con quanti beati / per li miei prieghi ti chiudon le mani!* (“behold Beatrice with so many blessed ones / pray for my prayers with her hands crossed”, 38–39). While *prie* is not *ri* in its pure form, its repetition alongside the disseminated *ri* forms a cohesive pattern.

Finally, I would like to highlight Dante's soundplay with *ri* and *vi* in Canto XXXIII, the last canto of the *Comedy*. As noted earlier, *vi* appears three times in the first canto of the work. Here, it reappears thrice in the final word position of verses 64–69 alongside three occurrences of *ri* and some six occurrences of *si* between verses 58–74.

Par XXXIII 58–60	Qual e colui che sognando vede, che dopo 'l sogno la passione impressa <b>rimane</b> , e l'altro a la mente non <b>riede</b> ,
Par XXXIII 61–63	Cotal son io, ché quasi tutta cessa mia <b>visi</b> one, e ancor mi distilla nel core il dolce che nacque da essa.
Par XXXIII 64–66	Così la neve al sol si disigilla; così al vento ne le foglie <b>levi</b> si perdea la sentenza di Sibilla.
Par XXXIII 67–69	O somma luce che tanto ti <b>levi</b> da concetti mortali, a la mia mente <b>ripresta</b> un poco di quel che parevi

The triple *vi*, which – when taken separately from the texture of the verses – does not mean “there” in any of the three occurrences. However, I argue that *vi* suggests both temporal and spatial distance when projected upon the ephemeral dispersal of Sibyl's light leaves (*foglie levi*), the stealthy disappearance of the snow's seal (*la neve al sol si disigilla*), the upsurge and detachment of divine light from all mortal concepts (*o somma luce che tanto ti levi / da concetti mortali*), and the poet's request to regain even a little (*ripresta un poco*) of what his personage seemed to have experienced there and then (*di quel che parevi*). This effect is heightened by the intensity of *ri*. Similarly, with its stealthy, liquid sound, the syllable *si* (found in *quasi, così, così, si, disigilla, Sibilla*) plays a noteworthy role.

In conclusion, I suggest that in the entire phonic and semantic system of the text *ri* (alongside many other monosyllabic elements, for example the discussed *vi* and *si*) truly functions as one of those units that Dante defines as “necessary” in his *DVE* (II, vii). I acknowledge the subjectivity inherent in my suggestions regarding the semantics of the poetic of *ri*. Therefore, if others propose better interpretations, I am more than willing to consider them. In some cases, aligning with Meschonnic's statement, the repetitions of *ri* occupy a space between designation and signification. However, a certain preliminary semantic clustering of the occurrences of *ri* is nevertheless possible. Both the

evident reiterations and the disseminated occurrences of *ri* (both as a prefix and as a simple syllable) carry diverse and, at times, even opposing semantics across different contexts and rhythmic patterns: intensification, reflection, renewal, transformation, distancing, remoteness, and fusion. In some cases, these clusters revise the possibilities of the linguistic semantics of the prefix *ri-*, while in others, the recurrences of *ri* acquire additional or entirely distinct semantic values. Thus, I hope to have demonstrated that the poetic of *ri* in Dante's *Comedy* highlights both temporal and spatial distancing: the gap between the perception of the protagonist and the narration of the poet. A more systematic and rigorous clustering of all occurrences of the poetic of *ri* throughout Dante's *Divine Comedy* would be a worthwhile focus for future research.

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