

About dante's inferno



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In the Inferno, Dante describes a journey where he saw hell, purgatory and paradise. He began to write about this starting at the gates of hell. Hell is described as a series of layers/circles descending towards Satan.

Each of the circles represents a different type of sin; the outer circle is for the least serious sinners and the inner circle where Satan contains the worst sinners. In Dante's expedition, he sees many noble people in the modern world from Roman history, pre-Socratic philosophers and important people from the church. The Inferno gives an exciting yet horrifying insight into the true origin, nature and culmination of Sin. By elaborating on these three elements of sin, readers can have a better understanding of Dante's Hell.

The true origin of sin comes from the creation of the world, when Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. George Stevens a theologian states, Though one's disobedience the many were made sinners. (Stevens, 592). Humans were guilty of the sin Adam and Eve committed and were condemned for it. Human freedom was lost, and the origin of evil has been embedded in human essence. Even though humans were condemned for it, it is up to each human person to make their decision. Sin is like a desire, but if a person does not have a strong will that is when the person commits the sin, because they cannot reason, their desire is stronger than their will. The people that sin consequently are people that have fallen so deep that they do not want to be close to God but rather they want to be like God. They think they can overcome the authority of God.

In the beginning of the Inferno, there is a brilliant introduction to the presence of sin. The description of sin is considered carnal, and in the dark

woods Dante is wandering through, he is trying to save himself from a life of sin. In the Inferno, Dante tries to climb out of Hell by himself, but he cannot do it alone. He makes his way back the hill and that is where he meets three beasts. The three beasts are allegories of the three different sins: the leopard, the lion and the wolf, but from all three the wolf was the most dangerous which represents avarice.

The three beasts ride him back and there he meets Virgil. In order to achieve virtue, Dante needs help, and Virgil comes to Dante as a salvation. Virgil escorts Dante along the journey through hell. As Dante and Virgil get closer to the gates of hell the most horrifying sign reads, abandon all hope, you who enter here (Canto III, line 9). Dante overhears cacophony sounds and those are the sinners in hell moaning in pain. Dante states, Now sighs, loud wailing, lamentation resounded through the starless air, so that I too began to weep (Canto III, line 22).

Dante's problem is that he feels pity for the sinners and he needs to stop feeling pity for them.

In order to save his own soul from hell, he has to reject sin completely. His journey is a major aspect to the Inferno, the change he is going to go through will be a big part for his salvation, because he is also a sinner. He thinks God is wrong for punishing the sinners but later through his journey he agrees to the punishments they receive.

Humans satisfy themselves in a wide variety of sins, and in Dante's version of Hell there are various levels that represent the different types of sin. Nice circles of sin are described in the Inferno, and the order of the circles are

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limbo, lust, gluttony, avarice, wrath, heresy, violence, fraud, and treachery. Treachery are the sinners that sin against God, and they are located at the bottom where the frozen Lake Cocytus contains Satan. The souls living there are frozen. Some of those souls were spiritually frozen even before their death. Innocent humans can be persuaded into a world of evil and sin. The sinners take the other people with them. Sinners are not damned into hell just because of insignificant matters, but rather due to lives that were built on a foundation of sin. An example of habitual sin is the story of Paolo and Francesca. The two lovers spend their lives on an adulterous affair for seven years. They repeatedly gave into temptation and lust. When speaking to Dante, Francesca recalls the first kiss she had with Paolo:

When we read how the longed-for smile was kissed by so renowned a lover, this man, who never shall be parted from me, all trembling kissed me on my mouth (Canto V, line 133).

Dante admired their love, but it was a sin. This is the perfect example of corrupt habits and lust.

Each individual circle of sin reveals the culmination of whatever sin that circle represents. One of the defining features of the poem is that each sinner's punishment matches their crime. Those in the upper level of Hell do not receive as harsh a punishment as those who are in the lower circles of Hell. The upper levels have punishments like burning sand for their homosexual desires, but the ones in the lower levels had horrifying punishments, because their punishments are now physical. In the ninth circle, which is the Lake of Cocytus, people are frozen because they are very

close to Satan. The worst thing is that all of the sinners do not even repent for what they did.

In conclusion, the essence of sin in the Inferno is expressed by three factors: origin, nature, and culmination. To better understand the reality of sin, the reader must take a firm grasp of each. Susan Blow an educator who studied Dante states, The Divina Commedia is the outcome of a profound and exhaustive reflection upon the facts of the moral world. Based on these facts of the moral world we live in The Divina Commedia came to existence. (Blow, 123). One final theme in the Inferno that we ought to note is the amazement when Dante sees people in Hell, people who he thought were innocent but were actually sinners. People have dark secrets that only they know but will soon pay. Dante's view of the sinner progressively changes throughout his journey. At the end of his journey Dante feels no pity for them. In fact, he physically punishes one by kicking him in the head. Dante is grateful for Virgil and he refer to him as his mentor. He knew he could not have witnessed and moved through without the help of Virgil. Virgil almost always was able to overcome the bad spirits, and that made it possible for them to continue through their journey. Dante finishes his journey through Hell, and he determines his soul is not ready for salvation. Therefore, he decides he will continue his journey through Purgatory.