

Dante's allegory of love in the divine comedy assignment

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The Meaning of Love through the works of Dante Alighieri
Devon Strand-Brown "O all ye whose intellects are sound, Look now and see the meaning that is hidden Beneath the veil that covers my strange verses:" (Inferno 9: 61) Dante Alighieri is indisputably the most famous Italian poet in history. His seminal work, The Divine Comedy still inspires 700 years after its writing and has not yet yielded all of its secrets, though it is one of the most widely studied works ever to be written.

The name "Dante" and that of The Divine Comedy are known the world over, but what of the man Dante? What of the allegory beneath his verses? The history of the Divine Poet, his life, his love and the mysteries of his great achievements are known to relatively few, compared to the number of people who have read the Comedy. My purpose here to open those doors to you, to give a taste of the lessons and mysteries of Dante's work, to give a glimpse of a man, famous in his time and forevermore, and to recount the greatest tale of Love ever told.

His definition of love may be the most potent and intricate definition ever described, told through four separate levels of allegory, culminating in the rise of the universal goal of Love itself. The Man In that book which is my memory, On the first page of the chapter that is the day when I first met you, Appear the words, 'Here begins a new life'. " (Vita) Dante was born in 1265, though the month is not known. His given name was ranted Delhi Alighieri, Dante being a shortened version which he himself, and subsequent ?? ??? writers and translators would adopt.

His family name Alighieri comes from the Latin word 'aliger', which can be translated to "winged." Though it came from his father, it was originally passed from a mother, Alighiera Luchini ?? wife of Suicidal Elise, founder of Florence ?? to her son. Thus Dante can trace his lineage directly back to the founders of his beloved Florence. The root meaning of Durand (and Dante) is more obvious, enduring, as names were of the most importance in those days.

Dante would be happy to know that he has far surpassed the destiny of an enduring name. His father was a man of finance, buying and selling property as well as lending money, something Dante later disapproved of and which found its way into his Inferno. His mother was also from a well respected Florentine family, the Bardi. Her father Durand (whom Dante was named after) was a judge at the time. Much of the Poet's history we can find in the Comedy because although it is the story of his enlightenment, it also tells the tale of his past.

We see this with his mother, whom we find in the circle of violence in Inferno, for she committed suicide while Dante was still very young, somewhere between 1270 and 1275. After his mother's death, his father soon remarried and had two more children. It seems Dante had a good relationship with these siblings as he refers affectionately to a sister who visits him while he is sick in "La Vita Nuova." These references require that I move ahead, to describe the works of Dante or it is especially through them that we learn so much of the man.

I shall discuss The Divine Comedy at greater length in a future section. But as an overview it is the tale of Dante's journey through Inferno, rising up through Purgatory, then finally moving through Paradise, guided by his beloved Beatrice, with his pilgrimage ending with the vision of God. The other work that I shall mention often is "La Vita Nuova", The New Life, which is a compilation of poems, sonnets and stories from throughout his life. It particularly focuses on his love for Beatrice which pervaded his life from the age of nine until he died at fifty-six.

At this time Florence was a burgeoning hub of trade and culture, becoming one of the richest and most powerful cities in Italy, and even in Eastern Europe. However the city was divided along many lines; there was a split between the populace and the gentry, yet also among the gentry. The largest of these rifts was that between the Guelphs, whom Dante supported, and the Ghibellines. Once the Ghibellines were expelled from Florence another divide occurred; between the Black Guelphs, those who supported the Papacy, and the white Guelphs, who wished for more autonomy from Rome.

With the support of Pope Boniface the Black Guelphs took control of Florence, destroying many white Guelph homes and exiling Dante. If he were ever to return to his beloved Florence to "airship at his baptismal font" he would suffer death by burning. Following his exile, Dante wandered from city to city. Reigniting his intellectual spirit in Bologna and moving as far field as Paris. Finally he settled in Ravenna, a small city not far from Florence. It is during this time that it is believed that he began his masterpiece, The Divine

Comedy. It was completed just prior to his death, sometime between 1318 and 1321.

The final Canto of Paradise was said to be lost for months following Dante's death, until in a dream, one of Dante's sons saw his father who showed him where the final pages were hidden. His son, Pietro, searched for the pages and found them just where his father had indicated, and so, just as a dream had begun the Comedy, a dream completed it. The Divine Comedy tells the tale of the poet, Dante, and his journey down into Inferno, up mount Purgatory and into Paradise where "the Love that moved the sun and the other stars" is finally revealed to him.

It is divided into three Canticles, Inferno, Purgatorial and Paradise. Each canticle is then further divided into 33 cantos, similar to chapters, except for Inferno which has a 12th particularly focuses on the age of nine until he died. At this time Florence was one of the richest and most powerful cities in Europe and the center of the world. Once the Ghibellines between the Black and White Guelphs, who wished to see the Black Guelphs homes a beloved Florence to "with rolling his exile, Dark spirit in Bologna and a carnal city he believed that he began just prior to his death, Paradise was said to be just where his father had indicated. A dream completed it.

The Divine Comedy tells of Inferno, up mount Purgatory, the sun and the other Inferno. Purgatory divided into 33 cantos, single introductory canto bringing the total to 100. It is divided into three line sections, each line with a precise 11 syllables. It occurs in the year 1300 and Dante is faithful including people who had died before 1300 in any way though often referencing those who are still living. Inferno, the

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first volume, is by far the most famous a three. It begins: " Midway upon the journey of our life. " Simi premise to the Comedy being both a literal journey TTL earth but also a figurative voyage through the life of

Dante, though it can be expanded to include a more Through inferno Dante is guided by another great PC he is a virtuous infidel has been confined to neutrality But who has been tasked by Beatrice to guide Dante up Mount Purgatory. Their journey through Hell take nine levels, on each level pausing to watch the pun is' sometimes speak to them, talking of their crimes or (living world. Finally in the lowest ?? 5 level ?? Judea, reserved for the traitors?? gravity rev back out of the pit of inferno to once more observe t At the base of Mount Purgatory seven Fays are instinct Each tanning for Peculate or sin in Latin.

As they pass thru levels of purgatory, each P is purged from his before, place of perpetuity as many believe; it is a place of apt suggests. Virgil continues as his guide and offers DVD questions along the way. However on questions off asking Dante to await her for his answer. At the peak Garden of Eden, earthly paradise. Here in paradise D heavens above him, while Virgil is reserved and distant from his guide to gaze at four bright stars above him Virgil is gone. In his place stands Beatrice.