

Compare dante (the divine comedy) and odyssey



R. Preeti 21/4/2008 LITERATURE COMPARISON Literature has been endowed with a number of ics, that enrich the every quality of the subject, while also contributing to the expression of major ideologies---religious, political, socio-economic and cultural---of the varied epochs it belonged to. It has also helped in learning about varied countries, their cultural backdrops and the like. However, it is also inevitable that humanity is devoid of similarities, which is why many pieces of literature can be pitted against each other, for comparisons of similarities and dissimilarities.

' The Divine Comedy' by Dante and ' Odyssey' by Homer are two such pieces that can be compared. The former is the story of the " Christian afterlife" and the journey through the various circles of Heaven and Hell, that stand for the various sins committed in life on Earth. The latter, is the story fo the journey of Odyssey or Ulysses, after the Trojan War, to Ithaca which is his home.

One of the striking similarities between the two pieces is the form. Both the pieces of Literature are written in the form of an Epic Poem. This form is inclusive of journey, heroic acts, tests and sacrifices, teachings and other transitions. The Divine Comedy is an Italian epic poem, while the Odyssey is a Greek one.

Both the pieces of literature begin medias res. In other words, they start off in the middle of action or in the mid-life. The Divine Comedy, for instance starts off after the individual has lived his transient life on earth and progresses towards the permanent life in Heaven. The Odyssey, on the other hand, starts of after the Trojan War and describes the ten years of Ulysses' journey back to Ithaca. Thus, both start of mid-action.

The structure is more or less similar, on account of the segregation and

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demarcation of the whole epic poem into different segments. Be it the Inferno, Purgatorio and Paradiso or the twenty-four books of the Odyssey, it is more or less the same.

However, there are quite a number of dissimilarities as well. While the form of the epic poetry is similar, the theme varies. While The Divine Comedy deals with the theology of the Christian faith and the elements of medieval belief as kindled by the Church, the Odyssey delves into the heroics of the Greek hero, Ulysses. It talks about his personal life and his journey towards home, after the aftermaths of the Trojan war.

While The Divine Comedy is more or less about the interface between Man and his encounter with life after death, the Odyssey is about a hero's encounter with humbling events, in the aftermath of war. War could be equated to life, and the aftermaths could be considered purgatory!

Thus, both the classic epic poems do have a great deal of similarities and dissimilarities, that heighten the parallels and crossing of the literature of the respective milieu.

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