

Literature review on dantes inferno

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



The picture illustrates the moment from the 13th canto of the Dante's famous poem. The Divine Comedy as a literature work is divided into three parts: the Inferno, the Purgatory and the Paradise. In this poem Dante Alighieri summed up all the common ideas about the afterlife and united them under the one storyline. The Inferno is considered to be the most important part of the poem because it provides the description of hell. This image became so popular and traditional that it was used in many other literature and art works. According to the Dante's theory the hell is divided into nine circles, which are full of evil-doers and sinners. The circle to which the person belongs depends on the crime he or she committed during the terrestrial life. The harder is the misdeed the deeper is the circle, where the evil-doer can be found. For example, the Ninth Circle is a place where the greatest betrayers such as Jude spend the eternity. The 13th canto describes the Seventh Circle of the Inferno. According to the writer, this part was dedicated to people who tended to violence: either they insulted others and their property or they committed suicides and behaved carelessly with their belongings. Furthermore, this circle also includes people who were violent against God and the nature. The well done picture by Gustave Dore shows the events that are happening in the second ring of the Seventh Circle. People who committed suicide and victims of careless attitude to their property "inhabit" this part of hell. The painting depicts the punishment of the self-murderers. They were turned into the ugly trees with crooked branches, dark leaves and poisonous fruit. The Harpies were the only spirits who visit those trees and eat that fruit. Harpies are mythological creatures described by Hellenistic authors. Dante uses the traditional image of them as

half-birds and half-women. In Greek myths they are known for their stealing. Perhaps, Dante wanted to show that suicides are persons who themselves stole their own lives. Gustave Dore is a famous engraver and artist of the 19th century. The illustrations he made for the Divine Comedy are done at the late period of his creative life. This means that on the picture we can see the handwriting of the mature author.

The picture refers to that part of the 13th canto, when the main hero gets through the wood and accidentally breaks the branch and hears the story of one of the self-murderers. The main difference between the storyline and the picture is that bushes and trees in Dante's poem do not look like people. After their deeds they lost the face. But Dore violates this point because for him as an artist is important to show both the current state of the art and the previous experience of the wrong-doers as well. It is easy to recognize people in his characters. Apart from the criminals the artist depicts Harpies. Here he used the classical description and Dore's harpies correspond to Hellenistic image.

Finally, the picture includes the shadows of two people on the back ground. They are the main hero of the poem and his guide in the hell. All in all, the picture explains the canto's message clearly and comprehensively.