

Divine comedy assignment

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Exploring the Rhetorical Constructions of Dante's Inferno In his mildly satiric epic poem *The Inferno* (1317), Dante Alighieri asserts that individuals must learn to reconcile their sympathy and emotional naivety for the acceptance of suffering and the violence of God's justice. He suggests that pity for sinners clouds an individual's pursuit of stringent moral standards and could make him or her unfit for entrance into Purgatory or Heaven.

Dante elicits his argument against the notion of pity through the use of a dual reiterative structure to juxtapose two different schools of thought—the compassionate sinner (protagonist) and the omniscient poet (narrator).

Dante also illuminates the societal flaws that produce such evildoers through the allegorical structure of Hell, creating a microcosm of society where the sinners become their sins. The author compares these interpretations about the effects of Hell's monopoly of violence, in order to warn his contemporaries about the dangers of eliciting sympathy and that grief could constitute as repudiation of God's divinity power.

Dante's criticism resonates in a didactic yet slightly emotional tone, towards his audience, the individuals responsible for his exile and noted contemporaries, revealing the absurdity of a retributive society given an already merciless Hell. The tone throughout *The Inferno* fluctuates from two highly emotional states, sympathy and condemnation. It is the result of the opposing flow of logic, which is embodied by the guide Virgil, thus having a notable composition with emotional and logical appeals.

Dante cares deeply about the moral thought processes of mankind, having personally suffered as a result of others' sins as he was exiled from his

hometown. It is quite hard to make out the intensity of Dent's feelings and attitude towards the presence of eternally condemned souls and state of repentance, or lack thereof, as it is obscured by the translation to English, and therefore absent in the rhythm and possible plays on language originally in the *terza rima* style. The "sympathetic" measure comes out in the portrayal of the supposed "incontinent sinners" who speak very little about their actual sins.

The purpose of their little explanation still amounts to the same question as to why they are in Hell, albeit the negligible severity of their crimes or sins. But Dante weeps, as if injustice thrives within the levels of the suffering Hell. Here, it is likely that Dante thus proves there is a dichotomy between the unenlightened ignorance thriving upon lack of faith in God and the well-defined vivacity provided by God's love, as he accepts yet admonishes such stern punishments practiced in Hell. Dante is particularly pitiless with the fraudulent sinners: "O Simon Magus!...

Rapacious ones, who take the things of God, / that ought to be the brides of Righteousness, / and make them fornicate for gold and silver! / The time has come to let the trumpet sound / for you... In the actual text, this quote is not marked with quotation marks; the absence of quoted language then implies that not only were the words not meant to be spoken as the opinion of the character Dante, but also it then again produces discrepancy with the rest of the poem, which is written in first person narrative. However, this is not the case.

Quoted dialogue in this and most of the textual poetry is indicative of the verbal exchanges between the pilgrim and Virgil. These exchanges are often marked by Virgil's syllogistic explanations that resolve prior claims of disapproval from the pilgrim. Really an example of a teacher correcting a student's naive thought process. By incorporating dialogue in this fashion, Dante establishes the exact roles of these two characters in relation to the massive allegory of the piece: a guide and his sensitive student.

Virgil explains a central concept in Dante's vision of Christianity: the Divine is natural, since nature is commanded by the art and intellectual proceedings of the Divine world: "Philosophy, for one who understands, points out, and not in just one place," he said, "how nature follows - as she takes her course - the Divine Intellect and Divine Art; and if you read your Physics carefully, not many pages from the start, you'll see that when it can, your art would follow nature, just as a pupil imitates his master; so that your art is almost God's grandchild. (11) It is then the inherent duty of a man (or woman) to follow the laws of nature, thus following God. It is rather ambiguous as to what Dante claims is natural, although it is apparent in this context, he refers solely to the understanding of philosophy accompanied by practical and physical sciences. The properties and laws of physics have a purpose to explain and interpret what is nature, better yet what humans receive to be the reality of their existential nature.

Dante thus implies that schooling of religion and philosophy at this era is devoid of scientific influence and is not righteous to God; this is a blatant disapproval of the Church and the social constructs it attempts to preserve in the era. Consequently, anything made by man's art is usually natural and

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thus somewhat like “ God’s grandchild” (if man is God’s child). The laws of nature are meant to be studied and practicable, and God is willing for humans to create it, however these grandchildren are only accepted if they are parallel to the natural way of fining.

As a rule, then, anything that goes against nature inherently goes against God or, in other words, sins. And that’s how it all goes down: the commitment of sin. Dante makes the definition of sin simple: any act that has transgressed nature and its natural practices. Usurers gain from the unnaturally speedy accumulation of money, the lustful engage in sexual practices that cannot possibly yield a child; they are the incarnation of sterility, the incontinent sinners deny their human civility (1. 50).

Although sin becomes a strong foundation for his comedy, Dent’s *Inferno*, itself one piece f a literary trilogy repeatedly deploys the leitmotif of the number three as a metaphor for ambiguity, compromise, and transition. For example the leopard, lion, and she-wolf that menace Dante in his quest to get to the sunlight all illustrate different types of sin. Interpretations have parsed the leopard as a symbol of fraudulence, the lion as a symbol of pride, and the she-wolf as a symbol of avarice or greed, thus we see three levels of sin: incontinence, violence, and fraudulence-?? severity dictated by that order.

Dante gives the number three allegorical importance in terms of esthetics pleasure (ii 3 faces of Satan, 3 line poetry): “ Oh how amazed I was when I looked up and saw a head-?? one head wearing three faces” (34. 37). The incorporation of this numerical value presents an inverted trinity, his replica

of society and the Catholic Church due to beliefs in the holy trinity, but it becomes apparent that Dante stages the entirety of The Divine Comedy as to prove that God's divine justice is still administered in Hell.

He even applies it to Satan serves to mock him and as a reminder that, even for him, his raison d'être is to carry out God's will. Dante's Inferno dwells upon the idea of stasis, or an static perpetual state, on a number of levels. The very Structure Of Hell - a series Of concentric circles - gives an sense Of incapability, since circles are boundless or have no edges, an individual can only continue tracing their arcs in a futile attempt to find a way out.

He describes the entrance to hell like so: " Midway along the journey of our life I woke to find myself in a dark wood for had wandered off from the straight path" (1 . 1). The very imagery portrayed introduces the allegory that Hell is dark, succulent mass astray from the " straight path. " This journey is reciprocated of his exile from Italy. In his journey, he must learn to reject the deceptive promises of the temporal world. These promises are what he deems to be the problems of Italy's social structure derived from the renaissance era.

Promises atheistic shall be executed at the expense of the Church, promises that obedience to the Church will ensure one's reservation in Heaven, promises heeding to allow a state to monopolize the violence within its asserted territory. The use of the allegory' explains the means by which he came to cope with his personal calamity of exile and to offer suggestions for the resolution of Italy's troubles as well. Thus, the exile of an individual

becomes a microcosm of the problems of a country, and it also becomes representative of the fall of man.

Thus, each sinner in the Inferno embodies his sin just as Dante's exile assumed embodies the laws of the state and status quo. He stresses the ridiculousness of exile and the prevalence of state power by posing Hell as a counter product of society, ultimately asserting that the people have lost faith in God's power to uphold justice. The Inferno encompasses temporal, literary, and political bridges and chasms that link Dante's recognition of the Renaissance as a metamorphic error and of himself as its poetic forerunner.

Through the intense use of language and objects carrying comparative meaning that are two-fold, Dante outlines a possible philosophical directive on how humans ought to live their lives in the temporal and post-mortem worlds. "Do not be afraid; our fate cannot be taken from us; it is a gift." Dante preaches that fate is adjudicated by the adherence to nature, but it is also by choice and lack of instinct that individuals determine their own fate. Thus, fate is an award for being human, and is the sign of God's leverage over humanity, asserting his divine power.