

Dante alighieri assignment

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The Inferno written by Dante is a haunting and gruesome tale of one man's journey through hell. Taking place in 1300 Dante writes about a character named Dante. Throughout the book we are not sure if the character is strictly sketched out like Dante himself or just simply named Dante. Most scholars of Dante believe that he used the name Dante but suggest that no evidence has been given to support the character Dante being based on the poet Dante. The Inferno is about Dante's travels through hell with the help of his guide, Virgil.

Dante gets lost and Virgil helps guide him by taking him through hell and then to heaven where he will see Beatrice, his love. During Dante's pilgrimage he goes through seven different circles of hell. In each of these circles he encounters sinners who are enduring punishment. The punishment of each sinner exhibits contrapasso. The theme of contrapasso is displayed throughout Dante's travels in hell. The punishment of the sinner fits the crime. This theory of contrapasso states that the souls suffering in hell should match with what they did on earth and that the sinner is never forgotten by God.

The sinner will always be in punishment for whatever crime they committed while on earth. Dante uses contrapasso to help figure out his own morals and those of humans. Dante and Virgil first begin by going across the river Acheron to the first circle of hell. The first circle of hell is also noted as Limbo. Virgil is a resident of the first circle along with others who did not know about Christ. Dante enters the second circle of hell which is for those who are lustful. Just before entering this circle lays Minos, who is a king in Greek mythology.

Before sinners can enter, Minos hears their confessions and then gives them the appropriate punishment. In circle two sinners are punished for letting their feelings and passions get carried away. The fitting punishment for lustfulness is swirling around in a horrible storm. The punishment shows how easily it is to give in to this sin and that unless you control lust, it can get carried away. In the third circle Dante meets the gluttons. By definition glutton refers to a person who eats and drinks too much. This type of person has an inordinate ability to withstand or receive something.

The appetites of these sinners take over them and they can not control it. They may even start to worship food and drink instead of God. They are gluttons because they are consumed with eating and drinking. In this circle the gluttons have to lie in mud and are showered with excrement and filth. This type of punishment is an exact reminder of what a glutton means. They are literally stuck in mud with horrible filth and excrement all over them. As a sinner gluttons were filled with food and drink. Now in hell they will be reminded of what it means to be a glutton daily. The fourth circle has sinners who punish each other.

Sinners are given large rocks or boulders; they then fling the rocks and large stones at one another. This fourth circle is home to Pluto. Pluto means great money or wealth according to Greek mythology. Pluto stands guard of the circle. All who are sentenced here either hoarded money or spent money and were jealous of their neighbor. Perfect punishments to fit contrapasso by having the sinners stay in conflict with each other and hurt each other as they did on earth. Dante saw this as a very selfish sin. Circle five is actually in the Styx River. In circle five there are two divisions of sinners.

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Both divisions are wrathful but one has rage and the other groups are silent about it. The ones who are silent stay at the bottom of the river in deep mud. The sinners who bottled up their wrathfulness have sunk to the bottom and choke on the mud as their punishment. The sinners with rage remain on top of the marsh or river shredding and tearing to pieces other men. The punishment is obviously fitting for the ones who hold in their silent rage and wrath. They are bottom feeders because of their quietness and sulkiness. The sinners on top still display harm on each other as they did on earth. The Heretics live in circle six.

They consist of gods and goddesses who tormented and went after other sinners. They also went against what the church said to do. They preferred to live and do by their own will and not that of the church or God. For this their punishment is to be buried in an iron tomb with fire around it. The iron shows their defiance against the church and their unwillingness to comply with the church. Circle seven has different rings in it. The first ring Dante and Virgil encounter houses sinners who have shed blood against their neighbors. The fitting punishment is to have them bathe and live in the Phlegethon River, which is full of blood.

The blood represents the slain victim's blood that was shed by the sinners. They are in constant remembrance of what they did to their neighbors by living in this pool of blood. They also meet a Centaur, a half man and half animal creature from Greek mythology. The Centaur, Nessus takes them to the next ring in circle seven. The next ring in circle seven is home to the sinners who committed suicide. A perfect example of contrapasso is in this

ring. The suicides are made into dead trees. Suicide is the act of getting rid of your body on your own will and not God's will.

Therefore a permanent reminder of following ones own will and ridding a human body is to turn into a tree that is dead and lifeless forever. The sinners here took away God's gift of there life. They will never get it back and must live as a simple, withering tree. They may long to be back in their bodies but punishment is eternal and they can never get their body back. Some scholars have said that this punishment is very fitting for such a selfish crime. Staying in circle seven Dante discovers more sinners such as people who were violent and did not care about nature on earth.

They are left in circle seven on a desert of burning, hot sand. These sinners, named the sodomites, did not care about the earth. The contrapasso seen here is that of being stuck in hot burning sand as a reminder of what they did on earth. Our actions towards earth also have consequences in the after life. Dante and Virgil next meet Geryon, a monster according to Greek mythology who takes them to circle eight. The eight circle has several different dimensions to it. They are described as going from a dark sin to the darkest of all sins. Dante comes across panderers and seducers in the first dimension.

These sinners are beaten and receive lashings as their punishment. Next, Dante meets the flatterers who are must live in a river of feces. The simoniacs have their feet burned with fire in the next dimension. The astrologists' punishment is to have their heads on backwards and live this way in eternity. Sinners who accepted or gave bribes are punished by

demons tearing them apart literally. Dante came upon some hypocrites next who forever had to walk around in a circle with a heavy robe draped around them. In one of the last dimensions the sinners who were thieves have to sit with vipers and are trapped in there with them.

Once bitten they are then a viper and can only restore to their original form of not being a viper by biting another thief. This form of punishment fits Dante's description of contrapasso perfectly. Thieves still from other people or take something away from someone else. As a reminder, they are bitten then have to bite someone else to return to original form. They are taking away another thief original being and giving them the bite of the viper. This constant back and forth of biting and being bitten, then passing it on and stealing another sinner original form is great use of contrapasso.

Sinners who are scandalous towards others suffer great consequences in the afterlife. They are to walk a circle and be afflicted with pain that leaves open and closed wounds. Lying or those who give a false witness must live in disease with plagues. These are some of the most violent forms of punishment that Dante discovers in his travels. As the sin gets darker and progresses the punishment must also stay in alignment with the sin. In the ninth circle Dante and Virgil are in the frozen lake of Cocytus. There Dante sees sinners who were not kind or nice to their family members embedded in the frozen lake all the way up to their necks.

Right after them are the sinners who are not partial their country or state. They are frozen as well but this time it is all the way up to their head. Dante also comes across sinners who were not hospitable to their guests. They are

cascaded over the frozen lake on their backs, not able to get up. The last group he sees is those that sinned by not staying loyal or true to their benefactor. They are completely submerged in the frozen lake. Lastly Dante comes across Lucifer who has three heads. He has swallowed and chewed up three great traitors of all time, Judas, Brutus, and Cassius.

He does not talk but simply chews up these men. Perhaps the symbolism here can be seen as the three heads representing the trinity of God. The father, the son, and the holy spirit. Dante eventually walks over Lucifer, his body pierces through the center of the earth, and Dante makes it out of hell. Dante uses contrapasso in all of the circles throughout the poem. The reader is able to see a connection between our actions and consequences. Dante shows us that what we do and how we act on earth does affect us in the afterlife. He has realized what is true of his morals and the morals of mankind through his travels in hell.

By understanding contrapasso Dante sees how actions and reactions are justified in the world. He has a better understanding of how to live his life and by what means or morals to live them by. He also understands that for every action done here on earth there are ramifications and actions that are taken in the afterlife. Dante has helped his readers to understand this as well by showing us the contrapasso in each of the circles he travels through. Hopefully the reader of the Inferno can use the concept of contrapasso to help them with their own morals and truth.