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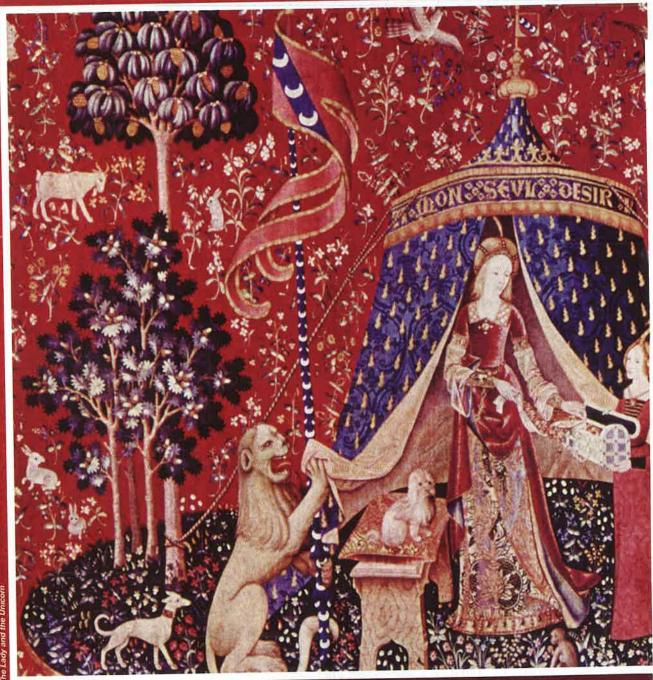
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Assessment workshop

Inferences and Generalizations

In the reading sections of some tests, you are often required to read a passage of fiction and draw inferences and make generalizations about the plot, setting, characters, and mood. The following strategies will help you answer such test questions:

- Remember that to infer is to read between the lines, recognizing the implied message of a passage.
- Look in the passage for clues about the characters, setting, plot, and mood.
- Identify significant word choices, patterns of events, and other clues that can help you understand the writer's implied message.

Test-Taking Strategies

- Before answering guestions, review the passage and highlight the main points.
- Look for descriptive details to help you make inferences about character, setting, plot, and mood.

Sample Test Item

Directions: Read the passage, and then answer the question that follows.

Penelope tried to scoot out the front door, but it closed too quickly. It was spring, and that meant it was time to chase squirrels and roll in puddles of sunshine. She had spent most of the winter in the house where she was warm and coddled, but fresh air and the thrill of the hunt beckoned now. She wound herself around Jenna's ankles and glanced at the door, but her efforts prompted no response.

- 1. In this passage, Penelope can best be described as
 - A a stubborn child,
 - B a frightened squirrel.
 - C an impatient cat.
 - D an eager student.

Practice

Directions: Read the passage, and then answer the questions that follow.

If his parents had their way, David would buy the most sensible car on the lot. But he had other ideas in mind. He was done driving the family car. He wanted something new, something splashy that would make heads turn. He was a working man now, and it was high time he owned his own car. When David saw the metallic blue sports model in the corner of the lot, he knew he had found the perfect set of wheels.

- 1. Which of the following inferences about the family car does the passage support?
 - A It is sporty and fast.
 - B It is conservative and slow.
 - C It was very expensive.
 - D It is a metallic blue.
- 2. Which of the following most accurately describes David?
 - A headstrong
 - **B** cautious
 - C lucky
 - **D** hesitant

Answer and Explanation

The correct answer is C. Penelope's desire to chase squirrels, her reference to the "thrill of the hunt," and her ability to wind around Jenna's ankles suggest the behavior of a cat. The clues in the passage do not suggest a child, a squirrel, or a student, so the remaining answers are incorrect.

(A.D. 450–1300)



66 Where there is peace and meditation, there is neither anxiety nor doubt.

— St. Francis of Assisi, from The Counsels of St. Francis

Timeline A.D. 450-1300

450

700

European Events

- 476 The Western Roman Empire ceases to exist.
- 476–750 Merovingian kings rule the Franks.
- 511 Merovingian King Clovis dies; he was the first important Catholic king.
- 597 Roman cleric Saint Augustine converts English

King Ethelbert to Christianity.

■ 700 This is the earliest possible date for the composition of the English epic Beowulf. ◀



- 711 The Moors invade Spain.
- 732 Charles Martel defeats the Moors at the Battle of Tours.
- 778 Charlemagne crosses the Pyrenees to fight the Moors in Spain.
 - 800 Charlemagne is crowned Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Leo III.
 - mid-800s Latin books are written using the style called Carolingian minuscule.
 - 800s Vikings begin to raid and settle in Europe. ▼



- 400s and 500s (India) Using the concept of zero, mathematicians develop decimals.
- c. 400 (Middle East) Jews compile religious teachings called the Palestinian Talmud.
- 500s (India) The game of chess is invented.
- 618–907 (China) The T'ang dynasty rules.
- 622 (Middle East) Muhammad journeys from Mecca to Yathrib, an event that marks the rise of Islam.
- 600s (Africa) Islam spreads to North Africa.
- c. 600s (Tibet) Buddhism begins to take hold.

- early 700s (Japan) The first works of Japanese prose appear.
- 700s (Japan) "Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves," an early poetry anthology, appears.
- 762-763 (Middle East) Baghdad is founded as the new capital of the Abassid dynasty.
- 794 (Japan) A new imperial capital is built at Heian (Kyoto).
- 800 (New Zealand) This is the earliest known date for habitations of the Polynesian people known as the Maori. ►
- 813–833 (Middle East) Science and scholarship thrive during Ma'mun's reign (Abassid dynasty).
- c. 850 (Africa) The trading empire of Kanem-Bornu is founded.



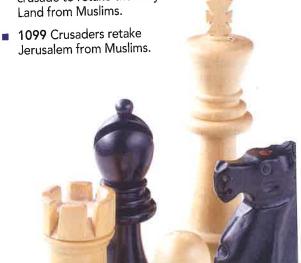
European and World Events

1300 1100 900

900s The game of chess is introduced into Europe.

- 1000s Serious efforts begin to drive the Moors from Spain.
- 1043–1099 Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, Spain's national hero, lives and battles the Moors.
- 1066 William the Conqueror successfully invades England.

 1095 Pope Urban II urges a crusade to retake the Holy Land from Muslims.



- c. 900 (Mexico/Central America) Classic period of Mayan culture ends.
- c. 1000 (Japan) Lady Murasaki Shikibu writes The Tale of Genji.
- c. 1020 (Persia) The poet Firdawsi, author of the Book of Kings, dies.
- 1048-1131 (Persia) Omar Khayyam poet, mathematician, and astronomer-

- 1100s Use of windmills starts to spread.
- 1100s Society experiences a rebirth; the Gothic style develops.



- 1122-1204 Eleanor of Aquitane, the most influential woman of her time, lives.
- 1215 King John of England signs the Magna Carta, limiting royal power.
- mid-1200s Eyeglasses are in use.
- 1300 Universities exist in a number of European
- early 1300s Dante, exiled from Florence, writes the Divine Comedy.
- 1300s Paper mills exist in Europe.
- 1100 (Africa) The city of Timbuktu is founded in West Africa.
- c. 1100s (Mexico/Central America) The Aztecs first appear.
- 1187 (Middle East) Jerusalem is again under Islamic



The Middle Ages

(A.D. 450–1300)

Historical Background

From the Fall of Rome to the Renaissance Scholars usually refer to the historical period between approximately A.D. 450 and 1300 as the Middle Ages—but why is this considered a "middle" period? The Middle Ages may be seen as a historical filling, sandwiched between the Latin civilization of the Roman Empire and the later rediscovery of the classical civilizations of Greece and Rome in the Renaissance.

The dates of the Middle Ages are somewhat arbitrary. The fifth century, a period marked by the rapid decay of those institutions that held the Roman Empire together, is the beginning of this period: Rome was sacked by the Visigoths, a Germanic tribe, in 410 and the western part of the empire ceased to exist in 476. The end of the Middle Ages, however, is more complex an issue. The Renaissance began in the south of Europe. In Italy, the early fourteenth century brought the rediscovery of classical forms in art and architecture, together with the production of new editions of classical literature. In northern Europe, however, such innovations did not occur until the end of the fifteenth century.

A New European Structure In the third century A.D., Rome was master of most of Europe. The empire extended from England in the north to Africa in the south and from Portugal in the west to Syria in the east. Ultimately, this territory was far too large to administer, both politically and militarily. The Roman Empire was then divided into two distinct empires, with the emperor of the West ruling from Rome and the emperor of the East ruling from Constantinople (now Istanbul,

Turkey).

For some time, the northern frontiers of the empire had been experiencing pressure from several Germanic tribes. The northern border, however, had generally remained secure. Then, a population explosion among these tribes triggered a need for expansion. This need for more territory, coupled with the tribes' warlike disposition, provoked what is sometimes called the "barbarian invasions." In reality, the incursion of the Germanic tribes into Roman territory more accurately resembled a mass migration sometimes marked by hostilities. Germanic historians, sensitive about using the word "invasion," called this period in history the Volkerwanderung—the wandering of the peoples.

▼ Critical Viewing
What does this
statue of a Roman
soldier suggest
about the values of
the Roman Empire?
Explain. [Infer]

Close-up on Culture

The Code of Chivalry

Superheroes who defend the weak are today's knights, following the code of chivalry first developed in the Middle Ages.

The chivalric code evolved slowly out of the feudal system. Under this system, the king granted land to his lords, or vassals, so that they could afford to maintain mounted troops. Each lord, therefore, had a group of loyal knights ready to serve him in battle at a moment's notice.

Knights were experienced horsemen. They were also experienced in the use and repair of elaborate metal armor and of weapons such as lances, long wooden shafts tipped with iron or steel; maces, heavy clublike weapons with metal spikes at the end; and double-edged broadswords, about three feet long but weighing only a few pounds.

Equally important as these weapons, however, was the code of chivalry that dictated their use. A knight's loyalty to his lord was crucial, as was the obligation to defend those weaker than himself, especially women. Knights also offered their services to the greater glory of God. The Crusades, campaigns to retake Jerusalem and the Holy Land from Muslims, were opportunities for knights to fight for their most powerful lord, God himself.

The code of chivalry was impossibly idealistic. Yet the view of the perfect knight offered by medieval literature softened a brutal feudal system based on warlike qualities. Eventually, however, knights became less effective in warfare. In various fourteenth-century battles, French knights were like tin cans on horseback, easy targets for English archers with longbows.

Nevertheless, the code of chivalry has survived its armored adherents. It is still practiced by Batman and Spiderman, and it lives every time a man treats a woman with courtesy and respect.

The Germanic Contribution Hardly a portion of the old Western Roman Empire was left untouched by the various Germanic tribes: Lombards, Visigoths, and Ostrogoths settled in Italy; Visigoths, in southern France and Spain; Franks, in northern France; Angles and Saxons, in England. The presence of these peoples radically changed the political structure of what had been, until then, a unified empire. As these tribes began to dominate the land in which they settled, they established individual kingdoms, ending Roman rule once and for all.

The Birth of Feudalism These tribes also helped shape the feudal system that spread through medieval Europe. The act of vassalage, in which one lord swears allegiance to another in exchange for privileges or "feuds," originated in tribal organization. The concepts of kingship, knighthood, and chivalry all emerged from these Germanic peoples. (See Close-up on Culture, above.) After settling in the empire, Germanic tribes were quickly converted to Christianity, which had become the empire's official religion during the



This weapon is a spiked mace. What does it indicate about the importance of armor to a knight? Why? [Infer]

fourth century A.D. Because of this religious conversion, their political institutions were also Christianized. With their adoption of Roman religion, they also adopted Latin, the official language of the Western Church, as their language. Many linguists believe that the Romance languages descended from Latin—such as French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and Romanian—owe their modern differences to the various Germanic tribes that learned Latin in an imperfect manner. Many words of Germanic origin, especially those relating to warfare and feudalism, still exist in these languages.

Feudalism and Peasants The feudal system did not involve only lords and knights. It also spelled out the duties of poor farmers known as peasants. They lived on a lord's manor—a village and its surrounding fields—and owed service to the lord in exchange for protection. Usually, they were not free to leave the land. They contributed to the manor by raising sheep and cattle and growing grain and vegetables. Their self-sufficient community often included a mill, a blacksmith shop, and a church.

The Moors Threaten Europe In A.D. 711, the Muslims, or Moors, inspired by their successful subjugation of the Middle East and North Africa, swept into Spain and quickly conquered all but a few mountain strongholds. The Muslim advance into Europe's heartland was not stopped until A.D. 732, when Charles Martel (mär tel'), "the Hammer," defeated the Moors at the Battle of Tours, in central France. The struggle between Christianity and Islam became one of the most important conflicts in medieval Europe.

A New Stability: The Reemergence of Learning On December 25, A.D. 800, Charles I, King of the Franks, also known as Charles the Great or Charlemagne (shär' lə mān'), was crowned Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Leo III. (For the size of this empire four hundred years later, see the map on page 549.) This event represents the complete integration of the Germanic peoples into the mainstream of European society. In addition, the use of a title and an office linked to the traditions of the ancient Roman Empire was an attempt at creating a new unified political order. This action revealed a need and willingness to revive some kind of historical continuity, and there is little doubt that at this time Europe needed all the unity it could muster.

A Crusade Having contained the Islamic threat in Europe, the Christian rulers of Europe turned their eyes to the Holy Land. This Middle Eastern region, located in what is now Jordan and Israel, was at that time a Muslim stronghold. Its sacred associations, however, made it "holy" for Jews and Christians as well. In 1095, Pope Urban II preached a sermon in Clermont, France, urging European knights to participate in a crusade that would win back the Holy Land.

These images from an illuminated manuscript show scenes from the life of Charlemagne. The upper picture, for example, shows him being crowned. Which details in this scene suggest a close association between religious and political power? Explain. [Interpret]





A Powerful Sermon Urban's sermon was perhaps one of the most effective orations in history. The pope even claimed that he was not ready for the intense fervor generated by his discourse. Nevertheless, one year later, the first crusade was launched. This army, under the leadership of several powerful lords, initially met with great success. They regained Jerusalem in 1099, but the Arabs reorganized and began to exploit the internal discord of the crusaders. Several crusades were subsequently undertaken. Their success was minimal because the European lords were more interested in protecting and expanding their own domains than in pursuing any international cooperative venture. By 1187, Jerusalem was once again under Islamic control.

Stirrings of Nationalism With nationalism beginning to take hold in Europe, there arose a natural antagonism between the single most important international office, the Catholic Church, and the various kingdoms. This conflict of interest between the papacy and the secular order reshaped the political landscape of Europe. One of the most famous victims of this controversy was the great Italian poet Dante (dän' tā). Exiled from his native Florence in 1302 for opposing papal meddling in Florentine politics, he expressed his aversion to the worldly pursuits of the papacy as a recurring theme in the *Inferno*, the first part of his epic poem, the *Divine Comedy*.

▲ Critical Viewing
In thirteenth-century
Europe, what was
the status of
present-day Spain,
Germany, and Italy?
Explain. [Read a
Map]

Art in the Historical Context

The Gothic Cathedral

Consider the relationship between the lowly bean and the soaring Gothic cathedral. The growing of beans, which provided better food for people of all social levels, was part of a twelfth-century renaissance in which towns thrived, trade increased, and travel conditions improved. The development of the Gothic style of architecture was the spiritual expression of this social rebirth.

The Gothic style was also an expression of the brilliance of stonemasons. These artisans discovered how to use flying buttresses (supports on the outer walls) to build tall cathedrals whose walls were thin enough to accommodate

stained-glass windows. These architectural innovations give us our most vivid images of the Middle Ages: stone towers that seem to fly toward heaven and windows that make a multicolored heaven of sunlight.

The Impact of the Crusades Despite their limited military success, the crusades had a tremendous impact on medieval civilization. As crusaders returned from the Middle East, they brought back with them new spices, textiles, and other products. A demand for these new and exotic items inspired commerce. This trading created a new merchant class in the Italian city-states of Genoa, Florence, and Venice, and new markets sprang up elsewhere as well. Small towns in Europe were quickly transformed into large trading centers. By the effective end of the crusades in the late thirteenth century, the merchant class was becoming increasingly important in many parts of Europe.

As the medieval city grew, so did the new centers of learning. By 1300, universities existed in a number of important European cities. The University of Paris was the most eminent center of theology and philosophy in the Western world, and the University of Bologna in Italy was the most important center for the study of law.

Transformation of Medieval Life Despite disease and poverty during this time, new capital generated by commerce stimulated the quest for learning and the rediscovery of classical literature. In addition, explorers searching for better trade routes would soon expand European knowledge of the world. Europe was entering the period of rebirth that we now call the Renaissance.

♣ Critical Viewing Which details in these pictures of Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris, reveal two major elements of the Gothic style? Explain.

[Connect]

Literature

Literature in Native Languages As previously mentioned, Latin became the language of religion, scholarship, and government. It was no longer understood by common people, who spoke German or one of the Romance languages that were evolving from Latin, such as Italian, French, and Spanish. These languages were known as the vernacular, or "the native

language of a place."

vernacular.

This new linguistic situation affected the way culture was passed on. Two cultures existed side by side: a high culture based on Latin and a popular culture based on vernacular languages. The history of medieval literature is the story of how the various national literatures emerged in native languages while Latin became increasingly specialized.

Reforms in Latin As vernacular literatures were emerging. however, Latin underwent important reforms that ensured the more accurate transmission of texts. Under Charlemagne's patronage, monks created a new writing style called the Carolingian minuscule. This style, featuring a neater script penmanship and distinct breaks between words, made documents much easier to read. In addition, new Latin grammars helped to standardize the language by eliminating elements introduced from the

A New Kind of Vernacular Epic While monks in monasteries were refining Latin and copying out libraries of books, the oral tradition was thriving in the rough-and-tumble world. Germanic storytellers, for example, developed a new kind of epic, or long narrative heroic poem. Epic poetry existed in classical Latin, but these Latin poems, such as Virgil's Aeneid, were extremely refined and literary. The Germanic epics existed in oral form centuries before they were written down. Their verse form is irregular, and they were meant to be performed to stimulate a warrior's courage before battle. The most famous Germanic epic is the Nibelungenlied ("Song of the Nibelungs"), which an unknown author composed from earlier tales sometime around 1200.

Critical Viewing This fifteenthcentury Holy Book provides some idea of what a medieval illuminated manuscript looked like. Compare and contrast the relationship between words and pictures in such a manuscript and in a modern illustrated book. [Compare and Contrast

Et bent adam Don

ethin; et non tenta

cite clas et tro men

nie filemn et tre

opto he arbit d

mmani: lancen no es ten intantantes

ambas posta fange

um et bent Substrago bomus b **Epic Heroes for Different Nationalities** The Spanish Song of My Cid and the French Song of Roland, although written in medieval Spanish and medieval French, respectively, are also descendants of this ancient Germanic tradition. These two epics describe conflicts between Christians and Moors.

The Moors had invaded Spain and Portugal in the early 700s. Charlemagne took part in early efforts to expel the Moors. In 778, he crossed the Pyrenees into Spain to accomplish this goal. The *Song of Roland*, dating from around 1100, relates the tragedy that befell Charlemagne's nephew, Roland, during this campaign.

In the eleventh century, Christians in Spain launched a new campaign against the Moors. Eventually, several independent Christian kingdoms emerged. Song of My Cid, written in the mid-1100s, tells the story of Spain's national hero, Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar (1043–1099), who helped spearhead the expansion of these Christian kingdoms.

Icelandic Sagas Meanwhile, from the ninth through the eleventh centuries, conflicts also occurred between Europeans and Viking raiders from Scandinavia. These Vikings, or Norsemen, settled in England and in northern France, where they became known as Normans. Under William the Conqueror, a Norman army conquered England in 1066.

Vikings also settled in Iceland. There, in the late 1100s, they carried their restless, adventurous spirit into literature, producing works like *Njáls saga* and *Egils saga*. These tales draw upon oral traditions and fictionalize historical events.

Troubadour Poetry In the second half of the eleventh century, a group of poets began writing verse in Provençal (prō' vän säl'), a Romance language spoken in the south of France. These troubadours—from *trobar*, meaning "to find or invent"—were associated with the courts of certain powerful lords and invented new ways to sing about love. As a result, the theme of their poetry became known as courtly love. The rules of courtly love required a troubadour to praise in poetry a distant, unattainable lady, usually someone else's wife.

Courtly Love and the Status of Women

This type of poetry, which helped foster enlightened attitudes toward women, took Europe by storm. Poets followed courtly love traditions, writing in their own native languages rather than in Latin. Among those who helped popularize the new poetry was Eleanor of Aquitane (c. 1122–1204). As queen of France and England, successively, she was the most influential woman of her time.

Chrétien de Troyes (krā tyän de trwä'), writing at the court of France's Marie de Champagne in the twelfth century, created a new poetic form, the courtly romance. This

Critical Viewing

Troubadours played music and composed poetry. What does this picture of medieval troubadours reveal about the kinds of instruments they played? Explain. [Infer]



A Writer's Voice

François Villon, Outlaw Poet

Today, gangsta rappers stir up controversy with lyrics about their outlaw lives. Yet medieval French poet François Villon (frän swä' vē yōn') (1431–c. 1463) beat rappers like Dr. Dre to the punch. Villon, who came from a poor family, ran with the roughest crowds in Paris. Although he studied at the Sorbonne, a college that taught religion, he was involved in brawling and thievery. He even killed a priest but was pardoned due to extenuating circumstances.

Villon wrote his poem "Ballade" at a time when he thought he would be hanged. In the poem, he speaks as a dead man and asks forgiveness of those who view his body. Villon's actual death, however, remains mysterious. Instead of being executed, he was exiled from Paris. At this point, he vanishes from history and enters legend as an outlaw poet.

from "Ballade" by François Villon, translated by Galway Kinnell

Brother humans who live on after us Don't let your hearts harden against us For if you have pity on wretches like us More likely God will show mercy to you

- 5 You see us five, six, hanging here
 As for the flesh we loved too well
 A while ago it was eaten and has rotted away
 And we the bones turn to ashes and dust
 Let no one make us the butt of jokes
- 10 But pray God that he absolve us all. . . .

form combined the elements of courtly love with the longer narrative form of the romance. Many of his works, like *Perceval*, recount adventures associated with the legendary King Arthur of Britain.

Dante Makes a Fateful Choice As medieval society evolved and education became more available with the growth of the universities, popular and Latin culture at times intersected. These traditions combined in the greatest poem of medieval times, Dante's Divine Comedy, written in the early 1300s. This epic, which expresses a Christian vision of the world, is based in part on Latin culture. Dante's guide for his imaginary trip through Hell, for example, is the great Roman poet Virgil. At the same time, Dante chose to write his poem in Italian rather than in Latin. His choice gave added prestige to the vernacular and caused other writers to use it as well.

The Dark Side Starting in the 1100s, European towns began to increase rapidly in size. Although this urbanization was part of a social rebirth, it had its dark side as well. Impoverished city-dwellers, menaced by crime and disease, had a hard time surviving. Especially threatening was the plague, a highly contagious disease carried from rats to humans by fleas. The dark side of medieval life found expression in the work of Parisian poet François Villon (see above).



Critical Viewing
Do any details in this
picture of François
Villon suggest that
he was an outlaw
poet? Why or why
not? [Interpret]



Prepare to Read

from the Divine Comedy: Inferno

Dante Alighieri (1265-1321)

Dante Alighieri (dän tā al əg yer ē), whose visions of Hell have haunted readers for centuries, is widely considered one of the greatest poets of Western civilization. T. S. Eliot wrote, "Dante and Shakespeare divide the modern world between them. There is no third."

Political Chaos Dante was born into a poor but noble family in Florence, Italy. At the time, Italy was not a unified country but a collection of independent city-states. These city-states were marked by fierce political turbulence and power struggles between ruling families. The states were constantly at war with each other while they simultaneously battled civil unrest within their own borders.

Painful Exile As a member of the nobility, Dante became an elected official. Along with six other officials, he ran Florence's government. However, in 1300, a street accident led to a skirmish, which escalated into a full-blown civil war. Dante's political party and all its representatives were overthrown. In 1302, Dante was officially exiled from his beloved city, never to return. His experience of exile would later play an important role in his writing.

Writing in Italian Scholars believe that Dante studied law and rhetoric at the University of Bologna, one of Europe's most prestigious institutions of higher learning. Bologna also boasted a great poetic tradition, and it was there that Dante discovered a school of writers who sought to free poetry from the limitations imposed by the church and government. At the time, most writers wrote in Latin, the language of scholars. Dante believed

that poets should write in the language of the people—in his case, Italian. In 1304, he published *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, in which he argued for the use of the common tongue in works of literature. He wrote many lyric poems in Italian; however, it was with his *Divine Comedy* that he created the crowning achievement of medieval literature.

Principle of the Trinity Completed shortly before his death, the Commedia, which later gained the honorific title Divina, documents the physical and spiritual journey of a man who is also named Dante. Dante used the number three, which represents the Christian concept of the trinity, as an organizing principle for the Divine Comedy. Consisting of 100 cantos, the poem is divided into three parts—the Inferno, the Purgatorio, and the Paradiso. Each part contains thirty-three cantos; there is also an introductory first canto for the Inferno, the only one that takes place on Earth. Within each canto, the verse form is terza rima, a stanza of three lines. In addition, Dante's journey takes three days, beginning on Good Friday and ending on Easter Sunday.

The Love of His Life Guiding Dante on his pilgrimage is his beloved Beatrice, whose name means "she who blesses." It is believed that Dante modeled his literary Beatrice on the real-life Beatrice Portinari. Although evidence suggests that Dante saw the real Beatrice only twice in his life—first when he was nine years old and then again nine years later—she became for Dante the force that led him out of his despair. She was first the subject of his love poetry; later, she became both the object of his religious quest and a symbol of spiritual purity. Beatrice, the guiding presence in Dante's life and in his poem, is literally and symbolically his link between heaven and Earth.

In 1321, shortly after completing *Paradiso*, Dante died in the city of Ravenna in northern Italy.

Preview

Connecting to the Literature

Imagine a movie that begins with a lone man lost in a dark forest. Suddenly, a leopard and a lion leap from the shadows, baring their fangs. The man runs, only to come face to face with a vicious wolf. This selection opens with just such a scene and contains all the drama of a Hollywood film.

Literary Analysis

Allegory

An allegory is a literary work with two levels of meaning—the literal and the symbolic. In an allegory, every detail, character, and plot point has an equivalent symbolic meaning. For example, an allegory in which a rowboat floating down a river symbolizes the journey of life might have these symbolic equivalents:

- rowboat = person
- water = flow of time
- two oars = hard work and persistence
- rudder = love or guidance

The *Divine Comedy* is a complex allegory in which a literal journey symbolizes a man's struggle for redemption. As you read, try to identify the allegorical meanings of the places and characters Dante encounters.

Connecting Literary Elements

Imagery is the use of language that appeals to one or more of the five senses and creates mental pictures for the reader. Dante uses imagery to make the allegorical world of his poem seem tangible and real, helping the reader *feel* the ideas. As you read, notice language that appeals to the senses and creates powerful word pictures in your mind.

Reading Strategy

Interpreting Imagery

To interpret an image, identify which of the five senses it involves. Then, classify the physical experience the image creates by the sight, sound, taste, smell, or sense of touch it evokes. Finally, define the emotion or idea the image conveys. As you read, use a chart like the one shown to interpret imagery.

Vocabulary Development

flounders (floun' dərz) v. struggles to move (p. 614)

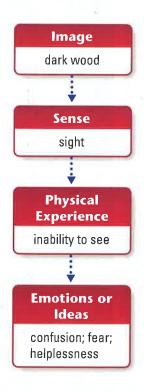
tremulous (trem' yoo les) adj. quivering; shaking (p. 616)

zeal (zēl) n. ardor; fervor (p. 616)

putrid (pyōō´ trid) adj. rotten; stinking (p. 619)

despicable (des´ pi ke bel) adj. deserving to be despised; contemptible (p. 621) lamentation (lam´ en tā´ shen) n. weeping; wailing (p. 621) scorn (skôrn) v. reject (p. 621)

reprimand (rep' re mand') v. chastise; blame (p. 622)



from the

Infemo

Dante Alighieri

franslated by John Ciardi

Forest, Informo I, 1862, Gustave Dore

Background

The Divine Comedy is composed of three sections—the Inferno, the Purgatorio, and the Paradiso. In the Inferno, the poet Virgil has been sent by Beatrice to lead Dante through Hell. Hell, a series of downward spiraling circles, is organized according to the gravity of the sin being punished. The lowest circle is reserved for traitors and Lucifer himself, the ultimate betrayer.

In Canto I of the Inferno, Dante first awakens to his plight and meets his guide. In Canto III, Virgil leads Dante through the Gate and into Hell itself.

Canto I

THE DARK WOOD OF ERROR

Midway in his allotted threescore years and ten, Dante comes to himself with a start and realizes that he has strayed from the True Way into the Dark Wood of Error (Worldliness). As soon as he has realized his loss, Dante lifts his eyes and sees the first light of the sunrise (the Sun is the Symbol of Divine Illumination) lighting the shoulders of a little hill (The Mount of Joy). It is the Easter Season, the time of resurrection, and the sun is in its equinoctial rebirth. This juxtaposition of joyous symbols fills Dante with hope and he sets out at once to climb directly up the Mount of Joy, but almost immediately his way is blocked by the Three Beasts of Worldliness: The Leopard of Malice and Fraud, The Lion of Violence and Ambition, and The She-Wolf of Incontinence.2 These beasts, and especially the She-Wolf, drive him back despairing into the darkness of error. But just as all seems lost, a figure appears to him. It is the shade of Virgil,3 Dante's symbol of Human Reason.

Virgil explains that he has been sent to lead Dante from error. There can, however, be no direct ascent past the beasts: the man who would escape them must go a longer and harder way. First he must descend through Hell (The Recognition of Sin), then he must ascend through Purgatory (The Renunciation of Sin), and only then may he reach the pinnacle of joy and come to the Light of God. Virgil offers to guide Dante, but only as far as Human Reason can go. Another guide (Beatrice, symbol of Divine Love) must take over for the final ascent, for Human Reason is self-limited. Dante submits himself joyously to Virgil's guidance and they move off.

Midway in our life's journey,4 I went astray from the straight road and woke to find myself alone in a dark wood. How shall I say

- 1. equinoctial (ē' kwi näk' shəl) rebirth After the vernal equinox, which occurs about March 21, days become longer than nights.
- 2. incontinence (in kän' te nens) n. lack of self-restraint.
- 3. Virgil (vur' jel) great Roman poet (70-19 B.C.).
- 4. Midway in our life's journey The biblical life span is threescore years and ten-seventy years. The action opens in Dante's thirty-fifth year, i.e., A.D. 1300.

Critical Viewing Which elements in this engraving portray Dante's "dark wood of error" as an ominous, threatening place? [Analyze]

Literary Analysis

Allegory Which details in the opening lines immediately suggest the allegorical nature of the poem? Explain.



At what time of year does Dante's tale take place?

what wood that was! I never saw so drear, so rank, so arduous⁵ a wilderness! Its very memory gives a shape to fear,

Death could scarce be more bitter than that place! But since it came to good, I will recount all that I found revealed there by God's grace.

How I came to it I cannot rightly say, so drugged and loose with sleep had I become when I first wandered there from the True Way.

But at the far end of that valley of evil whose maze had sapped my very heart with fear I found myself before a little hill

and lifted up my eyes. Its shoulders glowed already with the sweet rays of that planet⁶ whose virtue leads men straight on every road,

and the shining strengthened me against the fright
whose agony had wracked the lake of my heart
through all the terrors of that piteous night.

Just as a swimmer, who with his last breath

flounders ashore from perilous seas, might turn
to memorize the wide water of his death—

so did I turn, my soul still fugitive from death's surviving image, to stare down that pass that none had ever left alive.

And there I lay to rest from my heart's race till calm and breath returned to me. Then rose and pushed up that dead slope at such a pace

each footfall rose above the last. And lo! almost at the beginning of the rise I faced a spotted Leopard,⁷ all tremor and flow flounders (floun' derz) v. struggles to move



Critical Viewing

Do you think these illustrations of the leopard (this page), the lion, and the wolf (facing page) emphasize each animal's realistic appearance or its symbolic meaning? Explain.

[Make a Judgment]

so rank, so arduous (är' joo es) so overgrown, so difficult to cross.

6. that planet the sun. Medieval astronomers considered the sun a planet. In the Divine Comedy, the sun is also symbolic of God.

7. a spotted Leopard The three beasts that Dante encounters are taken from the Bible, Jeremiah 5:6. While numerous interpretations have been advanced for them, many scholars agree that they foreshadow the three divisions of Hell (incontinence, violence, and fraud), which Virgil explains at length in Canto XI, 16–111.

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and gaudy pelt. And it would not pass, but stood so blocking my every turn that time and again I was on the verge of turning back to the wood.

This fell at the first widening of the dawn as the sun climbing Aries with those stars that rode with him to light the new creation.⁸

Thus the holy hour and the sweet season of commemoration did much to arm my fear of that bright murderous beast with their good omen.

Yet not so much but what I shook with dread at sight of a great Lion that broke upon me raging with hunger, its enormous head

45

60

held high as if to strike a mortal terror into the very air. And down his track, a She-Wolf drove upon me, a starved horror

ravening and wasted beyond all belief.

She seemed a rack for avarice, gaunt and craving.

Oh many the souls she has brought to endless grief!

She brought such heaviness upon my spirit at sight of her savagery and desperation, I died from every hope of that high summit.

And like a miser—eager in acquisition
but desperate in self-reproach when Fortune's wheel
turns to the hour of his loss—all tears and attrition¹⁰

I wavered back; and still the beast pursued, forcing herself against me bit by bit till I slid back into the sunless wood.





Literary Analysis
Allegory In what ways is
Dante's reaction to the
beasts more realistic than
heroic? Explain.

8. Aries ... new creation The medieval tradition held that the sun was in the zodiacal sign of Aries at the time of the Creation. The significance of the astronomical and religious conjunction is an important part of Dante's intended allegory. It is just before dawn of Good Friday A.D. 1300 when he awakens in the Dark Wood. Thus, his new life begins under Aries, the sign of creation, at dawn (rebirth) and in the Easter Season (which commemorates the resurrection of Jesus). Moreover, the moon is full and the sun is in the equinox, conditions that did not fall together on any Friday of 1300. Dante is poetically constructing the perfect Easter as a symbol of his new awakening.

9. a rack for avarice an instrument of torture for greed.

10. attrition (a trish' an) n. weakening; wearing away.



What does Dante see on the other side of the "valley of evil"? And as I fell to my soul's ruin, a presence gathered before me on the discolored air, the figure of one who seemed hoarse from long silence.

At sight of him in that friendless waste I cried:

"Have pity on me, whatever thing you are,
whether shade or living man." And it replied:

"Not man, though man I once was, and my blood was Lombard, both my parents Mantuan.¹¹
I was born, though late, *sub Julio*,¹² and bred

of the false and lying gods. ¹³ I was a poet and sang of old Anchises' noble son

who came to Rome after the burning of Troy. 14

But you—why do *you* return to these distresses instead of climbing that shining Mount of Joy

which is the seat and first cause of man's bliss?"
"And are you then that Virgil and that fountain
of purest speech?" My voice grew tremulous:

"Glory and light of poets! now may that <u>zeal</u>
and love's apprenticeship that I poured out
on your heroic verses serve me well!

For you are my true master and first author, the sole maker from whom I drew the breath of that sweet style whose measures have brought me honor.

See there, immortal sage, the beast I flee.

For my soul's salvation, I beg you, guard me from her, for she has struck a mortal tremor through me."

V Critical Viewing

In this fifteenth-century illustration of Canto I, what do you think Virgil, in red, is telling Dante? [Connect]



tremulous (trem' yoo les) adj. quivering; shaking

zeal (zēl) n. ardor; fervor

^{11.} Lombard ... Mantuan Lombardy is a region of northern Italy; Mantua, the birthplace of Virgil, is a city in that region.

^{12.} sub Julio in the reign of Julius Caesar. It would be more accurate to say that he was born during the lifetime of Caesar (102?—44 B.C.). Augustus did not begin his rule as dictator until long after Virgil's birth, which occurred in 70 B.C.

under Augustus... gods Augustus, the grandnephew of Julius Caesar, was the emperor
of Rome from 27 B.C. to A.D.14. The "lying gods" are the gods of classical mythology.

and sang...Troy Virgil's epic poem, the Aeneid, describes the destruction of Troy by the Greeks and the founding of Roman civilization by the Trojan Aeneas, son of Anchises (an ki' sēz).

And he replied, seeing my soul in tears:

"He must go by another way who would escape this wilderness, for that mad beast that fleers¹⁵

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105

before you there, suffers no man to pass.

She tracks down all, kills all, and knows no glut, but, feeding, she grows hungrier than she was.

She mates with any beast, and will mate with more before the Greyhound comes to hunt her down. He will not feed on lands nor loot, but honor

and love and wisdom will make straight his way.

He will rise between Feltro and Feltro, 16 and in him shall be the resurrection and new day

of that sad Italy for which Nisus died, and Turnus, and Euryalus, and the maid Camilla.¹⁷ He shall hunt her through every nation of sick pride

till she is driven back forever to Hell whence Envy first released her on the world. Therefore, for your own good, I think it well

you follow me and I will be your guide and lead you forth through an eternal place. There you shall see the ancient spirits tried

in endless pain, and hear their lamentation
as each bemoans the second death¹⁸ of souls.

Next you shall see upon a burning mountain¹⁹

souls in fire and yet content in fire, knowing that whensoever it may be they yet will mount into the blessed choir. **Literary Analysis**

Allegory Based on Virgil's comments, do you think the She-Wolf symbolizes Dante's social, political, religious, or moral concerns? Explain.



What assistance does Virgil offer Dante?

^{15.} fleers (flirz) laughs scornfully.

^{16.} the Greyhound ... Feltro and Feltro The Greyhound almost certainly refers to Can Grande della Scala (1290–1329), a great Italian leader born in Verona, which lies between the towns of Feltre and Montefeltro.

^{17.} Nisus ... Camilla All were killed in the war between the Trojans and the Latians when, according to legend, Aeneas led the survivors of Troy into Italy. Nisus and Euryalus (Aeneid IX) were Trojan comrades-in-arms who died together. Camilla (Aeneid XI) was the daughter of the Latian king and one of the warrior women. She was killed in a horse charge against the Trojans after displaying great gallantry. Turnus (Aeneid XII) was killed by Aeneas in a duel.

^{18.} the second death damnation.

^{19.} a burning mountain Mountain of Purgatory.

To which, if it is still your wish to climb,
a worthier spirit²⁰ shall be sent to guide you.
With her shall I leave you, for the King of Time,

who reigns on high, forbids me to come there²¹ since, living, I rebelled against his law.
He rules the waters and the land and air

and there holds court, his city and his throne.
Oh blessed are they he chooses!" And I to him:
"Poet, by that God to you unknown,

lead me this way. Beyond this present ill
and worse to dread, lead me to Peter's gate²²
and be my guide through the sad halls of Hell."

And he then: "Follow." And he moved ahead in silence, and I followed where he led.

20. a worthier spirit Beatrice.

120

- 21. forbids me to come there In Dante's theology, salvation is achieved only through Christ. Virgil lived and died before the establishment of Christ's teachings in Rome and therefore cannot enter Heaven.
- 22. Peter's gate the gate of Purgatory. The gate is guarded by an angel with a gleaming sword. The angel is Peter's vicar and is entrusted with the two great keys.

Review and Assess

Thinking About the Selection

- 1. Respond: Which part of Dante's experience in the Dark Wood did you find most frightening? Explain.
- 2. (a) Recall: Which three beasts block Dante's path?
 - (b) Interpret: What emotion or idea does each beast represent?
 - **(c) Analyze:** Why is each beast an appropriate choice for the emotion or idea it represents?
- 3. (a) Recall: Who rescues Dante? (b) Infer: What does the author's choice of rescuer and guide reveal about Dante's values?
- 4. (a) Interpret: Identify at least two lines in Canto I that reveal strong emotion in Dante. (b) Analyze: Based on his thoughts, emotions, and actions thus far, how would you describe Dante's character?
 (c) Speculate: Based on your understanding of his character, how do you think Dante will respond to the sights and sounds of Hell? Explain.
- 5. Evaluate: Does Dante the character seem like a real man on a real journey, or does the whole situation presented in Canto I seem like a fantasy? Explain.

Literary Analysis

Allegory At the end of Canto I, Dante lays out the structure of his entire poem. In what ways does this help the reader grasp the allegory?

Canto III

THE VESTIBULE OF HELL

The Opportunists

The Poets pass the Gate of Hell and are immediately assailed by cries of anguish. Dante sees the first of the souls in torment. They are *The Opportunists*, those souls who in life were neither for good nor evil but only for themselves. Mixed with them are those outcasts who took no sides in the Rebellion of the Angels. They are neither in Hell nor out of it. Eternally unclassified, they race round and round pursuing a wavering banner that runs forever before them through the dirty air; and as they run they are pursued by swarms of wasps and hornets, who sting them and produce a constant flow of blood and <u>putrid</u> matter which trickles down the bodies of the sinners and is feasted upon by loathsome worms and maggots who coat the ground.

The law of Dante's Hell is the law of symbolic retribution. As they sinned so are they punished. They took no sides, therefore they are given no place. As they pursued the ever-shifting illusion of their own advantage, changing their courses with every changing wind, so they pursue eternally an elusive, ever-shifting banner. As their sin was a darkness, so they move in darkness.

As their own guilty conscience pursued them, so they are pursued by swarms of wasps and hornets. And as their actions were a moral filth, so they run eternally through the filth of worms and maggots which they themselves feed.

Dante recognizes several, among them *Pope Celestine V*,² but without delaying to speak to any of these souls, the Poets move on to *Acheron*,³ the first of the rivers of Hell. Here the newly arrived souls of the damned gather and wait for monstrous *Charon*⁴ to ferry them over to punishment. Charon recognizes Dante as a living man and angrily refuses him passage. Virgil forces Charon to serve them, but Dante swoons with terror, and does not reawaken until he is on the other side.

I AM THE WAY INTO THE CITY OF WOE.

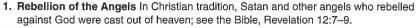
I AM THE WAY TO A FORSAKEN PEOPLE.

I AM THE WAY INTO ETERNAL SORROW.

putrid (pyōō' trid) adj. rotten; stinking

▼ Critical Viewing

Which details in this illustration of Dante help convey the fear and horror he is experiencing? Explain.
[Interpret]



2. Pope Celestine V He lived from 1215 to 1296.

3. Acheron (ak' ər än')

4. Charon (ker' en)



What is the law of Dante's Hell?

SACRED JUSTICE MOVED MY ARCHITECT.

I WAS RAISED HERE BY DIVINE OMNIPOTENCE, PRIMORDIAL⁵ LOVE AND ULTIMATE INTELLECT.

ONLY THOSE ELEMENTS TIME CANNOT WEAR⁶
WERE MADE BEFORE ME, AND BEYOND TIME I STAND.⁷
ABANDON ALL HOPE YE WHO ENTER HERE.

These mysteries I read cut into stone above a gate. And turning I said: "Master, what is the meaning of this harsh inscription?"

And he then as initiate to novice:⁸
"Here must you put by all division of spirit and gather your soul against all cowardice.

This is the place I told you to expect.

Here you shall pass among the fallen people, souls who have lost the good of intellect."

So saying, he put forth his hand to me, and with a gentle and encouraging smile he led me through the gate of mystery.

Here sighs and cries and wails coiled and recoiled on the starless air, spilling my soul to tears.

A confusion of tongues and monstrous accents toiled

in pain and anger. Voices hoarse and shrill and sounds of blows, all intermingled, raised tumult and pandemonium⁹ that still

whirls on the air forever dirty with it as if a whirlwind sucked at sand. And I, holding my head in horror, cried: "Sweet Spirit,

what souls are these who run through this black haze?" And he to me: "These are the nearly soulless whose lives concluded neither blame nor praise. Literary Analysis Allegory In what ways does Dante's use of a gate, an object familiar to all medieval people, make his allegory seem all the more real?

Literary Analysis Allegory and Imagery Why do you think the imagery at this point in the poem appeals almost solely to the sense of hearing?

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^{5.} primordial (prī mōr' dē əl) adj. existing from the beginning.

^{6.} only ... wear The Angels, the Empyrean (the highest heaven), and the First Matter are the elements time cannot wear, for they will last forever. Human beings, being mortal, are not eternal. The Gate of Hell, therefore, was created before people.

^{7.} and ... stand So odious is sin to God that there can be no end to its just punishment.

^{8.} as initiate to novice as one who knows to one who does not.

pandemonium (pan' de mō' nē em) word coined by English poet John Milton (1608 –1674) to identify the demons' capital in hell; now describes any place or scene of noise, wild disorder, and confusion.

They are mixed here with that <u>despicable</u> corps of angels who were neither God nor Satan, but only for themselves. The High Creator

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despicable (des' pi ke bel) adj. deserving to be despised; contemptible

scourged¹⁰ them from Heaven for its perfect beauty, and Hell will not receive them since the wicked might feel some glory over them." And I:

lamentation (lam' en tā' shen) n. weeping; wailing

"Master, what gnaws at them so hideously their <u>lamentation</u> stuns the very air?"

"They have no hope of death," he answered me,

their miserable lives have sunk so low that they must envy every other fate.

"and in their blind and unattaining state

No word of them survives their living season.

Mercy and Justice deny them even a name.

Let us not speak of them: look, and pass on."

I saw a banner there upon the mist.

Circling and circling, it seemed to <u>scorn</u> all pause.

So it ran on, and still behind it pressed

a never-ending rout of souls in pain.

I had not thought death had undone so many as passed before me in that mournful train.

And some I knew among them; last of all
I recognized the shadow of that soul
who, in his cowardice, made the Great Denial.¹¹

At once I understood for certain: these were of that retrograde¹² and faithless crew hateful to God and to His enemies.

These wretches never born and never dead ran naked in a swarm of wasps and hornets that goaded them the more the more they fled, scorn (skôrn) v. reject

10. scourged (skurj'd) *v.* whipped.

12. retrograde (re' tre grād') adj. moving backward.



In the vestibule of Hell, with whom are the "nearly soulless" souls mixed?

^{11.} who, in ... Denial This is almost certainly intended to be Celestine V, who became pope in 1294. He was a man of saintly virtue, but he allowed himself to be convinced by a priest named Benedetto that his soul was in danger since no man could live in the world without being damned. In fear for his soul, he withdrew from all worldly affairs and renounced the papacy. Benedetto promptly assumed the mantle himself and became Boniface VIII, a pope who became for Dante a symbol of all the worst corruptions of the church.

- and made their faces stream with bloody gouts
 of pus and tears that dribbled to their feet
 to be swallowed there by loathsome worms and maggots.
 - Then looking onward I made out a throng assembled on the beach of a wide river, whereupon I turned to him: "Master, I long
- to know what souls these are, and what strange usage makes them as eager to cross as they seem to be in this infected light." At which the Sage:
 - "All this shall be made known to you when we stand on the joyless beach of Acheron." And I cast down my eyes, sensing a reprimand
 - in what he said, and so walked at his side in silence and ashamed until we came through the dead cavern to that sunless tide.
- There, steering toward us in an ancient ferry came an old man¹³ with a white bush of hair, bellowing: "Woe to you depraved souls! Bury
 - here and forever all hope of Paradise:

 I come to lead you to the other shore,
 into eternal dark, into fire and ice.
- And you who are living yet, I say begone from these who are dead." But when he saw me stand against his violence he began again:
 - "By other windings¹⁴ and by other steerage shall you cross to that other shore. Not here! Not here! A lighter craft than mine must give you passage."
 - And my Guide to him: "Charon, bite back your spleen: this has been willed where what is willed must be, and is not yours to ask what it may mean." 15

reprimand (repr re mand') v. chastise; blame

Literary Analysis
Allegory Judging from
this character, in what
ways has the mythology of
ancient Greece and Rome
provided Dante with
source material for his
allegory?

75

^{13.} an old man Charon, the ferryman who transports dead souls across the Acheron in all classical mythology.

^{14.} By other windings Charon recognizes Dante not only as a living man but as a soul in grace and knows, therefore, that the Infernal Ferry was not intended for him. He is probably referring to the fact that souls destined for Purgatory and Heaven assemble not at his ferry point but on the banks of the Tiber (a river that runs through Rome), from which they are transported by an Angel.

^{15.} Charon . . . mean Virgil tells Charon to suppress his bad temper because God has ordained that Dante shall make this journey. Charon has no right to question God's orders.

The steersman of that marsh of ruined souls, who wore a wheel of flame around each eye, stifled the rage that shook his woolly jowls.

95

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120

But those unmanned and naked spirits there turned pale with fear and their teeth began to chatter at sound of his crude bellow. In despair

they blasphemed God, their parents, their time on earth, the race of Adam, and the day and the hour and the place and the seed and the womb that gave them birth.

But all together they drew to that grim shore where all must come who lose the fear of God.

Weeping and cursing they come for evermore,

and demon Charon with eyes like burning coals herds them in, and with a whistling oar flails on the stragglers to his wake¹⁶ of souls.

As leaves in autumn loosen and stream down
until the branch stands bare above its tatters
spread on the rustling ground, so one by one

the evil seed of Adam in its Fall¹⁷
cast themselves, at his signal, from the shore
and streamed away like birds who hear their call.

So they are gone over that shadowy water, and always before they reach the other shore a new noise stirs on this, and new throngs gather.

"My son," the courteous Master said to me,

"all who die in the shadow of God's wrath

converge to this from every clime and country.

And all pass over eagerly, for here
Divine Justice transforms and spurs them so
their dread turns wish: they yearn for what they fear. 18

The Vulgar Tongue

hemes in

World Literature

By composing the Divine Comedy in Italian, Dante implicitly rejected the use of Latin, the literary language of his day, in favor of the "vulgar" tongue. A vulgar tongue is the language spoken by the vulgus, the common people. In many cultures, centuries passed before the language spoken by ordinary people was accepted as a medium for the composition of literature. For example, in Japan, works written in Japanese were considered less significant than works written in Chinese until well into the twentieth century.

Works composed in "vulgar" tongues are more accessible to more people. As the common tongue becomes the dominant literary language, literature takes an increasingly important place in the life of a society. Literary works better express the real lives of the people; in turn, literature exerts a greater influence on the culture itself.

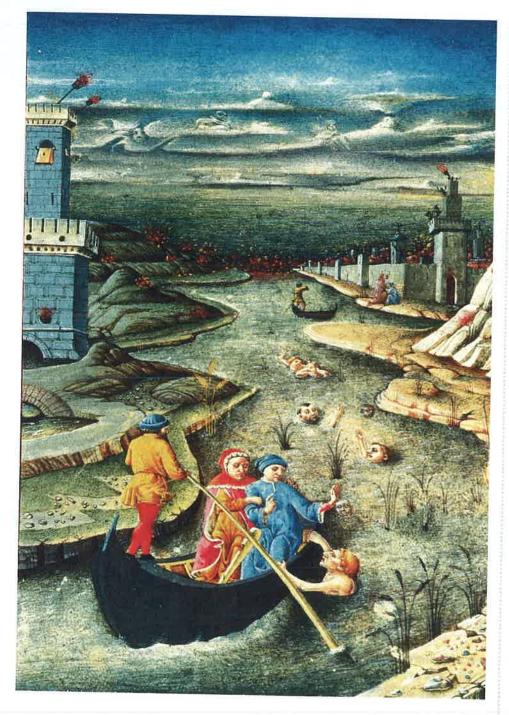
^{18.} they yearn . . . fear Hell (allegorically, Sin) is what the souls of the damned really wish for. Hell is their actual and deliberate choice, for divine grace is denied to none who wish for it in their hearts.



What hope does Charon tell the dead souls they must abandon?

^{16.} wake n. a watch over a corpse before burial, with a pun on waking up.

^{17.} Fall This word has at least three different meanings: the season of fall, the fall of all humans with the sin of Adam and Eve, and the fall of individual sinners.



Critical Viewing

In this fifteenth-century illumination of Dante and Virgil crossing the river into Hell, how do Dante's posture and attitude compare and contrast with those of both Virgil and the ferryman? [Compare and Contrast]

No soul in Grace comes ever to this crossing;
therefore if Charon rages at your presence
you will understand the reason for his cursing."

When he had spoken, all the twilight country shook so violently, the terror of it bathes me with sweat even in memory:

Reading Strategy

Interpreting Imagery
To which senses do the images in this passage appeal?

the tear-soaked ground gave out a sigh of wind that spewed itself in flame on a red sky, and all my shattered senses left me. Blind,

like one whom sleep comes over in a swoon, 19 I stumbled into darkness and went down.

Review and Assess

Thinking About the Selection

- 1. Respond: Do you think that the Opportunists deserve the punishment Dante envisioned for them? Why or why not?
- 2. (a) Recall: According to the inscription on the Gate of Hell, which feeling must be abandoned by all who enter? (b) Analyze Causes and Effects: What effect do you think Dante intends this passage to have on the reader? Explain.
- 3. (a) Recall: Which creatures torment the Opportunists?(b) Analyze: In what ways do these small but fierce creatures suggest Dante's attitude toward the sins of the Opportunists?

Explain.

- 4. (a) Recall: As they prepare to cross the river Acheron into Hell itself, what physical reactions do the spirits have? (b) Interpret: Judging from their outbursts, what emotional reactions do they experience? (c) Infer: What is the greatest spiritual torment of Hell? Explain.
- **5. Analyze:** Why do you think Dante dwells on the physical torments of Hell?
- 6. (a) Draw Conclusions: What message does this Canto provide about those who will not or cannot make a commitment to God? Explain. (b) Synthesize: What image might be appropriate to appear on the banner pursued by the Opportunists? Explain your answer.

^{19.} swoon the act of fainting. This device (repeated at the end of Canto V) serves a double purpose. The first is technical: Dante uses it to cover a transition. We are never told how he crossed Acheron, for that would involve certain narrative matters he can better deal with when he crosses Styx (stiks), another river of the underworld, in Canto VII. The second purpose is to provide a point of departure for a theme that is carried through the entire descent: Dante's emotional reaction to Hell. These two swoons early in the descent show him most susceptible to the grief about him. As he descends, pity leaves him, and he even goes so far as to add to the torments of one sinner.

Integrate Language Skills

Vocabulary Development Lesson

Word Analysis: Latin Root -trem-

The word tremulous, which means "trembling, as with fear," is based on the Latin root -trem-, meaning "tremble." Match each of the following words with its definition.

- 1. tremble
- a. musical vibration
- 2. tremor
- h. vibration
- 3. tremolo
- c. shiver; vibrate

Spelling Strategy

The us sound at the end of a word is often spelled ous when it represents the suffix -ous, meaning "full of" (tremulous = "full of trembling"). Write a word ending in the us sound that meets each definition below.

- 1. full of fame
- 2. full of caution

Fluency: Sentence Completion

Review the vocabulary list on page 611, and notice the way the words are used in the context of the selection. Then, complete each sentence below with the appropriate words.

- 1. They looked down with __ ? __ on the ? criminals.
- 2. "Please do not __ ? _ me," the driver says to the policeman in a __? __ voice.
- 3. The ? smell of rotting food dampened the ? of the diners.
- 4. She hears the cries and __ ?__ and sees the poor soul who ? in the waves.

Grammar and Style Lesson

Present Perfect Verb Tense

The present perfect tense shows either a single action or repeated actions that were completed at an indefinite time before the present.

Single action . . . this has been willed Repeated action . . . that sweet style whose measures have brought me honor ...

Practice Identify the example of the present perfect tense in each item, and state whether it describes a single or a repeated action.

1. For centuries, Dante has been considered the greatest Italian writer.

- 2. Have you read his Divine Comedy?
- 3. Do you know someone who has read it?
- 4. The Inferno has become my favorite.
- 5. The Divine Comedy is the most complex allegory we have studied.

Writing Application Write a paragraph about an amazing sight that you have seen. Include at least three examples of the present perfect tense.

We Prentice Hall Writing and Grammar Connection: Diamond Level, Chapter 21, Section 2

Extension Activities

Listening and Speaking Dante's crisis occurred "midway" through his life. With a small group, create a presentation on changing images of middle age. [Group Activity]

Writing Write a new version of this part of the journey from Virgil's point of view.

Review and Anticipate

In Canto III, Dante and Virgil paused at Hell's outer edge, where they witnessed the torments suffered by the Opportunists. As they prepared to cross the river Acheron into the first circle of Hell, Dante was so overcome by terror he fell into a swoon.

In Canto V, Dante and Virgil will enter the second circle of Hell, where they will observe the carnal sinners.

Then, in Canto XXXIV, Dante and his guide will enter the ninth and lowest circle of Hell, the lair of Satan himself. How do you think Dante will react when he witnesses the horrors ahead? Read to find out.

Canto V

CIRCLE TWO

The Carnal

The Poets leave Limbo and enter the *Second Circle*. Here begin the torments of Hell proper, and here, blocking the way, sits *Minos*, the dread and semi-bestial judge of the damned who assigns to each soul its eternal torment. He orders the Poets back; but Virgil silences him as he earlier silenced Charon, and the Poets move on

They find themselves on a dark ledge swept by a great whirlwind, which spins within it the souls of the *Carnal*, those who betrayed reason to their appetites. Their sin was to abandon themselves to the tempest of their passions: so they are swept forever in the tempest of Hell, forever denied the light of reason and of God. Virgil identifies many among them. Semiramis is there, and *Dido*, *Cleopatra*, *Helen*, *Achilles*, *Paris*, and *Tristan*. Dante sees *Paolo* and *Francesca* swept together, and in the name of love he calls to them to tell their sad story. They pause from their eternal flight to come to him, and Francesca tells their history while Paolo weeps at her side. Dante is so stricken by compassion at their tragic tale that he swoons once again.

So we went down to the second ledge alone; a smaller circle³ of so much greater pain the voice of the damned rose in a bestial moan.

- 1. Minos (mi näs') Like all the monsters Dante assigns to the various offices of Hell, Minos is drawn from classical mythology. He was the son of Europa and of Zeus, who descended to her in the form of a bull. Minos became a mythological king of Crete, so famous for his wisdom and justice that after death his soul was made judge of the dead. In the Aeneid, Virgil presents him fulfilling the same office at Aeneas' descent to the underworld. Dante, however, transforms him into an irate and hideous monster with a tail.
- 2. many among them The names that follow are those of famous lovers from legend and history: Semiramis (si mir' e mis); Dido (dī' dō); Cleopatra (klē' ō pa' tre); Achilles (e kil' ēz'); Tristan (tris' ten); Paolo (pā' ô lô); Francesca (frān ches' kā).
- a smaller circle The pit of Hell tapers like a funnel. The circles of ledges accordingly grow smaller as they descend.



What function does Minos perform?



Minos, the infernal judge, sitting at the entrance to the second circle of hel waiting to pass sentence on the souls brought before him, Gustave Doré

There Minos sits, grinning, grotesque, and hale.⁴
He examines each lost soul as it arrives
and delivers his verdict with his coiling tail.

That is to say, when the ill-fated soul appears before him it confesses all,⁵ and that grim sorter of the dark and foul

decides which place in Hell shall be its end, then wraps his twitching tail about himself one coil for each <u>degree</u> it must descend.

The soul descends and others take its place:
each crowds in its turn to judgment, each confesses,
each hears its doom and falls away through space.

"O you who come into this camp of woe,"
cried Minos when he saw me turn away
without awaiting his judgment, "watch where you go

once you have entered here, and to whom you turn!

Do not be misled by that wide and easy passage!"

And my Guide to him: "That is not your concern;

15

Literary Analysis Characterization Dante uses three adjectives to directly characterize Minos. Which adjective do you find surprising? Explain.

grotesque (grō tesk') *adj.* strangely distorted

degree (di grē') *n.* step; stage; level

^{4.} hale (hāl) adj. healthy.

^{5.} it confesses all Just as the souls appeared eager to cross Acheron, so they are eager to confess even while they are filled with dread. Dante is once again making the point that sinners elect their Hell by an act of their own will.

- it is his fate to enter every door.

 This has been willed where what is willed must be, and is not yours to question. Say no more."
- Now the choir of <u>anguish</u>, like a wound, strikes through the tortured air. Now I have come to Hell's full lamentation, sound beyond sound.
 - I came to a place stripped bare of every light and roaring on the naked dark like seas wracked by a war of winds. Their hellish flight

30

45

- of storm and counterstorm through time foregone, sweeps the souls of the damned before its charge. Whirling and battering it drives them on,
- and when they pass the ruined gap of Hell⁶
 through which we had come, their shrieks begin anew.
 There they blaspheme the power of God eternal.
 - And this, I learned, was the never ending flight of those who sinned in the flesh, the carnal and lusty who betrayed reason to their appetite.
- As the wings of wintering starlings bear them on in their great wheeling flights, just so the blast wherries⁷ these evil souls through time foregone.
 - Here, there, up, down, they whirl and, whirling, strain with never a hope of hope to comfort them, not of release, but even of less pain.
 - As cranes go over sounding their harsh cry, leaving the long streak of their flight in air, so come these spirits, wailing as they fly.
- And watching their shadows lashed by wind, I cried:
 "Master, what souls are these the very air lashes with its black whips from side to side?"
 - "The first of these whose history you would know," he answered me, "was Empress of many tongues.8 Mad sensuality corrupted her so

6. the ruined gap of Hell At the time of the Harrowing of Hell—the supposed descent of Christ into Limbo to rescue and bring to Heaven his "ancestors" from the Hebrew Bible a great earthquake shook the underworld, shattering rocks and cliffs.

7. wherries (hwer' ēz) v. transports.

8. Empress of many tongues Semiramis, a legendary queen of Assyria.

anguish (aŋ´ gwish) n. great suffering; agony

Reading Strategy

Distinguishing Between the Speaker and the Poet Which images does Dante the poet use to convey the physical experience of Dante the character?

Literary Analysis

Characterization In lines 38–39, what does Dante's definition of carnal sin reveal about his values?



What force whirls and batters the souls of the damned?

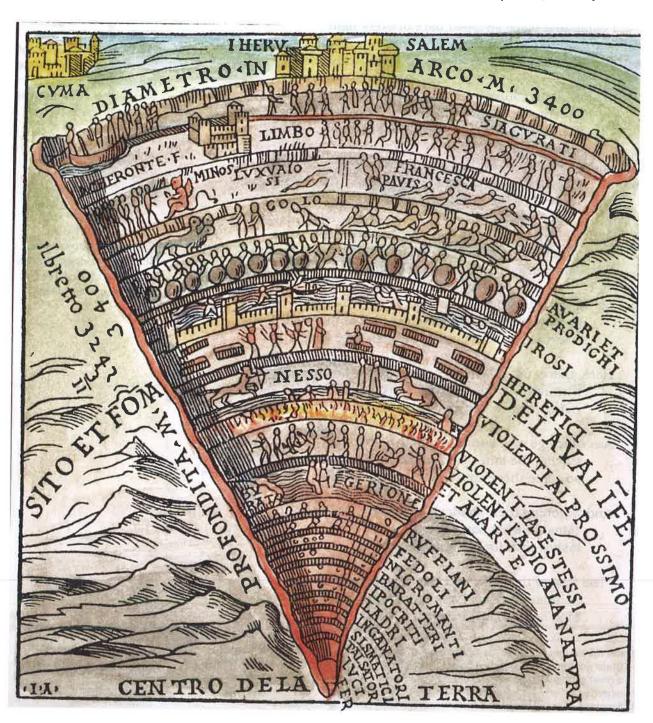
that to hide the guilt of her debauchery she licensed all depravity alike, and lust and law were one in her decree.

60

She is Semiramis of whom the tale is told how she married Ninus and succeeded him to the throne of that wide land the Sultans hold.

V Critical Viewing

In what ways does this map of Dante's Hell help you better understand the poem? [Connect]



The other is Dido; faithless to the ashes of Sichaeus, she killed herself for love. The next whom the eternal tempest lashes

is sense-drugged Cleopatra. See Helen $^{10}\,$ there, from whom such ill arose. And great Achilles,11 65 who fought at last with love in the house of prayer.

And Paris. And Tristan."12 As they whirled above he pointed out more than a thousand shades of those torn from the mortal life by love.

I stood there while my Teacher one by one named the great knights and ladies of dim time; and I was swept by pity and confusion.

At last I spoke: "Poet, I should be glad to speak a word with those two swept together¹³ so lightly on the wind and still so sad."

75

And he to me: "Watch them. When next they pass, call to them in the name of love that drives and damns them here. In that name they will pause."

Thus, as soon as the wind in its wild course brought them around, I called: "O wearied souls! 80 if none forbid it, pause and speak to us."

As mating doves that love calls to their nest glide through the air with motionless raised wings, borne by the sweet desire that fills each breast-

9. Dido Queen and founder of Carthage, an ancient kingdom in northern Africa. She had vowed to remain faithful to her husband, Sichaeus (sə kē' əs), but she fell in love with Aeneas.

10. Cleopatra ... Helen Cleopatra was a queen of Egypt (51-49; 48-30 B.c.) and the mistress of the powerful Romans Julius Caesar and Mark Antony. Helen was the beautiful wife of the King of Sparta. According to legend, the Trojan War was started when she was forcibly taken away to Troy by Paris, a son of the Trojan king Priam

11. Achilles greatest warrior on the Greek side during the Trojan War; placed in this company because of his passion for Polyxena (pō lik' se ne), the daughter of Priam. For love of her, he agreed to desert the Greeks and to join the Trojans, but when he went to the temple for the wedding (according to the legend Dante has followed), he was killed by Paris.

12. Tristan knight sent to Ireland by King Mark of Cornwall to bring back the princess Isolde (i sol' de) to be the king's bride. Isolde and Tristan fell in love and tragically died together.

13. those two swept together Paolo and Francesca. In 1275, Giovanni Malatesta (jō va nē ma la tes ta) of Rimini made a political marriage with Francesca, daughter of Guido da Polenta (gwe dō da pō len ta) of Ravenna. Francesca came to Rimini and fell in love with Giovanni's younger brother Paolo. Paolo had married in 1269 and had had two daughters by 1275, but his affair with Francesca continued for many years. Sometime between 1283 and 1286, Giovanni surprised and killed them in Francesca's bedroom.

Literary Analysis

Characterization and Allusion In what ways do these allusions to both historical and legendary figures add to the sense of reality in Dante's tale? Explain.

tempest (tem' pist) n. storm

Literary Analysis

Characterization How does the poet's use of the word "swept" enrich his characterization of Dante's character?



According to Virgil, what tore the souls in this circle of Hell from their mortal lives?

- Just so those spirits turned on the torn sky from the band where Dido whirls across the air; such was the power of pity in my cry.
 - "O living creature, gracious, kind, and good, going this pilgrimage through the sick night, visiting us who stained the earth with blood,
 - were the King of Time our friend, we would pray His peace on you who have pitied us. As long as the wind will let us pause, ask of us what you please.
- The town where I was born lies by the shore
 where the Po¹⁴ descends into its ocean rest
 with its attendant streams in one long murmur.
 - Love, which in gentlest hearts will soonest bloom seized my lover with passion for that sweet body from which I was torn unshriven¹⁵ to my doom.
- Love, which permits no loved one not to love, took me so strongly with delight in him that we are one in Hell, as we were above. 16
- Love led us to one death. In the depths of Hell Caïna waits for him¹⁷ who took our lives."

 This was the piteous tale they stopped to tell.
 - And when I had heard those world-offended lovers
 I bowed my head. At last the Poet spoke:
 "What painful thoughts are these your lowered brow covers?"
- When at length I answered, I began: "Alas!

 What sweetest thoughts, what green and young desire led these two lovers to this sorry pass."
 - Then turning to those spirits once again, I said: "Francesca, what you suffer here melts me to tears of pity and of pain.

14. Po (pō) river in northern Italy.

15. unshriven unconfessed and so with her sin unforgiven.

- 16. that we ... above Dante frequently expresses the principle that the souls of the damned are locked so blindly into their own guilt that none can feel sympathy for another. The temptation of many readers is to interpret this line romantically. The more Dantean interpretation, however, is that Paolo and Francesca add to each other's anguish as mutual reminders of their sin.
- 17. Caïna ... him Giovanni Malatesta was still alive at the time this was written. According to Dante, his fate is already decided, however, and upon his death, his soul will fall to Caïna, the first ring of the last circle (Canto XXXII), where lie those who performed acts of treachery against their kin.

Literary Analysis Characterization What does the repetition of the word "Love" at the beginning of these three stanzas add to Francesca's characterization?



But tell me: in the time of your sweet sighs by what appearances found love the way to lure you to his perilous paradise?"

And she: "The double grief of a lost bliss is to recall its happy hour in pain. Your Guide and Teacher knows the truth of this. 120

But if there is indeed a soul in Hell to ask of the beginning of our love out of his pity, I will weep and tell:

On a day for dalliance we read the rhyme of Lancelot, 18 how love had mastered him. 125 We were alone with innocence and dim time. 19

Pause after pause that high old story drew our eyes together while we blushed and paled; but it was one soft passage overthrew

▲ Critical Viewing

This three-part illustration shows Paolo and Francesca in life, Virgil and Dante, and Paolo and Francesca in Hell. Do you think the artist shares Dante's sympathy for the doomed pair? Explain. [Take a Position]

perilous (per' ə ləs) adj. dangerous



With which condemned soul does Dante speak?

^{18.} the rhyme of Lancelot The story of Lancelot exists in many forms. The details Dante uses are from an Old French version.

^{19.} dim time the olden time depicted in the Lancelot story. This phrase was added by the translator; the original reads, "We were alone, suspecting nothing."

our caution and our hearts. For when we read how her fond smile was kissed by such a lover, he who is one with me alive and dead

breathed on my lips the tremor of his kiss.

That book, and he who wrote it, was a pander.²⁰

That day we read no further." As she said this,

the other spirit, who stood by her, wept so piteously, I felt my senses reel and faint away with anguish. I was swept

by such a swoon as death is, and I fell, as a corpse might fall, to the dead floor of Hell.

20. That book ... pander Galeotto, the Italian word for "pander," is also the Italian rendering of the name of Gallehault, who, in the French Romance Dante refers to here, urged Lancelot and Guinevere on to love. A pander is a go-between in a love affair.

Review and Assess

135

Thinking About the Selection

- 1. Respond: Do you share Dante's sympathy for Paolo and Francesca? Why or why not?
- 2. (a) Recall: What punishment do the lustful suffer? (b) Analyze: In what ways does this punishment match their sins? Explain.
- 3. (a) Recall: In line 39, what does Dante say the sinners relinquished in favor of "appetite"? (b) Classify: In lines 55 through 67, note words and phrases that liken sensual indulgence to madness. (c) Evaluate: What kind of love does Dante condemn in this Canto? Explain.
- 4. (a) Recall: In line 72, what two emotions does Dante experience in reaction to the sight of the carnal sinners? (b) Interpret: Why does Dante feel each of these emotions? Support your answer with details from the text.
- 5. (a) Recall: According to Francesca, what motivates her descent into sin? (b) Infer: What does Dante suggest about the effects of certain kinds of literature? (c) Take a Stand: Do you agree with Dante's assessment?

Literary Analysis

Characterization and Allusion How is the Divine Comedy, in its message and purpose, quite different from the Arthurian romance Francesca describes?

Canto XXXIV

NINTH CIRCLE: COCYTUS¹ ROUND FOUR: JUDECCA

Compound Fraud The Treacherous to Their Masters

THE CENTER

5

10

"On march the banners of the King," Virgil begins as the Poets face the last depth. He is quoting a medieval hymn, and to it he adds the distortion and perversion of all that lies about him. "On march the banners of the King—of Hell." And there before them, in an infernal parody of Godhead, they see Satan in the distance, his great wings beating like a windmill. It is their beating that is the source of the icy wind of Cocytus, the exhalation of all evil.

All about him in the ice are strewn the sinners of the last round, Judecca, named for Judas Iscariot.3 These are the Treacherous to Their Masters. They lie completely sealed in the ice, twisted and distorted into every conceivable posture. It is impossible to speak to them, and the Poets move on to observe Satan.

He is fixed into the ice at the center to which flow all the rivers of guilt; and as he beats his great wings as if to escape, their icy wind only freezes him more surely into the polluted ice. In a grotesque parody of the Trinity, he has three faces, each a different color, and in each mouth he clamps a sinner whom he rips eternally with his teeth. Judas Iscariot is in the central mouth: Brutus and Cassius4 in the mouths on either side.

Having seen all, the Poets now climb through the center, grappling hand over hand down the hairy flank of Satan himself—a last supremely symbolic action and at last, when they have passed the center of all gravity, they emerge from Hell. A long climb from the earth's center to the Mount of Purgatory awaits them, and they push on without rest, ascending along the sides of the river Lethe, till they emerge once more to see the stars of Heaven, just before dawn on Easter Sunday.

"On march the banners of the King of Hell," my Master said. "Toward us. Look straight ahead: can you make him out at the core of the frozen shell?"

Like a whirling windmill seen afar at twilight, or when a mist has risen from the groundjust such an engine rose upon my sight

stirring up such a wild and bitter wind I cowered for shelter at my Master's back, there being no other windbreak I could find.

I stood now where the souls of the last class (with fear my verses tell it) were covered wholly; they shone below the ice like straws in glass.

Cocytus (kō sīt' əs) Greek: "river of walling."

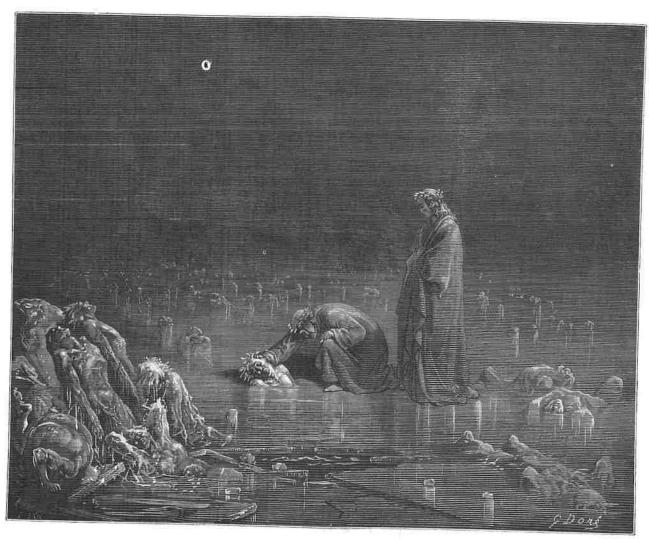


What is the source of the icy wind of Cocytus?

^{2.} On ... King This hymn was written in the sixth century by Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers. The original celebrates the Holy Cross and part of the service for Good Friday, to be sung at the moment of uncovering the cross.

^{3.} Judas Iscariot (is ker' ē ət) disciple who betrayed Jesus; see the Bible, Matthew 26:14, 48.

Brutus and Cassius They took part in a plot to assassinate Julius Caesar.



Some lie stretched out; others are fixed in place upright, some on their heads, some on their soles; another, like a bow, bends foot to face.

When we had gone so far across the ice that it pleased my Guide to show me the foul creature⁵ which once had worn the grace of Paradise,

he made me stop, and, stepping aside, he said:
"Now see the face of Dis!⁶ This is the place
where you must arm your soul against all dread."

✓ Critical Viewing
Which figure in this illustration is Dante, and which is Virgil? Explain how you know. [Distinguish]

^{5.} the foul creature Satan.

^{6.} Dis (dis) in Greek mythology, the god of the lower world or the lower world itself. Here, it stands for Satan.

Do not ask, Reader, how my blood ran cold and my voice choked up with fear. I cannot write it: this is a terror that cannot be told.

I did not die, and yet I lost life's breath:
imagine for yourself what I became,
deprived at once of both my life and death.

The Emperor of the Universe of Pain jutted his upper chest above the ice; and I am closer in size to the great mountain

the Titans⁷ make around the central pit, than they to his arms. Now, starting from this part, imagine the whole that corresponds to it!

If he was once as beautiful as now he is hideous, and still turned on his Maker, well may he be the source of every woe!

35

40

50

With what a sense of <u>awe</u> I saw his head towering above me! for it had three faces:⁸ one was in front, and it was fiery red;

the other two, as weirdly wonderful, merged with it from the middle of each shoulder to the point where all converged at the top of the skull;

the right was something between white and bile; the left was about the color one observes on those who live along the banks of the Nile.

Under each head two wings rose terribly, their span proportioned to so gross a bird: I never saw such sails upon the sea.

They were not feathers—their texture and their form were like a bat's wings—and he beat them so that three winds blew from him in one great storm:

it is these winds that freeze all Cocytus.

He wept from his six eyes, and down three chins the tears ran mixed with bloody froth and pus.⁹

7. Titans giant deities who were overthrown by Zeus and the Olympian gods of Greece.

Reading Strategy

Distinguishing Between the Speaker and the Poet In what ways does Dante the character's direct address to the reader intensify both the drama and the sense of reality of this scene? Explain.

Literary Analysis

Characterization and Allusion Why is an allusion to the Titans an appropriate detail in Satan's characterization? Explain.

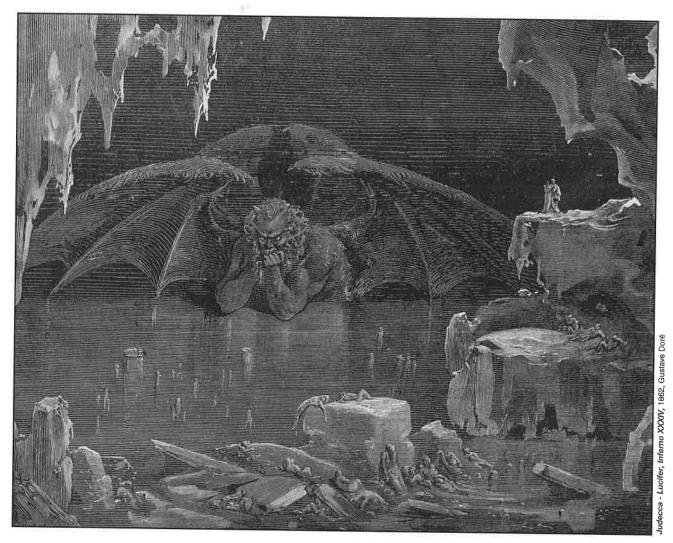
awe (ô) n. feelings of reverence, fear, and wonder



In what substance are the souls of the damned trapped?

^{8.} three faces There are many interpretations of these three faces. The common theme in all of them is that the faces are a perversion of the qualities of the Trinity.

^{9.} bloody froth and pus the gore of the sinners he chews, which is mixed with his saliva.



In every mouth he worked a broken sinner

between his rake-like teeth. Thus he kept three in eternal pain at his eternal dinner.

For the one in front the biting seemed to play no part at all compared to the ripping: at times the whole skin of his back was flayed away.

"That soul that suffers most," explained my Guide, "is Judas Iscariot, he who kicks his legs on the fiery chin and has his head inside.

Of the other two, who have their heads thrust forward, the one who dangles down from the black face is Brutus: note how he <u>writhes</u> without a word.

A Critical Viewing
How does the artist's
depiction of Lucifer in this
engraving compare and

engraving compare and contrast with Dante's description? Explain.

[Compare and Contrast]

writhes (rīthz) v. twists and turns the body, as in agony

65

And there, with the huge and sinewy arms, is the soul, of Cassius,—But the night is coming on10 and we must go, for we have seen the whole."

Then, as he bade, I clasped his neck, and he, watching for a moment when the wings were opened wide, reached over dexterously11

70

80

95

and seized the shaggy coat of the king demon; then grappling matted hair and frozen crusts from one tuft to another, clambered down.

When we had reached the joint where the great thigh merges into the swelling of the haunch, my Guide and Master, straining terribly,

turned his head to where his feet had been and began to grip the hair as if he were climbing;12 so that I thought we moved toward Hell again.

"Hold fast!" my Guide said, and his breath came shrill with labor and exhaustion. "There is no way but by such stairs to rise above such evil."

At last he climbed out through an opening in the central rock, and he seated me on the rim; 85 then joined me with a nimble backward spring.

I looked up, thinking to see Lucifer as I had left him, and I saw instead his legs projecting high into the air.

Now let all those whose dull minds are still vexed by failure to understand what point it was I had passed through, judge if I was perplexed.

"Get up. Up on your feet," my Master said. "The sun already mounts to middle tierce, 13 and a long road and hard climbing lie ahead."

Reading Strategy

Distinguishing Between the Speaker and the Poet What spiritual and emotional change does the poet express through a physical description? Explain.

nimble (nim´ bəl) adj. able to move quickly and lightly; agile

10. the night is coming on It is now Saturday evening.

11. dexterously adv. skillfully.

12. as if he were climbing They have passed the center of gravity and so must turn around and start climbing.

^{13.} middle tierce According to the church's division of the day for prayer, tierce is the period from about six to nine A.M. Middle tierce, therefore, is seven-thirty. In going through the center point, Dante and Virgil have gone from night to day. They have moved ahead twelve hours.



What torture do Judas Iscariot, Brutus, and Cassius suffer?

It was no hall of state we had found there, but a natural animal pit hollowed from rock with a broken floor and a close and sunless air.

"Before I tear myself from the Abyss,"
I said when I had risen, "O my Master,
explain to me my error in all this:

100

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125

where is the ice? and Lucifer—how has he been turned from top to bottom: and how can the sun have gone from night to day so suddenly?"

And he to me: "You imagine you are still on the other side of the center where I grasped the shaggy flank of the Great Worm of Evil

which bores through the world—you were while I climbed down, but when I turned myself about, you passed the point to which all gravities are drawn.

You are under the other hemisphere where you stand; the sky above us is the half opposed to that which canopies the great dry land.

Under the midpoint of that other sky

the Man¹⁴ who was born sinless and who lived beyond all blemish, came to suffer and die.

You have your feet upon a little sphere which forms the other face of the Judecca. There it is evening when it is morning here.

And this gross Fiend and Image of all Evil
who made a stairway for us with his hide
is pinched and prisoned in the ice-pack still.

On this side he plunged down from heaven's height, and the land that spread here once hid in the sea and fled North to our hemisphere for fright;¹⁵

hemes in World Literature

Literary Views of the Underworld

Although the Divine Comedy is probably the most famous literary excursion into the afterlife, there are many others. The Sumerian-Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh contains a vivid description of an underworld in which people sit in darkness and eat dust and clay. In Homer's Odyssey, Odysseus visits the Greek underworld, where he converses with the shades of mortals. In Plato's Apology, Socrates is optimistic about the afterlife, saying that death may be a state of nothingness, a kind of sleep, or a journey to a place where he will meet all who have gone before him. John Milton's Paradise Lost and Goethe's Faust present images of Heaven and Hell in which goodness on Earth is rewarded and excessive pride and egoism are punished. However, Dante's version of Hell, with its clear structure, sharp physical descriptions, and fully realized characters, remains perhaps the most detailed and vividly imagined of all the literary underworlds.

^{14.} the Man Jesus, who suffered and died in Jerusalem, which was thought to be the middle of the Earth.

^{15.} fled North ... for fright Dante believed that the Northern Hemisphere was mostly land and the Southern Hemisphere, mostly water. Here, he explains the reason for this state of affairs.



Critical Viewing

Which details in this illustration suggest that the poets are no longer in hell? [Interpret]

And it may be that moved by that same fear, the one peak 16 that still rises on this side fled upward leaving this great cavern¹⁷ here."

Down there, beginning at the further bound of Beelzebub's 18 dim tomb, there is a space 130 not known by sight, but only by the sound

16. the one peak the Mount of Purgatory.

17. this great cavern the natural animal pit of line 98. It is also "Beelzebub's dim tomb," line 130.

18. Beelzebub's (bē el' zə bubz') Beelzebub, which in Hebrew means "god of flies," was another name for Satan.



What "stairway" did Virgil take to climb out of Hell?

- of a little stream¹⁹ descending through the hollow it has eroded from the massive stone in its endlessly entwining lazy flow."
- 135 My Guide and I crossed over and began to mount that little known and lightless road to ascend into the shining world again.

He first, I second, without thought of rest we climbed the dark until we reached the point where a round opening brought in sight the blest

and beauteous shining of the Heavenly cars. And we walked out once more beneath the Stars.²⁰

- 19. a little stream Lethe (le the); in classical mythology, the river of forgetfulness, from which souls drank before being born. In Dante's symbolism, it flows down from Purgatory, where it has washed away the memory of sin from the souls who are undergoing purification. That memory it delivers to Hell, which draws all sin to itself.
- 20. Stars As part of his total symbolism, Dante ends each of the three divisions of the Divine Comedy with this word. Every conclusion of the upward soul is toward the stars, symbols of hope and virtue. It is just before dawn of Easter Sunday that the Poets emerge—a further symbolism.

Review and Assess

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Thinking About the Selection

- 1. Respond: Which aspect of the ninth circle of Hell do you find most horrible? Why?
- 2. (a) Recall: In lines 22–23, what does Dante say he cannot write or describe? (b) Interpret: How does he succeed nevertheless in communicating his experience?
- 3. (a) Recall: Who are the three figures in Satan's mouth?
 (b) Infer: What sin do all three have in common? (c) Analyze: Why do you think Dante chooses to situate the punishment for such sin in a frozen lake?
- **4. (a) Recall:** In line 65, which aspect of Brutus' suffering does Virgil emphasize? **(b) Generalize:** Why might language be denied to the inhabitants of the ninth circle of Hell?
- **5. (a)** Evaluate: In what ways do you think Dante the character's feelings about the lost inhabitants of Hell have changed since the beginning of the *Inferno?* **(b)** Analyze: What message about tolerance for sin might Dante the poet be expressing through his character's emotional evolution?
- 6. Hypothesize: If you were to undertake a journey such as Dante's, whom would you choose as your guide? Explain your answer.

Integrate Language Skills

Vocabulary Development Lesson

Words Related to Awe

Some words formed with the word awe have either positive or negative meanings, depending upon their context. Awful, for example, can mean either "bad" or "awe-inspiring." Define each of the following words, and determine which of them, if any, possess both positive and negative meanings.

- 1. awesome
- 3. overawed
- 2. awestruck
- 4. awfully

Spelling Strategy

For most words ending in e, make no change when adding a suffix beginning with a consonant (care + -ful = careful). Add the indicated suffix to each word below.

- 1. love + -lv
- 3. complete + -ly
- 2. grace + -ful
- 4. whole + -some

Concept Development: Synonyms

Review the vocabulary list on page 628. Then, complete the activity below by matching each of the words in the left column with the correct synonym in the right column.

- 1. grotesque
- a. dangerous
- 2. degree
- b. storm
- 3. anguish
- c. reverence
- 4. tempest
- d. agony
- 5. perilous
- e. twists
- 6. awe
- f. level
- 7. writhes
- g. agile
- 8. nimble
- h. distorted

Grammar and Style Lesson

Past Perfect Verb Tense

The past perfect verb tense expresses actions that were completed before a specific moment in the past. Use the past perfect tense to show a connection between two past actions or conditions.

Past Actions: And when I had heard those world-offended lovers I bowed my head.

Past Condition: He had been beautiful until he turned on his Maker.

Practice Identify examples of the past perfect tense in each item below, and explain whether they connect past actions or past conditions.

1. We had finished reading the Inferno before we went on to the Purgatorio.

- 2. We were able to compare translations because our teacher had brought three different ones to class.
- 3. Previously, Martina had favored the Sayers translation.
- 4. Before we read it in English, I had translated some of the Italian text myself.
- I had never thought I would love medieval literature until I read Dante.

Writing Application Write a dialogue in which two people discuss the Inferno. Use at least three examples of the past perfect tense.

WG Prentice Hall Writing and Grammar Connection: Diamond Level, Chapter 21, Section 2

A Closer Look

The Art of Translation

The words, expressions, and attitudes of one language do not always match those of another language; translation is a far more complex task than one might think.

When Dante started the *Divine Comedy*, did he write these lines?

Midway in our life's journey, I went astray from the straight road and woke to find myself alone in a dark wood.

Or, did he write these lines?

Halfway along the road we have to go, I found myself obscured in a great forest, Bewildered, and I knew I had lost the way.

Then again, perhaps he started out with these words:

Midway this way of life we're bound upon,

I woke to find myself in a dark wood,

Where the right road was wholly lost and gone.

Actually, Dante began his masterpiece with these lines:

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita mi ritrovai per una selva oscura, che la diritta via era smarrita.

For those of us who are not well versed in medieval Italian, translators are essential to our understanding of Dante. The three English versions shown above—John Ciardi's lucid and dynamic verse, C. H. Sisson's elegant blank verse, and Dorothy Sayers's rhymed lines—are just a few of the many attempts to make Dante's personal adventure and his medieval worldview clear to modern readers.

A translation is an interpretation of a work of literature. When we read Dante, the translator of his work serves as our own personal Virgil—our guide and interpreter. Whether the text is Dante's *Commedia* or a brand-new masterpiece of world literature, a great translator conveys both the meaning and the musical sense of the original.



▲ Critical Viewing

Which details in this painting of Dante explaining the *Divine Comedy* suggest that the poet is trying to educate or teach people? [Analyze]

The Levels of Meaning A translator must be conscious of several levels of meaning—the literal, the idiomatic, and the symbolic.

- Literal: A literal translation is a word-for-word rendition of the words of an original text. Usually, these word-for-word translations are stiff and awkward; they do not fully capture the meaning or music of the original. For example, in Spanish, the word for "sky" and the word for "heaven" are the same—cielo. A word-for-word translation might indicate both English meanings.
- Idiomatic: Each culture's day-to-day experiences create distinct ways of looking at everyday objects and events. These distinctions result in idiomatic meanings—the unique ways in which a language expresses the characteristics of a culture. A translator must be aware of idiomatic meanings in both languages.
- Symbolic: Symbolic meanings involve the figures of speech, images, and ideas that an author may use to convey an artistic or a philosophical vision. For example, Dante's word via may be translated literally as "road"—an ordinary path in the woods. However, a translator may also try to suggest the symbolic meaning of Dante's faith in the road to Heaven.

Capturing the Music Every language has its unique sound, its particular beauties, and its quirks. Translation requires the skills of a writer who can make the work sing in the new language. Word choice and syntax, rhythm and meter, sentence structure and variety, assonance and consonance, onomatopoeia, and tone contribute to the impression that the translated work captures the original.

Translation is an art of sacrifices, and every Dante translation is a good example of necessary compromises. Some translators favor meaning and accuracy over music and style. Others blur meaning for poetic effect. Some translators turn the poem into prose; others would never dream of doing so. Still others simply want to make a vital, readable modern English poem.

Each age needs its own Dante. Today, we can still admire the formal translation written by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in the nineteenth century:

Midway upon the journey of our life I found myself within a forest dark, For the straightforward pathway had been lost.

Nevertheless, we seem to respond more intensely to the voices of our own time. Here is the compressed but fluid version of former United States poet laureate Robert Pinsky:

Midway on our life's journey, I found myself In dark woods, the right road lost.

As the centuries have passed, one of the continuing lessons of the Commedia, whether Dante intended it or not, is that every age needs not only great writers but also great translators.

You, too, can be a translator!

The second tercet of the Inferno, shown below, is an emotional outburst. Write your own version of these lines. As you write, experiment with prose and poetry, rhyme and no rhyme. Decide whether you want your version to be dramatic. emotional, formal. or informal, as well as how you can make it meaningful for contemporary readers.

Original

Ahi quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura / esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte / che nel pensier rinova la paura!

Literal Translation

"Ah, how hard it is to tell what that wood was, / wild, rugged, harsh; the very thought of it / renews the fear!" (Charles S. Singleton)

Writing About Literature

Evaluate Literary Themes

One of the most characteristic themes of the literature of the Middle Ages is the quest, or search. In a world filled with mysterious forces, characters embark on quests with goals such as the discovery of the Holy Grail or proof of true love. Heroes test their courage as they go beyond the apparent objects of their quests to discover insights about God, love, and loyalty. Far from being the inert, inactive era that people had long considered it to be, the medieval period was one of political, social, and religious change. Perhaps this is why the theme of the quest for meaning in an unstable world held such allure for writers of this period.

To evaluate the theme of the quest in medieval literature, complete the assignment described in the box at right.

Prewriting

Review the selections. Identify the selections in which a quest is a dominant theme. Then, describe the object of the quest. To narrow the focus of your essay, ask yourself questions such as the following:

- How do plot and characterization reveal the quest theme?
- In what ways does the quest theme reveal the values and concerns of writers of the Middle Ages?
- Does the quest make the story interesting, even gripping, or does it lead to a predictable or undramatic story?
- As it appears in the selection, does the quest-theme shed light on life or people in general? Or is its relevance limited to the Middle Ages?

Find a focus for your essay by jotting down notes in a format similar to the example below.

Assignment: The Quest in Medieval Literature

Write an analytical essay that evaluates the theme of the quest in the literature of the Middle Ages, as revealed in the selections in this unit.

Criteria:

- Include a thesis statement that evaluates the theme of the quest in the Middle Ages.
- Evaluate this theme in each of the works you discuss by answering these questions: Does the theme create narrative interest? Does it have relevance for modern readers?
- Support your evaluations with detailed analyses of this theme in at least two of the selections.
- Approximate length: 1,500 words

Read to Write

As you reread the texts, ask yourself what the main character desires more than anything else. That desire prompts the character's search, or quest.

	Model: Identifying Evidence of the Quest Theme			
	Selection	Object of Quest	Details	Quotes
0	"The Grail"	Holy Grail;	Perceval prays	"'There's something I
	from Perceval	true faith	to God; help	would ask of you, / some
			of fisherman	things I wanted to in-
				quire, / some informa-
				tion I desire.'"

Choose selections. Reread your notes, and choose two selections that illuminate the theme of the quest or that might make an interesting thematic contrast.