H

Trojan War in her paradigmatic role as mother bereft of her children and queen become slave. With the fall of Troy, Hecuba witnesses the loss of all she values, including the deaths of her husband and several children. As Ulysses' slave she is helpless to prevent the sacrifice of her daughter Polyxena on the tomb of Achilles, and this death is followed by the discovery of the body of her son, Polydorus, cast up on the seashore. Driven mad by her grief, Hecuba loses her mind and takes revenge on her brother-in-law Polymestor for having killed her son, by blinding him. As she is stoned by vengeful Thracians, Hecuba is transformed into a dog and reduced to howling and barking. According to some mythographers, she then hurls herself into the sea. References in Virgil's *Aeneid*, a lengthy episode in Ovid (*Meta.* 13.404–575), and Seneca's *Troades* are among Dante's major sources for the story.

Hecuba *(Ecuba)* appears indirectly in the *Commedia*, in an extended simile that opens *Inf.* 30 and describes the madness visited on falsifiers of person. Representative of Dante's high or tragic style, the simile recounts two well-known cases of classical insanity—Hecuba of Troy and Athamas of Thebes—establishing a comparison between the archetypal rage and madness of these two women and the far greater rage and madness of two souls damned in the lowest pit of Malebolge: Capocchio and Gianni Schicchi, who are condemned to attack each other viciously for all eternity.

Donna Yowell

Helen of Troy

The wife of a Greek king, Menelaus, she was abducted by a Trojan prince, Paris, an act that indirectly led to the war between the Greeks and Trojans. Helen *(Elena)* is pointed out in the circle of the lustful in Hell as the cause of much ill (*Inf.* 5.64–66). She is obliquely referred to in the *Detto* (*Alena*, v. 197).

Joan M. Ferrante

Heliodorus

Treasurer of the Syrian king Seleucus IV (187–175 B.C.E.), who sent him to steal treasures from the temple in Jerusalem. Upon his arrival there, he was nearly kicked to death by a horse ridden by a man in golden armor, and he was flogged by two men (2 Macc. 3:25–30). Heliodorus *(Eliodoro)* is

included among the examples of avarice in *Purg.* 20.113.

Molly Morrison

Hell

According to Catholic doctrine, Hell is the place where the rebel angels and the souls of humans who perished in mortal sin are eternally punished. In the *Commedia*, Hell is the first realm of the afterlife and the subject of the first *cantica*, the *Inferno*. In his representation of Hell, Dante reveals himself to be both a canny connoisseur of a complex tradition and a radical innovator.

The Hebrew Bible offers a vast abyss, Sheol, "the grave," to which after death the good and the wicked alike descend. In its moral neutrality Sheol parallels the ancient Greek concept of Hades. The concept of retribution for the wicked after death, which begins to manifest itself in the Old Testament, especially in the books of the prophets, is rendered explicit in the gospels of the New Testament. "Three crucial passages in the synoptic Gospels helped form the concept of Hell" (Bernstein 228); these are Mark 9:43–48, Matt. 25:31–46, and Luke 16:19–31. The passage in Mark is the first to identify the fire and the worm of Isa. 66:24 with Hell: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into Hell, in the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (43–44). In the great eschatological discourse of Matt. 25 ("perhaps the single most important biblical passage for the history of hell," Bernstein 231), Christ predicts the division of the souls at the Last Judgment ("And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left," 33) and explicitly contrasts eternal fire and punishment to eternal life: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (41), continuing "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (46).

This doctrine of Hell, based on the symmetry and justice of eternal reward for the good and eternal punishment for the wicked, was challenged in the third century by Origen, who affirmed the medicinal and corrective value of a non-eternal system of punishment which would eventually succeed in restoring all souls to God. However, the eternity of Hell was vigorously defended by

Dante preparing to enter the Gate of Hell. From the 1481 edition illustrated by Baldino after sketches by Botticelli, published in Florence by Nicholo di Lorenzo della Magna. Giamatti Collection: Courtesy of the Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections.

Augustine, who puts the passage from Matthew at the center of his argument, noting that "the sentence of the Lord could not be evacuated of meaning or deprived of its force; the sentence, I mean, that he, on his own prediction, was to pronounce in these words: 'Out of my sight, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the Devil and his angels'" (*City of God* 21.23). Laying the eschatological foundations of the later Middle Ages, Augustine writes in the *Enchiridion* not only of fixed and eternal lots for the bad and the good, but also of degrees of happiness and misery:

> After the resurrection, however, when the final, universal judgment has been completed, two groups of citizens, one Christ's, the other the devil's, shall have fixed lots; one consisting of the good, the other of the bad—both, however, consisting of angels and men. The former shall have no will, the latter no power, to sin, and neither shall have any power to choose death; but the former shall live truly and happily in eternal life, the latter shall drag a miserable existence in eternal death without the power of dying; for both shall be without end. But among the former there shall be degrees of happiness, one being more pre-

eminently happy than another; and among the latter there shall be degrees of misery, one being more endurably miserable than another. (ch. 111)

Both these concepts—fixed, eternal lots and degrees of misery for the wicked proportionate to their sins—are key to Dante's Hell, whose sinners are distributed through nine circles according to the gravity of their sins. The eternity of Hell is solemnly proclaimed by the Gate of Hell itself: *Per me si va ne l'etterno dolore . . . Dinanzi a me non fuor cose create / se non etterne, e io etterno duro* ("Through me the way into eternal sorrow . . . Before me were no things created except eternal ones, and I endure eternal," *Inf.* 3.2, 7–8).

Augustine conceives the wages of sin in terms of loss and alienation—it is "to be lost out of the kingdom of God, to be an exile from the city of God, to be alienated from the life of God" (*Enchiridion* 112). So does Aquinas, who defines sin as, first, "aversion, the turning away from the changeless good" *(aversio ab incommutabili bono)* and, second, as "conversion, the disordered turning towards a changeable good" (*inordinata conversio ad commutabile bono, ST* 1.2.87.4). Aquinas further teaches that aversion from God

H results in the *poena damni* or "pain of loss," which corresponds to the loss of the beatific vision, while disordered conversion results in the *poena sensus,* or "pain of sense" (*ST* 1.2.87.4), which corresponds to the torments of hell-fire. These concepts are fundamental to Dante, who holds that sin alienates us from God—"sin alone is that which unfrees" us and renders us "dissimilar from the highest good" (*Par.* 7.79–80)—and who structures his poem around a metaphor (life as a path or journey) that embodies the ideas of *aversio* and *conversio:* at the beginning of the poem, the pilgrim has lost the right path and figures the state of *aversio,* of the sinful soul that has turned away from God, in his case temporarily, but with respect to the sinners of Hell permanently. The notion of sin as *conversio,* as a turning toward the changeable goods of the world, likewise permeates Dante's thought. It is inscribed into the center of the *Commedia,* in *Purg.* 16's depiction of the newborn soul as a female child who, set forth by a happy maker on the path of life, willingly turns toward all that brings delight, only to find itself deceived and seduced by earthly goods: *"Di picciol bene in pria sente sapore; / quivi s'inganna, e dietro ad esso corre, / se guida o fren non torce suo amore"* ("Of some lesser good it first tastes the flavor; there it is deceived and runs after it, if a guide or rein does not turn away its love," *Purg.* 16.91–93). And *conversio* is the centerpiece of the rebuke that Beatrice issues to the pilgrim when they meet at the top of Mount Purgatory, where she compels him to acknowledge that after her death *"Le presenti cose / col falso lor piacer volser miei passi"* ("Present things with their false pleasure turned aside my steps, as soon as your face was hidden," *Purg.* 31.34–35).

While Dante's conceptualizing of sin, and ultimately of Hell, is thus firmly embedded within theological tradition, his representation is frequently idiosyncratic to the point of being heterodox. For instance, there is no theological precedent for creating a vestibule to Hell that houses neutral angels and cowardly souls "who lived without infamy and without praise" (*Inf.* 3.36); nor is there theological justification for putting virtuous pagans into Limbo alongside the unbaptized children, or for claiming that certain traitors are damned before death—their souls sent to Hell while devils inhabit their bodies on Earth (*Inf.* 33). Therefore, although Dante reflects the most informed theological thought on Hell, he is certainly not constrained by it. By the same token, he is not limited to the high-culture sources from which he explicitly borrows, such as Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics,* which he credits as a source for the structure of his Hell, or Virgil's underworld in *Aen.* 6, various of whose characters and features he appropriates and transforms. Rather, Dante's Hell also demonstrates clear links to an established popular iconography of Hell, as well as to popular cultural forms like sermons, visions, and the didactic poetry of vernacular predecessors such as Bonvesin da la Riva and Giacomino da Verona. Dante's representation of Hell is unique, however, in its rich and uninhibited blending of these remarkably heterogeneous constituents into a personal vision: for instance, while Aquinas cites Aristotle in his discussion of sin, and the vision authors knew the Bible, Dante alone brings together traditions as disparate as the *Aeneid* and the *Apocalypse of Paul.*
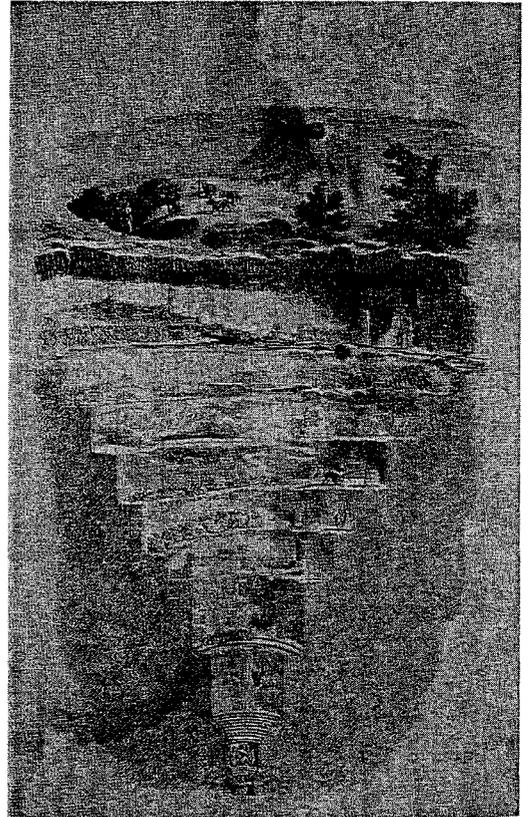
The scheme of Dante's Hell. La commedia di Dante, Allighieri, *illustrated by Ugo Foscolo and edited by Giuseppe Mazzini (London, 1842). Giamatti Collection: Courtesy of the Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections.*

Dante's Hell is a hollow cone excavated by Lucifer's fall; the displaced matter became Mount Purgatory (see *Inf.* 34.121–126 for this highly original account). Situated under Jerusalem, Hell is made of nine concentric circles that house ever more grievous sinners; it tapers to a point at the Earth's core, where Lucifer, the apex of creaturely sinfulness, is eternally fixed at *lo mezzo / al quale ogne gravezza si rauna* ("the center / toward which all weight collects," *Inf.* 32.73–74). The topography of Hell is extensive and varied, embracing rivers (one of blood), a swamp, a wood, a burning plain, some landslides, an immense waterfall, a frozen lake, the fortified turrets of Dis, and the ditches and bridges of Malebolge. The demography of Hell is likewise extensive, ranging from biblical and classical characters (a true innovation, since, as Morgan points out, classical figures "are totally unrepresented in the earlier medieval texts" [57]) to contemporaries, mainly Italians. Many of the circles have guardians, which again range from classical figures (Charon, Minos) and monsters (the centaurs, Geryon) to contemporary demons. The order of the nine circles and its underlying logic are explained by Virgil in *Inf.* 11, prior to the descent to the seventh circle, using a schema based on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (7.1).

Virgil's account makes no mention of the first circle (Limbo) or the sixth (heresy)—both of which involve deficient faith and hence have no place in Aristotle's ethics—and it distinguishes between sins of incontinence and malice. The sins of incontinence (circles two through five) are sins of impulse, brought about by immoderate passion rather than by habit; they are lust, gluttony, avarice (or prodigality), and anger. The sins of malice cause injustice and harm to others, either by force or by fraud (a distinction that Dante finds, as Moore points out, in Cicero's *De officiis* 1.13). Injurious acts achieved by fraud are more sinful because fraud requires the misuse of reason, man's peculiar gift. The seventh circle, then, houses the violent, while the eighth and the ninth circles contain the fraudulent. Violence is divided into three subsets; each subset in turn involves two types of violence: violence against one's neighbor in his person and in his possessions (tyrants, murderers, robbers); violence against the self in one's person and in one's possessions (suicides, squanderers); and violence against God in his person and in his possessions (blasphemers, sodomites, usurers). (Virgil explains that sodomy is violence against nature, the child of God, while usury is violence against human art, the child of nature.) Fraud too is subdivided. The eighth circle contains those who practiced fraud on the untrusting, distinguished into ten groups: panders and seducers, flatterers, simoniacs, diviners, barrators, hypocrites, thieves, fraudulent counselors, sowers of scandal and schism, and falsifiers. The ninth and lowest circle of Hell contains sinners who practiced fraud on those who trusted them—traitors.

The resulting overlap between the Aristotelian scheme adopted for Hell and the theological scheme that Dante adopts for Purgatory (where the seven terraces corresponding to the seven deadly sins include lust, gluttony, avarice and prodigality, and anger) displays a uniquely Dantesque contamination of Christian and classical paradigms—and of popular with high culture, for Dante is conflating popular religious currents (the seven deadly sins were not part of Church doctrine but were important in confession manuals of the period) with a hyperliterate textual tradition. With respect to Hell, we could say that an arrangement that at first seems to be loosely based on the seven deadly sins is then grafted onto Aristotle, whose distinction between sins of incontinence and sins of malice provides the overarching order. (However, while this system of classification is Aristotelian, the material remains fundamentally Christian, given that "the thirty-seven sins punished in the *Inferno* are essentially the same sins as those traditionally represented in the popular visions of the other world and listed in the confession manuals of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries" [Morgan, 131].) With respect to Purgatory, where the seven deadly sins provide the order, the classical/Christian syncretism can be seen in the theologically unorthodox coupling of avarice with its Aristotelian counterpart, prodigality.

Dante's infernal system of classification is not without its puzzles and inconsistencies (for instance, prodigality occurs as a sin of both incontinence and violence, and theft occurs as a sin both of violence and of fraud). On the whole, however, when one compares the *Inferno* to the previous accounts of Hell in vision literature, one is struck not by its inconsistencies but by the opposite: Dante's *Inferno* stunningly conveys the appearance of a totally inclusive penal system from which no sin is omitted and no sinner can escape. Key to creating such an illusion is the deployment of a system of classification that seems quite logical,

H precise, and rigorous in its definitions and distinctions, and that invokes the immense authority of Aristotle. In the confused and unsystematic earlier visions, where sins and sinners are frequently piled one on the other with minimal differentiation, the reader has no way of distinguishing the first category from the second, third, or fourth, and consequently little incentive to see who comes next. In the *Inferno,* by contrast, we know the order in which sins will be encountered, as well as the moral value that has been assigned to each. As a result, the reader can anticipate the narrative and is thereby induced to proceed, propelled by the subliminal desire to see how cogently the author's rendering will conform to his earlier declarations, as well as by the urge to participate in a possible world that seems to make sense, or that can be challenged if it does not, because its structuring principles have been made known.

Also key to constructing a persuasive representation of Hell is what Dante calls the *contrapasso* ("counter-suffering," *Inf.* 28.142), the principle whereby the punishment fits the crime. For Dante, the *contrapasso* frequently takes the form of literalizing a metaphor: thus, the souls of the lustful are tossed by a Hell-storm as in life they were buffeted by their passions; the schismatics, who in life rent the body politic, now find their own bodies torn. Dante's punishments display remarkable inventiveness and draw from a broad spectrum of sources, from traditional motifs like the graduated immersion of a sinner in a river or a lake (already present in the *Apocalypse of Paul*) to the metamorphosis of man into tree as in *Aen.* 3. Overall, Dante effectively deploys the *contrapasso* to deflect any sense of randomness or arbitrariness and to suffuse his text with a feeling for God's order and justice. In this way, the *contrapasso* is a crucial tool in Dante's attempt to represent Hell in a way that bears out the declaration on its gate— *Giustizia mosse il mio alto fattore* ("Justice moved my high maker," *Inf.* 3.4)—and in a way that reflects its true nature: since Hell is deserved separation from God, punishment is not something inflicted by God but the consequence of the sin itself. Here too, though some of Dante's punishments may seem more fitting than others, and some more transparently suggest the sin being punished, a comparison of Dante's Hell to those of his precursors reveals that he is the first author to deploy an ideology of moral decorum not sporadically, but as a systematic feature of his other world.

Ultimately, of course, what most distinguishes Dante's *Inferno* from other representations of Hell is that he creates sinners so complex and alive that the reader is compelled to sympathize and identify with them, rather than simply to fear their lot and resolve to avoid it. While the lessons of earlier Hells are straightforward—beware, mend your ways, or this will happen to you—the reader of Dante's Hell is drawn into a much more sophisticated dance, in which he or she must sort through the sirens' songs of sinners who are devilishly attractive and tragically human. Only Dante constructs a Hell in which the reader encounters figures like Francesca, Brunetto, and Ulysses, and is thereby induced to engage the challenges not just of death but of life.

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Teodolinda Barolini

Hendecasyllable

The Italian hendecasyllable is by definition a verse-line of ten, eleven, or twelve syllables whose last word-accent falls on the tenth syllable. Since most Italian words are accented on the penultimate, most hendecasyllables have eleven syllables; but they can have ten when the last accent is in word-final position, or twelve if it is on the antepenultimate. Dante's poetry contains instances of both ten-syllable and twelve-syllable hendecasyllables, but they are very few; the vast majority have eleven syllables.

How are Dante's hendecasyllables scanned? With certain exceptions, in the Italian hendecasyllable from the thirteenth century on, all groups of adjacent vowels count as one syllable, although each vowel retains some of its distinct articulation. This principle is termed *sineresi* (synaeresis) when it operates within the word, and *sinalefe* (synaloepha) when it operates across word boundaries. When there is a syllable division between adjacent vowels, the term *dieresi* (diaeresis) is used within the word, and *dialefe* (dialoepha) across word boundaries. (*Sineresi* and *dieresi* are sometimes used more strictly, to describe respectively counting as one syllable two vowels that would normally be two syllables, and counting as two syllables two vowels that would normally be one; but the terms are used in their looser acceptance here.) In Dante's practice, as in that of his successors, *sineresi* and *sinalefe* are the normal rule; the latter applies even when a major syntactical division, represented by a punctuation mark in modern editions, separates vowels that would otherwise be adjacent.

There are also, however, a large number of instances of *dieresi* and *dialefe*—more than in Dante's successors from Petrarch on, and applied less systematically. One set of vowel combinations always has diaeresis, and as a result this diaeresis is usually not marked in modern critical editions: *a, e,* or *o* immediately followed by any accented vowel, as in *paura, leone,* or *poeta.* The other main instances of diaeresis (usually marked in modern critical editions) are as follows: imperfect verb forms such as *avëan, dovëa, facëa,* though here synaeresis is the general rule; verbs with an initial *ri-* (from Latin *re-*) followed by a vowel (here diaeresis is the rule); some cases of accented *u* and *i* followed by a vowel, such as *colüi, cüi, süo, disïo, fïa, ïo* (alongside a much greater number of instances of the same forms without diaeresis); and (more consistently) Latinate combinations involving an initial *e, i,* or *u* that preserve the vowel structure of their origins—*empirëo, Enëa, Pegasëa; settentrïon, trïunfo, vïaggio; contïnüando, intellettüal, perpetüa. Beatrice* sometimes has diaeresis but more often does not. Dante's etymological sense is thus a significant factor in his use of diaeresis: there is always synaeresis on the Italian diphthongs *ie* and *uo* from Latin *e* and *o.*

Dialefe occurs regularly in the *Commedia* after polysyllables that end in an accented diphthong or vowel, and after the great majority of monosyllables, such as *e, io, più, è, noi, da, o,* but not after *di* ("of") or the definite article or proclitic pronouns *(ci, la, le, li, lo, mi, ne, si, ti, vi).* Again, there are a number of exceptions, with no apparent motivation, to the use of *dialefe* after these categories of forms: about one in ten uses *sinalefe* instead. Apart from these categories, there are only about forty instances of *dialefe* in the *Commedia,* after final unaccented vowels in polysyllables, and for the most part there is no discernible reason other than the immediate needs of scansion. Although Dante has a strict sense of the number of syllables in the verse line, as *De vulgari eloquentia* shows, and although there is a high degree of regularity in the way he counts syllables, he uses considerably more license in this respect than his successors from Petrarch on.

A semiconsonantal *i* between two vowels also produces a syllable division (not properly speaking a diaeresis or *dialefe*) either inside or at the beginning of a word, with a very small number of apparently arbitrary exceptions. In the *Commedia, primaio* has both two and three syllables, for instance, and *migliaio* has two, in contrast to *migliaia,* with three.

Italian versification is mainly syllable-based rather than stress-based like English and German, so there is no fixed division of the hendecasyllable