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Presented here are three different English translations of *Inferno* 8, lines 43 through 54.

“That done, he threw his arms around my neck
And kissed my face and said: ‘Indignant soul,
Blessed is she who bore you in her womb!

When in the world, he was presumptuous;
There is no good to gild his memory,
and so his shade down here is hot with fury.

How many up above now count themselves
great kings, who’ll wallow here like pigs in slime,
leaving behind foul memories of their crimes!’

And I: ‘O master, I am very eager
to see that spirit soused within this broth
before we’ve made our way across the lake.’”

(Allen Mandelbaum, 1980)

“After that, throwing his arms around my neck,

Kissing my face, my master said:

‘How seemly, soul, your indignation; blessed
the woman who gave you birth! In the world
this man’s pride puffed him up and no good
attends his memory. That’s why his shade’s
enraged. So many beings up above who act
now like kingly beings will bed
down in this bog like pigs
—having left behind a terrible scorn.’

And I:

‘Master, before we leave the lake I’d love
to see him pitched into this broth.’”

(Schwerner, 2000)

“Then with embracing arms he turned to me,

And kissed my face, and said, ‘Indignant soul,

Happy the mother who gave birth to thee!

Proud upon earth was he who bears this dole:

No gentle deeds lend to his memory grace;

And thus his furious shade has dwelling foul.

Many there be who fill the highest place,

Kings upon earth, who were like swine shall bide,

Leaving but scorn and horror in their trace.’

And I: ‘Master, within this dismal tide

Fain would I see him deeply dipped before

We issue forth upon the other side.’”

(Margaret Oliphant Oliphant, 1877)

Inferno 8 not only casts a shadow of doubt upon Virgil's omnipotence when he fails to gain access to the city of Dis; this canto also presents the reader with a troubling moral development. Whereas in previous cantos we see Dante's concern for the "shades" (lacking bodies) that he encounters—his sympathy often overwhelming him to the point of collapsing—here we see a flash of aggression from our narrator. In the Fifth Circle, where the Wrathful and the Sullen are tormented, it would appear that Dante has committed a sin, the very sort of sin for which those around him thrash in the mire. That Dante would recognize figures whose earthly history coincided with his own is unsurprising, but when his vengeful, *human* emotions are not only expressed, but also encouraged by Virgil, there is reason to stop and consider what this interaction reveals to the reader.

I first encountered this passage through Mandelbaum's translation: Virgil both commends Dante and reminds us of their affection for one another, using the word "Indignant" to precisely identify for the reader the controversial emotion Dante expresses; Virgil further erases all doubt for the reader as to Felippo's sinfulness; Virgil discusses the earthly figures bound to follow Felippo to the Fifth Circle; and lastly Dante, emboldened, expresses his will to see Felippo in particular be destroyed. All three translations agree in labeling "indignation" as the emotion to be carefully considered by the reader, and all three translations immediately relieve the reader of any concern that Dante's actions will be poorly received by his master. Schwerner's "How seemly, soul" does, however, slightly help reinforce the propriety of Dante's hostility in this context. In contrast with Mandelbaum's and Oliphant's translations, in Schwerner's I see Virgil's initial reaction as expressing more pride in Dante, and perhaps relief that Dante would finally engage the shades without collapsing from grief.

The critical question this passage hinges on was posed in class by Professor Eisner: "Is this an example of righteous anger?" Weaving together the three translations, we can collect a few words in the second stanza which help us to tease out the differences between Dante's apparent sin and the Wrathfulness for which Felippo is punished. Mandelbaum gives us "presumptuous," Schwerner "pride," and Oliphant "proud" as the negative qualities Felippo possessed on earth. The word "presumptuous" can also mean "usurping," which could stand to reference Felippo's supposed confiscation of Dante's property from the Commune of Florence after he was exiled. Mandelbaum's

following line, “There is no good to gild his memory,” would then seem to be a stab at Felippo’s prodigal nature and propensity to steal, for *to gild* is to cover with a thin layer of gold, and Mandelbaum’s notes tell us that Filippo was nicknamed “Argenti” due to his horse being “shod with silver” (p. 358). But if we focus on the other two authors’ use of “pride” to describe Felippo’s prior sins, then we should be more concerned that the character Dante is overstepping some boundaries, indeed becoming roused to the point of being more than a passive observer of the structure of hell—his comment to Virgil in the fourth stanza suggests that the *character’s* pride, as well as that of the author here, is of primary concern.

Felippo’s negative qualities addressed, we now turn to the positive behavior he failed to demonstrate: “good,” and “gentle deed[s]” which, in Oliphant’s translation, bring Felippo’s memory “grace.” She might have translated: “No gentle deeds grace his memory,” but her syntax allows for “grace” to be interpreted as that quality bestowed by God as a *result* of his lack of good deeds. Oliphant has in fact used “lend” to describe the relation between Felippo’s actions and the grace bestowed upon his memory. The other two translations suggest that good acts have themselves failed to decorate the memory of Felippo. Whether Mandelbaum’s and Schwerner’s translations treat “memory” as a property of Felippo’s current, hellish consciousness or instead as the sum of his earthly actions is, for me, ambiguous. Nonetheless, Mandelbaum’s and Schwerner’s translations bind the actions of Felippo more directly to the word “memory”, without the hint at judgment which Oliphant’s “No gentle deeds lend to his memory grace” permits. It is Oliphant’s translation which puts his deeds *first*, and then allows the element of judgment of Felippo’s history to necessarily follow. Oliphant’s use of “grace” reminds us that it is God who is the ultimate master. In Dante’s universe, the qualities which men may judge “seemly” among themselves are all subject to God’s will, with God’s grace being the ultimate and necessary requirement for salvation. “Good deeds” is a more earthly form of score keeping used to describe the character of a man, and without the notion of God’s grace, Mandelbaum’s and Schwerner’s third stanzas seem all the more a bitter continuance of Virgil’s dishing out personal anger towards those who have scorned him on Earth. Going from Mandelbaum and Schwerner to Oliphant, we have “good” being elevated to “grace.” Oliphant’s line, “No gentle deeds lend to his memory grace,” reshaped my interpretation of the word “memory” in this

passage. After reading Mandelbaum's translation, I felt it was Felippo's current understanding and remembrance of his earthly actions that lacked any redeeming qualities. Whether Felippo is "hot with fury" because he wishes he had done "good," or instead he is simply blindly raging at his current situation, his soul's personality unchanged, I was unsure. After all, it *would* be Felippo who would interpret things in terms of his ability to guild them, thus his torment seems to plausibly come partially from his own recollection of his past, rather than God's judgment. Yet Oliphant presents a slightly different coloring of this second stanza. Her translation suggests that his memory lacks grace, therefore he resides here. Here his memory is his *history* on earth—all that is judged until you die. This interpretation comes from interpreting the line, "And thus his furious shade has dwelling foul," as separating his earthly body and history from his soul and the consequent judgment it must endure. The other translations of this last line describe Felippo's fury, rather than the location he resides in as a consequence of his particular form of sin.

The rest of the passage is substantively the same across each of the translations, but various rhyme schemes and regular differences in syntax exist. Mandelbaum and Schwerner abandon the interlocking *aba—cbc—cdc—ded* rhyme scheme of Dante Alighieri's terza rima. This allows Mandelbaum to choose the more natural synonyms from within the English language. While Mandelbaum's translation still fits well within the flowing three-line stanzas, with one significant point or deliverance offered nearly every three lines, Schwerner chooses to break up his translation into blocks of dialogue and narration. Schwerner's translation seems more conversational, as in a play, in part due to the typesetting used in his 2000 book where the entire width of the page is used to spatially separate narration from words spoken by figures aloud—a quality I appreciate. It is Schwerner's translation which is able to set Dante's wish to see Felippo destroyed apart from Virgil's preceding words. Schwerner's translation makes Dante's request more arresting to the reader, for it does not fit into the interlocking rhyme scheme. Oliphant uses terza rima, with apparent compromises: in line 59 she describes kings who were "like swine," rather than kings who will wallow in the Fifth Circle like pigs in slime. Oliphant's last stanza is also more formal than the others'; her inversion of subject and verb affects Dante's utterance so as to temper his aggressive condemnation of Felippo.