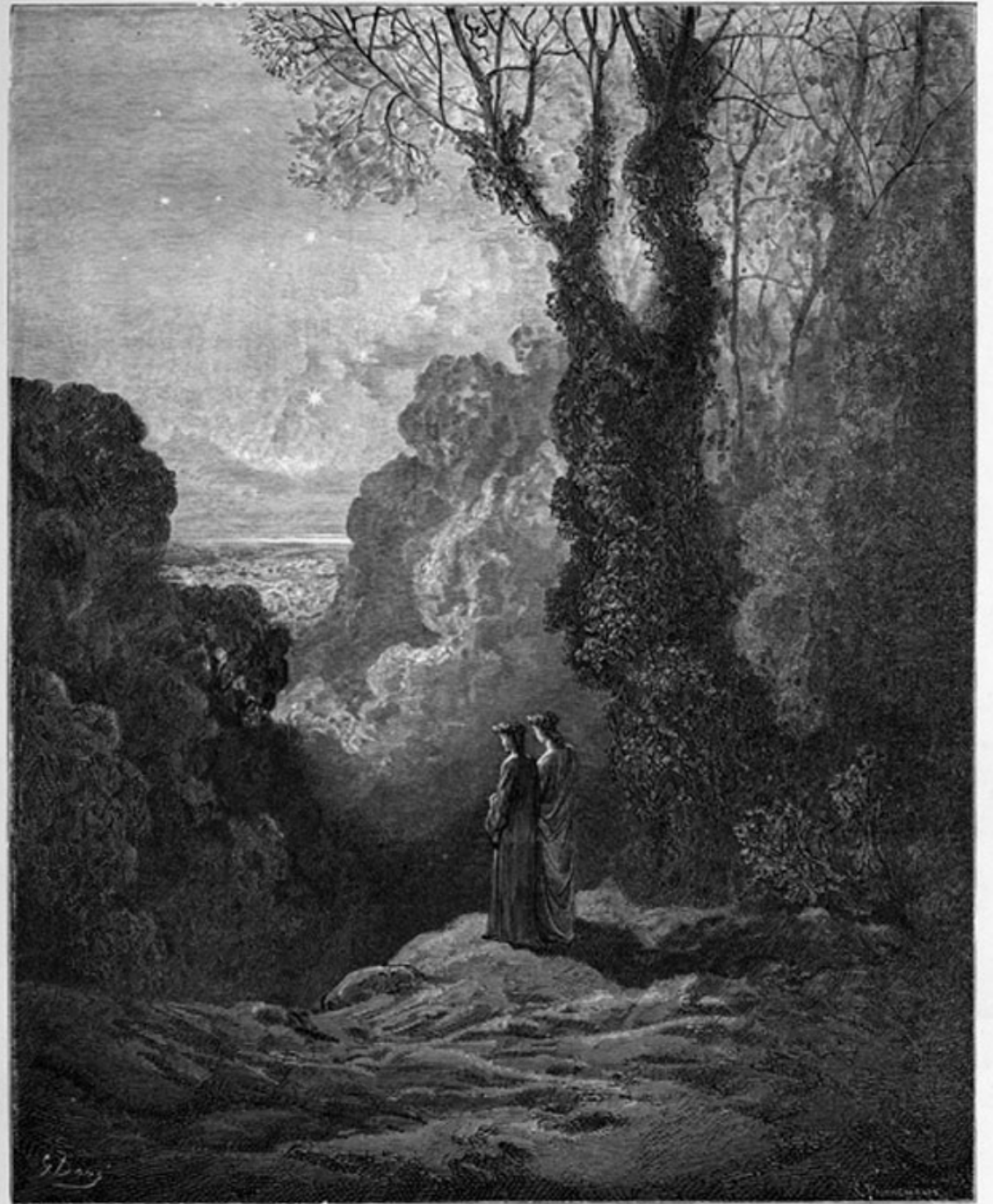


Purgatorio: I-II, IX, XVI

23 March 2020



PATTERNS: From the end of Inferno

- Apostrophes
 - “How then I became frozen and feeble, do not ask, / reader, for I do not write it, and all speech would be / insufficient. I did not die and I did not remain alive: think / now for yourself, if you have wit at all, what I / became, deprived of both.” XXXIV 22-24
- Tropes of incommunicability
 - “How then I became frozen and feeble, do not ask, / reader, for I do not write it, and all speech would be / insufficient.” XXXIV 22-24
- Body metaphors
 - Mouths, chewing, devouring
 - The center of the universe is at Lucifer’s anus, Dante thus ‘exits’ through the anus in a body metaphor that to a large degree progresses from the head down through the body.
- City metaphors
 - The giants are like the towers of medieval towns where clans built their own towers for warfare and espionage
 - This is called ‘Dis’ again XXXIV 20
 - Dante names and criticizes many Tuscan cities in these cantos.
 - Montereccione, above all Pisa and Genoa
- The bridging of the Classical and the Biblical
 - We see the giants come from both traditions, Nimrod from the Old Testament, Ephialtes is the son of Neptune, Antaeus is from *Pharsalia*
 - We see that the three greatest sinners are a bridge. Judas, the worst, was a traitor to Jesus. Brutus and Cassius to Julius Caesar

“E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle.”



Purgation in the Afterlife

- Plato and Pythagoras believed in reincarnation with periods of 1,000 years as punishment in intervals between lives
- Virgil's *Aeneid* circulated some of these ancient doctrines during the years that the literature itself was lost to the West
- The Bible does not specifically mention a Purgatory, but there are numerous implications of purgation after death
- The term was only coined in 1170, afterwards it started being more fully conceived of
- One passage in Matthew uses a monetary metaphor, which led to the custom of 'indulgences', which led to a practice of 'accountancy' of sins and allowed believers to literally 'pay back' their sins through 'good deeds'
 - INDULGENCE: "a way to reduce the amount of punishment one has to undergo for sins". It may reduce the "temporal punishment for sin" after death in the state or process of purification called Purgatory.
- Indulgences were rife with abuse by the late Middle Ages, especially as one 'good deed' was considered to be 'donation to the Church', which became in a sense a way to bribe one's way to Heaven
- One of the central tenets of the Protestant Reformation was the rejection of the doctrine of Purgatory (and thus the efficacy of indulgences), specifically due to the 'selling of indulgences' which had become particularly problematic in the late Middle Ages
- Pope Boniface VIII declared 1300 a Jubilee year with 'plenary [absolute] indulgence' for any pilgrims who came to Rome and visited the basilicas of Saint Peter and Paul a specified number of times

Dante's Unique Purgatory 1

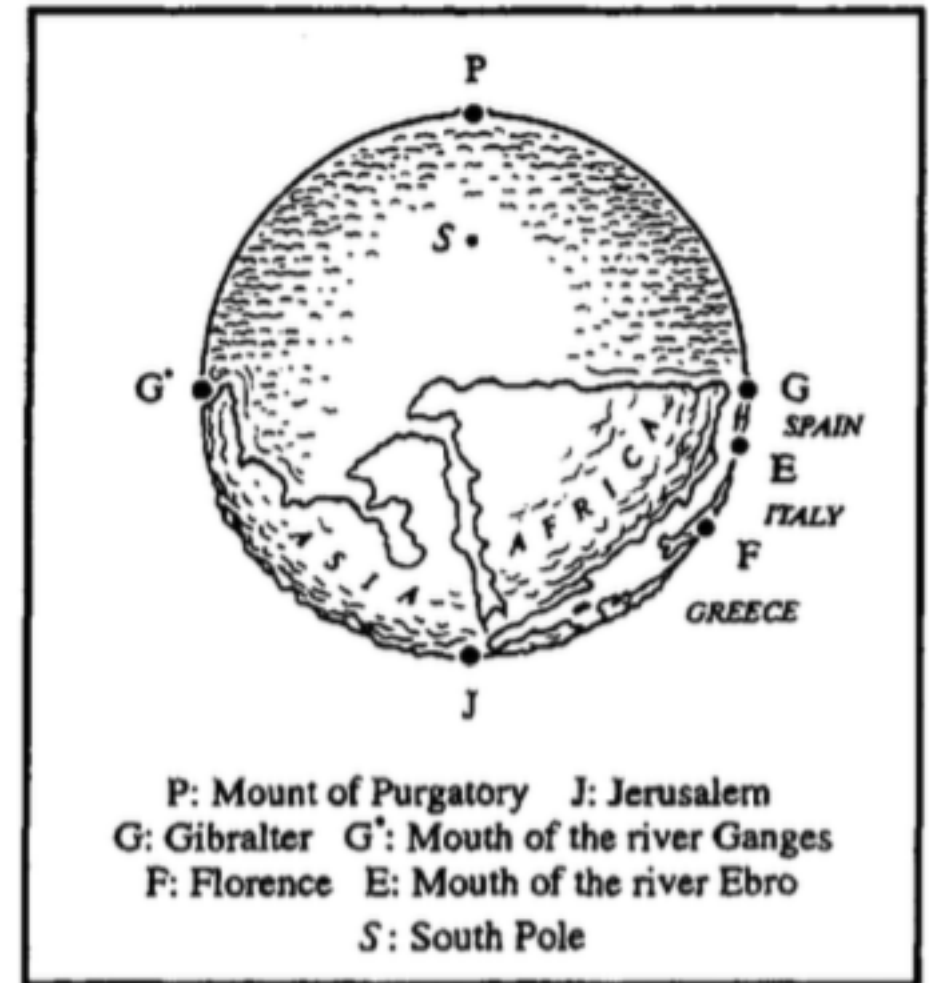
- Dante's treatment of it is profoundly different from orthodox Christian views
- Ante-Purgatory: is unique to his depiction
- Structure:
 - With the idea of 'accountancy' coupled with the emergence of mechanically measured time, Purgatory came to be increasingly thought of as a strict "time is restored for time" structure
 - Dante's Purgatory represents a "marked advance in rendering the concept both concrete and systematic" (Durling, *Purgatorio*, 6)
- Who can be saved?
 - Until Aristotle was rediscovered, Augustine's pessimistic conception of man as redeemable (see: virtuous) *only through knowledge of Christ* was dominant. Dante's view is one of the most optimistic of the Middle Ages, meaning, that he sees man as inherently virtuous (non-Christians could live without sin as well as Christians)
 - This was largely due to Aristotle's conception of "natural moral virtue and vice" which was reintroduced to the West in the 12th century
- Aristotle:
 - "In the Aristotelian conception, vice is a tendency to act wrongly; virtue is a tendency, governed by reason and acquired by, and realized in, repeated action, to act rightly. [...] *Acting* on the inclination is what constitutes sin" not the inclination itself. (Durling 8)
 - Implied is an inner war between IMPULSE and REASON that is fundamental to Dante's conception of 'learning to act morally'.
- This is fundamental to Dante's conception: moral virtue is attainable through reason, not only through the knowledge of Christ. Thus, man need not rely on the Church to guide him, he may follow his own reason.
- Reason for punishment:
 - In the Church's view of Purgatory, the punishment is called 'temporal punishment' and is opposed to 'eternal punishment'
 - In Dante's view, Purgatory is a place of learning 'moral discipline', which implies that Purgatory is still a place attached to the temporal sphere, where all things are governed by change

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Dante's Unique Purgatory

- Much was undecided about doctrinal Purgatory. For example, its location and structure.
- The Location
 - It was antipodal to Jerusalem
 - Located on the 'watery' southern Hemisphere, which Dante considered Earth's better half (because the Aristotelian belief in 'absolute up' made the South the direction toward god)
 - It is halfway between the Earth and the moon
 - Because it is sub-lunar it is part of the temporal and mutable Earth



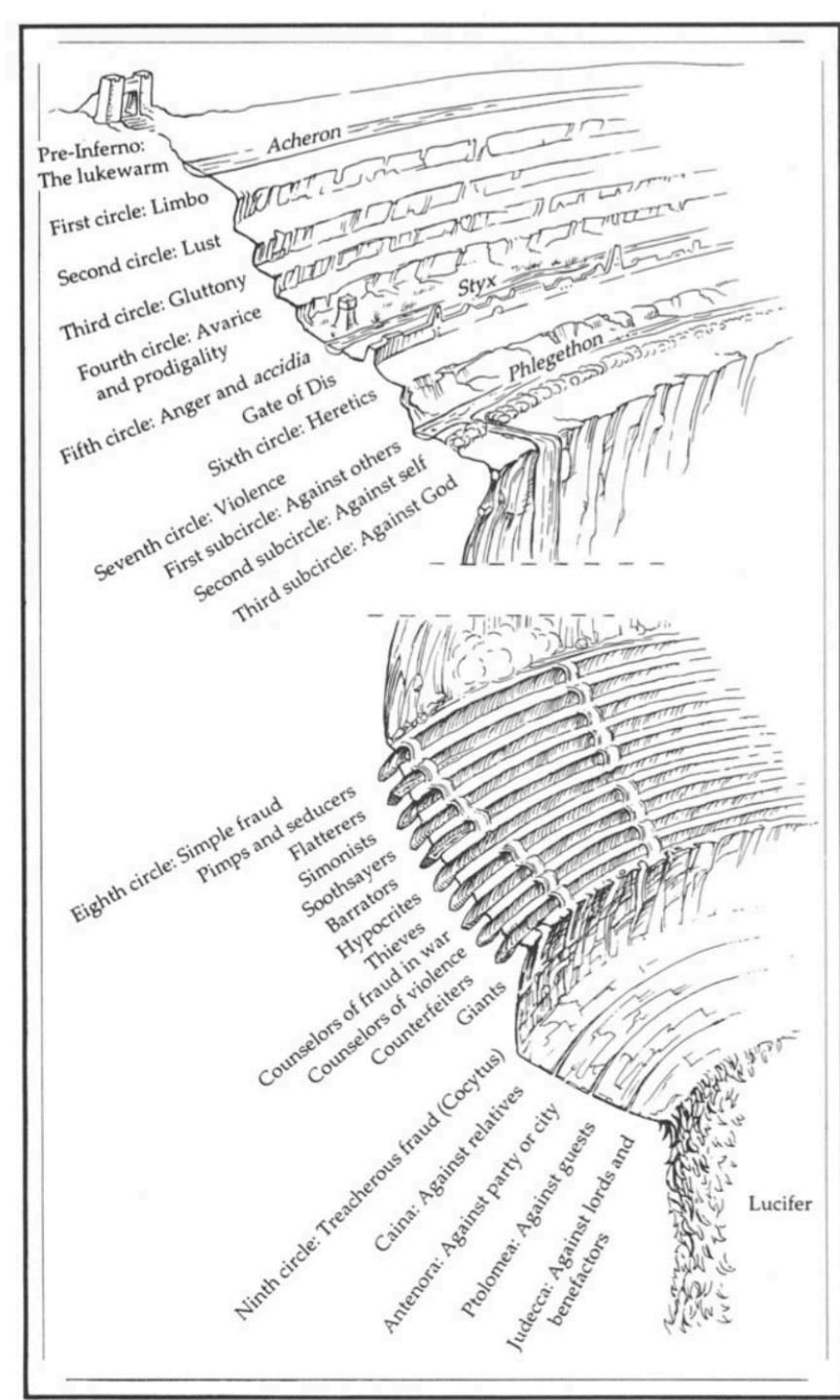
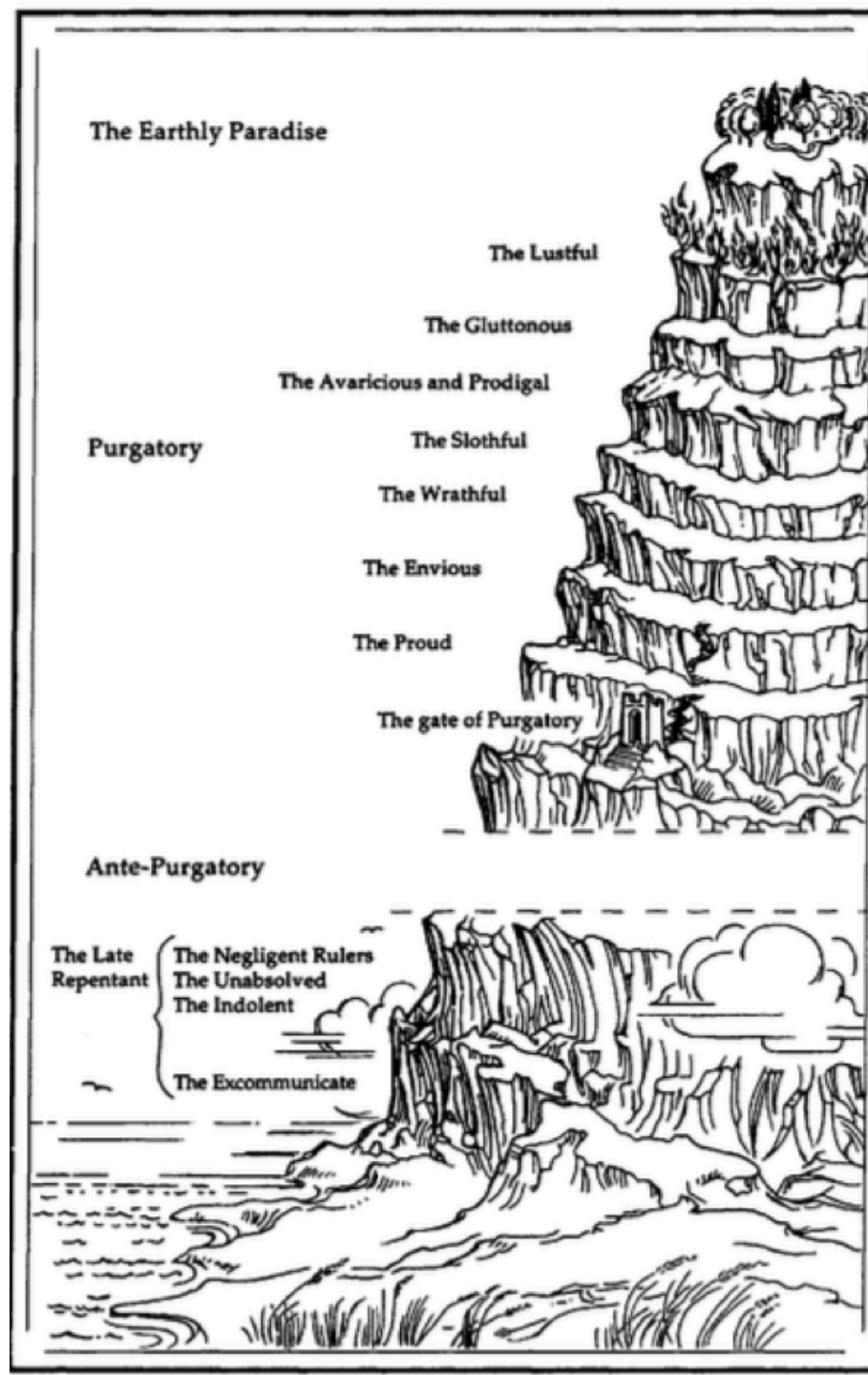
Dante's Unique Purgatory

- The Structure
 - Ante-Purgatory
 - The Gate
 - Purgatory Proper
 - Seven Terraces (corresponding to 7 Deadly Sins or Vices)
 - Each terrace has examples of the sin and its opposite virtue
 - Each terrace has its contrapasso temporal punishment
 - Garden of Eden (earthly paradise)



DISCUSSION: THE STRUCTURE

How would you compare the structures of Inferno and Purgatorio?



The Pilgrim's Journey

Cantos 1-16

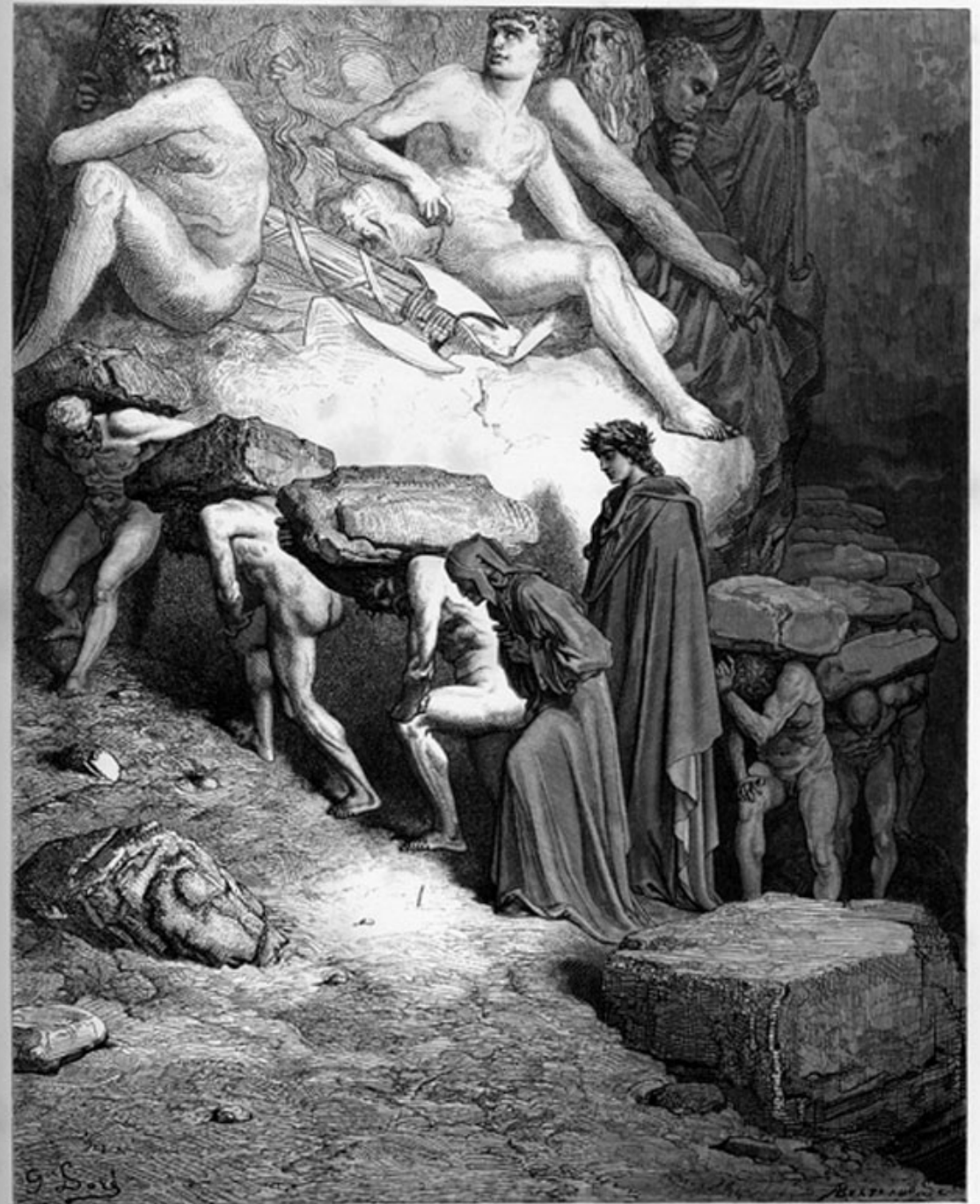
- Cantos 1-8
- Ante-Purgatorio
 - Cato
 - The excommunicated, the negligent, the violently killed and late repentant



The Pilgrim's Journey

Cantos 1-16

- Cantos 9-12
- Canto 9:
 - Dante gets carried to the gate
 - The Gate to Purgatory
- Cantos 10-12: First Terrace
 - Pride
 - Carved examples of humility
 - Souls carry heavy stones
 - Angel erases a P



The Pilgrim's Journey

Cantos 1-16

- Cantos 13-14: Second Terrace
 - Envy
 - Carved examples of compassion
 - Souls' eyes are sown shut
 - Angel erases a P
- Canto 15: Arrival at Third Terrace
 - Anger / Wrath
 - Carved examples of forbearance
 - Souls' wander through cloud of smoke



Purgatorio I: ll. 1-10

“To run through better waters the little ship of
My wit now hoists it sails, leaving behind it a sea
So cruel,
And I will sing of that second realm where the
human spirit purges itself and becomes worthy to
Ascend to Heaven.
But here let dead poetry rise up again, O holy
Muses, since I am yours, and here let Calliope arise
Somewhat,
Accompanying my song.”

Discussion:

- Canto 1, ll. 40-69
 - What is happening in this section of Canto 1? What is its larger function?
 - What do you notice that we have seen before and/or that is new?
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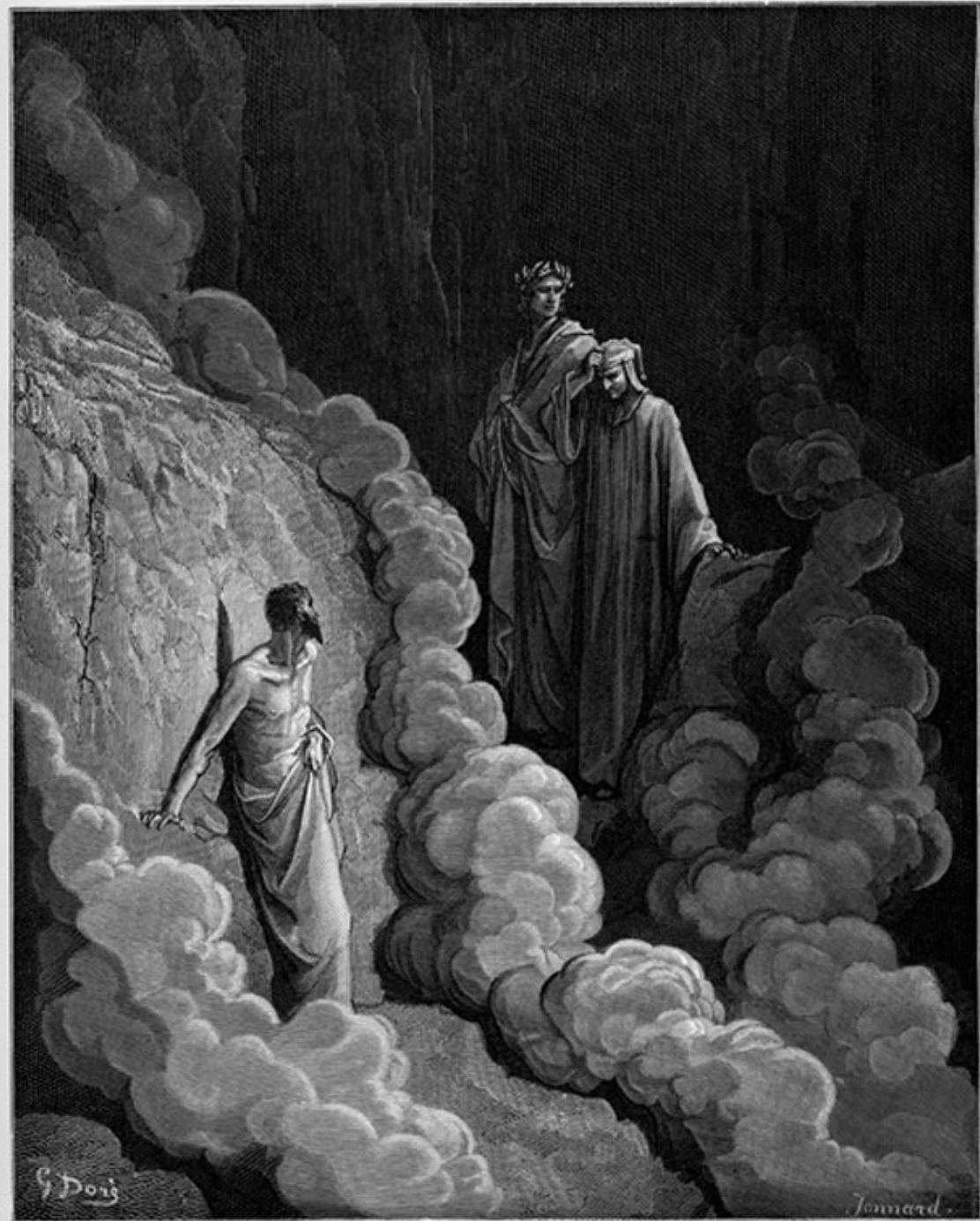
Discussion:

*"Reader, you see how I am elevating my
Matter, and therefore do not marvel if with more
Art I bolster it."*

- Canto 9
- How does the pilgrim arrive at the Gates of Purgatory?
- How is the gate described? How is it opened?
- Compare the scene of the pilgrim's arrival and the gate itself to descriptions in Inferno.

Canto XVI

- This canto is very important. It develops many central themes.
- Why does Dante-Author choose this canto, specifically, for such a crucial speech by Marco Lombardo?



Canto XVI (Canto L)

- Discussion of:
 - The power of the stars (free will)
 - The causes of earthly disorder
 - The corruption of the papacy
 - The decadence of Dante's time
 - The value of earlier examples of civic virtue
 - The role of rulers

Canto XVI (Canto L)

- What is the contrapasso of the terrace? Why might this be symbolically important to the discussion in the canto?
- Dante asks Marco Lombardo (ll. 58-62): “What is the cause of the malice on Earth? Is its origin in heaven or earth?”
- How does Marco Lombardo respond?

Canto XVI (Canto L)

- What is the contrapasso of the terrace? Why might this be symbolically important to the discussion in the canto?
- Dante asks Marco Lombardo (ll. 58-62): “What is the cause of the malice on Earth? Is its origin in heaven or earth?”
- How does Marco Lombardo respond?
- “Brother, your world is blind, and surely you come from there.”

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1. If heaven were the cause of human action “free choice would be destroyed” (70)
2. “The heavens begin your motions [...] a light is given you to know good and evil, and free will. [...] Thus if the present world has gone astray, in you is the cause.” (73-83)
3. “Of some lesser good [the soul] first tastes the flavor; there it is deceived and runs after it, if a guide or rein does not turn away its love.” (91-93)
4. “You can clearly see that bad government is the cause that has made the world wicked.” (103-104)
5. “It is necessary [...] to have a king who would discern the tower at least of the true city.” (94-96)
6. “The people [today] see their guide striking at the thing that they themselves are greedy for, [and thus] feed there and seek no further.” (100-102)
7. “Rome, which made the good world, used to have two suns that made visible the two paths, of the world and of God. One sun has extinguished the other, and the sword is joined to the shepherd’s staff, and it is ill for those two to be violently joined together.” (106-111)

The power of the stars

The causes of earthly disorder

The corruption of the papacy

The decadence of Dante’s time

The value of earlier examples of civic virtue

The role of rulers