The Mythological Allusions in Dante Alighierie’s Inferno

Dr. Chona M. Adlawan
Languages Department, College of Arts and Communication University of Eastern Philippines Northern Samar, Northern Samar, Philippines.

Abstract

This study identified all allusions from classical mythology found in the first book of the Divine Comedy, the Inferno. It looked into the appropriacy of the use of each mythological allusion in hell, and how each mythological allusion hammered home the impact of the punishment.

This qualitative research used textual analysis to crystallize the mythological references in the Inferno. Each allusion was interpreted based on its story. Knowing what they are in mythology served as a springboard for the analysis of their place in the Inferno, thus a close reading of the allegorical epic was done. Alluded to were Hector and Achilles, Trojan war heroes and protagonists in Iliad: Helen and Dido, famous women: beasts and monsters like the Minotaur, Cerberus, and Harpies: and places such as the rivers Styx, Phlegethon, Acheron, and Cocytus.

Based on the analysis, it was found out that the Inferno is rich in mythological allusions. Imaged and symbols are found in almost every canto of the poem. The great images however are Virgil, the representation of Human Wisdom and Beatrice, the image of Divine Wisdom and she also symbolizes the “Blessed Virgin”.

The use of each mythological allusion in hell was found to be appropriate. The placement if these mythological allusions in hell was based on their stories and sins. It was also gleaned that each reference either to sinners, or places or monsters and beasts hammered home the impact of the punishment. Dante has placed each mythological allusion in the circles of hell corresponding to what they were or did in classical mythology.

Downloads

Download data is not yet available.
The works of Dante Alighieri – particularly the Divine Comedy, widely considered his masterpiece – have been a source of inspiration for various artists since their publications in the late 13th and early 14th centuries. Some notable examples are listed below. Auguste Rodin’s sculptural group, The Gates of Hell, draws heavily on the Inferno. The component sculpture, Paolo and Francesca, represents Francesca da Rimini and Paolo Malatesta, whom Dante meets in Canto 5. The version of this sculpture known Dante Alighieri (1265-1321). Born in Florence, Italy (Tuscany) Attended University of Bologna Studied Tuscan painting, Greek and Roman mythology, philosophy, music, and poetry, especially that of Homer and Virgil. Slideshow 6178856 by dale-parsons. Allusions, or references the author makes to other people, characters, and literary works, will be made throughout Inferno to. Political leaders. Religious leaders.