

JUXTAPOSING INFERNAL REALMS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HELL IN JAMES JOYCE'S 'A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN' AND DANTE'S 'DIVINE COMEDY'

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Abstract

This essay examines the comparative analysis of Hell as presented in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*. It explores the thematic, symbolic, and allegorical elements employed by the authors in their respective works. The essay provides a brief overview of the literary context and historical background of both texts, highlighting the significance of studying and comparing their depictions of Hell. It analyzes Joyce's portrayal of Hell, focusing on characters, symbolism, and underlying themes such as guilt, sin, and redemption. Similarly, it delves into Dante's intricate depiction of Hell, exploring the nine circles, punishments, and theological aspects embedded within. The essay then offers a comparative analysis, discussing the shared themes and symbolic representations, as well as the divergences influenced by cultural and personal contexts. Through this analysis, the essay enhances our understanding of Hell as a literary construct and illuminates the unique perspectives and artistic choices of Joyce and Dante.

Keywords: Hell, comparative analysis, symbolism, allegory, themes.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of Hell, as a realm of suffering, punishment, and moral reckoning, has intrigued humanity for centuries. It has found expression in various forms across different cultures and epochs, serving as a potent metaphor for the consequences of human transgressions. Among the many literary works that delve into the intricate landscape of Hell, two stand out as remarkable and influential: James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. These works, separated by centuries and cultural contexts, offer distinct yet compelling visions of Hell, inviting readers to explore the depths of human experience and morality.

This essay embarks on a comparative analysis of Hell as portrayed in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*. It seeks to unravel the thematic, symbolic, and allegorical elements embedded within these literary masterpieces. By juxtaposing these two interpretations of Hell, we aim to discern the shared narratives and unique artistic choices made by the authors, ultimately enhancing our comprehension of this age-old literary construct.

The *Divine Comedy* by Dante and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by Joyce are two of the most seminal books in literary history. The reflective qualities of the human mind are examined in both works, along with topics such as development and the value of one's own opinion. Stephen Dedalus, the protagonist of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* spends the first half of the novel grappling with the nuances of Irish society, religion, and his own creative goals. However, Dante's *Divine Comedy* is an epic work where the main character, Dante, journeys through Hell (in "Inferno"), Purgatory (in "Purgatorio"), and Heaven (in "Paradiso"). Both works feature intricate plots and make extensive use of symbolism to express their meanings. Dante's exploration of deep religious and philosophical topics was couched in lyrical analogies and elegant language. However, Joyce uses a stream-of-consciousness style to enter inside the protagonist's head and feel what he feels. Understanding the protagonists, storylines, and themes of the two works requires first grasping their major interests. These works of literature also have significance and influence owing to the serious questions they raise about humanity and the pursuit of illumination.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Before delving into the specific depictions of Hell in these works, it is imperative to understand the literary context and historical background that shaped them. Dante's *Divine Comedy* emerged in the early 14th century, deeply rooted in medieval Catholicism. This epic poem takes readers on a journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven, offering a structured and hierarchical vision of the afterlife. Dante's Hell, comprised of nine concentric circles, represents a meticulously constructed moral universe, where sinners face punishments commensurate with their transgressions. The *Divine Comedy* is not merely a literary work; it is a theological and philosophical exploration of sin, salvation, and divine justice.

In contrast, James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* emerged in the early 20th century during the heyday of literary modernism. This novel reflects the intellectual and cultural shifts of its time, characterized by skepticism towards traditional beliefs and a fascination with the individual psyche. Joyce's depiction of Hell is less conventional, more abstract, and profoundly psychological. It mirrors the disorientation and uncertainty of an era marked by two world wars and a growing disillusionment with established systems of thought.

The significance of comparing these two works lies in their capacity to shed light on the evolving human understanding of Hell as a literary construct. By examining the shared themes, symbolism, and allegory within these depictions, we gain insights into the enduring human preoccupation with morality, guilt, sin, and redemption. Moreover, the differences between Dante and Joyce's interpretations illuminate the cultural and personal contexts that influenced their artistic choices, underscoring the malleability of Hell as a metaphorical canvas.

A semi-autobiographical work of fiction titled *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* was initially released in serial format during 1914 and 1915 before it was released in a book format in 1916. The main character of the novel, Stephen Dedalus, is a young Irishman who currently resides in Dublin, as stated by Crispi (68). The book follows Stephen's upbringing and the development of his creative sensibility from his childhood to adolescence, when he starts to rebel against the social, political, and religious norms of the day. The *Irish Literary Revival*, sometimes known as the *Irish Renaissance*, was a time of significant cultural and political shifts in Ireland when Joyce was born (Joyce 45). The early twentieth century Irish literary revivalist movement had a significant influence on Joyce's writing. Joyce's work was influenced by his growing up in a fervently Catholic and nationalistic environment. Stephen Dedalus examines the morals and dogma of his Catholic upbringing in the book. Here, Joyce's dissatisfaction towards the Church & the restrictions it imposed on individuals is evident.

Joyce was influenced by the modernist literature of the day as well as by Irish history and culture. According to Mahadin and Azmi, the term "modernism" describes a literary movement that rejected traditional narrative frameworks to explore the complex experiences of people. Modernist techniques and Joyce's style of writing are excellent examples (Mahadin and Azmi 15-16). According to Grgurić, the tale is written in a stream-of-consciousness format, letting the reader see the world through Stephen's eyes (Grgurić 4). By going deeply into Stephen's emotions and completely capturing his innermost thoughts, Joyce employs this technique to paint an individualized and comprehensive portrait of his life.

The *Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri, written in the 14th century, is an epic poem often regarded as one of the finest examples of Italian literature. Because it reflects the worldview, religious beliefs, and political setting of the medieval period, Borraccini et al. contend that it is of great cultural and literary significance (Borraccini et al.). Between the 5th and 15th centuries, the Middle Ages were in effect, and throughout this period, strict social order and the widespread influence of Christianity were hallmarks of this period. Europe saw significant political, social, and intellectual advances throughout this time, and religious beliefs played a crucial role in people's daily lives, as described by Bellone et al. (Bellone et al.).

Inferno, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso* are the three canticas that make up the poem, and they each describe a different level of the afterlife. There are 100 cantos containing 14,233 lines of poetry written in terza rima, a complicated poem style developed by Dante. Of these, 33 cantos are found in *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, while 34 are in *Paradiso*. The first section of Dante's *Divine Comedy* is titled "Inferno," it details Dante's descent into Hell and his subsequent ascent through its nine levels. Sin and its repercussions are shown in all their ugliness and horror, and moral and theological lessons are drawn from this. Famous people from history and legend populate Hell, each circle representing a different sin and its penalty, as described by Flores. Part two, titled "Purgatorio," details Dante's journey through the purifying fires of Mount Purgatory on his way to Paradise. Dante encounters remorseful spirits purging their sins by facing different tests and hardships. In the last section of the *Divine Comedy*, titled "Paradiso," Dante is seen ascending to Heaven. Each heavenly orb represents a distinct virtue in depicting the heavenly spheres. Baxter claims that *The Divine Comedy* is a theological allegory delving deeply into politics, history, and literature (Baxter 66). Dante's criticisms of the Church and society and his hopes for a more peaceful and fairer world are all reflected in this work.

This comparative analysis promises to deepen our appreciation of the diverse ways in which authors engage with and reinterpret classical themes across temporal and cultural boundaries. Through it, we will navigate the intricacies of Hell, uncover the shared threads of human experience, and celebrate the creative genius of two literary giants who dared to venture into the infernal realms of the human psyche. In the following sections, we will delve into the specifics of each work, exploring their portrayals of Hell before offering a comparative analysis that bridges the gap between tradition and modernity, faith and skepticism, and the profound depths of human imagination.

HELL IN JOYCE'S A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN

Hell plays a significant role in the protagonist's emotional and intellectual development. Sinha argues that the experiences and characters encountered in Hell contribute to the novel's exploration of religious guilt, personal

identity, and the struggles of an artist's development (Sinha 65). In the novel, "Hell" is depicted through a series of vivid and disturbing visions experienced by the protagonist, Stephen Dedalus. Farahmandian and Shao posit that these visions reflect Stephen's internal conflicts and his evolving relationship with Catholicism. As a young man seeking self-discovery and artistic freedom, Stephen grapples with the oppressive religious dogma and the weight of sin (Farahmandian and Shao 30).

The characters encountered in Hell represent various aspects of Stephen's psyche and societal influences. For instance, in the first vision, Stephen witnesses his tormentor, the "pigeon house" bully, Wells, who embodies Stephen's guilt and fear (Reali 45). Wells taunts and humiliates Stephen, representing the oppressive moral standards imposed by society and the Catholic Church. Throughout these horrific experiences, symbolism plays a significant role. For instance, fire is a common symbol, denoting the hellish pain of guilt and sin. There is also the use of allegorical elements to hint at hidden meanings. The descent into Hell represents Stephen's inner conflict and growth. As he faces his demons and accepts his heart's wishes, this ritual symbolizes his cleansing and redemption. According to Van Dyke, it is only after Stephen's descent into Hell that he can fully realize who he is as an artist and rediscover his sense of self (Van Dyke).

Guilt and sin are two primary concepts probed by Hell's imagery. The protagonist, Stephen Dedalus, struggles throughout the book with his feelings of sin and shame. In his opinion, "Hell" is a metaphor for Gichan's inner turmoil and the repercussions of his misdeeds. It gives form to his anxieties and doubts, evidencing his anguish as he tries to balance the competing pressures of society, religion, and his own needs. The representation of Hell prompts contemplation not just of sin and punishment but also of redemption and self-realization. Stephen goes through a period of self-reflection and introspection as he makes his way through his own personal Hell, which leads him to a profound epiphany. Zubair reflects on how, due to his life lessons, he is more determined to break free of the stifling constraints of his culture and religion (Zubair). In this sense, Hell serves as an impetus for Stephen's journey toward self-awareness and away from the constraining norms of his day. Neuse emphasizes the connection between atonement and coming into one's own (Neuse). Stephen can finally accept himself and find redemption when he rejects the norms of society.

HELL IN DANTE'S DIVINE COMEDY

As the title suggests, Dante spends the first section of his epic poem, "Inferno," wandering around Hell and its nine circles. Each segment symbolizes a particular transgression; within each segment, various retributive measures await the transgressors. Following is a description of this trip to Hell as a figurative and allegorical investigation of human sin, justice from God, and moral implications.

- 1. Limbo:** The unbaptized and good pagan heathens live in Limbo, the first circle. Even if they may not have committed any crimes, those who do not believe in Christianity nonetheless miss the joy of being in God's presence (Ushkanova 62). As a metaphor for human reason's limits, "limbo" is a region of longing and unrealized potential apart from divine grace.
- 2. Lust:** Dante meets lustful sinners in the second circle of Hell. A furious storm follows them around constantly, representing the unpredictability and chaos of this transgression. Their punishment is a metaphor for how warped love and unquenchable lust may derail a person's quest for enlightenment.
- 3. Gluttony:** The third circle is dedicated to gluttony. Here, the sinners lie in a putrid slush, tormented by an incessant, icy rain. Corbett argues that this punishment reflects the excesses of appetite and the degradation of one's spiritual nature through self-indulgence.
- 4. Greed:** The fourth circle is divided into two parts: the hoarders and the spendthrifts. The hoarders roll heavyweights against one another while the spendthrifts wander. Yagodina argues that both groups represent the misuse of wealth and the selfishness that arises from an imbalanced relationship with material possessions (Yagodina 33).
- 5. Wrath:** The fifth circle is characterized by the river Styx, in which the wrathful and the sullen are punished. The wrathful fight with each other on the river's surface while the sullen are submerged beneath its murky waters. These punishments depict the destructive nature of anger and the passive resistance that stifles one's capacity for joy.
- 6. Heresy:** Heretics are condemned to tombs engulfed in flames in the sixth circle. This punishment signifies the denial of fundamental truths and the rejection of divine revelation. The graves on fire represent the lasting repercussions of perverting or rejecting Christian teachings.
- 7. Violence:** Three concentric circles inside the seventh circle stand for three distinct forms of violence: aggression against others, aggression toward one's body, and aggression toward God, the natural world, and works of art. The punishments in this circle include being immersed in a river of boiling blood, trapped in burning sand, transformed into trees, and bitten by harpies. These torments reflect violence's consequences and destructive power in all its forms.
- 8. Fraud:** The eighth circle consists of ten concentric trenches, each punishing a different type of fraud. Medugno seconds that this circle explores the perversion of reason and the deliberate deception committed by sinners (Medugno 47). The punishments vary from being consumed by flames, trapped in pits, or subjected to

constant transformations, symbolizing the chaotic nature of deception and the lack of stability for those who deceive others.

9. Treachery: The final circle, called Cocytus, is reserved for traitors. It is divided into four regions, each holding sinners who betrayed their family, homeland, guests, or benefactors. According to Gibson, these individuals are frozen in ice, representing the absence of love and the ultimate betrayal of trust.

Comparative Analysis

Hell has been a recurring theme in literature throughout history, often serving as a powerful symbol of human suffering, sin, and redemption. Two influential works that delve into the concept of Hell are James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. These two literary giants, separated by centuries and cultural contexts, present unique interpretations of Hell that provide fascinating insights into the human condition.

I. Dante's 'Divine Comedy': The Hierarchical Hell

Dante's depiction of Hell in the *Divine Comedy* is a meticulously structured, hierarchical realm. It consists of nine circles, each designed to punish specific sins. The deeper one descends into Hell, the more severe the sins and punishments become. Dante's Hell represents a moral universe in which divine justice prevails, and sinners receive punishments commensurate with their wrongdoing. This vision of Hell is rooted in Catholic theology and reflects a clear moral order.

A) The Infernal Hierarchy: In Dante's Hell, sins are categorized into three main groups: incontinence, violence, and fraud. Each of these groups has its own corresponding circle. For instance, in the second circle, the lustful are punished by being tossed about in a violent storm, symbolizing the turbulence of their desires.

B) Symbolic Punishments: The punishments in Dante's Hell are highly symbolic, designed to fit the nature of sin. For example, the sinners in the seventh circle, where violence is punished, are immersed in a river of boiling blood, reflecting the violent nature of their sins during life.

C) Journey of Redemption: Dante's *Divine Comedy* is not only a depiction of Hell but also a journey of spiritual growth and redemption. As Dante progresses through Hell and Purgatory, he learns about the consequences of sin and the importance of repentance, ultimately leading to his ascent to Heaven.

II. Joyce's 'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man': A Psychological Hell

In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* James Joyce offers a more modern and psychological interpretation of Hell. Instead of a structured and hierarchical realm, Hell in Joyce's novel is an internal and subjective experience. The protagonist, Stephen Dedalus, grapples with his own personal demons and existential questions, creating a sense of hellish turmoil within his mind.

A) Inner Torment: Stephen Dedalus' experiences and inner thoughts are central to the depiction of Hell in Joyce's novel. His struggles with guilt, religion, and his identity create a pervasive sense of inner torment, resembling the modernist concern with individual consciousness.

B) Religious and Moral Confusion: Unlike Dante's clear moral framework, Stephen's Hell is marked by religious and moral confusion. He is torn between the strict Catholicism of his upbringing and the intellectual skepticism of his time. This inner conflict becomes a source of torment for him.

C) Alienation and Isolation: Another dimension of Stephen's Hell is his profound sense of alienation and isolation. He feels estranged from his family, his peers, and even his country. This sense of isolation contributes to his inner turmoil and suffering.

III. A Comparative Analysis

While Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* approach the concept of Hell from different angles, they share some common themes:

A) Suffering and Redemption: Both works explore the themes of suffering and redemption. In Dante's Hell, sinners suffer for their wrongdoings but have the opportunity for redemption through repentance. In Joyce's novel, Stephen's inner torment and struggles with his identity are ultimately a part of his journey toward self-discovery and possible redemption.

B) Symbolism: Symbolism plays a significant role in both works. Dante uses symbolic punishments to convey the nature of sins and their consequences, while Joyce employs symbols and metaphors to represent Stephen's psychological and existential struggles.

C) Spiritual Journey: Both works can be seen as spiritual journeys. Dante's journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven represents his quest for spiritual growth and understanding. In Joyce's novel, Stephen's inner journey is a search for his artistic and intellectual identity, akin to a modernist quest for meaning in a changing world.

However, their differences are equally noteworthy:

A) Structure vs. Subjectivity: Dante's Hell is highly structured and hierarchical, reflecting a clear moral order. In contrast, Joyce's Hell is subjective and internal, mirroring the modernist concern with individual consciousness.

B) Religious vs. Secular: Dante's 'Divine Comedy' is deeply rooted in Catholic theology and tradition. Joyce's novel, on the other hand, reflects the secular and skeptical atmosphere of the early 20th century. The comparative analysis of Hell in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Dante's *Divine Comedy* reveals the evolution of literary interpretations of Hell across different historical and cultural contexts. Dante's hierarchical and structured Hell reflects medieval Catholicism's moral universe, while Joyce's internal and subjective Hell mirrors the modernist preoccupation with individual consciousness and identity.

FURTHER OBSERVATION

Both works, despite their differences, provide profound insights into the human condition, the nature of sin and suffering, and the possibility of redemption. Whether through Dante's meticulously crafted circles of Hell or Stephen Dedalus' psychological turmoil, these literary representations of Hell continue to captivate readers and invite contemplation on the complexities of the human experience.

Both works depict Hell in their respective works, but they do so with distinct differences and similarities influenced by their cultural, historical, and personal contexts. Regarding similarities, Ryf notes that both works present 'Hell' as a place of punishment and suffering for the souls of the damned (Ryf).

O'Brien adds that sinners are tormented and tortured in both narratives as retribution for their transgressions (O'Brien). Besides, Joyce and Dante present Hell as a realm with different levels or circles corresponding to the severity of sins committed (Ryan 25). The souls in Hell are punished according to the nature and gravity of their offences.

The two works, however, show differences in depiction. Dante's *Divine Comedy* was written in the 14th century and was heavily influenced by Christian theology and medieval beliefs, thus reflecting the medieval worldview, incorporating elements of Christian morality and the hierarchical structure of sins described by Toth (Toth, 2020). The author's disappointment with established religious and social rules likely contributed to Joyce's shift toward a more modernist viewpoint in his writing. His vision of Hell is more subjective and introspective, emphasizing feelings and thoughts rather than objective facts.

No spirit is damned for eternity in hell portrayed by Dante as a sinner unless he obstinately refuses to recognize his own sin and to accept God's grace. Those who accept their sinfulness are converted to pilgrims who gradually purge themselves (Slade 16). This is depicted in a totally different manner in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* where the description of hell goes against Christian conception of hell. In the book it is stated that those who will go to hell will never come out of it. The scriptures say that hell is a place of raging fire where sinners will be cast into on the Day of Judgment as a punishment for their sins. But nothing in the scriptures suggests or indicates that punishment for sinners will continue eternally. The word used in the scripture for the punishment of sinners is "aion" which has been wrongly translated by many of the scholars as "eternal" or "forever", but the correct translation of the word is "age", and the English word "eon" is a derivative of this word. The corresponding word in Hebrew is "olam" which means "age" or "world". The point to be noted here is that these three words "aion", "eon" and "olam" signal conditions with an indefinite, but not an infinite, duration.

While both works deal with the notions of sin, guilt, and punishment, they do it in very different ways. According to McCormick and Core (65), Dante's *Divine Comedy* is preoccupied with the soul's salvation, the value of divine justice, and the potential of spiritual development. However, Joyce focuses most of his writing on the individual's struggle for self-actualization and autonomy.

Virginia Woolf once referred to Joyce as a "queasy undergraduate scratching his pimples" whereas Dante is the high and magnificent lyrical voice of mediaeval Christendom. Joyce is a modern rebel and blasphemer (Eagleton, 2022). Joyce used Dante as a role model for the artist who, like the intellectual and the critic, must always be at battle with his society if he is to speak trenchantly about his own time. The artist will likely have to make accommodations with the very aspects of society with which he should be at conflict because of his willingness to enter the establishment and accept praise and admiration. The identities of people who perished in subsequent Trojan Horses are not recorded in history, thus those who claim they would burrow from within may prove brave or may be stupid. The artist must maintain his integrity by keeping himself at a distance if the prospect of suffocation is genuine and the establishment poses a threat to it. Joyce was aware of this, and he makes this point clear by having Stephen Dedalus play the part of an Irish Dante (Helsing 591).

According to Mary Reynolds, Joyce crafted a Dantean allegory of art in his own fiction by examining the rhetorical and linguistic devices he used to connect his works to Dante. Dr. Reynolds contends that rather than as a practicing Catholic, Joyce read Dante as a poet and that Joyce was drawn to Dante's social critique and, more importantly, his remarkable capacity for inventiveness (Reynolds).

IMPACT AND INFLUENCE

The impact and influence of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* on literature, culture, and thought have been profound and enduring. These two works have left an

indelible mark on the literary world and have influenced a wide range of fields, including literature, philosophy, theology, and even popular culture.

Impact of Dante's *Divine Comedy*:

A) **Literary Legacy:** Dante's *Divine Comedy* is widely regarded as one of the greatest works in Western literature. Its innovative use of the Italian vernacular, known as the Tuscan dialect, played a crucial role in shaping the Italian language and literature. His terza rima, a poetic form used throughout the poem, remains influential in poetry to this day.

B) **Religious Influence:** Dante's depiction of Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven profoundly impacted Christian theology and eschatology. His imaginative portrayal of the afterlife influenced subsequent religious thinkers and contributed to the development of Christian thought.

C) **Allegory and Symbolism:** Dante's use of allegory and symbolism in 'Divine Comedy' set a precedent for allegorical literature in subsequent centuries. Writers like John Milton and John Bunyan drew inspiration from Dante's use of allegory in their own works.

D) **National Identity:** Dante's work is often seen as a cornerstone in the development of Italian national identity. His promotion of the Tuscan dialect as a literary language helped unify Italy linguistically and culturally.

Impact of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*:

A) **Modernist Literature:** James Joyce is considered one of the pioneers of modernist literature. 'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man' exemplifies modernist themes and techniques, including stream-of-consciousness narration and the exploration of individual consciousness. This novel had a profound influence on the development of 20th-century literature.

B) **Literary Experimentation:** Joyce's innovative narrative techniques challenged conventional storytelling. His influence can be seen in the works of other modernist writers like Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner, who also experimented with narrative structure and the interior lives of characters.

C) **Autobiographical Fiction:** Joyce's semi-autobiographical approach to storytelling, as seen in 'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,' inspired a generation of writers who used their own experiences as source material for their fiction. This approach blurred the lines between fiction and autobiography.

D) **Exploration of Identity:** The novel's exploration of the protagonist Stephen Dedalus's intellectual and artistic development contributed to the modernist focus on the individual's quest for identity and meaning in a rapidly changing world.

E) **Language and Style:** Joyce's mastery of language and linguistic experimentation left an indelible mark on literature. His use of different narrative voices, languages, and wordplay challenged conventional notions of how language could be used in fiction.

While Joyce drew inspiration from various sources, including his own experiences, the influence of Dante's masterpiece can be seen in several aspects of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Kleinhenz observes that Joyce employs various symbolic elements reminiscent of Dante's work. Dante's use of allegory and symbolism to represent different levels of sin and spiritual ascent resonates with Joyce's use of symbolic imagery throughout his novel. Furthermore, Dante and Joyce employ a highly stylized and innovative use of language (Keohane 145). Natali (69) claims that both writers aimed to experiment with and challenge conventional forms of literary expression.

The impact and influence of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* on literature, culture, and thought have been profound and enduring. These two works have left an indelible mark on the literary world and have influenced a wide range of fields, including literature, philosophy, theology, and even popular culture.

CONCLUSION

Several significant results and insights are revealed by comparing Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* both of which help our knowledge of these works and their relevance in literary studies. First, the hero's quest for inner growth and enlightenment is a common theme in both works. The main character of Dante's work, Dante himself, journeys through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven, meeting other people who represent different parts of human nature and moral choices. Stephen Dedalus, Joyce's protagonist, too experiences an awakening as he discovers his identity and culture via art. Secondly, the comparison emphasizes the themes shared by the two works. Sin, redemption, the origins of evil, and the intricacies of the human condition are all explored by both Dante and Joyce. They dive into philosophical and theological questions, analyzing the interplay between people and their communities and the conflicts that arise when individual needs collide with communal norms.

This study's relevance for literary studies stems from what it reveals about the continuity of literature and the development of literary methods across time. Scholars may learn more about the literary and cultural factors that shaped future works by examining the similarities and differences between these two landmark texts. In addition, the contrast reveals new avenues for exploration, and thus, scholars might compare and contrast Dante and Joyce's storytelling approaches, looking at how these elements contribute to the works' overarching

themes and messages. This study adds to the canon of scholarly literature and points the way to future inquiry, enriching our knowledge of these works and their place in literary history.

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