

ULYSSES: THE POET'S IMPERFECT REFLECTION

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ABSTRACT

Critical analysis of Ulysses' role in *The Divine Comedy* currently revolves around the notion that Dante sees at least a part of himself represented in his Ulysses character. While there are numerous opinions on the relationship between Dante and the ancient Greek hero, using Althusser's theory on interpellation as a lens through which to view Ulysses' interactions with Dante sheds light on what Ulysses' role might be. Applying Althusser's theory reveals that Dante the Poet writes Ulysses as the representation of his sin. Both the Poet and Ulysses have transgressed human boundaries – the Poet through writing *The Divine Comedy* and Ulysses through his Mad Flight.

INTRODUCTION

If Ulysses is the representation of Dante's sin, then Dante's representation of himself as the Pilgrim character is equally important. While Ulysses is Dante's confession, the Pilgrim is what Dante views as a more perfect representation of himself. Dante recognizes that his act of transgressing the boundaries of human knowledge do not match up to the Pilgrim's humble actions of respecting authority and accepting his place. An analysis of which characters end up in the Inferno and the Purgatorio reveal that actions are not the sole determinate of one's fate; recognition of one's shortcomings is the requirement for salvation in Dante's religion. While Ulysses never questions his transgression, the Poet is troubled by his sin, indicating both recognition and desire for absolution. The Poet matches Ulysses in his actions, but showing that he is able to see himself reflected in a known sinner is enough to save him.

Main Text

Many scholars believe Dante may have wished to draw particular attention to Ulysses and his sin in *The Divine Comedy* because Dante intended the Greek hero to represent certain negative aspects of himself. Once the similarities between the two figures' sins are discovered, the issue becomes one of figuring out whether Dante will share in his damnation. Ulysses' fate is a manifestation of the situation Dante the Poet would have ended up in had he not been self-aware enough to recognize his sin of intellectual pride, and earnest in his desire to overcome it through the representation of himself as the humble Pilgrim; the confession of sin and desire to change are enough to be absolved in Dante's view of faith.

The critical conversation regarding Ulysses generally accepts the idea that he functions as a reflection of aspects of Dante himself. Donno notes Dante's attraction to Ulysses and says that Dante is both fearful of and exalted by it (29). Franke, Howard, and Jacoff use the Pilgrim's actions to help determine Dante's fate in relation to Ulysses'. While Franke thinks Dante shares Ulysses' sin of intellectual pride, he argues that by allowing himself to be led in the right direction by a guide, he differentiates himself from the shades of hell and is saved (109). Howard says that the fact that the Pilgrim is able to return from hell is evidence of his salvation (138). Jacoff adds that Ulysses' east-to-west journey contrasts with the Pilgrim's perpendicular ascent from hell to heaven, which shows a key difference in their journeys (241). These critics all use evidence from Dante's Pilgrim character to determine what Dante believes will be his fate.

Barolini, Fido, Trovato, and Harrison use aspects of the Poet himself when determining Dante's sin in relation to Ulysses'. Barolini says that the Poet and Ulysses share the same flaw of using their intelligence to transgress boundaries – Ulysses through his mad flight and Dante by writing *The Divine Comedy* (117). She concludes that Ulysses pays Dante's debts and thus saves him from damnation (127). Trovato focuses on use of intelligence as well, but argues that Ulysses' use of intelligence is sinful in that it is used for self-gratification instead of for bettering his community (264). Dante is attempting to save the human race, so his use of intelligence is not sinful compared to Ulysses'. Fido does not focus on the writing of *The Comedy*,

but argues that the Pilgrim's journey is different from Ulysses' because Dante's poet standing entitles him to travel: "Dante's status as a poet in *Purgatorio* casts back light and weight on his status as traveller in the *Inferno*" (260). Another scholar, Harrison, adds that despite great intelligence, Ulysses lacks self-reflection, which would have helped him tame his sin (1050). The Poet is self-reflective in writing *The Divine Comedy*, which ultimately saves him.

While transgression of boundaries and use of intellect are common interpretations of Ulysses' sin, other critics take a more literal approach to deciphering the reason behind Ulysses' damnation. Ryan's interpretation is partially reminiscent of Trovato's in that he believes the bulk of Ulysses' sin lies in abandonment of his community (234). He notes that Dante the Pilgrim is different from Ulysses in that the Pilgrim becomes ready for "citizenship in the true community of the redeemed" (237-8). Bates and Rendall also argue against the idea that misuse of intellect is Ulysses' main sin – they say that Dante intended to portray the specific sin of deceitful speech in Ulysses (36). They and Ellis point to Ulysses' "little oration" as an example of the fraudulent counsel for which they believe he is damned. These critics are generally in the minority, since they disagree with the popular critical belief that Ulysses and Dante share the sin of transgression.

TRANSCENDING HUMAN BOUNDARIES WITH INTELLECTUAL PRIDE

While interpretations of Ulysses' main sin are varied and debatable, the interpretation that Dante resembles Ulysses in that they both transcend normal human boundaries on account of their intellectual pride is most convincing. The differences between the Pilgrim's journey and Ulysses' mad flight may not be sufficient evidence to prove that Dante believes he will be saved – the glaring differences between the Poet and the Pilgrim regarding intellectual pride need to be examined before one can accept that the Pilgrim's actions reflect the Poet's intent. Dante's Pilgrim character has never had a problem with pride – he has consistently acted grovelingly towards both Virgil and Beatrice. In the actual writing of *The Divine Comedy*, Dante is aware of the fact that he is surpassing limits of what mortal humans should and should not know about the afterlife, yet continues anyway. The Poet's self-consciousness in recognizing his intellectual pride helps to prevent Ulysses' fate – he shows the more ideal version of himself in his Pilgrim character, which represents Dante's confession of his sins and his desire to have his sin absolved.

The use of intellect to transgress human boundaries is made sinful largely by how it affects other people. Althusser's theory of interpellation explains the process by which people can be called to particular ideologies and practices. Althusser demonstrates his theory of interpellation in an example in which a person notices and waves to an old friend among many people on a street – the friend is being hailed, or interpellated, by the person waving (173). Being hailed entails becoming a subject who recognizes himself as an individual, and recognizes that he has a relationship with the person who hailed him (181). Subjects are called into particular ideologies involving certain views and assumptions, which are dependent on the way the subject is hailed, as well as the hailer. Those ideologies entail performing concrete rituals and practices (such as smiling and waving back in the above example) (175). Althusser's theory of interpellation can be used to compare and contrast Dante and Ulysses during their respective journeys.

Ulysses exposes his desire to transcend normal human limits as the main reason for his mad flight when he talks about what sparked his epic journey. While talking to Virgil, just before reiterating his "little oration" through which he wins the support of his crew, Ulysses says: "Then finally we reached the narrow neck / where Hercules put up his signal-pillars / to warn men not to go beyond that point" (*The Inferno*, XXVI.107-109). Hercules' warning sign hailed the Greek hero as a challenger of bounds. The ideology he was hailed to is one of proving oneself and attaining glory. The practices involved taking the warning as a challenge and surpassing Hercules' boundary. The fact that humans were not allowed in a certain spot made doing so more appealing. Ulysses knew he possessed the cunning to carry out the voyage, and his intellectual pride pushed him to defy his status as merely human by proving he could go "beyond" limits, therefore accomplishing what other humans cannot. The desire to transcend limits for the sake of intellectual pride is Ulysses' sin – his mad flight was spurred by a higher power's warning to not continue.

Dante confesses that he shares the same tendency towards intellectual pride as Ulysses through the Pilgrim's attraction to the Greek hero. After Virgil tells Dante that the tongue of fire is the Greek hero's soul, the Pilgrim has an overwhelming desire to approach it:

'If it is possible for them to speak
 from within those flames,' I said, 'master, I pray
 and repray you – let my prayer be like a thousand –
 that you do not forbid me to remain
 until the two-horned flame comes close to us;
 you see how I bend toward it with desire!' (*The Inferno*, XXVI.64-69)

Ulysses' soul hails Dante as a subject who can identify with him and who admires him and his journey – so much that he feels a sense of urgency in meeting the hero and begs his guide to indulge him. Dante is not repulsed by Ulysses' sin; quite the contrary, he admits his fascination through the Pilgrim's gravitation towards Ulysses. Dante is hailed to an ideology that values grandiose and making one's capabilities known. Donno argues that Virgil may have prevented direct contact between the two characters because of the Pilgrim's attraction to Ulysses: "he can scarcely address the hero without betraying something of his attitude toward him, thereby influencing the hero's response" (29). While Virgil's interception can be examined further, the idea that Dante would act so kindly towards Ulysses as to affect how the hero tells his story supports the claim that Dante wishes to show that Ulysses' sin appeals to him through the Pilgrim.

The fact that the souls in Ulysses' circle of hell are portrayed as fire is significant in deciphering what Dante sees in Ulysses that he identifies with and admires. Upon entering the eighth *bolgia*, but before singling out Ulysses, Dante compares the flames to fireflies "in the season when / the one who lights the world hides his face least" (*The Inferno*, XXVI.25-27). The fireflies could represent intellectuals, who shed light on the world by discovering the secrets of how the universe functions. The phrase "hides his face least" could be a reference to the sin of intellectual pride. One way the phrase could be read is as a reference to Ulysses' encounter with Polyphemus – his desire to have his name known outweighed his the fact that it would have been advantageous to keep his identity private. Dante writes that Virgil explained the contents of the flames to the Pilgrim after "he saw [the Pilgrim] so absorbed [in the flames]" (*The Inferno*, XXVI.46). The flames hail the Pilgrim as a subject who wishes to shed light on the world through his intellectual capabilities, and who wishes to achieve fame. Dante is called to an ideology of discovering unknown paths – the practical application of which could be the act of writing *The Divine Comedy*.

The description of the flames as tongues of fire further ties Dante's sin to Ulysses, because it emphasizes that both Dante and Ulysses' sins affect other people. Just before Ulysses begins speaking, Dante says, "then, while its tip was moving back and forth / as if it were a tongue itself that spoke / the flame took on a voice" (*The Inferno*, XXVI.88-90). Bates and Rendall cite the analogy of the flames to tongues as evidence that the sin being punished in Ulysses' circle is evil speech: "Surely it is by design that the spirits of the eighth *bolgia* are punished in tongues of flame because they sinned with their tongues" (35). While limiting Ulysses' sin to evil speech may be too restrictive to encompass the larger meaning of his sin, the tongue metaphor reveals that Ulysses' mad flight was sinful in part because he convinced others to transgress limits with him. Similarly, Dante may be struggling with the idea that spreading his knowledge by circulating *The Comedy*, even if intended to help others, could expand his transgression.

Though he admits their similarities, Dante attempts to differentiate himself from Ulysses by the ideologies to which they interpellate their followers. The entirety of *The Divine Comedy* hails a subject who is imperfect, but desires to be right with the Christian God. The opening tercet of *The Inferno* consists of Dante hailing his readers: "Midway along the journey of our life / I woke to find myself in a dark wood, / for I had wandered off from the straight path" (*The Inferno*, I.1-3). Though the remainder of *The Comedy* is written from the Pilgrim's perspective, the pronoun "our" in the first line indicates that readers are called identify with the Pilgrim. The subjects being hailed are clearly sinners – they had "wandered off from the straight path." However, the fact that they awoke to "find" themselves suggests that they are called to an ideology of being aware of their sins and desirous of changing them. The ideology calls for the practice of Christian activities, such as prayer and confession. People concerned with bettering his or her moral state by way of the Christian faith would be interpellated by Dante's poem, which shows Dante intent to save others.

Dante hails subjects again in the same canto as Ulysses' episode, Canto XXVI of *The Inferno*. He directly addresses the people of Florence in a passage in which he predicts that the city will someday fall (*The Inferno*, XXVI.7-9). The prophesy is brought about by the fact that the Pilgrim has seen several

Florentines among the thieves in hell: "I was ashamed to find among the thieves / five of your most eminent citizens, / a fact that does you very little honor" (*The Inferno*, XXVI.4-6). In the address, Dante hails Florentines as subjects who are flawed, but who are self-reflective enough to feel the shame of their sins. He calls them to an ideology of recognizing sin and paying the price for it. This ideology may not lead to the practice of changing one's ways, but certainly into the practice of confession and asking for forgiveness. By implying that he would be less ashamed of the people of Florence if they respected the boundaries set on them by God (in this case not stealing), Dante is interpellating self-aware subjects, even if those subjects are imperfect.

When Ulysses interpellates subjects in the same canto, he calls them into an ideology that is not self-reflective of one's wrongdoings. When relaying his "little oration" to Virgil, Ulysses recounts that he said: "'do not deny / yourself experience of what is beyond... / Consider what you came from: you are Greeks!'" (*The Inferno*, XXVI.115-6, 118). In this hail, Ulysses interpellates subjects who have pride in where they came from, which opposes Dante's hail in which he says he is "ashamed" of citizens of his city. Furthermore, the fact that Ulysses is urging his crew to disobey Hercules (an authority during the pre-Christian era) by traveling "beyond" is inconsistent with Dante's condemnation of the Florentines who disobeyed God and ended up in hell for thievery. This differentiation between the ideologies to which Dante and Ulysses hail their subjects shows contrasting intentions in the two figures' journeys. Despite the shared trespass of boundaries spurred by intellectual pride, Dante shows that his ultimate intent is geared towards serving a higher power, while Ulysses' intent was to surpass his higher power.

The fact that Ulysses' speech to his crew was intended to hail subjects who ascribe to an ideology of breaking boundaries could be the reason Virgil needs to prevent a direct exchange of words between Dante and the Greek hero. The fact that Virgil speaks to Ulysses in place of the Pilgrim (*The Inferno*, XXVI.73) has two implications. First, the fact that the Pilgrim needs to be physically blocked from it is his confession that could have been hailed by Ulysses' speech if he experienced it directly. However, the interception also shows his desire not be drawn in – Virgil, a heaven-ordained guide, prevents the Pilgrim from being interpellated by Ulysses. This could indicate that Dante believes he has not allowed himself to get sucked into the ideology of intellectual pursuits for the purpose of self-glorification. The Pilgrim represents the Poet's confession that he identifies with Ulysses, but he also represents the Poet's rejection of Ulysses' ideology of breaking boundaries for the sake of intellectual pride alone.

Dante's desire to respect the appropriate boundaries is explicitly stated by the Poet, in a moment that solidifies his self-awareness and regret for his sin. When Dante and Virgil are just entering the eighth *bolgia*, Dante says: "I grieve when I remember what I saw, / and more then ever I restrain my talent / lest it run a course that virtue has not set" (*The Inferno*, XXVI.20-2). The "grief" Dante feels upon remembering the sight of the flames could be read as guilt for identifying with the souls of the eighth *bolgia*. This reading is supported by the fact that Dante's "grief" is clearly not indicative that he dreads his time there – he feels fascinated by the flames and by Ulysses' flame in particular. The second two lines deal explicitly with intellectual pride and surpassing appropriate human boundaries – he is fearful that his "talent" in writing *The Divine Comedy* may go beyond what humans are meant to know. The significance of placing that admission just prior to meeting Ulysses further links the two characters' sins, showing that Dante consciously recognizes the association between Ulysses' flight and his writing of *The Comedy*.

While confessing his sin self-consciously as the Poet is a large part of why Dante believes he can be absolved of it, he must also prove a will to overcome his sin. Just after the previously mentioned lines, Dante the Poet says: "for if a lucky star or something better / has given me this good, I must not misuse it" (*The Inferno*, XXVI.23-4). If writing *The Divine Comedy* is itself a sin, since a mortal should not have the knowledge to tell other humans what they must do to fare well in the afterlife, then Dante will have no choice but to sin if he finishes and distributes his poem. However, if Dante believes that his "good" (his intellect) comes from above the human plane, even possibly from divinity ("a lucky star or something better"), then he may also believe there is a chance that he is authorized to write *The Comedy*. He indicates that he wishes to "not misuse" his talent. It could be the case that Dante feels uncertain about his authority to continue the poem – he wants to inform his fellow humans, but does not know whether doing so is a trespass of bounds.

The Pilgrim's journey through the planes of the afterlife is a metaphorical representation of Dante's writing of *The Divine Comedy* – a metaphor that shows his sin in a more directly comparable light to

Ulysses'. The Pilgrim and the Greek hero are the only two mortals to have gained exposure to the afterlife before their times. When Ulysses describes his mad flight, he said that after five moon cycles, "there appeared a mountain shape, darkened / by distance, that arose to endless heights. / I had never seen another mountain like it" (*The Inferno*, XXVI.133-5). The mountain he sees is commonly regarded as the Mountain of Purgatory. Since no one is meant to possess concrete knowledge of the afterlife until they have died, Ulysses' mad flight led to a literal trespass of mortal bounds spurred by pride in his intellectual capabilities. The Pilgrim, in his journey through planes of the afterlife, is linked to Ulysses in that they are the only two beings to have seen planes of the afterlife while still alive. Dante admits association with the sin, but shows through the fact that his Pilgrim is authorized by divinity that he desires to change his sin.

By portraying the Pilgrim's journey through the afterlife as led by a guide, Dante shows that he thinks his poem would have been made better by divine authority. While both the Pilgrim and Ulysses see at least a portion of the plane of the afterlife before their time, the Pilgrim's journey is authorized, while Ulysses' is not only self-pioneered and sparked by the fact that he specifically wished to transgress bounds. When Virgil is initially explaining the journey to Dante the Pilgrim, he says, "I think it best you follow me / for your own good, and I shall be your guide" (*The Inferno*, II.112-4). A guide prompts the journey to the unknown, and suggests that the journey will be beneficial. By contrast, while telling his tale to Virgil, Ulysses says: "With this brief exhortation I made my crew / so anxious for the way that lay ahead, / that then I hardly could have held them back" (*The Inferno*, XXVI.121-3). Ulysses granted himself the authority to go on his journey – which directly contradicts what spurs the Pilgrim's journey. Dante shows regret that writing *The Comedy* is similar to Ulysses' mad flight in that he cannot guarantee a higher power's approval; therefore, the guides represent Dante's wish to have the approval of divine authority.

Adam functions in *The Divine Comedy* a character that displays Dante's sin, but who does not end up damned. Adam explains his sin to Dante in Canto XXVI of *The Paradiso*: "Know now, my son, the tasting of the tree / was not itself the cause of such long exile, / but only the transgression of God's bounds" (*The Paradiso*, XXVI.115-7). Fido points out that, "As for transgression or infringement of a limit, one might consider the relationship between *i resguardi*, or markers, set by Hercules...and the admission of Adam" (255). Adam completed his sin with knowledge it was wrong, yet was still eventually absolved. Dante uses Adam's salvation as proof that one can be absolved of the sin. Adam's self-aware wisdom contrasts with Ulysses' lack of self-consciousness even in the afterlife. In Dante's awareness of his sin, he displays himself in a light that is more similar to Adam than to Ulysses.

The representation of the Pilgrim as a guided character signifies not just his desire to have divine approval, but also his acknowledgment of his inferiority compared to God. While at first glance the fact that the Pilgrim is guided seems to be cancelled out by the fact that Dante is writing the parts of the guides, further investigation reveals that the Pilgrim's guides do serve a function in absolving Dante of his sin. In the more perfect and redeemable version of himself – the Pilgrim – Dante writes that he needs help as opposed to writing that he possesses higher abilities. When entering the eighth *bolgia* the Pilgrim says, "my guide went first and pulled me up behind him" (*The Inferno*, XXVI.15). Putting his guide ahead of him and admitting his comparative lack of capability shows recognition that he is not the standard of competency. He demonstrates a respect for divine authority through his Pilgrim character's inferiority to his guides. Though Dante could not have literally been told what to write by divinity, recognizing his inferior status to authority figures through the humble Pilgrim shows a desire that he wishes he could have been.

Instead of just showing that the Pilgrim accepts being guided, Dante goes out of his way constantly to remind the reader that the Pilgrim is in a power-based relationship with his guides. Earlier in *The Inferno*, when Dante the Pilgrim is about to meet Farinata degli Uberti, he says to Virgil: "O my good guide, I do not hide / my heart; I'm trying not to talk too much, / as you have told me more than once to do" (*The Inferno*, X.19-21). Dante refers to Virgil as his "guide" here and throughout *The Inferno* and *The Purgatorio* likely because the word "guide" draws attention to each party in the relationship's relative position. Saying that he is trying to take Virgil's previous instructions into account when approaching the shade shows he is willing and eager to learn from his guide. While reading *The Comedy*, people may feel uncertain about why the Pilgrim acts in a seemingly overly humble way. Read from the perspective of absolving his sin, it makes sense that Dante represents himself in relationships in which he completely revokes his pride.

The fact that Dante is able to travel with a companion, let alone submit to that companion, is directly opposed to Ulysses' antisocial behavior towards Diomed. Though the two Greeks are damned to

stay in a single flame, they have not learned how to exist in community with one another. When Dante asks Virgil who is in the flame with the separated tip, Virgil responds, "Within, Ulysses and Diomed / are suffering in anger with each other, / just vengeance makes them march together now" (*The Inferno*, XXVI. 55-7). As opposed to deriving benefit from having a companion, companionship is used as a form of punishment for Ulysses. Dante juxtaposes the Pilgrim's ability to get along with his guides against Ulysses' inability to get along with the soul that shares his flame. While the Pilgrim's social behavior shows that Dante endorses society, Ulysses' distaste for sharing a flame is further evidence that, unlike the writing of *The Divine Comedy*, Ulysses did not embark on his mad flight for the intention of benefiting others.

Insight into Ulysses' anti-societal behavior is developed further through his reiteration of his speech to motivate his crew to join him – he proves that his only use for human relationships is to serve his own ambitions. The use of the word "brothers" at the beginning of Ulysses' oration (*The Inferno*, XXVI.112) contradicts with the rest of his speech, in which he urges his crew to experience what is "in the world they call unpeopled" (*The Inferno*, XXVI.117). The word "brothers" suggests feelings of community and is meant to interpellate the subjects as close friends with whom trust has been established. The fraternity suggested by Ulysses likely gave them a sense of security, which Ulysses knew would be necessary to get them to agree to the flight. Had he not needed a crew, they most likely would not have been invited at all. The sense of community is false since Ulysses' ultimate goal is to travel to a land away from where humans are permitted to go, into a land "unpeopled" where community does not exist. He treated his crew as a means to an end, rather than as a group of people whose lives he wished to enrich through the journey.

The anti-community aspect of Ulysses' flight contributes to his sin of trespassing bounds because it shows an assertion that no one else is needed – in other words, the root of his aversion to society is his intellectual pride. By contrast, in Dante's relationship with Beatrice in particular, he shows a willingness for humility. Once he gets to heaven, Dante relies upon Beatrice to console him after he is frightened by a loud shout: "Shocked, in amazement, like a little boy / who always runs back to the one in whom / he trusts most, so I turned to my guide" (*The Paradiso*, XXII.1-3). The Pilgrim's mother-son relationship with Beatrice, a love interest, solidifies that he is comfortable not being in the superior position in all his relationships, even where that would have been the traditional dynamic. Dante's acceptance of needing guidance serves as a revocation of his intellectual pride – he draws attention to the fact that he is not so prideful as to represent the Pilgrim as the most competent character in *The Comedy*. In the more perfect version of himself, Dante writes himself as a humble and even groveling character.

Dante exposes the differences between himself and Ulysses even further through the fact that Ulysses is not regretful of his self-indulgences. While explaining the tale of his mad flight to Virgil, he speaks of his "burning wish / to know the world and have experience / of all man's vices, of all human worth" (*The Inferno*, XXVI.97-99). The "burning wish" implies that his mad flight involved no higher purpose than to gratify his impulse to prove his abilities. Equating human vice with human worth is also marker of a resident of hell – he shows aspirations to indulge the animalistic side of human nature as opposed to vying for the qualities of virtue and deferral of enjoyment. Through the whole of his journey, the Pilgrim was on one large mission to overcome the indulgences of human nature. Calling his mad flight a "burning wish" allows Dante to differentiate himself from the Greek hero. Writing *The Divine Comedy* was for the purpose of helping others, while the Ulysses' flight was nothing more than self-indulgence.

Dante traces his progress in confessing his sin and proving his desire to be absolved throughout *The Divine Comedy* through the guards' reactions to the Pilgrim's journey. In Canto VIII of *The Inferno*, the Pilgrim is denied access the City of Dis by the "fiendish angels" (*The Inferno*, VIII.82) guarding the entrance: "Who is the one approaching? Who, without death, / dares walk into the kingdom of the dead? ... Our adversaries slammed the heavy gates / in my lord's face" (*The Inferno*, VIII.84-5, 115-6). The guards of the City of Dis hail the Pilgrim as a subject who recognizes himself as a trespasser. The ideology he is hailed to is one of recognizing one's transgressions but not trying to correct them. That ideology is realized in the specific action of being rejected from a land to which he does not rightly have access, and then finding an alternate route. Dante had not yet fully acknowledged his sin at this point of *The Comedy*. While he had acknowledged a need for a guide, he had not yet shown his confession and desire to "not misuse" his intellect that comes in Canto XXVI. For that reason, the transgression in Canto VIII of *The Inferno* is not yet pardoned – he is not yet adequately differentiated from Ulysses.

By the time he enters Purgatory, the Pilgrim has an easier time gaining approval of the guards, which shows that Dante is moving closer to being absolved of his sin by that point. Whereas entering the City of Dis required a breach of rules by finding an alternative route, the Pilgrim was granted access into Purgatory legally. When Virgil speaks with Cato about allowing them entry, Cato says "But if a heavenly lady, as you say, / moves and directs you, why your flattery? / Ask in her name, there is no need for more" (*The Purgatorio*, I.91-3). The guard of Purgatory is much more accepting of the Pilgrim's journey than the guards of hell; the angels guarding the City of Dis did not find divine authority to be sufficient in justifying the transgression. Dante is likely using Cato's acceptability of the Pilgrim's transgression as a reflection of his own progress in being absolved of his sin.

When Ulysses came to the same spot as Dante in *The Purgatorio* Canto I, he received a completely different response from the Pilgrim – not only was his flight halted, but his ship was sunk by the will of divinity. When Ulysses concludes the story of his mad flight when talking to Virgil, he comments that after seeing the Mountain of Purgatory, "Our celebrations soon turned to grief: / from the new land there rose a whirling wind / ... / the fourth blast raised the stern up high, and sent / the bow down deep, as pleased Another's will" (*The Inferno*, XXVI.136-7, 140-1). Here, Dante draws attention to a direct comparison between Dante's journey and the Pilgrims'. Before completely confessing his sin to the readers and indicating a desire for change, his transgression could never be forgiven, as evidenced through Ulysses' transgression of Hercules' bounds. Dante the Pilgrim's entrance to Purgatory was deemed more appropriate than Ulysses' since the Poet had confessed his sins prior to arriving. That comparison between the results of Ulysses' and Dante's arrivals at Purgatory solidifies that Dante sees his fate as differentiated from Ulysses; he believes that his confession and the revocation of his intellectual pride through his Pilgrim character was enough to grant him entrance to a place from which Ulysses is forbidden.

CONCLUSION

The ultimate fates of the Greek hero and Dante the Poet are dictated not necessarily by their actions, but by their intentions. The Poet uses the journey of the Pilgrim to expose his shortcomings and the personality of the Pilgrim to show the more ideal version of himself. That self-consciousness in acknowledging his sin and desiring to exist more perfectly are what ultimately saves him. In fact, it is what saves many of the souls who do not end up in hell, according to Dante. There is overlap between the sins of the *Inferno* and Purgatory (lust and pride, for example), which exposes that actions are not the only factor in, decided a soul's fate. The ultimate differentiation between Dante and Ulysses is that Dante's recognition of his sin and desire to revoke his intellectual pride allow his sin of transgression to be absolved.

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