

# DANTE'S PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN THE INFERNO

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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to analyze the role of women characters in Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy, specifically the first canticle of the epic, the Inferno. This qualitative research employed textual analysis in interpreting and analyzing how the different women characters were portrayed by Dante in his Inferno. This study also identified the images and symbols found in the Inferno. From the findings of this study, inputs for teaching literature and values education were drawn.

Based on the analysis, it was found out that most of Dante's women characters present in the Inferno, were portrayed as beautiful, powerful, brave and loyal. Electra, Penthesilea, Camilla, and Lavinia were placed in the contemplative Limbo, the abode for the noble people. It implied that loyalty and bravery were important for Dante. Some women characters like Helen, Dido, Semiramis, Francheska, and Cleopatra were placed in the lustful. For Dante, these women suffered in the second circle because they were driven by their passion for love, and lust according to Dante is always associated with love. Some were turned into monsters like Medusa and Erichtho, who were placed in the circle of the wrathful. Their rage and anger turned them into monsters.

Beatrice, the ultimate love of Dante, however was portrayed as the wonder and power of divine grace. She was described as the beauty that motivated and inspired Dante in his journey. She represented the ideal of beauty and grace that guided Dante through Paradise.

## Keywords

Divine Comedy, allegory, Inferno, Paradiso, women characters

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## I. Introduction

Dante's Divine Comedy is an allegorical epic. It is rich in images and symbols. Every line repletes with vivid description of people, places, things, and even beasts and monsters. Sayers commented that Dante's imagery can be discussed as a picture made out of words. She added that a great part of his poetic strength lies in his power of using words to make a visual picture, so that it is as though the things he describes are seen by the reader's eyes. The Divine Comedy especially the Inferno is a work of a truly gifted genius, hence considered as one of the world's greatest literary masterpieces. It is an incredible literary masterpiece that contributed much to how people conceptualize and value life, love, and human nature.

Dante's portrayal of women characters in his Inferno is the focus of this study. It is vital

It is said that the inferno is a difficult poem, therefore the knowledge that the students will get from the teachers depend on how teachers understand the poem, thus a broad comprehension of the poem is needed. Since some literature students find Dante's work difficult and boring, teachers can encourage their students to read Dante's masterpiece in an enjoyable and in a more comprehensive manner. How? The readings and analyses, especially on how Dante portrayed his women characters in the Inferno, will help the students find the poem readable and more interesting. The fact that teachers are able to encourage students to read and appreciate Dante's work is already a great fulfillment on their part.

on the part of the students particularly in the study of Dante's Inferno. As they go through

the analysis of the content of this study, they will be guided in their comprehension of the text, and develop eagerness to read Dante more. Hopefully, this will trigger their interest to read more classic literary pieces. Furthermore, this textual analysis will also guide students who are majoring in literature to do a similar study on another author. They will also know the images and symbols used by Dante, thus enhancing their appreciation of the text.

In an essay written by Stuber, she mentioned that the Divine Comedy is well-deserving of praise, however, she finds Dante's portrayal of women critically lacking. She stated that Dante refined and advanced literary devices such as metamorphosis and symbolism, but his depictions of women are not much more progressive than those of Ovid. Women are present in the three canticles – the Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso. Some are damned, others are saved; some are praised, others are scorned (Carey, 2007). He further stated that women are guilty of a variety of vices and possess many different virtues; they embody chastity, honesty, and charity – the characteristics Dante considered laudable – as well as lust, deception, and selfishness – the traits that Dante considered damnable (Carey, 2007).

It is important to read classical literature such as the Divine Comedy of Dante

because it has values that readers of today's generation should learn and apply. It is also imperative to critically read and examine how Dante presented his women characters especially that the idea of gender equality has greatly affected since works such as that of Dante Alighieri were written.

It is hoped that the analysis of the women characters in Dante's Inferno would give insights to teachers and literature students in the analysis of a literary work. In addition, this research was conducted so that teachers, students, and researchers be better acquainted with Dante and his Inferno. Those who would read Dante's work will benefit from the analyses and readings of this study.

## II. Statement of the Problem

This study is a textual analysis of the women characters in Dante Alighieri's Inferno. It aimed to look into how these women characters were portrayed by Dante in the first book of the Divine Comedy – the Inferno. Specifically, it evaluated and answered the following queries:

1. Who are the women characters found in the Inferno?

2. How appropriate are the punishment of the sinners in hell?
3. What implications for teaching literature and values education can be derived from this study?

## III. Scope and Limitation

The Divine Comedy of Dante has three parts: the Inferno (hell), the Purgatorio (purgatory), and the Paradiso (paradise). The

researcher is focused only on the first canticle of the poem. Excluded therefore are the last two books/canticles of the Divine Comedy, the Purgatorio and the Paradiso, since a textual analysis of the other two books, if included would be too broad. Besides, the researcher finds Inferno more interesting. In addition, of the three books, the Inferno is the most anthologized. It appears in all collections of literary pieces of the world. Furthermore, in literature classes,

the Inferno is often taught rather than the Purgatorio and the Paradiso. The fact that the researcher cannot read the language of the original text limits herself to a translation. And a translated text always loses something in the process. Nevertheless, the researcher chose the more authoritative translations of John Ciardi, Dorothy Sayers and Allen Mandelbaum to work on.

#### IV. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two literary theories; the feminist approach and the impressionistic approach. It looked into how the women characters in the Inferno are presented by Dante. It utilized a feminist approach since it analyzed the portrayal of women characters in the poem. It also used the impressionistic approach since the study presented the researcher's personal insights with the help of the literary approaches. A textual approach was also used to allow the readers into the world of the characters and the writers and give them the 'feel' of the characters through their verbal and non-verbal expressions (Rosales, 2012).

#### V. Discussion

The prison-house of sinners divides itself into an upper and lower part with its corresponding circles in accordance with the arrangement of sins patterned after Aristotelian divisions of reprehensible actions (Velasco, 1949). The Inferno is divided into two; the upper hell where the sins of incontinence and violence are found, and the nether hell where the sins of fraud and treachery are found.

The Inferno is a landmark in literary history as much for its allegorical and spiritual values as for its accessibility (Longfellow.chaoscafe.com). The rhyme scheme of the Inferno, aba,bcb, cdc, or terza

rima runs continuously from beginning to end of every canto. Dante gave to terza rima its artistic character. It is seen in the opening lines of the Inferno:

*Nel mezzo del cammin de nostra vita  
Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,  
Che' la diritta via era smarrita*

*Oh quanto a dir qual'era e' cosa dura  
Questa selva selvaggia ed aspea e forte  
Che nel pensier rinnova la paura!*

*When I had journeyed half of our life's way,  
I found myself within a shadowed forest,  
For I had lost the path that does not stray.*

*Ah, it is hard to speak of what it was,  
That savage forest, dense and difficult,  
Which even in recall renews my fear!*

In these lines, it not possible to break off the lines since there is no rhyme to forte, which has to be supplied twice in the lines that follow, where there is the rhyme, trovai, which links the whole to a further tercina, hence aba, bcb, cdc, etc.

The opening line of the poem speaks for Dante himself, the Florentine poet, who symbolizes the Christian sinner who journeyed through hell, purgatory, and paradise. The dark forest is a metaphor for everything that Dante thought was wrong in 1300 (Longfellow). It includes sin and other life's imperfections like political corruptions. His Inferno contains his hatred for people who had been "evil" in his time especially during his exile, as opposed to Paradiso.

#### Beatrice

*"It is I, Beatrice, who send you to him, I come from the blessed height for which I yearn. Love called me here." (Inf. 70:37)*

This refers to Beatrice, the lady whom Dante loved, the reason why he was able to surmount all the obstacles that he encountered in hell. In this poem, she allegorized to one of the “God-bearers” and was Dante’s inspiration. She was not one of the sinners in hell, rather she was placed by Dante in the Paradiso. The line ‘love called me here’ brings positive outlook in Dante’s journey.

Beatrice is mentioned as part of Dante’s survival in hell. She personally appears to guide Dante. The thought of her being around him pushes him to continue his journey. Beatrice is a symbol of the Divine grace. Being his love of his life, Beatrice is placed in paradise and not in hell.

Beatrice represents divine love which serves as Dante’s bridge to salvation. She is a powerful character and a woman of action who descends into hell to call upon Virgil for his help and to instruct him to lead the pilgrim on an otherworldly journey. Beatrice not only saves Dante from the Dark Wood of sin, but also inspires him to cross through the purifying flames of Mount Purgatory into the peaceful bliss of heaven (Dante’s Guides, Villanova.edu).

LIMBO – first circle in the Inferno, a place for virtuous pagans and those who died before they were baptized. The only punishment is isolation from the presence of God. They have that strong will and desire to see God in paradise, but being unbaptized, that desire will never be satisfied. Hence they could not proceed to Paradiso.

### **Electra**

*“Electra stood in a great company among whom I saw Hector and Aeneas.” (Inf. 121:53)*

Another woman character present in hell was the daughter of Atlas and Pleione in classical mythology. She was one of the virtuous souls that Dante met while traveling through Limbo. She was the founder of Troy and the ancestor of the Trojan race that earned her place in Limbo, a place for the virtuous pagans. Hector and Aeneas were her descendants that is why in the eyes of Dante, Electra was a noble Trojan, the very reason why she was placed among their ranks.

Though, not much was said about Electra’s bravery, but the fact that Hector and Aeneas were her descendants, Dante gave her a contemplative place in Limbo. It showed how Dante valued bravery and nobility.

### **Camilla**

*“I saw Camilla and Pentheselia, and on the other side, saw king Latinus who sat beside his daughter Lavinia.” (IV-124:37)*

In Roman mythology, she was a powerful and brave virgin warrior. It was Virgil who mentioned her that she was among the virtuous souls in Limbo. Camilla was also directly mentioned by Virgil in his Aeneid in which she fought against Aeneas.

In another story, it was mentioned that she remained faithful to Diana to the point that she repelled the idea of marriage. She died in her battle against the Trojans and the Etruscans. It was her bravery that made her stay in Limbo. In here, Dante also thought of her unwavering loyalty and nobility to Diana, that earned her place in this calm and serene place, the Limbo. Add to this the fact that she was mentioned by Virgil, Dante’s favorite poet.

### **Penthesilea**

*“I saw Camilla and the Queen Amazon across the field.” (Inf. 124-53)*

Penthesilea was an amazon queen who led her troops to Troy in support of King Priamos during the Trojan war. She fought bravely against the Greeks, however, she was slain by Achilles. When Achilles saw the beauty and youth of the fallen body, he fell in love with her and returned the dead body to be given a decent burial.

Virgil mentioned her in the Aeneid just like Camilla. Her heroic action placed her in the band of virtuous souls in Limbo. It could be her bravery and being a warrior leader that made Dante to put her in such a meditative place. Indeed, Dante had a special treatment for women who are brave and noble.

### Lavinia

*"I saw the Latian King seated there with his daughter Lavinia by his throne." (Inf. 125-53)*

Another woman figure in Roman mythology was the daughter of Latinus, king of Latium. She was married to Aeneas when he defeated the Etruscans. From their union was born the race of the Roman empire. Nothing was said about the bravery and nobility of Lavinia, but being Aeneas' wife could be the sole reason of her earning a place in Limbo. The researcher feels that her placement in the band of bravest warriors was not appropriate since she did not show any bravery at all.

**LUSTFUL** – the second circle in the Inferno intended for the sin of lust. In this circle, the sin according to Dante is taken with a great deal of compassion because according to him, lust is associated with love. Some of the sinners in this circle were women. The black wind symbolizes the howling darkness of helpless discomfort (Sayers, p.101). As the lovers were drifted by their passion, and

so they drifted forever. The strong winds symbolize the restlessness of people who are led by their desire for physical pleasures.

### Dido

*"That other spirit killed herself for love, and she betrayed the ashes of Sychaeus." (V-61-43)*

This line refers to the queen of Carthage Dido who fell in love with Aeneas. Dido was married to Sychaeus who was murdered by his brother Pygmalion. After her husband's death, she fled and founded a new city, Carthage. When Dido laid her eyes on Aeneas, she immediately fell in love with him and they lived together in Carthage. For a moment, Aeneas has forgotten his mission of looking for the destined city for him. He was happy with Dido, but he was reminded in his dream that his city was not Carthage. With this thought, Aeneas decided to leave Carthage and continue with his journey. When Dido saw Aeneas and his men leaving Carthage, she killed herself. Dido loved Aeneas too much that she gave him everything. She asked nothing for herself except for Aeneas' love.

Dante placed Dido in the circle of the lustful because of her adulterous relationship with Aeneas. Thought she committed suicide and Dante could have placed her in the seventh circle, the place of those who committed suicides, but Dido's reason of killing herself was because of love. Her passion for Aeneas earned her place in the lustful. It was her spurned love that ended her own life.

### Francesca da Ramini

*"Love lead us to one single death." (V- 103-105)*



Franchesca was punished in hell because of adultery. She was married to Paolo's brother, Giancotto. She was a beautiful girl who was kidnapped and forced to marry the cruel Giancotto Malatesta, Paolo's older brother. While living together, Franchesca and Paolo fell in love, but the husband discovered their love affair and killed the lovers.

This is one of the most moving and romantic scenes in the Inferno. Readers will be moved by the love story of Franchesca and Paolo for they are considered as innocent victims of a dreadful fate. They will be able to feel the pain and sorrow that the lovers had to go through just to be together. In this circle, they will be forever, free to love each other, however suffering is also forever for the two lovers. They are doomed to spend eternity in hell.

It was in this circle that Dante fainted after listening to the story of Franchesca and Paolo. It can be observed that Dante's heart will always be moved by stories of love, thus placing the sin of lust as less serious.

## Helen

*"See Helen, for whose sake so many years of evil had to pass; and see Paris... Tristan... and he pointed out to me more than a thousand shades departed from our life because of love." (V-64:43)*

She was the famous face that launched a thousand ships. Helen of Troy was placed by Dante in the circle of the lustful because of her adulterous relationship with Paris. Helen captivated all men, and as a result, was the immediate cause of the Trojan war. She was the wife of Menelaus, king of Sparta. She was abducted by Paris with the help of the goddess of love and beauty, Venus.

It was not known whether Helen consented her relationship with Paris or not, but Paris is a prince, a handsome young prince, compared to her old husband Menelaus. Because of the alluring qualities of Paris, Helen's heart must have been captivated. The fact that they were helped by the goddess of love and beauty, they must be passionately in love with each other. It is for this reason that Dante placed the lovers in this circle.

## Semiramis

*"This is Semiramis, of whom 'tis writ, that she succeeded Ninus her espous'd; and held the land, which now the Soldan rules."*

Semiramis grew into a young woman of extraordinary beauty. The governor of Syria named Onnes was struck by her beauty. Onnes succeeded in winning Semiramis' hand in marriage. After the wedding, Onnes took Semiramis to Nineveh. Later, Onnes was sent to besiege the city of Bacra, and asked Semiramis to join him. Not only did Semiramis travel to this place, she also had the idea of making the besieged city surrender. When the Assyrian king learned of this feat, he wanted to meet Semiramis. The king's name was Ninus, and he fell in love immediately after seeing Semiramis. Ninus ordered Onnes to trade his wife for one of Ninus' daughters. At first, Onnes was reluctant but when he received threats from the king, he committed suicide. The widowed Semiramis married king Ninus and became the queen of Assyria.

Semiramis' story was used by Dante in placing her in the second circle where sinners of lust reside. Though some stories would tell that she committed suicide, and would have earned her place in the seventh

circle, Dante had seen her relationships with different men and so placed her in the lustful.

### **Cleopatra**

*“The next in amorous fury slew herself, and to Sichaeus’ ashes broke her faith: then follows Cleopatra, lustful queen.”*

Cleopatra was the third child of Ptolemy. A charming and intelligent young girl was her father’s favorite child. While still young, Cleopatra’s younger siblings, Tryphaena and Berenice attempted to seize the throne from their father when he fled to Rome, which caused their death. After her father’s death, she was married to her brother Pharaoh Ptolemy as per Egyptian tradition. However, they became rivals of the throne and this rivalry quickly turned into a bloody war.

When she met Marc Anthony, her life was changed. They were blessed two children. When the disaster for the Egyptians came, Antony and Cleopatra fled to Egypt, and Antony fought his last battle. Receiving the fake news that Cleopatra had died, Antony committed suicide. Cleopatra buried Antony and then committed suicide. It was the adulterous and incestuous actions of Cleopatra that earned her place in the circle of the lustful instead of placing her in the circle of the suicides. For Dante, she was famous with her adulterous relationship with Marc Antony.

**GLUTTONS** – the third circle where sinners are moaning and crawling in a swamp called mire and has a terrible smell because of the cold rain coming from the sky along with feces. The constant heavy filthy rain symbolized the overindulgence in earthly pleasures. This is one of the most striking scenes in the Inferno. The sinners have no way to escape the filthy and foul-

smelling rain. They are forced to wallow in the muddy swamp. The third circle is guarded by a three-headed dog Cerberus. It can be observed that there is no woman character in this particular circle.

**AVARICIOUS AND PRODIGALS**- the fourth circle where sinners are made to move in opposite directions, endlessly pushing each other with big boulders. They used great weights to push with their chests which symbolized their selfish motives when they were still alive. The circle is guarded by Pluto, the Greek ruler of the underworld. Dante saw many clergymen including cardinals and popes in this circle. It can be seen that no woman character in this circle is present, an implication that Dante views women as not greedy.

**WRATHFUL AND SULLEN** – this is the fifth circle in hell where the wrathful are besmirched by the muddy river, and the sullen are immersed in it. Dante distinguishes two kinds of wrath. One is active and ferocious; it vents itself in sheer lust for inflicting pain and destruction on other people, on itself, on anything and everything it meets. The other is passive and sullen, the withdrawal into a black sulkiness which can find no joy in God or man or the universe (Sayers, p.114).

### **Medusa**

In Greek mythology, Medusa was a beast of horrifying powers. She had hair of venomous snakes and eyes with dreadful powers. She used to be a beautiful priestess but was turned into a horrible monster by Athena’s curse. The goddess Athena made her a monster because Medusa broke her oath of celibacy. Those who would gaze into her eyes would be instantly turned to stone.

In the poem, she is the image of ferocious anger that could inflict destruction to everyone who would come upon her. Dante placed her in this circle because of her characteristics.

By looking into the story of Medusa, it can be seen that Medusa only punished men and not women. Those who suffered from her wrath are men. Medusa may symbolize women empowerment. Her strength and powers were her characteristics reflective of what a woman should have, and that is finding your own inner power.

### **Erichtho**

In Roman literature, Erichtho was a legendary witch who appeared in several literary works. She was known for her horrifying appearance and her impious ways, the very reason why she was placed by Dante in the circle of the wrathful. The researcher feels however that Erichtho should be placed among the diviners, fortune-tellers, astrologers and magicians in the eighth circle, she being a sorceress.

**THE HERETICS** – the 6<sup>th</sup> infernal circle where heretics are entombed in burning graves and suffered great torments. In this circle were seen the tombs of the Epicureans. They believed in the Epicurean doctrine that denied the immortality of the individual soul (Sayers).

**VIOLENT AGAINST NEIGHBORS** – the seventh circle first ring is for the tyrants and murderers who are immersed in the river of boiling blood. In here, no woman character is found.

**VIOLENT AGAINST THEMSELVES** – the second ring in hell where the suicides are being punished. Another striking scene in

the infernal region. The suicides are transformed into strange trees, hounded by bitches. Although Dante assigned suicides to a deep place in hell, Dante in his journey cannot help but be suffocated by pity for them.

**VIOLENT AGAINST GOD** – the third ring and the first zone where the blasphemers are lying on fiery sand.

In the second zone are the sodomites who are punished by endlessly crossing the fiery sand beneath the rain of fire. Their perpetual fruitless running forms a parallel, on a lower level, to the aimless drifting of the lustful in Canto V (Sayers, p.165). Dante saw one of his mentors in this circle who was a well-known homosexual in Florence. Dante however showed great respect and honor for the sinners in this circle, probably due to the fact that the sinners in this circle are famous and respected in Florence during Dante's time.

The third zone is for those who are violent against nature and art (usurers). Each is seated beneath the rain of fire with a purse bearing his/her family's emblem around the neck. The image of the violent against nature and art is derived from nature. They set looking upon the ground, because they have sinned against that and against the labor that should have cultivated its resources (Sayers, p.178).

In the circle of the heretics, no women characters were found, some of the sinners here were men especially those who were famous during Dante's time in Florence.

**PANDERS AND SEDUCERS** – are found in the eighth circle and they are scourged by demons.

**THE FLATTERERS** are in the second pouch of circle eight. The sinners are immersed in excrement. The punishment for the flatterers is the most disgusting. Here,



they are plunged in the filth which they excreted upon the world, insincere compliments they spread to get what they want. Most of the sinners in this pouch are men because of their insincerity and flattery when still alive to get what they wanted.

COUNTERFEITERS OF OTHER PERSONS OR IMPERSONATORS – suffered in this circle by being deprived of their sanity.

### Myrrha

*“That is the ancient soul of the indecent Myrrha, she who loved her father past the limits of just love.” (XXX-97:279).*

Myrrha was the daughter of the king of Cyprus, who fell incestuously in love with her father, and impersonated another woman so as to sleep with him. When she was discovered, she fled execution and was changed into a myrrh tree by the gods.

She was placed in this circle by Dante because she disguised as another woman so that she could sleep with her father, a concrete example of impersonation. Her punishment is to lose her sanity which the researcher finds it appropriate because the sinner robs the identity of another person for selfish motives and so she loses her identity as well. However, since her sin was her passion for her father, it would be more appropriate if she was placed among the lustful in the second circle, but Dante emphasized that her having impersonated other woman which to him is a more serious crime.

**TRAITORS** are found in the 9<sup>th</sup> circle. Cocytus is the central pit or well where the last river of hell freezes. The giants in Greek mythology dwell in this place. In here, they

are the images of blind forces which remain in the soul (Sayers, 269).

The first round or Caina is where the traitors to kin are punished. They are immersed in ice, heads bent down, and their eyes and lips are frozen, shut with tears and miserable with cold. There are no female characters found in this round.

The second round or Antenora is the place for the traitors to their homeland. This section has no female character, the sinners here are noble Ghibellines who became traitors to their party. They are punished in the frozen lake, gripped by ice. Those who committed acts of treachery against their country are punished in this circle.

The third round or Ptolomea is for the traitors to guests where the sinners are punished by making them out from the ice, their eyes sealed by frozen tears. No women characters are found in circle nine.

## V. CONCLUSION

The female characters involved in Dante's *Inferno* are punished in the circle of the lustful, except for Beatrice who served as Dante's guide and guardian angel in his journey. In some circles in hell, women are also seen as monsters, having a negative depiction. In Dante's version of hell, he punishes women and are not given major roles, again, except for his only love Beatrice. Even the women that are discussed are portrayed in an unequal manner, reflecting the bias evident in the perceived societal norms of the 14<sup>th</sup> century ([www.cram.com](http://www.cram.com)).

In the *Inferno*, Dante mentions characters such as Beatrice, who was described as a beautiful lady whose eyes were “shining brighter than the morning star”(canto 2,

103). He also placed Electra, Camilla, Penthesilea, and Lavinia in Limbo, a place for the noble where his favorite writer Vigil is one of them. In the lustful were seen Dido, Franchesca da Rimini, Helen, Cleopatra and Semiramis. These women suffered great torment together with their lovers. To Dante, these women were driven by their passion for love, hence the punishment. Medusa and Erichtho also suffered in the circle of the wrathful. They were even transformed into monsters. Myrrha, the seducer, is in the seventh circle and suffered for impersonating another woman.

The women in Dante's *Inferno* are considered as powerful, brave, loyal, and beautiful as exemplified by the presence of female warriors like Electra and Penthesilea. However, some are taken as weak and even seducers such as Dido, Helen, Cleopatra, and Franchesca. Dante has portrayed them as powerful but weak when it comes to love, the very reason why they were placed in the circle of the lustful.

According to Gilbert, it is clear that no matter the story, Dante always made sure that the stories of these women were heard and conveyed them with utmost importance. He further added that this was revolutionary for Dante's time, because women often were excluded and put on the sidelines in literature, therefore, the inclusion of women was a vital step in the enhancement of literature at that time.

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Ingallinella said that in the *Divine Comedy*, Dante gave these women to his readers and to posterity, but what he often didn't do was give them their own voices. Many women in the *Comedy* receive only one line in the poem, and more often they are referred to as relatives of male speaking characters. She stated that there is still that type of marginalization among women. In the *Inferno*, it was Franchesca da Ramini who was given the chance to speak about their story of love.

Dante's placement of these women characters in the circles of hell is based on their stories. The researcher thinks that Dante is not fair in placing some of the women characters in hell, especially those who suffered in the second circle. Dante even made sure that his love, Beatrice will not be placed in hell, rather she was placed in paradise.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In teaching Dante's *Divine Comedy*, teachers should emphasize the values reflected in the epic.
2. Another study/research about women characters should be conducted, dwelling on the other two books of the *Divine Comedy* – the *Purgatorio* and the *Paradiso*.
3. A thorough analysis of these women characters be made.

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