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AP Literature and Composition

16 May 2017

Dive into Dante

Though I wasn’t the biggest fan of *Dante’s Inferno*, I did learn a myriad of things through his work. Rather than like his work, I came to appreciate it for the messages and impact on the English language it has had. Dante presented some interesting philosophical, religious, and moral views, as well as an interesting depiction of Hell. He made Hell into circles, funneling down to Satan. Each ring represented a different sin and a punishment that fit the wrongdoing, which is known as contrapasso. He also diversified the perspective of Hell by making Satan’s bottom half encased in ice, challenging the orthodox thought that Hell was consumed by fire. As we read through Dante, we also met some interesting characters that really existed and saw what Dante believed their fates to be. I made my baseball cards off a few of these characters, dividing them into the “Hellish” taxonomy (represented by the red cards) and the “Holy” taxonomy (represented by the purple cards).

One of my favorite cards from the “Hellish” category was Helen of Troy. Prior to this assignment, I didn’t know that Helen was supposedly the daughter of Zeus—a Greek God. This may explain why she had such power over people and was inherently beautiful. As our class started to read Dante, I was perplexed as to why Helen was in the lusty circle of Hell. I didn’t know that she cheated on her husband with the Prince of Troy, thus causing the Trojan war. Her impact on history was quite immense; Helen has multitudes of poems, stories, odes, songs, movies, etc. written about her. Now, she has a baseball card!

Though there are many Mary’s in the Bible, I decided to focus on the lesser known one: Mary Magdalene. Mary Magdalene was one of Jesus’ most devoted followers. All throughout the New Testament, there are references to the proximity of Mary to Jesus—she was always by his side! Even when Christ was being mocked, tortured, and crucified, Mary Magdalen never left the scene. In fact, she was the first one Jesus chose to appear to after His resurrection. Though she is not mentioned in *Dante’s Inferno*, she is an important character that I believe would be in Dante’s Paradiso.

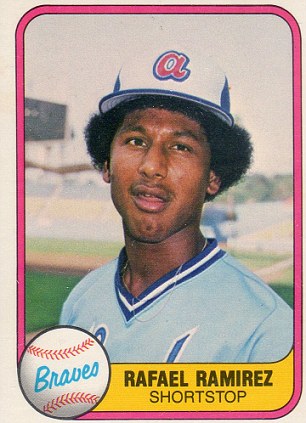
Found in the last ring of Hell is Lucifer, the fallen angel. I decided to put him on one of my baseball cards because he has such a paramount role in *Dante’s Inferno*. Lucifer was one of God’s most prestigious angels, but his pride and egotistical nature got the better of him. He believed he could defeat God and failed miserably. God cast him out of Heaven and Satan fell from Paradise. In Dante’s eyes, Satan is in the last circle of Hell, encased waist-high in ice, chewing on the three greatest sinners: Judas (betrayed Jesus), Brutus and Cassius (both traitors of Caesar). He is said to have three faces that are joined onto one head—this is a kind of perverted Holy Trinity. We don’t know if this is how it is in Hell nor do we know why Dante chose this specific punishment, but it was essential to put on a baseball card.

*Dante’s Inferno* allowed me to see a different perspective to the traditional view of Hell, as well as to ponder some philosophical, political, religious, and moral questions. I was also able to tangibly see symbolism in Dante’s text. He used tercets because the number “three” is a holy number, as well as having thirty-three Cantos, as it also represents a holy number. Though I didn’t particularly enjoy the work itself, I appreciated its messages and ideas. It will stick with me long after this class.

**Resources Used:**

When I created my baseball cards, I made the design on a regular Word document and used an image of a baseball card I found online to model my design after (see below):

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/102456960243024548/>



**Lucifer’s Picture:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qA7Ry65Vius>

Source: http://www.christianity.com/theology/theological-faq/how-did-lucifer-fall-and-become-satan-11557519.html

**Helen of Troy’s Picture:**

<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/features/manolo-blahnik-reveals-his-fantasy-of-designing-for-helen-of-troy-as-he-opens-his-second-london-shop-a6853296.html>

Source: https://www.britannica.com/topic/Helen-Greek-mythology

**Cerberus’ Picture:**

<http://forums.smitegame.com/showthread.php?137334-Cerberus-Guard-of-the-Underworld>

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cerberus

**Eve’s Picture:**

[http://www.keywordsuggests.com/SgxgZ\*f39tosQKdk5yUyFyNm2Fr6FR\*r1AB5Q85b7g0/](http://www.keywordsuggests.com/SgxgZ*f39tosQKdk5yUyFyNm2Fr6FR*r1AB5Q85b7g0/)

Source: http://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-stories/adam-and-eve-in-the-garden.html

**Adam’s Picture:**

<http://aminomail.com/page/anime/150943/six-religious-symbols-found-in-neon-genesis-evangelion>

Source: http://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-stories/adam-and-eve-in-the-garden.html

**Beatrice’s Picture:**

<http://aminoapps.com/page/ygo/477560/whats-behind-a-card-burning-abyss-part-2>

Source: http://www.florenceinferno.com/beatrice-portinari/

**Dante’s Picture:**

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311708950_Dante_Alighieri_evidence_for_sleep_disorder-related_cardiac_autonomic_dysfunctions>

Source: http://www.biography.com/people/dante-9265912

**Jesus’ Picture:**

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/87749892721272745/>

Source: http://www.biography.com/people/jesus-christ-9354382

**Virgin Mary’s Picture:**

<http://www.theworkofgod.org/OurLady.htm>

Source: https://www.gotquestions.org/virgin-Mary.html

**Mary Magdalene’s Picture:**

<https://www.pinterest.com/explore/mary-magdalene/>

Source: https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/all-women-bible/Mary-Magdalene