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Canto Illustration Rationale

In my illustration I depicted Canto IX. In this canto the heavenly messenger arrives and opens the gates to the city of Dis for Dante and Virgil. The messenger is the largest figure in the center of the drawing. To the right is the opened gate to the city of Dis. At the bottom right corner are the bowing figures of Dante and Virgil and at the bottom left are the mangled bodies of the furies and the people protecting the gate. For my composition, I made the messenger the biggest figure in the canto to depict how out of place and larger than life he is than the things happening in hell. Even though they are terrible, heaven's power is much larger and brighter. At the top left are the "glow of red mosques" that are "eternal flues to the eternal fire that rages . . . in Hell" (VIII:68-72). However, the figure is a brighter yellow than even the eternal fires, making the orange of the mosques seem duller in comparison. Also, all of the lines in the composition point to the messenger. The wall of the city, Dante and Virgil, and even the destroyed people in the landscape of hell all point towards the messenger, showing his power over hell. I used two different mediums in this drawing, conte crayons and markers. The conte crayons are a scratchier, darker material, which depicts the harsh landscape of hell. On the other hand, the markers are smooth and bright, which creates a large contrast from the background. There is also a difference in color. Everything in hell is either black or brown, whereas the heavenly messenger has many different bright colors on his clothes and wings.

My visual represents Canto IX by showing the heavenly messenger "wave open" the gates to the city (IX, 87). The heavenly messenger opens the doors when even Virgil is incapable

of doing so, indicating that even human reason is not enough sometimes. I covered the heavenly messenger in mosaics to represent a church. The heavenly spirit is a symbol for how even though you can get through some of life with human reasoning, at some point you need faith in god and need to go to church. Virgil and Dante are also kneeling and bowing, which is another change from the original canto. In the allegory of Dante's journey through hell representing everyman's journey through life, this scene shows that sometimes human reasoning must bow down to faith. Sometimes you need to trust in it blindly. To show this, I depicted Virgil and Dante literally bowing down to demonstrate deference to the messenger. Not only are Dante and Virgil showing deference, they are also blindly listening to his actions and words. The messenger arrived and cleared the obstacles that had pushed Dante into despair moments before. He gave the pair a new hope to "move towards the city, fearing nothing after his holy words" (IX, 101-102).

WORK CITED

Alighieri, Dante. *The Inferno*. Translated by John Ciardi, Signet Classic, 2001.