



## **Inferno Revealed: From Dante to Dan Brown**

*Deborah Parker, Mark Parker*

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Using Dan Brown's book as a jumping off point, *Inferno Revealed* will provide readers of Brown's *Inferno* with an engaging introduction to Dante and his world. Much like the books on Leonardo that followed the release of the *Da Vinci Code*, this book will provide readers with more information about the ever-intriguing Dante. Specifically, *Inferno Revealed* explores how Dante made himself the protagonist of *The Divine Comedy*, something no other epic poet has done, a move for which the ramifications have not yet been fully explored. The mysteries and puzzles that arise from Dante's choice to personalize the epic, along with his affinity for his local surroundings and how that affects his depiction of the places, Church, and politics in the poem are considered--along with what this reveals about Brown's own usage of the work.

The authors will focus on and analyze how Dan Brown has repurposed *Inferno* in his newest book--noting what he gets right and what errors are made when he does not. Of course, Dan Brown is not the first author to base his work on Dante. *The Comedy* has elicited many adaptations from major canonical writers such as Milton and Keats to popular adaptations like David Fincher's *Se7en* and Tim Burton's *Beetlejuice*-- all of which will be discussed in detail within *Inferno Revealed*.

## **Inferno Revealed: From Dante to Dan Brown Details**

Date : Published October 8th 2013 by St. Martin's Press

ISBN : 9781137279064

Author : Deborah Parker , Mark Parker

Format : Hardcover 256 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Literature



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# **From Reader Review Inferno Revealed: From Dante to Dan Brown for online ebook**

## **Christian Dupont says**

Among the many books about Dante and the Divine Comedy, there is none I can think of that attempts -- and accomplishes -- quite what Parker & Parker set out to do: to provide the public at large with both a way into Dante and his medieval world as well as way into his famous epic by means of adaptations of it from our modern day.

The first part of the book smartly draws upon the traditions of explicating the revolutionary autobiographical perspective of Dante's epic through his biography and offers highly accessible vignettes of key cantos of Inferno by drawing on the vast array of historical commentaries on the poem, yet in both cases without overwhelming the reader with erudition or arcane facts. Already helpful in itself as a guide for first-time or even returning readers of Inferno, it sets up the still more engaging and original second part, which is designed to subtly and effectively bring readers into a deeper awareness of the evolution of Western literary and cultural movements and show how manifestations of the Inferno in popular culture -- in particular Dan Brown's thriller, but also Matthew Pearl's Dante Club, and movies like Se7en and Hannibal, and more -- respond creatively and cleverly to the deeper significance of Dante's poetic vision.

Although professors Parker & Parker are both serious academics, they will help you understand and appreciate Dante without making you feel like you're back in a college English class.

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## **A.g. says**

I truly enjoyed Inferno Revealed for its clear and lively style, and for the wealth of information it provides to readers of both Dante's poem and Dan Brown's novel. The book is well structured, very accessible, and it sparked my interest in both these literary works. I liked the fact that the authors offered a detailed background of the Inferno as the great Italian poet envisioned it, thus helping us better understand the motivations behind Dante's choice to write about his own descent through the circles of Hell. The book also places Dan Brown's novel in a new light, by connecting its plot and characters to the author's source of inspiration. I highly recommend Inferno Revealed to anyone looking for an enjoyable, but also rich and rewarding reading experience – the kind of book that you don't want to put down.

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## **Jennifer-Eve Workman says**

I won this through Goodreads First Reads Giveaway.

We have all had to read, review and analyze The Divine Comedy and specifically Dante, while in college. The author, Deborah Parker, did an excellent job at keeping my attention and making this an absolutely fascinating book to read! There have been so many interpretations of Dante's work, even in the movies we watch today. This book really looks at the link between that and of Dan Brown's Inferno Revealed. After reading this, I think I will now go back and re-read Brown's work!

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### **Alan says**

Interesting non-academic analysis of Dante's epic poem, in the context of Dan Brown's recent novel. Longer review here: <http://eyesandearsblog.blogspot.com/2011/09/the-divine-comedy.html>...

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### **Maurice says**

I was amazed how many modern authors and film makers dip into Dante for their material. This book is not a descent into hell but rather a stairway to heaven! A joy to read!

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### **Steve Smits says**

If you are interested in The Divine Comedy this book will be worth the read. The authors (writing only on "Inferno") show linkages between Dante's masterpiece and popular novels, film and serious literature down the ages.

The first half of the book analyzes the methods used by Dante in constructing the epic story of his journey through hell. Despite this being a Christian work, Dante has made the poet Virgil, a classicist from pre-Christian times, the pilgrim's guide. Dante makes himself the protagonist of the work, an unprecedented device in the epic genre. The historical, political and moral themes that underlie the pilgrim's encounters in the various circles of hell are explained. The history and context of many of the contemporaneous figures encountered by the pilgrim are revealed. If you have tackled this master work you know that a reader's guide is essential and this book offers much in that regard.

The second half shows how Dante's work influenced writers in the ages that followed. Milton's "Paradise Lost" has many connections derived from Dante. The authors show how the Romantic poets took from Dante. There is an interesting discussion of how modernist poets like Eliot and Pound draw heavily from The Divine Comedy.

Popular works, both film and novels, also have been shaped by the Inferno. The films "Beetlejuice", "Se7en", and "Hannibal" incorporate Dante themes into their plots. Matthew Poe's "The Dante Club" used the punishments of hell visited on its characters in an engaging mystery/thriller set in the late 19th century. The book concludes with a close analysis of Dan Brown's "Inferno" in his use of Dante to unfold the action in this best-selling novel. If one's taste runs to thrillers, this potboiler can be enhanced by awareness of the characters, themes and actions of the masterpiece that precedes it by hundreds of years.

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### **Haven Gordon says**

I won this from a goodreads giveaway and I absolutely loved it. I'm a religious studies student and this book is exactly the kind of novel that I thoroughly enjoy!

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### **Sgt Roman Hunter says**

I HEARD THIS WAS A GOODREAD AND I REALLY LIKE TO FIND OUT IF IT'S TRUE, IT SAYS LIKE DANTE'S INFERNO. I HAVE READ 2 GOOD VERSIONS OF THE DIVINE COMEDY,,, LET ME TELL YOU, IT WASN'T COMEDIC IN ANY WAY. WHEN I READ A BOOK, IT'S LIKE A MOVIE IN MY MIND, I VISUALIZE IT. DANTE'S INFERNO GAVE ME NIGHTMARES AND NIGHT TERRORS FOR MONTHS. PICTURE YOURSELF VISITING 9 LEVELS TO HELL. I LIVED IT, I SMELLED IT, I FELT IT. {TRUE STORY} I HAVE A JEWISH FRIEND THAT WISHES HE SEE WHAT I SEE. I TOLD HIM, OI, I DEAL WITH IT,,, BUT HE WOULD SHITE HIS TROUSERS.

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### **Jon says**

A pretty good introduction to Dante's *Inferno* and its influences, for people who have read Dan Brown and would like to know a little more about his many allusions to Dante's work. There's not a lot here about Dante that can't be found in many other places, but what there is seems to be accurate, well selected, and readable. The most interesting section for me was a brief survey of Dante's influence on the modernists--specifically T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. The authors do not over-praise Dan Brown, but they do give him the respect he's due--that his books should be read on their own terms and not be criticized for failing to deliver what they never had any intention of delivering. They do quote without comment something that Brown uses as an epigraph: "The darkest places in hell are reserved for those who maintain their neutrality in times of moral crisis." This irritating quote is actually from JFK misremembering Dante. In the *Inferno* the "neutrals" actually get off pretty lightly at the very top of hell, not at the bottom where we find the ones who are explicitly the worst of all--the treacherous betrayers--the people who will throw their friends under the bus without a second thought.

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### **Alison says**

Wonderful introduction to Dante's masterpiece and a lucid reflection on what makes a classic--why certain books speak to readers across time and space. I haven't read the *Inferno* since my freshman year at Pomona. Now I want to read it again--this time with *Inferno Revealed* as my Virgil.

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### **Molly says**

Having studied Italian literature and Dante's Divine Comedy for so many years as an undergraduate and graduate student, I can honestly say that I believe Deborah and Mark Parker have made a very important contribution to Dante studies from a fresh perspective with this book.

When I say Dante Studies I'm not referring exclusively to the academic world, but to everyone who has read any of Dante Alighieri's writings or those who have always thought about doing so one day. There are a lot of people out there who still have the Divine Comedy on their "to-read one day" list, or who want to take a course to study it in depth, as well as those who have it on their "to re-read" lists that linger over us with

temptation until we find the time. *Inferno Revealed* engages lovers of literature, art and history, and it's not just for Dan Brown's readers. You don't even need to be a reader of Dan Brown's books to love this book. This is a book primarily for those who love Dante and who want to read more about his world, the world that fascinated Dan Brown and lead him to write his own *Inferno*.

Because the first five chapters are entirely based on Dante's life and times including what 13th and 14th century Florence was like, his contemporaries, the scandals, politics and role of the papacy as well as war and corruption, it leads the reader into the fascinating real world of Dante's times. Reading these chapters made me realize all over again why I fell in love with the study of Italian literature and how reading the *Divine Comedy* and the study of this historical period must have influenced a thriller genre writer like Dan Brown.

I often lead historical walks in Florence on Dante where we discuss the *Divine Comedy* and other writings of his and his contemporaries amid the churches, squares, backstreets and alleyways, and I now highly recommend *Inferno Revealed* among the list of recommended readings for travelers to Florence who want to read more about Dante in a way that is accessible, but also written by scholars of literature who know how to present this complex material in an engaging and concise way.

For visits that I lead inside Florence's Palazzo Vecchio for students of Film Studies on a local university study abroad program I have found the later chapters on the legacy of Dante's *Inferno* and its popular adaptations in film and contemporary art extremely useful and inspiring for the students when studying this magnificent monument of the city. They read Thomas Harris' *Hannibal* and watch the movie with its scenes in Palazzo Vecchio and discuss the book's references to Dante and the tragic 1478 "Pazzi Conspiracy." Now, however, following its popularity and its setting inside Palazzo Vecchio – and knowing there will be an upcoming film - Dan Brown's *Inferno* has made its way onto the course reading list.

Thank you, Professors Deborah and Mark Parker, for this invaluable contribution and for creating a bridge between the vast world of academic scholarship on Dante and the equally vast world of readers out there with their "to-read one day," "to study," or "to re-read" lists - and even for those of us who still scribble favorite passages by Dante now and then by hand on pieces of paper whether they are found wrinkled up in our wallets or carefully written out in our journals.

I hope to see something similar on Purgatory and Paradise one day soon. The world of Dante is eternal.

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### **Jason says**

Beyond being very useful for the modern-day fan of Dante, this book is very pleasant to read. I will recommend it to all of those who are curious about Dante, whether they have read Dan Brown or not.

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