

University of Iceland
School of Humanities
Department of English

Good and evil

Two sides to an ethical dilemma

B.A.-Essay

Robert Louis Pells

Kt.: 240556-2279

Supervisor: Gregory Alan Phipps

May 2020

Abstract

In this essay, I examine the literary works of Dante's *Inferno* and Mark Cain's *Circles in Hell* series, focusing on the values of good and evil and the way in which society has tolerated these two dichotomies. The essay also demonstrates the way punishments are used in these two works in order to show how tolerance influences different aspects of life. I also show how these values have changed through the years and how literature can be used to reflect upon the nature of change. Moreover, I examine the relationship between contemporary society and Christian theology. I show how the centre of power has shifted from the latter to the former as the culture has changed with respect to ethical choices. We also see how the protagonists deal with dilemmas in different ways according to the rules of the society in which they live.

In this essay, I compare two literary works, separated by time. However, there is more to this separation than time. There is also the notion of style, namely that Dante chose to write a poem which is an allegory, while *Circles in Hell* is a satire. *Circles in Hell* is also a commentary on our contemporary society, a society in which religion is no longer at its centre. The focus in this paper is *Inferno* and not the other parts of *The Divine Comedy*, meaning the thesis explores depictions of Hell. However, interestingly, Hell seems to be a more tolerant realm than we might expect. It is because these are literary works and not oral that they are representative of their time and can be used as a resource, unlike the oral tradition which morphs with time.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Good and Evil	1
Good and evil in Dante's era (Inferno)	2
Good and evil in contemporary times (e.g. Circles in Hell)	3
Good and evil, comparison	5
Tolerance	8
Tolerance in Dante's era	8
Tolerance in contemporary times	10
Tolerance, comparison	11
Punishment	12
Punishment in Dante's era	13
Punishment in contemporary times	14
Punishment, comparison	17
Discussion	18
Conclusion	21
Work Cited	23

Introduction

The nature of good and evil permeates the human condition and has done so since the dawn of civilisation. Literature is a written account of how people have recorded their view of the world, building upon a rich oral form of storytelling. However, when stories are committed to print, they become fixed, unlike the oral way which can change to reflect the nature of a dynamic world. Therefore, literature becomes a historical resource that provides future generations with a record of how change and values have occurred. Consequently, it follows that literary works from different historical points will show the difference and to what extent that change will have happened.

Closely related to good and evil is tolerance for it is in many ways based on our notion of what is good and what is evil. Each society has a set of rules built on this notion and the individual endures or tolerates what he or she may find wrong. In these rules we also have the foundation of the law of which we base punishments for crimes. In this thesis, I will show, using predominantly Dante's *Inferno* and Cain's *Circles in Hell*, how society's views on good and evil have changed. I will also examine and compare through the study of literature, how tolerance and punishment is portrayed in these works.

Good and Evil

In Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet*, the character Hamlet says "there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so" (2.2.). The creation theory would have us believe that God created the universe, and because of this, it would have been a perfect entity, reflecting the glory of God. However, if we accept the premise that God did indeed create the ideal universe, how is it possible for evil to have entered it? Furthermore, if everything is perfect, then how is it possible to perceive it so without the contrast of an imperfection? (Kahn 99). Sholom Kahn argues that the Bible is, for the western world, the best-known source of good and evil (107). Surely it must follow that good needs evil and vice versa. God would have needed to create a nemesis in the form of Satan. An interesting question is then raised as to the nature of Satan, whether he is a being or a conceptual being of unclear distinction. In Ray G. Funkhouser's paper, he states that the word Satan is Hebrew for oppose so that he

would be the opposite of God (861). Satan, who was the closest of all God's angels and his most beloved servant had to be the one to fulfil the role of being the antiChrist. No other being could carry the authority needed to become a creditable force. Good cannot exist without evil, and it is a sad understanding that we can imagine what the realm of Hell must be like and yet have very little in the way of imaginings of Heaven.

Further, this would suggest that people have a better understanding of what the realm of Hell is like rather than Heaven. Funkhouser explains evil as the sole purpose of destroying what is considered to be right in a modern society. In contrast, good consists of achieving positive life goals and helping others, regardless of culture and time (861). Literature is often all about the struggle of these most fundamental forces, good and evil. *Faust*, written by Goethe, shows the battle for the soul and the result when one makes pacts with the Devil (Khan 108). In this example, Goethe is drawing inspiration on the use of allegory (Verdicchio 34). Further, Goethe builds upon the theme of the afterlife similarly to that of Dante. Dante and Goethe have created a vision that Cain later uses in his work *Circles in Hell*. The various levels of Hell are modified to reflect the changing nature of what society understands to be good or evil.

The dichotomy of what is good or evil has more to do with circumstances and the choices made at the time, than any fixed concept. The proverb, the road to Hell is paved with good intentions, relates to the value of meaning to do good without following through with that meaning. The Bible attempts to establish a definition as to what good and evil are in the eyes of God. People innately think they know what good and evil are, but this has more to do with cultural conditional thinking than a systematic study.

Good and evil in Dante's era (Inferno)

In Dante's time, the middle ages, the two dominant forces in politics would have been the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire which both lay claim to being of divine origin. The opposite political parties were the Guelphs, who supported the Pope but thought he should only be in charge of the church, and the Ghibellines who thought the Pope should be in charge of both religious and secular matters. In Dante's time, Florence was primarily a Guelph city, and he was a member of the party (Roberts and Moustaki 2-3; Shipley 2).

Dante's vision of the afterlife is one taken from Christian theology. Dante's protagonist is himself, as he, along with his guide Virgil start upon a journey of discovery. The nature of sin at this point in history is one in which good and evil are the values of the medieval church. Dante starts this journey in a deep dark wood, an allegory of what comes to a man when he becomes spiritually lost. If one is to remain good, then one is required to adhere to the tenets of the Roman Catholic church. The evil-doer is a person that has rejected or transgressed the rules of God. A person can be of good character and yet still find the passage to paradise denied them if they do not follow the law of God.

However, it is critical to note who is the creator of these rules. Ostensibly it is said to be the word of God, as understood by his representatives on Earth, the Pope and the College of Cardinals. Therefore, one can deduce a value system of good and evil based upon a religious interpretation of scripture. The problem with interpretation is just that; it is what human culture believes it to be. The system of justice, when based on faith is flawed because it lacks an unbiased observation of the facts. Citizens of the medieval period would comprehend the world through the eyes of a powerful, all-seeing God. The notion of a rational system of logic and accountability is by its very nature one that does not have its basis in faith. Therefore, those guilty of breaking the laws of the church will be sent to Hell. Dante's version of Hell is somewhat akin to jail with various descending levels, with each level representing a more severe judgment. Cain also follows this grading system, a system that assigns a level commensurate with the crimes.

Good and evil in contemporary times (e.g. Circles in Hell)

Since the time of Renaissance, the differences between good and evil have become blurrier. This is because in modern times we do not regard the Bible as being a manual of how to live. Authors and poets have through the ages used good and evil, Heaven and Hell, but to modern people, they are just poetic words. It does not mean that evil and the Devil no longer exist, more that he has changed form and the twentieth-century evil is reflected in our social actions (Kahn 108).

Dante has been the inspiration for multiple writers of prose and poetry, such as Melville, Hawthorne, Eliot and Pound, who have taken his ideas over the centuries. The concepts of an eternal struggle between the opposing forces of good and evil and

Heaven and Hell, have found fertile ground within the art of storytelling, be it spoken or in written form. Hawthorne uses darkness and light to symbolise this and in *The Marble Farm*, he creates a scene of sinning lovers which reminds us of Paolo and Francesca. In *Young Goodman Brown* the hero goes into a dark forest to find witches celebrating evil, supervised by the Devil (Cambon 221). Glauco Cambon goes on to claim that T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound use Dante as their literary Bible, where Eliot's first poem, *Prufrock*, includes lines from Dante, spoken from Hell in disguise (224-5). Pound claims in an interview, that it is the contemporary reality to know about Hell and purgatory, with an only limited vision of paradise (Cambon 229).

In the Lutheran religion, God is often hidden and goodness a mystery. This is portrayed in Scandinavian fiction where authors claim that we do not understand the demonic drive of people. God is often referred to in titles of novels but the symbology of God is only there because people lack the ability to understand the nature of evil. Another explanation could be the reluctance of people to explain evil as the absence of good. Being a part of Lutheran theology, sin, death and evil are real concepts and do not depend on an opposite to exist as entities in their own right (Saarinen 134-135).

Mark Cain takes the structure of Hell as given by Dante and imposes a new set of rules which reflect the values of contemporary times. The protagonist is Steve Minion, a college lecturer in economics who has been gunned down by a disenchanted drug-fueled student. Steve Minion is ostensibly a good man, albeit one who is not a strict believer in Christianity, but he finds himself confined to Hell by the toss of a coin. Furthermore, we learn that a number of people have ended up in Hell through this dubious method, a method which is subsequently found to be flawed. This can be understood to mean that the boundaries between evil and good are at times vague. Mark Cain touches on this in the fourth book of the series, *The Reluctant Demon*. In this example, Steve Minion who is now a demon, is sent to Earth to complete the task of tempting a human being into selling his soul, a task he approaches with reluctance. Clearly Steve Minion has retained free will and finds himself questioning the nature of this trickery. The vagueness of this action comes from his mentor who being a prince of Hell, Beelzebub shows kindness towards Minion.

Following his promotion and subsequent conversion to the ranks of demons he should have lost his free will, alas this was not so. Minion has always been a bridge between worlds and for that matter good and evil. His role is to give Hell a human

perspective and to do this requires that he must retain his free will. Again there are multiple examples of this duality in the character makeup of Minion. His deep friendship with Orson Wells (Cain “A Cold Day in Hell”, ch.27). Also, his friendship with Charon is yet another example (Cain “The Reluctant Demon”; ch. 19) His actions towards others are often kind and sincere, being helpful to others and establishing friendships based upon affection and understanding (Cain “Hell’s super”; ch. 10).

Therefore, following his promotion to the demon corps, it follows that he would start to question the nature of his new job, the taking of souls. His mentor Beelzebub tells Minion that humans always overthink the nature of good and evil (Cain “The Reluctant Demon”; ch. 17). Mark Cain’s vision becomes a mirror to western values and as such, it takes a capitalist view of the afterlife. However, he does stay true to the main thread of the afterlife, a life set down by Dante. The categories of sin remain the same, but the setting has changed significantly to include the dynamic nature of good and evil. This is because both good and evil are constructs of humanity and not the other way around. Our perceptions of good and evil reflect our values and not some ethereal being. The power of the church has been replaced by the power of science, which will at some indeterminate point in the future be replaced by something else. This reinforces the notion that good and evil have a relative value reflecting the cultural values of its time. It is essential within any social grouping of creatures that rules have to be established and enforced. The values of good and evil have to be human constructs otherwise society cannot form or function. In *Circles in Hell*, the narrative shows a capitalistic system, whereas currently the author of this series has not given the reader a vision of his idea of Heaven.

Mark Cain further informs us that his vision of Hell is not so precise and ordered as Dante would have it. In this contemporary version created by Cain, sinners of all types are found on all levels (“A Cold Day in Hell”; ch. 1). This would seem to suggest that the nature of sin is complex and can be represented on all levels of Hell. For example, the thief might also suffer from the sin of gluttony.

Good and evil, comparison

The author Mark Cain has been careful to avoid making political judgements, and none are to be found within this series of novels (Cain “Personal interview”).

Though this is in stark contrast to Dante, who was a political thinker and activist. The passage into Heaven or Hell in *Circles in Hell* by Mark Cain is based upon whether one has led a good life. However, Dante sets the criteria as being one that considers whether the person believes in God and further has adhered to the law of God or has atoned for transgressions. This is the most significant difference between Dante and Cain in their literary works. In these contemporary times, it is difficult to determine who is the arbiter of good or bad. Western societies tend to be secular and this has posed problems for religious groups trying to formulate an authoritative power base. Governments are usually either rightwing or leftwing with each trying to claim they are the ones acting for the good and not the other. This is similar of course to Dante in his stance being a Guelph opposing the Ghibellines.

The literary works of *Inferno* and *Circles in Hell* present to the reader a vision of the afterlife as experienced by a person in Hell, one being a visitor and the other a denizen of Hell. They both share the perspective of having seen all of the various levels of Hell and have first hand accounts as to the nature of punishments meted out there. Further to this is that both protagonists are placed here to learn, in the case of Dante by a love of his life, Beatrice (Alighieri 3). The circumstances concerning Minion in the earlier books are vague and the reader is not given a chance to consider that the reason for being here is as a servant of God.

Cain's protagonist Steve Minion is unaware of his true status in the afterlife, spending most of his time as a denizen of Hell. The ending of book four in the series, *The Reluctant Demon* confirms that the protagonist uniquely retains his good and bad characteristics. Though granted passage into Heaven, he refuses to go there, like his partner Florence Nightingale. Only the good may pass through the pearly gates and that requires a purging of what evil remains in the righteous person. Minion understands this duality very well and recognises that he must have a dark element to his character in order to function ("The reluctant Demon; ch. 28).

Florence Nightingale is a character in Hell by choice as she wishes to help those in need, and she later has a sexual relationship with the protagonist Steve Minion. Her status is such that although she is working in Hell it is by her own choice and she is still a member of Heaven and not one to be consigned to the second level of Hell. Indeed, in *Circles in Hell*, she cannot be harmed by the denizens of Hell because of her status as being a saved soul and therefore being protected by God. For her, being in Hell is not a punishment, it is a vocation. Minion sees his association with

Flo as opening up possibilities that he thought he had lost and freedom from eternal damnation as a handy-man (Cain “Hell’s Super”; ch. 13). This is a foreshadowing of what is to come in later books where his relationship with Flo, in fact, helps change his afterlife and of those around him for the eternity of Hell is in fact not an eternity.

Mark Cain’s vision is satire blended with comedy but Dante has a strong connection to the Bible and conforms to the nature of Satan as being cast into the deepest pit of Hell, a frozen wasteland. Cain, on the other hand, has a reverse vision which conforms to a more contemporary view of Hell as being warm, albeit not intolerably so. The office of the CEO of Hell, complete with secretary, conforms to our view of the faceless offices of large corporations. In *Circles, in Hell*, many of the sins to be found in Dante’s *Inferno* are still represented, such as gluttony. In this example, Cain is explicit in his treatment of gluttons and condemns them to an eternity of taking turns eating each other. Dante, however, is more tolerant than Cain, in that he regarded hoarding and being a spendthrift as more heinous than the sin of gluttony.

The grading system introduced by Dante is the same in Cain’s version in that, the deeper one goes, the more extreme is the nature of evil. However, it is markedly different in that the head of Hell, Satan is seen as being the head of a large corporation with department heads being the princes of Hell. This vision as such can be seen as being capitalistic in nature, and thus the tolerance will be of a kind in keeping with this system. Here we have a Hell that has a reward system for denizens who prove adept at being evil, for they are offered a promotion to the rank of a demon with all of the benefits that come with it. Therefore, we have encouragement for those that excel in tolerating the nature of evil for they are going beyond tolerance to embracing evil.

In both Dante’s *Inferno* and Cain’s *Circles in Hell*, we have very little knowledge of Heaven, whereas we know a considerable amount about Hell. It can therefore be said that we know much more about evil than of good. Dante’s vision of the afterlife is almost entirely based upon the divine and in his works, the characters need to go by the rules of the Catholic church. Not only that, but a good person also needs to follow the law of God in order to be allowed into Heaven. In contemporary times this is different. Cain describes his demonic world as more capitalist and more human and it reflects contemporary values. Like Risto Saarinen says, sin, death and evil are real, but God is a mystery (134-135). Cain depicts Hell in a satirical manner

and the theme of the books is comedy, albeit not a divine one. Therefore the reader is supposed to see Hell through the tinted glasses of humour.

Tolerance

For a society to function requires the existence of rules, part of which reflects what will be acceptable and what will not be. Tolerance can be defined as the “willingness to ‘put up with’ those things that one rejects” (Clawson and Oxley 250). Adam B. Seligman agrees with this and claims that tolerance can be seen as an impossible virtue because it involves accepting or accommodating views that one does reject. But it can also be seen as not being a sufficient virtue because it is too feeble and insufficient (Seligman 12). Murat Inan claims that there are two types of tolerance, political and social (592). He also goes on to say that tolerance grows out of negativity since it is related to the negative judgement of the opposition and sometimes of ignorance or indifference (591). Jovan Babic says that without a question tolerance is clearly both relevant and essential in our time (225). He goes on to claim that the source must be in religion and that religious tolerance is the ultimate one (226). Also, that tolerance is to build up endurance for something we find wrong or unpleasant and not to rebel against it. It is not easy to be tolerant and often easier to substitute real tolerance with a pretend one (227).

However, the use of tolerance can be seen as duplicitous and untruthful, for are we not in the act of tolerating things that we find wrong or unpleasant, condoning them? Slavoj Žižek claims that this is only possible in western cultures where we have the advantage of freedom and, controversially, military interventions to fight intolerance (Karkov 293). In Žižek’s interview with Christopher Hanlon, he talks about his understanding of tolerance and how it can be seen as support for racism and exploitation (Hanlon 10). In this, one could say that one person’s patience could be seen as another’s intolerance, for example, when Steve contemplates Flo’s prejudice towards him becoming a demon. The degree to which tolerance survives is in knowing when it changes from being helpful to destructive. This knowledge comes, of course, from the influences of society and culture upon the individual and forms their character of which tolerance is but a trait. However, tolerance is dealt with differently in various literary works as can be seen later.

Tolerance in Dante's era

During the period of Dante, the people of the middle ages, the rival powers of the Holy Roman Empire and that of the Papacy, competed to be the dominant force. Dante would have favoured the Papacy, being a Guelph, and therefore his writings are those advocating the rule of the church of Rome. Tolerance in contemporary times is seen as being good and virtuous; however, this runs contrary to Dante's period of history. Upon passing through the gates of Hell itself, the protagonist and his guide Virgil hear the cries of the uncommitted and the angels that did not take a stand, which can be interpreted as being tolerant to opposing sides. In not taking sides, they were being selfish because to do so is to put one's own values ahead of others, finding themselves in the end not wanted by either realm of Heaven or Hell.

This is backed up by the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek who raises that interesting question in his article *Tolerance as an Ideological Category*. He asks why tolerance is the right way to deal with injustice and is it not condoning it? He points out that problems of injustice, oppression and exploitation are described as being problems of intolerance, which then could be solved with tolerance (1). This to most people would seem illogical. However, it raises the question of what tolerance really is and how it is to be defined.

Therefore, the grading system in Hell is such that the lower one descends into it, the more grievous the crime is said to be. It can be claimed that to a degree, this represents tolerance. Given that the upper level is reserved for carnal lust it will also contain those guilty of being adulterous or which some who can be judged as being more a victim than a perpetrator, having fallen under the power of love. Inasmuch as, the system of tolerance is one which has been taken from the time of its writing and reflects the author's values.

Dante's *Inferno* examines the tolerance mentioned earlier from two distinct points of view, the judge and the pilgrim. Progressively his tolerance decreases as he descends through the various levels of Hell. It is Dante the pilgrim that becomes less tolerant to the denizens of Hell as they go deeper into this pit. Clearly, his tolerance is declining because he is encountering more heinous sinners. Though it is interesting that Dante the writer chose to create his book this way. It is a way for Dante to create these two dichotomies of right and wrong. Dante the poet or judge is strict and selects those he wishes to confine to Hell and to what level of Hell they are placed. However,

Dante then creates a pilgrim, which we can consider to be a chance to cross-examine these judgements. Crimes of a religious nature are treated more severely than those directed against property or the person, a direct reversal of the contemporary notion of punishment. This attitude can be attributed to his belief in an all embracing relationship with religion, one that is not constrained to purely religious matters but includes all of life.

Tolerance in contemporary times

Mark Cain's *Circles in Hell* series examines tolerance differently to Dante's *Inferno*, reflecting a secular world in which there are few lines of guidance other than common law to follow. A society expects the individual to accept and tolerate those who see the world differently, providing that such differences adhere to a common value system, which has as one of its pillars tolerance. This tolerance is, of course, a product of the secular world in that the populace has learnt to be tolerant in order to coexist with different cultures in a global rather than a regional world.

In Cain's *Deal with the Devil* where Steve Minion is contemplating Satan's offer of becoming a demon, one of his main hesitations of doing so is related to his relationship with Florence Nightingale. He knows that she would never tolerate him if he switched sides (ch. 4) so other people's tolerance influences Steve Minion's decision making. In Cain's contemporary version of Hell, the act of becoming a demon is regarded as being something to be desired. Therefore, Minion recognises that in becoming a demon, he will lose self-will. However, for mysterious reasons, the hand of God, he does not lose his self-will and finds himself in a job which will continually challenge his good nature. Through his time in Hell he has had to endure numerous examples of intolerance, for that is one of the defining factors of Hell, his pragmatic nature though enables him to deal with these intolerances.

The literary works of Cain and Dante make use of personalities that would have been their contemporaries. It has been stated that Cain avoids political statements and that is true though he does not shy away from having some great fun with characters of recent history. There are some characters most notably Henry Ford and Tomas Edison that are judged unfavourably. In life and now in death they remain friends to the annoyance of the protagonist Steve Minion. Cain has placed these two into jobs in Hell which deny them both the ability to use their creativity and

inventiveness. Therefore, to that extent, he is following a similar tolerance as Dante. However, Cain always leaves open the door for them to improve their circumstances and during multiple times in the books they are used to help Steve Minion in solving problems. Here we have an example of tolerance in Cain's version of Hell, for Satan tolerates them moving out from their damnation albeit temporarily to do jobs for which they are most fitted.

Tolerance, comparison

Dante's *Inferno* makes scant reference to tolerance, reflecting the black and white nature of his world. For tolerance to exist requires the understanding that these two opposing forces are linked to an extent that judgments are rarely so stark a choice, for it was a simpler world. However, Mark Cain's *Circles in Hell* is more contemporary and embraces a more tolerant society, albeit tolerance born out of secularism. The world of Dante was a European centric one, and therefore subject to local influences, which would have been predominantly Christian. The contemporary world now deals with many competing powers and the exercise of tolerance is aimed at allowing these forces to coexist. Žižek argues that tolerance or rather intolerance is used rather than more explicit terms, such as racism. Tolerance, he suggests, is used to deal with problems that are difficult to solve (1). However, tolerance is more than semantics and in *Circles in Hell*, we have multiple examples of different types of tolerance. When the protagonist Steve Minion becomes a demon his friends tolerate his actions because they know he has to do these things and they understand the struggle he is dealing with. Further, there are examples in which his department head, Beelzebub, tolerates his attitude because he finds it refreshing to have someone with whom he can relate to.

The nature of good and evil has become blurrier in contemporary times and has moved away from the stark rules of the Papacy (Kahn 98). There is now a gradient between these two dichotomies, which makes judgement more subjective and reflective of contemporary times. An example of which would be the ten commandments, where there is no ambiguity at all, thou shalt not kill and so forth, whereas in modern times the door is left open to extenuating circumstances, for example, mental illness, or by government decree. It must be of course accepted that

such tolerance would have existed in Dante's time, but that is not the point. The point is that in modern times this tolerance is considerably higher.

Dante was a member of a political party and therefore it is not surprising that he touches upon political characteristics of the world he lived in. Therefore, it can be expected that we see both social and political aspects of tolerance in his work, whereas Cain deliberately avoids the political side. Inan considers if intolerance is incompatible with democracy and claims that it is so because in countries where intolerance is the norm, it is difficult to form democracy. He goes on to say that tolerance is only important for countries with democratic regimes (591).

Tolerance can therefore be seen as, on the one hand, local and divine in Dante's works, and on the other hand, global and secular in contemporary times. These two binaries reflect the times in which they were written. It has been stated earlier that tolerance grows out of negativity, ignorance and indifference, and is in fact a way to accept or put up with things and views that we reject. It has its source in religion but because it does, it could in Dante's time be strict and either black or white. It is in a way a selfish act where people use tolerance as an excuse to not have to take a stand. In modern times it sometimes is a way to deal with problems that are difficult to solve in Cain's case in using satire, he takes the frustrations of contemporary life and magnifies them into "hellish proportions" ("Circles in Hell: Books 1-4"), and makes people laugh in doing so.

Punishment

In the world of religion, evil can be seen as punishment for sin (Kahn 107). In the middle ages, the wheel of fortune was a well-known metaphor, provided by religion and the church. The role of the church was to explain or justify the hardship of people's lives by showing them this picture of punishment for their sins. This would then justify and ease the hardship of their punishments (Zare-Behtash 9). Public punishments and even executions have through the centuries drawn attention and even been mandatory to watch. An example of this can be seen in the last execution in Iceland which has since then resulted in books and films, one being *Enginn má undan líta* where the head of the community demands that no one can look away with these exact words. The spectacle of stoning, lynchings, hangings and the like have through the ages been both a form of entertainment but also a way for the

authorities to control their people (Kotch 157). In later years there have been requests of televising executions which show the demand for this kind of entertainment (Levi 144). These traditions tie in with literature in the way that literary figures, such as Dickens, may well have witnessed public executions themselves. However, he was careful not to overuse the appeal they had on the people (James 246).

The use of punishments in the time of Dante and contemporary times is, of course, to enforce ecclesiastical rules, which can be traded and therefore have a monetary value. To an extent, this is still the case in the contemporary church of Rome, wherein the confessional a price is extracted from the penitent by the priest. Therefore, when a system is more than a spiritual but also a political power, the trading of transgressions becomes significantly more serious. The church of Rome understood this and came down hard on those guilty of simony, people who have personally gained financially from their position in the church. Though, surely this is something that can be levelled at all of the members of the church. Dante, the poet places these people in the third ditch, level 8, which is very close to the deepest regions of Hell and the residence of the Devil himself. There is a strong case to be made that these rules as we see in Dante serve more to ensure the security of the church than the spiritual needs of the congregation. Dante did not like those guilty of simony, as Dante the pilgrim in his treatment of the people he finds guilty of this sin. On his journey through the levels of Hell Dante, the pilgrim has often shown pity for those who have fallen but not here, not for those who have abused their position. Mark Cain's *Circles in Hell*, though paints a picture in more generalistic terms. There are no overt lessons here, but there are subtle ones, which relate to how we as people treat others.

Punishment in Dante's era

Dante served for a short while as a magistrate for the region of Florence and due to a decision he made then, he was sent into perpetual exile (Chevigny 789) where he then wrote *The Divine Comedy*. In his *Inferno*, there are nine circles of Hell, the top one being designated to the least serious sins and crimes, and the bottom one, the one closest to Satan, the most serious (Roberts and Moustaki 15). This levelling system, coming from medieval theology and philosophy, can be seen as grades of punishment. The least serious are those of passion or weakness, for example, adultery

such as Paolo and Francesca. Violent criminals are below those and at the bottom crimes of betrayals, which are the most serious. Dante's *Inferno* is not to be seen as any form of rehabilitation, only to serve just deserts. The reason for crimes of betrayal being the most serious ones is both that they are done out of people's own choice and also that they do the most ethical damage in society. In Dante's time, sin was often the cause of crime (Chevigny 788-790).

Dante does not consider acts of violence to be a crime of evil because it would probably have been committed under the influence of insanity, while malice indicates that there is ill-will and intent behind the act. However, the most human crime, one who is clearly the act of free will, was a betrayal of trust. Although all crimes could be seen as some form of betrayal, many are not as calculated and evil as Dante would have considered them to be. To him, betrayal of trust was the ultimate crime. They are directed towards society in general and normally not only one single harmful act but a style of life those evil-doers choose (Chevigny 792). Dante does say in *Inferno* that the punishment has to fit the crime and it must be just (canto XIX) and that it comes from God (canto XXIX).

In Dante's *Inferno*, the punishment fits the sin or the opposite of that sin. The misers and the spendthrifts, who are the opposite and could not stand each other, are punished with continually throwing large stones, which represent hoarding of money or uncontrolled spending of money, at each other. The thieves have their hands cut off, adulterous lovers, who were controlled by their passions in the physical realm, were in Hell moved around by winds of passion (Roberts and Moustaki 7).

Punishment in contemporary times

The Christian obligation of Dante's time has diminished in modern times and values have shifted but a lot of them still exist in modern criminal law and therefore in modern literature (Chevigny 290). In modern-day, we have mostly left the medieval idea of theological ethics used by Dante (Chevigny 796).

In Cain's *Hell's Super*, which is the first book in his series *Circles in Hell*, Hell is described as only for people of Abrahamic tradition. There are no Hindus and no Buddhists, only Jews, Christians and Muslims and some virtuous pagans on level one and atheists and agnostics from these nations. Minion thinks that to Jews staying in Hell is more of a punishment than of a purification (ch. 10). There are numerous

ways of punishment in Hell and Satan does not discriminate, he punishes everyone. Minion being made Hell's Super is one of the main punishments in the series because Minion is an academic and does not like doing manual labour and further to this is that he is rather poor at it (ch. 4). He also does not like getting up early so a part of his punishment is to have to get up early (ch. 11). His assistant Orson, on the other hand, who is used to being in charge, is made Minion's assistant. This is Orson Wells, the famous film director whose punishment is to be forever the assistant and not the main man (ch. 8). People who want to live alone after decades of being married and not having had a good relationship with their spouse are made to continue living with that person. Minion, however, hates living alone, so of course, he lives alone (ch. 11). Virtual Bob, who in real life pioneered virtual reality, is punished virtually. It is an experiment where he is eternally locked inside a game console (ch. 6). This is yet another example of a system of punishments that is evolving to address the crime.

As stated in the second book, *A Cold Day in Hell*, punishment is not supposed to be easy and any act of kindness was never left unpunished. Saying sorry, helping someone or complimenting them, meant that Minion was showered with coconut cream pie. Satan loves throwing pies in the faces of the damned and since Minion is allergic to coconut, Satan picks coconut flavoured pies to throw at him. Orson's however, was lemon (ch. 7). He also likes to add little things like outside doors that normally open inwards, doing the opposite every now and then, changing the rules every now and then to get his "jolly out of it" (ch. 11). Mining sulphur by hand was another one. It would not have been impossible to use a locomotive to transport the sulphur out of the mine but that would have been too easy so it had to be done by hand (ch. 10).

Hell has many golf courses and in *A cold Day in Hell*, Cain explains how they are and how they are a part of eternal punishment at the lower levels as "you could spend a decade in the rough or a sand trap, or knock ball after ball into a water hazard the size of Lake Michigan" (ch. 22). Now, this may not seem to be much of a punishment, but the wait is long, even up to a century and it can be an agony, or in other words, it can be Hell. The reasons for this wait can be several. The course could be a thousand miles, a good player could be grouped up with very slow ones or beginners, but the biggest problem is that everybody has either a "wicked slice or hook, assuming they can get the ball in the air at all, and not just dribble it down the grass a dozen feet, or miss the ball entirely" (ch. 22). The poor damned souls who can

get their balls in the air “drive them so far to the left or right that they could end up in the rough of a fairway on another course entirely” (ch. 22). In addition to that, they have no golf carts, everybody must walk and carry their clubs themselves and usually not even in a bag but in their hands. However, if they do have a golf bag it is usually covered with barbed wire since Satan really seems to like barbed wire (ch. 22).

Glutton is another form of punishment, in fact, it can be seen in many forms. The waiting area of Luby’s cafeteria was enormous and some people there seem to have been waiting for centuries, eyes and bellies looking like hollow madness. Others not sitting, but held down at tables by demons, food constantly brought to them and demons using small shovels force-feeding them while the poor souls begged for them to stop (Cain “A Cold Day in Hell”; ch. 23). In book four, *The Reluctant Demon*, the gluttons are punished in a somewhat more severe fashion. In the town Glutton’s Gap, which looks like a mining town from the Wild West, the Donner Party Planners is run by demons and devils. Their slogan “Have your friends for dinner, and we’ll do the cooking” (ch. 19) has a sinister meaning as the Donner Party Planners do just that, cook their friends. A group of over two hundred people are gathered there, half of them are cooked until the meat falls off the bones and the other half eats. They then go to port-o-lets close by and excrete the remains of their eaten friends. The remains would reconstitute and the party would switch roles as the eaten would become the eaters and vice versa. This would then go on forever (ch. 19).

In book three, *Deal with the Devil*, Steve Minion needs to do his self-appraisal with, as per usual, several tricky questions. One of these questions is where he sees himself in 5 years time to which he answers “In Hell, doing pretty much what I’m doing right now.” (ch. 3). This answer causes him to get a score of adequate for his self-appraisal, which then brings him on the path of doing a deal with Satan, namely becoming a demon himself. It was an honour to be offered that opportunity, but also, it meant the end of eternal damnation and punishments. Although this is in some ways beneficial to him, for example, he would be the one dishing out punishments instead of receiving them, the cost of this, of course, was becoming a demon which not only meant some physical changes, one being growing horns on his head, but more importantly, losing his masculinity since demons are neither male or female. This, of course, would change his relationship with Flo, or even end it (ch. 4).

In the fifth, and in a way, the last book about Steve Minion’s travels through Hell, *I’m no Angel*, it turns out, however, that punishing the damned is not the only

reason for punishments. It has another purpose, namely that of amusing the devils who run Hell, but especially Satan who has a “warped sense of humour” (ch. 12). However Satan is keen not to lose sight of the main goal of Hell though, and punishment is its first priority (ch. 14).

Punishment, comparison

In contrast to Dante’s grading system, Cain uses the more contemporary system of our time where crimes of violence are the gravest and fraud being less grave (Chevigny 788). The difference in the social structure of medieval and contemporary times can be seen in comparing Dante’s and Cain’s versions of Hell. Dante’s views are based on ethical, social and political views of his time, as is that of contemporary authors, but the gravity of crimes has changed (Chevigny 790).

Mark Cain, in his literary work, retains the punishment system used by Dante in that the nature of punishment is directly connected to its penalty. If one has been a glutton, then one sentence would be an uncontrollable appetite. Another example is in Dante’s second circle of Hell when the reader encounters an example of a sinner that would conform to the values of a Christian power of the middle ages, namely adultery. In the contemporary world of *Circles in Hell* this is not a problem, indeed there would seem to be a rather lax attitude. Another literary work by Mark Twain, *The Eighth Letter*, continues the view that man continually misunderstands the nature of God. Twain in his narrative, takes the interpretation of the Bible by man and shows the contradictions that people draw from it and hence the stance of what is and what is not good or bad. Dante views the sin of adultery to warrant a place in Hell, but Twain would say that these rules do not apply in the animal kingdom and therefore would also not be applicable to man (Twain “Letters from Earth”; ch. Letter VIII).

Further, the perspective is significantly different in that Dante’s the pilgrim is a journey which starts at the upper level of Hell and then progresses downward with his guide Virgil, who is said to bring human reason and wisdom to the narrative (Roberts and Moustaki 11). The journey is linear, unlike Mark Cain’s version in which our protagonist is a handyman who has to be able to go anywhere in Hell to do his job. Therefore, his perspective will be different to that of a visitor. Dante is seeing this for the first time and until his time comes for his own journey to the afterlife

might result in it also being the last time he visits Hell. Steve Minion has been in Hell for over half a century and would, therefore, have a more jaundiced view of the place.

However, Dante shows some flexibility in how the treatment of evil is handled according to circumstances. For example, there are characters in level two (the first real level of Hell) that have committed suicide, Dido and Cleopatra, which should have been placed further down in Hell to the level reserved for suicide. However, at this time suicide was not considered to be a crime. This raises an interesting question as to whether Heaven and Hell are constructs from the physical realm, as they make use of the rules of what society considers to be right or wrong.

It has been stated that punishments were a form of public entertainment. In modern days the equivalent could be said to be reality TV. At first glance it looks like Cain's punishments are not really punishments, but annoying circumstances that the characters are put in. This is not always so, some of the punishments, such as the repeated dinner parties at Glutton's Gap, are gruesome and crude. Cain is here mirroring Dante's *Inferno* but applying his own interpretation of it. However, in the manner Cain writes, the reader frequently finds the punishments amusing and therefore, less serious.

Discussion

The world of Dante is one in which the rules are clear, and so are the resulting consequences of one's actions. However this rule book as such does not exist in our contemporary times and society is left having to build a value system devoid of an all-seeing and all-powerful God (Kahn 98). Mark Cain's version of Hell takes account of the contemporary world interpretation of ethics and more generalistic rules.

Indeed, the similarity is so substantial that the reader would have no difficulty in understanding the culture of this Hell. In a marked difference to Dante, Cain does not make political statements or judgements here, indeed he is careful to avoid doing so. Therefore, a politician finding themselves in Hell would do so for some other transgression than being a member of a political party. Dante, however, does make political statements and his work can be referenced as a political commentary of his period.

Therefore, one can deduce that good and evil are human constructs that any society would need to have in place for that culture to function. The problem is, of

course, that rules by their very nature are restrictive, and there will be times when flexibility will impose the need to bend if not break those rules. Twain attempts to show the foolishness of strict adherence to a Biblical moral codebook. In seeking out contradictions, he is bringing to the narrative his character traits and beliefs. Indeed that is what Dante, Cain and others have done and continue to do. However, the nature of good and evil is not a constant as we are inclined to believe. Literature over some time will seek to draw upon culture as it is at the time of writing. Authors make use of the afterlife as being the ultimate source of justice from which none can escape. Though, who gets to decide what that justice is, is of course, the source of real power, and that it can be traded just like any other commodity. The holding and exercising of power have changed from Dante to Cain, but only in so much as the group wielding that power has shifted.

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) was a Swedish scientist, nobleman and industrialist. Swedenborg also held deep Christian beliefs as well as an understanding of the physical world as seen during the Renaissance. He claims to have had a first-hand account of the nature of existence in the afterlife. Through a series of dreams, he records what the afterlife is like ("Swedenborg's Biography"). Dante and Cain's vision is fictional unlike Swedenborg who claims his account to be factual. Swedenborg advocates that he has been given a view of the afterlife, an existence that is similar to life on earth. The treatment of good and evil is significantly different in his vision to that of Dante and Cain. The struggle of good and evil continues in the afterlife with God continually trying to save souls from the grasp of Satan (456). Swedenborg though shares the view that the afterlife is one in which the inhabitants of Heaven are the believers, with the non-believers being led away to Hell. However, he does say that on the path to the point of separation there are no visible differences between the saved and unsaved. Indeed he goes on further to say that they are friendly towards each other (452).

Swedenborg considers the nature of good and evil to be forces that are measured in relation to an equilibrium. Further to this, he states that all those who are enlightened see that good comes from Heaven and evil from Hell. This is the reason why God gave man free will, for without this choice between these two opposite forces he cannot come to God (546). At the heart of this concept is the equilibrium of good and evil. Swedenborg states that "with the good the equilibrium is between good acting and evil reacting, but with evil the equilibrium is between evil acting and good

reacting. Spiritual equilibrium is between good and evil because the whole life of man has reference to good and evil, and the will is the receptacle” (459).

Swedenborg’s account of the afterlife differs significantly between Dante and Cain, in that he recalls the reality of the world beyond, albeit one that would not pass the scientific method test, it still purports to be true. William Rowlandson, states that Borges opinion on the nature of Dante’s vision of an afterlife is fictional because of its length and also its inspiration that of poetic faith (Rowlandson). W. B. Yates, further goes on to describe Swedenborg’s views of good and evil. He says “Swedenborg because he belongs to an eighteenth century not yet touched by the romantic revival feels horror amid rocky uninhabited places, and so believes that the evil are in such places while the good are amid smooth grass and garden walks and clear sunlight of Claude Lorraine” (Yates). The relative qualities of good and evil whether from a fictional or none fictional standpoint retain their use as to the shifting nature of how societies make ethical judgements. Tolerance can be said to be the oil upon which the machine of democracy relies for its smooth running. However, its use must be within clearly defined parameters, which govern and monitor its use. Dante’s vision of the afterlife is, of course, a religious society with beings sorted according to the rule of God. However, as to the nature of a God who is said to be all-wise, this negates any concept of examining a life as to whether it is good or evil. God would know and would certainly not need to spend time in consideration.

Therefore, God cannot exercise toleration. Though an argument can certainly be made for Satan to be able to do so. The central problem is that God is an embodiment of an idea or value that people are unable to comprehend, unlike Satan, who is all too easy to understand. Therefore, the nature of good and evil is not an equal one, if good comes from God and Evil from the Devil. Indeed the very nature of the words reflects this connection: Good is God with the letter o added, and the Devil is evil with the letter D added. Although Cain follows Dante’s forms of punishments, for the most part, Cain puts a contemporary twist on it. His punishments can often be seen as tedious and annoying, more like karma, rather than punishments, although in the long run, which for example in Steve Minion’s case is 60 years, they would be more of an annoyance. Cain uses golf as an example of punishment. It is usually a sport of companionship and social bonding and networking, but in *Circles in Hell*, it is nothing of the sort. Cain has created the right golf course from Hell, and the players are stuck there for eternity.

Cain's series *Circles in Hell* is satirical. His punishments bear the character of humour and irony, and they are there to amuse the reader. Satan enjoys practical jokes and has a mischievous sense of humour. The interplay between Satan and Minion allows for a more rounded characterisation. Minion even gets away with things which probably should not go unpunished like calling Flo darling (Cain "A Cold Day in Hell" ch. 15). Issac Newton stated that for each action there is an equal and opposite reaction. He was of course analysing the physical world, but the interplay between perceived opposites also embraces all forces in the universe. It therefore follows that good would require evil to exist. For indeed how would we even be able to understand good without also having an equal understanding as to what evil is. It is for humans to determine which force is beneficial in accordance with the circumstances and culture of the time, one person's freedom fighter is another person's terrorist.

Conclusion

Society is a collection of individuals functioning as a cohesive whole, or at the very least attempting to do so while acknowledging that value of the individual. It is an agreement to abide by a set of rules and the enforcement of those rules. Dante has his protagonist be a person who is transitioning Hell. Dante's solution to the problem of needing to create a character that can present to the reader all of the levels of Hell. Cain, on the other hand, deals with the same problem differently, in that his character is a maintenance worker who would need an all-access pass to do his job.

In the middle ages, the divine was prominent, whereas the secular might be seen more significant in contemporary times. With religion comes the Pope and the Bible and with the secular comes CEOs, capitalism, corporations and different values. Although the line between good and evil is sometimes vague in Cain's books, there are apparent opposites in both his work and Dante's. Most people would associate God and Heaven with what is good, and Satan and Hell with evil. They are positive and negative ends of the same line. On the one hand, achieving positive goals while on the other, destroying what is right. But interestingly, there seems to be more flexibility in Hell because there is room for more than evil there, whereas to be allowed into Heaven, you have to be all-good. Therefore, based upon this idea, then there is a case that Hell is more tolerant than Heaven. It has to be said though, that in all these literary works there are scant descriptions as to the nature of Heaven. Mark

Cain's literary work as yet does not venture into the realms of Heaven, and in comparing these two literary works, Dante's *Paradiso* was therefore not examined. In Cain's books, it is clear, though, that Minion cannot keep his evil side if he goes to Heaven, whereas he can keep his good side staying in Hell. Pound claimed that it is a part of our modern psyche to know about Hell and purgatory but only have limited vision of paradise and perhaps that is because it is difficult to imagine the perfect utopia.

Punishments in both books are in many ways similar although Cain avoids any political connections, whereas Dante's does not shy away from that. He often describes them graphically, and through the ages, punishments have drawn a lot of public attention. The two works are, however, very different in the way that Dante's *Inferno*, being a part of *The Divine Comedy*, is very much an allegory, whereas Cain's *Circles in Hell* is above all a satire. Some of Cain's punishments are hilarious, and in fact, Satan uses them not only as punishments but also for his amusement.

Using mainly *Inferno* and *Circles in Hell* I have shown the opposites regarding good and evil in Dante's and Cain's era and how the human perceptions as to that nature have changed, along with culture and civilisation. I have also shown that here are indications that Hell is more tolerant than Heaven but it has to be noted that we do not get a good description of Heaven in the works examined. However punishments are in many ways similar in the literature examined, although, in Cain's case, often blended with humour. Therefore it has to be noted that Dante's *Inferno* is an allegory whereas Cain's *Circles in Hell* is a satire. The literature has provided a first hand account of sociological values and in particular how it tolerates good and evil. It therefore follows that this change in attitude would be mirrored in our conceptual vision of the afterlife.

Work Cited

Alighieri, Dante. *The Divine Comedy: Hell or the Inferno*. Translated by The Rev. H. F. Cary, M.A. Kindle ed. 2011.

Babic, Jovan. "Toleration Vs. Doctrinal Evil in our Time." *The Journal of Ethics* 8.3 (2004): 225-50. ProQuest,
<https://search.proquest.com/docview/858948417/F2E83600794E4893PQ/1?accountid=135943>.

Cain, Mark. *A Cold Day in Hell (Circles in Hell - book 2)*. Kindle ed. Perdicion Press. 2015.

Cain, Mark. *Deal with the Devil (Circles in Hell - book 3)*. Kindle ed. Perdicion Press. 2015.

Cain, Mark. *Hell's Super (Circles in Hell - book 1)*. Kindle ed. Perdicion Press. 2014.

Cain, Mark. *I'm no Angel (Circles in Hell - book 5)*. Kindle ed. Perdicion Press. 2018.

Cain, Mark. *The Reluctant Demon (Circles in Hell - book 4)*. Kindle ed. Perdicion Press. 2018.

Cain, Mark. Personal interview/Facebook message. 3 November 2019.

Cambon, Glauco. "Dante's Presence in American Literature." *Dante Studies, with the Annual Report of the Dante Society*, no. 118, 2000, pp. 217–242. *JSTOR*,
www.jstor.org/stable/40166560.

Chevigny, Paul G. "From Betrayal to Violence: Dante's Inferno and the Social Construction of Crime." *Law & Social Inquiry*, vol. 26, no. 4, 2001, pp. 787–818. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/828974.

"Circles in Hell: Books 1-4". *Fantastic Fiction*.

<https://www.fantasticfiction.com/c/mark-cain/circles-in-hell-books-1-4.htm?fbclid=IwAR37QE4bNNGGKXUBZdPsljVJkAH1NvFlvqDhDg0scbjKv-IUi8Wil1NovdM>

- Clawson, Rosalee A. and Oxley, Zoe M. *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*. CQ Press. 2016.
- Funkhouser, G. Ray. "Cross-Cultural Similarities and Differences in Stereotypes of Good and Evil : A Pilot Study." *Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 131, no. 6, Dec. 1991, pp. 859–874. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1080/00224545.1991.9924673.
- Hanlon, Christopher. "Psychoanalysis and the Post-Political: An Interview with Slavoj Zizek." *New Literary History*, vol. 32, no. 1, 2001, pp. 1-21,217. *ProQuest*, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/221371322?accountid=135943>.
- İnan, Murat. "Two Dimensions of Interpersonal Tolerance: Their Prevalence and Etiology in World Civilizations." *Alternatif Politika*, vol. 11, no. 3, 2019, pp. 589-622. *ProQuest*, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/2337336283?accountid=135943>.
- James, Louis. "Stones of Law, Bricks of Shame: Narrating Imprisonment in the Victorian Age/ Witnesses to the Scaffold: English Literary Figures as Observers of Public Executions." *The Dickensian*, vol. 105, no. 479, 2009, pp. 246-248,196. *ProQuest*, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1009306990?accountid=135943>.
- Kahn, Sholom J. "The Problem of Evil in Literature." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 12, no. 1, 1953, pp. 98–110. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/426305.
- Kotch, Seth M. "Public Executions in Richmond, Virginia: A History, 1782-1907." *The Journal of Southern History*, vol. 80, no. 1, 2014, pp. 156-157. *ProQuest*, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1498061578?accountid=135943>.
- Karkov, Nikolay. "Balkan Ghosts, Western Specters, and the Politics of Location: The Case of Slavoj Zizek." *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society*, vol. 16, no. 3, 2011, pp. 291-298. *ProQuest*, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/888618884?accountid=135943>, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/pcs.2011.10>.
- Levi, Nicholas. "Veil of Secrecy: Public Executions, Limitations on Reporting Capital Punishment, and the Content-Based Nature of Private Execution Laws."

- Federal Communications Law Journal*, vol. 55, no. 1, 2002, pp. 131-152.
ProQuest, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/213214441?accountid=135943>.
- Roberts, James and Moustaki, Nikki. *On Dante's Divine Comedy: Inferno*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 2001.
- Rowlandson, William. "Borges's Reading of Dante and Swedenborg: Mysticism and the Real." *Variaciones Borges*. No. 32 (2011), pp. 59-85.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24881527>
- Saarinen, Risto. "The Surplus of Evil in Welfare Society: Contemporary Scandinavian Crime Fiction." *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, vol. 42, no. 2, Summer 2003, pp. 131–135. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1111/1540-6385.00150.
- Seligman, Adam B. "Tolerance, Liberalism and the Problem of Boundaries." *Society*, vol. 41, no. 2, Jan. 2004, p. 12. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1007/BF02712699
- Shakespeare, William. *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*.
<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/hamlet/full.html>
- ShIPLEY, Lucy. "Guelphs, Ghibellines and Etruscans: Archaeological Discoveries and Civic Identity in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Tuscany." *Bulletin of the History of Archaeology*, 23(1), p. Art. 4. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5334/bha.2314>
- Swedenborg, Emanuel. *Heaven and its Wonders and Hell: from things heard and seen*. American Swedenborg printing and publishing society, 1900.
- "Swedenborg's Biography". *Swedenborg Foundation*.
<https://swedenborg.com/emanuel-swedenborg/about-life/>
- Twain, Mark. *The Complete Works of Mark Twain*. Kindle ed. E-artnow. 2014.
- Zare-Behtash, Esmail, Hashemi T. Seyyed Morteza, and Farzane S. Samani. "An Introduction to the Medieval English: The Historical and Literary Context, Traces of Church and Philosophical Movements in the Literature." *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2017, pp. 143-151. *ProQuest*, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/2188086123?accountid=135943>, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.all.v.8n.1p.143>.

Žižek, Slavoj. "Tolerance as an Ideological category." *Lacan.com*.

<https://www.lacan.com/zizek-inquiry.html>

Verdicchio, M. Faust and Dante: knowledge and allegory. *Neohelicon* 39, 31–38

(2012). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11059-012-0135-z>

Yates, William B. "Swedenborg, Mediums and the Desolate Places." *Visions and*

Believes in the West of Ireland. <https://www.sacred->

[texts.com/neu/celt/vbwi/vbwi21.htm](https://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/celt/vbwi/vbwi21.htm)