

PAOLO AND FRANCESCA:
UNFULFILLED LOVE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY FRENCH ART

by
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ABSTRACT

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Pamela Rae Hall, Master of Arts, 1986

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During the nineteenth century, the Divine Comedy became an important source of inspiration for French artists. Chief among the episodes represented was Dante's account of Paolo and Francesca, illicit lovers condemned to the Inferno's Circle of the Lustful.

This paper examines specific portrayals of the Francesca tragedy and seeks to explain why the theme became especially favored by the French. The method is three fold: First, to trace the history of Dante's popularity in France; second, to analyze the thematic changes which occurred in depictions of Paolo and Francesca between 1800 and 1880; and finally, to consider the ways in which these works were influenced by contemporary philosophies and events.

An historical survey of the popularity of the Divine Comedy indicates that France's admiration for Dante was closely linked to the appearance of numerous French translations of his chef d'oeuvre. Artists responded to the public's growing appreciation of the epic by incorporating Dantesque themes into their repertoire of subjects: at least 111 works inspired by the Divine Comedy

were exhibited at the Salon during the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century -- of these 43 were based on Francesca's tale.

The Francesca episode enjoyed prominence throughout the century largely because it was relevant to the advancing political, social, religious and artistic mores of society. The motif could be adapted to address sentimentality or melancholy. It could provide a moralizing lesson on lascivious living or serve as a pretext for eroticism. The theme of unfulfilled love, popular throughout the century, was embodied in Paolo and Francesca as either chaste, lamentable, deplorable or impassioned.

To my Parents --
with much love and gratitude

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The nineteenth century has recently been credited for "re-discovering" Dante.¹ During these years the Italian's works, and above all his Divine Comedy, achieved renewed fame and exerted much influence in both literary and artistic spheres.² In France, contemporary translations of La Divine Comédie granted artists access to Dante's episodes which were quickly incorporated into their repertoire of subjects. The wealth of images derived from the epic which were exhibited at the Paris Salon between 1800 and 1880 illustrates the inspiration that the Divine Comedy provided for French artists.

The fact that Dante furnished nineteenth-century artists with numerous themes has been noted by many scholars.³ By 1855, Delécluze could claim that the poet had become an "idole de la nouvelle generation"⁴, and his contemporary, Artaud de Montor, wrote in Histoire du Dante Alighieri: "Aucun poète n'a donné des sujets de peinture et de sculpture avec plus d'abondance que Dante Alighieri, et ces deux arts lui doivent d'éclatants hommages."⁵

¹After extensive studies, two scholars come to this conclusion: Albert Counson, in Dante en France and Werner P. Friederich, in Dante's Fame Abroad, 1350-1850.

²Dante began writing the Divina Comedia around 1307. The Inferno was finished in 1314, and it is probable that Paradise was completed, as Boccaccio reports, in 1321, the year of the poet's death.

³For example, Rosenblum writes: "Dante's Inferno, . . . from the late eighteenth century on, had become a fertile source for those artists who wished to explore imaginative worlds of uncommon mystery and passion." Rosenblum, 19th-Century Art, p. 124.

However, why the Divine Comedy attained such significance and why specific cantos from the poem became especially favored has not been adequately explained.

In France throughout the nineteenth century, the most popular episode from the Comedia was Dante's account of the tragic love of Paolo Malatesta and Francesca di Rimini in the Inferno's Circle of the Lustful. Artists' preference for depicting this canto can be explained by the romantics' fascination with the theme of ill-fated lovers and the period's fondness for sentimentality and melancholy. The revival of Dante's works, particularly his Inferno, also aided in popularizing the tragedy.

Yet, because the popularity of the Francesca episode was not limited to the visual arts, other explanations for its fame may become evident through a consideration of concurrent social circumstances. Lamartine, a great admirer and enthusiastic scholar of Dante, penned:

Dante semble le poète de notre époque, car chaque époque adopte et rajeunit tout à tour quelqu'un de ces génies immortels qui sont toujours aussi des hommes de circonstance; elle s'y réfléchit elle-même, elle y retrouve sa propre image et trahit ainsi sa nature par ses prédilections.

⁴E. J. Delécluze, Louis David, son école et son temps, p. 397.

⁵Artaud de Montor, Histoire du Dante Alighieri, p. 504. Artaud first translated the Divine Comedy between 1811 and 1813. He was acquainted with Ingres when they both lived in Rome, and the artist gave him a cherished drawing of Paolo and Francesca, inscribed: "Ingres inv. et Del. à Monsieur Artaud. Secrétaire d'Ambassade. Roma. 1816." See Artaud, op. cit., p. 601.

He saw in the "culte" of Dante "une révélation de l'esprit de ce siècle".⁷

Can the Francesca tragedy be viewed as a "révélation" of nineteenth-century beliefs? Did its intrigue stem from a recognition of the relevance of Dante's words to contemporary issues? This paper examines the history of Dante's popularity in France; analyses the thematic changes evident in nineteenth-century depictions of Paolo and Francesca; and considers the way in which these works correspond to contemporary beliefs.

France's attention to Dante's works fluctuated over the centuries. The poet attained some fame prior to 1550 and much after 1800, but remained largely unappreciated by the generations from Ronsard to Voltaire.⁸ Christine de Pisan (1363-1431), and Marguerite de Navarre (1492-1549) were among the earliest admirers of Dante and may have been at least indirectly responsible for introducing Dante to the French.⁹ The greatest initial interest in Dante, however, was no doubt stimulated by Charles VIII's invasion of Italy in 1494; the poet's fame increased with subsequent expeditions under Louis XII and François I.

⁶ Lamartine, Discours de réception à l'Académie française, 1830.

⁷ Lamartine, Traducteurs et commentateurs du Dante, 1855.

The Turin Manuscript, the first French translation from Dante, (a terza rima of the Inferno) was composed shortly after these invasions. Four cantos from Paradise (with original illustrations) were translated into French by François Bergaigne for François I circa 1520. Near 1550 a translation of the entire Divine Comedy, the so-called Vienna Manuscript, was written in "rimes plates".¹⁰ The first printed translation of the Divine Comedy (in "rime française") was published by Grangier in 1596.¹¹ Colbert d'Estouteville's translation, La Divine Comédie of 1796, was the next published version to appear in France -- a full two centuries later.¹²

In general the French Renaissance, under the guidance of Le Pléiade (established 1549), perjoratively viewed Dante as medieval and his poetry exerted virtually no influence on this powerful group of aesthetes.¹³

⁸Friederich, op. cit., p. 10. Friederich also states that French literature was second only to English in evidencing a more or less continuous knowledge of Dante.

⁹Christine de Pisan was the daughter of an Italian physician and astrologer who came to France when she was a young girl. Marguerite de Navarre was the sister of François I. For their role, refer to ibid., pp. 58-59 and 67ff.

¹⁰None of these translations, however, were made available to the general public until they were compiled by Camille Morel and published in 1897, under the title Les Plus Anciens Traductions françaises de la Divine Comédie.

¹¹See the Catalogue Général des livres imprimés de la Bibliothèque Nationale, auteurs, vol. 35.

¹²This edition was prefaced by Bullart's Vie de Dante.

Similarly, the classicists -- Corneille, Pascal, Racine, Boileau and above all Voltaire -- exhibited a general disregard for Dante.¹⁴ Thus, for more than 200 years, from the age of du Belley until the age of Voltaire, Dante was considered a writer of "medieval allegory, of poetic inverrisimilitude, [and] of fantastic visions."¹⁵ And thus he remained, in relative obscurity, until his poetry caught the attention of pre-romantics all over Europe.

Studies on the life of Dante, published beginning in the late eighteenth century, aided in the popularization of his Comedia in France.¹⁶ Pierre Louis Giguen  contributed

¹³ France was not alone in its distaste for Dante. There was a more or less general indifference towards the poet during this time in Spain, England, and Germany as well. Sixteenth-century Europe chose rather to acclaim the works of Petrarch, Boccaccio, Ariosto, and Bembo. See Friederich, op. cit., p. 75.

¹⁴ Voltaire, in his Dictionnaire Philosophique of 1764 referred to the Divine Comedy as having been written "dans un go t bizarre." He was, however, as Friederich explains, instrumental in the popularization of Dante: "Though many of Voltaire's objections may seem unfair, indeed childish, he had the curiosity to investigate Dante at a time when nobody cared for him, and rather than hide his displeasure under a few banal statements, he had the courage to speak up frankly. And by the very acerbity of his opinions, he succeeded in calling everybody's attention to the long-forgotten Divine Comedy. . . . Voltaire was not only the enemy, but unwittingly, also the popularizer of Dante." Referer to ibid., p. 98.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 77.

¹⁶ In 1773, Michel Paul Gui de Chabanon published Vie du Dante (Paris: Chez Lacombe); Le Baron Paul Drouilhet de Sigalas, wrote Dante Alighieri et La Divine Com die in 1822 (Paris: Librairie de Fermin Didot Fr res); and Henri Dauphin's Vie de Dante. Analyse de La Divine Com die, was published in 1869 (Paris: A. Durand & P done Lauriel). Early in the nineteenth century, Boccaccio's Life of Dante was also translated into French.

much to introducing the study of Dante in French universities. In 1801, he presented lectures at the Athenée and at the Institut de Paris, and later published the Histoire Litteraire d'Italie in nine volumes. Gigueneé praised the Divine Comedy as

un monument qui frappe l'imagination par sa hardiesse, et l'étonne par sa grandeur. . . . Dans ses vers on voit agir et se mouvoir chaque personne, chaque objet qu'il a voulu peindre. L'énergie de ses expressions frappe et ravit; leur pathétique touche; quelquefois leur fraîcheur enchante; leur originalité donne à chaque instant le plaisir de la surprise. . . . Il posséda au plus haut degré toutes les qualités du poète, et partout où il est pur, ce qui est beaucup plus fréquent qu'on ne pense, il est resté le premier et fort au dessus de tous les autres.¹⁷

Dante gained recognition as his writings became increasingly accessible to the public. Initially the Comedia, and later other works (most predominantly Vita Nuova) were translated into French.¹⁸ From the time of Colbert d'Estouteville's 1796 translation until the last issue of Doré's illustrated version of the Inferno in 1891, no less than 52 translations of the Divine Comedy, or portions of it, were published.¹⁹ By the mid-thirties,

¹⁷Quoted in Friederich, *ibid.*, p. 118.

¹⁸E. J. Delécluze, in 1841, 1847, and 1853 proffered editions of his translation of Vita Nuova (La Nouvelle Vie), and between 1843 and 1856 Sébastien Rhéal de Cesena prepared six volumes for Les oeuvres complètes de Dante in which he aspired to translate the balance of Dante's minor works.

¹⁹For a complete listing, refer to the Catologue Général des livres imprimés de la Bibliothèque Nationale, auteurs, vol. 35.

Dante had become so popular that Jean-Jacques Ampère regretted that study of Dante had become "une fureur universelle":

C'est un vrai malheur pour les admirateurs sincères de Dante que la mode se soit emparée de ce grand poète. Il est cruel pour les vrais dévots de voir l'object de leur culte profané par un engouement²⁰ qui n'est souvent qu'une prétention.

Despite the public's eventual admiration for Dante, the Divine Comedy in its entirety received neither immediate nor enthusiastic acceptance in the nineteenth century. Initially, Dante was viewed solely as a poet of horror and revenge. This one-sided interpretation was perpetuated by the publication of translations of the Inferno, separate from Purgatory and Paradise. The first "modern" edition, by Moutonnet de Clairfons, appeared in 1776.²¹ Sixteen additional translations of the Inferno (some with numerous editions), were published between 1785 and 1893.²²

The public was both shocked and intrigued by Dante's horrifying account of Hell. Artists undoubtedly preferred to compose from this first book as its concrete character

²⁰J.-J. Ampère, "Le Voyage Dantesque", Revue des Deux Mondes, 1839.

²¹Moutonnet was a professor and translator of Greek. Artaud de Montor referred to his translation as "le meilleur dantologue du moment."

²²Antoine de Rivarol in 1783; in 1813ff editions by Artaud de Montor; an 1817 translation by Henri Terrasson; Brait Delamathe's translation of 1823; J. C. Tarver's 1824 edition, published in London for the French market; a translation of 1831 by Joseph-Antoine de Gourbillon; in

proved more visual than the metaphysical Paradise, and its impassioned incidents were more exciting than the relatively banal account of Dante's travel through Purgatory.

Throughout the century two cantos from the Inferno were favored: the legend of Ugolino, a political traitor who was left to starve with his sons in the tower of Pisa; and the tale of Paolo and Francesca, illicit lovers who perished by the sword of her jealous husband.²³ These two cantos became so renowned, in fact, that Antoni Deschamps believed that the Francesca and Ugolino tales were for those who did not read Dante, what Hamlet's "To be or not to be" was for those who did not read Shakespeare.²⁴

Of these two, the Francesca episode was especially admired. During the century the tragedy inspired three

1835 a translation by Charles Calemard de Lafayette; A. le Dreuille in 1837; in 1838 a translation by J.-A. Mongis; from 1852ff three editions by Louis Ratisbonne; and from 1861ff seven editions translated by Pier Angelo Fiorentino, with illustrations by Gustave Doré; in 1862 a translation by Victor de Perrodil; an 1867 translation by François Villain Lami; in 1879 one by E. Littré; a translation of 1884 by Amédée Jubert; and a 1893 translation by de Lamennais.

²³ Irène de Vasconcellos, in L'Inspiration Dantesque dans l'art romantique français, explains: "On ne cessera de parler de ces deux épisodes [Ugolino and Paolo and Francesca] et ce sont, pendant le XIXe siècle, ceux qui vont attirer le plus l'attention des artistes." p. 18.

²⁴ Friederich, op. cit., p. 174. Antoni Deschamps was a great Dante enthusiast, who travelled in Italy and in 1829 published a translation of 20 cantos from the Divine Comedy, including the fifth canto of the Inferno. He and his brother, Emile Deschamps, (who translated Shakespeare) were well-acquainted with the leading figures of the Romantic movement.

plays²⁵ and six operas.²⁶ Three fragmentary translations of the canto were published,²⁷ and at least forty-three works based on the theme were exhibited at the Paris Salon between 1800 and 1880.²⁸ [Appendix 1]

²⁵From Charles Wicks, The Parisian Stage, vol. 1 - 5: Françoise de Rimini, a tragedy in five acts, written in verse by Contant Berrier was presented at the Théâtre de la rue Louvois, beginning 15 March, 1827; Françoise de Rimini, a drama in five acts, written in verse by Gustave Drouineaux, opened at the Théâtre Française on the 28 June, 1830; and Françoise de Rimini a tragedy in three acts, written by Ostrowski was first presented at Versailles on 28 June, 1830 and then at Théâtre Beaumarchais beginning on July 14, 1846. Wicks adds that Silvio Pellico's tragedy, Francesca da Rimini, which was first presented in Milan in 1815, contributed to popularity of the tale in France when it was translated into French by Vannoni in 1848. Larousse claims, however, that the play was produced by Constant Berrier in 1827 and again by Gustave Drouineau in 1830 (Grand Dictionnaire, vol. 13, p. 1218), and Kolb claims that Pellico's play was immensely successful when it was presented in 1822 (Scheffer, p. 356). In 1850, Victor de Méri de la Canorgue published Françoise de Rimini, tragédie imitée de Silvio Pellico.

²⁶From Felix Clément, Histoire des Opéras: Françoise de Rimini, a one act operetta with music by de Douay opened 12 March 1879; Françoise da Rimini an "opéra sérieuse" in 4 acts was presented beginning 19 February, 1878, at Théâtre Royale Turin ["cet ouvrage a été bien accueilli"]; Françoise de Rimini an opéra, was performed at Linz, 17 February, 1840; Françoise di Rimini, an "opéra sérieuse" opened at Lucques on 2 September, 1829; Françoise di Rimini an operetta in one act, was performed at l'École Lyrique, beginning on 3 April 1866; Françoise de Rimini an opera in four acts with a pro- and epi-logue, opened at l'Opéra on 14 April, 1882.

²⁷From the Catalogue Général des livres imprimés de la Bibliothèque Nationale, auteurs, vol. 35, p. 767: In 1805 a translation by L. Bridel; in 1857 one by E. Hycinthe; and in 1860 a translation "déclamé par Mme. Adelaide Ristori" and translated by L. Ratisbonne.

²⁸According to the Salon Catalogues, 111 works were derived from the Inferno. Of these, 43 depicted Paolo and Francesca, and 18 represented Ugolino; eight images were

The episode was singled out as being the most sublime of the entire Comedy. Musset was very fond of the Francesca tragedy "[qui] n'a guère que 25 vers" and

rendent un homme immortel! Pourquoi? Parce que celui qui lit ces 25 vers, après 5 siècles, s'il a du coeur, tombe à terre et pleure, et qu'une larme est ce qu'il y a de plus vrai, de plus impérissable au monde. . . . [ces vers] ne sont pas les seuls beaux, il est vrai, . . . mais ils suffisaient à eux seuls pour préserver le poète du néant.²⁹

Of the whole Inferno, Lamartine admired the episode of Francesca and little else:

Quoi de plus incendiaire que ces deux amants seuls avec ce livre complice qui interprète malheureusement leur silence, que cet égarment qui les perd, et enfin que ce supplice changé en félicité amère par le souvenir de leur séparation sur la terre et par le sentiment de leur indivisibilité dans le châtement? Si Dante avait beaucoup de pages comme celle-là, il surpasserait son maître Virgile et son compatriote Pétrarque. Peu de pages de poésie élégante en mélancolique beauté et en perfection ces quelques vers . . . l'impression est éternelle! C'est que l'émotion et la beauté y sont complètes et pour ainsi dire infinies. . . . C'est que le récit est simple, court, candide comme la confession de deux enfants. . . . L'émotion n'est-elle pas produite ici par le Dante en quelques vers plus complètement que par tout un poème? Aussi c'est pour cela que le poème survit; le poème de théologie³⁰ est mort, celui de l'amour est immortel.

based on themes from Purgatory, and nine were inspired by Paradise. (This number includes all images of Beatrice.) The life of Dante and related but non-specific works account for 32 additional objects with a Dantesque theme. [Appendix 2]

²⁹ Musset, "Le Poète Déchu."

³⁰ Lamartine, Traducteurs et Commentateurs du Dante, 1856.

Jean-Jacques Ampère also praised "le récit tendre et triste de Francesca": "La poésie humaine n'a rien de plus simple et de plus profond, de plus pathétique et de plus calme, de plus triste et de plus abandonné que ce récit."³¹

Charles Émile Yriarte, an historian and dilettante artist wrote two books in which he aimed to "retrouver la vérité historique sous la poétique légende"³²: Rimini, un Condottière au XVe Siècle (1882), and Françoise de Rimini dans la légende et dans l'histoire (1883). In his studies, Yriarte revealed that Giovanni (1248-1304), the oldest [sic] son of Malatesta da Verrucchio -- "dur, cruel, difformé, d'un caractère atrabilaire provenant de sa complexion malade"³³ -- was betrothed to Francesca, the "belle, noble, [et] fière"³⁴ daughter of the Lord of Ravenna, to assure an alliance between the two powerful families. However, Francesca loved Paolo, the brother of Giovanni -- "beau comme le jour"³⁵ -- from the first time she saw him as a proxy at her betrothal. In time, a fatal love affair developed between Francesca and her brother-in-law:

Francesca et Paolo se sont aimés à première vue, plus tard ils succombent à leur passion, et le jour où ils ne lurent pas d'avantage, le Sciancato, averti par un serviteur, vient en tout hâte . . . il les supprime³⁶, et, dans sa fureur, les immole tous les deux.

³¹J.-J. Ampère, "Le Voyage Dantesque," Revue des Deux Mondes, 1839.

³²Yriarte, Françoise de Rimini, p. 64.

³³Yriarte, Rimini, un Condottière, p. 28.

Yriarte did not believe that Paolo and Francesca were killed at the moment of their first kiss (as Francesca explains to Dante in the Circle of the Lustful) since Francesca married Giovanni when she was 18 (ca. 1275) and was killed ten years later:

Il est difficile de révoquer en doute que son beau-frère Paolo soit venu à l'épouser par procuration, et, dès le premier jour elle a conçu pour lui la passion que leur coûtera la vie à tous deux dix années après. Il faut en conclure qu'elle a la langue pratique de la connivence amoureuse. . . ."³⁷

However, this rather distressing fact was not divulged until the end of the century, and therefore did not diminish the pathos of the legendary tale. Yet if the "facts" were known, it is likely that Paolo and Francesca would have still been considered "des victimes pitoyables" and Giovanni, "le meurtrier."³⁸ The general public would have only been familiar with the basic tenants of "ce touchant épisode" -- "Francesca était une femme d'une extrême beauté et d'un coeur ardent; . . . Lanciotto . . . était difforme; son frère cadet, Paolo, était, au contraire, un très-joli garçon" -- and it was in this light that the canto became "l'envie [des] poètes, [des] peintres, [et des] conteurs tragiques."³⁹

³⁴Yriarte, Françoise, p. 133.

³⁵Ibid., p. 136.

³⁶Yriarte, Condottière, p. 32.

³⁷Yriarte, Françoise, p. 135.

In art as in history, Dante was neglected until the nineteenth century. The first known French canvas inspired by the Comedy, painted by Pierre Subleyras before 1734, proved to be an anomaly: the next French work based on the epic did not appear for nearly three-quarters of a century.⁴⁰ Although Subleyras titled his painting Charon Passing the Shades [figure 1], he may have selected the Dantesque theme primarily as a pretext for displaying his talent in portraying an academic nude. Charon's idealized physique, with well-developed muscles and carefully stanced pose, recalls a studio model more than it suggests the infernal boatman of the River Acheron (from Inferno, canto III). Nevertheless, Subleyras's painting, at least in title, refers to Dante, who, as has been

³⁸Yriarte comes to this conclusion even after his study is complete. See *ibid.*, pp. 23 and 56. Other interesting information which Yriarte exposed included the fact that Paolo had been married for six years before he met Francesca, and his wife, Orabille Beatrice, had two children during the course of his affair with Francesca. Giovanni and Francesca also had a daughter, Condcordia, with whom Giovanni later sired five children. Giovanni must have been an extraordinarily insensitive man, for the day after he killed his wife and brother, he married a certain Zambrasinia. *Ibid.*, chapter 5.

³⁹Larousse, *op. cit.*, vol. 13, p. 1218.

⁴⁰Honoré Dufau's Death of Ugolino (1800) may well be the next French illustration of an episode from the Comedy. The painting, which is now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Valence, is reproduced in Jean Clay, Romanticism, p. 36.

demonstrated, was little known in France at the time. Subleyras's influences were in fact more Italian than French: he lived in Italy from the date he was awarded the Grand Prix de Rome (1727) until his death (1749). His awareness and assimilation of the Roman classical manner was made complete with his adaptation of the Italian subject.

Paolo and Francesca did not make their Salon début until 1812.⁴¹ Numerous images based on their theme continued to be exhibited throughout the century. Despite the public's emergent stereotypical conception of the characters as beautiful, deformed, and handsome (see above), the artist was granted considerable poetic license in illustrating the Francesca legend: he could select which aspect of the tale to represent. The earliest portrayals typically presented the couple at the moment of their fateful kiss, prompted by their reading in the

⁴¹It is interesting to note that the writer of the Salon Catalogue was compelled to give a rather extensive (and somewhat inaccurate) explanation of the heretofore little-known theme: "Fille de Gui de Polente, seigneur de Ravenne, elle fui unie par son père à Lancelot, fils de Malatesta, seigneur de Rimini, homme renommé par sa bravoure, mais peu favorisé de la nature. Paul son frère, jeune homme d'une rare beauté, habitait le même palais; séduit par les charmes de François de Rimini, il conçut secrètement pour elle un violent amour que sa belle-soeur partageoit, et qu'elle s'efforçoit de tenir caché.

"Un jour les amants se croyant seuls, s'étaient réunis sans dessein prémédité, pour lire le roman de Lancelot du Lac, célèbre alors; cette lecture les émut puissamment, leur raison s'égara . . . Le mari qui les épousait, entra furieux, et les tua tous deux du même coup d'épée." Janson, ed., Catalogues of the Paris Salon, 1812, p. 24.

Arthurian legend of the illicit love of Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere -- the amorous narrative which precipitated their own adulterous act. A second image depicted Paolo and Francesca in an eternal embrace in the Circle of the Lustful -- the punishment for their carnal sin. Often, they are observed by Dante and Virgil. A third representation portrayed the bodies of the lovers, slain by the sword of Francesca's jealous husband, upon his discovery of her infidelity.⁴²

Marie-Philippe Coupin de la Couperie⁴³ was the first artist to exhibit a Paolo and Francesca at the Salon [figure 2]. In The fatal love of Francesca de Rimini Coupin depicted a sentimental portrayal of the lover's

⁴²Unfortunately, a large number of the forty-three representations of Paolo and Francesca which were exhibited at the Salon between 1800 and 1880 are now lost. None of the sculptural works are known. (Etex's bas relief is lost and Croissy's sculpture was destroyed. Felicie de Fauveau's Monument to Dante (now partially destroyed) and Bartholdi's bas-relief after Scheffer's painting were never exhibited at the Salon. Rodin's Gates of Hell, which include at least one representation of Paolo and Francesca, were not "completed" until 1899. His Paolo and Francesca and The Kiss were not produced until 1905 and 1886 respectively.) In addition to analyzing the few extant images, I have relied on descriptions of now missing objects as recorded in contemporary criticism.

Furthermore, several artists produced Paolo and Francescas which were never exhibited at the Salon (e.g. Girodet's painting ca. 1815, Delacroix's watercolor of 1824-25, and the above mentioned sculpture by de Fauveau of 1834). The list of only 43 objects may be further misleading, for other works, such as Chenevard's Inferno (exhibited at the Salon of 1846) and Scheffer's The Sufferings of the Earth (ca. 1855) include the figures of Paolo and Francesca as a subsidiary motif within the composition. I am grateful to Mr. David Gariff for sharing with me the fruits of his research of Dantesque themes in nineteenth-century art.

kiss, and his painting established the conventional representation of the motif for the first quarter of the century. A handsome Paolo tenderly embraces the elegant Francesca, who demurely accepts his kiss while she half-heartedly attempts to refuse his affection -- her left hand politely pushes him away. Giovanni looks on from the right rear of the painting, sword in hand. Each object is meticulously rendered, as would befit this painter of porcelain, and in keeping with the then popular "style troubadour".⁴⁴

The painting closely resembles Flaxman's drawing which had been engraved by Thomas Piroli for an illustrated edition of the Divine Comedy in 1793 [figure 3]. Indeed, Flaxman's two drawings for the fifth canto -- one representing the kiss, and one which depicts the lovers in Hell -- were the prototypes for the majority of French paintings of Paolo and Francesca. Coupin would likely have known Flaxman's depiction of the lovers. His teacher,

⁴³Coupin (1773-1851) was a student of Girodet before he began working as a painter of porcelain at the Manufacture de Sèvres. In 1815, he was appointed professor of drawing at the Collège Militaire of La Flèche. Six months later, he became a professor at the école Militaire of St. Cyr where he taught until he retired in 1844. Coupin's artistic career can be viewed as being quite successful: he exhibited paintings at the Salon between 1812 and 1833; in 1817 he was awarded a "grande médaille" and in 1832 he was named chevalier in the Legion of Honor.

⁴⁴Other medieval themes in Coupin's oeuvre include: View of the monumeny which includes the court of Henri IV; Christine of Pisan (1819); Sully at the tomb of Henri IV; Valentin of Milan (1822).

Girodet, was acquainted with the British draughtsman and Piroli's engravings enjoyed a wide distribution in art schools from the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Compositionally, Coupin's work differs from Flaxman's only in the positioning of Giovanni. Flaxman's reductive style, however, enables a more straightforward accounting of the episode than does Coupin's staged portrayal. Coupin's use of light draws the viewer's eye to the figures of Paolo and Francesca, who are bathed in the radiance of their love at the moment of their blameless kiss, while the vengeful husband is [symbolically] cast in shadow. By portraying the couple's love as innocent, Coupin implies that Giovanni is guilty of destroying their happiness.⁴⁵

The first of seven paintings of Paolo and Francesca by J.-A.-D. Ingres⁴⁶ painted in 1814, appears to be a simplified adaptation, both stylistically and thematically,

⁴⁵ Coupin's painting must have been quite favorably received, for it was bought by the Empress Josephine in 1813 and re-exhibited in 1814. The painting also inspired a lithograph by Grevedon which was exhibited in the Salon of 1827.

⁴⁶ Ingres (1780-1867) was a student of Roques, Vien, Vigan, and Briand before arriving in Paris to study with David in 1796. In 1800, he placed second in the Prix de Rome competition, and won the prize the following year. However, Ingres had to stay in Paris for five years until monies were available to fund his studies in Italy. The artist spent a large portion of his life in Rome, not returning to France as a permanent resident until 1841. He sent paintings to be exhibited at the Salon while residing in Italy, however, and was made a chevalier in the Legion of Honor in 1824, a member of the Institute in 1825, and an officer in the Legion of Honor in 1826. At the Universal Exposition of 1855, Ingres was awarded a grande médaille d'honneur and proclaimed a grand officer in the Legion of Honor.

of Coupin's painting [figure 4].⁴⁷ The resemblance of Ingres's to Coupin's painting is too striking to be purely coincidental. Ingres may have known of Coupin's canvas, either from an engraving in the Salon Guide⁴⁸ or firsthand. Both paintings could have been independently based on Flaxman's prototype, but it seems unlikely that both artists would have made the same compositional shift in the placement of Giovanni. As does Coupin's figure, Ingres's Francesca shyly allows the handsome Paolo to kiss her -- not on the mouth as in the poem -- but on the cheek, in order to better show off her pretty face and to emphasize the innocence of their love.

Ingres painted his most successful version of this motif in Rome in 1819 for the "Société des Amis des Arts de Paris" [figure 5].⁴⁹ The painting was exhibited at the Salon of 1819,⁵⁰ in 1846 at Galleries Bonnes-Nouvelle,⁵¹ and at the Exposition Universelle of 1855. It was also

⁴⁷ Ingres painted his first Paolo and Francesca around 1814 for Caroline Murat, sister-in-law to the Empress Josephine. Ingres's seven paintings are as follows: ca. 1814, Chantilly, Musée Condé; 1819, Musée d'Angers; ca. 1845, Hyde Collection; n.d., Barber Institute; ca. 1850, Bayonne, Musée Bonnat; ca. 1856-57 private collection, New York; and ca. 1856, London. Ingres also depicted the subject in eleven drawings. See Condon, In Pursuit of Perfection, pp. 70-77.

⁴⁸ Condon makes this assertion as fact. See *ibid.*, p. 72.

⁴⁹ The Société, which had paid 500 francs for the painting was dissatisfied and traded it for a painting by Turpin de Crissé (amateur artist and member of the commissioning committee). Crissé later bequeathed the Ingres painting to the Musée d'Angers.

lithographed in vignette by Aubry-Lecomte for the Salon of 1835 [figure 6].⁵²

The 1819 painting is more elaborate and more gracefully drawn than the earlier version. The figures, who wear authentic costumes and sit in an architecturally accurate salon, are rendered in a fittingly anachronistic Italian primitive style. The scene is at once tense and static. Although Giovanni spies the lovers from the background and Francesca drops her book, Giovanni's sword will never be drawn and the Arthurian legend will never reach the ground.

Ingres's concern for portraying the appropriate "types" for his Paolo and Francesca, is documented in his ninth notebook, in his description of the characters. He envisioned Francesca to be a "Femina di bellezza e di maniera eccellentissima". Paolo should be "Bello di corpo e di dolce maniera e costumi", and "le mari" was to be

⁵⁰ Condon, op. cit., p.13 states that the painting was hung too late to be included in the Salon catalogue.

⁵¹ Théophile Silvestre, Les Artistes françaises, p. 38.

⁵² Aubry-Lecomte (1792-1858) was a student of Girodet and attended the école des Beaux-Arts. He made his Salon debut in 1819, and by 1831 he was recognized with a first class medal. In 1849 he was named a chevalier in the Legion of Honor. He had many admirers; Larousse referred to him as the "prince des lithographes" (Larousse, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 918). Initially his lithographs received nearly as much acclaim as the original paintings he reproduced, but later his work was criticized for having a vaporous quality. He was especially renowned for his portraits of women. Ingres's portrayals of Paolo and Francesca which date from after Aubry-Lecomte's 1819 lithograph adopt the prints reversed position of the figures.

portrayed as a "uomo bellicoso . . . brutto di corpo e scianiato."⁵³ The same notebook also contains a paraphrase of Dante's account of the tragedy, and outlines Ingres's ambitious plans for a cycle of paintings based on the fifth canto.⁵⁴ Although the series was to include four paintings of different moments within the tragedy, Ingres only represented the scene which he called "Le moment de leurs amours innocents."⁵⁵

Possibly, Ingres never realized his plans because repetition was for him a means to understanding and perfection.⁵⁶ It is equally likely that Ingres prudently chose to revise and reproduce the first painting of the projected cycle due to popular demand: the image was widely acclaimed. Théophile Gautier exclaimed: "Jamais le gracieux épisode du cinquième cercle [sic] de l'Enfer d'Alighieri n'a été traduit plus intelligemment". Another

⁵³ Henri Lapauze, Les dessin d'Ingres au Musée de Montauban, vol. 11, notebook ix. Quoted in Vasconcellos, op. cit., p. 68.

⁵⁴ As quoted in *ibid.*, p. 86, the four paintings were to be as follows: "Le moment de leurs amours innocents"; "Après qu'ils sont tombés mort l'un sur l'autre, le féroce mari considère les cadavres et les remords semblent se mettre à l'assiéger"; "Ils sont exposés dans la chapelle du palais. Un Recollet, en étoile, tout seul, célèbre l'office des morts. La scène est éclairée par un seul chandelier de fer noir"; "Les âmes de ces innocents amants racontent à Virgile et à Dante leur malheureuse aventure."

⁵⁵ Ingres's anticipated Raphael "series" had a similar outcome: only two paintings, Raphael and the Fornarina and Betrothal of Raphael were ever completed -- each in several versions.

⁵⁶ Condon, op. cit., p. 14, proffers this suggestion.

critic praised the painting for its appealing characterization. He wrote:

. . . Je préfère infiniment la Françoise de Rimini, quoique Lanciotto y soit bien laid. . . . Il est bon qu'un mari soit laid, pour que sa femme soit excusable; . . . M. Ingres, le s'en est donné à cœur joie. En revanche, les deux amants sont adorables: Francesca confuse, aimante, émue, laisse échapper le livre avec une grâce infinie. Paolo Malatesta est peut-être encore plus beau. Sa jambe gauche est comme un ressort qui le jette tout entier vers celle qu'il aime. On comprend, à ce spectacle, le mot de l'homme qui disait: "Il m'en restera toujours une pour vous aimer." Le baiser, ce funeste baiser qui doit lui coûter la vie, n'est pas seulement sur ses lèvres, il est dans tout son corps, il remplit toute sa personne, il lui gonfle le cou, et vient enfin expirer sur la bouche de Francesca. Devinez-vous maintenant ce que j'entends par le style? Dans l'intention de M. Ingres, Paolo n'est pas un homme: c'est un baiser.⁵⁷

Ingres's "baiser sur terre" is the thematic complement to images of the "baiser infernal" -- a motif which was immortalized by Scheffer in the 1830's. Scheffer, however, was not the first to portray this aspect of the tragedy. Around 1815, Girodet-Trioson had portrayed the famous lovers in their eternal embrace. Dante Swooning in the Arms of Virgil upon Seeing the Torments of Paolo and Francesca [figure 7] is the earliest French painting of the couple in the Inferno. Girodet's treatment of the theme was no doubt the result of two influences: his penchant for portraying his subjects in a dark, Ossianic manner,⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Edouard About, in "Voyage à travers l'Exposition des beaux-arts," 1855. Quoted in Evocations, p. 32.

⁵⁸ G. Levitine, Girodet-Trioson: an Iconographical Study, p. 376.

and his knowledge of Flaxman's engraving of the subject [figure 8]. Girodet's painting seems to have had little influence on early representations of the canto. The painting was not exhibited at the Salon and it is unlikely that it was engraved.

The most celebrated version of this subject, Ary Scheffer's⁵⁹ Dante and Virgil encounter the shade of Francesca di Rimini and of Paolo in the Inferno was exhibited at the Salon of 1835 [figure 9].⁶⁰ The painting portrays the damned lovers in their eternal punishment, blown by a turbulent wind of darkness. Francesca, with trembling lips and teary eyes, is suspended on the shoulders of Paolo, who hides his face in grief. Dante and Virgil watch the large swirling forms of the lovers and

⁵⁹ Scheffer (1795-1858) was the son of Dutch parents (both his father and his mother were artists) who moved to Paris when he was quite young. Around 1810 Scheffer entered Guérin's atelier; in 1811 he enrolled at the école des Beaux-Arts, where he won a medal in 1817, and unsuccessfully competed for the Prix de Rome in 1818. Scheffer exhibited paintings at the Salon between 1812 and 1835. He was made a chevalier in the Legion of Honor in 1828, and elected an officer in 1835. He was very prolific, leaving an oeuvre of over 400 paintings. He became increasingly famous after 1830 and was considered by his contemporaries "comme un des plus grands de l'école française." (Ary Scheffer, dessins, aquarelles, esquisses à l'huile, p. 7.) A commemorative exhibition was held in Scheffer's honor in Paris in 1859.

⁶⁰ In 1822 and in 1824, Scheffer exhibited two earlier versions entitled The ghosts of Francesca de Rimini and her lover appearing to Dante and to Virgil, which were possibly preparatory studies for the chef d'oeuvre of 1835. He eventually painted ten or so versions which are related to the 1835 painting. See Ary Scheffer, Dessins, op. cit., p.27, note 4 for a comprehensive list.

the shadows of other carnal sinners who share the plight of Paolo and Francesca.⁶¹

Like Ingres and Coupin, Scheffer was indebted to Flaxman, whom he greatly admired. He admitted: "Si inconsciemment j'ai emprunté à quelqu'un dans la création de la Francesca, ce doit être quelque chose que j'ai vu dans les dessins de Flaxman."⁶² The works' compositional affinities are obvious, yet it is clear that Scheffer did not merely add volume to Flaxman's forms.

In the years between the Salons of 1819 and 1835 (which exhibited Francescas by Ingres and Scheffer respectively), four now lost paintings from the fifth canto were displayed. A Francesca by Louis-Chevalier Rubio (1797-?), exhibited in 1833, must have portrayed the kiss, for the Salon guide includes this portion of the canto in its description of the painting:

Nous lisions un jours dans un doux loisir . . .
 nous étions seuls sans défiance . . . mais un
 seul moment nous perdit tous deux . . . alors
 celui qui ne me sera plus ravi colla sur ma
 bouche ses lèvres tremblantes, et nous laissâmes
 échapper ce liège par qui nous fut révélé le
 mystère d'amour.⁶³

⁶¹ Calamatta's admired engraving of the painting was exhibited in the Salon of 1843 [figure 10]. See "Gravures et Lithographies. Françoise de Rimini par M. Calamatta d'après Ary Scheffer" in L'Artiste, 3e serie, vol. iii, 1843, p. 182. Bartholdi's bas relief, a transliteration of his teacher's painting to marble, completed in 1852, was never exhibited [figure 11].

⁶² Quoted in Harriet Grote, Memoir of the life of Ary Scheffer, 1860, p. 56.

⁶³ Janson, ed., Salon, op. cit., p. 246.

Paintings by Alexandre-Jean-Baptiste Hesse (1806-1879) in 1831 and Alexandre-Marie Colin (1793-?) in 1833 rather unsuccessfully depicted Paolo and Francesca in the Inferno, as two unflattering criticisms explain.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Gustave Planché, études sur l'école française 1831-52, p.112-113: "M. Hesse, ancien pensionnaire de l'école de Rome . . . nous a donné cette année . . . un tableau de petite dimension, 'Françoise de Rimini.' A ce qu'il paraît, il réserve ses forces pour son grand oeuvre. . . . Nous ne le chicanerons pas sur le choix ni le développement de son sujet. Plusieurs compositions délicieuses des écoles italienne et espagnole sont exécutées dans les mêmes proportions, et ainsi l'espace ne lui a pas manqué; mais il nous a été absolument impossible de saisir le mérite de cette peinture, et si ce mérite existe, il y a probablement des procédés particuliers pour le découvrir . . . nous plaindrons très sincèrement le poète florentin d'être tombé aux mains d'un pareil interprète. Pauvre poète, à quoi lui a servi d'être l'Homère des temps modernes, de résumer dans une satire immense et variée tous les crimes et toute l'histoire de son siècle? C'était bien la peine vraiment, pour venir expirer sa gloire et son génie sur la toile de M. Hesse. Or, Dante est là en personne, enveloppé d'un manteau rouge; Virgile est bleu; pour Françoise et son amant, s'est autre chose, et la royale munificence du peintre les a fait gris tous les deux. Ces quatre personnages, qui composent la drame, sont jetés au milieu d'une vapeur indéfinissable. Si le peintre a prétendu donner à son oeuvre un caractère mystérieux, à la bonne heure; mais tant pis, car l'épisode de la Divine Comédie ne le comportait guère. Que M. Hesse aille revoir au Luxembourg le Dante d'Eugène Delacroix, et qu'il apprenne à comprendre et à traduire le poète florentin." And in the "Examen critique du Salon de 1833", par MM. Annet et Trianon, pp. 6-7, regarding Colin's painting: "Comme il n'y a ni couleur, ni ensemble, c'est un tableau manqué. L'artiste n'a pas eu l'air de se désiner, ni caractère. L'artiste n'a pas eu l'air de se douter seulement de contraste qu'il fallait établir entre la pâle et noble figure de Virgile et la tête rouge et hideuse des damnés. On ne sent pas, dans ce tableau, l'atmosphère lourde et brûlante que le Dante répand sur l'Enfer. D'un côté, le lac de feu, et les damnés qui s'y tordent; au dessus, le tourbillon fatal qui passe; à gauche, Virgile qui regarde le Dante étendu à ses pieds et près d'eux, Françoise de Rimini et son amant qui retournent à leur supplice. La figure de Virgile est d'un beau caractère et le groupe des deux amants d'une assez bonne composition. Mais le Dante a plutôt l'air d'hommes qui tâcheraient de s'arracher d'un gué fangeux"

Thus Scheffer's 1835 painting was not, for its time, the only recent representation of Dante's lovers in Hell. Nevertheless, it was clearly the most admired. The painting's immediate popularity⁶⁵ may have encouraged the Duke of Orleans to acquire it for a large sum.⁶⁶ Critics applauded the tragic and the melancholy in Scheffer's interpretation:

Il y a dans ce groupe vaguement balancé dans l'air, une si profonde douleur, un tendresse si noble et si triste, que l'on oublie les qualités réelles qui peuvent y manquer en faveur de la rêverie mélancolique qu'il inspire. . . ."⁶⁷

The painting's appeal endured, and in 1860 Zola wrote to Cézanne

[Scheffer] était poète dans tout l'acception du mot, [il] ne peignant presque pas le réel, abordant les sujets les plus sublimes, les plus délivrants. Veux-tu rien de plus poétique, d'une poésie étrange et navrant, que sa Françoise de Rimini?"⁶⁸

Scheffer based such a large portion of his oeuvre on literature that he was considered one of the most literary

⁶⁵ M. Kolb, Ary Scheffer, p. 54 writes: "Son tableau acquiert immédiatement une grande célébrité. . . ."

⁶⁶ Scheffer had known the Duke and Duchess of Orleans since 1821. After the July Revolution he became the art instructor for their daughter, Princess Marie. Some accounts indicate that the 1835 image was painted for the Duke. The painting was later sold in the vente Duc d'Orleans for 43,600fr. to Prince Demidoff in 1853 and again in 1870 (the vente San Donato) it was sold for 100,000fr to Lord Hertford. It is now in the Wallace Collection, London.

⁶⁷ Alexandre Deschamps, Revue Republicaine.

⁶⁸ i. Zola, Lettres de jeunesse. Paris, 1907, p. 203.

men of the nineteenth century. Théophile Gautier wrote: "Ary Scheffer was a transposed poet; Dante, Goethe and Byron were more his masters than Michelangelo, Raphael or Titian". Scheffer's initial attraction to the Paolo and Francesca episode may be explained in light of his admiration for Dante, who he considered a "sublime poète."⁶⁹ His repetition of the motif could well have been economically motivated.⁷⁰ Yet, since Scheffer was known for portraying paintings with a message -- "idées pures" as Gautier referred to them -- it also seems plausible that Scheffer had some moral intention for the depictions.

Although Scheffer had Protestant origins, he was praised for his "profoundly Catholic sentiment."⁷¹ The Goncourt's claimed Scheffer was "a man of superior spirit" and hailed him as "the leader of . . . rejuvenated spiritualism remade to suit the temper of our century."⁷² Delécluze noted that Scheffer was:

. . . beaucoup plus préoccupé de l'action dramatique ou du sentiment intérieur de ses personnages que de leur extérieur. . . . Enfin la tendance mystique de son esprit, que l'on avait pu reconnaître déjà dans plusieurs de ses productions, s'est tout à fait développée dans . . . Françoise de Rimini. . . .

⁶⁹Vasconcellos, op. cit., p. 110 quotes from correspondence in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

⁷⁰Symmons, "French Copies after Flaxman's Outlines," p. 595, refers to Scheffer's 1835 painting as proving so popular that "the artist was able to live off his subsequent copies of it for the rest of his life."

⁷¹Gazette des Beaux-Arts 1859, vol. 1 p. 129.

Indeed, the viewer can sense the interior of Scheffer's characters: they are suffering. The lovers' sadness has overcome their passion. Their anguished gestures are befitting Adam and Eve in an expulsion scene. Rather than embracing one another lovingly, Francesca clings helplessly to Paolo, weighing him down. Yet, Dante looks upon them in stern accusation. There is no hint of compassion. He does not suffer from the profound sadness recorded in the canto. Unlike Coupin and Ingres, who portrayed the couple as innocent and pure, Scheffer subtly implies that the lovers were slain in the midst of an amorous embrace, rather than at the moment of their first kiss. The carefully delineated wound indicates that Giovanni's sword was thrust through Francesca's left shoulder into Paolo's right breast. Scheffer's moralizing is thus justified, and his depiction, although wrought with melancholy, focuses on the due punishment of illicit love.

⁷² E. and J. Goncourt, "La Peinture à l'Exposition de 1855," Paris: R. Flammarion, 1893.

⁷³ Delécluze, op. cit., p. 388.

⁷⁴ Yvon (1817-1893) was one of leading battle painters of the Second Empire. He entered the école des Beaux-Arts in 1835 and studied in Delaroche's atelier. He unsuccessfully competed for the Prix de Rome in 1840, 1842, and 1843. In 1841 Yvon began exhibiting portraits at the Salon. By 1843 he was admired as a painter of religious subjects. During the Third Empire, Yvon travelled to Russia and began to paint military subjects -- the works for which he is best known today. In 1848 he was awarded a first class medal, and in 1855 he obtained a second class. He was named a chevalier in the Legion of Honor in 1855 and an officer in 1867 after having been appointed professor at the école de Beaux-Arts in 1856.

Scheffer's didactic theme is echoed in Lust, a large drawing by Henri-Frédéric Yvon⁷⁴ which he exhibited at the Salon of 1848 [figure 12]. The drawing, based on the Francesca tragedy, was the first in a series of illustrations of the seven deadly sins. In this cycle of drawings, produced between 1848 and 1850, Yvon couched each transgression in Dantesque themes. Thus "lust" was appropriately manifest through the image of Paolo and Francesca.⁷⁵

Like Scheffer, Yvon depicted the lovers in Hell. The anguished Francesca hangs listlessly from her grieving Paolo, in a near quotation of Scheffer's lovers. Beyond this striking similarity, however, Yvon's work departs sharply from the archetypal portrayal.

In Yvon's drawing, Paolo and Francesca are identifiable only by their fatal wounds. Rather than being the central focus of the work, the lovers are just two of many lascivious figures, swept along mournfully in the Circle of the Lustful. The focal point of the drawing is the distraught woman who occupies the exact center of the composition. This unidentified shade and the other damned souls who suffer the onerous punishment are portrayed with as much clarity as Paolo and Francesca.

⁷⁵ The other drawings in the group are Anger (Inferno, canto 7), also exhibited in 1848; Avarice (Inferno, canto 6) and Gluttony (Inferno, canto 7) exhibited in 1849; Pride, Envy, and Idleness, all exhibited in 1850. The drawings are now at the Musée du Havre. Although I have been unable to find any contemporary criticism of the illustrations, they must have been admired, for they were re-exhibited at the Exposition Universelle in 1855, and Larousse referred to them as "dessins d'un grand style". Larousse, op. cit., vol. 15, p. 1437.

The [by then] well-known Francesca episode served as a vehicle to powerfully illustrate the sin of infidelity. Yvon's message is clear: the punishment of any illicit love -- infamous or common -- is horrid damnation.

A near-contemporary painting by Ernest-Augustin Gendron⁷⁶ also presents the lovers in the Inferno. His painting, exhibited in the Salon of 1852 [figure 13], echoes the mood, if not the ethic, of Scheffer's and Yvon's depictions: the setting is gloomy and oppressive.

The painting's sombrous vein no doubt contributed to its success. Even in comparison to Scheffer's masterpiece, Gendron's Francesca was well-received:

M. Gendron a envoyé trois tableaux, dont le plus important est Francesca et Paolo traversant les enfers. Il y avait de l'audace à traiter ce sujet après M. Ary Scheffer, et M. Gendron n'a pas à regretter son audace. Pensée et exécution, tout est délicat dans cette toile. Le mouvement de Françoise est plein de grâce, d'abandon chaste, d'enivrement contenu; la ligne du corps est des plus heureuse. . . .

Possibly Gendron's portrayal was admired for its peculiarities. Paolo and Francesca are the principal

⁷⁶Gendron (1817-1881) entered the école des Beaux-Arts in 1837 and studied in Delaroche's atelier. In 1837 he competed for the Prix de Rome. He never won the prize, but was able to study in Italy in the early forties, returning to France in 1847. Although Gautier praised the Dance of Willis, his chef d'oeuvre, Gendron was best known for his history paintings. In 1861-63 he completed work for a coveted commission to paint the Petit Salon du Ministre d'Etat at the Louvre. At the Salon, Gendron was relatively successful: he garnered a third class medal in 1846, a second in 1849, and another third in 1855, at which time he was also named a chevalier in the Legion of Honor.

⁷⁷L. Clément de Ris, in L'Artiste, 1852, p. 116.

figures, but rather than being blown by the incessant wind, they stand firmly on the planks of a shipwrecked prow.⁷⁸ The lovers are truly helpless: destitute on a sinking boat in the midst of a brewing storm. A Neptune-like Charon looks on remorselessly from the helm and Virgil attempts to protect himself from the powerful gale. Dante, overcome by grief, lies prostrate on the deck -- in keeping with the poetic account: ". . . dans une émotion pénible de pitié, je [Dante] perdis l'usage de mes sens, et je tombai comme tombe un corps sans vie."⁷⁹

Although Gendron's figures are well covered by their dramatically windswept drapery, they are not comparable to Ingres's chaste figures. Their classicized coverings are in fact the sheets of their opprobrious bed. The lovers no longer passively accept their fate as they did in both Scheffer's and Yvon's depictions: Paolo's expression is one of indignation while Francesca appears pathetic yet passionate. Dante, who clenches his fist in anger and despair is not critical of the couple's adulterous actions; rather, he is overcome with grief for their macabre fate.

Gustave Doré's⁸⁰ painting of the lovers in the Inferno, exhibited in the Salon of 1863 [figure 14], was

⁷⁸The placing of Paolo and Francesca on a boat was both innovative and aliteral, but also shrewdly reminiscent of two earlier esteemed works: Gericault's Raft of the Medusa and Delacroix's Barque of Dante.

⁷⁹Artaud de Montor's 1813 translation of the Inferno, canto V, lines 140-142.

not an original composition. Rather, it is a painted version of his 1857 drawing that had been included in the illustrated edition of L'Enfer. Although this painting brought Doré positive attention⁸¹ he remained best known as a draughtsman, and most admired for his vivid, direct, and often grotesque imagery.⁸² Thus while his painted version of Paolo and Francesca should not be overlooked, Doré's undisputed contribution to Dantesque imagery was through his numerous book illustrations.

In 1855, Doré recorded his intent to illustrate prominent literary works:

Ma pensée était, et est toujours celle-ci: faire dans un format uniforme et devant faire collection, tous les chefs-d'oeuvre de la littérature, soit épique, soit comique, soit tragique. . . .

⁸⁰Doré (1832-1883) was born in Strasbourg and moved to Paris in 1847. At the age of 15 he sold some drawings to Charles Philipon's Journal pour rire, and soon after was a regular contributor of caricatures. Although Doré was a self-taught draughtsman, his satirical images, in the manner of Daumier and Gavarni, were successful and the artist quickly gained recognition. Beginning in 1854, he executed illustrations for an edition of Rabelais and proceeded to illustrate many classics, including Balzac, Dante, Cervantes, Milton and the Bible. He exhibited many of these drawings at the Salon, and beginning in 1851 he also exhibited oils. He was named a chevalier in the Legion of Honor in 1861 and an officer of the order in 1879. When he died at just 51 years of age, Doré left an immense oeuvre.

⁸¹Despite the fact that Doré began exhibiting paintings in the Salon of 1851, his Francesca de Rimini and Paolo was the first to be favorably reviewed.

⁸²Zola, for example, referred to Doré's paintings as "colored prints of inordinate size" i. Zola, Salons, 1859, p. 198.

In the "plan de ces grandes éditions in-folio" Doré specified his anticipation for Dante's Inferno to be "le premier volume publié": "Je dus faire à mes frais le premier de ces livres: L'Enfer de Dante."⁸³

Doré's enthusiasm, however, was not sufficient to convince a publisher of his project's feasibility and merit, and so in 1857 he began work on L'Enfer without assurance of its eventual publication. In fifteen months, he had completed the 75 drawings for the Inferno. He then employed several artisans -- including Sotain, Pisan, Pannemaker, and Jonnard -- to engrave the images for publication. By 1860, Doré had convinced Hachette to publish an edition of 400 copies of L'Enfer⁸⁴ which would juxtapose Doré's scenes with both a French prose translation by Pier Angelo Fiorentino and Dante's original text. The book appeared in 1861, the same year Doré exhibited four of its drawings at the Salon: Paolo and

⁸³The journal entry also lists Don Quixote, Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Ossian, Molière, La Fontaine, Milton, Byron, Shakespeare, and etc. as authors to be honored in Doré's over-ambitious plan. Doré's decision to illustrate Dante first reflects his nearly life-long fascination with the poet: when he was ten years old, Doré titled a drawing "Voyage à l'Enfer". Musée Strasbourg, Gustave Doré 1832 - 1883, p. 241.

⁸⁴The agreement, however, specified that Doré was required to supply the funds for more wooden plates and the paper in addition to the money he had already invested in having the engravings made. 3000 copies were eventually sold after subsequent editions were published in 1862, '65, '68, '72, '77, '84, and '91. In 1868, Hachette also published the entire Comedy in one volume, which included 42 plates from Purgatory and 18 from Paradise as well as the 75 of the Inferno.

Francesca, Dante and Virgil, 9th circle, Dante and Virgil crossing the Styx, Virgil and Dante at the tomb of Florentin Farrinata.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Although Doré's book is the most ambitious and original, three other illustrated versions of the Divine Comedy were published in France during the nineteenth century. In 1812, Mme. Sofia Giacomelli (pseudonym Chomel) exhibited drawings and engravings "d'une suite de 100 sujets du Dante" which were published in book form by Chez Salmon in Paris (n.d.). Giacomelli prepared one plate for each canto of the Inferno, Purgatory, and Paradise. No text was included in the book except for a single verse in Italian at the base of each plate. A frontispiece containing a "Table de l'explication des figures" gave a sentence description of each image. The engravings are unashamedly derivative of Flaxman's in both style and composition. The portrayal of Paolo and Francesca, for example, is greatly indebted to Flaxman's prototype of the lovers in Hell [figure 15].

Antoine Etex's illustrations for the Divine Comedy were published 1854 by Bry Ainé. As Vasconcellos indicates, copies of Etex's book are rare: "Heureusement, les illustrations d'Etex n'ont guère été vulgarisées. Il est très difficile aujourd'hui de trouver un exemplaire de la Divine Comédie, illustrée par lui. Ni l'art français, ni le poète florentin n'y perdent rien." (Cornell University has a copy in their extensive Dante collection, which I was unable to view.) Vasconcellos also claims that the artist "n'avait aucune imagination et il lui manque un modèle." She criticizes Etex for inconsistent portrayals of Dante and Virgil, and singles out the Francesca episode as being especially poorly rendered: "Françoise et Paul sont représentés au moment où le mari va les surprendre. Paul est un enfant. Françoise une grosse matrone. Le dessin est sans grâce, sans finesse." (Vasconcellos, op. cit., pp. 148-149.)

In 1878, Yan d'Argent's illustrations for the Divine Comedy were published by Garnier frères with an accompanying prose translation by Atraud de Montor. According to Vasconcellos, the book contains 36 large drawings and many ("nombre considérable") vignettes -- one on practically every page. She criticizes d'Argent's illustrations as being derivative of Doré: "Il [d'Argent] suit sa [Doré's] conception et n'a rien inventé de nouveau. Ce sont les mêmes démons, les mêmes arbres aux formes humaines, les mêmes corps entamés, les mêmes grimaces." (Vasconcellos, ibid., p. 149.)

Doré's drawings for L'Enfer were enthusiastically praised for the way in which they harmonized with Dante's somber poetry. Théophile Gautier wrote:

. . . il [Doré] possède cet oeil visionnaire dont parle le poète, qui sont dégager le côté secret et singulière de la nature. Il voit les choses par leur angle bizarre, fantasque et mystérieux. Son crayon vertigineux crée en se jouant, ces divinations insensibles qui donnent à l'homme l'effroi du spectre, à l'orbe l'apparence humaine, aux racines le tortillement hideux des serpents, aux plantes les bifurcations inquiétantes de la mandragore, . . . aux eaux de sinistres miroitements d'acier ou des transparences pleines de replis squameux, aux montagnes de anfractuosités que l'imagination sculpte en bas reliefs.

Doré illustrated the Francesca episode with five drawings [figures 16 - 20]. These images (like the other illustrations for L'Enfer) are hauntingly fantastic and yet meticulously realistic. As Théophile Gautier observed, Doré effectively "a inventé le climat de l'enfer."⁸⁷

In four of the Francesca drawings, Doré utilized sharp value contrasts and a continuous swirling line to emphasize the writhing, amative figures of the Circle of the Lustful. Even the single representation of the "baiser sur terre" is sexually charged. Although Doré's purpose was illustrative, he was undoubtedly cognizant of the growing taste for the erotic in art -- and astutely catered to bourgeois expectations.

Doré selected the most risqué drawing to exhibit in

⁸⁶Moniteur Universel, 30 July, 1861.

⁸⁷Moniteur Universel, 11 August, 1861.

the Salon of 1861 and to re-create in the painting which was exhibited in 1863. In this image, the two nude figures of Paolo and Francesca hover above Dante and Virgil, who regard them from the dark depths of the Inferno. Francesca turns her body towards Paolo, while not hiding her nudity from the observer. The pose of Francesca and the image of her delicate white flesh against the darker, masculine torso of her lover both serve to emphasize her sexuality. Blood of the fatal wound is the only vestige of the couple's tragic fate. In this image, the lovers are not compressed by the other shades who are caught up in the wretched wind; rather, they seem to float, oblivious and free.⁸⁸

The sumptuous painting The death of Francesca de Rimini and of Paolo Maletesta by Alexandre Cabanel,⁸⁹ exhibited at the Salon of 1870 [figure 21], continues

⁸⁸ Even though this painting was quite successful, Doré's drawings continued to be more admired than his paintings. He was perhaps the most successful illustrator of the nineteenth century, but as a painter, he can not be considered among the masters. Philip G. Hamerton, an English critic, wrote of Doré's paintings in the Salon of 1863: "Doré is not a painter in the true sense. He paints as well as many reputed 'painters' of the French school, but his color will not bear the least comparison with that of real painters such as Cabanel or Paul Baudry. His pictures are conceived simply as designs. . . . Doré's pictures are, of course, always very impressive, very great inventions, but that is not enough." From "Salon of 1863", Fine Arts Quarterly Review, London, 1863, p. 247.

⁸⁹ Cabanel (1824-1889), was one of the most successful academic masters of his time. He was trained at the studio of Picot and the école des Beaux-Arts. He won the Prix de Rome in 1845 and then spent five years in Italy. Returning to Paris, Cabanel began to receive many important commissions, and was well admired at the Salon. His early

continues in the vein of the erotic. The potentially gruesome scene of the lovers at their moment of death⁹⁰ is rendered à la Cabanel as elegant, resplendent, and exquisite.

A fittingly poetic explanation of the "scène dramatique" penned by a contemporary critic, serves to describe Cabanel's painting:

Le jeune femme, étendue sur un divan, laisse pendre un de ses bras, tandis que l'autre est replié sur sa poitrine, et de ses lèvres pâles semble murmurer encore quelques mots d'amour à son amant, expiré à ses pieds. Le vieux mari, tenant encore à son épée ensanglantée, entrouvre un rideau en regardant [sic] la scène. . . la tête de Françoise soit d'une grande finesse . . . Cette tête blonde, pleine d'une élégance aristocratique, est modelée avec soin extrême et porte un cachet de distinction remarquable. Le dessin est juste, correct et plein de charme, et la peinture caressée avec une délicatesse infinie montre dans les carnations des blancheurs exquises et des demi-teints d'une finesse incomparable. Les yeux, bien échâssés, ont une expression douce et fière, et la paleur mate de la peau vient ajouter⁹¹ encore à l'adorable distinction de l'ensemble.

Although the figures are fully clothed (in what Théophile Gautier praised as an exacting reproduction of

works were religious; later he added historical, mythological, and literary themes to his oeuvre. During the early 60's, he achieved considerable fame with erotic works (e.g. Birth of Venus). In 1855 he was elected chevalier in the Legion of Honor, and became an officer in 1864. In 1863, Cabanel was appointed professor at the école, where he served until his death. He also served as a Salon juror for 20 years, between 1868 and 1888.

⁹⁰ Cabanel's painting is the only known representation of this aspect of the tragedy.

⁹¹ René Ménard in Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1870, pp. 508-509.

"la mode florentine de XIII^e siècle") the painting is erotically charged. Francesca's meticulously rendered garments emphasize her femininity. The oblique perspective from which the figures are viewed stresses the sexuality of their lifeless yet pulsing bodies.⁹² Francesca's pose evokes exhausted abandon, not death. Her facial expression, with slightly parted lips, is one of rapture.

Édouard Théophile Blanchard,⁹³ a student of Cabanel, echoed his master's eroticism in his portrayal of the famous lovers. His quite explicit painting of Paolo and Francesca in the Inferno, exhibited in the Salon of 1880, was well regarded.⁹⁴

But Blanchard never knew of his painting's success, because his short life came to a sudden end before the Francesca was exhibited. Hence, both Blanchard and his painting were eulogized in a review of the Salon which appeared in L'Artiste:

⁹²Cabanel was in fact criticized for the "ingracious" attitude of Paolo whose "jambes décrivent l'écart d'un campas forcé." He was also derided for the excessive luxury of Francesca's costume. (Larousse, op. cit., vol. 13, p. 1218, quotes Paul de Saint-Victoire.) Another critic however, praised the artist unconditionally: "M. Cabanel is not an artist; he is a saint. He doesn't make art; he makes perfection. He does not deserve criticism; he deserves paradise." (Camille Lemonnier, Salon de Paris 1870,⁹³ p. 30.)

⁹³Blanchard (1844-1880) was a student of Picot and Cabanel. He won the Prix de Rome in 1868, after finishing third in 1866 and second in 1867. His paintings were exhibited at the Salon from 1867 until his death in 1880. He was awarded a second class medal in 1872, and a "première" in 1874.

⁹⁴Blanchard's Françoise de Rimini was sold in 1880, at the Vente Édouard Blanchard, for 3,100 francs.

Ce n'est jamais sans un serrement de coeur qu'au milieu de cette floraison touffue d'oeuvres signées par des peintres vivants, on recontre la dernière toile d'un artiste dont la mort vient de briser le pinceau . . . Cette année, c'est un jeune qui nous est enlevé dans sa marche vaillante et déjà radieuse. Édouard Blanchard comptait parmi les nombreux talents qui font honneur à l'atelier de Cabanel. . . Notre hommage, qui devaient aujourd'hui un adieu suprême, s'adressera à un lumineux et charmant portrait de femme marqué d'une empreinte toute moderne, comme à une "Françoise de Rimini" resplendissante au milieu des ténèbres nuageuses où Dante la condamne à errer sans repris. Maintenant, le peintre accompli sa tâche! A-t-il fait assez pour que son nom survive, ou son souvenir s'effacera-t-il comme un espoir irréalisé?⁹⁵

For Blanchard, the dreaded Circle of the Lustful is not in the least dark, crowded and frightening. The puffs of infernal smoke which frame the nude figures could easily pass for heavenly clouds. The lovers are no longer suffering: their agonizing separation on earth has been replaced by their ecstatic union in Hell.

Blanchard's sensual image is thoroughly unlike Ingres's portrayal of "l'amour innocent" or Scheffer's didactic, moralizing depiction. Indeed, these three artists' interpretations of the theme indicate an evolution in Paolo and Francesca iconography: a metamorphosis in representations of the couple from innocent victims to damned sinners to sensual lovers. Thus the episode could be variously couched in sentimental, melancholic or erotic imagery, as befitted the contemporary public. It was precisely this adaptability of the Francesca legend that ensured its continuing popularity.

⁹⁵ Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1880, p. 56.

During the nineteenth century, a variety of events and ideologies -- literary, political, religious, artistic, and social -- contributed to Dante's fame. The popularity of Paolo and Francesca was initially tied to the revival of Dante's chef d'oeuvre. In due course, however, the Francesca episode enjoyed prominence because its theme paralleled society's advancing notions of the complex nature of women and love.

The numerous French editions of La Divine Comédie, which granted the public access to Dante's epic, were crucial to its popularization in France. Only after these translations appeared did Dante become popular and the Francesca episode become especially favored -- with artists, playwrights, musicians, and scholars alike.

Although Delacroix⁹⁶ and undoubtedly other artists read the epic in Italian, they began to do so, and to incorporate its themes for their works, only after the Comedy had been translated into French. The numerous

⁹⁶Delacroix Journal, p. 85. On May 7, 1824, Delacroix writes: "Dante is really the first of poets. One thrills with him, as if before the thing itself. Superior in this to Michelangelo, or rather, different, for in another fashion, he also is sublime, though not through his truth." In August 1854, when displeased by Ratisbonne's translation of the Inferno, Delacroix wrote: "M. Ratisbonne flays the French language and our ears and he gives us neither the spirit nor the harmony of his [Dante's] poetry, and consequently, no true sense to him either." Delacroix, op. cit., pp. 405-406.

Dantesque works exhibited at the Salon surely enhanced the popularity of La Divine Comédie. However, artists were clearly not the initiators of the fad: they contributed to its development by responding to popular taste.

The epic's popularity also benefited from the Napoleonic invasions of Italy. Napoleon's campaigns to the peninsula augmented the diffusion of Italian culture among the French populace which had begun as early as the 15th century under Charles VIII. The growing renown of the Divine Comedy corresponded to France's heightened eager absorption of Italian art and culture, for as Italy became increasingly *à la mode*, so did Dante.

The legendary possibility that Dante visited Paris became an established and cherished "fact" for the French.⁹⁷ The rationale by which Napoleon claimed rights to the treasures of Italian museums was echoed in France's ostensible adoption of Dante as her own. Thus, while England revived Shakespeare and Germany popularized Goethe, France resurrected "her" Dante.

This paternal perspective was strengthened by the fact that Dante, like France, was Catholic.⁹⁸ For the pious, the epic granted quasi-religious teachings and produced

⁹⁷From de Nolhac, Nouvelle Revue d'Italie VI, (1874) p. 208: "Dante est bien venu chez nous. Nous devons l'affirmer sans crainte: non pas parce que cela nous fait plaisir, comme l'allèguent ceux qui nous accurent de jouer du sentiment, mais tout simplement parce que c'est la vérité."

⁹⁸The fact that Dante was more popular in Catholic France than in Anglican England strengthens this argument.

vivid insights into the horrifying reality of Hell and the infinite glory of Paradise. During the 1820's and 1830's, when "art in France acquired the aura of a religious revival,"⁹⁹ the Comedy proved a fertile source for relating Biblical truths in a "modern" way.

Certainly, Dante's theology was not tantamount to that of the Catholic Church. The poem's popularity, therefore, was not regulated either by the Church's decrees or by the religious controversy which the epic created. The Comedy was greatly admired by Catholics between 1830 and 1836,¹⁰⁰ but was later denounced as heretical.¹⁰¹ Yet the public exhibited a more or less consistent admiration for the poem. Thus while the Catholic association may have enhanced the blossoming vogue of Dante, the Church's ultimate reprobation of the epic seems to have had little negative effect on its popularity.

In the artistic realm, the Divine Comedy was enthusiastically embraced by both the most conservative and progressive artists, for it contained both classical and romantic subjects: the epic contains an odd synthesis of

⁹⁹Geraldine Pelles, Art, Artists, and Society: Origins of a Modern Dilemma. Painting in England and France 1750-1850, p.20.

¹⁰⁰Gabriel Maugain, "L'orthodoxie de Dante et la critique française, de 1830 à 1860" in Dante, Recueil d'études publiées pour la vie centenaire du poète, p. 187.

¹⁰¹In 1856-57, "L'Hérésie de Dante démontré par Francesca de Rimini, de preuves supplémentaires et de la clef" was included at the end of the third volume of a translation of the Comedy by E. Aroux.

the Italian and the Catholic with the fantastic and the medieval. For the neo-classicists, the Divine Comedy provided an opportunity for illustrating warnings for moral sobriety. The troubadour painters admired Dante's medievalism and the romantics applauded his sublime pathos. And by the end of the century, the academicians had found in Dante's text numerous themes appropriate to satisfy their clients' taste for images of pseudo-chaste eroticism.

Many of the artists who produced Dantesque images also studied in Italy. Of those who exhibited works based on the Francesca tragedy, Girodet, Ingres, Calamatta, de Faveau, Hesse, Rubio, Gendron, Cabanel, and Blanchard all travelled to the peninsula. Undoubtedly such proximity to Dante's homeland fueled a special interest in the Divina Comedia. In Italy, French artists may have been influenced by Italian works inspired by the Comedy, for in the early part of the century, the poet's reknown was comparatively greater in Italy than in France.¹⁰² Like Suhleyras, who was exposed to Dante while living in Italy, numerous other French artists may have gained a special admiration for the poet as a result of visiting his country.

Artists also seem to have played an important role in fostering in their apprentices an admiration for Dante, for

¹⁰²For an initial list of Italian paintings of Paolo and Francesca, refer to the Colulmb de Batine's Bibliographica Dantesca.

a significant number of the artists who depicted Dantesque themes worked together in the same atelier or studied under the same master. From those artists who represented the Francesca scene, the following connections existed: Guérin was a teacher for Delacroix, Delaroche, and Scheffer. Girodet was the teacher of Aubry-Lecomte, Coupin, Colin, and Decaisne. Delaroche taught Yvon, Gendron, and Gérôme; Gros was teacher to Hesse, Decaisne, Perlet; Cogniet taught Rubio and Feyen-Perin (Yvon later also taught Feyen-Perin); Picot taught Cabanel and Blanchard (Cabanel was later Blanchard's master); Scheffer was the teacher of Bartholdi; Ingres was teacher to Flandrin, Etex, and Perlet; Gérôme taught Lecomte de Nouy and Lesrel.

All of these factors -- the numerous editions of La Divine Comédie, the continuing vogue of Italy augmented through the Napoleonic invasions, the role of the Catholic Church, and the connections of French artists to Italy and to each other -- suggest why the Divine Comedy became an important source of artistic inspiration after two hundred and fifty years of relative obscurity.

However, within this atmosphere of growing admiration for Dante, the Francesca episode became especially favored largely because its theme was synonymous with the ideology of the burgeoning romantic cult of love. The love of Paolo and Francesca echoed that of Lancelot and Guinevere and was in turn re-told through contemporary literature which characterized lovers as doomed or dying.

Nineteenth-century artists often culled their subjects from the great epic literary works of the past (Homer, Shakespeare, Milton, Ossian) and present (Goethe, Byron, Scott, Chateaubriand) which were deemed sublime or beautiful. And the theme of unfulfilled love, which was so popular in literature, thus became a favorite subject for the visual arts as well. Daphnis and Chloé, Pyramus and Thisbe, Tristan and Iseult, Romeo and Juliet, Paul and Virginie, Marguerite, and Atala all inspired images exhibited at the Salons contemporary with those of Paolo and Francesca. But unlike the Dantesque image, which remained popular throughout the century, these other themes were prevalent only during relatively specific times.

Paul and Virginie, for example, were popular figures around the turn of the century. However, their story was deemed too sentimental to be promoted by the romantics. In contrast, a previously sentimentalized Paolo and Francesca was transformed to an image of lamentable lovers to suit the romantic taste for melancholy. Similarly, artists could just as readily present yet another aspect of the Francesca episode to defame infidelity. Ironically, after mid-century, when sensual themes reached new heights of popularity, this formerly depicted chaste, melancholic, and moralizing episode provided artists with a socially approved channel for the erotic.

But the intrigue of the Francesca tragedy also grew out of an impression that its themes were relevant to contemporary moral and social ideologies. In his study of

the popularity of the Divine Comedy in France, Counson suggests: "Aux livres comme aux hommes on s'attache dans la mesure où l'on se retrouve en eux; et le public pense, lit, et juge selon son âge et son humeur."¹⁰³ Especially relevant was the public's concept of love, adultery and women.

During a large part of the century, love was viewed as a painful sentiment, and suffering was considered to be a condition for its fulfillment. Saint-Beuve wrote to George Sand: "Love means tears; if you weep, you love."¹⁰⁴ An ambiguous composite concept for the ideal lover emerged in which women were to be at once a virginal Madonna and an alluring pagan goddess; a fragile nymph and a dangerous temptress. Thus, throughout the century, women were both the object of fervent adoration and fearful anxiety. They were idealized by, and at the same time sharply differentiated from, men.¹⁰⁵

This confused and irrational view of women was undoubtedly precipitated by their changing role in society, for they were viewed as becoming increasingly complex and less predictable. In Napoleon's attempt to modernize the medieval battle between law and chastity, women became at

¹⁰³Counson, op. cit., p. 3.

¹⁰⁴Pelles, op. cit., p.140.

¹⁰⁵For a well-documented study on the fate of French women in the nineteenth century, see Claire Goldberg Moses, French Feminism in the 19th Century.

once cherished and destroyed.¹⁰⁶ The laws which he established created a system which stressed masculine authority and repressed women, presumably to protect them. The Church's intolerance of divorce and the State's subsequent prohibition of it in 1816¹⁰⁷ was, needless to say, an ineffective effort in encouraging fidelity. Likewise, the increasingly restrictive laws against prostitution were more efficient in degrading the honest working woman than in imposing moral reform.¹⁰⁸

The Francesca legend could thus be perceived as strikingly modern. The characters in Dante's fifth canto served as analogues to nineteenth-century men and women. Paolo and Francesca's torturous romance, like contemporary concepts of love, is impassioned yet distressing. Their pathetic fate could either justify or challenge the Church and the laws governing adultery. Francesca comprises the

¹⁰⁶ Napoleon's Civil Code (1800-1804) granted equal rights for all citizens, but women were not considered citizens. The code's inequities become especially evident in regards to adultery: the code permitted the husband the right to separation in the event of the wife's commission of adultery; not unexpectedly, the wife did not have equal recourse. If convicted of adultery, a wife was imprisoned, but the husband would merely be fined if he was found guilty of the same crime. Proving his infidelity was difficult, however, because he was considered unfaithful only if his mistress was living in his home.

¹⁰⁷ Divorce was not legalized again until 1884.

¹⁰⁸ The Police des Moeurs, who Napoleon originally instated to contain and regulate prostitution ultimately became agents of control and moral reform. In 1836, Parent-Duchâtelet published a two volume study entitled De la Prostitution dans la Ville de Paris. See Jill Harsin, Policing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Paris.

ambiguous components of the ideal woman, for she is at once Paolo's joy and nemesis.

While it is tempting to "explain" the nineteenth-century's fondness for the Francesca episode, one important fact should not be overlooked: the lines of "le recit tendre et triste de Françoise de Rimini" were quite simply some of the most beautiful of the entire epic. As Nicolas Perella has suggested, "medieval literature bequeathed no kiss more justly famous than the one we read of in the fifth canto of Dante's Inferno."¹⁰⁹ The lover's fame was insured both by Dante's poetic perfection and the absolute timelessness of his theme. Art is fortunate to have found such a willing theme in the literature of poetic justice, and the populace is all the more indebted to its artists by the wedding of the two.

¹⁰⁹Nicholas Perella, The Kiss, Sacred and Profane, p. 140.



Figure 1
Pierre Subleyras
Charon Passing the Shades, ca. 1730



Figure 2
Coupin de la Couperie
The fatal love of Francesca de Rimini, 1812

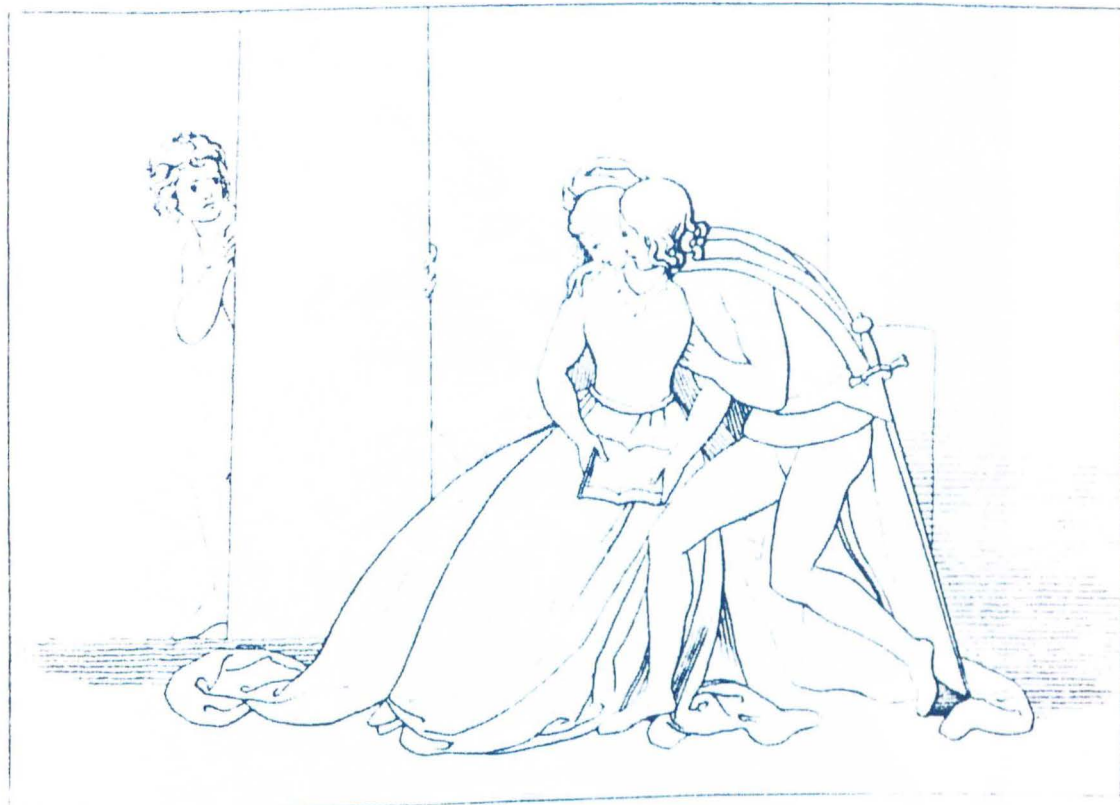


Figure 3
John Flaxman
Paolo and Francesca, 1793



Figure 4
J.-A.-D. Ingres
Paolo and Francesca, 1814



Figure 5
J.-A.-D. Ingres
Paolo and Francesca, 1819



Figure 6
Aubry-Lecomte
Paolo and Francesca, 1835



Figure 7
A.-L. Girodet-Trioson
Dante Swooning in the Arms of Virgil
upon Seeing the Torments of Paolo and Francesca, ca. 1815



Figure 8
John Flaxman
Paolo and Francesca, 1793



Figure 9
Ary Scheffer
Dante and Virgil encounter the shade of
Francesca di Rimini and of Paolo in the Inferno, 1835



Figure 10
Luigi Calamatta
Paolo and Francesca, 1843

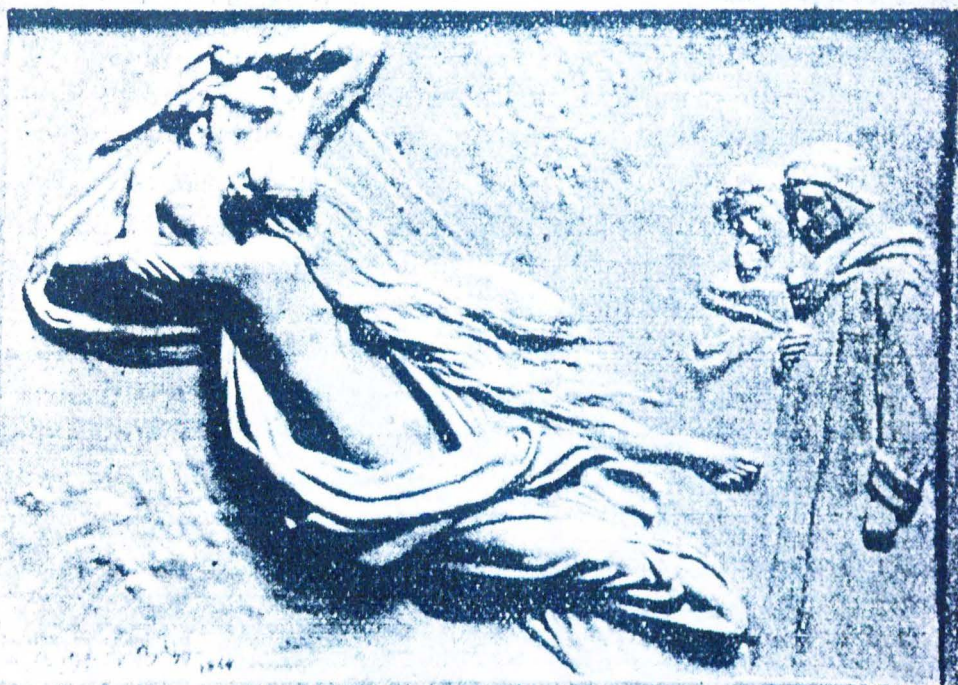


Figure 11
F.-A. Bartholdi
Francesca di Rimini, 1852



Figure 12
Adolphe Yvon
Lust, 1848



Figure 13
E.-A. Gendron
Francesca and Paolo Passing through the Inferno, 1852



Figure 14
Gustave Doré
Francesca de Rimini and Paolo, 1863

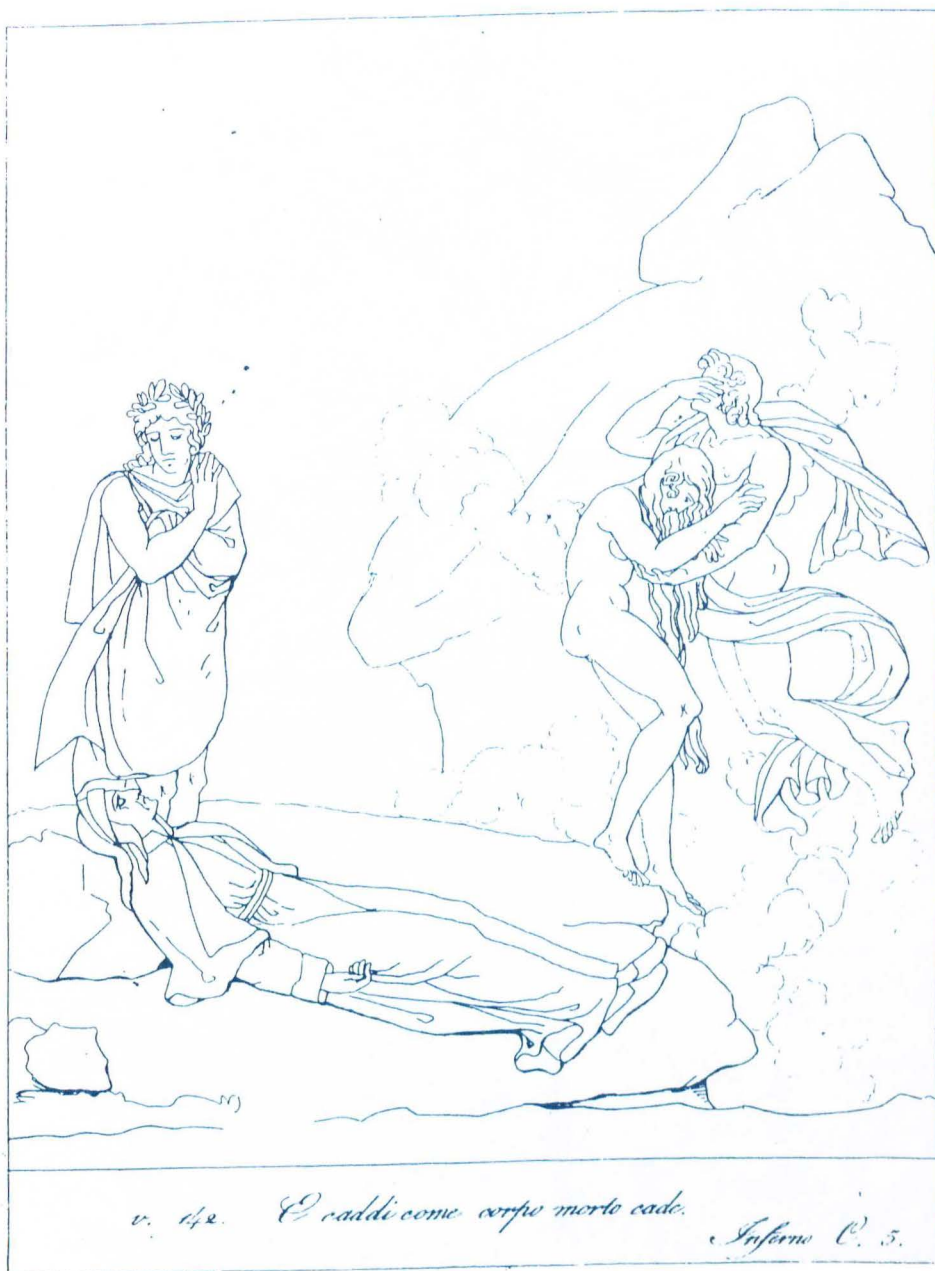


Figure 15
 Sophia Giacomelli
Inferno, canto V, 1812



Figure 16
Gustave Doré
The Lustful, 1861
Inferno, V, 31-32



Figure 17
Gustave Doré
Paolo and Francesca, 1861
Inferno, V, 73-75



Figure 18
Gustave Doré
Paolo and Francesca, 1861
Inferno, V, 106-107



Figure 19
Gustave Doré
Paolo and Francesca, 1861
Inferno, V, 138



Figure 20
Gustave Doré
Paolo and Francesca, 1861
Inferno, V, 141-142



Figure 21
Alexandre Cabanel
The Death of Francesca de Rimini and of Paolo, 1870



Figure 22
Edouard Blanchard
Francesca de Rimini, 1880

APPENDIX 1

Coupin de la Couperie	1812	#227	"Les amours funestes de Françoise de Rimini"
Coupin de la Couperie	1814	#219	"Les amours funestes de Françoise de Rimini"
Ingres, J.-A.-D.	1819		"Paolo et Francesca"
Scheffer, Ary	1822	#1172	"Les ombres de Françoise de Rimini et son ammant apparaissant au Dante et à Virgile"
Scheffer, Ary	1824		"Les ombres de Françoise de Rimini et son ammant"
Grevedon	1827	#1562	"Françoise de Rimini" (lithograph after Coupin)
Darondeau, S.	1831	#446	"Françoise de Rimini"
Hesse, A.		#1065	"Françoise de Rimini"
Colin, A.	1833	#431	"Françoise de Rimini"
Rubio		#3189	"Paul et Françoise de Rimini"
Scheffer, Ary	1835	#1945	"Le Dante et Virgile recontrant l'ombre de Francisca di Rimini et de Paolo aux enfers"
Etex, Antoine		#2231	"Françoise de Rimini" (marble bas-relief)
Aubry-Lecomte		#2459	"Françoise de Rimini et Paul" (lithograph after Ingres)
Decaisne, H.	1841	#493	"Françoise de Rimini"
Perlet, P-ï	1842	#1467	"Françoise de Rimini"
Rollet, Rene		#2094	"Françoise de Rimini" (aquatint after Decaisne)
Calamatta, Luigi	1843	#1538	"Françoise de Rimini" (engraving after Scheffer)
Yvon, Adolphe	1848	#4591	"La Luxure" (drawing)
Gendron, Auguste	1852	#550	"Francesca et Paolo passant aux enfers"
Etex, Antoine	1855		"Françoise de Rimini" (marble bas-relief)
Ingres, J.-A.-D.			"Paolo et Francesca"
Yvon, Adolphe			"La Luxure" (drawing)
Garnier, Jean	1857	#2907	"Enfer du Dante, cercle des luxurieux" (gilded bronze bas-relief)
Bottinelli, Antonio	1859	#3094	"La Francesca da Rimini" (marble bust)
Dore, Gustave-Paul	1861	#908	"Paolo et Francesca di Rimini aux enfers" (drawing)
Feyen-Perrin, A.		#1094	"Les ames damnées"
Dore, Gustave-Paul	1863	#598	"Françoise de Rimini et Paolo"

Lecomte-Dunouy, J.-A.-J.	#1135	"Francesca de Rimini et Paolo"
Bogino, Frederic-Louis	#2246	"Françoise de Rimini" (plaster group)
Bovin, Émile	1866 #197	"Françoise de Rimini"
Stattler, Stanislas	1868 #3327	"Françoise de Rimini" (lavé after Scheffer)
Jacott, Jean-Jules	#4186	"Luxure" (lithograph after Yvon)
Didier, Adrien	1869 #3959	"Françoise de Rimini" (engraving after Ingres)
Cabanel, Alexandre	1870 #437	"Mort de Francesca de Rimini et de Paolo Malatesta"
Lesrel, Adolphe-Alex.	#1754	"Françoise de Rimini"
Pomey, Louis-Edmond	#2315	"Francesca et Paolo"
Sichel, Nathale	1876 #1899	"Françoise de Rimini et Paolo de Malatesta"
Croisy, Aristide	#3180	"Paul Malatesta et Françoise de Rimini" (plaster group)
Ricco, Claudio	1877 #4093	"Françoise de Rimini" (marble bust)
Croisy, Aristide	1878 #4159	"Paul Malatesta et Françoise de Rimini" (marble group)
Tojetti, Dominico	1879 #2862	"Françoise de Rimini"
Hugues, Jean-Baptiste	#5105	"Ombres de Francesca de Rimini et de Paolo Malatesta" (plaster group)
Blanchard, Édouard	1880 #360	"Françoise de Rimini"

APPENDIX 2

Giacomelli, Mme.	1812	#1053	"Dessins et gravures d'une suite de 100 sujets du Dante"
Soulary	1817	#1045	"Le comte Ugolin"
Delacroix	1822	#309	"Dante et Virgile conduits par Plegias traversent le lac qui entour les murailles de la ville infernal de Dite"
Lecomte, P.	1824	#1098	"La lecture du Dante"
Garella	1831	#855	"Ugolin"
Norblin	1833	#699	"Le mort d'Ugolin"
Chevalier, F.	1834	#326	"Le mort d'Ugolin" (drawing after Norblin)
Klagmann		#2094	"Le Dante Alghieri" (bronze statuette)
Flandrin, H.	1836	#697	"Le Dante, conduit par Virgile, offre des consolations aux des envieux"
de Biefve	1837	#124	"Le conte Ugolin et ses fils dans la tour de Pise"
Delaborde, Henri	1838	#447	"Arrestation du Comte Ugolin"
Kearsley, Henriette		#1010	"Sujet tire du Purgatoire du Dante"
Boilly, Jules	1839	#198	"Le Dante a Verone"
Lessorre, imile		#1369	"Le comte Ugolin"
Long, Augustin		#1400	"Ugolin, comte de la Gherardesca"
Podesti, Francesco		#1702	"Le Giotto compassant sous l'inspirationn du Dante"
Regis, Augustin		#1754	"Le Dante dans une villa de Guido Novello"
Rochet, Louis		#2254	"Le comte Ugolin et ses enfants enfermes dans la tour Guadandi a Pise" (plaster group)
Cornu, Sebastien	1840	#303	"Le Beatrix du Dante"
Delaborde, Henri		#402	"Apparition de Beatrix au Dante"
Delacroix			"Justice de Trajan"
Maison, Jules-Eugene		#1127	"Une scene de l'Enfer, du Dante"
Rubio		#1454	"Le Dante, conduit par Beatrix arrive dans le cercle de la lune où se trouvent les îmes qui ont manqué à leurs voeux"

Gendron, Auguste	1844	#777	"Le Dante commenté en place publique"
Baille, E.	1846	#58	"Le Dante et Virgile aux enfers"
Lobin, Leopold		#1211	"Le Dante"
Barre, Albert	1847	#77	"Dante Alighieri"
Delaborde, Henri		#450	"Dante à Verona"
Glaize, A.-B.		#722	"Dante ecrlant son poème sous l'inspiration de Beatrix et de Virgile"
Pluyette, A.-V.		#1318	"Ugolin et ses enfants"
Triqueti, Henry de		#2168	"Le Dante aux Champs-Elysées"
			(bas-relief)
Hurtrel, A.	1848	#2339	"Le cercle des traîtres visite par Dante et Virgile"
Lecomte, Émile		#2782	"Le comte Ugolin et ses enfants"
Yvon, Adolphe		#4590	"La colere"
			(drawing)
Yvon, Adolphe	1849	#2084	"Deux dessins tire de l'Enfer du Dante: L'Avarice; La Gourmandise"
Berthoud, Fritz	1850	#203	"Dante rencontrant Bevilacqua et d'autres ombres paresseuses"
Boulanger, Louis		#325	"Douler d'Hecube"
Boulanger, Louis		#326	"La prison d'Ugolin et de ses fils"
Bougureau, William		#357	"L'enfer du Dante"
Caudron, Jules-Desire		#491	"Les faussaires"
Devers, J.		#843	"Le Dante"
			(enamel on porcelain after Delacroix)
Prevost, Alexandre		#2534	"Dante et Virgile"
			(drawing after Delacroix)
Yvon, Adolphe		#3127	"L'orgeil"
Popelin-Ducarre	1852	#1065	"Dante lisant ses poesies à Giotto"
Barrias, Félix-Joseph	1853	#51	"Dante Alighieri"
Préault, August		#1481	"Virgile" and "Dante" (two bronze medals)
Curzon, Paul-Alfred	1857	#659	"Dante et Virgile sur le rivage du Purgatoire, voient venir la barque des âmes que conduit un ange"
Feyen-Perrin, Auguste		#963	"Le Barque de Caron"
Lobbedez, Chas-August		#1760	"Ugolin et ses Enfants"
Corot	1859	#688	"Dante et Virgile, paysage"
Hamman, Edouard		#1393	"Dante à Ravenne"

Magaud, D.-A.	#2058	"Dante, conduit par Virgile, arrive au sommet du Purgatoire et aperçoit le Paradis"
Chéron, Alfred	#3138	"Dante" (plaster statue)
Lassale, Émile	#4824	"Le Dante et Virgile" (lithograph after Delacroix)
Doré, Gustave-Paul	1861 #904	"Dante et Virgile, 9e cercle (Ugolin)"
Doré, Gustave-Paul	#906	"Dante et Virgile traversant le Styx" (drawing)
Doré,	#907	"Virgile et Dante au tombeau du Florentin Farrinata" (drawing)
Morani, Vincenzo	#2289	"Le Dante, reçu par Béatrix dans la 1er sphère du Paradis, aperçoit un groupe d'âmes parmi lesquelles Piccarda et la reine Constance s'avancent vers lui"
Olivier, Pierre	#2402	"Le Dante et Virgile"
Popelin, Claudius	#2585	"Le Dante victorieux rentre à Florence après la bataille de Compaldino"
Allais, P.-P.-E.	#3664	"Dante à Ravenne" (engraving after Hamman)
Delduc, J.-P.	#3700	"L'enfer du Dante" (wood engraving after Doré)
Dumont, Louis	#3706	"Scène de l'enfer du Dante; le songe" (wood engraving after Doré)
Dumont, Louis	#3707	"Scène de l'Enfer du Dante; la Louvre" (wood engraving after Doré)
Dupeyron, Bonnet	#3712	"Scène de l'Enfer du Dante" (wood engraving after Doré)
Fagnion, Jules	#3717	"Scène de l'Enfer du Dante" (wood engraving after Doré)
Gauchard, Félix-Jean	#3724	"Le barque de Caron" (wood engraving)
Henriet, Charles-Louis	#3754	"Le Barque du Dante" (etching after Delacroix)
Laplante, Charles	#3775	"Ugolin, scène de l'Enfer" (wood engraving after Doré)
Pannemaker, Adolphe	#3831	"Six scènes de l'Enfer du Dante" (wood engraving after Doré)

Verdeil, Pierre		#3891	"Scène de l'Enfer du Dante, chant VI"	(wood engraving after Doré)
Verdeil, Pierre		#3892	"Scène de l'Enfer du Dante, chant XIII"	(wood engraving after Doré)
Wauters, C.-A	1863	#1885	"Dante et Beatrix"	
Carpeaux, J.-B.		#2272	"Ugolin et ses enfants"	(bronze group)
Roab, Jean-Léonard		#2729	"L'Enfer du Dante"	(wood engraving after Doré)
Sotain, Noel-Eugène		#2744	"Scène de l'Enfer du Dante"	(drawing after Doré)
Sirouy, Achille		#2809	"Dante et Virgile arrivant à l'entrée du Paradis"	(after Magaud)
Jacquand, Claudius	1864	#968	"Dante à Rome"	
Meyer, Alfred		#2353	"Tête du Dante"	(enamel after Raphael)
Manigaud, Jean-Claude		#2945	"Le Dante lisant ses poèmes à Béatrix"	(engraving after Wauters)
Leofanti, Adolphe	1866	#1206	"Le Dante porté sur la croupe de Nessus au delà du Phlégéon"	
Popelin, Claudius		#2509	"Dante Aligheri"	(enamel)
Jacott, Jean-Jules	1867	#2726	"La Colère"	(after Yvon)
Jacptt, Jean-Jules		#2727	"L'Envie"	(after Yvon)
Saint-Marceaux, René	1868	#3842	"Jeunesse du Dante"	(plaster statue)
Lehmann, August		#4082	"Le Dante aux enfers"	(engraving after Flandrin)
Pannemaker, F.-A.		#4107	"Le Purgatoire du Dante"	(after Doré)
Jacott, Jean-Jules		#4186	"Luxure"	(lithograph after Yvon)
Jacott, Jean-Jules		#4187	"Orgueil"	(lithograph after Yvon)
Chenavard, Paul	1869	#472	"Divina Tragedia"	
Barnouvin, J.-B.-P.-A.		#2493	"Dante et Virgile aux Enfers"	(watercolor after Delacroix)
Saint-Marceaux, René		#3693	"La jeunesse du Dante"	(marble statue)
Sunol, Geronimo		#3723	"Le Dante"	(bronze statue)
Pannemaker, Adolphe		#4101	"Scène du <u>Paradis</u> du Dante"	(wood engraving after Doré)

Jacott, Jean-Jules		#4201	"Portrait du Dante"
			(lithograph after Raphael)
Cabasson, G.-A.	1870	#441	"Le Dante et Virgile aux enfers, dans le cercle des Géants"
Levasseur, J.-G.		#5265	"Le Dante"
			(engraving after Gérôme)
Pannemaker		#5300	"Dante au Purgatoire"
			(after Doré)
Durangel, L.-V.	1874	#668	"Christ Glorieux"
Topart, Antonin		#2585	"Le barque du Dante"
			(enamel after Delacroix)
Delacroix, H.-E.	1875	#608	"Supplice réservé aux dissipateurs"
Doré, Gustave-Paul		#688	"Dante et Virgile visitent la septième enceinte"
Hadengue, Louis-Michel		#1005	"Les avarés et les prodiges"
Janmot, Louis		#1109	"Le rêve du Dante"
Laurens, Mlle Pauline		#1258	"Béatrix"
Moreau de Tours, G.	1876	#1507	"Didon aux Enfers"
Vaudet, Alfred-Auguste		#3695	"Dante Alighieri"
Roubaud, F.-F.	1877	#4111	"Le barque de Caron"
			(group of marble statuettes)
Schulz, Jean-Georges		#4222	"Le Dante"
			(engraving after Raphael)
Antigna, J.-P.-A.	1878	#39	"L'enfer"
Comte, Pierre-Charles		#553	"Le Dante"
Richter, Édouard		#1899	"Ugolin"
Zuber, Jean-Henri		#2327	"Dante et Virgile"
Albano, Salvatore		#3995	"Inferno di Dante"
			(marble statue)
Amy, Jean-Barnabe		#4006	"L'Enfer"
			(terra-cotta bust)
Bellanger, C.-F.	1879	#200	"Scène de l'enfer du Dante"
Contti, Antonio		#760	"Le Dante à Vérone"
Édouard, Albert		#1150	"Dante et Virgile sur le lac glacé"
Aubé, Jean-Paul		#4765	"Dante Alighieri"
			(plaster statue)
Hébert, Théodore-Martin		#5091	"Dante"
			(terra-cotta bust)
Courtoise, Gustave	1880	#923	"Dante et Virgile aux enfers; - cercle des traîtres à la Patrie"
Aubé, Jean-Paul		#6061	"Dante Alighieri"
			(bronze statue)

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