

Linguistics 103: Language structure and verbal art
Translations of Dante: Cantos II and III of *The Inferno*
Discussion Problem for October 12

Follow the 'readings' link from the course home page. You will find .pdf files containing translations of the beginning of *The Inferno* by eight different translators. (Most files contain cantos 1-3, although two have only cantos 2-3).

Read and evaluate the translations of canto 2 by the following translators:

Jefferson Butler Fletcher 1931 (lived 1865-1946, United States)
Geoffrey L Bickersteth 1965 (lived 1884-1974, British)
Charles Hubert Sisson 1981 (lived 1914-2003, British)
Sean O'Brien 2006 (b. 1952, British)

Read and evaluate the translations of canto 3 by the following translators:

Mark Musa 1967 (b. 1934, United States)
Allan Gilbert 1969 (lived 1888-1976, United States)
Steve Ellis 1994 (b. 1952, British)
Ciarán Carson 2002 (b. 1958, Northern Ireland)

Although it's not essential to read the other cantos in each translation, they are provided for you if you are interested in getting a clearer sense of the translator's style.

For each translation be prepared minimally to discuss:

- (a) the meter, if any, the translator has chosen
- (b) the rhyme scheme, if any
- (c) choices in vocabulary (formal, archaic, 'elevated', casual, quirky etc.)
- (d) choices in word order (natural vs. artificial)
- (e) why, specifically, you did or did not like the translation