



Images of the Journey in Dante's Divine Comedy

Professor Charles H. Taylor, Patricia Finley

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The vivid events and characters of Dante's "Divine Comedy" have inspired artists for over six centuries. This book assembles more than 250 illustrations of Dante's poem, created by fifteen known artists and some twenty anonymous illuminators to depict every aspect of the pilgrim's journey to the depths of Hell, the mountain of Purgatory, and the heavenly spheres of Paradise. Through twenty short essays and commentaries on each painting or drawing in this collection, Charles H. Taylor and Patricia Finley illuminate the artistry of generations of the "Divine Comedy"'s illustrators and of the poem itself. Taylor and Finley examine Dante's poem as a psychological journey from the dark wood of depression, through painful purgations achieved in inner work and dreams, to the maturity of objective love that is grounded in feminine compassion. And they explore how Dante's own life journey is the necessary setting for his poem. They support their interpretation with visual images of the poet's imagined journey as created by illustrators from the naive yet skilled medieval illuminators of the fourteenth-century through artists as notable and diverse as Sandro Botticelli, Giovanni di Paolo, William Blake, Gustave Dore, and Leonard Baskin. In this book, Taylor and Finley encourage newcomers to discover the depth of Dante's insight into the essential human journey and invite those who know the "Divine Comedy" to rediscover the poem itself.

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