

5-2019

Necessity Rather than Influence: The Use of Satirical Elements by Dante Alighieri and Geoffrey Chaucer as a Result of the Social Conditions During the Middle Ages

Kendra Makenzie Carter
East Tennessee State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.etsu.edu/honors>

 Part of the [Medieval History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Carter, Kendra Makenzie, "Necessity Rather than Influence: The Use of Satirical Elements by Dante Alighieri and Geoffrey Chaucer as a Result of the Social Conditions During the Middle Ages" (2019). *Undergraduate Honors Theses*. Paper 486. <https://dc.etsu.edu/honors/486>

This Honors Thesis - Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Works at Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Undergraduate Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University. For more information, please contact digilib@etsu.edu.

Introduction

The Roman Catholic Church was the dominant social force in Europe during the Middle Ages. According to Alixe Bovey, “The success of the Church as a dominant force can be attributed in no small measure to its highly-developed organization, which over the course of the Middle Ages developed a sophisticated system of governance, law and economy.” However, due to the Church’s involvement in indulgences, simony, and the increasing ecclesiastical and temporal power of the clergy, there was a growing expression of criticism regarding the Church’s policies and procedures. Bovey continues to state, “The Church aggressively struggled against dissenters within and without: Christians who disagreed with the Church's teachings were considered heretics, and could be physically punished or even killed.” This presented a unique challenge to people who were questioning the Church’s methods and motives. The Medieval society was the perfect catalyst for satire as a literary device to prevent punishment from the Church or government officials. Both Dante and Chaucer, who are considered among the most significant literary influences in Europe during the Middle Ages, use satirical method.

Dante Alighieri, considered the father of Italian language, created his best known work *The Divine Comedy* as a stark reflection of the issues surrounding the Church. Instead of writing *The Divine Comedy* in Latin which was the language of literature at the time, Dante utilizes the common Italian vernacular. Nearly seven decades later Geoffrey Chaucer, considered the father of English literature, also wrote a criticism of the Church in his work *The Canterbury Tales* and wrote this in Middle English instead of Latin. Each author uses the literary device of satire to present a criticism of the church when most forms of criticism were considered heresy. Dante’s criticism is more open and biting because of his use of Juvenalian satire; while Chaucer’s

criticism is more wry and playful because of his use of Horatian. Nevertheless, both authors reveal their criticisms in the language of the people to the people.

These similarities among others seem to suggest a connection and possible influence from Dante to Chaucer. Research does suggest that because Dante uses satire and Chaucer, whose education was heavily influenced by French and Italian writers, such as Boccaccio, also uses satire, that Dante had an indirect if not direct influence on Chaucer (Lowes 708). However, I propose that the matter of influence may not be one that is strictly literary from Dante to Chaucer, but that both authors were expressing through the use of satire a reaction to the societal conditions produced by the policies and politics of the Roman Catholic Church which directly or indirectly influenced each man's life and art.

Current research regarding influence from Dante to Chaucer seems to be a superficial look at influence from primarily a literary perspective. Influence may very well occur on both writers through the historical perspective surrounding the policies of the Roman Catholic Church which link both men across time beginning with Boniface VIII to the Western Schism. I will examine these social conditions within the Middle Ages, and how this prompted the use of satire by both Chaucer and Dante. A comparison and analysis of Dante's *The Divine Comedy* and Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* in light of the events surrounding the church at the times these works were written will provide insight into a possible historical influence. These literary works are both expressions of a dissatisfaction with the Church and more importantly a dissatisfaction with its influence on society in general. It may be that Chaucer is not influenced by Dante, but the age itself necessitated the use of his own mode of satire. The Roman Catholic Church's influence on history may shed light into why these two authors utilized their own unique mode of satire while at the same time writing about some of the same issues surrounding the church.

Chapter One: Opposing Views

When discussing the overarching question of influence, whether it is artistic or societal, it may be best to begin with research concerning the artistic influence surrounding Dante, Boccaccio, and Chaucer. Research begins with Dante and moves toward Chaucer; however, that is where the similarities end. Research separates into those who either believe Dante had a significant influence on Chaucer or those who believe there is little to no influence. There is also some research which contends a connection between Dante and Chaucer through Boccaccio, a medieval Italian author, whose works appear between the writings of Dante and Chaucer.

Group One

In “A Text and Its Afterlife: Dante and Chaucer” Karla Taylor states, “On the question of Dante’s overall influence on Chaucer, they tend to fall into one of two camps” (9). The first group generally “concedes that Chaucer’s writings contain many Dantesque lines,” but as Taylor goes on to state, the commonly accepted thought within this first group tends to “minimize their importance” (9). The prevailing thought in the article “The World of Chaucer” published by the University of Glasgow seems to be that Chaucer’s stronger influences are a common medieval education with prevailing Christian topics from authors such as Virgil. This same article discusses various influencers for Chaucer and his body of work with Dante receiving only a slight mention. The University of Glasgow article continues by stating, “Chaucer aimed to emulate the great poets of the past in his vernacular writing is quite clear from his line at the end of *Troilus and Criseyde* where he consciously places himself in the grand line of ‘Virgil, Ovid, Omer, Lucan and Stace.’” There is no mention by Chaucer himself regarding Dante when the author gives this list of influencers; therefore, The University of Glasgow article implies that if

Chaucer felt Dante to be a significant influencer, Chaucer would have listed him. Conversely, Stockton Axson in *Dante and English Literature* states, “There are about 100 lines in Chaucer that are unquestionably taken from Dante,” but still intimates despite the numerous references to Dante by Chaucer this does not equate to influence (222).

Axson continues in *Dante and English Literature* to speak to the issue of influence when he states, “as time goes on and scholars discover more and more of what may be called the machinery of allegory in the past, it becomes more doubtful that a resemblance implies indebtedness” (221). For example, in his book *The Mind of Chaucer* Uberto Limentani expounds on the issue of resemblance rather than influence when he states, “Chaucer seems to be mocking Dante: in the scene in Purgatorio, for example, where Dante describes a golden eagle that came down like a thunderbolt and snatched him up to heaven. Chaucer’s eagle *In the House of Fame* is similar, but protests at the load it has to carry” (189-190). According to Limentani, Chaucer seems to share form and function with Dante in the “similarities in structure between the *Comedy* and Chaucer’s *Parlement of Foules* (190).” Limentani writes that “Other critics have pointed out Dante’s significance in the tradition of the poet-pilgrim device, the ‘fallible first-person singular’; the fruitfulness of Dante’s technique of portraying and commenting implicitly and explicitly on himself cannot have escaped Chaucer as he wrote the *Canterbury Tales*” (198-199). Such similarities in form and function do not necessarily translates into a true and pure influence. The University of Glasgow, Axson, and Limentani research places them into Taylor’s first group who tend to minimize Dante’s influence on Chaucer.

Group Two

According to Taylor, “The second group sees Chaucer as ‘Dante in Inglissh’ in the broadest possible sense, with the same poetic and philosophical aims as his predecessor” (10).

One of the most adamant among authors who suggest a definitive influence of Dante on Chaucer is John Livingston Lowes. Lowes states in his article “Chaucer and Dante” featured in the journal *Modern Philology*, “It is the purpose of this article to present a number of Chaucer’s borrowings that have not (I believe) hitherto been pointed out” (705). Lowes contends that borrowing translates into influence when concerning Dante and Chaucer. According to Lowes, Chaucer’s “phraseology shows unmistakably the influence of Dante” and Lowes utilizes numerous examples of Chaucer’s borrowings to demonstrate influence (715). Nevill Coghill in his book *The Poet Chaucer* adds to this definitive influence perspective when he states that Chaucer was “struggling to look forward to a newer and a more controlled way of writing. He had now read Dante, and was beginning dimly to show in his own verses the first fruits of his reading. Not only are there individual lines taken from *The Divine Comedy*, but there is the palpable effort to organize his material something after the manner of Dante” (48).

However, one of the more compelling perspectives concerning the influence of Dante on Chaucer is found in Benjamin Granade Koonce’s book *Chaucer and the Tradition of Fame: Symbolism in the House of Fame*. According to Koonce, “Chaucer’s indebtedness to the Comedy is evident not only in his threefold structure and use of Dante’s invocations but also in similar patterns of imagery, as well as verbal echoes, throughout the poem” (8-9). Koonce goes on to challenge the contention by authors such as Limentani who feel there is limited influence when Koonce states “Such differences, considered merely on the surface, have led to the widely-held view that Chaucer’s imitation of Dante is, at most, a kind of parody. But the *House of Fame*, at least in its ultimate intent, is not a parody of the Comedy” (10). Unlike Taylor’s first group, Lowes, Coghill, and Koonce make up the second group which believe Chaucer borrowed heavily

and intentionally from his predecessor Dante, and unlike Taylor's first group do, in fact, equate this borrowing with influence.

Group Three

Finally, some researchers consider that influence may have occurred between Dante and Chaucer by way of an Italian contemporary Boccaccio. Research shows that Chaucer was indeed familiar with Boccaccio and because Boccaccio is "echoing Dante" there is evidence of a direct, if not indirect, influence by Dante on Chaucer through Boccaccio (Lowes 708). According to Hubertis Cummings in his dissertation "The Indebtedness of Chaucer's Works to the Italian Works of Boccaccio" of the two works of Boccaccio's that had the potential for the most influence on Chaucer they represent "a source rather than a model" (199). In fact, Cummings goes on to say Chaucer never adopts Boccaccio's form and function and is indebted to Boccaccio only as a "borrower" and "What of Boccaccio he drew upon he drew from a storehouse" (199).

However, Robert Hollander, in his book *Boccaccio's Dante and the Shaping Force of Satire*, challenges these claims that Boccaccio and Chaucer used their predecessors as a model or a source. The main contention lies when authors such as Cummings state that while Dante acts as a model or source for both Boccaccio and Chaucer, this represents one among any number of influences these authors might have encountered. Hollander does not agree with this assertion that this influence might reflect in their work but does not necessarily translate into a heavy prevailing influence. Robert Hollander states "While I in no way desire to insist that the two works are not greatly different in many respects, I hope that there will be no confusion about the strength of my disagreement with the view that Dante served only as a distant model for Boccaccio" (2). Hollander believes that Boccaccio "can hardly make a move without thinking of how Dante had moved before him" (2). He goes on to state that "The *Decameron*, we now

realize, is dotted with not dozens but hundreds of citations from the *Commedia*" (3). Hollander contends that Dante was not a mere model for Boccaccio but a "pressing literary presence" (2). This indirect connection between Dante and Chaucer with Boccaccio as the link may occur when considering the vernacular used by all three men. According to Hollander "most think of Dante's language, as did Boccaccio and most of Dante's readers as being noble, lofty, even austere, while Boccaccio's seems typically to be streetwise, low-mimetic, and playful" (2). This same playfulness of vernacular seems to be the proposed connection between Chaucer and Boccaccio with Dante's influence inevitably making its way through. Needless to say, this third group are as divided as the first two about influence with the slight different of Boccaccio as the catalyst.

Conclusion

When looking at the research surrounding the issue of direct or indirect influence from Dante to Chaucer, one might say that this is a matter on which researchers can all agree to disagree. In fact, there is no prevalent research either way. Not to mention, the research regarding Boccaccio adds just another point of contention concerning the matter of influence. The majority of research by groups one and two occurred in the early to mid-twentieth century with a few outliers in the twenty-first century. However, group three presents from 1997 through the 2000s. It appears that some researchers, especially in group one, who feel there is limited if any influence, hint to the possibility of other influences that may have had the greater impact. I contend that what links these authors is not a purely literary influence, but an influence far greater which affected these men deeply and on a personal level.

Chapter 2: Historical Influencers

Once one considers the matter of influence it becomes apparent that influence from Dante to Chaucer might be too narrow of a perspective. Research does have examples of references by Chaucer which undoubtedly reflect Dante, but the compelling nature of the whole question is whether there is an actual quantifiable influence from author to author. This leads one to consider the broader more relevant influences for each author. It might be that the more compelling argument of socio/political events each author had to contend with during their time were so similar by their very nature and in turn creates the illusion of influence; therefore, the more powerful argument might be that these authors were men writing for their own time.

Dante: Historical Influencers

Dante Alighieri was born in 1265 into a noble, but much declined, Italian family (Martinez and Durling 4). In 1290, the untimely death of a woman, whose unrequited love made a significant impact on Dante's life, dramatically affected Dante and influenced him to begin composing *La Vita Nuova*, a selection of poems and narrative prose explaining the life and relationship of Dante and Beatrice. After *La Vita Nuova* was completed in 1295, Dante continued to write poetry and historians believe he more than likely composed much of *rime petros*, in which "poems of challenging power and formal difficulty addressed to a lady called "stone", in which the poet's frustrated sexuality and feelings of violent resentment" can be seen throughout (Martinez and Durling 12). During this time, Dante wrote verse and prose in the Italian vernacular mainly about courtly love and despite being married to Gemma, Beatrice was his muse. However, it was at this time in his life, his writing was interrupted, and he became more involved in the political turmoil surrounding Florentine politics.

According to Martinez and Durling, “The increasing commercialization of Florentine life and the corruption of the papacy seemed to Dante the two principal causes of his own misfortune and of the troubling developments he saw throughout Europe” (5). Throughout northern Italy especially cities such as Florence citizens became increasingly torn between those who favored the power of the church and those who favored a separation of powers between the Roman Catholic papacy and the crown heads of Europe (Puchner et al. 1049). Martinez and Durling continue by stating “All over Europe the conflict between the popes and emperors had split local communities: supporters of the pope were known as Guelphs, and those of the emperors were known as Ghibellines” (6). In Florence, these political factions quickly developed into quarrels between families as opposed to actual political factions. Across northern Italy these factions were used by some leaders to switch between the Ghibellines and Guelphs in order to garner political advantage while others remained loyal to their parties to the extreme and to their detriment.

Initially a member of the Guelphs, who openly supported the pope against the Ghibellines, Dante was caught up in the internal fracture within the Guelphs. This internal strife caused the Guelphs to split into two factions: the Black Guelphs, who continued to support the pope and the White Guelphs, to which Dante belonged, “who had come to oppose his (Boniface VIII) despotism” (Puchner et al. 1049). Dante’s view concerning the separation of religious rule and temporal rule can be seen in his book *Monarchia* (1318) in which Dante made it clear he believed the two should be separate and is a testament of his perspective regarding the issues surrounding the papacy.

The White Guelphs were the dominant political force in Florence even though the city was plagued with tense political meetings involving both factions which oftentimes resulted in riots. By 1300, Dante had advanced through a series of minor offices and was finally elected to

serve as one of six priors. Within this capacity, Dante was faced with exiling a friend to try to help resolve the growing strife between the Black Guelphs and the White Guelphs. In October, 1301, in continued efforts to moderate the strife within Florence, Dante was sent as a part of an emissary to Rome to speak to Boniface VIII in order to persuade him “not to interfere with the internal affairs of the commun” (Baranski and Pertile 466). During their absence and unbeknownst to this emissary, Boniface VIII sent Charles of Valois of France to Florence in the pretext of resolving the strife between the Black and White Guelphs. “Once inside, according to his (Valois) agreement with the pope, he cooperated with the Blacks in their violent coup d'etat, during which the leading White Guelphs were killed or driven from the city and had their property confiscated or destroyed” (Martinez and Durling 9).

After the transfer of power in Florence, “Dante was consequently forbidden from ever reentering the city of his birth, under penalty of death by burning at the stake” (Puchner et al. 1049). Once the White Guelphs were deposed from power in Florence, Boniface VIII took advantage of having his strongest critics removed and in the following year November, 1302, he issued the papal bull *Unam Sanctum*. The papal bull states, “Therefore we declare, state, define and pronounce that it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.” This, in essence, sent a message to both Philip IV of France and the dissident White Guelphs of Florence that the pope is not only the leader of the Roman Catholic Church, but is superior to all things temporal, including emperors, and is the final authority throughout Christendom.

“Deeply embittered by the experience of exile, Dante spent the next twenty years wandering from city to city, all the while continuing with his political writing (*Monarchia*) as well as his poetic efforts (*The Divine Comedy*)” (Puchner et al. 1050). Within the first few years

of his exile, Dante was unsuccessful in trying to garner an effective White Guelph movement. The Guelph/Ghibelline conflict was not well received throughout communities in central and northern Italy for fears the conflict would cause similar problems witnessed within Florence, so members of these factions, such as Dante, were not welcome very long within these cities before they were asked or forced to leave. “The poet having nowhere left to go humbly tried to persuade Florence to revoke his banishment, but in vain” (Baranski and Pertile 467). Later, Dante expresses the pain of exile:

You shall leave everything you love most:
this is the arrow that the bow of exile
shoots first.

You are to know the bitter taste
of others’ bread, how salt it is, and know
how hard a path it is for one who goes
ascending and descending others’ stairs...
(*Paradiso* 17.55-60)

In 1304, upon hearing of the death of his uncle Alessandro, Dante wrote to his cousins regarding his inability to pay respects due to, not only his exile, but his abject poverty and states in a letter:

It was neither neglect nor ingratitude which kept me away, but the unlooked-for poverty brought about my exile. Poverty, like a vindictive fury, has thrust me, deprived of horses and arms, into her prison den, where she has set herself relentless to keep me in durance; and though I struggle with all my strength to get free, she has hitherto prevailed against me. (Baranski and Pertile 463)

Dante tried on a couple of occasions, including the death of Boniface VIII and the assertion of Henry VII of Luxembourg as the Holy Roman Emperor, to end his exile from Florence, but the Roman Catholic Church held salvation over its citizens both common and royal, and Dante could not break the edict of the Church. Due to the pain of exile and being directly affected by the corruption of the papacy, Dante demonstrates a dramatic shift in his writing from predominantly courtly love to political criticisms and satire. It is during this time in

his life he penned one of the most influential works of western literature *The Divine Comedy*. Dante used a pilgrimage through a fictionalized hell to reflect the very hell of his exile and the hope of his afterlife. Although Dante addresses the more mundane issues of the church like prostitution, money, and indulgences, he makes it more than clear that the most horrific crimes of the church surround the factionalized members of Florentine politics and the papacy which are reflected in the lowest levels of hell.

Chaucer: Historical Influencers

The events surrounding the Roman Catholic Church, which directly affected Dante and his writing, began with Pope Boniface VIII and continued up through the Western Schism (1378-1417). The exact issues which Dante wrote about were equally relevant to Geoffrey Chaucer and had a profound effect on the writings of both men. Pope Boniface VIII was kidnapped by King Philip IV of France, with whom he had been engaged in a fierce political struggle for power and properties. King Philip IV tried to force Boniface VIII to abdicate the papacy. Boniface escaped with the help of townspeople in Agnani and opinion shifted in favor of the pope due to the reports of the kidnapping, the infamous slap at Agnani, and the ill treatment he received over those three days. Boniface died shortly thereafter and the cardinals elected a less contentious pope Benedict XI who lifted Boniface VIII's excommunication on Philip IV of France. Benedict XI died eight months after being chosen and this opened the door for King Philip to have Clement V chosen as pope and move the papacy from Rome to Avignon where it remained through the next six papacies and began the French line of popes.

During this time period, Italy insisted the papacy be returned to Rome with the election of an Italian pope. The papacy became a matter of contention and during the Western Schism (1378-1417) as many as three popes were being declared pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church.

The church was not only split regarding the papacy, it remained deeply entrenched in power plays between the secular emperors and the spiritual clergy. These struggles which began in Dante's time were still relevant when Chaucer was first introduced to John Wycliffe at Oxford University.

John Wycliffe was one of the most controversial theologians of his time. Some historians believe that his teaching or even the mere influence Wycliffe had on the learning environment at Oxford had an impact on Chaucer while he attended. According to Benson Bobrick, "Long before the Reformation came about - before German princes assumed the right to name their own bishops, or Luther tacked up his famous thesis on the door of a Whitenburg church - secular authorities had begun to insist on sharing in ecclesiastical revenues, on filling high church offices with their own appointees, and on giving national security precedence over international religious crusades. It was in Wycliffe's day that the challenge to pope's authority by the resisting power of the national monarchies seemed to be coming to a head" (31). Bobrick also states, "If the birth of religious inquiry and spiritual freedom can be traced (within the Protestant tradition) to one man in England, that man is John Wycliffe" (24). G.M. Trevelyan, author of *England in the Age of Wycliffe*, states Wycliffe "had an eager hatred of what was wicked and could never be kept from denouncing what he regarded as such" (Bobrick 27). One of the prevalent influences on Wycliffe was the book *Of the Cause of God* wherein Thomas Bradwardine asserts that "all human activity was worthless, even impossible, without God's ineffable and gratuitous gift of grace" (Bobrick 28). This was the basis for Wycliffe's core beliefs and this was "diametrically opposed to the notion that man can earn his salvation through acts of free will" (Bobrick 28).

Among these basic tenets of Wycliffe's beliefs was the individual did not require a church intercessor to interpret God's will. Instead, Wycliffe believed that the Bible was the

definitive way to find God's will and that the Bible needed to be translated into Middle English in order for the common man to read for himself and be freed from the interpretations of the Roman Catholic Church through its papacy and clergy. Wycliffe was extremely critical of many church practices such as indulgences and the church amassing wealth and among the more politically incendiary positions held by Wycliffe was one against the church holding property. By 1377, he had also written several works attacking the temporal power and corruption of the church, had boldly advised the government to reject the pope's demands for tribute, exalted the state above the church in secular affairs, and was honored by the University of Oxford for his zeal against friars (Bobrick 40).

The Western Schism was one of the more pressing influencers on Europeans of this time and precipitated many of Wycliffe's writings and lectures while at Oxford. The Western Schism began when in 1378 Pope Gregory XI brings the papacy back to Rome after having the holy Roman court headquartered in Avignon, France for 67 years. Gregory XI died shortly thereafter and the cardinals, which contained a French majority, elected Urban VI, who quickly seemed well qualified for the job, but incendiary in nature and lacked the "savoir-faire somewhat necessary for his position." (Rollo-Koster and Izbicki 11).

The cardinals left Rome and redacted their support, asked Urban to step down, and elected Pope Clement VII. Clement became the first antipope and resides in Avignon, France. "This counter-election initiated the Great Western Schism, which lasted up to 1417" (Rollo-Koster and Izbicki 13). Bobrick claims "The spectacle of two popes, each devoting his entire energies to the destruction of his rival, was appalling to every devout heart, and dealt a heavy blow to that idea of church unity which had exercised such a great (and consoling) influence on the imagination of the Middle Ages. Wycliffe gave voice to a rising tide of disgust" (46).

According to Wycliffe, ‘Many noble, Catholic truths,’ he sarcastically wrote, ‘are made plain by the happy division,’ and compared the two popes to dogs snarling over a bone. Ultimately, he regarded the institution of the papacy as without scriptural foundation, and came to reject the doctrine of papal infallibility outright” (Bobrick 46). It is probably the Western Schism itself that kept Wycliffe from being killed for what the Roman Catholic Church was viewing as heretical opinions. It was a politically charged time in which England supported an Italian pope - France supported a French pope - no king wanted to be prevented from taxing the church holdings in their kingdoms and all the while Wycliffe believed the church should not be amassing this wealth. Wycliffe found himself either at cross-purposes or garnering support at any given time depending on which way the political wind was blowing.

Although Wycliffe was known as a “compelling university teacher and an outstanding preacher,” pressure began to be placed on the university for his removal due to his political views (Bobrick). In “1377 a convocation of bishops assembled at St. Paul’s Cathedral and summoned Wycliffe to appear before them on February 19th to answer charges of heresy. The exact charges are not known, but his prominence in the growing political movement against church property made him a clear target of the bishops ire” (Bobrick 39-40). “Three months later, on May 22, 1377, the pope (Gregory XI) issued five bulls against Wycliffe, variously addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, the King, and the Chancellor of Oxford. ‘We have learned to our extreme sorrow,’ wrote the pope, ‘that John Wycliffe, rector of the church at Lutterworth, of the diocese of Lincoln, a professor of holy writ-what he were not a master of errors! - has been impugning received doctrine’” (Bobrick 41). This led Oxford University to ask Wycliffe to step down, but not before he had left a lasting impression on the students of the university, one of whom many historians believe was Geoffrey Chaucer. “The

Oxford philosopher Ralph Strode, who wrote a treatise on scholastic logic and to whom Chaucer dedicated *Troilus and Cressida*, was apparently a friend of Wycliffe during the 1360s, and both Wycliffe and Chaucer had the same patron, John of Gaunt. It is not impossible that Chaucer's poor parson in the *The Canterbury Tales* is a partial portrait of Wycliffe" (Bobrick 30).

There is some speculation that both Chaucer and Wycliffe shared the same patron in John of Gaunt. However, John of Gaunt threw his support behind Wycliffe regarding the church not amassing wealth for distinctly political reasons, and this support likely hurt Wycliffe more than helped him. In fact, Wycliffe, before his retirement to Lutterworth, came under strong criticism for having what was thought to be an indirect influence, which may have contributed to the violent uprising of the 1381 Peasants' Revolt, which ended in the deaths of anyone thought to be involved in government and the destruction of property including one of John of Gaunt's homes. Chaucer also knew John of Gaunt and one of first poems "The Book of Duchess" many believe was written upon the death of John of Gaunt's wife with some speculation being it was at the request of John of Gaunt himself. However, this did not constitute a true patronage and neither did the annuities John of Gaunt granted both Chaucer and Chaucer's wife Philippa. Such annuities were customary at the time and not indicative of a true patronage but as compensation of trusted service to members of the court.

"Unlike many pre-modern poets who were supported by wealthy patrons, Chaucer was obliged to hold a mundane day job for most of his career. He had the time consuming and tedious position of record keeper at the Customs Authority in London, and later supervised a number of building projects in his role as Clerk of Public Works" (Puchner et al. 1198). Unlike Dante, Chaucer was not involved in the major intrigues of the politics surrounding the Roman Catholic Church. Chaucer generally engaged in servile errands of diplomacy for the King.

Chaucer, an observer of the church, but from the perspective of a member of the British court, also found himself being blown by the changing winds of socio/political influences which included the Western Schism, the theology of Wycliffe, and the vying for power by members of the royal family. “Chaucer had a genius for keeping on the right side of power in a difficult and competitive era, a time categorized by civil unrest, international war, and, ultimately, seizure of the throne in 1399” by Henry IV, John of Gaunt’s son, who seized the throne after his cousin King Richard II, who had recently placed Henry in exile, refused to let Henry return allowing him to claim his lands of inheritance upon the death of his father John of Gaunt (Puchner et al. 1198). “Chaucer appears to have seamlessly transferred his loyalty from Richard to the new king” (Puchner et al. 1198).

Chaucer, through his position at court and various jobs, had a unique opportunity to bear witness to the life of the English citizen on many different socio/economic levels. Many historians believe that Chaucer bore witness to the major events surrounding the controversies of the church which is directly demonstrated in the theology of Wycliffe and indirectly demonstrated in events such as the Peasants Revolt. As stated earlier, a reflection of Wycliffe very likely made its way into the *The Canterbury Tales* through the character of the parson, but just as a reflection. The more violent and disturbing events surrounding the Peasants Revolt never made its way into Chaucer’s writings. Instead, he chose a different approach and focus. *The Canterbury Tales* seem to be Chaucer’s way of using the pilgrimages of everyday people in an entertaining way to critique the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church in such a way that he demonstrates how the exercise of faith would oftentimes seem silly and ridiculous while at other times seem poignantly destructive to the very people the church was supposed to be serving. Chaucer used *The Canterbury Tales* to reflect, in a light-hearted way, the struggles surrounding

socio-political decisions of the leadership of the church and ultimately the influence these decisions had on its members.

Conclusion

Dante was directly involved in the politics of the Roman Catholic Church, and this is reflected in *The Divine Comedy* which is filled with the important figures surrounding the conflict of the Roman Catholic Church. Chaucer, on the other hand, witnessed the instabilities and controversies of the Roman Catholic Church, but from a less involved perspective which in turn is reflected in the *The Canterbury Tales*. Dante's relationship with the church is on a distinctly personal level and the effects are marked, thus conflict is a major part of this relationship. However, Chaucer's relationship with the church comes as a bystander in the English court, and conflict is to be avoided at the expense of pilgrimages and indulgences. Dante's loyalties were fixed and contributed to his poverty. In comparison Chaucer's loyalties were flexible, but also contributed to his poverty. Both Chaucer and Dante spend the last years of their lives struggling financially and many decisions concerning their lives and careers are made based on a lack of funds. It is within this poverty that both men who live in a time where the church should represent a bastion of hope, each author challenged the church through his writing.

Great writers become great by writing what they know and research can never be certain how much Chaucer "knew" Dante. However, there is one thing that both men knew and knew well. It is something that connects them across time, and this was the politics and policies surrounding Roman Catholic Church. It is worth more than a passing or second glance at how the history of this institution links these men across time and how the events surrounding the church were a major aspect of their lives. One might find the true connection concerning influence is historical rather than literary.

Chapter Three: Dante and Chaucer Modes of Satire

One aspect to understanding the historical influence on these authors is the use of satire and more specifically, the type of satire each author uses to criticize the church. As Dustin Griffin states in his book *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction*, “satire is problematic, open-ended, essayistic, ambiguous in its relationship to history, uncertain in its political effect, resistant to formal closure, more inclined to ask questions than to provide answers, and ambivalent about the pleasures it offers” (4). It is true that satire, in and of itself, presents its own obstacles surrounding history and influence. Griffin intimates that satire and history have a “relationship.” It is because of the “problematic” nature of this genre that the relationship might be characterized as “ambiguous.” It is within a contemporaneous view that the multiple layers of inference within satire are most clearly understood. As time passes, it is incumbent upon the reader to discover the historical circumstances that helped mold the satire and to understand it. However, it may be the very use of satire by authors such as Dante and Chaucer, whether it be Horatian or Juvenalian, that begs the question is there indeed influence between authors across time or did the institutions that dominated history, specifically the Roman Catholic Church, necessitate the use of two forms of the same satire so that these authors could write a reflection of the injustices of their time.

According to *Prose: Literary Terms and Concepts*, Juvenal when talking about the form of satire that bears his name states it is, “The upright person who looks with horror on the corruption of his time, his heart consumed with anger and frustration. Why does he write satire...Viciousness and corruption so dominate Roman life that, for someone who is honest, it is difficult not to write satire. He looks about him, and his heart burns dry with rage; never has vice been more triumphant. How can he be silent” (Kuiper 166). When reading Juvenal’s own

description of this form of satire, it calls to mind Dante the very author who took this art form to its peak.

Horatian, on the other hand, as used by Chaucer, “opts for mild mockery and playful wit as the means most effective for his ends” (Kuiper 166). Kathleen Kuiper continues by paraphrasing Horace and states, “Although I portray examples of folly... I am not a prosecutor and I do not like to give pain; if I laugh at the nonsense I see about me, I am not motivated by malice. The satirist’s verse ... should reflect this attitude: it should be easy and unpretentious, sharp when necessary, but flexible enough to vary from grave to gay. In short, the character of the satirist as projected by Horace is that of an urbane man of the world, concerned about folly, which he sees everywhere, but moved to laughter rather than rage” (166). Dustin Griffin in his book *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction*, states “Horace provides his own implicit theory of satire: that the satirist, speaking out freely, seeks to laugh men out of their follies” (6). According to Griffin, “He is oblique rather than blunt, smiling and hinting rather than attacking directly” (8). Griffin goes on to state “Horace is not simply a stern moralist who speaks his mind with sincerity...He slides noiselessly from plain speaking and ethical advice into ironically lofty and pompous verse (and sometimes into the mock-heroic), from there into sincere and artless emotion...and thence into a highly allusive mode, quoting directly from his predecessors, often for ironic purposes” (Griffin 8). Manager captures the form of Horatian satire in her approach to its namesake, but Griffin captures its function and reflects its use by Chaucer.

Each author uses their respective satire which in general reflects their personalities, but more specifically reflects their respective view of the church. In Dante’s time the church was looming powerful and was the church *Unam Sanctum* with the power of heaven and hell over every soul in Europe. In Chaucer’s time the church and those who executed its power became the

more unstable under the Western Schism and the papacy became more of an institution of uncertainty rather than hope. It is interesting to look at how each author uses his own particular mode of satire to address similar issues each man was observing regarding the Roman Catholic Church across the expanse of time.

Critique of Simony Through Satire

One issue that plagued each author during their respective time was the issue of the church amassing wealth through practices of simony which oftentimes included indulgences. Dante uses his Juvenalian satire to attack simony at its source referring to the story of Simon Magus found in Acts 8 of the Holy Bible:

Oh Simon Magus, O wretched followers, you who
the things of God, that should be brides of goodness,
rapaciously
adulterate for gold and for silver, now the trumpet
must sound for you, because you are in the third
pocket. (*Inferno* 19.1-6)

It is important to note how Dante makes what is considered by many the damning charge of simony and challenges the church by creating an analogy of the leaders of the church ravishing the bride of Christ, the church herself. Dante sets a very cutting tone indicative of Juvenalian satire at the beginning of this Canto. In the previous Canto, Dante charges the flatterers and panderers in a similarly cutting way when he goes so far as to charge the church by condemning even the Jubilee of Rome:

On my right hand I saw a new cause for pity, new
torments and new wielders of the whip of which the first
pocket was full.
At the bottom were the sinners, naked; on this side
of the mid point they came with their faces toward

us, on the other side, they went with us, but with longer steps:
 as the Romans, the year of the Jubilee, because of the great throng, found a way to move people across the bridge,
 for one side they are all turned toward the Castle and are going toward St. Peter, and on the other they are going toward the mountain.
 Here and there, along the dark rock, I saw horned demons with great whips, who were beating them from behind.
 Ah, how the first blow made each lift his heels! None waited for the second or the third.
 (*Inferno* 18.22-37)

In notes by Martinez and Durling regarding the translation of the Divine Comedy, “This is the first mention in the poem that 1300 was proclaimed by Boniface XIII in February to be a Jubilee year, according to which special plenary indulgences were granted for daily visiting of Basilicas of San Pietro in Vaticano and San Paolo. According to chronicler Villani, 200,000 visited Rome during the Jubilee” (283). Dante uses Juvenalian satire to demonstrate how the act of simony as it relates most directly to the Jubilee of Rome is evil and the poor pilgrims as victims of this cruel practice of indulgences.

Dante is not merely expressing an all-out criticism of the church. The Roman Catholic Church is the church of his faith and a church he loves to the extent he argues on its behalf through his writing. Dante expresses his frustration and outrage on how the church leaders have perverted the church in Canto 19 when he states “Ah Constantine, not your conversion, but that dowry which the first rich father took from you, has been the mother of so much evil!” (*Inferno* 115). Dante continues his sharp criticism of this act of simony by church leaders when in his journey through hell he witnesses what becomes of men who he feels are responsible for this corruption:

From the mouth of each protruded the feet and

Legs of the sinners, as far as the thighs, and the rest was inside.
 All of them had both soles aflame; therefore they
 Wriggled their joints so violently that they would
 Have broken twisted writhes or braided ropes
 As flaming of oily things moves over just the
 Outer rind: so did it there from heel to toes. (*Inferno* 19.22-29)

Here Dante continues to utilize Juvenalian satire by demonstrating how his heart is filled with dry rage to the point these men are left with such an eternal punishment. Dante through his writing casts the violators headfirst into what resembles a baptistery tub to face their torment head long into hell with their “soles aflame” (24). This is an excellent example of the “upright man” using Juvenalian satire to critique the injustices of the church.

Chaucer, on the other hand, utilizes Horatian satire to give a view of simony with a lighter tone, but not necessarily a less critical one. In *Canterbury Tales, General Prologue*, Chaucer makes it understood that the Pardoner comes straight from Rome:

With him, there rode a gentle PARDONER
 Of Roncevalles, and good and, and close friends were they.
 He'd come straight from the papal court at Rome.
 And loudly sang “Come hither, love to me!”
 (671-675)

Chaucer uses this lighter criticism of the Pardoner as a stark example of the Pardoner’s main purpose and his lack of regard for his flock:

For my exclusive purpose is to win
 And not at all to castigate their sin.
 Once dead what matter how their souls may fare?
 They can go blackberrying, for all if care!
 ...
 But let me briefly make my purpose plain;
 I preach for nothing but for greed of gain
 And use the same old text as bold as brass,
Radix malorum est cupiditas.
 And thus I preach against the very vice
 I make my living out of - avarice.

And yet however guilty of that sin
 Myself with others I have power to win
 Them from it, I can bring them to repent;
 But that is not not my principal intent.
 Covetousness is both the root and stuff
 Of all I preach. That ought to be enough. (*The Pardoner's Tale* 87-91, 110-21)

Chaucer's Horatian style comes through the easy and unpretentious phrase "once dead what matter how their souls may fare? / They can go blackberrying for all I care" (90-91). However, this easy style turns quickly into a sharp criticism in the line "*Radix malorum est cupiditas*" wherein the character, in his own words and in the language of the papacy, condemns the desire to amass wealth (113).

Criticism of Popes Through Satire

Digital Dante states that Chapter 2 "Church and State in the Comedy" of Joan Ferrante's book *The Political Vision of the Divine Comedy*, "We are also told several times in Purgatory of popes interfering in political affairs: in Canto 6, it is because of them that there is no emperor to enforce the laws; in 16, by taking on temporal authority, 'confounding two governments in itself,' the church soils itself and its burden arid deprives the world of the two organs ordained by God to guide it, the empire, which cannot function, and the church, which malfunctions. 'Now I understand,' Dante says, all innocence, 'why the sons of Levi [the priesthood] were excluded from inheritance' (16.131-32)." It is through such writing Dante demonstrates the condition of the Roman Catholic Church under the papacy of Boniface VIII. Dante continues with his stark Juvenalian style as he addresses the issue of popes, and more specifically Pope Boniface, the papacy whose interference in political matters of his beloved city of Florence resulted in his exile:

And he cried out: "Are you already standing
 there, are you already standing there, Boniface? The

writing lied to me by several years.
 Are you so soon sated by the wealth for which
 you did not fear to marry the lovely lady
 fraudulently, and then tear her apart?" (*Inferno* 19.52-57)

In Canto 19 of *Inferno*, Nicholas II mistakes Dante for Boniface VIII and expects him to take his place, pushing him further down into this torment. It is important to note that Dante is condemning Boniface VIII to Hell before he has actually died. Here Dante utilizes Juvenalian satire not only to condemn Boniface but to compare his actions of simony to raping the church.

However, Ferrante goes on to state "the most striking attack on the church is made by Peter, the first pope, who rages against those who have exploited his face on the 'lying privilege' they sell (27.53), and 'usurped' his place, now vacant in the eyes of God (27.23-24). ...this vacancy must refer to Boniface, who either had no right to be pope, or who has lost that right by abusing the position, or both. However, to a contemporary audience, it would also suggest the more recent popes, Clement V and John XXII, who failed to support properly elected emperors and claimed authority over the 'vacant' empire." Here in *Paradiso* 27 Dante uses biting Juvenalian satire to declare the papacy vacant, and ironically enough, he references the first pope through which so many popes thereafter claim to be the basis of their secular authority (Ferrante):

He who on earth usurps my place, my place,
 my place, which in the sight
 of God's own Son
 is vacant, of my burial ground hath made
 a sewer of blood and stench; whereby the Pervert,
 who fell from hence, is there below appeased.
 ...
 Rapacious wolves disguised in shepherds' clothes
 are seen in all the pastures from up here. (22-27, 31-32)

Peter condemns Boniface's perversion of the papacy and that holy burial ground of Peter himself has been turned into a "sewer of blood and stench" (26). Christ's last instruction before his ascension into heaven was that Peter and the other disciples/apostles to feed his sheep. Dante utilizes his harsh satire to place the men who assumed the papacy after Peter, and thus into the position of shepherds over Christ's flocks, into the image of "Rapacious wolves" in "shepherd's clothing" (31).

Chaucer too takes issue with the papacy, but once more with the light and quick witted Horatian style. Instead of attacking the papacy directly, he mentions him in the Pardoner's tale, "He'd come straight from the papal court at Rome. / And loudly sang "Come hither, love to me!" as being the cause of the Pardoner coming to seek money from the poor pilgrims (674-675). Chaucer also provides a bit of a backhanded criticism of the pope when describing a friar and his lack of attentiveness to his flock. St. Francis the founder of Friars Minor whose main principle teachings is that friars should spend time with and ultimately help the poor is not the character reflected in Chaucer's writing, but instead a friar who is too much like his master:

Because, for such a worthy man as he,
It would not do, with his ability,
With sick lepers to have an acquaintance.
It is not right; it hardly can advance
Him if he has to waste time with the poor,
Just with the rich and victualers, for sure.
...
In a threadbare cloak, like a poor scholar
But like a master or the pope as well. (*General Prologue* 243-248, 262-263)

In medieval England, friars were given license to beg for money in certain areas which included permissions to listen to and forgive sins of the people of the area who oftentimes were affluent

and could readily afford these indulgences. These activities of not only friars but monks added significantly to the clergy's wealth and to the church's ultimate goal of amassing wealth.

Forgiveness oftentimes came at a high price. Here we see Chaucer's friar doing just that and ignoring the religious principles set before him and choosing the social circle which best benefits his pocket. However, despite his ability to make quite a bit of money through his vocation, in line 262 we see he is still dressed like a poor and lowly friar. It is due to this practice which alludes to an appearance of religious piety that the friar is compared to a pope. In simply comparing the Friar to the pope Chaucer uses his Horatian satire to surpass the criticism/punishments of the papacy, while still being able to demonstrate their greed and deception.

Criticism of Hypocrisy Through Satire

Finally, another example of a primary issue of the church is addressed when Dante writes regarding hypocrisy. In fact, the hypocrisy of the church provides a perfect platform for Dante to present one of the more stunning uses of Juvenalian satire to exact one of the harshest criticisms of the clergy. Dante figuratively weighs down the clerics with their own greed;

They were wearing robes with hoods pulled low
Over their eyes, made in the fashion that is sewn in
Cluny for the monks.
On the outside they are dazzling gilded, but
within they are all of lead, so heavy that the ones
Fredrick put on people might have been of straw (*Inferno* 23.61-66)

Dante continues in Canto 23 by describing the robes as so thick and heavy that they "make their balances creak" (100-101). Here one can see Dante put a high price on heresy in that the monks of poverty are weighed down with the gravity of their heresy. Chaucer on the other hand, paints a jovial picture of his monk. Instead of being weighed down as Dante's monks, he is very much

uplifted by his status and earthly possessions. This monk was going about the new business of the church and leaving the old habits of a monk behind:

And when he rode, men might his bridal hear
Jingling in a whistling wind as clear
And just as loud as tolls the chapel bell
Of the house where he was keeper of the cell.
The rule of Saints Maurus and Benedict,
Because it was so old and somewhat strict -
This same monk let the old things pass away
And chose the new ways of the present day. (*General Prologue* 169-176)

The monk of Chaucer's time was not the same type of cleric that was part of the tradition of the early church which embraced poverty and servitude as was "The rule of Saints Maurus and Benedict" (173). Instead, this was a new order which translated the wealth of the church that was present in the opulent cathedrals and lifestyles of its leaders into the lives of the everyday monks who reflect the order of the day. Chaucer's examples of the wealth of this monk are not the crowns and gold of Rome. His examples strike home especially when considering the average person of Middle Age England in that it is not so much a pure indicator of wealth, but an indicator of the more important state of prosperity which the church through amassing wealth is keeping from its own parishioners. For example, "Many a striking horse had he in stable" may not mean much to the accumulation of wealth for the pope and the church, but to the average person of Middle Age England this is a luxury (168). In line 190, "He had greyhounds as swift as birds in flight." This is another example of prosperity. Not to mention the delicate, but noted examples of his less than impoverished status which is indicative throughout Chaucer's description of his attire:

I saw his sleeves were fur land at the hand
With rich, grey squirrel, the finest in the land;
And to fasten his hood beneath his chin,
He had, all wrought from gold, a fancy pin (*General Prologue* 193-196)

Once Chaucer gives the reader a visual for this character, as he does so many times in his writing, he then reveals the character's true nature and motivation when he states,

For that text he'd not give you one plucked hen
That said that hunters are not holy men,
Or that a monk disobeys his order
Is like unto a fish out of water-
That is to say, a monk out of the cloister.
But that text, he held not worth an oyster. (*General Prologue* 177-183)

Chaucer ends by pointing out that this monk, who is not obeying the rules of his order, is very much “a fish out of water” (180). This is demonstrative of Horatian satire in that it is a witty and wry analogy for the monk. However, within the next lines he uses this same wryness to make a sharp and necessary point about “that text,” Rule of Saint Benedict, which this monk “held not worth an oyster” (183).

The Element of Irony

Considering all of these examples, it is important to consider the role irony played in each author's execution of their respective satirical style. Throughout the texts of each author as each criticized the church, the examples demonstrate the use of irony to develop, what in the end, are two distinct forms of satire. For example, Dante, throughout *The Divine Comedy*, uses irony as his technique of choice to render punishment for earthly sins to the leaders of the church. Ironically, the average sinners whose sins were pointed out by the clerics of the time are found in the upper circles of hell. However, Dante reserves his more biting irony for the lower circles, specifically the 8th circle for leaders of the church. As is noted by Dante, the church leaders, including popes, who have committed simony are face down in hell with their bodies from the waist down being exposed. Dante uses irony to describe the shape of the holes which contain these leaders as being in the shape of baptismal fonts and baptism being one of many spiritual services which came at a price during the Middle Ages (*Inferno* 19.17-19). It is also

telling that the monks who are weighed down with beautiful gilded robes have an analogous of the basilicas of Rome which are beautifully gilded on the outside but weighed down on the inside by the political and monetary pursuits of its leaders. Dante uses lead to line the monk's coats to represent the worthlessness of this secular gain in the spiritual hereafter. Throughout Dante's *Inferno*, we see the lifestyle chosen by ordinary people, political figures, and members of the church forced upon them in hell. Dante's use of situational irony lends itself to his use of Juvenalian satire in crafting the hell which indeed represents the rage and fury of an upright man who finds himself in the midst of the injustices of the church and the papacy.

However, Chaucer's use of irony fits the wittier style of Horatian satire. In fact, his Horatian style is much more comedic. Since the Greek's invention of comedy, it is universally understood that an essential element of this art form is that what makes comedy funny is the undeniable element of truth. On that note, Chaucer uses verbal irony to even describe his Pardoner as an honest liar in that he is honest about having no true conviction for the absolution of sins, but will use the same old text "bold as brass" and state in Latin that money is the root of all evil unbeknownst to the ignorant sinner who has no idea what he has said but will pay for forgiveness of sins. This indeed makes the Pardoner a liar, but when he admits he "preaches for nothing but for greed of gain," Chaucer is revealing the true nature of his motivations and evoking the chuckle of the Horatian style of satire.

In Earle Birney's essay *The Beginnings of Chaucer's Irony*, he states "Chaucer's poetry is generally felt to be distinguished by "an irony so quiet, so delicate, that many readers never notice it at all or mistake it for naivety" and that "Chaucer 'made a good many more jokes than his critics have ever seen'" (637). However, when Chaucer utilizes the more biting elements of Horatian satire, he sometimes evokes situational irony much like Dante and this is evident in his

description of the monk. Chaucer represents the monk as one of the poorest leaders of the church, but even in his poverty he has “many a striking horse,” greyhounds, squirrel lined sleeves, and a gold pin to hold his hood (168-196). Also, the monk holds the text or Bible in same disregard as other characters and would not give you “one plucked hen” for it. Chaucer is using the irony of a rich monk to subtly bring home the realization that the church was amassing its wealth at the expense of its parishioners.

Conclusion

Irony is an important part of both Dante and Chaucer’s development of their respective forms of satire. In Dante’s harsh and provocative Juvenalian Satire it reveals the frustration of the “up-right man” who is looking around at the stark injustice exacted by the church. However, Chaucer’s light-hearted Horatian satire reflects the uncertainty of the Western Schism and at the same time the somber responsibility surrounding the church’s duty of shepherding of souls. Nonetheless, in each author’s respective form of satire the criticism of the church reflects the relationship each author had with the Roman Catholic Church and is evident of how each author was directly and indirectly influenced by the church.

Thus, the matter of influence still remains. As previously noted there are three groups when considering influence from Dante to Chaucer. It may be that the matter of influence is more complex than simply a literary one. Even when it comes to the use of satire, Chaucer’s use of satire is not necessarily a reflection of his predecessor Dante, but an equal reaction and necessary literary style choice to the largest, looming influence on both men’s lives which would be the clerics and leadership within the Roman Catholic Church. There might even be a case made that the catalyst for the relationship each author finds himself having with the Roman Catholic Church can be connected to Boniface VIII having a direct influence on Dante and

ultimately his actions having an indirect influence on Chaucer through the Western Schism. Ultimately, this does not necessarily mean that a fourth group needs to be added to the list. However, it may be worth considering that the three traditional groups which discuss influence did not consider the respective historical influences of the time and that these influences had a far more reaching affect in both style and content. When one considers historical influencers and each author's respective mode of satire, there is evidence that instead of a strictly literary view of influence between two authors across time and from two different cultures, that the most telling element may be that the common denominator is not literary at all but the historical component of the relationship each had with Roman Catholic Church which bore itself out through both men's writing.

Works Cited

- Alighieri, Dante. *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Inferno*. Edited and Translated by Robert M. Durling, Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Alighieri, Dante. *The Divine Comedy: Paradiso*. Digital Dante, <https://digitaldante.columbia.edu/dante/divine-comedy/paradiso/paradiso-27/>. Accessed 2 March 2019
- Axson, Stockton. "Dante and English literature." Rice Institute Pamphlet-Rice University Studies vol. 8, no. 2, 1921, pp. 216-245.
- Barański, Zygmunt G., and Lino Pertile. *Dante in Context*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Bobrick, Benson. *Wide As the Waters: The Story of the English Bible and the Revolution*. Simon & Schuster, 2010.
- Boniface VII. "Unam Sanctum." *New Advent*, 18 Nov 1302, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15126a.htm>, Accessed 28 Feb 2019.
- Bovey, Alixe. "Church in the Middle Ages: from Dedication to Dissent." The British Library, 17 Jan. 2014, www.bl.uk/the-middle-ages/articles/church-in-the-middle-ages-from-dedication-to-dissent
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales, The General Prologue*. The Norton Anthology: World Literature. 3rd ed., vol. 1, W.W. Norton & Company, 2013, pp. 1202-1221.
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales, The Pardoner's Tale*. Translated by Neville Coghill, Penguin Classic, 1965, pp. 241-246.
- Cummings, Hubertis. *The Indebtedness of Chaucer's Works to the Italian Works of Boccaccio*. 1914. Princeton University PhD dissertation.
- Coghill, Nevill. *The Poet Chaucer*. vol. 185, Oxford University Press, 1949.

Durling, Robert and Martinez, Ronald. Introduction and Notes. *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Inferno*. Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 1-24.

Birney, Earle. "The Beginnings of Chaucer's Irony." *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*. vol. 54, no. 3, 1939, pp. 637-655.

Ferrante, Joan M. "Political Visions of the Divine Comedy" *Church and State in the Comedy*, Digital Dante, Columbia University Libraries, 2014, digitaldante.columbia.edu/criticism-context/scholars-works/political-visions/church-and-state-in-the-comedy/

Griffin, Dustin H. *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction*. University Press of Kentucky, 1994.

Hollander, Robert. *Boccaccio's Dante and the Shaping Force of Satire*. University of Michigan Press, 1997.

Koonce, Benjamin Granade. *Chaucer and the Tradition of Fame: Symbolism in the House of Fame*. Vol. 2120, Princeton University Press, 2015.

Kuiper, Kathleen, ed. *Prose: Literary Terms and Concepts*. Britannica Educational Publishing, 2011.

Lowes, John Livingston. "Chaucer and Dante." *Modern Philology*, vol.14, no. 12, 1917, pp. 705-735.

Limentani, Uberto. *The Mind of Dante*. Cambridge University Press, 1965.

Puchner, Martin, et al. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*. 3rd ed., vol. 1, W.W. Norton & Company, 2013.

Rollo-Koster, Joëlle, and Thomas M. Izbicki. *A Companion to the Great Western Schism (1378-1417)*. vol. 1, 2009.

Taylor, Karla. "A Text and Its Afterlife: Dante and Chaucer." *Comparative Literature*, vol. 35, no. 1, 1983, pp. 1-20.

University of Glasgow. "The World of Chaucer." Chaucer's Influences,
special.lib.gla.ac.uk/exhibns/chaucer/influences.html. Accessed 12 Oct. 2018