Commentary and Ideology: Dante in the Renaissance

Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* is one of the most important works of literature in Western history. Written in the early 14th century, it is a vast and complex poem that tells the story of Dante's journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. The *Divine Comedy* has been interpreted in many different ways over the centuries, and it has been used to support a variety of different political and religious ideologies.

Commentary and Ideology: Dante in the Renaissance

by Deborah Parker

⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐ 5 out of 5

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Dante and the Papacy

One of the most common ways in which the *Divine Comedy* has been used is to support the authority of the Papacy. In the poem, Dante meets with several popes who are condemned to Hell for their sins. This has been seen as evidence of Dante's support for the Papacy, as it suggests that he

believed that the popes were responsible for upholding the moral order of the world.

However, there is also evidence in the *Divine Comedy* that Dante was critical of the Papacy. In particular, he condemns Pope Boniface VIII, who was in power when Dante wrote the poem. Boniface is depicted as a corrupt and greedy tyrant, and Dante places him in the eighth circle of Hell, reserved for those who are guilty of fraud.

Dante and the Holy Roman Empire

The *Divine Comedy* has also been used to support the authority of the Holy Roman Empire. In the poem, Dante meets with the Emperor Justinian, who is depicted as a wise and just ruler. This has been seen as evidence of

Dante's support for the Empire, as it suggests that he believed that the Emperor was responsible for maintaining peace and order in the world.

Dante meeting with the Emperor Justinian, from the *Divine Comedy*.

However, there is also evidence in the *Divine Comedy* that Dante was critical of the Empire. In particular, he condemns the Emperor Frederick II, who was in power when Dante wrote the poem. Frederick is depicted as a cruel and unjust tyrant, and Dante places him in the ninth circle of Hell, reserved for those who are guilty of treason.

Dante and the Italian City-States

The *Divine Comedy* has also been used to support the authority of the Italian city-states. In the poem, Dante meets with several prominent figures

from the Italian city-states, including the poet Guido Cavalcanti and the philosopher Brunetto Latini. These figures are depicted as wise and virtuous men, and Dante places them in Paradise.

However, there is also evidence in the *Divine Comedy* that Dante was critical of the Italian city-states. In particular, he condemns the city of Florence, which was his birthplace. Florence is depicted as a corrupt and divided city, and Dante places it in Purgatory.

The *Divine Comedy* is a complex and challenging work that has been interpreted in many different ways over the centuries. It has been used to support a variety of different political and religious ideologies, and it continues to be a source of inspiration for people today.

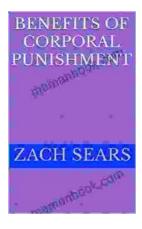## Commentary and Ideology: Dante in the Renaissance

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