



Well-placed members of the household provided filaments connecting the court to key regions, providing the face of the center.

Hepburn has provided an insightful discussion of the intimate dimensions of rulership, and the crucial role of the household in providing such rule with coherence. Inevitably Hepburn is hampered by the limitations of the surviving sources. Thus he finds it difficult to develop a significant comparison of the Scottish court with Elias' study of the complex role of etiquette at the court of Louis XIV. Mistakes are few: Thomas Craig of Riccarton (d. 1608) was not a "seventeenth century lawyer" (124n5). The most jarring aspect of this study is the disjunction between the granular teasing out of the doings of household figures and grand anthropological theory. Even so, this remains a book of substance and significance.

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Jonathan Hughes. *Dante's Divine Comedy in Early Renaissance England: The Collision of Two Worlds*

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Jonathan Hughes's *Dante's Divine Comedy in Early Renaissance England* details how we might view an earlier Renaissance occurring in fifteenth-century England through interesting connections to Dante's world. Hughes synthesizes intellectual, religious, and literary movements relevant to Dante's influential text to then compare to English writers such as Chaucer as well as English intellectuals surrounding Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, Uncle to King Henry VI. With nine chapters corresponding to astronomical elements, *Dante's Divine Comedy in Early Renaissance England* ranges in content from classical influences on both Dante and English writers; to contemporary views on nature, science, religion, and fortune in both contexts; to conflicting representations of women and the afterlife. In this ambitious collection of topics, Hughes at times lacks precision in detail, and the text has a few errors in the transcription of Dante's Italian; nevertheless, the book offers fascinating new insights into these connections between Italy and England.

The introduction opens by explaining that this book "resolves a long-standing contradiction" for Hughes as someone who studies Medieval writers and intellectual life but also has a passion for modern literature (1). Hughes explains how he became interested in Dante from reading James Joyce, and this is an apt introduction to the different, wider literary perspectives brought up throughout the text. Hughes then outlines the overall points of comparison between Dante and late Medieval England discussed in the book, including shared interests in classical texts, the natural world, and fortune, as well as similar admirations for love, beauty, and art. Key differences, Hughes argues, stem from Dante's faith and his representation of the afterlife, which lead to differences in religious, intellectual, and cultural viewpoints of each environment. Hughes offers a strong overview of how the book explores not only English admirations of Dante's writing but also critiques to Dante's work as a means of delineating the collective influences of Dante in England.

The first three chapters include meaningful insights into various connections between Dante and England. Chapter 1 discusses Dante's life and important context for *The Divine Comedy*, reminding the reader of the different intellectual and political influences on Dante as well as his reception in Italy before detailing English responses to Dante's work. Hughes adeptly discusses connections to English mystical writing as well as French engagement with Dante. The chapter then discusses the influence of Dante in the specific intellectual environment surrounding Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, as the main site of reception Hughes utilizes throughout the book. This section also includes interesting points on the shared importance of using vernacular language as a means of establishing a national literature. The next two chapters discuss classical Roman and Greek influences on both Dante and English writers in this period. Here, Hughes explains overarching connections to Greek mythology and ethics in Italian and English writing as well as how Dante and Gloucester looked to ancient Rome for moral and political guidance. Hughes establishes remarkable links useful for both Italian and English scholars in this section.

The next set of chapters employs a similar pattern in which Hughes begins a chapter with Dante, moves to an analysis of English writers (mainly Chaucer and Lydgate), and then discusses connections to the intellectual environment surrounding Gloucester. While this structure worked well in initial chapters, it has mixed results as the book moves to the larger topics of fortune, nature, science, and representations of women. Hughes's chapter on fortune, for example, nicely discusses the various and conflicting viewpoints of this concept from Dante through Chaucer and English writers surrounding Gloucester. This chapter is also a highlight for Hughes's strength in representing how a given concept took on diverse meanings in various environments and speaks to the importance of such comparative work. However, the chapters on nature, science, and women often feel constrained by this repeating structure and some claims are consequently less clearly developed. The section could also use more engagement with secondary scholarship, especially in the chapter on women. However, Hughes still provides interesting context on a range of captivating topics in these chapters.

Final chapters discuss representations of love, the afterlife, and melancholia before turning to the conclusion. In this section, Hughes includes points that strongly represent his subtitle: *The Collision of Two Worlds*. Hughes describes how Chaucer and writers in Gloucester's circle had crucial contrasts to Dante's views of the afterlife. Hughes claims English writers desired "to place conceptions of the soul or the spirit firmly within the spheres of the realities of human behaviour and the laws of nature, science and logic" (265). Hughes synthesizes how English reactions to Dante's afterlife prompted larger religious doubt, and his chapter on melancholia builds on this point as well as earlier thoughts on fortune, suffering, and the afterlife. The conclusion offers a solid summary of these key points of connection and collision between Dante and early Renaissance England and then goes back to similar thoughts from the introduction on modernist views of Dante. Overall, *Dante's Divine Comedy in Early Renaissance England* provides noteworthy context valuable to Italian and English scholars of premodern literature, history, and culture.

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