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Dante's footsteps in the novel *The Moon and the Bonfire* by Cesare Pavese Fatemeh Asgari ¹✉ 0000-0002-1234-1975

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Extended ABSTRACT

Dante Alighieri's name appears in many works of world literature, especially in the West. Many contemporary authors from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds have mentioned Dante's inner journey in some of their works or studies. In the Italian peninsula, Dante's name, tradition, thought, and mentality have been mentioned many times by thinkers and writers from the 16th century to the present day. Contemporary researchers in national and cross-border comparative studies both inside and outside Italy have studied thematic and morphological borrowings in the works of some Italian storytellers and writers of the 20th century. Tristan Kay's "'Una modesta Divina Commedia': Dante as Anti-model in Cesare Pavese's *La luna e i falò*" (2011) is a notable example, because adopting a holistic critical point of view, he carries out a thematic and structural comparison between the thoughts of the author of *The Moon and the Bonfire* (1949) and the author of *Divine Comedy* (1321). Inspired by Tristan Kay's and adopting a necessarily in-text view while trying to move from the thematic depth of *The Moon and the Bonfire* to some content and imagery angles of the *Divine Comedy*, the present study seeks to find Dante's footprints in different parts of Pavese's novel. This analytical study of the linguistic and narrative forms that make up the characters and the landscape of the novel points to a number of conclusions at the level of aesthetics and comparative textual criticism. Firstly, Pavese's studies of Dante during his academic years have so deeply influenced the literary nature of the narrator that he wanted to specifically transmit to his novel's characters all those formal characteristics, meanings, and roles of the characters of the Purgatory in the *Divine Comedy*. In the style of a scene in Dante's Purgatory, Pavese's novel seems to be a mirror reflecting a conceptual dimension, in which Man is condemned to a perpetual purging of original sin on earth and hopes for a paradise promised in the sacred religious texts. Secondly, the textual analysis of the novel reveals that only one of the characters has infernal similarities in attitude and in the tragic end that he causes for himself and his neighbors. Lastly, there are no traces of paradise, so longed for by Pavese imitating the master, in the novel. Paradise seems to be inaccessible to Man, even if he is always anxiously searching for it. Therefore, the achievement of paradise, whether interpreted in a secular sense or conceived in a Dantean sense, is not granted to him.

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