

Professor Jelena Todorovic**Mother Greed and Her Children in Dante's *Divine Comedy***

“Radix omnium malorum est cupiditas” (“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil”), we read in 1 Timothy 6.10. Early Christian thinkers seemed to agree, holding avarice (greed) as the most egregious of the deadly sins. With the rise of economy and private wealth in the early Middle Ages, greed started to be normalized and eventually pride would take over as the worst Christian transgression. Even though Dante seems to comply with this teaching (placing pride on the lowest terrace of Mount Purgatory and condemning it all throughout the *Inferno*), a more careful analysis of the *Divine Comedy* suggests that the Florentine poet still subscribed to the original, biblical tenet that avarice is, indeed, the worst of the deadly sins and the origin of much of the evil in this world because of its multifaceted effects both on the sinner and on their society, and, by extension, on the world in general. In the time when most of the issues of our contemporary world, from global warming to massive inequalities to perpetual wars that sow utter destruction, are driven by the greed of individuals, it is worth exploring Dante's views on greed and, hopefully, learning something along the way.

PhD student Roodmerlynn Pierre
Navigating Our History: A Tidalectic reading of Edwidge Danticat's *Krik? Krak!* and *Breath, Eyes, Memory*

Some geologists have argued that thinking of the ocean as a force rather than a place is more useful. The ocean, unlike other places, poses challenges to representation and memorialization. The ocean is not an aqua nullius or a blank space but an agentive, ontological, and material place. Thinking about the sea as an agentive entity helps us to understand how Caribbean authors and scholars use the ocean and bodies of water to generate alternative ways of knowing. Put

another way, the fluidity and malleability of water provide a valuable framework for understanding the entanglements of history, memory, and representability.

I seek to explore the presence of water in Edwidge Danticat's short story "1937" ! and her novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. With Kamau Brathwaite's theory of dialectics as a framework, I argue that Danticat uses water (in components and structures) to destabilize the linearity of time and distinctions of place. Using water as a distinctly feminine agent, I seek to demonstrate how Danticat uses bodies of water to convey the challenges of representing the histories and relationships of Haitian women and their (fore)mothers and how these women navigate their relationships "in the wake" of slavery and state regimes of terror.

Professor Stefania Buccini

"Fiery and Impetuous": Early Reception of Alfieri in America

In 1788 Italian tragic poet Vittorio Alfieri sent George Washington a copy of *L'America libera* (America the Free), a collection of five odes devoted to the American Revolution. In the same year, he dedicated to the distinguished Virginian the tragedy *Brutus I*, stating that "no name but that of America's liberator may precede the tragedy of the liberator of Rome". It was, therefore, Alfieri himself who initiated the journey of his work across the Atlantic, perhaps hoping that it could achieve resonance with free, broad-minded, and dynamic readers capable of capturing his fervent aversion to despotism and his vigorous defense of liberty. This presentation will explore the various ways in which scholars and freelance writers read Alfieri in nineteenth-century America.