

**THE REJECTION TOWARD "DIVINE COMEDY"
PRACTICED BY THE DOMINANCE AS DESCRIBED
IN MATTHEW PEARL'S *THE DANTE CLUB***

A THESIS

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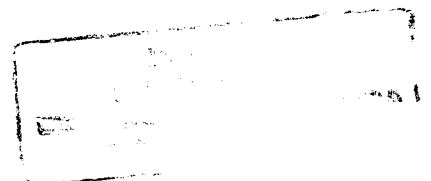
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**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF LETTERS
AIRLANGGA UNIVERSITY
SURABAYA**

2007



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**Submitted as Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Sarjana Degree of English Department
Faculty of Letters Airlangga University Surabaya**

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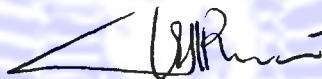
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Dedicated to

My Beloved Mama and Papa



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In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. There is no God, but Allah SWT. Praise be to You, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the world, for giving me a chance to live and never stops blessings me ever since I was born till the end of my life. Praise and peace be upon Muhammad, the last Prophet, the messenger of Islam who has enlightened our life.

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The Writer

Rizal Octofianto Datau

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ABSTRACT

Matthew Pearl's *The Dante Club* is a historical fiction that set its story in the state of Massachusetts after the American Civil War, which ended in 1865. Along with the aftermath, xenophobia and anti-Catholicism were two important issues of the story presented by the author. More specifically, it is the story of a controversy over the presence of an Italian literary work, "Divine Comedy" to the country brought and about to be translated by a group of people named the Dante Club.

The main issue, which is analyzed in this study, is the controversy over the presence of "Divine Comedy" to America. The writer focuses his analysis on the attempts to reject that Italian masterpiece done by the dominance. The reasons of the rejection are based on the viewpoint of the dominance by the application of the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA). ISA is a term used by Louis Althusser in his theory of ideology, which is applied in the analysis of this study.

The result of this study is the revelation of the existence of a dominant ideology and its ideological practices. Here, the ideology of the dominance is Unitarian, which through its ISA (the university, the church, and the media), they attempt to reject the presence of "Divine Comedy" to America since according to the dominance that literary work contains Euro-centric paradigm and influenced by Catholicism, which its teaching are contrary to Unitarian.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The influx of immigrants from Europe to America after the American Civil War that ended in 1865 had remained hostile impacts to whole of the country. It had caused the unstable social and political condition, which inevitably led to some disadvantages, such as poverty, corruption, and the raising number of violence and crimes that happened in some states. As a result, besides the issue of racial discrimination, which is believed by most historical accounts as one of the causes of the war, was still found in particular situations. The hatred toward the Europeans among the native citizens of the country was overwhelming as well. This phenomenon of xenophobia inevitably raised some overreacting responses toward any Euro-centric paradigm and European immigrants since the nativists blamed on the Europeans for their massive coming that had caused the situation of the country after the civil war worse (Queen 34-35.)

Along with those issues, anti-Catholicism was another ongoing problem that also took part in causing those disadvantages. *Encyclopedia of American Religious History* explains that anti-Catholicism arrived in North America with the first British settlers in eighteenth century. They brought with them the anti-Catholicism that was part of the political and social environment in England and enacted into colonial law the anti-Catholic statutes of their homeland. For them anti-Catholicism was a mission. Their goal was to purify the Church of England

of its remaining “Popish” elements. As time went by, the anti-Catholicism started to be neatly organized. As a result, until after the Civil War, the increasing of immigration had given birth to a renewed assault on immigrants in general and Catholics in particular besides the ongoing attendant poverty, urban corruption, and rising crime (Queen 33-35). This situation threatened the social living of the native citizens. Hence, the prejudices and suspicions toward its believers finally led to the rejection toward anything that has to do with Catholicism. However, it also caused that anything, which has to do with Italy was considerably influenced by Catholicism since Italy is the country where the Roman-Catholic was born. As well as the Italian immigrants, the Irish immigrants inevitably underwent the same discrimination since they came to America in a very large number and most of them were Catholics (Online)

Published by Vintage, London in 2004, both phenomena—Euro-centric fear and anti-Catholicism—that have been mentioned above, which happened after the American Civil War, are portrayed in Matthew Pearl’s *The Dante Club*. Based on that background, Pearl wrote a story telling about a controversy over the presence of “Divine Comedy” to America. *The Dante Club* is his debut novel. The idea of writing this novel was encouraged by his interest in “Divine Comedy” and his eagerness to explore further about his thesis in Harvard’s Department of English and American Literature that he perfectly finished using the same title as the novel. In 1997, he became a graduate of Harvard University with a summa cum laude. Moreover, for he has also been living in Massachusetts since he was born, it is quite reasonable that he knows well how to describe the setting of place

of the novel and create a relevant story. Another interesting historical part, furthermore, is the main characters within the story are real figures that lived at that time. Whereas, here, the fictional parts of the novel are the story and its plot that are created by Pearl (Online).

In *The Dante Club*, Pearl tells about the efforts of a group of people, called the Dante Club who bring and introduce a world-famous Italian literary masterpiece, entitled “Divine Comedy” to America. The name of the club itself is taken from the name of an Italian medieval poet, who wrote “Divine Comedy”, Dante Alighieri. Here, “Divine Comedy” is a very long poem that contains three canticles: Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso, in which each canticle consists of thirty-three cantos, except “Inferno”, which consists of thirty-four cantos. However, it is told that the presence of “Divine Comedy” to America becomes a controversial issue since according to the dominance, this work of literature is Euro-centric and influenced by Catholicism. Here, the dominance refers to the ruling power that its ideology is based on the religion believed by the majority of Massachusetts’ people. The religion believed by those people—mostly the native citizens—is Unitarian.

In brief, the story is about the attempts of the club to find the murderer of a serial homicides happened in two main cities of Massachusetts, Boston and Cambridge. They have to be involved in it since they figure out that the modus of the murders resembled the scenes of the Hell’s tortures as depicted in “Inferno”, but nobody knows it except them and the murderer. Then, of course, it is another obstacle for their attempts to introduce the reputable masterpiece to America. The

members of the club are the main characters within the novel and they are Henry Wardsworth Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes, James Russell Lowell, George Washington Green, and J. T. Fields. Historically, the Dante Club existed in Massachusetts during the middle of nineteenth century. The club, particularly Longfellow, is well-known because of their success of making the first American-English translation of “Divine Comedy” that finally led to the spirit of learning other European literatures to America. However, before “Divine Comedy” was translated into American English, some American intellectuals showed familiarity with Dante, which was gained mostly from the British translation (Pearl 369).

After reading the novel for several times, the writer thinks that as a historical fiction, Matthew Pearl’s *The Dante Club* is different from other usual historical fictions since it intensively deals with literature. Besides, the most interesting part of this novel is its main characters are the real people who used to be the famous American literary figures who lived at that time. Moreover, since the writer is the student of the English Department, in which literature is his major as well, so it makes sense that the above reasons have encouraged the writer’s curiosity to explore more about the issues provided in the novel. Here, according to the writer, the issues of xenophobia and anti-Catholicism that lead to the rejection toward the presence of “Divine Comedy” to America done by the dominance become the most interesting and challenging discussion to analyze. Therefore, based on this reason, the writer is eager to do a study, which is focused on the rejection of “Divine Comedy” practiced by the dominance.

B. Statements of the Problems

According to the background of the study, the writer has determined to analyze the following statements of the problems.

1. Why is “Divine Comedy” rejected by the dominance?
2. How is the ideology of the dominance practiced in the rejection toward “Divine Comedy”?

C. Objectives of the Study

Based on the statements of the problems, the objectives of this study are:

1. To explain the reasons why the dominance rejects “Divine Comedy”.
2. To reveal how the ideology of the dominance is practiced in the rejection toward “Divine Comedy”.

D. Significance of the Study

This study is purposed to get a good comprehension about a particular phenomenon that happens in America as the impacts of the civil war. More specifically, it is significantly aimed to reveal the ideological practices done by the dominance that appear as the reaction against the presence “Divine Comedy” to America.

The other significance is the writer hopes that this study can give a valuable contribution, which is useful and helpful for the students of English Department of Airlangga University, particularly to those who are in the major of literature. Moreover, it is expected that through this study, the readers can

explained in his writing *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, according to Althusser, there are two types of ideological apparatuses, Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) and Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs). The first mentioned works ideologically and the other is repressively. Therefore, the further discussion of this theory will be explained in the Theoretical Framework in the following chapter.

G. Method of the Study

This study, basically, is a qualitative study since it requires the importance of the valid information from the sources, which is representative, relevant, and accurate. Therefore, after reading the novel for several times, the writer continues to collect the qualitative data from the dialogues, plots, or actions that are relevant with the chosen issue. Here, since the novel is a historical fiction, the importance of the library research is very influential and crucial toward the study. The writer has to gain enough information about the relevant history that will be used to support the analysis in order to get the expected comprehension about the study.

The next important thing is the writer has to decide what theory that is going to apply. A correct and relevant theory will be helpful for the writer since it is useful for the analysis. Along with the process of writing, the discussion with lecturers and friends are going on as well in order to get a deeper comprehension.

In the analysis, the descriptive method will be applied in order to elaborate the collected data taken from the novel as the primary source that are represented

through the intrinsic elements, without ignoring the necessity of the supporting information, which are gained from the secondary sources.

H. Definition of Key Terms

- Anti-Catholicism* : a mission in America, which formerly its goal was to purify the Church of England of its remaining “Popish” elements that was brought and done by the first British settlers. This perpetuation kept going on and got worse in the post American Civil War period.
- Apparatuses* : the complex of instruments, which represent as the extended-arms of the organization or dominance.
- Unitarian* : the dominant religion of New England. Its basic teaching is the belief that God is one being rather than three beings.
- Xenophobia* : great dislike or fear of foreigners.
- Nativists* : the native citizens of America, particularly who live in Massachusetts—where the story revolves. Most of them feel threatened and disagree with the presence of the European immigrants that come to America in the large number.
- Dominance* : the ruling power that its ideology is based on the religion believed by the majority of Massachusetts’

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, the writer will explain the theory, which is going to be applied in the analysis. Here, the writer will explain about Louis Althusser's theory of ideology that will be helpful to reveal how the ideology of dominance practices its domination through the works of ideological apparatuses that interfere not only the public domain of the society, but also the private domain. In addition, since the novel contains historical values, some historical accounts are required to gain more understanding about the historical aspects that set the background of the story. The writer will focus on the historical accounts that deal with the social living background of America during the early period of post civil war, particularly in the state of Massachusetts and more specifically the ones that are related to the issues of xenophobia and anti-Catholicism.

A. Theory of Ideology by Louis Althusser

Ideology is a key term for, a French philosopher, Louis Althusser, whose theory of ideology has contributed to cultural studies. He defines that:

Ideology is a system (possessing its logic and proper rigour) of representations (images, myths, ideas or concepts according to the case) endowed with an existence and historical role at the heart of a given society (Barry 163)

Relevant with this definition, Takwin in *Membaca Althusser dari Beberapa Sisi* gives a simpler explanation about Althusser's thesis of ideology. He concludes that according to Althusser, ideology has become the part of every man since he was born. For instance, the way we dress and comb our hair, which we have been done for years are always believed that 'it has been like that since we were born'. We never realize when such way of self-adjustment appeared for the first time. Thus, the more we assume it as normal, the more we ignore things that are actually supposed to be questioned. Such belief that is unconsciously imposed to everyone's mind is called by Althusser as ideology (Takwin xvii).

In *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, Louis Althusser explains that ideology has particular tools or instruments that are helpful to maintain the domination of the ruling ideology or power. The tools are the State Ideological Apparatuses. Through these apparatuses, any action or policy, which is taken by the dominance, can be justified since it is based on a strong legitimacy. There are two types of State Ideological Apparatuses. The first is Repressive State Apparatuses and the second is Ideological State Apparatuses.

Althusser explains that the Repressive State Apparatuses or RSA contains the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons, etc. Whereas, Ideological State Apparatuses or ISA is a certain number of realities, which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions (Althusser 142-143). He proposes the following empirical list of ISA:

-- the religious ISA (the system of the different Churches),

- the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private 'Schools'),
- the family ISA,
- the political ISA (the political system, including the different Parties),
- the trade-union ISA,
- the communications ISA (press, radio and television, etc.),
- the cultural ISA (Literature, the Arts, sports, etc.).

It is clear that the Repressive State Apparatus belongs entirely to the public domain, whereas the Ideological State Apparatuses are part, on the contrary, of the private domain. Churches, Parties, Trade Unions, families, some schools, most newspapers, cultural ventures, etc. are private (Althusser 144).

What distinguishes the ISA from the (Repressive) State Apparatus is the following basic difference: the Repressive State Apparatus functions 'by violence', whereas the Ideological State Apparatuses' function 'by ideology'. However, he clarifies the fact that the Repressive State Apparatus functions massively and predominantly by repression (including physical repression), while functioning secondarily by ideology (there is no such thing as a purely repressive apparatus). For example, the Army and the Police also function by ideology both to ensure their own cohesion and reproduction, and in the 'values' they propound externally. (Althusser 145).

In the same way, but inversely, it is essential to say that for their part the Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly by ideology, but they also function secondarily by repression, even if ultimately, but only ultimately, this is very attenuated and concealed, even symbolic (there is no such

thing as a purely ideological apparatus). Thus, Schools and Churches use suitable methods of punishment, expulsion, selection, etc., to 'discipline' not only their shepherds, but also their flocks. The same is true of the Family. . . . The same is true of the cultural IS Apparatus (censorship, among other things), etc (Althusser 145).

B. The Historical Accounts of America before the Civil War and the Aftermath

The explanation of the following historical accounts merely functions as the supporting information, which is helpful for understanding and gaining a general view about the social living background of Massachusetts before the Civil War and the aftermath that has inspired the author to set the background of the story.

Besides civil war, the large number of immigrants from Europe and anti-Catholicism were two main phenomena faced by the country in nineteenth century. The main possibility that can be traced in order to find the motive that encouraged the immigrants to move to America is a promising hope of a better life and a better future in the destination land. *Encyclopedia of American Religious History* for example, tells that the famine happened in their homeland in 1845 and 1851 have encouraged the Irish immigrants to move to America (Queen 34). As well as the Irish immigrants, other Europeans decided to move to America since they often considered America as the land of hope.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the writer divides the analysis into two subchapters, in which each of them will represent the discussion of each statement of the problem. For the first subchapter, the writer will delineate the reasons of the rejection toward “Divine Comedy” done by the dominance. Whereas in the discussion of the last subchapter, the writer will reveal the ideological practices against the existence of “Divine Comedy” in Massachusetts, mostly provoked by Harvard University.

A. The Images of “Divine Comedy” Viewed by the Dominance

The rejection of “Divine Comedy” in America cannot be detached from the aftermath of the Civil War that ended in 1865 since the issue of its presence is related to the ongoing issues happen in that country at time. The story describes that the overwhelming social issues happening at that time, several of them are the continuation of the similar controversial problems in the past, precisely before the Civil War occurred. The story tells that “Divine Comedy” is an Italian made literary masterpiece, with its greatness facing difficulties to conquer America. It also tries to show that a world-famous achievement does not guarantee that it is acceptable for everyone.

Set in Massachusetts, it is described that a group of Harvard University intellectuals, who named their community as the Dante Club, tries to make the

American-English translation of “Divine Comedy”. The name of the club, whose members are Henry Wardsworth Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes, James Russell Lowell, George Washington Green, and J. T. Fields, refers to the name of an Italian medieval poet, who wrote “Divine Comedy”, Dante Alighieri. They eagerly hope to be able to introduce the masterpiece to the people of America.

However, the issue of its coming to Massachusetts has caused a controversy among the people, who mostly disagree with it. The bad response toward “Divine Comedy” leads to pressures on the Dante Club. These people persuade and prevent them to continue their intention. The pressures are getting stronger since it is provoked by Harvard University. As one of the influential institutions of the state, the university motorized by the Corporation of Harvard, the front liner of the action, insists to refuse its coming to the state for particular reasons, even though the masterpiece is brought by the university’s best graduates, scholars, and intellectuals. Thus, the following discussion will show and explain the reasons of what makes the presence of “Divine Comedy” to America becomes a controversy, according to the viewpoint of the people who disagree with it.

1. “Divine Comedy” shows the Harshness of European People

The coming of European immigrants to America happened since the early ages of the country. However, after the Civil War, the country’s states—especially Massachusetts where the story revolves—underwent the influx of European that had caused a large number of poverty, urban corruption, and rising crime. The story tells that everything has changed in Boston since the war lined

the whole place with money (122). Here, since the country had been impaired by the war and not been fully recovered, some nativists felt threatened because of the fact that the coming of the immigrants had made the situation worse. Prejudices toward the immigrants emerged while the traumatic of the war still overwhelmed.

Matthew Pearl's *The Dante Club* is set in the early years of the post American Civil War, precisely it is situated in the two main cities of the state of Massachusetts: Boston and Cambridge in 1865. The hatred toward Europeans and everything that has to do with them are the main issue of the story. The story described that in 1865, most of the Boston's native citizens were frightened of the multiplication of the foreigners. It is also told that many nativists, put signs on the windows in front of the houses FOREIGNERS NEED NOT APPLY (156). It may prove that their response toward the presence of the foreigners has been exaggerated. The bad stereotype attached to the immigrants has limited their access to have an opportunity to become the part of the people of Boston and live together with them. Another example that shows the haughtiness of the nativists is the public rumor that speaks about the attitude of the native girls toward the foreign girls that badly treated (191). This rumor is not merely a gossip since both the nativists and the immigrants know very well that the native girls often found underestimating the foreign girls. In Massachusetts, especially in Boston and Cambridge—where the story revolves—such cases are no longer peculiar things to see since they have been the part of the daily life. However, this phenomenon of xenophobia is often more pointed to the rejection toward the existence of the Italians and Irish since most of them are Catholics. According to

the nativists, the existence of Catholicism in Massachusetts is considered as another irritating problem that annoys the convenience of the place where they live. Here, however, the further explanation about the disagreement toward Catholicism will be conferred in the following discussion.

Apart from becoming an individual response, the rebuff toward the Europeans has reached to some influential public institutions. Personally, the nativists are grateful for it since their worry has been noticed and their hope is fulfilled because their refutation will be more well-organized under the control of the groups of people who have more right to do it. This shows that the dominance strongly tries to close every access for the Europeans in order not to give them opportunity to join and become the part of the people of Massachusetts. Thus, for the nativists, the interference of those institutions is a blessing since they feel that the misery caused by the Civil War has to end, and the massive number of Europeans that come to their homeland will never help them to recover from the trauma of violence. They think that because of those immigrants, the state has undergone the raising numbers of crime and violence.

As one of the stately institutions, the University of Harvard also considers that the influx of European immigrants to Massachusetts has been an inevitable threat, particularly for the university. Here, under the authority of the Corporation of Harvard, the university is in charge of some efforts to refuse the presence of the foreigners. It is told that the ways of Harvard Corporations to reject anything that has to do with Europeans are practiced by applying some policies that marginalize the paradigms of Euro-centric, which one of them is implemented to the

supposing such languages are available in Harvard, it may legitimize the presence of foreigners, which can be assumed that the immigrants have been received among the society. They also think that the Italian language is papist. This reason is actually addressed to refuse the presence of Catholic's influence to the university. According to the Harvard University, Catholicism is totally contrary to the teachings of Unitarianism, which the university is based on. It has been known that the most important difference between Unitarian and Catholicism is their theological principle, in which the Catholicism believes in the doctrine of Trinity, whereas the Unitarian does not. So everything that has to do with Italy is assumed equal to Catholicism since Italy is where Catholicism is centered and the pope lives. Whereas the terms vulgar is aimed to offend the teachings of Catholicism, which the university considers as disorders.

There are two things found by the university and assumed as the evidence of disorders. The first is the repetition of every century's rumor about the sexual ritual inside the Catholic convent. The writer finds that this reason is related to the past experience undergone by the Catholic immigrants in Charlestown, in which the Ursuline convent was burned by the Protestants because of such rumor. So, it shows that this rumor is still believed and justified by the university to refuse Catholicism. And the second is the scenes of the Hell's punishments depicted in the canticle of "Inferno", in Dante Alighieri's "Divine Comedy", which Harvard tends to accuse Dante of presenting violence in its lyrics. They disagree with the presence of that Italian literary work to America since they think after the Civil War, the country does not deserve to receive anymore kind of violence. This

reveals a tendency that the university only perceives “Divine Comedy” subjectively based on their viewpoint by selecting some findings, which they consider negative.

Moreover, the fact is that from the start, the people of Massachusetts dislike the living language, so they do not read any European works. Even though many works have been translated into English, they still do not want to read for the translation is bad (42). Based on such perceptions, it proves that the university has found a justifiable reason to refuse the living languages.

Thus, regarding to “Divine Comedy”, because of the above reasons, the Corporation of Harvard is assigned to clear the university from the influence of Euro-centric mindset. So, it makes clear why Dante Alighieri’s “Divine Comedy”, which is brought from Italy and introduced by the members of Dante Club to America, is black-listed by the university. Even though, the members of the club are the best intellectuals of Harvard, it does not bother the Corporation to accomplish their duty to prevent them from keeping their plan to translate the “Divine Comedy”.

Even Oliver Wendell Holmes himself, one of the club’s members, admits that “Inferno”—the first canticle of “Divine Comedy”—represents the hideousness, the savagery, and the nightmare of the medieval (43). Holmes is described as the most tolerant among the other members of the club. That is why the Corporation is easier to persuade him than to persuade the other members. This makes the other members suspect him that he supports the efforts of the Corporation to stop their translation. However, far in the bottom of his heart, he

never means to betray the club. He just tries to be polite to everyone, including Dr. Augustus Manning, the treasurer of the Corporation. Thus, by the time he gives comments about the harshness depicted in the “Inferno”, the other members accused him of being sent by Dr. Manning to stop the translation. Based on such described by Holmes, the Corporation figures that the American society has enough severity because of their sufferings from the war and it is time for them to fight against any violence, even from the things that are considered as academically scientific matters. Therefore, it depicts that this becomes one of the strongest reasons that leads to the rejection of “Divine Comedy”. This also emphasizes that the presence of “Divine Comedy” is one of the causes of the xenophobia.

Within the story, it is also told that Dr. Manning, the treasurer of the Corporation, encouragingly provokes others not to support the attempts of translating the “Divine Comedy” that is being done by the Dante Club.

There have begun attempts by Professor Lowell and several literary colleagues to bring certain literature into our city that does not belong. Its teachings will endanger the peace of millions of gentle souls. As a member of the Corporation, I am bound by duty to defend the good reputation of the university against any such blemishes (205).

According to the above opinion, “Divine Comedy” is considered as a work of literature that has a possibility to threat and endanger the people. The Corporation thinks that the image of violence as depicted by the Hell’s punishments found in

the lyrics of “Inferno” will revive the people’s trauma of the violence of the war. Such opinion that appears against the “Divine Comedy” is justifiable to any action and decision that they take to reject the presence of “Divine Comedy” to the people of Massachusetts.

Moreover, related to the ongoing case of serial murders happen in Boston and Cambridge. The writer examines that supposing the dominance and the public knows that the murderer are inspired by the scenes of the Hell’s punishments in Dante Alighieri’s “Inferno”, it would possibly becomes the most valid reason, which is undoubtedly justifiable for them to confidently state that “Divine Comedy” is the representation of the harshness of the European people.

However, based on the story, both the dominance and the public do not know about it, except the members of the Dante Club. The murderer has killed two victims, a judge and a reverend. The murderer has chosen a judge and a reverend because he tries to perfectly resemble the victims that were tortured by the punishment in Dante’s Hell depicted in “Inferno”, which were a judge and reverend as well. It is told that Prescott Healey, the judge and Reverend Elisha Talbot were found in a worst condition of their life; both of them were mutilated, particularly, the judge. He was slowly killed since the murderer mutilates him and left him half-dead. Regarding to the point of this paragraph, the writer will reveal the efforts of the Corporation to reject “Divine Comedy” based on those reasons in the next subchapter.

The writer figures out that the presence of “Divine Comedy” to America tends to result some risky resistances coming from the nativists and particularly



the dominance that discriminate the European immigrants in Massachusetts. These impacts are predictable since it is so obvious for the nativists' suspicion and fear of the immigrants are still going on.

2. "Divine Comedy" is influenced by Catholicism

In the previous chapter, the writer has explained that anti-Catholicism arrived in North America with the first British settlers in the eighteenth century. Their goal was to clear the remaining "Popish" elements in the country. After the Civil War, the increasing of immigrants had given birth to a renewed assault on immigrants in general and Catholics in particular besides the ongoing attendant poverty, urban corruption, and rising crime. Hence, the prejudices and suspicions toward its believers that caused the refusal of Catholicism finally led to the ideological practices of anti-Catholicism as the reaction against their presence. Hence, according to Harvard, the other reason, which can be justified to reject "Divine Comedy", is that Italian literary work is strongly influenced by the teachings of Catholicism. This assumption appears since the Corporation often thinks that anything, which has to do with Italy is considered Catholic and they also know very well that Dante Alighieri was a Catholic. This finally proves that this problem occurs because of the difference of the ideology between Unitarian believed by Harvard University and Catholicism (31).

Historically, at that time, the dominant religion of Massachusetts in the nineteenth century was Unitarian (Online). The teachings of Unitarian—denying the doctrine of Trinity and that Jesus Christ is God—is, of course, totally different

from Catholicism. Moreover, the whole reality of Harvard University itself is mostly based on Unitarian as well. That is why, since Catholicism is contrary to the university's teachings, anything that deals with Catholicism is considered disgraceful. However, it leads them to some overreacting responses. Therefore, since Italy is the country where the Roman-Catholicism was born, they suspect that anything that has to do with Italy is equal to Catholicism.

The story describes that the Catholic churches have a fund entrusted to them from the Vatican for immigrants (152). This fact makes the dominance—whose ideology is Unitarian—worried, because they assume that the spread of Catholicism has been well-organized and directly funded by the pope. Therefore, it is normal that the dominance is irritated. They do exaggerated things that are purposed to stop it. The Catholic immigrants are threatened and frightened if the tragedy happened in Charlestown, where the Protestants people had burned the Ursuline convent, will be repeated and experienced by them.

This unfairness is not felt only by the Italian immigrants in Massachusetts, but it also impacts the existence of “Divine Comedy” particularly. The teachings of Unitarianism, which tend to be rational and logical, can hardly accept the scenes of the punishments of Hell as depicted in the canticle of “Inferno”. About this point, Thomas Hill, the president of the university, also strengthens the opinion of disagreement with the coming of “Divine Comedy” when he is arguing with James Russell Lowell, the member of the club, about “Inferno”.

Hill tried hard not to sway from his purpose. “This idea of traveling through the afterlife, of recording Hell’s punishments—

that's downright harsh, Lowell. And a work like this so inaptly titled 'Comedy'! It's medieval, it's scholastic, and . . ."

"Catholic." This shut Hill up. "That is what you mean, Reverend President. That's It's all too Italian, too Catholic for Harvard College?" (31)

This proves that the influence of Catholicism becomes a reason, which is justified to deny the presence of "Divine Comedy" to the university. From the start, the university has considered "Divine Comedy" as representing the tendencies of Catholicism. The harsh and vulgar depictions of the afterlife described by the lyrics of its canticles, according to the university do not show its religious side, but on the other hand, it may become the guide of violence. Therefore, for the nativists, besides the rituals, this kind of perception about Catholicism may give birth to the stereotype toward the Catholics, especially to the immigrants from Italy and Ireland. So it is clear why the Catholics become the public enemy.

However, all members of the club have fully realized that the university is afraid of the influence of the Dante Club since that foreign work is Catholic (62). This has been noticed by the club that the university cannot directly state explicitly that they deny Catholicism, but they show their disagreement implicitly through ideological practices that tend to marginalize the existence of Catholicism. The club knows that the university wants to keep their good image in front of the public as a reputable institution that can accept differences and be tolerable. However, since the members of the Dante Club have been working for the university for years, they know it better than the common public.

B. The Rejection Practiced by the Apparatuses of the Dominance

For the main reasons that have previously mentioned, the bad response toward the presence of “Divine Comedy” to Massachusetts finally leads to the efforts to reject it. The story described that these efforts are done by the dominance. Here, the dominance refers to the ruling power that its ideology is based on the religion believed by the majority of Massachusetts’ people. The religion believed by those people—mostly the native citizens—is Unitarian. As the efforts are going on, the writer finds that the role of Harvard University has a very significant influence within it.

In the following discussion, the writer will try to delineate the efforts to reject the presence of “Divine Comedy” to America in order to reveal and prove the existence of the ideological practices that represent the existence of the dominance. Here, the writer will divide the discussion into three parts based on the sorts of the ideological apparatuses. The apparatuses are the extended-arms of the dominance, in which its practices represent the power of the dominance. These apparatuses are termed by Louis Althusser as the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA), which is represented in the story through the university, the church, and the media.

1. The University

Particularly for Massachusetts and generally for the country, the University of Harvard is a reputable university and an influential institution. In some certain occasions, the university would initiatively like to show its concern

toward any social issue happening in the state or the country. However, before discussing further the writer thinks it is necessary for the readers to know briefly about the organizational structure of the university. There are two major influential boards of the university, the first is the Corporation of Harvard that is assigned to manage and control the university, the other is the Harvard Board of Overseers, a twenty-person governing body, which is annually elected by the state legislature and one step removed from the Corporation of Harvard. The Harvard Board of Overseers elects what it calls advocates in order to thoroughly consider issues of particular importance or controversy (292). However, since the Harvard Corporation is assigned to control and manage the university, they have a more significant influence in the institution. They have the right to make policies and penalties given to any mistakes done by the lecturers and students that disobey the rule. The novel describes that because of this role and authority, Corporation's policies tend to be radical.

The story describes that the Harvard University encouragingly supports and defends the importance of the dominance. Here, the dominance is strongly influenced by the Unitarian and Protestant, the two dominant religions of the state. The obedience of Harvard University toward its religions teachings is strictly applied to the university. The Corporation of Harvard, which is assigned to manage and control the university, tends to be intolerant toward differences.

Several examples show that some actions taken by the university to face the difference is often radical. One of the examples has proved that the Corporation had never liked the idea of employing foreigners, particularly an

conduct by the Harvard Corporation (231). Such arrogance is often shown by the Corporation to show that they are ruling and having the right to do so.

Regarding to the issue of the presence of “Divine Comedy” to America, it has been known that the Corporation can never accept anything that has to do with Catholicism. Toward that literary work, the Corporation has been overreacting to other literary lecturers about Dante Alighieri and his works. It happens to James Russell Lowell, one of the members of the Dante Club. While participating himself to the Dante Club in translating the “Inferno”, the Harvard Corporation was always looking over his shoulder, racking and sifting and pickaxing and hoeing and shoveling and dredging and scratching (and, he feared, also damning) his brain like so many California immigrants (93). The efforts of the Corporation to pressure their lecturers in order not to support the existence of “Divine Comedy” is described as if the feeling of terror felt by those lecturers is similar with the terrified feelings felt by the immigrants.

Related to the above point, Lowell proved that the Corporation has hired a man, named Simon Camp, to investigate whether his lecture of Dante could be demonstrated as likely to produce a ‘pernicious effect’ on the students (242). Simon Camp is paid to report his findings to Dr. Augustus Manning. It means that prejudices toward everything that has to do with “Divine Comedy” leads to the exaggerated reactions. James Russell Lowell is not the only man that has been made inconvenient by the university. Ralph Waldo Emerson was once banned by the Harvard from speaking on campus for declaring the Unitarian Church dead (168). It is an obvious evidence, which proves that the Corporation of Harvard

University is worried that the Unitarian as the ongoing ideology that set the mind of most people of Harvard and generally the most citizens of Massachusetts will be threatened by risk of being taken over by any other ideology.

Moreover, the story tells that the Corporation wishes to bury Dante to preserve their curriculum (105). This point is also strengthened by another supporting evidence, which informs that by the time the Harvard Corporation already gets the negative facts of Dante, it will be easier for them to boost their position against re-forming and opening the curriculum (306). This makes the Corporation seems to be ambitious and work hard for it. However, it may actually be easier for the Corporation of Harvard to justify any action they take to reject "Divine Comedy" if they have known that the modus of the serial murders, which the real murderer has not been found yet, is inspired by the scenes of the Hell's tortures depicted in "Inferno". It is told that only the members of the club and of course, the murderer who know the modus. In this occasion, supposing the Corporation has figured out that clue, they might easily accuse all members of the club to be the only suspects if the real murderer will never be found. That is why, the club thinks that protecting themselves and Dante is one and the same (104).

Therefore, such fears, which are strongly pressured by the Corporation in order to let people such Longfellow and friends down, are often massively done. According to a note found by J. T. Fields, one of the Dante Club's members, the Corporation has even conspired with a reverend against Dante. The note states:

In October, four of the six members of the Corporation had eagerly sanctioned the idea of engaging the Reverend Elisha Talbot to pen

critiques of the upcoming Dante translation, leaving the matter of “appropriate compensation for time and energies” to the discretion of the Treasury Committee—that is, Augustus Manning (292).

The Corporation has enough capital to do so. They can afford what they need in order to make “Divine Comedy” be rid of Massachusetts. Paying a reverend to propagate the congregation is an easy thing to do for Harvard since the relation between the university and the church has been hold for years. Besides the university, once, offered Reverend Elisha Talbot to become the Head of the Harvard Divinity School. This misuse of relationship can be assumed as a conspiracy rather that a relationship.

By seeing from the mentioned evidences, the practices done by the University of Harvard to maintain the importance of the dominance, encouraged by the feeling of threatened by the foreigners and Catholicism have led to repressive actions. However, even though it is repressive, it shows that its role as the extended-arms of certain ideology does work. Although a university is categorized as an ideological apparatus that primarily functions ideologically, the repressive ways taken by Harvard University prove that an ideological apparatus has a secondary function that in some certain circumstances can be operated.

2. The Church

Here, the propaganda against the presence of “Divine Comedy“ to Massachusetts is no longer an internal affair that exclusively happens in Harvard University. The conspiracy between Harvard and one of the influential Unitarian

churches of Massachusetts has brought the rejection to a higher level. The authority of the Unitarian church is no longer independent. The university has implicitly taken over the control of that church since a senior reverend is found affordable. Reverend Elisha Talbot finally becomes another helpful extended-arm of the dominance who is trusted to give sermons that persuade his congregation in order not to support the presence of “Divine Comedy”.

The story tells that Reverend Elisha Talbot as the second victim of the serial murders. The Dante Club identifies the modus used by the murderer to murder the reverend resembles the torture undergone by the clerics who accepted money to misuse their titles (100). About this point, whether he is materialistic or not according to that clue, the writer has previously explained that after his death the club finds a note suspected to be the evidence that may prove a conspiracy between the reverend and the Harvard University. The note is written by Augustus Manning, in the name of the Corporation. The main idea of that writing explains that the Corporation has to give the reverend ‘something’ that is more than just a ‘thank you’ for his contribution of writing about the negative things on “Divine Comedy”. On the note what is meant by ‘something’ represented by a sentence between question marks: “appropriate compensation for time and energies” (292).

During his life, Reverend Elisha Talbot used to present himself at the pulpit confidently. Once, for the strength of his debates and his anti-Catholic sermons and writings, Reverend Talbot was encouraged by some to succeed Professor Norton at the Harvard Divinity School, but he declined. Devoting his life to church was a pride. He enjoyed too greatly the sensation of entering his

crowded church every Sunday morning. He loved hearing the solemn peals of the church organ. Since his wife's death in childbirth, he never had a family and never desired to marry another woman, because of the satisfaction brought by his congregation. Church was where his power mattered (80).

Regarding to the attempts to prevent the presence of "Divine Comedy" and the dangers of the rise of the Catholic Church in Massachusetts, Talbot had argued vigorously three chief points in these discourses:

1. that the superstitious rituals and lavish cathedrals of the Catholic faith constituted blasphemous idolatry;
2. that the tendency of the Irish to cluster in neighborhoods around their cathedrals and convents would give rise to secret plotting against America and signaled resistance to Americanization;
3. that popery, the great foreign menace controlling all aspects of the Catholic operation, threatened the Independence of all American religions with its proselytizing and its goal of overrunning the country (80).

Based on those three statements, it can be seen that Reverend Elisha Talbot tends to be a typical fundamentalist. This happens since he does not consciously realize that he has been fully imposed by the doctrine of Unitarian that leads him to be overreacting to Catholicism. However, whether he used to be fundamentalist or fanatic, regardless to such judgment, what has been described about Elisha Talbot above, show that the role of the church has slipped out of its path. The case shows

that a church is no longer a place that is merely used to pray, moreover, a church is where various tendencies can be spread and imposed to many people through it.

Here, it shows that those three statements stated by Talbot, are the overview of the image of Catholicism seen from the point of view of anti-Catholicism. Talbot just delivers what most nativists usually perceive about Catholicism. He informs his congregation how Catholicism is and what effect will happen supposing the people let the Catholics living together with people the country. As if in the name of the country he speaks and as though he knows what is the best for their homeland. He encourages the congregation not to support any attempts that try to make Catholicism exists in order to prevent them from the accusation of betraying the country. Regarding to the presence of “Divine Comedy” to Massachusetts, these three statements are an indirect invitation for the citizens to fight against the publishing of the translation of the Italian literary work.

While struggling against the existence of Catholicism in Massachusetts, the role of the church has been significantly helping to support every attempts purposed to spread the negative rumors about Catholicism among the public. Before the issue of the presence of “Divine Comedy to America appeared, some influential reverends of Unitarian and Protestant churches in Boston and Cambridge were paid by the Harvard University to support the anti-Catholicism. Those reverends are offered some money to help the university to provoke their congregation against Catholicism. However, there is only few numbers of people who notice this, since both side—the church and the university—always hide it

from the public, even from the congregation. And the murderer of the series of murder is one of those people. He thinks that it is improper that the churches through its reverends should accept money for something that he considers sinful. Based on this reason, he is encouraged to kill the reverend, which he intends to give the reverend punishment for the mistakes that he has done. Here, the reverend's devotion to his religion during his life that he implements by writing, debating, and the sermons presenting on the pulpit of the church have resulted two effects for him, a pride of becoming the public figure and a financial profit. However, he never realizes that his career comes to a risk. He had to die at the peak of his career as a famous public figure.

Overall, according to those findings, it shows that the role of the churches and its reverends have contributed significant efforts to support the anti-Catholicism. It also states that the churches' best reverends with their sermons and writings have become effective tools, which are used to influence the congregations. Thus, it concludes that the determination of the Unitarian churches as the extended-arms of the dominance is undoubtedly successful.

3. The Media

Before going further to explain about the role of the media in supporting the rejection toward "Divine Comedy", the writer would like to inform that the efforts done by the Corporation of Harvard University to influence the media is not perfectly successful. This happens because, the most influential publishing company in Boston and Cambridge that plans to publish the translation of "Divine

Comedy” to Massachusetts is never able to be persuaded. The reason is the owner of the company is one the members of the Dante Club, named J. T. Fields. He owns the Ticknor and Fields, Co. that publishes two reputable papers on the state, *The Atlantic Monthly* and *The North American Review*. For this reason, the writer wants to emphasize that even though the Harvard Corporation could not reach Ticknor and Fields Company to become one of its partners, which is to help them reject the “Divine Comedy”, it does not mean that there is no evidence to prove the efforts of the Corporation to make approaches to the public media. Here, in this discussion the writer will show the tendencies, which indicate that the Corporation do not give up looking for the supports from the media.

For any kind of dominance, the media is usually the most influential and the most effective tool to influence the public. This fact is very well read by the dominance. Unitarian is strongly maintained as the dominant ideology in Massachusetts by the apparatuses through any possible efforts. As told in Matthew Pearl’s *The Dante Club*, Harvard University also attempts to persuade the media to support the effort to reject the presence of “Divine Comedy” to America. For days, the series of murders heard all over the state have been the hottest topic of public conversation since the newspapers often speak about the terrible murders so frequently as if the media have become partners in the public mind (120). The great influence of media makes the Dante Club worried that the media will finally know that the modus of the murders is inspired by the scenes of the punishment in Hell as depicted in “Inferno”. Whereas for the Corporation, this kind of impact happen to people, which is caused by the news and information

released by the media, is viewed as an opportunity to propagate their idea. Based on this, the Corporation tries hard to gain the attention from the public by approaching some media, which in the story is told that they are trying to approach Ticknor and Fields, Co., as one of the most reputable publishing company of the state.

What makes the club worried about the media is reasonable since it has been well known that in Boston, reputation and rumor can do in gentleman far more efficiently than the hangman (105). It means that famous people may easily kill their own reputation and successful career if they cannot carefully protect his image in front of the media. In New England, Henry Wardsworth Longfellow and the other members of the club are the famous people of literary world. It makes them the celebrities of New England, together with other famous literati, such as Edgar Allan Poe and Ralph Waldo Emerson. So it is reasonable that they are categorized as the public figures whose risk may threaten their life any time as well as to other celebrities.

Furthermore, what makes it worse is, it has been commonly known that the public always harbored an unhealthy pinch of jealousy against it celebrities (105). The aftermath has gradually changed the way the people of Massachusetts think. It is because the gap between the common people and the public figures has been too wide. The reason is that poverty caused by the civil war has broadened the gap between the poor and the rich much further apart. This makes sense since this jealousy of the common people—mostly the poor---toward the public figures is mostly encouraged by the news on papers that tend to worship the glamorous

life of the public figure. Therefore, supposing there is a public figure whose disgrace is exposed by the media, it will easily become a gossip among the public. Additionally, if the celebrity used to underestimate and be arrogant toward the others, it will make the people glad and happy to hear the news. Supposing the Corporation knows about the clue of the series of murders, perhaps they will reconsider on looking to another publishing company in order not only to accuse the Dante Club to being the murderer, but also to disrespect the reputation of the Ticknor and Fields Company in front of the public for facilitating a group of murders

However, the Corporation of Harvard University still strongly insists that the most proper way to reject the “Divine Comedy” is by directly asking the publishing company, the Ticknor and Fields Company not to continue their plan to publish the translation of Dante’s masterpiece for the people of Massachusetts. However, even though it is impossible for them to gain their expectation, they never give up. The Corporation warns Fields to cease printing the translation of “Divine Comedy, otherwise the company will face the risk of losing the Harvard’s business (173-174). It is true that the company has been trusted by the university to print and publish the materials and the books for the lecturers. However, Fields bravely gambles on his decision to continue his plan. Knowing this, the steps taken by the Corporation is always bothers the privacy and convenience of the club’s members who are lecturing. It is purposed to scare them so the Corporation expects that they will not continue to do the translation, so the Ticknor and Fields Company will never publish the “Divine Comedy”.

However, the story tells that both sides, the Corporation of Harvard University and the Dante Club, keep insisting to each ambition. While the Corporation insists to reject the presence of “Divine Comedy”, according to J. T. Fields, the Ticknor and Fields Company will always support the publishing of the Dante Alighieri’s “Divine Comedy”. The company does not care of the negative rumors provoked by Harvard Corporation to the public and the congregation of the church. Besides owning and directing *The Atlantic Monthly* and *The North American Review*, the two reputable papers of the state, the commitment of the company is providing venues for authors and writers for their works and writings (16). So far, the other members of the Dante Club: Henry Wardsworth Longfellow, James Russell Lowell, and Oliver Wendell Holmes are his best poets and writers.

Here, it is told that one day Dr. Augustus Manning, the person that strongly supports the rejection of “Divine Comedy”, comes to New Corner, the office of Ticknor and Fields Company to see Fields in order to persuade him to reconsider his decision to publish “Divine Comedy” to the people of Massachusetts. Politely and carefully speaking, he shows his admiration toward the new office of the company before telling the reason of his visiting as if they he does not want Fields to be offended. He states that as the treasurer of the Harvard Corporation, he must present to Fields word of a potential problem that has been lately brought to Harvard Corporation’s attention. Manning compliments that the company, which has been working together with the university, owns an impeccable reputation. That is why, he explains further that the Corporation will

be disappointed if his plan to publish the translation of “Divine Comedy” done by Longfellow and friends is continued. Even though, Longfellow and friends have been proudly contributing at the university for years, Manning thinks it will be unwise to let such harsh literary work exists (13). It is indeed true that the contribution of the members of the club to the Harvard University has brought the university to be the reputable and one of the most influential universities particularly of the state and generally of the country.

Dr. Manning also adds to Fields as if his persuasion is purposed for the good of both society and the reputation of Ticknor and Fields Company.

Mr. Fields, it is in the name of *society* that we speak. Your authors hang on the skirt of your coat. Advise them properly. Do not mention this meeting if you like, and neither shall I. I know you wish your house to be held in esteem, and I do not doubt that you would consider all the repercussions of your publication (13-14).

Dr. Manning thinks that by saying that the cancellation of the publishing “Divine Comedy” is for the good of the society, he hopes that this statement will be the correct reason that can convince J. T. Fields not to publish it. This evidence also shows that the great reputation of *The Atlantic Monthly* and *The North American Review*, which are well known among the public have led to the popularity of the Ticknor and Fields Company. For this reason, Dr. Manning views that the influence of such publishing company may easily influence the public’s mind. And he thinks the propaganda will be more successful under the management of such reputable publishing company.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Some findings have fully helped to comprehend the sequence of events regarding to the controversy over the presence of Dante Alighieri's "Divine Comedy" to Massachusetts brought by the Dante Club. However, the aftermath of the American Civil War is considered as the basic reason that leads to the more specific reasons that caused the rejection toward "Divine Comedy". The novel described that by the end of the war, the situation and the condition of Massachusetts have not been fully recovered, particularly its social daily life. Even though, the war has ended, the trauma of violence was still overwhelming the people. However, along with it, the emergence of other problems makes the daily life of Massachusetts worse.

It is an inevitable disadvantage for the members of Dante Club since their attempt to translate "Divine Comedy" into American-English and introduce it to public of Massachusetts have brought forth two bothersome issues: xenophobia and anti-Catholicism. The influx of immigrants from Europe, particularly Italians and Irish have mostly threatened the native citizens whose beliefs were mostly Unitarian and Protestant. Here, the nativists as the dominance whose mindset and ideology were different from the immigrants thought that they should secure their land from the influence of the newcomers. The fact that "Divine Comedy" was an Italian-made work of literature surely made it insecure. It is predictable that Massachusetts would not welcome its presence. Furthermore, the reason that

ensured the dominance to reject “Divine Comedy” is that they thought the depiction of Hell’s tortures in the canticle of “Inferno” that represent the harshness that were typically found in medieval Europe. Besides that reason, it was obvious for the dominance that “Divine Comedy” had the tendency to Catholicism.

The dominance thought that according to those reasons, it was quite justifiable for them to reject “Divine Comedy”. As the following step after having proper reasons, the dominance started to look for supporters that would help their efforts. They finally found some institutions represented by Harvard University, a Unitarian church and a media. They were trusted to be the extended-arms of the dominance that would be expected to practice the persuasion to the public. according to Louis Althusser, those institutions are categorized as ideological state apparatuses (ISA) since they function ideologically. Here, some findings in the story prove that the role of a Unitarian church, which is trusted by the dominance to support anti-Catholicism, have become the most obvious evidence that represents the existence of the ideological practices. The reverend’s sermons and writings aimed to persuade the congregation are the indicators, which show that the church as an ISA has successfully worked ideologically.

However, according to some findings, the dominance did not only practice their efforts to maintain its ideology ideologically, but also sometimes repressively. Here, it means that even though the university, the church, and the media are dealing with the private domain, in which a certain ideology usually imposed ideologically, the novel shows that the strictness and the repression also

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SYNOPSIS

Massachusetts in 1865, the aftermath of American Civil War has caused the state to be overwhelmed by instability. Some disadvantages, such as poverty, corruption, and the raising number of violence and crimes were the ongoing social problems. Even, the racial discrimination, which is believed as the main cause of the Civil War can still be found. Furthermore, the issues of xenophobia and anti-Catholicism are the most irritating problems. According to the natives citizens, the influx of the immigrants—particularly from Ireland and Italy—along with the coming of Catholicism they bring with, has threatened and disturbed the existence of the nativists.

It is the literary geniuses of the Dante Club—poets and Harvard Professors Henry Wardsworth Longfellow, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, James Russell Lowell, and publisher J. T. Fields—are finishing America’s first translation of “The Divine Comedy”. “Divine Comedy” is an Italian literary masterpiece, which consists of three canticles; Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso. This very long poem was composed by an Italian medieval poet, named Dante Alighieri. Thus, here, it explains where the name of the Club is taken from. Indeed, the Dante Club is established as the place for the members, who mostly admire Dante, to discuss the works of Dante Alighieri.

However, the powerful old guard of Harvard University, the Corporation of Harvard wants to keep Dante in obscurity and the members of the Dante Club must fight to keep their sacred literary cause alive. The Treasury Committee of the

Corporation, represented but Dr. Augustus Manning encouragingly persuade all members of the Club not to continue what they are doing, otherwise the Corporation will always try to fail their attempts to bring “Divine Comedy” among the people of America. Particularly to J. T. Fields, Dr. Manning asks him to cancel his plan to make his company publishing the translation to public. The Corporation is worried since Ticknor and Fields Company, owned by J. T. Fields, is handling the two influential and reputable printed media of Massachusetts, *The Atlantic Monthly* and *North American Review*.

Moreover, the Club’s plans fall apart when a series of murders erupt through Boston and Cambridge. The victims are a reputable judge and a reverend. Only this small group of scholars realizes that the gruesome killings are modeled on the descriptions of Hell’s punishments from Dante’s “Inferno”. With the police baffled, lives endangered and Dante’s literary and reputation future at stake, the Dante Club must shed its sheltered literary existence and find a way to stop the killer.