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From Literal Path to Transcendent Journey: The Pilgrim's Movement throughout *Inferno*

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FROM LITERAL PATH TO TRANSCENDENT JOURNEY
THE PILGRIM'S MOVEMENT THROUGHOUT *INFERNO*

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Dante intended *The Divine Comedy* to be an instructional device for Christian salvation. According to his "Four Levels of Interpretation," Dante also understood that readers must interpret the poem in various ways in order for them to arrive at the same moment of full intellection that the Pilgrim reaches in *Paradiso*. While Aristotelian cosmology dictates the upward direction of his physical journey, gatekeepers mark the Pilgrim's uplifting intellectual and spiritual progressions. Dante's use of guards dates back to the ancient Apocalyptic literature where gatekeepers stop souls traveling through heaven to ask their names and their reasons for being there. The gatekeepers illustrate the Pilgrim's increasing knowledge of sin throughout this poem.

Using *Inferno* as a test case, this study utilizes Aristotelian cosmology to map the Pilgrim's physical journey and employs the gatekeeper tradition to mark the Pilgrim's spiritual progression. By connection Dionysius' definition of anagogy with Dante's "Four Levels of Interpretation," this paper illustrates the parallel images of the Pilgrim's spiritual and physical journeys.