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## Dante's Cosmology in Context

According to one authoritative historian of science "no genuine cosmological synthesis was developed during the late Middle Ages." Dante's *Commedia* stands out in contrast to the cosmographical context of its time, almost as the great gothic cathedrals of the period stood out in their urban settings and against the horizon of the surrounding countryside. The intellectual ferment and debate surrounding cosmological questions stimulated Dante to pursue through poetry a higher synthesis of the diverse elements that constituted the contemporary cosmological picture. To achieve a full understanding of the order of creation was for Dante tantamount to achieving knowledge of the Creator. In the poem he thus attempted to present as comprehensive and integrated a vision of the cosmos as was possible, thereby compensating for the lack of such a vision in the doctrinal contributions of the theological and philosophical masters.

*October 7, 2015*

*Wells Hall*

*B-310 4:30 PM*

Theodore J. Cachey Jr. is the Inaugural Academic Director of the Notre Dame Rome Global Gateway. He is a Professor of Italian and the Albert J. and Helen M. Ravarino Family Director of Dante and Italian Studies at the University of Notre Dame. He earned his B.A. from Northwestern University and his Ph.D. from the University of California, Los Angeles.



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