

## Art Young's Infernos

Art Young apparently was fascinated and delighted by Dante's "Inferno"... or at least with the concept of what a writer and artist could do with the device of a visit to Hell.

He produced 3 entire books of roughly 80 to 120 pages each, with roughly half of those pages brief text and half his cartoon line drawings, using the device of a visit to hell to make myriad social, moral, and political points.

The first two books, published in 1892-94 and 1901, a decade before Art Young began to make a name for himself drawing political cartoons for The Masses, tended not to be all that political. The one he published in 1934 had numerous biting political comments to make. All have a delightful, dark but whimsical humor that can bring a smile to our lips even today, over a century after he drew these images.

1892 - 1894 Hades / Hell Up To Date:

The first of Art Young's Inferno books was published under 2 different names in various formats over the period of 1892 thru 1894.

"Hades Up To Date" was an elaborately bound, hard cover illustrated account of the visit to hell by "R. Palasco Durant, special correspondent" published in 1892. In 1893 and 1894 this was re-issued with a less sanitized name: Hell Up To Date, both in hard cover and in soft cover.

1901 Through Hell with Hiprah Hunt:

In 1901 Art Young published a similar, longer (many more pages) volume, in hard cover, titled "Through Hell With Hiprah Hunt" (adopting a different pseudonym for his report on this journey thru Hell). On the sixth page of this roughly 120 page (tho none of the pages bear numbers) volume, Art Young included this quasi footnote:

"This volume contains seventy sketches and a dozen full-page pictures now printed for the first time. It also includes most of the drawings originally published In "Hell-up-to-Date." Others were published in the "Cosmopolitan Magazine," and a few were printed in the New York "Evening Journal" and "Judge." Acknowledgment is due the Editors of the publications mentioned for permission to reprint them in book form."

I spent some time comparing the illustrations between "Hell Up To Date" and "Through Hell With Hiprah Hunt". I found that about 75% of the major illustrations in "Hell Up To Date" were reproduced to one extent or other in Through Hell with Hiprah Hunt. Some (the portraits of Satan, Charon, and of Dante) very copied exactly, with their titles. Other illustrations were reproduced closely or exactly, but with different titles. Yet other illustrations in Hell Up to Date were retouched, partly or mostly re-drawn, and/or cropped to suit the purposes of "Through Hell

With Hiprah Hunt". As Art young's footnote states, however, there are also over 80 sketches and full page drawing presented for the first time in Through Hell with Hiprah Hunt.

Quite understandably, both the illustrations and text in Hell Up To Date and Through Hell With Hiprah Hunt have a very similar look and feel.

### 1934 Art Young's Inferno

Over 30 years after producing "Through Hell with Hiprah Hunt" Art Young published yet a third "Inferno" book: "Art Young's Inferno". For his report of this third visit to hell, Art Young dispenses with pseudonyms, and reports his visit to Hell under his own real name. The musings relating to social and in particular political reality in this work are much more explicit and sharp, reflecting the quarter of a century Art Young had spent being one of the two or three most prolific radical (communist) political cartoonists in the USA, appearing (often with brilliant work) in The Masses, The Liberator, New Masses, in particular, as well as other famous radical publications from 1911 thru the time Art Young's Inferno was published in 1935 (and up until his death in December of 1943).

### **Archivists's technical note:**

All of the digital images of these books here I scanned mostly at 1200 dpi in single bit BW (bitonal) mode, using 8 bit gray scale and 24 bit color occasionally where appropriate (for a few plates, and for the covers). From original first editions in my personal collection.

Google scanned at least one of these that I know of (Through Hell With Hiprah Hunt). Google's work is in this, much of its other rendering of art (and photographs) in a great deal of its other scanning, leaves much to be desired. Frankly, I find it to be incompetent and uncaring.

Their resolution of the art is marginal, but acceptable for screen display. However, exposures are made with lack of care. A huge problem is that Google employed a "smart" (read "contemptibly stupid") automatic algorithm in their scanning process that decides whether the scan, or whether a part of the scan, is to be made in single bit BW, gray scale, or color. Repeated failures of this algorithm to choose correctly results in various of the pure black fine line drawings on pure white paper of Art Young's work being rendered by that algorithm in iridescent color. The uncaring sloppy incompetents at Google (and Hathi Trust) never bothered to notice this or correct it. This particular flaw characterizes much of the scanning of art and photos in Google's / Hathi Trust's work with other publications, such as 1900-1918 International Socialist Review. It affects thousands... perhaps tens of thousands or more... of the pages of Google's scanning.

Google / Hathi Trust's inexcusably mediocre scanning has forced me to scan from scratch numerous left publications bearing art that they did particularly sloppy, bad jobs with. Material I would have not had to scan if Google's / Hatni Trust's scans had been competently done. Thus some of the extra contempt and disgust you notice me expressing here.

---marty

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