

The divine comedy - a modernization



The Divine Comedy - A Modernization Because of the way in which his lyrics and actions affected the world around him, John Lennon of Beatles fame is now known as something of a modern day prophet, but because of words he spoke during a news interview in which he claimed the group was "bigger than God", he is also often seen as an evil non-Christian. Although the phrase is taken out of context, Lennon meant that the group was more popular than God because they'd sold more albums that year than the number of Bibles sold in the same period of time, it is for this reason I would place John Lennon in the first circle of Dante's hell, which is reserved for poets and philosophers. Like the other philosopher-poets with whom he's placed, Lennon does not deserve to be placed in hell because of the brilliant ways in which his mind worked and the ways in which he used it to try to bring about a better world, but because he isn't Christian, he does not earn a place in heaven, therefore he is placed in Limbo. He would take the place of Lucan, who is very little known in today's age.

Entertainer John Candy is a prime candidate to take up residence in the third circle, in the place of Dante's Ciaccio. He does this on several levels. He provides the modern audience with an easy reference to a man who literally ate himself to death, but also provides many of the other same qualities that can be determined regarding Ciaccio. He was funny, entertaining, a consummate performer and a generally nice guy to be around. He also possesses a name that suggests his primary failing - Candy indicates the level of sugar content in his normal diet that played a large role in bringing about his death. The one thing he does not do, though, is bring in the idea of gluttony as having a deeper meaning than the simple act of overeating.

Despite any respect for talent or entertainment ability, I would have to place

Sir Elton John in the seventh ring of hell for his openly admitted sexual preferences, which necessarily include the sin of sodomy. I would propose John in the place of Brunetto Latini as he is both more fitting to Dante's description of this ring of hell (Brunetto was married with children and no written evidence exists of any type of sodomy being a part of his daily living) and someone with whom more people in the modern age would be able to recognize and immediately make the connection as to why he's there. Because of the many wonderful songs he's created that serve to bring attention to and encourage a greater world involvement in social and ecological responsibility, I would be much like Dante in treating him with sympathy and respect despite his position in hell.

President George W. Bush can join the eighth circle which is reserved for those who commit fraud in terms of seducing people, flattering without sincerity, false prophets, lawyers, hypocrites, thieves, false counselors, forgers and falsifiers. Bush fits into most of these categories, lying and misrepresenting information in such a way that has led to the United States going to war in Iraq, killing thousands of American soldiers and unnumbered Iraqis. He claims to want to do things that will help the world's ecology, but reduces funding for the development of more earth-friendly technologies even while he opens up nationally protected wildlife areas for oil drilling and assists the larger oil companies in gaining more control over the marketplace. Firmly placing him in this category is his use of rhetoric to accomplish evil and often only self-serving goals. He will take the place of Guido de Montrefeltro who was a sly military-political leader in the late 1200s and who "used all the wiles and secret ways" to accomplish his self-serving goals.