

Dante's

Inferno

The Upper Levels: Circles 1-5

The Upper Levels of Hell

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Upper Levels of Hell

1. Limbo
2. Lust
3. Glutton
4. Greed (Avarice)
5. Wrath

Minos - Minos is a giant beast who stands at the Second Circle of Hell, deciding where the souls of sinners shall be sent for torment. Upon hearing a given sinner's confession, Minos curls his tail around himself a specific number of times to represent the circle of Hell to which the soul should be consigned.

First Circle - Limbo

- Unbaptized pagans, who are not sinful, but did not accept Christ.
- Although they are not in torment, they live forever without the hope of something greater, without the hope of heaven.

Second Circle - Lust

- They are tossed around by winds of a violent storm.
- Symbolizes the power of lust to toss one about aimlessly.
- Dante sees many who were overcome by sensual love during life.
 - Cleopatra, Helen of Troy, Achilles, Paris, etc.

Third Circle – Gluttony

- Cerberus guards the gluttons
- They are forced to lie in a disgusting slush made by a never-ending foul, icy rain
- Virgil obtains safe passage by filling Cerberus' three mouths with mud
- The gluttons lie unaware of their neighbors, symbolizing the cold, selfish, and empty sensuality of their lives
- Dante converses with a Florentine named Ciaccio, which means "hog"

Fourth Circle – Greed/Avarice

- Contains the greedy and miserly
- They are guarded by Plutus
 - Either Pluto, the Roman ruler of the underworld
 - Or Plutus, the Roman god of wealth
- The prodigal son is here
- Two groups joust, using great weights as weapons, which they push with their chests
 - ... I saw multitudes to every side of me; their howls were loud while, wheeling weights, they used their chests to push. They struck against each other; at that point, each turned around and, wheeling back those weights, cried out: Why do you hoard? Why do you squander?

Fifth Circle - Wrath

- The River Styx
- The wrathful fight on the swampy surface, tearing each other apart
- The sullen lie gurgling beneath the water, drawn "into a black sulkiness which can find no joy in God or man or the universe."
- Phlegyas reluctantly transports Dante and Virgil across the Styx.