Circle 10 – The Heretics

Francesca is the poster child of incontinence. This is the sin we are all implicated in. You can commit the sin in a variety of ways – gluttony, hoarders, wasters, wrathful, slothful.

We have moved through incontinence – then on to violence. We need to stop along the way to a place that doesn’t fit in. The sin of heresy.

Where do you put “wrong belief”?

Heresy is some rejection of the teachings of the church: some of the people are guilty of that. Dante doesn’t describe it in this way – Two different sinners. Why politics and poetry? They don’t have anything to do with heresy?

2 concerns: politics and poetry and each has separate character who deals w/ Dante. He’s expanded the canvas a little. Dante is walking along: Oh Tuscan! 10:22-27. The pilgrim is interrupted rather than the other way around. I know you from your accent. Dante is confused.

Farinata degli uberti d.1264 – the punishment here is to be inside flaming tombs. All he saw was flames but now someone rises up with a commanding presence. Farinata begins to question Dante. 10:42 – and who would your ancestors be? Why would he ask this? What does farinata think is going on? Dante is put on the defensive – farinata takes control. 10:46-48: bitter enemies they were. Two guys from the same hometown in Florence. Normally a conversation would be about what they have in common. The question is all about is your family as good as mine? Party politics fell along family lines. What side are you on? All we get is division socially and politically. Farinata is making assumption that dante is on the wrong side. To prove it I’ll scatter them not once but twice. Farinata is a gibbeline. The gibellines did kick out the Florentines at one time – when dante was born. He is correct in saying your family was kicked out. The guelfs did come back though but farinata doesn’t know that. Dante is rising to the bait.

Dante: they were expelled but came back twice. An art your family never learned how. In 1300’s the guelfs are in firm control. So dante can trump him. He refers to coming back from exile as an “art.” There is an art of politics.

This tells us something about dante – poem is set in 1300 – caught up in partisan politics. He is doing what farinata is doing. Then another character appears.

Another fellow occupant of the same tomb – not as majestically as farinata. He has a question too: 10:58-60 – asks where is my son? Why is dante there? Other guy doesn’t know. We know he’s there because he’s messed up. His kid is an old friend of of dante’s: he doesn’t like virgil as much as I do – I’m here as a reward. Dante recognizes him: maybe your son is not here because he held virgil in scorn. Is guido alive? This man is making mischief w/ dante and goes back into the tomb without getting an answer. Comedy of errors. Cavalcante.

10:76-81 – if that art they did not master…he picks up where he left off. Farinata has the future card here: Dante’s future exile.

No sun in hell. Just a moon. The art of coming back after you’ve been kicked out. Dante is going to hear about his own exile which happens about a year after the poem is set in 1300. The poem is written when he’s in exile. He can use from 1300 til he writes the poem as a prediction.

He has more questions: why are the guelfs so tough on my family. The gibbelines were allowed to move back in 1340. 10:85-87 – massacre goes back to 1260 battle of montaperti.

How did the betrayal happen? Farinata only lists the things that divide. Makes an alliance with sienna – he was a traitor. Florentines were harsh on farinata because he betrayed them. He says he might not be patriotic – but I didn’t let them tear down the city.

Farinata wanted to rule but betrayed his country to get it. It’s all about me. He wanted power for power’s sake. Farinata was co-victor of this battle. This is not just about the guelfs and gibbelines – it’s about how you divide not about how you unite.

Cant see present or past – can only see future. Once second coming happens or the end of the world, you won’t see the future anymore. Now tell the fallen one that his son is alive (cavalcante) dante wants farinata to fix it for him. But they don’t recognize each other’s existence. What dante is asking won’t ever happen.

Why in the circle is heretics do we talk about that? There’s a lot of price and factionalism -we have divisions in characters in the realm of art – that’s what heresy – taking part of the truth and making it the whole truth.

The subject is politics and poetry but their conversation embodies the idea of heresy. Partisanship affected them very strongly.

SINS OF VIOLENCE: 7TH CIRCLE

We move into a subdivided circle:

3 different divisions of violence:

against neighbors, self, God (murder, suicide, blasphemers)

Look at 2 different events: the spiritual geography is interesting: Barren subsection – grubby shrubs. Read beginning of canto XII – a lot of negativity coming through. Described by what’s not there. Think about negativity. How does dante view human life? Gift from God – suicide is saying no thanks.

**Suicide**

* Bombarded w/ no words
* The grubby shrubs are themselves the suicides
* Correspondence between sin and punishment. In suicide you give up your right to self-determine
* They are no longer, as shrubs, able to determine anything – they must wait until someone snaps off a branch before they can speak
* Dante breaks off a branch. The shrub speaks. Quite offended.
* I am the one who held the keys to Frederick II – the emperor – fighter against papacy to control Florence – he was boss to a heretic – a bit of a spin doctor for Frederick
* Frederick wanted emperor-worship and Pierre de la Vigne had this job – good up to a point. He was hounded by office. He killed himself. No matter what the accusations were, I never broke faith w/ his Lord – Frederick. He has limited view – should have been God.
* Speaks eloquently like he was still in that position. But now he’s a shrub. “I lost life and sleep.”
* Envy was the one who was responsible for my death. I don’t mind playing the game when I’m winning. If I’m not winning, I’m done. If I don’t have power – I’m just not going to play at all. That’s what suicide is all about.
* Is life worth living if things aren’t going well?

**Sodomites**

* not exactly about the exact definition
* violence against God – different take or read
* it’s harder to figure out – look at what God has left for us – his world – we’re told we are in the image of God – be fruitful and multiply. We imitate God –bringing order out of chaos.
* If we clear fields – 15:4-10 – dante links what he is seeing to art – the process of ordering – water – people build dykes so the crops will not flood – god gives man the power the process of ordering so the world an have order.
* Order is the topic. Sodomy is not brought up exactly.
* Where the sodomites are is burning – took an image of fruitful and made it barren. Literally true about sexual reproduction. The opposite is what sinners do.
* Brunetto latini – poet and guelf – he is dante’s teacher, a role model, successful poet
* Reciprocal relationship – he and dante – he’s here in a meaphorical son.
* He asks, What are you doing here? You’re not dead.
* Dante speaks the truth. The answer to life is not fame on earth. You may be cutting yourself out of truth.
* Making yourself eternal is all about making yourself famous. Dangerous to dante.