

# NINE CIRCLES OF LINCOLN CENTER

"When halfway through the journey of our life  
I found that I was in a gloomy wood,  
because the path which led aright was lost,"  
whined a Lincoln Center student lost at Rose Hill.  
"Abandon all hope, ye who enter here," said the Plaza at 9:59 a.m.

Hop on a Ram Van, my fellow traveler, this time with Charon himself as your driver, and let me guide you on your journey through the Nine Circles of Hell at Fordham Lincoln Center. I came to know it my second night of academic orientation. I laid in bed in a food poisoning-induced coma as all my new friends were enjoying the tours of the city. Suddenly, Virgil appeared in front of my eyes, looking somewhat like Obi-Wan Kenobi's ghost from the Original Trilogy. He beckoned me with his finger and led me through the same worlds you, my friend, are about to experience.



POLINA UZORNIKOVA  
Staff Writer

Diaries  
of a  
Frustrated Freshman

GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION BY OLIVIA BONENFANT/  
THE OBSERVER

## LIMBO

We start with our first circle, limbo, home to the undecided students. On your right are the second semester sophomores. Listen in: They are discussing whether taking an academic leave to become a yoga instructor is a better option than staying at Lincoln Center at this point in their life. On your left is a rare case: a freshman. It seems that he's having a fit as he relives the chaos of the major declaration fair (a story for another time). Oh, and careful! It's one minute past 3 a.m., and we must not wake Minos, the security officer who guards the doors to the second circle of hell.

## LUST

I wish our second circle, the circle of lust, was as dramatic as Dante's. But ours is a Jesuit institution, and the only thing we can lust for is knowledge. Here, the only available class for your minor is an 8:30 a.m. at Rose Hill. Waitlists are always full and you are never qualified enough to get into a lecture you're interested in. You are forced to take four prerequisites, only to find out that the professor who teaches said lecture just went on to live a better life at Columbia (good for him!). Can you hear the rapid keyboard clicks? That's the Rev. Joseph M. McShane, S.J., this circle's guardian. He spends his days typing up explanatory letters on Fordham's perpetually decreasing rankings, and his nights negotiating deals with various devils and saints in order to bring down NYU.

## GLUTTONY

Now, let us move on to our third circle, reserved for those with a penchant for gluttony. I proudly present to you: the fridge you share with your roommates. Here, McKeon residents get bonus points, since their rental minifridges sometimes come in still covered in their previous users' grime. You can recognize these poor freshmen by the strong smell of Clorox that never quite washes out from their hair. Further down, you can see six McMahon residents fighting over the scarce freezer space — who knew that you needed ten tubs of Ben and Jerry's to survive one week of senior year? Special mention goes to Cerberus, aka that one suitemate who you know snacks on your food while you sleep, but whom you're too scared to call out.

## GREED

We gracefully glide from the pot-noodle-smelling area into the maze that is the Fordham Financial Aid (aka the fourth circle, greed). They never give you enough, but they always demand that one extra document that you never knew existed but is apparently crucial to maintaining your merit scholarship. They sometimes send you unexplained refunds because they overcharge you, but more often than not you find out that they undercharged you, and you have to pay extra. Maybe being a yoga instructor isn't that bad of an idea, after all.

## ANGER

Canonically, the fifth circle has angry people waging war in the River Styx. I think we can all testify that this battle had recently played out before our eyes, as the firemen dealt with the smelly rivers that emerged from underground. Let us revisit that moment when the cracks in the concrete burst open and murky waters of death stunk up the whole Lincoln Square. In the back row of our imaginary theater, you can see residents cheering as classes are canceled on their first day back. The real (tragic) heroes of this story are the commuters. Look at the screen: a Brooklynite on his way to class, thinking his 11:30 a.m. starts at noon. Due to poor reception on the express line, he did not get the second text that said only night classes were on.

Angry yet? That, my dear, is the true meaning of rage.

## HERESY

"But where are the heretics locked in flaming crypts?" you ask me as we enter circle number six. "There are other ways to get JesuLIT on this campus, child," I answer, leading you up to the south side of McKeon. Whenever an unusually warm day strikes New York, these rooms, with the air conditioning disabled for winter, make a flaming tomb look like an oasis in the middle of the desert. You better be pitching in to stop global warming; otherwise, you'll be stuck here forever with the other non-believers.

## VIOLENCE

Our seventh circle is quite a ride, and a violent one at that. I proudly present to you: the elevators. Don't you, right at this moment, experience a wish to beat up the able-bodied person who just pressed the third floor? Didn't we just suffocate someone to death trying to squeeze into this sardine tin of a transportation method? And, by the way, we skipped our stop and now have to go all the way down the twenty flights of stairs (as some of the McKeon residents do when only one out of four elevators is in working order).

## FRAUD

Welcome to the eighth circle: home of everyone who has ever committed fraudulent acts. Feel anxious yet? You really should, since you're about to start researching for your essay five minutes before the deadline. I didn't quite prepare for this part of the tour, so bear with me as I try to wing it. And please cut me some slack — I was feeling really sick yesterday afternoon. This circle first appeared in the late 19th century, when Tesla and Edison had the original "Can I copy your homework?" moment. The tensions of plagiarism (on which you can find out more in our dearly beloved Academic Integrity Tutorial) originated during the classical times, when the Romans stole the whole of Greek mythology, renamed the characters, and presented it as highly original work. My entirely unsubstantiated claim is, therefore, that creating out of thin air is far better than plagiarizing, since creation is a holy act, and plagiarism is the worst enemy of Academic Integrity. As we go on to our last stop, please be ready to get checked by Blackboard and its Global Reference Database.

## TREACHERY

Ah, the grand finale: circle nine. Would you feel slightly betrayed if I told you it's not as grand as you think it is? For this is the land of treachery, of the ultimate unfulfilled unrealistic expectations. We hear a collective groan as a professor doesn't curve the midterm even though the median score was 50%. Bright letters that spell out "New York Is My Campus. Fordham Is My School" appear from thin air and threateningly loom above your head. That, my friend, is an omen. This week you will have to turn to the halal cart as your main source of nutrition. Also, your professor has assigned you some obscure text that you can't pirate online (that's a sin!), but the bookstore had just sold its last very used copies for the price of \$200 each.

But what is that? I see the light! It's the fire trucks that have come to fix the steam valve that burst in the Gabelli building. Let's follow their gentle beacon, march through the security gates of the law school and proceed toward heaven: the Shakespeare & Co at 69th Street and Broadway.

