For nearly all of human history, “breaking bread” or the act of sharing a meal with somebody has been seen as the ultimate sign of hospitality and good will. Food has undoubtable weaved itself into every aspect of our cultural tapestry, and to this day still shapes an incredibly large part of global relations and trade. In the modern age, however, sentiment surrounding not only the way we consume food, but also the large variety in our diets, is vastly different from how food was view in the renaissance era. More specifically, the corporatization of food by fast casual companies such as McDonald's and Taco Bell (and many, many, others to be clear), has allowed people to begin to become choosey on their favorite types of cuisine. This led me to a question which guides the rest of my presentation; “if these characters existed in the present day, where would they get food from, you know, in between their long days of Grendelkin slaying and eternally repenting?”

While my presentation itself lies out the explanations of why each character specifically picked their fast-food location, I do think it would be helpful to provide a more blanket criterion here. First a foremost, marketing and brand image played a huge role in these decisions. Obviously, Hardee’s more sexualized advertising fits better with Beowulf than Augustine or Luther. Likewise, a restaurant’s target audience was important when considering the larger worlds that these characters come from, Milton and Lancelot are great examples of this philosophy in play. Ultimately, though, I tried to equate character identity traits or moments from the story itself to experiences they’d likely have eating at one of these establishments. This is why even though my presentation may be more satirical in nature (hence why I recorded it, I needed you to hear ME presenting it), I think it engages strongly with the course material and demonstrates enough knowledge of the content to be able to accurately poke fun at it.

Presentations like these are my favorite type to create for that very reason. Pairing up two concepts like fast food brands and renaissance hero's, which are supposedly unrelated, forces you to look at things beyond their surface. It gives us a chance to analyze the psychology of these characters in a way that we usually don't get to in class simply because we do not have enough time to ask questions like these. While I understand that fundamentally my project might not be as "serious" or "academic" as some of the others provided in our suggestions list, I do not believe that makes it any less of an important question in our journeys to understand these characters and the worlds that they inhabit.

In the end, I think that it makes a lot of sense that this is the avenue I went down to create my project. As someone who has been interested in marketing, specifically fast-food marketing, my entire life, it felt really nice to be able to use all that knowledge I had stored at the back of my brain. I was also inspired by a similar presentation made by Alex Gribb this time last spring for Dr. Harper's section of Diagnosing the Dark. She made a presentation pairing each of those characters with a specific scent of perfume which I thought was just absolutely wonderful. Overall, this project was incredibly fun to both create and map out, while also giving me conversations with my friends and roommates that I will surely not be forgetting anytime soon. In my opinion, that should be the goal of this project, a chance to get humanities students working with their peers and doing something fun to engage with the source material in a more long-lasting way. Because while I might not always remember the specific order of the circles in hell, Brock telling me, "Going to hell has got to be like gas station sushi, right?" is a sentence that I do not see leaving my mind for the foreseeable future. So, I really do hope that you enjoy this project, and all the love and joy that went into it behind the scenes. If you don't, that's alright too, it just means you probably don't know fast food ball as well as I do.