
Inferno And The Real World

Dante's *The Divine Comedy* is a narrative poem that depicts the realms of the afterlife. It is comprised of three parts with *Inferno* (hell) being the first. Dante's *Inferno* is based upon the idea of mortality and divine justice. In this part, he creates his own hell made up of nine different levels, each for various types of sins. He places many different people in different parts of his hell according to what he thinks is the best punishment for them and serves justice for their sins.

Similarly, we see almost everyone committing sins in today's world. It's natural. Making mistakes and committing sins are human tendencies. Even though *The Inferno* was created 700 years ago, it can still be related to modern-day problems. Dante got exiled from his hometown, Florence, which stripped him of his identity and heritage. This resembles the political turbulence that exists today in the modern world. Dante's words connect to those who are held as refugees and are suffering political injustices. Speaking of politics, misuse of power is something that is happening almost everywhere. It was prevalent in the *Inferno* and it's prevalent in the modern world too. Hypocrisy is huge in today's life and hypocrite people are found almost everywhere. In the *Inferno*, it was a big sin and the sinners were punished severely. But in today's world, it's different. Homosexuality is something that was considered a sin back then. But it's not seen as a sin anymore, it's rather seen as a form of love. Gluttony can be seen in the insatiability of modern capitalism. It shows the want to continuously consume and to always have the best and the newest products. The sin of usury which is lending money at high-interest rates can be widely seen in the modern-day banking system. So in today's world, we see almost all the sins that existed back in *The Inferno*. Misuse of power and hypocrisy are two of the biggest prevalent sins.

Abuse of power is nothing new to us. We see power being misused everywhere in today's world. From political and economical to physical and even social power abuse, it's super frequent. Politically, leaders misuse their powers and corruptly make money. Taxpayers' money is used to pull off big business deals that don't even affect the taxpayers but only the political leaders, and there's nothing we can do about it. Chasing popularity and glory leads them to abuse their powers. This corruption affects normal people to a great extent. Money, votes, and their support is won and used by political leaders for something which has nothing to do with normal people. Nepotism according to me is one of the biggest misuses of power. Promoting your unworthy generation, friends or family members over someone who's worthy of something is very common in today's society. The pressure of carrying the 'legacy' leads people to use their powers in order to elevate their generations. It's bad because the truly qualified and talented people are subjected to injustice. Socially, we frequently see the stereotypes of men being greater or stronger than women. Because of these stereotypes, oftentimes men are favored more for some kinds of jobs even though it's illegal. All this abuse of power is widely predominant in our society and we can't really do much about it because that is how the system works. The sinners were punished in the *Inferno* but in the real world, it's hard to stop them. It's almost impossible to prevent it. An effort to punish the sinners in today's world would lead to more power abuse because in order to stop them you would have to misuse your power too. The sin of simony is considered very dire in *The Inferno*. The souls of people like Pope Nicholas III and St. Peter are burning among the flames for deeds like spiritual prostitution, nepotism in church, etc. Dante speaks against the corrupted churchmen and calls them an affliction on the

world: "And were it not that still forbids it me The reverence for the keys superlative Thou hadst in keeping in the gladsome life, I would make use of words more grievous still; Because your avarice afflicts the world, Trampling the good and lifting the depraved. The Evangelist you Pastors had in mind, When she who sitteth upon many waters To fornicate with kings by him was seen;"(Inf.XIX, 100-108)

Hypocrisy is a sin that is placed above the sin of simony in *The Inferno*. Just like abuse of power, hypocrisy isn't new to us either. In fact, we often see hypocrisy more than we see the abuse of power. There are so many people around us who hide their own true self and contrive their fake image just to look good in front of others. The biggest example of hypocrites are celebrities. They are always running behind achieving popularity and stardom. In this pursuit, they often show their fake side in order to get liked and followed by people. They fool people about what they do, what they like, their political views, their standpoints on social issues, etc. There are many celebrities in today's society who really show their concern about the degrading climatic conditions in the world. They express their viewpoints, criticize people, and persuade people to stop doing some things but when it comes to them and their private lives, they don't really care about the environment. They are one thing on the screen and something else off the screen. Apart from celebrities, political leaders are big hypocrites too. We have all come across some people in our lives who are hypocrites. There are so many aspects to being a hypocrite. For example, saying gossiping is bad and then repeating it to a friend, telling someone to stop being lazy as you sit comfy on the couch, etc. Knowingly or unknowingly, we are often hypocritical at times. It's not a good thing but there's no solution for that. It's human nature and that's how human beings work. Hypocrisy can range from something really small as telling someone to get off their phone while being on one to something very big that can lead to a disaster. In *The Inferno*, people with the sin of hypocrisy are punished severely. They are dressed in lead-lined garments which render them heavy and make it difficult for them to walk. Some people like Caiphus are crucified on the ground and all other sinners trample over him as they walk. Dante believes that there are very few sins that are equal to the purposeful cloaking of one's true character in a false aspect of tolerance.

Summing up everything, *The Inferno* which was created 700 years ago is still significant. Almost all the sins described in the poem can be seen in today's world. The only difference is the way in which the sinners were seen back then and are seen now. There are no severe punishments in the modern society. The sins of abuse of power and hypocrisy are bad because they affect a lot of people apart from the one doing it. Misusing power doesn't keep any competition fair. Hypocrites are everywhere and it's very important to recognize such people. But after all, we also learn one thing which is, all these sins are unavoidable because they're a part of human tendency. They can be minimized to a great extent, but getting completely rid of them is almost impossible.