

# Dante Alighieri's Imagery of Hell

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The Middle Ages was a time of instability and corruption, which was when Dante Alighieri lived. Dante wrote about the horrible era because he wanted to show his hatred towards the current leaders. In the *Inferno*, he illustrates the unethical community vividly by the use of influential figures that disobey the laws. Additionally, Dante uses imagery in Hell that shows the connection between the Earthly sins and gruesome punishments that portray a vivid image emotionally attached to the church. Furthermore, Dante's orthodoxy expresses mockery because the church did not always have a clear interpretation for the placement of a multiple sinner, thus exposing the inconsistent church. Likewise, Dante's character development shifts in a negative manner due to evil pressures around him and his exposure to the true earthly sins. In summation, Dante uses the [Inferno](#) to express his animosity toward the church and the corrupt environment to expound how people that follow the church would be contaminated, just like the pilgrim.

Political figures in Hell explicitly depict their strong connection to the Christian values that govern this era. The many popular figures in Hell, especially the Popes, ended up there for their grievous and shocking misconducts. In Canto 19, the pilgrim talks to Pope Nicholas III, who tells him that he is in Hell for simony (Alighieri 455, 456). Simony is when someone pays to receive sacraments, which happened during the period of Dante's life; this shows how he perceives the political figures who have committed these scandals. He uses

multiple Popes in the Inferno to illuminate how deeply corrupted the leaders of the church were. Dante exemplifies this by Pope Nicholas being scared that [Pope Boniface VIII](#), who actual...

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...onjointly, Dante's strategically used imagery shows the horrors are merely the hidden sins committed on Earth and that caused them to be punished in Hell to their sins' equal severity. The crowning jewel of Dante's illustrative text was the pilgrim's development from a pure human being to one filled with evil and hatred after seeing Hell's truths and how he changed negatively from his exposure. These clues left by Dante display show the reader the precise reason why the Church is debauched and how it affected its misguided people.

#### Works Cited

Alighieri, Dante. "The [Divine Comedy](#): Inferno". The Norton Anthology: World Literature. Volume B. 3rd Edition. Ed. Martin Puchner, Suzanne Akbari, Wiebke Denecke, Vinay Dharwadker, Barbara Fuchs, Caroline Levine, Pericles Lewis, Emily Watson, and Mark Musa trans. New York City: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012. 392-511. Print.

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