

Chapter 1 : Deep Desires that Transcend Time

These Political Desire poems are examples of Desire poems about Political. These are the best examples of Desire Political poems written by international poets. just a kiss from CHRIST-- by James Edward Lee Sr.

The young Shelley was educated at Syon House Academy in 1794 and then at Eton in 1800, where he resisted physical and mental bullying by indulging in imaginative escapism and literary pranks. Between the spring of 1801 and that of 1802, he published two Gothic novels and two volumes of juvenile verse. In the fall of 1802 Shelley entered University College, Oxford, where he enlisted his fellow student Thomas Jefferson Hogg as a disciple. Hogg submitted to his family, but Shelley refused to apologize to his. Late in August 1802, Shelley eloped with Harriet Westbrook, the younger daughter of a London tavern owner; by marrying her, he betrayed the acquisitive plans of his grandfather and father, who tried to starve him into submission but only drove the strong-willed youth to rebel against the established order. Early in 1803, Shelley, Harriet, and her older sister Eliza Westbrook went to Dublin, where Shelley circulated pamphlets advocating political rights for Roman Catholics, autonomy for Ireland, and freethinking ideals. The couple traveled to Lynmouth, Devon, where Shelley issued more political pamphlets, and then to North Wales, where they spent almost six months in 1804. Lack of money finally drove Shelley to moneylenders in London, where in 1805 he issued *Queen Mab*, his first major poem—a nine-canto mixture of blank verse and lyric measures that attacks the evils of the past and present commerce, war, the eating of meat, the church, monarchy, and marriage but ends with resplendent hopes for humanity when freed from these vices. Following travels through France, Switzerland, and Germany, they returned to London, where they were shunned by the Godwins and most other friends. But a Chancery Court decision declared Shelley unfit to raise Ianthe and Charles his children by Harriet, who were placed in foster care at his expense. After revisions, it was reissued in 1807 as *The Revolt of Islam*. *Queen Mab*, the early poems first published in 1801 as *The Esdaile Notebook*, *Laon and Cythna*, and most of his prose works were devoted to reforming society; and even *Alastor, Rosalind and Helen*, and the personal lyrics voiced the concerns of an idealistic reformer who is disappointed or persecuted by an unreceptive society. But in Italy, far from the daily irritations of British politics, Shelley deepened his understanding of art and literature and, unable to reshape the world to conform to his vision, he concentrated on embodying his ideals within his poems. Later, as he became estranged from Mary Shelley, he portrayed even love in terms of aspiration, rather than fulfillment: During their stay, little Clara Shelley b. In November the Shelleys traveled through Rome to Naples, where they remained until the end of February. Settling next at Rome, Shelley continued *Prometheus Unbound* and outlined *The Cenci*, a tragedy on the Elizabethan model based on a case of incestuous rape and patricide in sixteenth-century Rome. He completed this drama during the summer of 1819 near Leghorn, where the Shelleys fled in June after their other child, William Shelley b. Even so, it is a less notable achievement than *Prometheus Unbound*: Both plays appeared about 1819. In *Prometheus* Shelley inverts the plot of a lost play by Aeschylus in a poetic masterpiece that combines supple blank verse with a variety of complex lyric measures. By eschewing revenge, Prometheus, who embodies the moral will, can be reunited with his beloved Asia, a spiritual ideal transcending humanity; her love prevents him from becoming another tyrant when Jupiter is overthrown by the mysterious power known as Demogorgon. The end of the act describes the renovation of both human society and the natural world. Act IV opens with joyful lyrics by spirits who describe the benevolent transformation of the human consciousness that has occurred. To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite; To forgive wrongs darker than Death or Night; To defy Power which seems Omnipotent; To love, and bear; to hope, till Hope creates From its own wreck the thing it contemplates. After moving to Pisa in 1819, Shelley was stung by hostile reviews into expressing his hopes more guardedly. Late that year, *Oedipus Tyrannus*; or, *Swellfoot the Tyrant*, his satirical drama on the trial for adultery of Caroline estranged wife of King George IV, appeared anonymously but was quickly suppressed. In 1820, however, Shelley reasserted his uncompromising idealism. His essay *A Defence of Poetry* published eloquently declares that the poet creates humane values and imagines the forms that shape the social order: The verse drama *Hellas* published celebrates the Greek revolution against Turkish rule and reiterates the political message of *Laon and Cythna*—that the struggle for

human liberty can be neither totally defeated nor fully realized, since the ideal is greater than its earthly embodiments. Shelley and Edward Williams drowned on July 8, 1802, when their boat sank during the stormy return voyage to Lerici. Shelley was a passionate idealist and consummate artist who, while developing rational themes within traditional poetic forms, stretched language to its limits in articulating both personal desire and social altruism.

Chapter 2 : Politics (poem) - Wikipedia

Rare is the poet who doesn't view himself as deeply invested in political life, and yet the sloppy, compromised, and frequently idiotic business of democracy—“which is, for all its flaws, the way most political changes occur in this country”—rarely attracts the attention of our best poets.

See Article History Alternative Titles: Virgil was regarded by the Romans as their greatest poet, an estimation that subsequent generations have upheld. His reputation as a poet endures not only for the music and diction of his verse and for his skill in constructing an intricate work on the grand scale but also because he embodied in his poetry aspects of experience and behaviour of permanent significance. Virgil was born of peasant stock, and his love of the Italian countryside and of the people who cultivated it colours all his poetry. He was educated at Cremona , at Milan , and finally at Rome, acquiring a thorough knowledge of Greek and Roman authors, especially of the poets, and receiving a detailed training in rhetoric and philosophy. It is known that one of his teachers was the Epicurean Siro, and the Epicurean philosophy is substantially reflected in his early poetry but gradually gives way to attitudes more akin to Stoicism. The civil war between Marius and Sulla had been succeeded by conflict between Pompey and Julius Caesar for supreme power. Hatred and fear of civil war is powerfully expressed by both Virgil and his contemporary Horace. The key to a proper understanding of the Augustan Age and its poets lies, indeed, in a proper understanding of the turmoil that had preceded the Augustan peace. It is said that he spoke once in the lawcourts without distinction and that his shy and retiring nature caused him to give up any ideas he might have had of taking part in the world of affairs. He never married, and the first half of his life was that of a scholar and near recluse. But, as his poetry won him fame, he gradually won the friendship of many important men in the Roman world. Gradually, also, he became a Roman as well as a provincial. The area in which he had spent his youth, the area around the Po River known as the province of Cisalpine Gaul , was not finally incorporated into Italy until 42 bce. Thus Virgil came, as it were, to Rome from the outside. The enthusiasm of a provincial for Rome is seen in the first eclogue , one of his earliest poems, in which the shepherd Tityrus tells of his recent visit to the capital and his amazement at its splendours. His earliest certain work is the Eclogues , a collection of 10 pastoral poems composed between 42 and 37 bce. Some of them are escapist, literary excursions to the idyllic pastoral world of Arcadia based on the Greek poet Theocritus flourished c. They convey in liquid song the idealized situations of an imaginary world in which shepherds sing in the sunshine of their simple joys and mute their sorrows whether for unhappy love or untimely death in a formalized pathos. But some bring the pastoral mode into touch with the real world, either directly or by means of allegory , and thus gave a new direction to the genre. The fifth eclogue, on the death of Daphnis , king of the shepherds, clearly has some relationship with the recent death of Julius Caesar; the 10th brings Gallus , a fellow poet who also held high office as a statesman, into the pastoral world; the first and ninth are lamentations over the expulsion of shepherds from their farms. It was thought that he subsequently recovered his property through the intervention of his powerful friends. But one eclogue in particular stands out as having relevance to the contemporary situation, and this is the fourth sometimes called the Messianic, because it was later regarded as prophetic of Christianity. It is an elevated poem, prophesying in sonorous and mystic terms the birth of a child who will bring back the Golden Age , banish sin, and restore peace. It was clearly written at a time when the clouds of civil war seemed to be lifting; it can be dated firmly to 41–40 bce, and it seems most likely that Virgil refers to an expected child of the triumvir Antony and his wife Octavia , sister of Octavian. But, though a specific occasion may be allocated to the poem, it goes beyond the particular and, in symbolic terms, presents a vision of world harmony, which was, to some extent, destined to be realized under Augustus. One of the most disastrous effects of the civil wars—and one of which Virgil, as a countryman, would be most intensely aware—was the depopulation of rural Italy. The farmers had been obliged to go to the war, and their farms fell into neglect and ruin as a result. The Georgics , composed between 37 and 30 bce the final period of the civil wars , is a superb plea for the restoration of the traditional agricultural life of Italy. By this time Virgil was a member of what might be called the court circle, and his desire to see his beloved Italy restored to its former glories coincided with the national requirement of

resettling the land and diminishing the pressure on the cities. It would be wrong to think of Virgil as writing political propaganda; but equally it would be wrong to regard his poetry as unconnected with the major currents of political and social needs of the time. Virgil was personally committed to the same ideals as the government. In the year 31 bce, when Virgil was 38, Augustus still known as Octavian won the final battle of the civil wars at Actium against the forces of Antony and Cleopatra and from that time dates the Augustan Age. Virgil, like many of his contemporaries, felt a great sense of relief that the senseless civil strife was at last over and was deeply grateful to the man who had made it possible. Augustus was anxious to preserve the traditions of the republic and its constitutional forms, but he was in fact sole ruler of the Roman world. He used his power to establish a period of peace and stability and endeavoured to reawaken in the Romans a sense of national pride and a new enthusiasm for their ancestral religion and their traditional moral values, those of bravery, parsimony, duty, responsibility, and family devotion. Virgil, too, as a countryman at heart, felt a deep attachment to the simple virtues and religious traditions of the Italian people. All his life he had been preparing himself to write an epic poem regarded then as the highest form of poetic achievement, and he now set out to embody his ideal Rome in the *Aeneid*, the story of the foundation of the first settlement in Italy, from which Rome was to spring, by an exiled Trojan prince after the destruction of Troy by the Greeks in the 12th century bce. The theme he chose gave him two great advantages: The poem, then, operates on a double time scale; it is heroic and yet Augustan. The sonorous and awe-inspiring prophecy by Jupiter I. The speech ends with a memorable image depicting the personified figure of Frenzy in chains, gnashing its bloodstained teeth in vain. At the end of the sixth book, Aeneas visits the underworld, and there pass before his eyes the figures of heroes from Roman history, waiting to be born. The ghost of his father Anchises describes them to him and ends by defining the Roman mission as one concerned with government and civilization compared with the Greek achievement in art and literature and theoretical science. The *Aeneid* is no panegyric; it sets the achievements and aspirations of the giant organization of Roman governmental rule in tension with the frustrated hopes and sufferings of individuals. The most memorable figure in the poem—and, it has been said, the only character to be created by a Roman poet that has passed into world literature—is Dido, queen of Carthage, opponent of the Roman way of life. Again, Turnus, who opposes Aeneas when he lands in Italy, resists the invader who has come to steal his bride. It is clear that Turnus is a less civilized character than Aeneas—but in his defeat Virgil allows him to win much sympathy. These are two examples of the tension against Roman optimism; in many other ways, too, Virgil throughout the poem explores the problems of suffering and the pathos of the human situation. Yet in the end, Aeneas endures and continues to his goal; his devotion to duty *pietas* prevails, and the Roman reader would feel that this should be. The *Aeneid* occupied Virgil for 11 years and, at his death, had not yet received its final revision. In 19 bce, planning to spend a further three years on his poem, he set out for Greece—doubtless to obtain local colour for the revision of those parts of the *Aeneid* set in Greek waters. On the voyage he caught a fever and returned to Italy but died soon after arrival at Brundisium. A few years after his death, Virgil was being imitated and echoed by the younger poet Ovid, and this process continued throughout the Silver Age. The study of Virgil in the schools has lasted as long as Latin has been studied. By the 4th century a new reason for admiration was gaining ground: This aspect figures largely in the writings of the writer and philosopher Macrobius flourished c. Allegorical interpretations began to gain ground and, under Christian influence, became especially widespread throughout the Middle Ages. The two main bases for Christian allegorization were the fourth eclogue, believed to be a prophecy of the birth of Christ, and the near-Christian values expressed in the *Aeneid*, especially in its hero, a man devoted to his divine mission. There was some reaction against him in the Romantic period, but the Victorians, such as Matthew Arnold and Alfred, Lord Tennyson, rediscovered in full measure that sensitivity and pathos that the Romantics had complained that Virgil lacked.

"Politics" is a poem by Irish poet William Butler Yeats written on May 24, It was composed during the time of the Spanish Civil War as well as during the pre-war period of Adolf Hitler's Third Reich in Germany.

The first is "Sailing to Byzantium," and its sequel is simply named "Byzantium. It contains multiple meanings and emotions, and the poet uses various literary devices to communicate them. Two of the most dominant themes of this poem are the desire for escape from the hardships of this world and the quest for immortality. The first stanza of "Sailing to Byzantium" describes a society of people who live for the moment but ignore the wisdom and intellect that the poet finds important. This is evidence of his desire for escape. It is believed that the poet is describing his own condition in these lines. The physical weariness he is experiencing causes him to want to be able to sing through poetry to keep his spirit alive. He believes that his poetry can help him to transcend time and old age, and that it will take him to his ideal city of Byzantium Thorndike He prays that the sages of God will "be the singing-masters of my soul" In other words, he wants to be taught how to write the poetry that will sustain his spirit. As long as his poetry still exists and is read, a part of his soul continues to live. Byzantium, as mentioned before, is a sort of ideal land, comparable to the scriptural heaven. This is obviously one of the most predominant symbols in the poem. Another symbol that carries throughout the work is that of a bird. There is a reference to a bird in each stanza, but perhaps the best indicator of its meaning is found in stanza 4. Yeats uses the image of a bird "set upon a golden bough to sing" 30 to refer to the timelessness and spirit he craves. The bird that is set in gold is there forever, singing for all time, and the poet longs to be able to sing similarly through his poetry and therefore achieve immortality. Similar to the way Yeats uses symbols to enhance this poem, he uses personal experience to inspire it. Twenty years prior to writing "Sailing to Byzantium," he was first exposed to Byzantine art. He saw mosaics that are regarded as the basis for most of the imagery in stanza 3. Also, when Yeats was nearly sixty years old, he suffered high blood pressure and had difficulty breathing. His wife took him on a Mediterranean tour to help him relax, and on that tour he saw mosaics that contrasted art with nature. In addition, Yeats did not regret leaving his home on this excursion because he was depressed about his health and dissatisfied with the political situations at home. It depicts a man striving to reach a better place while leaving a piece of his soul behind for all time. It expresses the weariness and frustration that everyone experiences at some point, but especially with the aging process. It is a poem that encompasses human desires and emotions and presents them almost as though they were in a dream. However, it is almost as though the imaginative wording of the poem makes it easier to see the reality behind its message. The poem refreshes the craving people have for a better world with no hardships, and the need they have to leave a part of themselves here to sing eternally "Of what is past, or passing, or to come" Works Cited Allen, James Lovic. The Terms of Use explains the specific permissions granted.

Chapter 4 : About Walt Whitman

With her characteristically light touch, Roy shows how the world applauds men's political acts and overlooks their domestic behavior, a luxury rarely afforded to women who chase their own desires.

Aphra Behn and Poetic Culture by: This essay is the last of four distilled from a lecture series on Aphra Behn given by Dr. Behn and Poetic Culture Portrait of Laurence Hyde, 1st Earl of Rochester, by William Wissing [Public Domain], via Wikimedia Commons While Aphra Behn initially became known for her numerous and popular plays, the comedy of sexual intrigue that she came to specialise in was not a high-cultural form. To gain real literary fame, rather than notoriety, she had to look to other genres. Thus she began, in the s and s, to produce poems and translations. During the Restoration poems circulated in a variety of forms, from copied manuscript to printed anthology. This meant that a single poem might exist in a number of different versions, and that poems could often be misattributed listen to Dr. There is still some doubt over which poems are by Behn, and which are by her contemporaries. The rest come from a variety of sources, mainly: This was a period before Romanticism, and before poetry was viewed as a medium for the expression of personal feelings. Did she see herself as participating in a tradition of women writers, or did she see her verse as part of a more public sphere, epitomized by male writers? Addressing the laurel tree, which was traditionally associated with the poetry, she asserts that: Here she identifies herself as a writer with the two most significant models of writing women available to her: Sappho, the Greek lyric poet from Lesbos, was primarily known for her simple and expressive poetry about the love between women. Katherine Philips was a problematic role model for Behn. Philips was born a decade before Behn, to the family of a London Puritan merchant. At sixteen Philips married a man much older than her, and spent the rest of her life at home in Cardigan in Wales writing royalist poetry and ardent poems about friendship. Philips modestly claimed that she had never written a single line with the intention of having it printed: In some ways those differences between Behn and Philips polarised the image of the woman writer in the late seventeenth century. Their writings were very different: Philips is preoccupied with the idea of spiritual transcendence, Behn with the disruptions and chaos of the material world. Philips idealizes a simply expressive prophetic language, whereas Behn suggests that language confuses rather than clarifies meanings. In her translation of *Of Plants*, Behn identifies herself as a part of the female poetic line. Yet at the same time, this passage is situated as part of a translation that worked as an act of homage to one of the most influential male poets of the time, Abraham Cowley. Cowley was known mainly for his pindaric odes and his committed royalist verse. While much of his verse was written from political exile, during the civil war, it was very much an elevated, public mode of poetry, one in which the poet was engaged with the affairs of state, rather than those of the private life. In translating *Of Plants*, Behn was aligning herself with Cowley and his politics. The section that she translated was about the oak tree, a plant with specific and widely recognised symbolic connections to the Stuart royal family. Whitehead [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons Behn began imitating Cowley very early on, and many of her most important state poems took the Pindaric form that he had popularised with his Pindarique Odes. Behn was a writer with serious political and philosophical opinions to express, and who often saw herself as participating in a tradition of male Tory and Royalist writers. So how do we tally these very different models of writing embodied in the male and female traditions? The political poetry refers to a concrete world outside the poem, to individuals who are known in public life, and it has a clearly identifiable panegyric function. The amorous poetry bears no such relationship to the external world. It does not have a practical agenda in the same way that the state poetry does, nor is it as clear where we situate the author. In it, she observed that writing, the medium she had exploited all her life in her efforts to effect political change, was now being used by Gilbert Burnet, to usher in the Glorious Revolution that would effectively end her career as a public poet: That can by unperceptable degrees Change every notion, every principle To any form, its great dictator please: The sort of political panegyrics that Behn had written to Charles II, James II, and their queens, were premised on the widely accepted notion that eloquent language had a political agency in its own right. By reconfiguring the events of political life in an elevated idiom, the poet made them real, granting them

an existence in the public sphere. Another aspect of the agency of poetic language was that its eloquence became a testament to the elevated nature of the subject it sought to describe. In other words, one you could tell the king was the real thing because of the grandiose verse he inspired. Behn highlights the way in which in presenting a poetic narrative, the speaker is granted a form of authority over events in which she might otherwise be powerless. In this genre of poems the speaker of the poem was always a man. Usually the poem would tail off into either a comic mock-heroic piece on the penis as recalcitrant soldier, or a resolution in which the man was finally able to perform. The speaker clearly identifies with Cloris, the woman in the poem, as she states: The speaker launches into a tirade against his pathetic member, which culminates in a series of curses that it may be punished by wasting away in consuming weepings. Other poems of the genre replicate this focus on the male response. Behn omits the second half of the French poem, in which Lysander pleads with Cloris to stay for another round of lovemaking. When Cloris touches the limp penis, it is compared to a snake. But rather than be tempted by the serpent, which according to Genesis will ultimately bring about her sexual subjugation, we are told that: The snake, which should be a symbol of seduction, or sexual awakening, is here literalised, returning to the slippery and creepy-crawly amphibian that it really is. Here there are two stories being retold: The scenario of which this fear and haste is most reminiscent, and which is evoked in the reference to Daphne, is an attempted rape. The attempted rape is an image that figured over and over again on the Restoration stage, and became central to imaginative and titillating reconstructions of the sexual encounter. In remodeling the imperfect enjoyment from the point of view of the disappointed woman, Behn borrows images and scenes from other representations of sexual encounters to demonstrate the authority gained in the narration of an event. Translation was considered to be a lesser art than original composition, but translations did hold a lofty association with the classics. Behn could use her translations to increase her literary status. In the case of her translations of Fontenelle, Lucretius, and La Rochefoucauld, translations also enabled her to enter into controversies on science, religion, and philosophy that otherwise would not be deemed fit subjects for the writings of an unlearned woman. The problem with translation was that as a woman, barred from university education, she was not equipped with the tools of the trade. Her great compliment to Creech is that in translating Lucretius, he opens up access to the classics: Behn seems divided between a desire to play the woman as victim, and the desire to compete in the public sphere on the same terms as men. Yet at the same time she was also anxious to show that she could play the learning game. As ever, she wanted it both ways, and so she goes on to refer in the same epistle to Hobbes and Apollonius, suggesting that she too is mistress of the full range of classic and native authorities. What are we, then, to make of Behn as translator and woman of learning, when she seems uncertain whether to play the ingenu or the old hand? Do her translations mark her difference from the male models that she follows, or her ability to imitate them? It ends with the death of the nymph, Aminta, who dies during an erotic encounter in the bower. The originally French translates roughly to: The description is mildly erotic in its mentions of physical attributes, but is not overtly sexy and certainly not bawdy. The account emphasises the sexual attractiveness of a woman for the benefit of a male spectator, who, as in the theatre, is to be aroused by the partial discovery of her body as the wind blows her dress aside. It is not immediately clear where Behn is positioning herself in translating a work like the *Island of Love*, written by a male author, with a male speaker, intended with a male audience and male pleasure in mind. Her modification of her source, shown above, involves the addition of sensational detail: One is that in masquerading so entirely in libertine discourse, in becoming such a stagey kind of predatory male lover, Behn exposes the theatricality of conventional ways of describing sexual desire. In presenting a speaker who is even more of the libertine that he was in her original source, she shows the way in which that source was based on very set cultural constructions of gender difference: But we could also read it as Behn demonstrating again that she can do what she should not be able to do: Behn was attracted to translation because of its high-culture status, but also because it could pay well. Behn clearly wanted her translations to perform as literary products for an eager marketplace, and as works of literature, contributions to current debate about the nature of translation, that were being conducted by prestigious male contemporary writers like John Dryden, the Earl of Roscommon, and the Duke of Buckingham. Discriminating between writers who adhere strictly to the source, and those who adopt a looser approach, she declares her own preference for the freer style of translation,

which is closely linked to a tradition of amateur writing. Here she is clearly associating the freer forms of translation with the tradition and culture of the aristocratic amateur. Yet she was producing these translations for money, to replace the sources of income she had lost by lack of interest in the theatre. At the same time that she was emphasising the ease and gentility of her translations in her prefaces and dedications, she was also literally begging for more money for them. She transplants the French narratives into the world of Restoration comedy. She changes the names of the two women wooed from the pastoral Sylvie and Iris into a Bellinda and Bellimante, reminiscent of the names of heroines on the Restoration stage. Behn blurs the distinctions between the high cultural genre of translation and the low cultural world of the playhouse, complicating our understanding of the relationship between genres and the relationship between amateur and professional writers. As ever, we are left uncertain as to where to position Aphra Behn.

In Shelley's poetry, the figure of the poet (and, to some extent, the figure of Shelley himself) is not simply a talented entertainer or even a perceptive moralist but a grand, tragic, prophetic hero. The poet has a deep, mystic appreciation for nature, as in the poem "To Wordsworth" (

About Walt Whitman [Note: This biographical essay is excerpted from a longer essay included in The Walt Whitman Hypertext Archive at <http://www.waltwhitman.org/>: Price and Ed Folsom. Walt Whitman was named after his father, a carpenter and farmer who was 34 years old when Whitman was born. Trained as a carpenter but struggling to find work, he had taken up farming by the time Walt was born, but when Walt was just about to turn four, Walter Sr. Whitman later came to view this event as a kind of laying on of hands, the French hero of the American Revolution anointing the future poet of democracy in the energetic city of immigrants, where the new nation was being invented day by day. Walt Whitman is thus of the first generation of Americans who were born in the newly formed United States and grew up assuming the stable existence of the new country. Pride in the emergent nation was rampant, and Walter Sr. His mother, on the other hand, served throughout his life as his emotional touchstone. There was a special affectional bond between Whitman and his mother, and the long correspondence between them records a kind of partnership in attempting to deal with the family crises that mounted over the years, as Jesse became mentally unstable and violent and eventually had to be institutionalized, as Hannah entered a disastrous marriage with an abusive husband, as Andrew became an alcoholic and married a prostitute before dying of ill health in his 30s, and as Edward required increasingly dedicated care. Walt loved living close to the East River, where as a child he rode the ferries back and forth to New York City, imbibing an experience that would remain significant for him his whole life: The daily commute suggested the passage from life to death to life again and suggested too the passage from poet to reader to poet via the vehicle of the poem. By crossing Brooklyn ferry, Whitman first discovered the magical commutations that he would eventually accomplish in his poetry. While in Brooklyn, Whitman attended the newly founded Brooklyn public schools for six years, sharing his classes with students of a variety of ages and backgrounds, though most were poor, since children from wealthy families attended private schools. Whitman had little to say about his rudimentary formal schooling, except that he hated corporal punishment, a common practice in schools and one that he would attack in later years in both his journalism and his fiction. The idyllic Long Island countryside formed a sharp contrast to the crowded energy of the quickly growing Brooklyn-New York City urban center. This dual allegiance can be traced in his poetry, which is often marked by shifts between rural and urban settings. Self-Education and First Career By the age of eleven, Whitman was done with his formal education by this time he had far more schooling than either of his parents had received , and he began his life as a laborer, working first as an office boy for some prominent Brooklyn lawyers, who gave him a subscription to a circulating library, where his self-education began. Always an autodidact, Whitman absorbed an eclectic but wide-ranging education through his visits to museums, his nonstop reading, and his penchant for engaging everyone he met in conversation and debate. In , Whitman became an apprentice on the Long Island Patriot, a liberal, working-class newspaper, where he learned the printing trade and was first exposed to the excitement of putting words into print, observing how thought and event could be quickly transformed into language and immediately communicated to thousands of readers. At the age of twelve, young Walt was already contributing to the newspaper and experiencing the exhilaration of getting his own words published. These early years on his own in Brooklyn and New York remained a formative influence on his writing, for it was during this time that he developed the habit of close observation of the ever-shifting panorama of the city, and a great deal of his journalism, poetry, and prose came to focus on catalogs of urban life and the history of New York City, Brooklyn, and Long Island. Brother Jeff, fourteen years younger than Walt, would become the sibling he felt closest to, their bond formed when they traveled together to New Orleans in , when Jeff was about the same age as Walt was when Jeff was born. But while Jeff was a young child, Whitman spent little time with him. Walt remained separated from his family and furthered his education by absorbing the power of language from a variety of sources: By the time he was

sixteen, Walt was a journeyman printer and compositor in New York City. As he turned 17, the five-year veteran of the printing trade was already on the verge of a career change. Schoolteaching Years His unlikely next career was that of a teacher. Teaching was therefore an escape but was also clearly a job he was forced to take in bad economic times, and some of the unhappiest times of his life were these five years when he taught school in at least ten different Long Island towns, rooming in the homes of his students, teaching three-month terms to large and heterogeneous classes some with over eighty students, ranging in age from five to fifteen, for up to nine hours a day, getting very little pay, and having to put up with some very unenlightened people. After the excitement of Brooklyn and New York, these often isolated Long Island towns depressed Whitman, and he recorded his disdain for country people in a series of letters not discovered until the 1850s that he wrote to a friend named Abraham Leech: He had interrupted his teaching in 1827 to try his luck at starting his own newspaper, *The Long Islander*, devoted to covering the towns around Huntington. He bought a press and type and hired his younger brother George as an assistant, but, despite his energetic efforts to edit, publish, write for, and deliver the new paper, it folded within a year, and he reluctantly returned to the classroom. Newspaper work made him happy, but teaching did not, and two years later, he abruptly quit his job as an itinerant schoolteacher. The reasons for his decision continue to interest biographers. One persistent but unsubstantiated rumor has it that Whitman committed sodomy with one of his students while teaching in Southold, though it is not possible to prove that Whitman actually even taught there. The rumor suggests he was run out of town in disgrace, never to return and soon to abandon teaching altogether. But in fact Whitman did travel again to Southold, writing some remarkably unperturbed journalistic pieces about the place in the late 1820s and early 1830s. It seems far more likely that Whitman gave up schoolteaching because he found himself temperamentally unsuited for it. And, besides, he had a new career opening up: Best of all, to nurture that career, he would need to return to New York City and re-establish himself in the world of journalism. The *Long Island Star* recognized his value as a journalist and, once he resettled in Brooklyn, quickly arranged to have him compose a series of editorials, two or three a week, from September to March 1830. With the death of William Marsh, the editor of the *Brooklyn Eagle*, Whitman became chief editor of that paper he served from March 5, to January 18, 1831. He dedicated himself to journalism in these years and published little of his own poetry and fiction. However, he introduced literary reviewing to the *Eagle*, and he commented, if often superficially, on writers such as Carlyle and Emerson, who in the next decade would have a significant impact on *Leaves of Grass*. But Whitman claimed that what he most valued was not the ability to promote his opinions, but rather something more intimate, the "curious kind of sympathy. He gets to love them. He sometimes dreaded slave labor as a "black tide" that could overwhelm white workingmen. He was adamant that slavery should not be allowed into the new western territories because he feared whites would not migrate to an area where their own labor was devalued unfairly by the institution of black slavery. Periodically, Whitman expressed outrage at practices that furthered slavery itself: Like Lincoln, he consistently opposed slavery and its further extension, even while he knew again like Lincoln that the more extreme abolitionists threatened the Union itself. Whatever the nature of his personal attachments in New Orleans, he certainly encountered a city full of color and excitement. He wandered the French quarter and the old French market, attracted by "the Indian and negro hucksters with their wares" and the "great Creole mulatto woman" who sold him the best coffee he ever tasted. He enjoyed the "splendid and roomy bars" with "exquisite wines, and the perfect and mild French brandy" that were packed with soldiers who had recently returned from the war with Mexico, and his first encounters with young men who had seen battle, many of them recovering from war wounds, occurred in New Orleans, a precursor of his Civil War experiences. But the exotic nature of the Southern city was not without its horrors: Whitman never forgot the experience of seeing humans on the selling block, and he kept a poster of a slave auction hanging in his room for many years as a reminder that such dehumanizing events occurred regularly in the United States. The slave auction was an experience that he would later incorporate in his poem "I Sing the Body Electric. The final decision, though, was taken out of the hands of the brothers, as the *Crescent* owners exhibited what Whitman called a "singular sort of coldness" toward their new editor. They probably feared that this northern editor would embarrass them because of his unorthodox ideas, especially about slavery. Budding Poet His trip South produced a few lively sketches of New Orleans life and at least one poem,

"Sailing the Mississippi at Midnight," in which the steamboat journey becomes a symbolic journey of life: Vast and starless, the pall of heaven Laps on the trailing pall below; And forward, forward, in solemn darkness, As if to the sea of the lost we go. Throughout much of the s Whitman wrote conventional poems like this one, often echoing Bryant, and, at times, Shelley and Keats. Instead, tired language usually renders the poems inert. His marginalia on these articles demonstrate that he was learning to write not in the manner of his predecessors but against them. The mystery about Whitman in the late s is the speed of his transformation from an unoriginal and conventional poet into one who abruptly abandoned conventional rhyme and meter and, in jottings begun at this time, exploited the odd loveliness of homely imagery, finding beauty in the commonplace but expressing it in an uncommon way. As we have noted, Whitman the journalist spoke to the interests of the day and from a particular class perspective when he advanced the interests of white workingmen while seeming, at times, unconcerned about the plight of blacks. Perhaps the New Orleans experience had prompted a change in attitude, a change that was intensified by an increasing number of friendships with radical thinkers and writers who led Whitman to rethink his attitudes toward the issue of race. Notebook passages assert that the poet has the "divine grammar of all tongues, and says indifferently and alike How are you friend? In any event, his first notebook lines in the manner of Leaves of Grass focus directly on the fundamental issue dividing the United States. His notebook breaks into free verse for the first time in lines that seek to bind opposed categories, to link black and white, to join master and slave: I am the poet of the body And I am the poet of the soul And I am I go with the slaves of the earth equally with he masters And I will stand between the masters and the slaves, Entering into both so that both will understand me alike. The audacity of that final line remains striking. When Whitman wrote "I, now thirty-six years old, in perfect health, begin," he announced a new identity for himself, and his novitiate came at an age quite advanced for a poet. Keats by that age had been dead for ten years; Byron had died at exactly that age; Wordsworth and Coleridge produced Lyrical Ballads while both were in their twenties; Bryant had written "Thanatopsis," his best-known poem, at age sixteen; and most other great Romantic poets Whitman admired had done their most memorable work early in their adult lives. The mystery that has intrigued biographers and critics over the years has been about what prompted the transformation: There is evidence to support both theories. On the other hand, the manuscripts that do remain indicate that Whitman meticulously worked and reworked passages of his poems, heavily revising entire drafts of the poems, and that he issued detailed instructions to the Rome brothers, the printers who were setting his book in type, carefully overseeing every aspect of the production of his book. Whitman seems, then, to have been both inspired poet and skilled craftsman, at once under the spell of his newly discovered and intoxicating free verse style while also remaining very much in control of it, adjusting and altering and rearranging. For the rest of his life, he would add, delete, fuse, separate, and rearrange poems as he issued six very distinct editions of Leaves of Grass. It was work produced by a poet who was both sage and huckster, who touched the gods with ink-smudged fingers, and who was concerned as much with the sales and reviews of his book as with the state of the human soul. The First Edition of Leaves of Grass Whitman paid out of his own pocket for the production of the first edition of his book and had only copies printed, which he bound at various times as his finances permitted. He always recalled the book as appearing, fittingly, on the Fourth of July, as a kind of literary Independence Day. His joy at getting the book published was quickly diminished by the death of his father within a week of the appearance of Leaves. He had already had some experience enacting that role even while Walter Sr. Now, however, he became the only person his mother and siblings could turn to. But even given these growing family burdens, he managed to concentrate on his new book, and, just as he oversaw all the details of its composition and printing, so now did he supervise its distribution and try to control its reception. Even though Whitman claimed that the first edition sold out, the book in fact had very poor sales. The absence of a name indicated, perhaps, that the author of this book believed he spoke not for himself so much as for merica. But opposite the title page was a portrait of Whitman, an engraving made from a daguerreotype that the photographer Gabriel Harrison had made during the summer of It was what Whitman called "al fresco" poetry, poetry written outside the walls, the bounds, of convention and tradition. The Leaves Within a few months of producing his first edition of Leaves, Whitman was already hard at work on the second edition. Whitman was a pioneer of the "any

publicity is better than no publicity" strategy. Those original twelve had been untitled in , but Whitman was doing all he could to make the new edition look and feel different: So the untitled introductory poem from the first edition that would eventually be named "Song of Myself" was in called "Poem of Walt Whitman, an American," and the poem that would become "This Compost" appeared here as "Poem of Wonder at the Resurrection of The Wheat. Like them or not, Whitman seemed to be saying, they are poems, and more and more of them were on the way. But, despite his efforts to re-make his book, the results were depressingly the same: The Bohemian Years In these years, Whitman was in fact working hard at becoming a poet by forging literary connections: Whitman also came to befriend a number of visual artists, like the sculptor Henry Kirke Brown, the painter Elihu Vedder, and the photographer Gabriel Harrison. He knew a number of abolitionist writers at this time, including Moncure Conway, and Whitman wrote some vitriolic attacks on the fugitive slave law and the moral bankruptcy of American politics, but these pieces notably "The Eighteenth Presidency! He continued to have them set in type by the Rome brothers and other printer friends, as if he assumed that he would inevitably be publishing them himself, since no commercial publisher had indicated an interest in his book.

Chapter 6 : The Corrupt Society – Digital Dante

About this Poet William Butler Yeats is widely considered to be one of the greatest poets of the 20th century. He belonged to the Protestant, Anglo-Irish minority that had controlled the economic, political, social, and cultural life of Ireland since at least the end of the 17th century.

Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work. The Importance of Establishing Identity As Beowulf is essentially a record of heroic deeds, the concept of identity—of which the two principal components are ancestral heritage and individual reputation—is clearly central to the poem. Characters in the poem are unable to talk about their identity or even introduce themselves without referring to family lineage. Characters take pride in ancestors who have acted valiantly, and they attempt to live up to the same standards as those ancestors. For example, Shield Sheafson, the legendary originator of the Danish royal line, was orphaned; because he was in a sense fatherless, valiant deeds were the only means by which he could construct an identity for himself. Tensions Between the Heroic Code and Other Value Systems Much of Beowulf is devoted to articulating and illustrating the Germanic heroic code, which values strength, courage, and loyalty in warriors; hospitality, generosity, and political skill in kings; ceremoniousness in women; and good reputation in all people. Traditional and much respected, this code is vital to warrior societies as a means of understanding their relationships to the world and the menaces lurking beyond their boundaries. Thus individual actions can be seen only as either conforming to or violating the code. The poem contains several stories that concern divided loyalties, situations for which the code offers no practical guidance about how to act. For example, the poet relates that the Danish Hildeburh marries the Frisian king. When, in the war between the Danes and the Frisians, both her Danish brother and her Frisian son are killed, Hildeburh is left doubly grieved. The code is also often in tension with the values of medieval Christianity. While the code maintains that honor is gained during life through deeds, Christianity asserts that glory lies in the afterlife. Throughout the poem, the poet strains to accommodate these two sets of values. Though he is Christian, he cannot and does not seem to want to deny the fundamental pagan values of the story. His transition demonstrates that a differing set of values accompanies each of his two roles. The difference between these two sets of values manifests itself early on in the outlooks of Beowulf and King Hrothgar. Whereas the youthful Beowulf, having nothing to lose, desires personal glory, the aged Hrothgar, having much to lose, seeks protection for his people. Though these two outlooks are somewhat oppositional, each character acts as society dictates he should given his particular role in society. The heroic code requires that a king reward the loyal service of his warriors with gifts and praise. It also holds that he must provide them with protection and the sanctuary of a lavish mead-hall.

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In his frustration, the poet says in lines that his heart is "sick with desire / And fastened to a dying animal." He is ready to leave this world of apathy and arrive in his holy land of Byzantium, which is a sort of paradise in his mind (Kennedy and Gioia).

Background[edit] The epigraph at the top of the poem is taken from Thomas Mann , "In our time the destiny of man presents its meanings in political terms". The phrase had been quoted in a copy of the Yale Review and Yeats wrote notes on that edition and attached them to the first typescript draft of the "Politics". O Western wind when wilt thou blow That small rain down can rain: In May , British forces in London were recruiting air raid wardens in preparation for possible war with Germany, and Yeats wrote in a letter that he was not expecting that war should break out, but in the letter he suggested that if war were to arise in Europe, he might move to Cornwall to escape the violence. As the poet speaks of turning his inability to turn his "attention" from "that girls standing there" to "politics", the poet presents the battle of intellect and emotion, a battle which emotion wins in the poem. Likewise, Meihuizen argues that the poem presents sexual longing in the final line as the poem ends with the combination of the male and female in sexual union. While Yeats never embraces Fascism the way that Ezra Pound did, the theme of the relationship between art and politics appears to focus heavily on that particular form of government as it was the prevailing political force in two of the three countries mentioned in the poem. Michael Bell, in his essay "W. All of the poems create a "utopia" in which the poet finds relief from public life by withdrawing from social spheres and entering into a mythical setting, yet "Politics" is unique in that it lacks the pastoral qualities of the earlier works and finds solitude in a different time rather than a different place. Yeats, Jacqueline Genet suggests that the opposing forces in the poem are the public life and the private life, which she equates to a battle between the self and the anti-self. For Yeats, Genet suggests that the struggle to remain objective is cyclical, citing " Easter " as an example of Yeats allowing political forces to dictate poetical, or personal reflection. While Yeats had sought a larger audience for his poetry and achieves success beyond Ireland, he fails to create a political voice to speak to the new audience and sinks back into the seclusion of personal interest. Marcus suggests that Yeats, while attracted to the idea of Fascism because of its "respect for both sides of social and political dichotomies", chooses instead to honor a "cultural nationalism" that is independent of politics. Oxford University Press , p. The Secret Life of W. An Annual of Critical and Textual Studies University of Michigan Press p. Yeats and the Drama of Sacred Space. Modernist Writing and Reactionary Politics. Cambridge University Press pp. In Dreams Begin Responsibilities". Literature, Modernism and Myth: Belief and Responsibility in the Twentieth Century.

Chapter 8 : SparkNotes: Beowulf: Themes

But for Whitman, poetry wasn't just a vehicle for expressing political lament; it was also a political force in itself. In his preface to the first edition of Leaves of Grass (), Whitman.

The causes were cirrhosis of the liver and tuberculosis due to prolonged serious alcoholism. Gibran started drinking seriously during or after publication of *The Prophet*. Several years before his death, he locked himself in his apartment, away from visitors, drinking all day. Gibran expressed the wish that he be buried in Lebanon. I am alive like you, and I am standing beside you. Close your eyes and look around, you will see me in front of you. There she discovered her letters to him spanning twenty-three years. She initially agreed to burn them because of their intimacy, but recognizing their historical value she saved them. She gave them, along with his letters to her which she had also saved, to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library before she died in . Excerpts of the over letters were published in "Beloved Prophet" in . Haskell had been thinking of placing her collection at the Telfair as early as . In a letter to Gibran, she wrote "I am thinking of other museums There when I was a visiting child, form burst upon my astonished little soul. The future American royalties to his books were willed to his hometown of Bsharri , to be "used for good causes". Writings[edit] Style and recurring themes[edit] Gibran was a great admirer of poet and writer Francis Marrash , [25] [26] whose works he had studied at al-Hikma school in Beirut. Love one another but make not a bond of love: But his mysticism is a convergence of several different influences: Christianity, Islam, Judaism and theosophy. I love you when you prostrate yourself in your mosque, and kneel in your church and pray in your synagogue. You and I are sons of one faithâ€”the Spirit. Its popularity grew markedly during the s with the American counterculture and then with the flowering of the New Age movements. It has remained popular with these and with the wider population to this day. Since it was first published in , *The Prophet* has never been out of print. Having been translated into more than 40 languages, [31] it was one of the best-selling books of the twentieth century in the United States. He reportedly read passages to his mother and over the years gave away copies of "The Prophet" to friends and colleagues. Photographs of his handwritten notes under certain passages throughout his copy are archived on various Museum websites. One of his most notable lines of poetry is from "Sand and Foam" , which reads: Yeats , Carl Jung and Auguste Rodin. His drawings were collected by Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha. Religious views[edit] Gibran was born into a Maronite Christian family and raised in Maronite schools. He was influenced not only by his own religion but also by Islam, and especially by the mysticism of the Sufis. Gibran also worked with St. He used to say: Illustration from *The madman*, his parables and poems *The Madman* transcriptions:

Chapter 9 : SparkNotes: Shelley's Poetry: Themes, Motifs & Symbols

Bernadette Mayer's The Desires of Mothers to Please Others in Letters is a series of unsent letters written over a nine-month period. Laynie Browne's follow-up homage to Mayer's text, The Desires of Letters takes on motherhood and community during a time of political unrest.

Within that framework, each cantica presents a different but related model for human society. Paradise is the ideal society in all its essential elements working harmoniously; Purgatory is a society in transition, moving from self-centeredness to concern for and commitment to others, but not yet organized within an effective structure. Hell reveals what society is when all its members act for themselves and against the common good. The souls here are condemned not just for their selfish motivations but also for the effects of their actions on others. The suffering, the violence, the anarchy of Hell are a result of their failure to act up to their responsibilities or their outright abuse of those responsibilities. Selfishness, greed for money, power, or pleasure, is the basis of the injustice that reigns in Hell, as charity is the basis of the justice that operates in heaven. Bonaventure and Aquinas name four objects of love or sin: God, ourselves, our neighbors, and our bodies; Dante adds a fifth, our community. It is not that the theologians are not concerned with the effects of our actions on others, but that they are not primarily concerned with the public aspect of those actions, with their consequences for society as an entity. Lust, gluttony, greed have sociopolitical overtones; even heresy and suicide are presented within a political context. Barratry graft within the government is placed in a lower section than simony graft in the church because corruption within the state has a greater effect on society; both are treated as aspects of fraud, that is, as social rather than religious sins. Flattery and hypocrisy are lower than robbery and murder except for murder committed by treachery, not because in themselves Dante considers them more serious sins, but because their effects on society are more insidious and ultimately more damaging. The secrecy is what makes theft worse for Dante, since it opens the way to various kinds of injustice, like the incrimination of the innocent, and threatens economic stability in a much graver way. For Aquinas, blasphemy is also worse than murder or theft because it is a direct attack on God ST, 1. He devotes thirteen cantos from 18 to 30 to it, more than a third of Hell, and he subdivides it into ten different sections. It is not unusual to subdivide sins; the capital vices are normally discussed in terms of the sins they spawn. By introducing all these complexities, he is clearly calling attention to these sins, forcing us to shift the emphasis from the traditional moral view of greed and pride as the worst of evils to the more sociopolitical distinctions of violence, fraud, and treachery. The cantica seems to draw more from legal codes than manuals on vice; several of the punishments, particularly in the eighth circle, are based on contemporary penal codes. One is the identification of specific places with sins. I suggested above in chapter one that Florence is presented as the central sinner throughout the cantica, but that in the lower parts of Hell other cities or regions of Italy share the stage; two classical cities, Thebes and Troy, also echo through Hell as emblems of self-destructiveness and pride. Rivers are often used to identify cities and regions, suggesting the spread of corruption from one place to another,[06] and Dante uses dialect words particularly in the Malebolge to suggest the atmosphere of different regions. In a malfunctioning society, sinners seem to lead even their relatives into sin: The bishop, Ruggieri, among the traitors, is a nephew of Cardinal Ottaviano, who is mentioned with the heretics, implying that the lack of faith in eternity facilitates the betrayal of faith to other men. Dante moves in Hell from vices which seem to be personal and simple although complications are revealed in them to more and more overtly social faults. The victims become more numerous, from single individuals to large groups and even whole nations; the simple impulse to sin is replaced by the more complex manipulation of that impulse in others. We see the corrupt society built up from its basic element—the self-indulgent individual—and when we reach the center, we discover that the lowest sinner is not so different from the souls in the upper circles: For Dante, individual morality cannot be dissociated from social responsibility because the individual is a citizen, and to be a good individual, he must be a good citizen. Thus, to retrace the moral journey of the pilgrim through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise, is to follow the journey of the citizen from a corrupt society, through the transition from selfishness to social responsibility, to his goal in the ideal society. In Hell, Dante leads his

pilgrim-persona step by step through a knowledge of what constitutes a corrupt society and a corrupt person and shows how even a basically good individual can be affected by the evil around him. By analyzing the structure of Hell, investigating each region in the order in which the pilgrim goes through it, since each sin has political implications, we can see how Dante reveals the hidden corruption that undermines society and how he unmasks the respected public figures. The first point Dante makes in Hell is his own social responsibility. The pilgrim begins outside society in the woods,[08] alone, severed from all human connections, as Dante found himself in exile, banned under pain of death, cut off from his family, his city, and any public function. The inner man on his own is threatened by vice the three animals , particularly greed the wolf [09] as the outer man is endangered by the enmity of Florence and the papacy see chapter one. Aid comes in the form of a man who has all the public connections and purpose Dante lacks. Virgil is a poet, a Roman who served the highest form of political society, the empire, with his poetry. He must prepare Dante to become like him, a Roman and a poet of the empire. He is the first character in the Comedy to speak and he identifies himself by region, city, period, government, and role, bringing the poem abruptly from the moral allegorical into the real historical sphere. Virgil connects himself with the origin and high moments of the empire, and provides all the social identifications Dante so far lacks: The language of the outlawed rebel associates Virgil with Dante, who is historically in that position when he writes the poem, although he was not when the poem is supposed to take place. But Dante is in rebellion only against an unjust government of man, Virgil against the law of God: Virgil began his speech with the Roman empire on earth; he ends it with the empire in heaven, making a connection between the two which Dante will carry through the poem, reinforced by the souls in Paradise. The last to make the poem, reinforced by the souls in Paradise. The allusions to their journeys establish certain important points. Aeneas is described in the first canto as the son of Anchises who came from Troy 1. He was chosen by heaven to be the father of Rome and of its empire 2. The empire had to prepare the way for the church. What Aeneas learned in Hell was the cause of his victory and also of the papal mantle 2. Can Dante have failed to understand this as meaning that the Christian faith restored the empire? The first lesson Dante learns towards this mission after he enters Hell is the importance of making a commitment, the first step in social action; the neutrals, men and angels who never took sides, never made a public commitment. The neutrals lived for themselves alone, refusing to choose either good or evil and are therefore scorned by both heaven and hell, by mercy and justice 3. Cut off from all recognized human and divine laws, they are men without a country; the world has forgotten them 3. Most early commentators take this to be Celestine V, whose abdication left the papacy to Boniface VIII, one of the major villains of the Comedy. There is one group of souls in Hell who chose good action, the inhabitants of Limbo, but they too failed in one crucial respect. They did not acknowledge the existence of God and therefore their action was not directed to his purpose. The moral life alone is not sufficient, it must serve the creation of the perfect society according to the divine plan. In every other respect, the three groups of virtuous pagans Dante sees together constitute an almost ideal society: The last include moral and theological writers, scientists, and commentators; together they represent all aspects of human knowledge, but that is not sufficient to save them or to enable them to succeed. In the sun, Dante will see, side by side, philosophers who took opposing views now completing the figure of perfection, the circle, because they were all motivated by faith. The society of Limbo is peaceful, the only harmonious community in Hell, but it lacks joy because it lacks the deepest motivation for the good society, the salvation of its citizens. Of the four roles Dante recognizes in civil life see Pr. Beyond Limbo, Dante sees souls who felt no responsibility outside themselves; the next three sections of Hell are devoted to different kinds of selfish action: But Dante makes it clear that the self is not the only victim. The circle of lust is filled with figures of great social responsibility, queens and princes, who chose indulgence of their passions over duty to their peoples. The queens are given a lot of attention by the early commentators, particularly Benvenuto da Imola, who details their great deeds as rulers as well as their vices 1. Semiramis twists the laws in order to cover her own guilt: The next three queens were not only self-indulgent but also obstacles in one way or another to the Roman empire: The only men named are Achilles, Paris, and Tristan, all princes: Achilles died ignominiously fighting over love, Paris and Tristan both stole the wives of kings, one of his host, the other of his uncle, and their affairs led to serious trouble for their countries. The violence such love

engenders, spreading the effects of self-indulgence well beyond the immediate actors, is part of the responsibility they must now bear for their sin, which in life interfered with their fulfilling their assigned obligations as leaders of their people. Gluttony is so completely centered on the physical senses that it becomes virtually impossible for the gluttonous individual to give of himself, even with words, to others. This self-indulgence leads to a self-absorption that necessarily interferes with social exchange. The gluttons lose the power to act or to communicate with others. But always the soul stops before Dante is satisfied: For a city as for a man, overfeeding is self-destructive; more wealth and power than it can handle will first disrupt its natural processes and then destroy it. The implication is that a modicum of virtue can stem the corruption of society, but the corruption of Florence is so great that its good men cannot save it. Greed and gluttony are aspects of the same impulse, the amassing of more material than can be used. In other words, the distribution of worldly goods and power seems random to man because he cannot understand it and wrongly blames fortune 7. It is not accidental that the group Dante concentrates on in this section is identified by their tonsures; they are all churchmen, whose function was to give, not to possess, and to teach others the vanity of earthly goods. Dante follows a logical progression in sinful impulses from the indulgence of natural physical desires for sex and food to the indulgence of desires for less natural, but still necessary, goods like wealth, which is essential to social existence. The more the sins are centered on the self, the more hostile they render the individual to others. The glutton is only noncommunicative, the miser is aggressive. The rage that begins to surface in the circle of greed in the accusing shouts of the souls, but without a specific object, erupts in the next three circles against very specific objects, other people, the self, and God. It bursts out like the stream that has boiled underground but pours forth into the Styx 7. As we learn later, all the rivers of Hell are connected, just as tendencies to sin are connected, so the Styx must flow underground from the Acheron; in other words, wrath is latent in all the sins of self-indulgence, but after greed it comes to the surface and finds its object in another being. In the upper circles, the sins and sinners are wrapped up in themselves; from wrath down, there is much more interaction between the souls and between them and Dante. Dante consciously aligns himself with divine justice and against the attacking soul, making it clear, as he has not before, that he is an alien in Hell. The scene is dramatic, with a much larger cast of active characters than has been seen heretofore, and the atmosphere is much more overtly civic. Beginning with the exchange of signals between towers, which suggests a hostile setting, the approach of an alien, perhaps an enemy, as Benvenuto notes 1. In the earlier circles, there were guards who objected ineffectually to his presence. Now there is sophisticated communication among beings he cannot see. Dante and Virgil enter this city as hostile aliens, although Virgil is himself an inhabitant of Hell, a fellow countryman from a different region, so to speak; for Dante, the experience is one he lived in his own life, an alien everywhere but in Florence, where he was an unwanted outlaw. The action of the fallen angels is, of course futile; they cannot shut this gate against the divine will. Their whole rebellion won them only the loss of heaven, not even the control of their own domain, which, like the Italian cities that defy the emperor, is filled with chaos and self-destructive violence. The angel who brings divine help asks the devils why they bother to resist a will that cannot be thwarted, an action which can only increase their pains, 9. That is an important question for Dante and the reader to ponder before entering the lower circles where the sins are a conscious and continuous affirmation of evil and rejection of God, but it is also a reminder to Florence that, however successful it may be at thwarting the emperor temporarily, the divine will must ultimately prevail on earth as in Hell. Inside it, Dante concentrates on four large categories of sin, those which are the most socially destructive: The souls he concentrates on are Epicureans, a sect which indulges the body and denies the immortality of the soul;[22] politically, these souls deny the larger reality of empire or even city in order to indulge the smallest segment, their party. They are buried along with those they misled, a point that is carefully made twice 9. That love for Florence was strong enough while he was alive to make him oppose a-lone the destruction of Florence,