

## 1 | Reading Notes

### 1.1 | :claim: The current praise for opulence is a mark of the guided age

where the opulence is unapologetic and the ranks of the hoi polloi can be seen swelling outside the gates

### 1.2 | Original guided age is marked by poverty, rising inequality, and corporatization of politics

period from roughly 1870 to 1900 marked by increased poverty, rising inequality and growing concern about corporate influence in politics.

### 1.3 | :claim: Guided age had a sense of productive enthusiasm both by rising economy but also new tech

Guided Age enthusiasm was fueled not merely by the performance of the overall economy, but also by the new technologies it produced.

### 1.4 | Guided age began the separation of American social classes and loss of Republican values

That America was losing its republican character and becoming more like a European nation with a population of haves and have-nots locked into fixed classes.

### 1.5 | :claim: That, if there *is* mass poverty, Republicanism has not fully succeeded

Note Whitman's reference to "surface successes." He was urging his audience to look beneath the gilding to see the threat facing the nation.

### 1.6 | Wealth accumulated and concentrated in the Guided age

By 1890, the top 1 percent of the U.S. population owned 51 percent of all wealth.

### 1.7 | In the Guided age, there was a mark of admiration of the ultra-wealthy

As guests arrived to the mansion, surging crowds of looky-loos had to be held back by police, like fans at a red-carpet premiere.

### 1.8 | Guided age brought corporate lobbying

Industrialists used their influence to lobby lawmakers to adopt policies favorable to big business and hostile to organized labor.

**1.9 | Bribery became used and meddled with in American politics**

“There are two things that are important in politics. The first is money, and I can’t remember what the second one is.”

**1.10 | As power consolidates, commoners’ strikes became more common**

These include the first nationwide railroad strikes, the Great Uprising of 1877 and the Pullman Strike of 1894, both of which saw more than 100 people killed in clashes with police, state militia and federal troops.

**1.11 | Guided age also had an echo of anti-immigration, counter-terrorism, and nationalism**

There was even concern about terrorism in the late-19th century, a threat associated with German anarchists and Irish nationalists

**1.12 | Guided age also included attempted political disenfranchisement**

In the North in the 1870s, lawmakers in New York state tried unsuccessfully to strip voting rights from poor urban whites—a majority of them Irish and Irish American.

**1.13 | Guided Age also contained mass partisanship**

The first Gilded Age was marked by intense partisanship, gridlock and presidential elections decided by razor-thin margins. Sound familiar?

**1.14 | Guided age was followed by Progressive progress**

The original Gilded Age was followed by the Progressive Era (1900-1920), a period marked by a vast array of reforms that alleviated poverty, increased workplace safety, improved public health and education, restrained big business, adopted an income tax