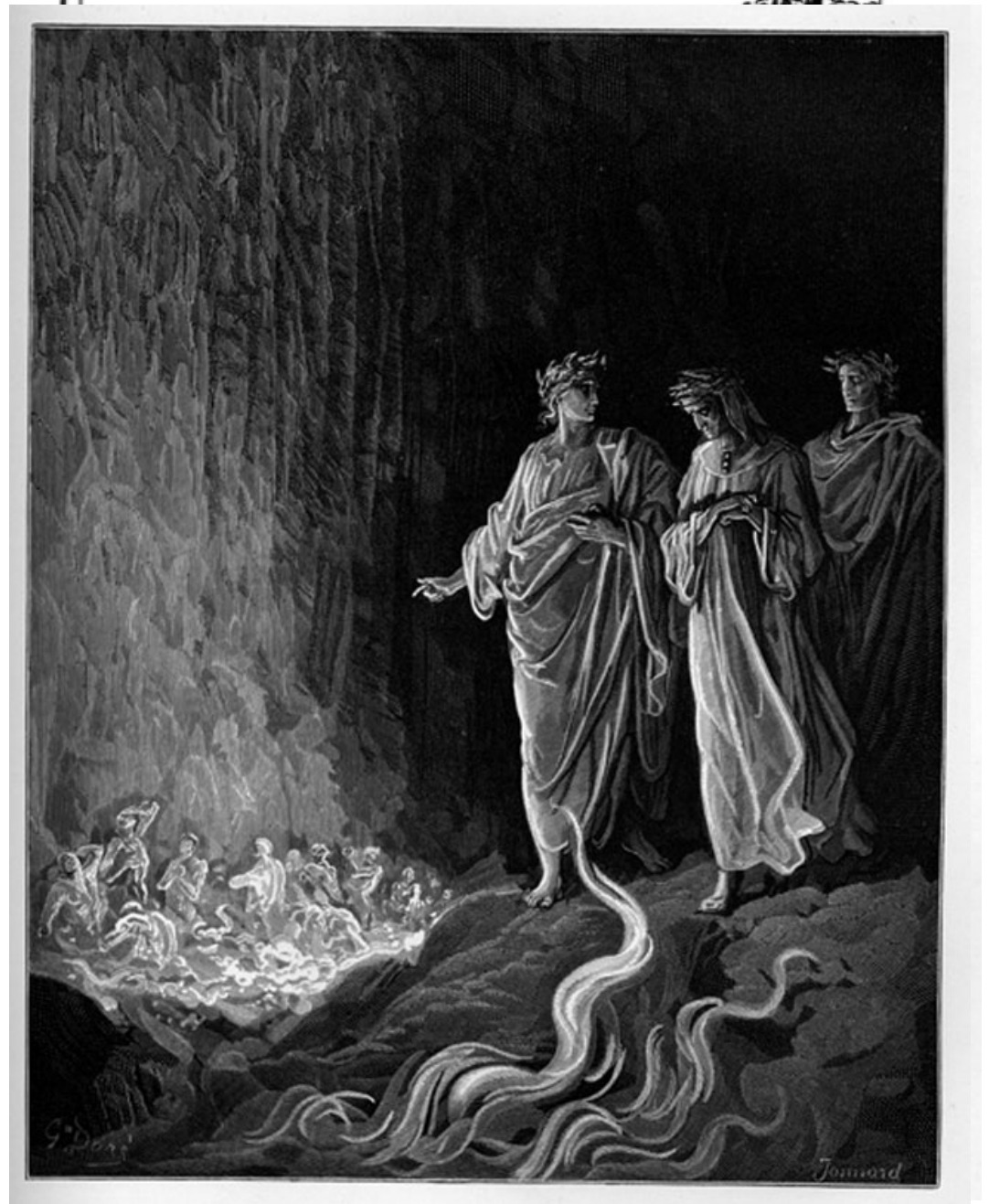


Purgatorio: XVII, XVIII, XXI, XXII

30 March 2020

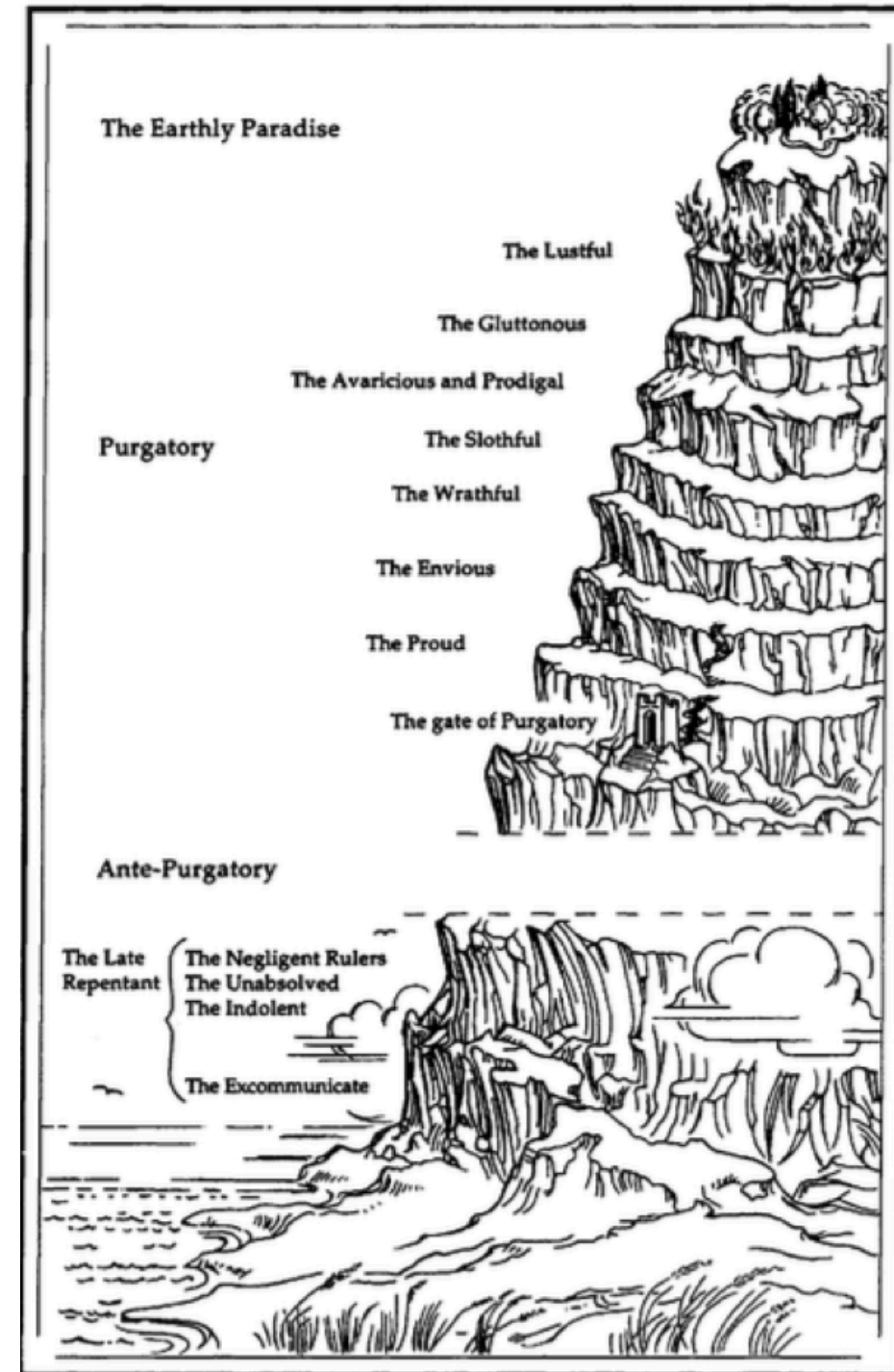
Progress

- Cantos XVII – XVIII (This week)
 - In Canto XVII, we find Dante just coming out of the terrace of the Wrathful
 - He and Virgil head into the terrace of the slothful
 - Discussion of Right Love
- Cantos XIX - XX
 - They enter the 5th terrace of the Avaricious and Prodigal
 - They meet Pope Adrian V
 - They experience an inexplicable earthquake
- Cantos XXI – XXII
 - They meet Statius
 - They arrive in the 6th terrace of the gluttonous
- Cantos XXIII – XXIV (The next reading)
 - They meet Bonagiunta (his prophecy)
 - The 'Sweet New Style' named and "Women who have intellect of love"
- Cantos XXV – XXVII
 - They arrive in the 7th terrace of the lustful
 - They pass through the wall of fire
 - Arrival at earthly paradise
 - The pilgrim is crowned and mitred



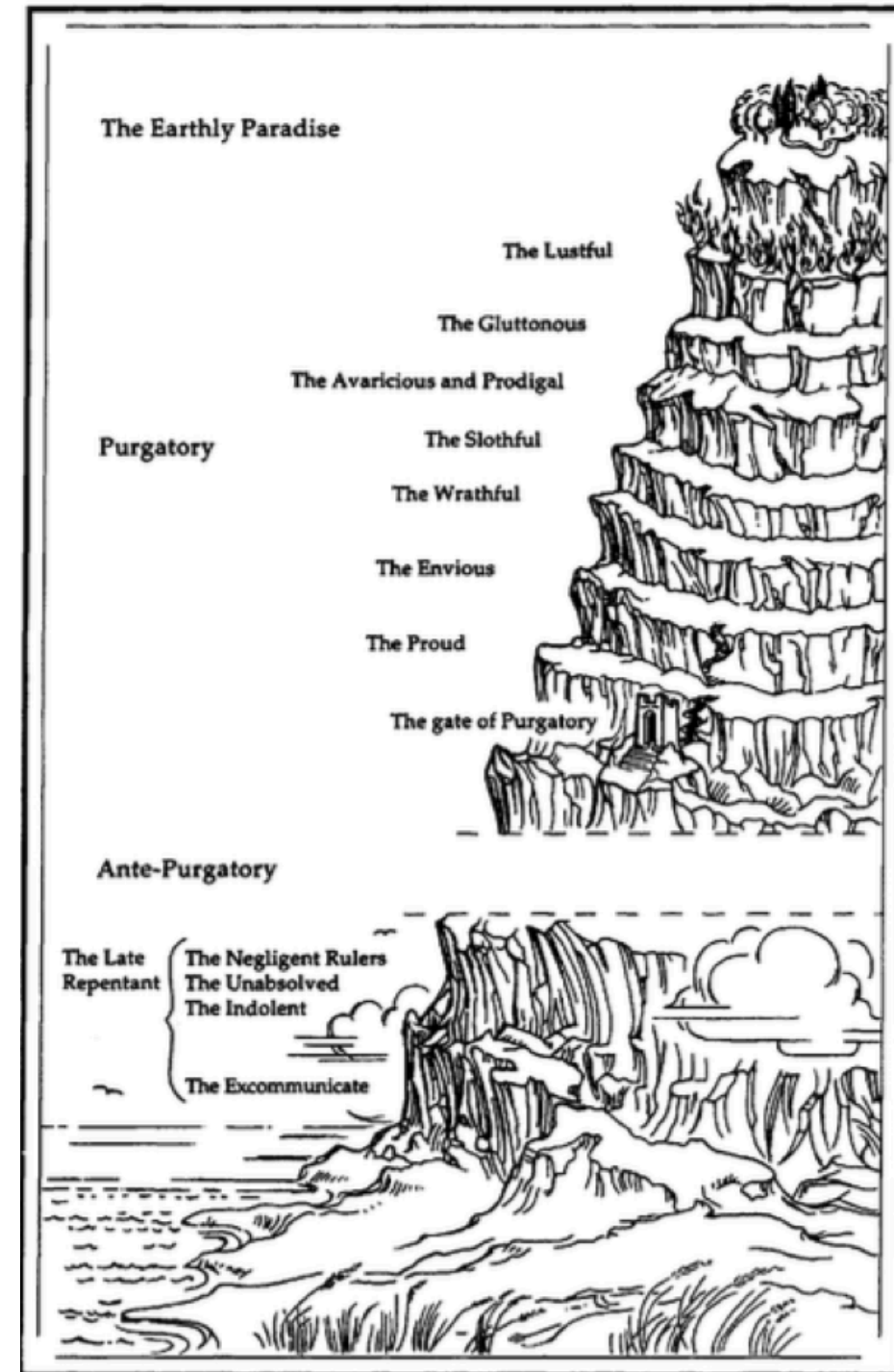
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Canto XXIV

Bonagiunta and the Pilgrim in conversation:

“But tell me if I see here the one who drew
Forth the new rhymes, beginning: ‘Ladies who
Have intellect of love’?

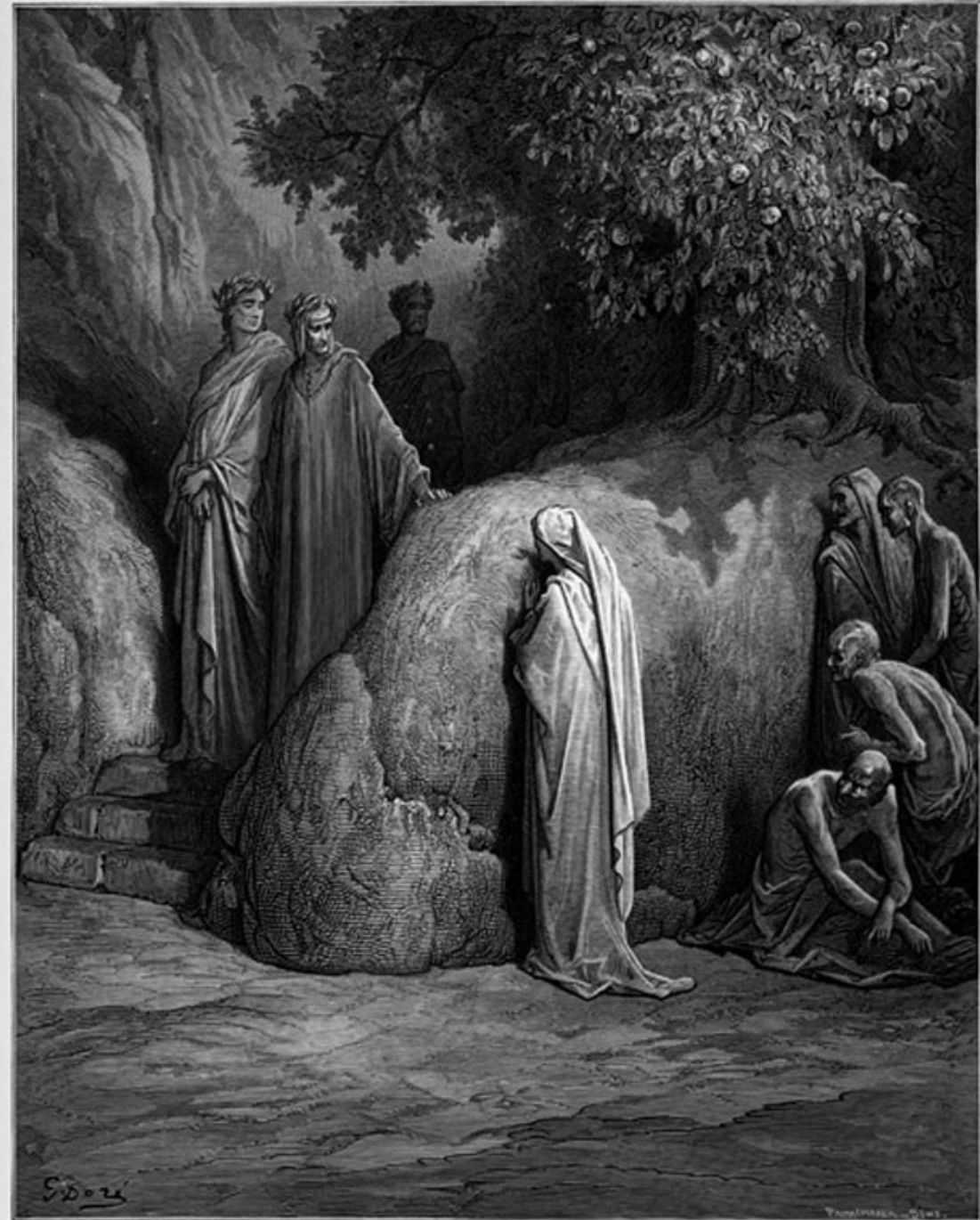
And I to him: ‘I in myself am one who, when
Love breathes within me, take note, and to that
Measure which he dictates within, I go signifying.’

“Oh my brother, now I see,” said he, “the knot
That held the Notary and Guittone and me back
On this side of the sweet new style I hear.

I see well how your **pens** follow close behind
Him who dictates.” (ll. 49-59)

“Donne ch’avete intelletto d’amore” is one of three canzoni (a type of poem) at the center of *Vita nova*. It is a major development in Dante’s poetry.

Pens is ‘*penne*’ in Italian meaning both pen and feathers.



Cantos XVII - XVIII

- The terrace of the slothful. What is the contrapasso?
- Group Discussion
 - Choose one formal aspect and one content aspect to highlight and discuss why you think each is central to these cantos and the entire *Commedia*.

Formal Elements

- Apostrophes
 - “How then I became frozen and feeble, do not ask, / reader, for I do not write it, and all speech would be / insufficient. I did not die and I did not remain alive: think / now for yourself, if you have wit at all, what I / became, deprived of both.” XXXIV 22-24
- Tropes of incommunicability
 - “How then I became frozen and feeble, do not ask, / reader, for I do not write it, and all speech would be / insufficient.” XXXIV 22-24
- Body metaphors
 - Mouths, chewing, devouring
 - The center of the universe is at Lucifer’s anus, Dante thus ‘exits’ through the anus in a body metaphor that to a large degree progresses from the head down through the body.
- City metaphors
 - The giants are like the towers of medieval towns where clans built their own towers for warfare and espionage
 - This is called ‘Dis’ again XXXIV 20
 - Dante names and criticizes many Tuscan cities in these cantos.
 - Montereccione, above all Pisa and Genoa
- The bridging of the Classical and the Biblical
 - We see the giants come from both traditions, Nimrod from the Old Testament, Ephialtes is the son of Neptune, Antaeus is from *Pharsalia*
 - We see that the three greatest sinners are a bridge. Judas, the worst, was a traitor to Jesus. Brutus and Cassius to Julius Caesar
- Bow and Arrows Imagery
- Sight and Understanding Imagery

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Cantos XVII - XVIII

- What is the central content discussion here?

Canto XVI (Canto L)

- Discussion of:
 - The power of the stars (free will)
 - The causes of earthly disorder
 - The corruption of the papacy
 - The decadence of Dante's time
 - The value of earlier examples of civic virtue
 - The role of rulers

Cantos XVII – XVIII: RIGHT LOVE

- Sloth is described by Virgil as “the love of good, falling short of what is right.” (85-86)
- There are two kinds of love: Natural and Elective
 - Natural love does not err and is connected to Divine Love.
 - You cannot love the First/God too much
 - Elective love is more problematic
 - You can err in judgment of *what* to love
 - You can err in judgment of *how much* to love
- Dante is designing an emotional cosmos in which Love is the seed of all feeling and action, good and evil.
 - “Love must be / the seed in you of every virtue and of every action / that deserves punishment.” XVII ll. 103-105
- Thus, love precedes evil in three ways, as Virgil sees it.

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Cantos XVII: RIGHT LOVE 1

- Thus, love precedes evil in three ways, as Virgil sees it.
 - “There are those who hope for supremacy / through their neighbor’s being kept down.” ll.115-6
 - PRIDE
 - “There are those who fear to lose power, favor, / honor, or fame because another mounts higher, / and thus are aggrieved that they love the contrary.” ll. 118-120
 - ENVY
 - “And there are those who seem so outraged by / injury that they become greedy for revenge, and / thus they must ready harm for others.” ll.121-123
 - WRATH
- “THIS TRIPLE LOVE IS WEPT FOR HERE BENEATH US.” ll. 124

Cantos XVII: RIGHT LOVE 1

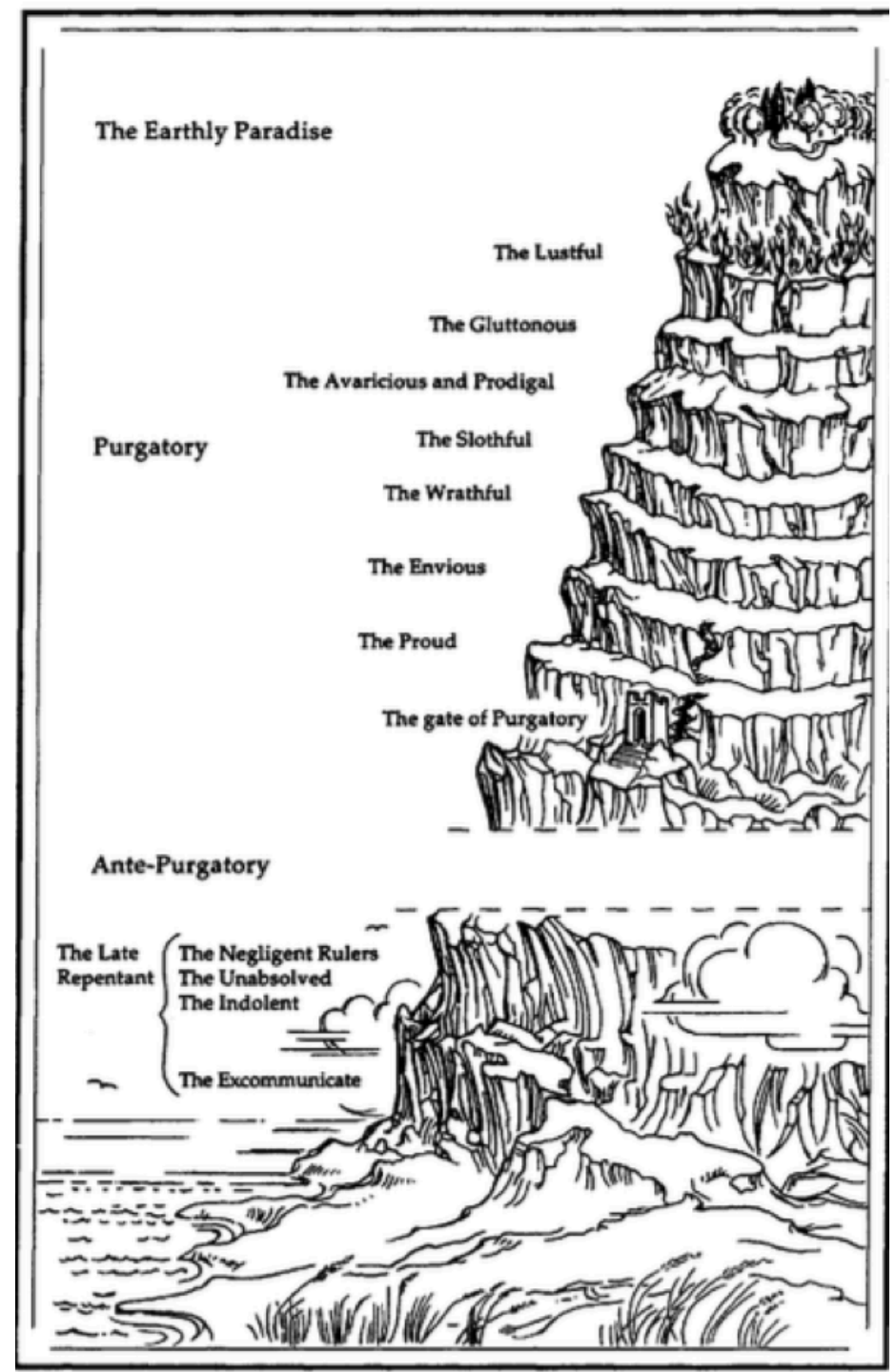
- “Other goods there are that do not make one / happy; they are not happiness [...] The love that abandons itself excessively to these / is bewailed above us in three circles; but how you must speak of it is tripartite, / **I do not say, that you may seek it out for yourself.**” ll. 133-139

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Cantos XVIII: RIGHT LOVE 2

- What do you find notable about the start of Canto XVIII?
 - “He was gazing attentively into my eyes to see...”
 - “Master, my sight becomes so keen in your light that I discern clearly...”
 - “Direct, he said, toward me the sharp eyes of your intellect and I will make manifest to you the error of the blind who claim to lead...”

Cantos XVIII: RIGHT LOVE 2

- What is the pilgrim's uncertainty in this canto?
- Why is this theme so important?
 - "I beg you, dear sweet father, expound love for me, to which you refer every good action and its contrary." ll.13-15
- Virgil says that the mind is created quick to love. l. 19
- But not every love is worthy of love:
 - "Now can appear to you how hidden the truth is / from the people who assert every love to be in / itself a praiseworthy thing." ll. 34-36

Cantos XVIII: RIGHT LOVE 2

- Dante-pilgrim asks if love comes to us from God, how can it 'walk straight or crooked' within us? (43-45)
- Virgil replies "As much as reason sees here, I / can tell you; beyond that, you must wait for / Beatrice, for that is a matter of faith." (46-48)
- But he goes on to say that we don't know where our first notions come from (55), and there is nothing wrong with the notion itself (59). What is important is your response to that first notion:
Innate in you is the power that
gives counsel and must guard the threshold of
assent.
This is the principle that accounts for the cause
Of merit in you, according as it accepts or winnows
Good or evil loves.
Those who reasoned things out to their
Foundations recognized this innate liberty; thus
They left morality to the world.
Therefore, supposing that every love kindled in
You arises by necessity, in you is the power to
restrain it.
This noble power Beatrice understands as free choice. ll. 62-74

CANTO XXI

- What is of note at the start of this canto?
- Who do they meet?
- What caused the earthquake?
- How/why is this new character important/meaningful?

CANTO XXI

The seeds of my ardor were the sparks from
Which I took fire, of the divine flame that has
Kindled more than a thousand:

Of the *Aeneid*, which was my mama and
Was my nurse in writing poetry: without it I did
Not make a dram of weight.

CANTO XXII

Virgil says: You know, your war-epics don't seem very Christian to me,
how'd you get here? ll. 55-63

Statius responds:

“You first sent me to Parnassus
To drink from its springs, and you first lit the way
For me toward God.

When you said: ‘The age begins anew; justice
Returns and the first human time, and a new
Offspring comes down from Heaven.’

Through you I became a poet, through you a Christian.” ll. 64-73

CANTO XXII

“They were walking ahead, and I all by myself
behind them, listening to their talk, which
instructed me in writing poetry.” 127-129

Dante and the classical poets

- What is important about the fact that Dante reads classical texts as 'historical'? Which text doesn't he read as historically true?
- What is different about how Dante-author uses the *Aeneid* in the *Inferno* and how he uses it in *Purgatorio*? What necessitates this different usage?
- Dante's poetry will overcome the classical vision of epic poetry, yet how are the limitations of Dante's poetry and his final vision in *Paradiso* ultimately the same as Virgil's soothsayer's?
- Cato is a pagan, a suicide, and Caesar's enemy. Give two reasons for which Dante-author saves him.
- How and why is the *Metamorphoses* treated differently?