

LITERATURE BY ERA

TEACHER'S MANUAL

J. Parnell McCarter

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The Puritans' Home School Curriculum

www.puritans.net

LITERATURE BY ERA
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SECTION ONE: COURSE INSTRUCTIONS

Purpose

This course provides students the opportunity to read literature by era in the period of history since Jesus Christ's First Advent.

Books Required

There are two books required of students for this course:

- *Literature by Era* (available free on-line at www.puritans.net)
- *Literature by Era Workbook for Students* (available free on-line at www.puritans.net)

Grade Calculation Tables

Grades for the course should be recorded on the grade calculation tables presented in this teacher's manual. Two alternative grading criteria are provided: one with and one without a grade for class participation.

Written Assignments

This course incorporates 15 written assignments. There will be written assignments assigned at each class.

Class Lecture Notes

This course includes 15 class lectures, which can be downloaded from the Westminster Covenant Academy section of www.puritans.net . Taking notes of class lectures is an important skill. Consequently, the lecture notes of students will be graded on their thoroughness and legibility.

Grading

The overall course grade is calculated based on weighted average scores of the course components, which should be recorded in the grade calculation tables.

SECTION TWO: COURSE GRADE CALCULATION

LITERATURE BY ERA GRADE CALCULATION TABLES

Student Name: _____

Teacher Name: _____

Period Course Taken: _____

Written Assignment Scores

ASSIGNMENT #	ASSIGNMENT SCORE (On 100-Point Scale)
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
Total of Scores on 15 Written Assignments	
Average Assignment Score (Total of Scores/15)	

Class Lecture Notes Scores

CLASS #	LECTURE NOTES SCORE (On 100-Point Scale)
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
Total of Scores of Lecture Notes for 15 Classes	
Average Score (Total of Scores/15)	

Course Grade Calculation Table

	SCORE	WEIGHT	WEIGHTED-AVERAGE SCORE
15 Written Assignments		65%	
Class Lecture Notes		35%	
<i>Course Grade on 100-Point Scale</i>			

Course Grade (Letter Grade Equivalent of Course Grade on 100-Point Scale): _____

Note: Grading in this course should be done on a 100-point scale, with letter grades assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Score on 100-Point Scale	Score on 4.0 Scale
A+	97 – 100	4.0
A	94 – 96	4.0
A-	90 – 93	4.0
B+	87 – 89	3.0
B	84 – 86	3.0
B-	80 – 83	3.0
C+	77 – 79	2.0
C	74 – 76	2.0
C-	70 – 73	2.0
D	60 – 69	1.0
F	0 – 59	0

In order to determine how many points each question in a test is worth, divide 100 by the number of questions in the test. For example, if there are 10 questions in a test, then each question is worth 10 points (= 100 / 10). So if a student got 9 out of the 10 questions right, then his test score is 90 (= 9 x 10) on a 100-point scale. His letter grade, according to the table above, would then be an A-. We supply in the above table the corresponding grade on a 4.0 scale.

LITERATURE BY ERA GRADE CALCULATION TABLES

Student Name: _____

Teacher Name: _____

Period Course Taken: _____

Written Assignment Scores

ASSIGNMENT #	ASSIGNMENT SCORE (On 100-Point Scale)
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
Total of Scores on 15 Written Assignments	
Average Assignment Score (Total of Scores/15)	

Class Participation Scores

CLASS #	PARTICIPATION SCORE (On 100-Point Scale)
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
Total of Scores in 15 Classes	
Average Score (Total of Scores/15)	

Class Lecture Notes Scores

CLASS #	LECTURE NOTES SCORE (On 100-Point Scale)
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
Total of Scores of Lecture Notes for 15 Classes	
Average Score (Total of Scores/15)	

Course Grade Calculation Table

	SCORE	WEIGHT	WEIGHTED-AVERAGE SCORE
15 Written Assignments		40%	
Class Participation		30%	
Class Lecture Notes		30%	
<i>Course Grade on 100-Point Scale</i>			

Course Grade (Letter Grade Equivalent of Course Grade on 100-Point Scale): _____

Note: Grading in this course should be done on a 100-point scale, with letter grades assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Score on 100-Point Scale	Score on 4.0 Scale
A+	97 – 100	4.0
A	94 – 96	4.0
A-	90 – 93	4.0
B+	87 – 89	3.0
B	84 – 86	3.0
B-	80 – 83	3.0
C+	77 – 79	2.0
C	74 – 76	2.0
C-	70 – 73	2.0
D	60 – 69	1.0
F	0 – 59	0

In order to determine how many points each question in a test is worth, divide 100 by the number of questions in the test. For example, if there are 10 questions in a test, then each question is worth 10 points (= 100 / 10). So if a student got 9 out of the 10 questions right, then his test score is 90 (= 9 x 10) on a 100-point scale. His letter grade, according to the table above, would then be an A-.

We supply in the above table the corresponding grade on a 4.0 scale.

SECTION THREE: ASSIGNMENT ANSWERS

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 1

1. The *Confessions* of Augustine is an auto-biography. What is an 'auto-biography'?
2. At the beginning of Book III of *Confessions* Augustine employs the metaphor of famine. Literally speaking, what is a famine?
3. But in this metaphor, what was Augustine starving for? God
4. Yet was Augustine at the time hungry for what he lacked? no
5. What was he instead hungry for, though it would not totally feed his soul, and what defiled him as a result of it? licentious, adulterous love
6. What else in Book III does Augustine say drew him away from the love he truly needed? stage-plays
7. Which book of Cicero had a profound effect on Augustine, turning him to seek divine wisdom? Hortensius
8. In Book IV Augustine tells about the affair he had out of wedlock. How does Augustine there contrast lawful marriage versus an illicit affair? Marriage is based on self-restraint, seeking issue of children, whereas illicit sex does not seek such.
9. While Augustine was a Manichee, who had the Manichees told him could answer his quandaries concerning Manicheism? Faustus
10. What assertion of the Manichees concerning the New Testament did Augustine begin to question? that the New Testament was corrupted by pro-Jewish elements
11. How does Augustine describe his mother in Book IV?
12. Under what bishop of Milan did Augustine become a catechumen in the Catholic Church? Ambrose
13. Why does Augustine say Christianity was more honest and unassuming than Manicheism? It forthrightly says one must believe things that cannot be demonstrated.
14. We read in Book VII of Augustine's being born again. To whom did he then embrace? Jesus the Mediator

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 2

1. What prominent features of Celtic Christianity can we discern from Patrick's "Morning Prayer"? belief in Trinity, monasticism
2. What is the theme of Patrick's "Morning Prayer"? Patrick's looking in the morning to the Trinitarian God to give him strength through the day
3. What is the effect of repeating the opening words of the poem at the end? for emphasis
4. Based upon his "Morning Prayer", does it appear Mariolatry was part of Patrick's religion? no

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 3

1. To whom does Bonaventure pray and long for in his “Prayer After Communion”?
Jesus

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 4

1. Why did Dante call his “Divine Comedy” a comedy? because it has a happy ending
2. What are the alleged 3 kingdoms of afterlife which Dante visited in his “Divine Comedy”? Inferno, Purgatory, Paradise
3. What was the metrical scheme of “Divine Comedy”? triplets with a rime concatenate scheme, each verse 11 syllables long
4. In Canto I, what description do we have of the appearance of Virgil when he first meets the narrator? not discernible whether a shade or a real man
5. Why did the narrator, in Canto I, not proceed immediately to Paradise? the panther was in his way
6. Why does Virgil say he could not guide the narrator into Paradise? because he was rebellious to God’s law

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 5

1. The characters presented in the Prologue of *The Canterbury Tales* represent a cross-section of medieval society. They represent a wide variety of medieval occupations, some of which are no longer common today. List the characters noted in the Prologue and define what each of the occupations means.
2. What is a character sketch? A portrait of a specific person
3. The Prologue of *The Canterbury Tales*, along with the Wife of Bath's Prologue and tale, provides us with a character sketch of the Wife of Bath. Write a one-paragraph essay describing the Wife of Bath, including her physical features, personality, beliefs and religious philosophy. She is deaf in one ear because one of her husbands smote her there.
4. What are some ways in which the prioress is satirized in the Prologue? she sings through her nose, her knowledge of French is deficient, she cries over the petty
5. What does the description of the monk, friar, and pardoner suggest about the spiritual state of the Church of the time? worldly
6. What does Chaucer's eulogy of the parson indicate about the attributes he admired? honesty, frugality, diligence, sincerity
7. What is a 'satire'? a genre of literature which combines criticism with humor
8. In what ways is *The Canterbury Tales* a satire? It satirizes much that was wrong in medieval life, such as the corruption of many officers in the Roman Catholic Church.
9. In the Prologue of *The Canterbury Tales*, how did the images Chaucer painted of the characters through words enhance his story of them?
10. In the Prologue of *The Canterbury Tales*, what do the Pardoner's relics suggest about the culture and religion of the times? It was very corrupted and often included a cynical use of religion for ill-gotten gain.
11. What game invented by the host of the Tabard Inn did the pilgrims on their way to Canterbury agree to? to each tell 2 stories coming and returning, and the one that told the best stories judged by the host would get a supper at the Tabard Inn paid by the others
12. In the Wife of Bath's Prologue, what does she say about the book "Against Jovinian", from which we had read earlier in this textbook? That one of her husbands would read from it regularly.
13. In the Friar's Prologue, what role does the host try to play in the dispute between the summoner and friar? peacemaker and arbiter
14. In the Summoner's Tale, what does it suggest is the motive for the friar's preaching? to bring in money
15. In the Summoner's Tale, why would the friar write people's names down who gave him food? to pretend to pray for them
16. In the Summoner's Tale, the friar responds angrily to the summoner's statement about what friars told those who gave them food. What did the summoner say friars told those who gave them food? mockeries and fables

17. In the Summoner's Tale, Thomas says to the friar that he has spent much money on friars to pray for his health, which is bad. How does Thomas say it has affected his health? It has not improved, despite the great outlay of money.
18. What did Thomas give the friar that made the friar so angry? a fart in his hand
19. How does the Summoner's Tale demonstrate the crudeness and cynicism then widespread in the culture? Because the tale dealt with a rather crude topic, and people viewed with cynicism much of the ministry of the Church.

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 6

1. Wycliffe, like Chaucer, wrote in Middle English. In several sentences, compare the Middle English of Chaucer (which you read in your medieval literature textbook), with the Middle English of Wycliffe.
2. Wycliffe's English language Bible, followed later in time by the King James' Version Bible, did much to standardize written English among the English-speaking people. The King James' Version Bible is written in what is called Modern English (although many people mistakenly think otherwise). In several sentences, compare the Middle English of Wycliffe, with the Modern English of the King James' Version Bible.
3. What did Wycliffe do to inaugurate the Reformation?

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 7

1. What role did Petrarch play in the Renaissance movement?
2. How many lines are there in Petrarch's poem, and what does that and other evidence suggest about the nature of the poem? 14 lines; it is sonnet
3. At this time in history, Italians were foremost of the Europeans in sea commerce. How does that perhaps affect Petrarch's poem?
4. In his poem, what do you think the voyage is symbolic of? Why?
5. What is a galley?
6. Why might the poem's narrator call his lord his enemy?
7. Scylla and Charybdis is an illusion to ancient Greek literature. What do they mean in Petrarch's poem?
8. What is the tone of the poem?
9. How does Petrarch employ imagery in the poem?
10. What is the theme of the poem? life as a difficult voyage of unfulfilled romance
11. The form of Italian sonnets typically consists of 1 octave (a major group of 8 lines) followed by the sestet (a minor group of six lines), whereas the English sonnet typically consists of 3 quatrains followed by a couplet. Does the poem follow the Italian or English form? Italian
12. What is a "double star", and what does Petrarch mean for it to symbolize in the poem?
13. What in the poem is said to shred the sail? mad desire, hope, heavy sighs
14. Sonnets often address romantic themes? Does this one?
15. What is unrequited love, and does it play a part in this poem? Yes, for it appears the narrator cannot find a woman
16. Does this poem reflect a Biblical Christian perspective on life? Why or why not? No. It does not look to God as provider, nor it satisfied with His providences. The chief end of the narrator does not seem to be that of glorifying God. And whenever that is not our chief end, then we often can be dissatisfied with our lot in life.

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 8

1. Martin Luther's 95 Theses were a reaction from and response to medieval Roman Catholicism. What do we learn about the Roman Catholicism of the time by reading these theses?
2. How do we know from reading the 95 Theses that they reflect a time in Luther's development before he had totally broken with Romanism? a number of the theses indicate Luther was still loyal to the Pope and still believed in purgatory
3. How are the 95 Theses testimony to the fact that reformation often comes in stages?

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 9

1. What is a pastoral lyric? Poetry that expresses emotions in an idyllic setting. It is related to the term "pasture," and is associated with shepherds writing music to their flocks. The tradition goes back to David in the Bible and Hesiod the Greek poet.
2. Is this poem a pastoral lyric? Why or why not?
3. What are the themes of this poem? The themes of the poem - *carpe diem* and the immediate gratification of their sexual passions.
4. What is the tone of the poem?
5. What is the metrical schema of the poem? It is composed in Iambic tetrameter (four feet of unstressed/stressed syllables), with six stanzas each composed of two rhyming couplets. It is often used for scholastic purposes because the poem is an good example of regular meter and rhythm. [quatrains (4 line stanzas) of iambic tetrameter (8 syllables per line, 4 measures per line with 2 syllables in each measure)]
6. What is the rhyme pattern in the poem?
6. How is the metrical schema consistent with the poem's themes?
7. How many stanzas are in the poem? 6
8. What is a quatrain? 4 line stanza
9. Is the perspective of this poem Biblical? Why or why not?
10. What does the term "passionate" in the title imply about the nature of the shepherd's love? "The use of "passionate" in the title suggests strong emotions, but may also refer to an ardent desire to possess the woman sexually, since there is never any declaration of love."
11. To what aspect of her personality does the shepherd appeal? sensual pleasures
12. There is a humanistic tradition that our problems are caused by having too many restrictions by society. If we could get away from these rules, we could return to a pristine condition of happiness. The "free love" movement of the 1960's was a modern manifestation of this utopian belief. If the nymph would go a-maying with the shepherd, they would have a perfect life. Is this realistic? Why or why not?
13. How is time presented in the poem? as static. "The poem is static in time, with no history or clearly defined future. Only the present matters. There is never any suggestion that the poet is asking the woman for a long-term commitment; there is no offer of marriage nor does he offer a long-term future together. Instead, he asks her to come and live with him and seek pleasure in the moment."
14. How does the poet use the setting of the poem to buttress the poem's theme? "The pastoral tradition is characterized by a state of contentment and of innocent and romantic love. Rural country folk are presented in an idealized natural setting, while they contemplate their perfect and peaceful world that is absent the worries and issues of crowded city life."
15. History suggests that the poet Marlowe lived a sexually licentious life. Do you think this is manifested in his poem? How?

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 10

1. In what ways does Raleigh's poem satirize Marlowe's poem?
2. How many stanzas are in this poem?
3. How does each stanza in Raleigh's poem respond to each stanza in Marlowe's poem?
4. At <http://www.enotes.com/passionate-shepherd/> we read: "Christopher Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" fits perfectly into the poetic genre of the period. Poets of the Elizabethan age used poetry as a way to express their wit and talent. It is likely that Marlowe's poem would have been passed around among his friends long before its publication in 1599 in England, six years after the poet's death. Few Elizabethan poets published their own work, especially one as young as Marlowe, and so it is fairly certain that the poem was well-known long before its publication. The composition date is thought to be about 1588, and probably it generated many responses well before its publication nearly a dozen years later. Among these responses was Sir Walter Raleigh's "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd" (date unknown, but thought to be about 1592), which provides the woman's response to Marlowe's shepherd. What do you think motivated Raleigh to compose this poetic response?
5. Marlowe had used nature to buttress his theme. How does Raleigh use nature to buttress his theme? The feminine persona (the nymph) of the poem sets up a hypothetical set of questions that undermine the intelligence of the man's offer because all that he offers is transitory. She reverses his images into negative ones:
 - rocks grow cold
 - fields yield to the harvest
 - the flocks are driven to fold in winter
 - rivers rage
 - birds complain of winter (a reference to the story of Philomela who was raped and turned into a nightingale).
6. Someone has written: "Raleigh combines *carpe diem* with *tempus fugit* in an unusual way. Normally we should seize the day because time flies. Raleigh argues that because time flies, we should NOT seize the day." How so?
7. Would Raleigh see society and societal norms as spoiling love and pleasure? "Raleigh argues that it is not society that taints sexual love. We are already tainted before we enter society. There will be consequences to their roll in the grass. Time does not stand still; winter inevitably follows the spring; therefore, we cannot act on impulses until we have examined the consequences."
8. What is the metrical schema of this poem? How does it compare with Marlowe's? This poem by Sir Walter Raleigh uses the same meter and references to present "mirror images" of Marlowe's poem.
9. What does Raleigh suggest about the advisability of "free love in the grass"? "Free love in the grass is impossible now because the world is not in some eternal spring. The seasons pass, as does time. Nymphs grow old, and shepherds grow cold."

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 11

1. In Act I, scene 1 provides the background for the plot of the play. Why do you think Shakespeare chose to do it in this way?
2. It is against the law of nature (as well as the law revealed in the Bible) to marry the sibling of one's deceased spouse. How is this law pertinent in the plot of *Hamlet*, and why would it have been such a poignant issue in mind of an English audience? Hamlet's mother has married his uncle, following the untimely death of Hamlet's father.
3. Why do you think Shakespeare chose Wittenberg as the site for the university where Hamlet and Horatio were students?
4. Why do you think Shakespeare incorporated in his plays ghosts and witches?
5. What do you think of Lord Polonius' parting advice to his son Laertes, as Laertes is leaving for France?
6. As a playwright, Shakespeare sought to justify his craft in an age when Puritans were opposed to the theater and showed from scripture its unlawfulness. How did Shakespeare's use of a play within a play in *Hamlet* serve his end, and what does it say about Shakespeare's perspective on the theater?
7. What is the debate within Hamlet's mind, voiced in his famous "to be or not to be" soliloquy? whether to commit suicide or not

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 12

1. Write an essay describing how a character in *Macbeth* struggles to gain power and its effect on other characters in the drama.
2. What is meant by the line “fair is foul, and foul is fair” in Act I, Scene I, and how does it support the overall theme of the play?
3. What should we think of actors playing the role of witches or murderers in a play like *The Tragedy of Macbeth*? Which Bible verses support your conclusion?
4. A central question in *The Tragedy of Macbeth* is whether human society is fundamentally amoral, dog-eat-dog. How do you think this question is resolved in the play?
5. Which characters in the play seem to regard life as amoral, and which do not? *Macbeth* believes human life itself is meaningless and tiresome and amoral. In contrast to this are: King Edward's ministry, Malcolm's clean living, the dignified death of the contrite traitor, and the doctor's prescription for pastoral care.
6. Probably composed in late 1606 or early 1607, *Macbeth* is the last of Shakespeare's four great tragedies, the others being *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *Othello*. It is a relatively short play without a major subplot, and it is considered by many scholars to be Shakespeare's darkest work. Why do you think it is regarded as such a dark work?
7. What role does nature play in *The Tragedy of Macbeth*? (*Lear* is an utter tragedy in which the natural world is amorally indifferent toward mankind, but in *Macbeth*, Shakespeare adds a supernatural dimension that purposively conspires against Macbeth and his kingdom. In the tragedy of *Lear*, the distraught king summons the goddess of Chaos, Hecht; in *Macbeth*, Hecate appears as an actual character.)
8. Do you think Lady Macbeth is portrayed sympathetically or unsympathetically? On the level of human evil, Shakespeare's Scottish tragedy is about Macbeth's bloody rise to power, including the murder of the Scottish king, Duncan, and the guilt-ridden pathology of evil deeds generating still more evil deeds. As an integral part of this thematic web is the play's most memorable character, Lady Macbeth. Like her husband, Lady Macbeth's ambition for power leads her into an unnatural, phantasmagoric realm of witchcraft, insomnia and madness. But while Macbeth responds to the prophecies of the play's famous trio of witches, Lady Macbeth goes even further by figuratively transforming herself into an unnatural, desexualized evil spirit. The current trend of humanist critical opinion is toward an upward reevaluation of Lady Macbeth, who is said to be rehumanized by her insanity and her suicide. Much of this reappraisal of Lady Macbeth has taken place in discussions of her ironically strong marriage to Macbeth, a union that rests on loving bonds but undergoes disintegration as the tragedy unfolds. Considered Biblically, Lady Macbeth is a very wicked lady.
9. Often we can be disappointed with what we placed our trust in. Compose a paragraph showing from the play a character who was deceived by what he had placed his trust in.
10. A bad conscience can destroy someone. How did it destroy Lady MacBeth?

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 13

1. In Sonnet 18, how does Shakespeare employ imagery to describe the one he loves?
2. What aspects of summer does the poet admire?
3. What is the meter of the poem?
4. Why do you think the poet chose the sonnet form for this poem?
5. What two things are compared in the poem? summer and “thee”
6. What aspects of summer does the poet disdain? its temporality
7. Which term in the poem marks the pivot point of the comparison?
8. What is personified in line 11? Death
9. What does “this” in line 14 refer to?

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 14

1. Sermons expositing scripture texts were a central feature of the Protestant Reformation. Why so?
2. In his sermon, Mr. Sibbes notes two general purposes of the prophet Isaiah in the sermon text. What are the two purposes he cites? comfort and how to worship God
3. Every piece of literature has within it certain assumptions that the writer holds true even if not expressly stated. What are some of those assumptions of Mr. Sibbes' sermon? the Bible is the infallible word of God and foundation of all knowledge
4. The assumptions commonly held during the Reformation era in the Protestant nations were by and large rejected in the modern era. What do you think led to this rejection?
5. Based on the sermon, how would you characterize Sibbes' view of God?
6. Based on the sermon, how would you characterize Sibbes' view of man?
7. The sermon mentions the active and passive obedience of Christ. How are these defined in the sermon? Christ did what we should have done and He suffered for us.
8. A central feature of the Protestant Reformation was rejection of Romish errors which had become accepted during the medieval era. What are some of these errors specifically denounced in the sermon? other mediators, other foundations, the idolatrous Mass
9. The issue of assurance of salvation was one which the Puritans wrestled much with. What does Mr. Sibbes say about it in his sermon?
10. Mr. Sibbes explains how the elect's condition in Christ is better than Adam's was. How so? We can depend on Christ's righteousness.
11. To what does Mr. Sibbes attribute the reason why Christ did not come with more pomp into the world in His First Advent? to perform what He needed to do to redeem His people as a lowly servant
12. What lessons ought we learn from Christ's coming in humility into the world? ourselves to be humble

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 15

1. Common characteristics of Puritan sermons include: exposition of a scripture text; a focus upon Jesus Christ and His exceeding beauty and grace; calling of hearers to embrace the gospel of grace alone through faith alone, realizing their own depravity; and application of the text to the life of believers, showing how they ought to live in the light of God's revealed word. Show how each of these elements is present in Flavel's sermon.
2. How does Flavel give a brief polemical rebuke to Judaism? By noting how Messiah was to visit the second temple, but the second temple has already been destroyed.
3. How does Flavel's Calvinism show through in his sermon? He speaks of the elect who desire Christ, and how Christ died for them alone.
4. How does Flavel believe the term "nations" should be understood in the phrase "the desire of all nations"?
5. Briefly summarize how Flavel answers this question: upon what account does Christ become the desire of all nations?
6. Sketch an outline of the sermon.
7. How does Flavel press the conscience of England as a nation to act in applied response?
8. Puritan sermons were typically soul-searching. How does Flavel press the consciences of individual believers in the sermon?
9. What concluding advice does Flavel offer in his sermon for those whose hearts are cold in their desire for Christ?

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 16

1. How does the poet use literary techniques like imagery, metrical scheme, and syntax to reveal the poet's attitudes?

“Ballad - like four-line stanzas help to create the gently, slowly moving "feel" of the poem. The rhyme scheme is consistent and predictable all the way through, as well. The "mood" of this poem is in direct contrast to that of "[The Apparition](#)", which is very much "raw emotion". Here there is emotion, but it is confined to the "layette"-the ordinary lovers who cannot stand parting. “

2. What is a quatrain? 4-line stanza

3. Of how many quatrains does this poem consist? 9

4. At the beginning of the poem, in the first two quatrains, Donne teaches a didactic lesson by way of a comparison and analogy. What are the two things compared? At the beginning of "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning," the poet, John Donne, engages in a didactic lesson to show the parallel between a positive way to meet death and a positive way to separate from a lover. When a virtuous man dies, he whispers for his soul to go while others await his parting. Such a man sets an example for lovers. The separation of the soul from the body, and the separation of lovers from each other, is not an ending but the beginning of a new cycle.

5. What is the didactic lesson in these two quatrains? At the beginning of "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning," the poet, John Donne, engages in a didactic lesson to show the parallel between a positive way to meet death and a positive way to separate from a lover. When a virtuous man dies, he whispers for his soul to go while others await his parting. Such a man sets an example for lovers. The separation of the soul from the body, and the separation of lovers from each other, is not an ending but the beginning of a new cycle.

6. In poetry, what is a conceit? an elaborate, fanciful metaphor, esp. of a strained or far-fetched nature

7. Do you think Donne employs any conceits in his poem? If so, provide examples.

“The speaker in the poem is unique in that he does not compare the perfection of his love to a traditional object such as a rock or a fortress; instead he chooses to compare the twin legs of a compass to the lovers' sense of union during absence (ll. 25-36). Such a comparison would be called metaphysical according to Gardner, who states that a metaphysical conceit must concern two things so dissimilar that we "feel an incongruity" (19). Here, the poet must then proceed to persuade the reader that these things are alike in spite of their apparent differences (19-22).”

8. What is a valediction, and why do you think Donne entitled his poem a valediction? an act of bidding farewell; because in it a lover is bidding temporary farewell to his beloved

9. Describe the speaker of this poem, based upon what can be deduced from the poem.

10. Describe the listener of this poem, based upon what can be deduced from the poem.

11. It is probable that Donne wrote this poem for his wife, Ann Donne, and gave it to her before leaving to go abroad in 1611. At the time, Ann was sick and pregnant, and

apparently protested being left behind as her husband began a European tour with his friend, Sir Robert Drury. How is that biographical information consistent with what we find in the poem, and how does it affect your interpretation of it?

12. In the second quatrain, why do you think the poet uses the term 'melt' in the context? The word "melt" implies a change in physical state. The bond of the lovers will dissolve quietly like the soul of a dying man separating from his body.

13. In the second quatrain, why do you think the poet refers to others as "the laity", and how does this tie in with his use of the term "profanation"? to emphasize the sanctity of their state and bond of love in comparison to that about them.

14. In the poem Donne compares the love relationship to natural phenomena. What are some examples of this in the second and third quatrains? "The poem begins with a metaphysical comparison between virtuous dying men whispering to their souls to leave their bodies and two lovers saying goodbye before a journey. The poet says, "Let us melt and make no noise.... 'Twere profanation of our joys/ To tell the laity of our love" (ll. 5-8). The word "melt" implies a change in physical state. The bond of the lovers will dissolve quietly like the soul of a dying man separating from his body. "Noise" refers to "tear floods" and "sigh tempests" that the speaker implores his love not to release (l. 6).

He continues by comparing natural phenomena to a love relationship, the "sigh tempests" relating to the element of air, and the "tear floods" to the element of water. He uses this hyperbole to demand that his lover remain stoic and resist any show of emotion upon his departure (ll. 4-8).

Next, the element of earth is introduced. Earthquakes are perceived by everyone, and people often interpret them as omens of misfortune. It is understandable that an earthquake would be looked upon with fear because of its potential to ravage the land; whereas a trepidation affecting a celestial sphere would be viewed in a different light, especially one that is imperceptible and has no apparent meaning for the average person (Donne 444: 159 l. 11)."

15. In the third stanza the speaker presents a contrast between an earthquake and the "trepidation of the spheres" (according to the classic astronomical theory that the heavenly bodies were spherical and traveled in circles). What is the point of the contrast, as suggested in the fourth and fifth stanzas? to suggest that more earthly lovers would have problems with such a thing as being apart, but that their more celestial relationship was above such

16. In quatrain six, Donne echoes a view of marriage found in the first several chapters of Genesis. What is that view? the "two souls" of the lovers are joined together as one

17. How does Donne attempt to use that view of marriage to bolster his own argument?

He describes separation as a stretching exercise in which the joined soul of the lovers is gold beat to an "airy thinness" (l. 24). According to Pinka, the comparison is "beautiful and pure" but "fragile" since there is "expansion without increase" (142). The "airy thinness" emphasizes the stretching of the lovers' resources, in that the love continues to exist, but its strength is weakened by the circumstances. He urges the lover to look at the separation in a positive light, but he sends out undertones suggesting that he is aware of the fragility of the situation.

18. The poetic speaker, in the closing argument of his poem, changes his symbol of perfection from the sphere to the circle. In the Ptolemaic Universe, which was the model long held, the universe consists of perfect spheres and perfect circular orbits. Using the

circle, what is the closing argument of the poet? “According to Freccero, "No matter how far Donne roams his thoughts will revolve around his love.... At the end of the circle, body and soul are one" (283). In Donne's "Valediction," the human souls are described in the context of a joint soul that is stretched by the separation, or two souls joined within a circle of spiritual strength. Donne once stated in an elegy, "...perfect motions are all circular."⁵ The circle in the "Valediction" represents the journey during which two lovers endure the trial of separation, as they support each other spiritually, and eventually merge in a physically and spiritually perfect union.”

<http://www.luminarium.org/sevenlit/cavanaugh.htm>

The Circle of Souls in John Donne's *A Valediction Forbidding Mourning*

by Cynthia A. Cavanaugh

At the beginning of "[A Valediction Forbidding Mourning](#)," the poet, John Donne, engages in a didactic lesson to show the parallel between a positive way to meet death and a positive way to separate from a lover. When a virtuous man dies, he whispers for his soul to go while others await his parting. Such a man sets an example for lovers. The separation of the soul from the body, and the separation of lovers from each other, is not an ending but the beginning of a new cycle. The poem ends with the image of a circle, the symbol of perfection (Hall's 69, 297), representing the union of souls in a love relationship. This perfection is attained by parting at the beginning of the circle and reuniting at the point where the curves reconnect.

According to Helen Gardner, the metaphysical poem takes the reader down a certain path, a fixed line of argumentation (17). This valediction, an act of bidding farewell, proceeds in the guise of a monologue in which a speaker attempts to persuade a lover to remain faithful during his absence. The monologue is dramatic in the sense that the stay-behind lover is the implied listener. Donne's monologue is unique because he uses metaphysical comparisons to show the union of the lovers during their period of separation.

Although the poem attempts to persuade the lover as an implied listener, it also speaks indirectly to the reader who is drawn into the argument. The speaker's argument is supported by an implied reference to the authority of Greek philosophers and astronomers. According to Patricia Pinka, this use of esteemed authority to justify a view about love is a common unifying element throughout many of Donne's *Songs and Sonnets* (50).

It is probable that Donne wrote this poem for his wife, Ann Donne, and gave it to her before leaving to go abroad in 1611. Ann, sick and pregnant at the time, protested being left behind as her husband began a European tour with his friend, Sir Robert Drury (Parker 56).

The poem begins with a metaphysical comparison between virtuous dying men

whispering to their souls to leave their bodies and two lovers saying goodbye before a journey. The poet says, "Let us melt and make no noise.... 'Twere profanation of our joys/ To tell the laity of our love" (ll. 5-8). The word "melt" implies a change in physical state. The bond of the lovers will dissolve quietly like the soul of a dying man separating from his body. "Noise" refers to "tear floods" and "sigh tempests" that the speaker implores his love not to release (l. 6).

He continues by comparing natural phenomena to a love relationship, the "sigh tempests" relating to the element of air, and the "tear floods" to the element of water. He uses this hyperbole to demand that his lover remain stoic and resist any show of emotion upon his departure (ll. 4-8).

Next, the element of earth is introduced. Earthquakes are perceived by everyone, and people often interpret them as omens of misfortune. It is understandable that an earthquake would be looked upon with fear because of its potential to ravage the land; whereas a trepidation affecting a celestial sphere would be viewed in a different light, especially one that is imperceptible and has no apparent meaning for the average person (Donne 444: 159 l. 11).¹

In order to understand the meaning of the third quatrain in the poem, it is necessary to consider the Ptolemaic Universe and the symbolism of the sphere. During the Middle Ages and the Elizabethan Age, the circle and sphere were looked upon as perfect shapes. The main influence behind that thinking may have been Greek philosophers such as Aristotle, who believed that since, "The motion of the celestial bodies is not straight and finite, but circular, invariable and eternal. So they themselves must be eternal, unalterable, divine" (Pannekoek 115).

The well-educated Donne, 1572-1631, certainly studied famous Greek thinkers such as Aristotle and Ptolemy, and their views concerning the universe. Donne lived during a time when many people accepted the Ptolemaic theory of the universe, which held that the spherical planets orbited the earth in concentric circles called deferents.² Writing this poem in 1611, Donne would most likely be influenced by his previous classical studies, and he chose to use the circle and the sphere to represent a perfect relationship based on reason and harmony.

The "trepidation of the spheres" is another obsolete astronomical theory, used to support the speaker's point that great changes in the heavens may be imperceptible to the layman. (ll.11-12). The speaker presents this comparison between the earthquake and the "trepidation of the spheres" to suggest that matters beyond one's control should be approached rationally.

In quatrains four and five, the speaker urges his love to remain stoic by making any change in their relationship as imperceptible to others as the "trepidation of the spheres," and again, he uses terms from astronomy to illustrate his point. The term "sublunary" refers to the surface below the moon. According to the Greek astronomers, this sublunary area, composed of the four elements, was imperfect. The sphere's surface, composed of quinta essentia, the perfect part, radiates light and heat (Pannekoek 115).

The dull sublunary lovers (l. 13) are imperfect human beings who do not practice mature love. The soul of their love is "sense" (l. 14), so they need physical contact to cement their relationship. However, the speaker suggests that reason can free itself from any connection with a sensory experience. Therefore, the lovers with fully developed souls "Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss" (l. 20), having developed rational souls,

the third part of the Aristotelian model for the human soul, consisting of vegetative, sense and rational parts. (Copleston, 328).

In quatrain six, Donne echoes the traditional marriage ceremony in which two become one, so the "two souls" of the lovers are joined together. He describes separation as a stretching exercise in which the joined soul of the lovers is gold beat to an "airy thinness" (l. 24). According to Pinka, the comparison is "beautiful and pure" but "fragile" since there is "expansion without increase" (142). The "airy thinness" emphasizes the stretching of the lovers' resources, in that the love continues to exist, but its strength is weakened by the circumstances. He urges the lover to look at the separation in a positive light, but he sends out undertones suggesting that he is aware of the fragility of the situation.³

The speaker then begins his closing argument, in which he changes his symbol of perfection from the sphere to the circle. One might argue that the circle and the sphere are slightly different objects and should not be considered one and the same; however, the Ptolemaic Universe consisted of both perfect spheres and perfect circular orbits, and so the concept of circle and sphere both represented perfection. Poets and songwriters have often used sphere and circle symbolism. One such work, *The Divine Comedy*, written in three books: the *Inferno*, the *Purgatorio*, and the *Paradiso* by Dante Alighieri, still remains well-known today.

In Dante Alighieri's *Paradiso*, a story of a pilgrim journeying through Paradise, Dante sees nine concentric circles in the eyes of Beatrice, his guide. Beatrice explains to him that each of nine circles represents an angelic order. The brightest circles are in the center nearest to God and represent the highest order of angels and the greatest good. According to Beatrice, each circle also corresponds to one of the nine spherical heavens consisting of the five planets, the sun, the moon, the fixed stars, and the Prime Mover.⁴

It does not seem unusual for Donne to include both the sphere and the circle in his poetry as symbols of perfection, since other writers had linked the circle and the sphere together in various ways throughout the history of science and literature.

The speaker in the poem is unique in that he does not compare the perfection of his love to a traditional object such as a rock or a fortress; instead he chooses to compare the twin legs of a compass to the lovers' sense of union during absence (ll. 25-36). Such a comparison would be called metaphysical according to Gardner, who states that a metaphysical conceit must concern two things so dissimilar that we "feel an incongruity" (19). Here, the poet must then proceed to persuade the reader that these things are alike in spite of their apparent differences (19-22).

The speaker proves the point by drawing the circle with the compass. The lover who stays behind is the fixed point, and the speaker is the other leg of the instrument. Without the "firmness" of the fixed point, he would be unable to complete the journey and make the circle just (precise). The adverb "obliquely" (l. 34) may have several different meanings. John Freccero supports the interpretation that obliquely means a spiral motion, referred to by the Neoplatonic tradition as a movement of the soul (286-87). Obliquely may also indicate a slant. Either the drawing instrument can be interpreted to move in a spiral, or the motion may refer to the second foot's tilted position in relation to the fixed one in the center. Such a position would be required during the drawing of a circle.

According to Freccero, "No matter how far Donne roams his thoughts will revolve around his love.... At the end of the circle, body and soul are one" (283). In Donne's

"Valediction," the human souls are described in the context of a joint soul that is stretched by the separation, or two souls joined within a circle of spiritual strength. Donne once stated in an elegy, "...perfect motions are all circular."⁵ The circle in the "Valediction" represents the journey during which two lovers endure the trial of separation, as they support each other spiritually, and eventually merge in a physically and spiritually perfect union.

<http://lardcave.net/tig/hsc/2eng-donne-valediction-comments.html>

Glossary

Valediction - a farewell, but a stronger meaning than that: Valedictions for people are read at funerals, etc, and ties in with the first stanza.

Prophanation - sacrilegious

Laytie - common people. Also has religious connotations; see below.

Trepidation - movement. Also implies cautious, silent movement. Also implies an irregularity of movement.

Elemented - instigated, started, constructed. Also ties in with the other "element" imagery in the poem; see below.

Overall Explanation

This is a "classic" Donne poem. In it, he shows off his vast knowledge of everything from alchemy to astronomy, and puts his most famous technique, the conceit, to great use. There is a rumor that this poem was written by Donne to his wife, before he went away on a long holiday with his friends, leaving her at home. It is impossible to prove, and doesn't really matter. I will, however, refer to the two characters in the poem as Donne and his wife in these comments.

Donne's basic argument was that most people's relationships are built on purely sensual things - if they are not together at all times, the relationship breaks down. Donne asserts that the love between him and his wife is different - it is not a purely sensual relationship, but something deeper, a "love of the mind" rather than a "love of the body". This love, he says, can endure even though sometimes the lovers cannot be close to each other at all times.

Donne uses some very evocative imagery in this poem. First of all, the parting of two lovers like Donne and his wife is likened to the death of a virtuous man. As a virtuous man dies, he knows that he has reconciled himself to God and will therefore be accepted into heaven. Thus he dies in peace and calm, and the people surrounding him at his deathbed are sad, but not anguished. In the same way, when two virtuous lovers part, there is no pain, because they know that each will be true to the other, even when they are apart. The people surrounding the dying man are quiet partly so as not to disturb him - in the same way, Donne says that too much outward show of emotion on the part of one lover would just disturb the other.

Donne is then very disparaging of the love of the rest of the population. The wails and screams and tears that "ordinary" lovers display when they must part is shown to be simply an act, with no real emotion in it.

The lovers are then likened to planetary bodies. In such a way, Donne places them above the "mortal earth". Unlike natural disasters, which are unpredictable and chaotic, the movement of the planets is peaceful and calm, even though the planets move much further.

Donne's most famous conceit is then introduced. The two lovers are likened to the two points of a compass. At first this seems ridiculous, but Donne shows how it makes sense. The idea of the wife staying and minding the house while the husband goes away is old-fashioned now, but we can still comprehend it. There is a lot more explanation of the "compass" conceit below.

Poetic Devices

- Ballad - like four-line stanzas help to create the gently, slowly moving "feel" of the poem. The rhyme scheme is consistent and predictable all the way through, as well. The "mood" of this poem is in direct contrast to that of "[The Apparition](#)", which is very much "raw emotion". Here there is emotion, but it is confined to the "layetie"-the ordinary lovers who cannot stand parting.
- Conceits used:
 - Donne and wife > celestial bodies > the points of a compass.
 - The wedding ring > the path of a planet > the alchemical symbol for gold > the path traced out by a compass
 - The emotions of the common people > earthquakes and tempests

Imagery / References to Donne's learning

- The circle
 - Marriage ring
 - Path of the planets (*Trepidation of the spheres*)
 - Alchemical symbol for gold was a circle with a point in the centre
 - Path described by a compass.
- Very broad range of knowledge displayed:
 - Planetary *trepidation*
 - Earthquakes, the love of "sublunary lovers"
 - Properties of gold - Gold is very **malleable** which means it can be beaten to *avery thinnesse*. The symbolism of gold is very important, as it is also the most precious of all the metals. It is also the **least reactive** of all metals, which ties in with Donne's placing of the lovers above the emotional *layetie*. In terms of alchemy, gold is also the most noble metal, and the most difficult to destroy.
 - Compass imagery and use.

Generally

There is a lot to learn in this poem, so take it slowly...

- The two lovers are their own self-sustaining universe. They have no need of anyone else, as they are made perfect by their perfect love.

- The compass and the circle together formed the Renaissance symbol for eternal perfection.
- The first stanza, along with the standard rhyme scheme and structure already mentioned, contains a lot of sibilants [words beginning with "s"] to create a soft, gentle atmosphere. EG *some of their sad friends, whisper to their souls*.
- *Prophanation of our joyes... layetie our love* - The use of "prophanation" and "layetie" elevates the lovers to the status of a superior priesthood. Ties in with the idea of the lovers as planets being above the Earth, and the purity of gold being superior to impure emotions.
- (*Whose soule is sense*) - the brackets here indicate casuality: other people's love is really of no importance to Donne.
- *A love, so much refin'd*. "refin'd" here implies pure love, but it also ties in with the "pure element" (gold) imagery that Donne uses throughout the poem. Also the pure "substance", water, is used obliquely: the imagery evoked by *so let us melt*, for example, is that of one substance slowly becoming two. This image is evoked again in Stanza 5 with *Inter-assured of the mind*.
- *Endure not yet / A breach...* - there is some confusion over the word "yet", which seems to imply that eventually there will be a breach. Perhaps this relates to the title and the first stanza, and implies that the only way the lovers can be parted is by death.
- *And growes erect, as it comes home...* - not only does this tie in with the imagery of the compass closing and the two points coming together, but the use of "erect" also implies the emotional buildup of expectation and joy when the two lovers are together again. Since he is quick to denounce the obsession of the *layetie* with "sense", there is probably no implied sexual connotation.
- Double meanings abound. Take the lines *Thy firmnesse makes my circle just, / And makes me end, where I begunne..* Here the compass is doing two different things, and both have significance. "End where I begunne" implies the completion of a circle as drawn by a compass; only through his wife's stability in the centre, Donne argues, can his circle be drawn correctly. However "End where I begunne" also implies the closing of the compass - and Donne coming home to be with his wife.

Conceit (literary term):

5. an elaborate, fanciful metaphor, esp. of a strained or far-fetched nature.
6. the use of such metaphors as a literary characteristic, esp. in poetry.

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 17

1. What is personification?
2. What is personified in this poem?
3. What effect do you think Donne wanted to create by use of personification?
4. Which text in scripture did Donne evidently draw upon in composing this poem? I Corinthians 15
5. Do you think the “some” referred to in line 1 of the poem at times included the poet himself? Why or why not?
6. What two things in line 5 are referred to as pictures of death? How are they pictures of death? In scripture rest and sleep are pictures of death, which is no doubt what Donne had in mind.
7. How do these two things bring pleasure, as Donne asserts?
8. What is the point of Donne’s comparison of these two things and death? to show that if these pictures bring great pleasure, the thing pictured by them (i.e., death) will bring even greater pleasure
9. In line 8 Donne mentions two pleasures or benefits that come with death. What are they? rest and the soul’s delivery
10. What do you think is the point of Donne stating that “our best men” go with death? Why did he not just say all men?
11. Lines 9 and 10 are intended to wound Death’s pride. How so?
12. In what sense is Death subject to “fate, chance, kings and desperate men”? because all of these can bring death in at their will
13. It is said that one is known by the company one keeps. How does Donne suggest this is so indicting for Death? because it dwells with such horrible things as poison, war and sickness.
14. Lines 11 and 12 also are intended to wound Death’s pride, by way of comparison. How so? Death compares poorly to poppy and charms.
15. What is a paradox?
16. The poem ends with a paradox. What is that paradox, and how is it so? the death of death. The poem ends in a paradox, as Donne concludes: "and death shall be no more, Death thou shalt die."
17. Some have called the poem “*Death Be Not Proud*” a tirade against death. Do you agree or disagree? Why? Donne mounts an impressive tirade against death, culminating in a celebration of its lack of power.
18. Donne’s wife’s death in 1617 may have been the occasion that prompted him to write this poem, as it seems it was for some other of his poems. How would the thoughts conveyed in this poem- ideas which have their source in scripture – have been a solace to Donne in just such an occasion?

Here is the commentary of one reviewer at
<http://www.luminarium.org/sevenlit/oliver.htm> :

Antonio S. Oliver

Views of Death in Donne's Poetry

John Donne's complex personality plays an important role in his poetry. His intellect, and as a result his work, demonstrates various opinions that at times conflict or agree with each other. These opposing views represent one of the most fascinating aspects of his poetry. Seldom is this divergence presented as clearly and frequently as in the theme of death, as will be illustrated by the following essay.

As with most poets of his time, Donne was obsessed with death. Mesmerized by its mysteries, charmed by its allure, and convinced of the existence of an afterlife (as a result of Christian theology), he finds himself at times unable to settle on a particular view of the subject. While a considerable portion of Donne's *opus* deals with death either directly or indirectly, some poems depict death as insignificant while others present it as something he, and therefore humans, should fear. As a Christian, Donne believed (although perhaps did not understand) the concept of an afterlife. This conviction is shown by his understanding of death as a necessary stage before reaching the glory of heaven, the promised life with God. His contradictory behavior is demonstrated by a fear of death, sometimes expressed in his search for ways in which he could triumph over it instead of becoming its victim, which fueled his interest in the practice of suicide.

One of the Holy Sonnets, *Death Be Not Proud*, presents the contradictory views of Donne. The opening lines, "Death be not proud, though some have called thee/Mighty and dreadful, for, thou art not so" demonstrate his own uncertainty on the issue, since that "some" he mentions includes him at times. However, he denies the power of death in the very next line, and proceeds to list several reasons why. The people whom death believes it kills do not "cease to live" (in order to avoid the use of the word 'death'); death does not have such powers. Death is not all-powerful, since it is part of God's creation. Furthermore, death is not an end to life. Rather, it is a kind of "sleep," a middle stage to cross before being reunited with the creator.

The final part of the fourth line presents a familiar trait of Donne's poetry: its theme shifts from death to Donne himself. Although it is not an extreme example, for he focuses on death and himself, it demonstrates his conviction that a poem is worth writing if it regards him in some way. "Nor yet canst thou kill me/From rest and sleep" serves to reinforce the idea of death as a mere transitory stage between the earthly and the afterlives. "Soonest our best men with thee do go" is used by Donne to remind the reader that death is not a punishment only a few people receive, but an occurrence everyone will and must endure. The fact that the even "our best men" will embark on death's journey reinforces the previous argument, possibly targeted at those who fear death as the final chapter of their existence. The subsequent line explains both the physical and spiritual need for death, since it provides "rest of their bones, and soul's delivery." Not only will it rejuvenate the body, but also the spirit, readying it for the glorious return of Christ and the afterlife.

The poem's next two lines wound death's pride and diminish its power, since Donne argues death cannot act alone. An accomplice is needed to complete its mischievous deeds. A rather comprehensive list of partners is presented: fate, chance, kings, and

desperate men. Death's might must bow down to mere chance at times, and humans of such different ranks as kings and desperate beggars can obligate death to act. Thus, death is nothing special, if it can be ordered by men of such different walks of life. While poison, war, and sickness may result in death, its actual effect is as insignificant as the one resulting from mere exhaustion or drunkenness. Donne is convinced both death and sleep are the same type of action, and as result, he makes no distinction between them. The poem ends by remarking that after the resting period that death constitutes, humans will enter the afterlife, a period in which death itself will cease to exist. The poem ends in a paradox, as Donne concludes: "and death shall be no more, Death thou shalt die."

Donne's wife's death in 1617 was a prolific source of inspiration for Donne's poetry. Another Holy Sonnet, XVII, is entirely dedicated to her loving memory. Once again he presents his belief of death as a mere transitory stage between the earthly and eternal life, and appears to be resigned to his fate. According to him, Anne has "paid her last debt" on earth. Her absence is not a cause for concern or pain, for "her soul early into heaven ravished/Wholly in heavenly is my mind set." That is, her death has been beneficial, since it has allowed her to join God in the afterlife while freeing him from earthly concerns. Therefore, Donne profits from her death since he is able to concentrate his thoughts and love on God. By ascending to the skies, Anne ceases to be competition against the higher being for Donne's affection, although, as the end will prove, this does not assure his or her wellbeing.

Donne's effort to downplay the death of his wife fails, however, when he exclaims "though I have found thee, and thou my thirst hast fed/A holy thirsty dropsy melts me yet." Scholars have debated the meaning behind these lines, but they seem to express Donne's discontent with relinquishing his wife to God in order to love him more. By being unable to transfer all this love to God, the poem turns into a bitter series of complaints to the deity.

The sonnets discussed above share the common bond of death as a theme, but differ in their representation of the subject. Although the topic of death is the main focus of both, one need only read a few lines in order to comprehend the difference between the content of the poems. In *Death Be Not Proud*, Donne mounts an impressive tirade against death, culminating in a celebration of its lack of power. In Holy Sonnet XVII, his visions of death are not identical since an attempt to come to terms with his wife's absence forces yet another search of death's significance. One would be justified in thinking that his original idea about death is greatly influenced by his wife's decease, and Donne, unable to decide on a new opinion, embarks on a journey to find his true feelings, although sonnet XVII gives the impression he has yet to find them.

Although the main focus of both poems is death, Donne's ego manages to steal the spotlight. In *Death Be Not Proud*, he manages to defend humankind against death, possibly because he feels he cannot be defeated by God. This claim is more explicitly shown in sonnet XVII, which commences as another attack on death but concludes as a protest against God for the taking of his wife. While he is indeed objecting to this action by God, the pain of loss of his wife overshadows his earlier beliefs and declarations against death. Carey writes that Donne's "feeling of loss is self-centered," (44) questioning the real motives behind the poem. This trait, however, is not exclusive to these sonnets, since it can be found in most of Donne's work.

In closing, Donne's concerns about death are well documented, as a considerable amount of his work presents references to the subject. As with most themes in his work, however, he often changes his opinion, leaving a perplexed reader to attempt to find his real belief on the subject. It is safe to assume he did not fear death in the conventional manner, for he believed in the concept of an afterlife. His faith in Christian theology calmed those fears and doubts, but at times he searched for answers to questions about death, answers that had no explanation. For this reason, his poetry is highly paradoxical, a quality that only adds to its richness and attractiveness, much to the delight of its readers.

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 18

1. The discipline of literary analysis requires knowledge of certain terms which are used in the context of analysis. Some of the terms include: diction, tone, detail, syntax, imagery, and figurative language. Define each of these terms.
2. Compose an essay explaining how Milton employs diction, tone, detail, syntax, imagery, and figurative language to create an impression about Adam.
3. How does Milton employ classical allusions in *Paradise Lost*? To what effect?
4. This epic poem grapples with many theological issues, including fate, predestination, and the Trinity. Explain its commentary on these three topics.
5. Symbols are objects, characters, figures, or colors used to represent abstract ideas or concepts. What are some symbols present in *Paradise Lost*?
6. *Paradise Lost* includes many contrasting characters. Compare and contrast an example found in *Paradise Lost*. One example is Satan, Sin, and Death, who form an evil version of the Holy Trinity.
7. It is characteristic of a classical epic that the poet invokes the aid of his patron muse near the beginning of his epic poem. Which muse does Milton invoke, fusing classical method with Christian theme? the Holy Spirit, third Person of the Trinity.
8. In this beginning invocation, what does Milton state is the purpose of his epic poem? “Assert eternal providence and justify the ways of God to men.”

<http://www.universalteacher.org.uk/poetry/paradiselost.htm>

9. Milton moves from prayer into an account of Satan's fall, by asking who or what caused man to fall. According to Milton, what was Satan's motive in effecting the Fall of man? to be above his peers
10. Next is Satan's speech to Beelzebub. Though acknowledging their sad and difficult condition, why does it seem Satan does not repent of his rebellion? his jealous hatred of Jesus Christ, “the Potent Victor”
11. In Beelzebub's reply to Satan, how does he suggest the futility of rebellion against God, in light of the providence of God? He notes how in all they will be carrying out God's “errands in the gloomy deep” of Hell.
12. Satan is able to persuade Beelzebub not to give up the fight against God. How is Satan able to do this? by instilling him with hope that they may sometimes succeed in their designs
13. Given the nature of man, there are many who have read Milton's *Paradise Lost* and come to view Satan in it as hero rather than villain. Why do so many sympathize with this quote by the character Satan: “better to reign in Hell, than to serve in Heav'n”? How has Satan deceived himself, even in believing this statement? because they are sinful rebels themselves; since all is decreed by God, even those who rebel are under God's sovereignty
14. How does Satan employ sarcasm to arouse the demon hordes to join him in rebellion rather than remaining idle in hell? He says, “...in this abject posture have ye sworn to adore the Conqueror?”

15. Beginning in line 622 of Book I, Satan begins to speak to the assembled host of demons. What futile hope does Satan plant in the minds of the demons? that they will re-ascend to heaven
16. In this same speech, how does Satan blame God for their rebellion? that God tempted them by not showing His full strength
17. Also in this speech of Satan he mentions a rumor he heard while still in heaven, planting in the minds of the demons a suggestion of what course they should take. What is this rumor? that God would create a new world
18. What is the significance in the fact that the demons are able to construct their “high Capital” of Pandemonium?
19. Book IV begins with Satan’s soliloquy, through which we have a window into the character Satan’s thoughts. How are his thoughts different from what he had said to the demons? He knew he could never defeat God and live in heaven, but to the demons he had suggested the possibility of victory.
20. Why do you think Satan is described as “pensive and slow” as he enters Eden on earth?
21. How do Adam and Eve first appear to Satan?

<http://www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/Eng200/milton.htm> - The following is the text of lectures delivered, in part, in English 200 at Malaspina University-College in November 1998 by [Ian Johnston](#). This document is in the public domain, released November 1988:

22. There are at least some reasons to fear that John Milton had an unorthodox view of God. Is there anything you read in the poem that suggests this is the case?
23. Some have suggested that this is “the great Protestant epic poem in English”. What is an epic poem, and do you agree or disagree with this assessment?

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 19

1. What does John Owen assert God intended as to purpose in the death of Christ? to ransom many
2. What is some proof that Owen offers for what he considers to be the purpose in the death of Christ?
3. John Owen lists 5 blessings effected in the death of Christ. What are the 5 blessings he listed?
4. At the end of Book 1, Chapter I Owen reveals the Arminian alternative to the Calvinist thesis regarding the death of Christ. What is this alternative?
5. For whom did Christ die to redeem, according to Owen? the elect

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 20

1. What is an allegory?
2. The allegory of *Pilgrim's Progress* began with Christian walking "through the wilderness of this world." What does this description imply about the author's view of this world?
3. What does the burden on Christian's back represent? sin
4. Who does the character Christian represent? the elect Christian, who repents and flees to Christ
5. What is the significance of the response to Christian by his fellow family members? He must forsake even his family for Christ.
6. Christian is sought after by his neighbors Obstinate and Pliable. What is the weakness of each of them? One stubbornly rejects the gospel, while the other is weak-minded.
7. What does the Slough of Despond represent? The fears and doubts of the soul, as that soul is becoming awakened
8. What was Worldly Wiseman's advice? that Christian have his burden removed in the city of Morality
9. What was flawed in Worldly Wiseman's advice?
10. Why do you think Bunyan did not have Christian's burden fall off upon going through the gate? Do you think this is theologically correct or incorrect?
11. What lesson does Interpreter teach Christian concerning Passion versus Patience?
12. Why was a man, who Christian met with Interpreter, forever in an iron cage? he had despised Christ, and delighted in the pleasures of this world
13. Do you think Bunyan's Baptist error in any way manifests itself in *Pilgrim's Progress*? missing that this world should be conquered for Christ

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 21

1. *Gulliver's Travels* is a satire of mankind in general and Western civilization in particular. By the end of the book the perspective is misanthropic. What are the first evidences in the work that it is satirical? He contrasts the Lilliputians' wisdom and kindness with the lack of it in Western leaders, and reveals his own unkind thoughts
2. How do grotesquely described bodily functions of Gulliver in the beginning of the book serve to presage a full blown misanthropic perspective?
3. How does the description of the emperor in the preamble to the sworn articles by Gulliver, function to satirize the political leadership of Swift's day? They thought themselves grand though they were small.
4. How does the internal strife in Lilliput between the Tramecksan and Slamecksan serve to satirize mankind in general and Europeans in particular? quarreling over that which is petty
5. Swift condemned the cynical use of religion for petty political purposes. How so?
6. What view does the author come to have of court politics and court promises?
7. Analyze the book from a Biblical perspective. Was Swift profane?
8. What irony is found in the method of punishment of the author for treason decided upon by the court of Lilliput? that starving him was moderate

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 22

1. How is the moral decadence of Voltaire and the France of his era reflected in his work *Candide*?
2. How does Voltaire satirize the wealthy elite of his day in *Candide*? They engage in various intrigues and are pompous.
3. How does Voltaire satirize the Roman Catholic Church in *Candide*? Sex slaves and children born out of wedlock of Pope and Portuguese Grand Inquisitor
4. What sort of social reforms would Voltaire seem to have advocated, as suggested in the story about Eldorado in South America, as well as the simple Turkish farmer, in *Candide*? no religious conflict, simple agrarian lifestyle

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 23

1. What is an elegy? a funeral song or lament for the dead
2. What is the metrical structure and rhyme scheme of the poem, and how does it enhance the poem's theme? iambic pentameter, abab ; stanzas: quatrain
3. What do the opening images of the poem suggest about the nature of death and the one who died? sad and lonely, unheralded by the world
4. Stanza 4 says "each in his narrow cell forever laid". What does this mean? Is it really true, or is the poet mistaken?
5. How does the poem describe the lives of those who lay buried in the country churchyard? "rude forefathers", simple folk, farmers
6. What does the poem suggest is the great equalizer of rich and poor? death
7. Who does the "you" seem to refer to in stanza 10? proud, prominent city folk
8. What does the poem suggest kept even the talented country folk from rising to a heralded position? their "lot" as well as penury
9. What is meant by these famous lines from the poem: "Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife, / Their sober wishes never learned to stray" ?
10. Compose an essay describing what we know about the buried youth who is the focus of the poem.
11. Why would his hope be described as "trembling"?

Info about the Poet:

"Gray, Thomas, 1716–71, English poet. He was educated at Eton and Peterhouse, Cambridge. In 1739 he began a grand tour of the Continent with Horace [Walpole](#). They quarreled in Italy, and Gray returned to England in 1741. He continued his studies at Cambridge, and he remained there for most of his life, living in seclusion, studying Greek, and writing. In 1768 he was made professor of history and modern languages, but he did no real teaching. Although he was reconciled with Walpole, and formed other close relationships in his lifetime, his shy and sensitive disposition was ill adapted to the robust century in which he lived. He was offered the laureateship in 1757 but refused it. His first important poems, written in 1742, include "To Spring," "On a Distant Prospect of Eton College," and a sonnet on the death of his close friend Richard West. After years of revision he finished his great "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (1751), a meditative poem presenting thoughts conjured up by the sight of a rural graveyard; it is perhaps the most quoted poem in English. In 1757, Walpole published Gray's Pindaric odes, "The Progress of Poesy" and "The Bard." Gray's verse illustrates the evolution of English poetry in the 18th cent.—from the classicism of the 1742 poems to the romantic tendencies of "The Fatal Sisters" and "The Descent of Odin" (1768). He did not write a large amount of poetry. Much of his verse is tinged with melancholy, and even more of it reflects his extensive learning. His letters, which contain much humor, are among the finest in the English language."

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 24

1. William Blake was an English poet, painter, and engraver. Many of his poems, including this one about the tiger, were accompanied by illustrations. Blake's religion was an important aspect of his life. He also believed in the visions he saw, which may have led him to his heretical Christian beliefs. For his era, William Blake was extremely radical, both politically and philosophically. He and his wife practiced nudism in a friend's garden. (According to him, "it's okay, we're just Adam and Eve".) Blake was tried for treason for saying something like "you soldiers of the [expletive] king, I hope Napoleon kills all of you" while throwing a drunken soldier out of his garden. Blake used to see visions and hear voices, and we have sketches he made of famous people who visited him. He was a follower of Emanuel Swedenborg. Blake wrote poetry that largely reflects Swedenborgian views. *Songs of Innocence* (1789) shows life as it seems to innocent children. *Songs of Experience* (1794) tells of a mature person's realization of pain and terror in the universe. This book contains his famous 'Tiger! Tiger! Burning Bright'. *Milton* (1804-08) and *Jerusalem* (1804-20) are longer and more obscure works. Blake died on Aug. 12, 1827. Research the tenets of Swedenborgianism, and compose a paragraph summarizing the doctrines of this heresy.

The doctrines of the New Church are as follows:

1. That there is one [God](#) and that He is [the Lord Jesus Christ](#). Within Him there is a Divine Trinity.
2. That a saving faith is to believe in Him and to live a life of charity.
3. That all [evils](#) are to be shunned and originate in mankind.
4. That good actions are to be done, because they are of God and from God, and are therefore necessary for life.
5. That these good acts are to be done by mankind as if from him/herself; but that it ought to be acknowledged that they are done from the Lord with Him and by Him.
6. That one's fate after death is according to the character one has acquired in life; specifically that those governed by the love of the Lord or the love of being useful to others are in heaven, and that those governed by love of Self or the love of worldly things are in hell.

(see Swedenborg's *True Christian Religion*, author's introduction [\[2\]](#))

Added to this the Swedenborgians believe that marriage is eternal. They state that an individual will be married to their spouse in the afterlife if they have a true spiritual marriage, and that if a person dies unmarried they will find a spouse in heaven. [Robert Frost](#) reportedly married in a Swedenborgian ceremony. Despite their [eighteenth century](#) origins they also have beliefs that could be deemed more "modern" or [New Age](#). For example they believe in [extraterrestrial life](#) and Swedenborg spoke of having spiritual journeys to other planets. They also reject the idea of [substitutionary atonement](#) and believe all religions are valid paths.

Swedenborgians are unorthodox. They have elements even of the [occult](#) movement in which people speak in tongues and see spirits.

2. Compose an essay explaining how you think Blake's Swedenborgian views influenced his poem "The Tiger".
3. Blake's images defy simple explanation; we cannot be certain what he wants us to think the tiger represents, but what do you think it represents in the poem? Explain why.

"It may represent something of the majesty and power of God's creation in the natural world seems to be present. Blake's spelling in the title (**The Tyger**) at once suggests the exotic or alien quality of the beast. The memorable opening couplet (pair of rhyming lines) points to the contrast of the dark "forest of the night" (which suggests an unknown and hostile place) and the intense "burning" brightness of the tiger's colouring: Blake writes here with a painter's eye. The questions that follow are directed at the tiger, though they are as much questions for the reader."

One website says this: "This poem is not so much about the tiger as it really is, or as a zoologist might present it to us; it is the Tyger, as it appears to the eye of the beholder. Blake imagines the tiger as the embodiment of God's power in creation: the animal is terrifying in its beauty, strength, complexity and vitality."

4. Many of the questions in the poem are rhetorical. What is meant by 'rhetorical'?
5. Do you think the questions in the poem are rhetorical or not? Why?

One website says this:

"They are of the kind sometimes called rhetorical (frequently used in public speaking, rhetoric in Greek) because no answer is given. However, these are questions to which the answer is far from obvious. For example, the answer to the first question might be "God's" ("immortal hand or eye"), but Blake is asking not so much "whose?" as "what kind of?" We are challenged to imagine someone or something so powerful as to be able to create this animal. The idea that the tiger is made by someone with hands and eyes suggests the stories in the Biblical book of Genesis, where God walks in the Garden of Eden and shuts Noah in his ark. It is again the painter and engraver who observes the complexity of the tiger's markings in their "fearful symmetry". The sensitive human artist is awe-struck by the divine artistry. Blake asks where the fire in the tiger's eyes originates. It is as if some utterly daring person has seized this fire and given it to the tiger (as, in Greek myth, Prometheus stole fire from the gods and gave it to men). The poet is amazed at the complexity of the tiger's inner workings ("the sinews of thy heart"), at the greater power that set the heart beating, and wonders how the animal's brain was forged: "What the hammer...in what furnace...what the anvil?"

6. The penultimate stanza takes us back to Genesis and the creation account there. How so?

One website says: "... on each of the six days (He rested on the seventh) God looked at His work and "saw that it was good". God is represented as being pleased with His creation, but Blake wonders whether this can be true of the tiger. If so, it is not easy to see how the same creator should have made The Lamb. The poem appropriately ends, apparently with the same question with which it started, but the change of verb from "could" to "dare" makes it even more forceful."

7. Some have suggested the tiger in the poem represents evil. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

8. Blake begins the poem with the two alliterations. What is an alliteration?

9. What function do you think these two alliterations serve at the beginning of the poem? Why?

One website suggests: "The alliteration focuses on the grandeur of the tiger, creating a sense of wonder for the reader."

10. What does the imagistic phrase "fire of thine eyes" suggest?

"This imagery emphasizes the ferociousness of the creature. The reader can feel the intensity of the tiger, as if it were staring at them."

11. By calling the tiger 'art', what does this suggest about the tiger's Creator?

"He is like an artist. - This is a comparison between the Creator and an artist."

12. What do you think the phrase "sinews of thy heart" denotes? What do you think it connotes? Why?

"Sinews refers to tendons, but also has a connotation of strength and resiliency which the tiger possesses."

13. Mention is made in the poem of "the lamb". This is a reference to the lamb in another one of Blake's poems, simply entitled "The Lamb". The speaker in "The Lamb" asks who made thee. The answer in that poem is God. In this poem, the answer is the same. Why is it harder for people to understand that God created the tiger than the lamb?

14. What do you think was Blake's purpose in writing one poem about the tiger and one about the lamb, given what you know about Blake?

15. What is the main theme of the poem? Explain the reason for your answer.

"The main theme of the poem is the speaker asking God, or whoever the creator is, how they could create such magnificence in this world as well as pain. In other words, the poet asks how could someone create something so intricate, sophisticated, and glorious as the

tiger, but also include so much suffering. This is a common question asked in poetry and this poem provides no answer.”

16. This poem suggests there is a difference between innocence and experience. This is a contrast from the "The Lamb" (part of *Songs of Innocence*). The Tiger was included in a book entitled *Songs of Experience*. Just within this poem, the contrast can be seen. Describe the nature of the contrast in the poem.

“On the outside, the tiger has "fearful symmetry" and "fire in thine eyes". Later, Blake speaks of "the twist of the sinews of thy heart" and the "dread hand". By doing so, the speaker demonstrates the difference from an innocent and experienced standpoint.”

17. What is the rhyming pattern of the poem, and what does it suggest?

“Rhythm and Sound - Blake uses an "A,A,B,B" rhyming pattern, which reminds us of a majority of poetry created by junior high and high school students. The consistency of the pattern implies that he is full of questions about the universe and ways of our world. It sounds like he is trying to discover the answers of these mysteries by asking questions from different angles. Blake also sounds choppy and inquisitive in this poem. Lines 9-10 and 13-14 are prime examples. He is demanding an answer that he knows is unanswerable.”

18. Who is the speaker in this poem?

“Speaker - The speaker sounds like an outside party that has seen a tiger before and knows the terror and violence that it can produce. The speaker seems to be asking why would anyone create such a horrible and vicious monster if they can also create good like the gentle lamb? He also sounds like he is speaking to the tiger even though the animal cannot respond.”

19. What is the poem's tone?

“Tone - The tone seems to be in fear, and at the same time an inability to believe that anyone would purposely create a beautiful, yet deadly creature like the tiger. The speaker is puzzled and cannot understand the contradiction.”

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 25

1. What do you think was so arresting about the ancient mariner that led the wedding guest to listen to his story?
2. What direction was the ancient mariner's ship heading after she left port? How do we know?
3. How is the storm described which blew the ship?
4. What do you think the Albatross represents in the poem? Why? And what is the significance of its color?
5. What had the ancient mariner done to the Albatross that caused him such anguish? killed it
6. At the beginning of Part II of the poem, which direction is the ship headed? north
7. How do the fellow crewmen of the mariner display their chameleon nature?
8. One of the most famous lines of the poem is: "Water, water everywhere, / Nor any drop to drink." In its context, what does it mean?
9. Could we tell from the poem itself that Coleridge is not a reformed Christian? Why?
10. The poem combines some Roman Catholic and pagan elements. What are some of the Roman Catholic elements present in the poem? profanity, reference to Heaven's Mother
11. What are some of the pagan elements present in the poem?
12. What was hung around the mariner's neck to shame him? the Albatross
13. By the end of Part III, what had happened to all of the ancient mariner's fellow crewman? they had died
14. What caused the Albatross to fall off the mariner's neck? love of water-snakes
15. What is implied in the mariner's praise of "Mary Queen"?
16. In what way did the Fall of man make man "sadder but wiser" in an ungodly way, and what similarities does it share with the conclusion of the poem?
17. What is the deceptive error in the idea expressed in the poem that God loves all things?
18. The element of a wedding guest could have scriptural allusion (Revelation 19,). What could be the significance that the wedding guest in the poem never made it to the wedding?
19. "To have an albatross around one's neck" is a phrase whose origin traces back to this poem. What does the phrase mean?
20. What is penance, and how does it figure in the poem?
21. Describe the metrical schema of the poem and how it is used to support the poem's theme.

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 26

1. Investigate the biography of poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning and compose a paragraph summarizing the tragic aspects of Mrs. Browning's life.
2. How are the sad aspects of her life alluded to in her poem?
3. Investigate the biography of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and compose a paragraph explaining who you think is the subject of the poet's love in the poem. Robert Browning
4. The poem is divided into an octave and a sestet. What is an octave? What is a sestet?
5. The poet lists four ways she loves her love in the octave and four ways she loves her love in the sestet. What are the four ways she lists in the octave? spiritually, materially, freely, purely
6. What are the four ways she lists in the sestet? with a passion of meeting former challenges but tempered by childlike faith, with a love she had thought she had lost, with her whole being, with a love she hopes will be eternal
7. This poem takes the form of a Petrarchan sonnet. What is a Petrarchan sonnet?
8. What is the rhyme scheme of the octave? ABBAABBA
9. What is the rhyme scheme of the sestet? CDCDCD
10. The poem begins with a question. What is that question?
11. Do you think the question is directed to her beloved or herself? Explain your answer.
12. Who answers the initial question? Why do you think the poet had this person answer the question instead of someone else?
13. How does the poet express her love on the spiritual level and then on the mundane level? In the first quartet of the octave, she expresses her on the spiritual level, while on the second quartet on the mundane level.
14. Interpret what the poet means in the 7th line of the poem. She means without constraint, moral compunction, or moral reservation.
15. Interpret what the poet means in the 8th line of the poem. She means without taint of sinful motive or desire, characterized by virtues like humility which turns away from praise.
16. What irony is present in the way the poem ends? though the poem ends, the love described in the poem will (hopefully) never end
17. What features in this poem do you believe have made it so famous and popular?
18. Evaluate the poem Biblically, analyzing whether and in what ways it is consistent or inconsistent with Biblical principles.

Additional Notes:

<http://ezinearticles.com/?Elizabeth-Barrett-Browning:-A-Discussion-of-How-Do-I-Love-Thee?&id=13270> -

“How Do I Love Thee?” by Elizabeth Barrett Browning was written in 1845 while she was being courted by the English poet, Robert Browning. The poem is also titled Sonnet XLIII from *Sonnets From the Portuguese*...

Elizabeth Barrett developed a serious respiratory ailment by age 15 and a horse riding accident shortly thereafter left her with a serious spinal injury. These two health problems remained with her all of her life.

In 1828 her mother died and four years later the family business faltered and her father sold the Durham estate and moved the family to a coastal town. He was stern, protective, and even tyrannical and forbid any of his children to marry. In 1833 Elizabeth published her first work, a translation of *Prometheus Bound* by the Greek dramatist Aeschylus...

In 1838 Elizabeth Barrett wrote and published *The Seraphim and Other Poems*. The collection took the form of a classical Greek tragedy and expressed her deep Christian sentiments.

Shortly thereafter, Elizabeth's poor health prompted her to move to Italy, accompanied by her dear brother Edward, whom she referred to as "Bro." Unfortunately he drowned a year later in a sailing accident and Elizabeth returned to London, seriously ill, emotionally broken, and hopelessly grief-stricken. She became reclusive for the next five years, confining herself to her bedroom.

Over the next twenty months Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning exchanged 574 letters. An admiration, respect, and love for each other grew and flourished. In 1845 Robert Browning sent Elizabeth a telegram which read, "I love your verses with all my heart, dear Miss Barrett. I do, as I say, love these books with all my heart – and I love you too." A few months later the two met and fell in love.

Inspired by her love for Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett wrote the 44 love poems which were collected in *Sonnets From the Portuguese* and which were eventually published in 1850. Her growing love for Robert and her ability to express her emotions in the sonnets and love poems allowed Elizabeth to escape from the oppression of her father and the depression of her recluse.

http://poetry.suite101.com/article.cfm/brownings_how_do_i_love_thee :

The sonnet "How do I love thee?" is number 43 in *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. It is a Petrarchan sonnet with the rime scheme ABBAABBA in the octave and CDCDCD in the sestet...

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 27

1. How is English nationalism promoted in the demeanor of Miss Pross in her response to Madame Defarge?
2. *The Tale of Two Cities* pits good versus evil, as those are understood by Dickens. How does he portray good, and how does he portray evil? Give examples.
3. Much thought has been given to the causes of the French Revolution. Do you think Dickens does or does not give insight into the true underlying causes of the revolution? Why or why not?
4. What does Dickens mean in the final chapter by “Universal Mother”?
5. Often in literature a character’s success in achieving his goals depends upon keeping a secret. How is this reflected in *The Tale of Two Cities*?

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 28

1. The world has long hated much of what Puritanism stands for. And many of the descendants of the Puritans, including Nathanael Hawthorne, rejected the tenets of Puritanism. In what subtle ways does *The Scarlet Letter* satirize Puritanism?
2. Is *The Scarlet Letter* fair in its depiction of Puritanism? Why or why not?
3. Most people believe the climax of the novel is when the sunshine burst forth in Chapter 18. Why do you think this is the generally accepted climax?
4. What is symbolized by Hester's removing the scarlet A from her chest and removing the cap from her hair? (worldly) freedom
5. What is the difference between freedom as taught in scripture and freedom as suggested in the novel?
6. Why do you think Hester later in life returns to Puritan Massachusetts and starts wearing the scarlet letter again? It seems she may perversely take it as a badge of honor.

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 29

1. What does Tennyson's poem suggest about the Victorian perspective on the Medieval era?
2. What contrasting images does the poem create?
3. What do you think is the climax of the poem? Why?
4. What choice does the Lady of Shallott face, and how does her decision affect her destiny?

Tennyson himself said that the poem was based on a thirteenth-century Italian novelette entitled *Donna di Scalotta*, which focuses on the lady's death and her reception at Camelot rather than her isolation in the tower and her decision to participate in the living world, two subjects not mentioned in "Donna di Scalotta."

<http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/7303/shallot.htm>

A Poem by Alfred, Lord Tennyson. 1843.

in which the Lady is under a curse that she may not look at the world through her own eyes, but must only see it reflected in a mirror. She does not know what the penalty is for looking without the aid of the mirror, and finds that, when she does finally look at Sir Lancelot with her bare eyes, that 'the mirror crack'd from side to side' and that the penalty is death.

<http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/tennyson/losov.html> :

In "The Lady of Shalott" Tennyson makes an Arthurian figure of his own invention serve as a symbol for the artist. Isolated within her tower, she weaves a tapestry that depicts human life, which she herself can only experience vicariously and at a distance in a mirror. When the beauty of the passing Lancelot leads her to turn away from her magic mirror and look directly out her window, her mirror and web shatter, flying apart, and her mortality comes upon her. This mythic poem embodies the way ordinary human needs destroy the artist, but in contrast "The Palace of Art", which shares the same climactic structure, makes the contrary point that isolating oneself from society also brings destruction.

Both poems, which present in parabolic form the problematic relation of the artist to society, reflect the political turmoil of the year in which they were written -- 1832, the time of the first Reform Bill and the fierce debates about the relation and responsibility of classes. Tennyson, like so many Victorian artists and writers who felt a need to preserve

aesthetic distance while making statements about their own age, dramatizes his sense of the artist's problematic relation to his society in mythic, parabolic narratives, which he sets in other places and other times. "The Palace of Art" and "The Lady of Shalott" show Tennyson making a first attempt to find the proper relation of the Victorian author to his audience. They also show that he had solved some of his technical problems by creating a poetic structure that embraced his tendencies toward static and climactic verse and that he had applied the result in creating a morally relevant poetry of vision and conversion.

Parts 1 and 2 of Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott" ([text](#)) provide the backdrop for the central action of the poem — the flight of the lady from her captivity and her subsequent death. The "silent isle" on which she lives is marked only by "Four gray walls, and four gray towers". This description, with its repetitious construction and use of the bland color gray, permeates the reader's image of the island with dullness and monotony. Furthermore, Tennyson pointedly remarks that the gray towers "Overlook a space of flowers" which plays up the contrast between the lifelessness of the gray stone, and the vibrancy of the garden outside (16). Even his use of a contained rhyming couplet brings the aesthetic disparity into the foreground. And so, Tennyson's vision of the Lady of Shalott immediately sets her apart from the vitality of the natural world, placing her in a realm of stagnancy and inertness. Indeed, it is interesting to note that, like many of the Preraphaelites, the focus on a solitary contemplative female figure is a recurring theme in his work, for example, in [Mariana](#).

Yet, amidst her colorless environment, the Lady of Shalott weaves "A magic web with colors gay" (38). How can we interpret this spontaneous production of magic, art and color? It appears as though Tennyson is indicating that the production of art occurs in melancholy isolation from the very world it mimics. Thus, in the first two parts of "The Lady of Shalott" Tennyson constructs a representation of the artist as a solitary and confined figure, inexplicably compelled to create, as if literally bound by a "curse".

"The Lady of Shalott" ([text of poem](#)), one of the most popular of Tennyson's poems, inspired painters throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth. The five most popular subjects for illustration were

- [the embowered lady](#) by a window longing for love after she sees the "young lovers, lately wed" in the mirror;
- the climactic moment she first sees Lancelot;
- the Lady leaving her island;
- the [Lady in her boat](#) dying for love or because of it; and
- the dead Lady in her boat floating on the river.

These five subjects reveal a great deal about the Victorians' conception of love and women.

The opening of the poem quickly establishes the ironic contrast, setting up a picture of the world that is both true and false, true in objective fact but with terribly misleading implications:

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And through the field the road runs by
To many-towered Camelot;
And up and down the people go

"On either side" of the Lady is the promise of fruitfulness and warmth, gentleness and motion. The abundance of nature is [32/33] connected to heaven and to man, the grain **clothes** the field, joining the earth both to man and to heaven, and the field contains the road on which all human activity takes place. The center of this microcosm is Camelot, many-towered as a temple, the source of the apparently benign and unified activity. In contrast, the Lady lives on a "silent isle" (l. 17), imprisoned within "four gray walls, and four gray towers" (l. 15). It is true that within this tomblike home there is a "space of flowers" (l. 16) and that her song "echoes cheerly" (l. 30) from it, but the force of this contrast between her island and the outside world is so strong that such contradictory details are nearly swept aside. Even the suggestive revelation that the curse is connected not to isolation but to life, that she is not cursed now but will be if she chooses to live, is submerged in the continuous development of the basic ironic contrast.

Part 2 (ll. 37-72) creates an image of life at Camelot, the irresistible world of "realities," as Tennyson so enigmatically puts it, that "takes her out of the region of shadows." (**Memoir**, I: 117). The main reality presented here is motion itself. In contrast to her stasis, the pictures of the world she sees are "moving," "winding," "whirl[ing]," "ambling," "riding." This static-dynamic dualism is crucial: she believes the lying promise of the mirror, progressing from her death-like isolation into the whirl of movement that is literal death. The most important of these perceived images of dynamic eternal life makes her "half sick of shadows" (l. 71) and prepares her for the final destructive lure:

For often through the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott. [ll. 66-72]

Notice the indiscriminate **or** that connects the funeral and the lovers. Life offers funerals or marriages; both are equal: love is equivalent to death.

The next section (ll. 73-117) is dominated by the image of [33/34] Lancelot. For the Lady, he is the symbol of personality and fulfillment in the vast scene of the world's growth and

beauty. He seems to her to provide an even more specific promise: the achievement of individual identity. He is the first person to be named in the poem, and he seems to guarantee the validity of names and their ability to give permanence and meaning to the self. He comes, riding "between the barley-sheaves" (l. 74), with all the abundance of nature. Lancelot carries with him a shield, in which "A red-cross knight for ever kneeled / To a lady" (ll. 78-79), an image of perpetual promise, invoked in terms of courtly love. The emphasis in Tennyson's lines on "for ever kneeled," however, also implies that it is only the promise, not the fulfillment, that is perpetual. The "blue unclouded weather" (l. 91) in which Lancelot appears conspires to make this image as beautiful and blinding as possible: like a "meteor, trailing light" (l. 98) he "flashed into the crystal mirror". (l. 106).

The first "reality" the Lady actually meets after invoking the curse is the truth of this mocking nature, which is no longer blue and unclouded but dark, with a "stormy east-wind" and a heavy low sky over the "pale yellow woods" (ll. 118-21). Images of oppression and waste surround her. Pathetically, she still tries, by writing her name on the prow of a boat to claim the promise of personality Lancelot had held out to her. But her personality is not confirmed, even by her death, and the tragic assertion of being is burlesqued. As she floats by Camelot, the knights "read her name" (l. 161) but respond only with misunderstanding:

Who is this? and what is here? And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer; And they crossed themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot. [ll. 163-67]

She manages to create only a flurry of superstition.

Lancelot, however, is presumably differentiated from this confusion and muses quietly a moment -- only to exhibit how undifferentiated he actually is;

He said, 'She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott' (ll. 169-71).

"She has a lovely face is absurdly inadequate to the mystery and potential tragedy of the Lady's story. We move only from one level of incomprehension to another. Lancelot is a structurally heightened parody of those figures at the end of a tragedy -- Horatio is an example -- whose duty it is to interpret, clarify, and keep alive the story of the tragic action, thus ensuring the institution of a new order. Here the death is uninterpreted because there is no context to give it meaning and no interpreter. Lancelot turns from the Lady after a perfunctory benediction, dismissing her and thus permanently fixing the [absurdity of her death](#). This, then, is what the parable of growth and development amounts to: not criticism of the Lady, or Lancelot, or "isolation," or the world; only an ironic equation of development with decay. The Lady is born into death.

Perhaps "The Lady of Shalott" marks the limit of this form of Tennyson's indirect, thematic irony; not that he was to abandon it, but it was to be subsumed in the search, for more inclusive ironies, ones that would contain even the reader: surprisingly, he found the means for this subtle rhetorical irony not in the further dissolution of his readers' judgment but in an insistence on judgments. The secret of this extension was not in the abolition of old certainties but in the reinforcement of them. Still, and it is a large qualification, these certainties are never unopposed, they are never adequately supported,

and they never provide solutions. They are certainly present and we are asked to make judgments based on them, but these judgments are either contradictory or, more commonly, trivial. They go nowhere. They never answer the questions that are raised in the poem, though they do create others. Most of all, these judgments do not provide comfort or release; they construct the ironic prison.

This rhetoric clearly involves a refinement of irony's traditional control of perspective and distance. It is nothing new for irony to vary our perspective abruptly, asking us to see as immediate and painful what we had supposed was comfortably distant and secure. Still, though the reader is often moved against his will, he always knows where he is. In the 1842 volume, however, Tennyson is striving to project the state which irony embodies, to create the suspension and discomfort the poems discuss. Previous poems had been made ambiguous by structural or thematic means; here the ambiguity is achieved rhetorically, by making our perspective on the poem uncertain. He removes the solid position from which we [35/36] can make judgments and then urges on us both the necessity for judgments and their futility.

The most radical form of this uncertain perspective is found in the [dramatic monologue](#), where the removal of context makes it extremely difficult not only to know how to judge but to be sure if one should judge at all. Certainly, the creation of a solid position from which one can observe how the speaker "contradicts himself" or is subject to the poet's satire is a critical fiction, a convenience that distorts the effects of the poem.

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 30

1. In what respects does Nora's philosophy deviate from sound Biblical Christianity?
2. In what respects does Helmer's philosophy deviate from sound Biblical Christianity?
3. What are the evidences that Nora has adopted and the play promotes feminism?
4. What are the evidences that Nora has adopted and the play promotes moral relativism?

p 331 – “if it is true for me”

5. In the play, Nora says, “You and papa have committed a great sin against me.” Despite Nora's purported moral relativism, how does this statement show even she cannot live as a self-consistent moral relativist? And how does this demonstrate that moral relativism is an incoherent philosophy?
6. What was Nora's attitude regarding the role clergymen had hitherto played in her life?
7. Suppose you were to encounter someone with Nora's feministic philosophy, what would you tell her to show her why she is wrong and must repent?
8. How does this play evidence that a society, having abandoned sound religion, progressively descends into moral corruption?

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 31

1. Summarize the plot of the short story in one paragraph.
2. What do you think is its climax? Why?

death of Kurtz (or else when Marlow first meets Kurtz)

3. A character's apparent madness plays an important role in *Heart of Darkness*. How so?
4. How must this apparent madness be judged reasonable in the story?
5. Why do you think Conrad employed the technique of a story within a story?
6. Write a character sketch of Charlie Marlow.
7. What is the significance in the story of the way the life of Fresleven, Marlow's predecessor, ended?
8. Where did the river steamboat run which Marlow would take charge of?

equatorial Africa

9. Of what nationality was the steamboat's owner company? French
10. What commentary does the short story offer on "the white man's burden" to the natives of places like Africa? skeptical of it, seeing it as a façade for profit-making
11. How did Marlow first learn of Kurtz? from Company's accountant
12. What impression of the European colonial era do you come away with from the short story?
13. Sometimes titles can have multiple references. To what does the title of the short story refer? native Africa, Kurtz' interior, Europe
14. How does the author build anticipation of Marlow meeting Kurtz?
15. What does Marlow learn about Kurtz from Kurtz's Russian friend?
16. How had the African wilderness affected Kurtz? became bloodthirsty, covetous, though had begun idealistic
17. Darwinism became widely accepted among the intelligentsia of Conrad's day. How do you think it affected Conrad's short story?
18. What is the setting at the beginning and ending of the short story? What do you think is its significance? How does the darkness of this setting compare with the darkness of Africa? near mouth of Thames River, England; it is dark like Africa
19. What lie did Marlow tell Kurtz's fiancée? that Kurtz's last words were her name instead of his actual words "The horror! the horror!"
20. What is the short story's denouement? after Kurtz's death
21. How is Kurtz anti-heroic?
22. What features of Conrad's short story make it modernistic? stream of consciousness, anti-hero, darkness
23. What distinguishes the Biblical doctrine of total depravity from the Darwinian notion of man as just another savage beast? Which of the two does this short story tend to promote?

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 32

1. Into what had the character Gregor Samsa metamorphosed, according to the short story?
2. Why does the author intersperse use of the Lord's name taken in vain?
3. The metamorphosis not only seems to refer to Gregor Samsa, but also to other members of his family. How did they change over the course of the short story?
4. What is the main point the author wants to make in this strange story?
5. Is this story of any true redeeming value?
6. How does this story tend to undermine Biblical truth and hope?

ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 33

1. The poem begins with a quote from the *Satyricon* of Petronius (d. A.D. 66), chapter 48: "With my own eyes I saw the Sybil of Cumae hanging in a bottle; and when the boys said to her: "[Sybil, what do you want?]" she replied, "[I want to die.]" The Sibyl to which this quote refers was a prophetess and was suspended in a bottle in the temple of Hercules at Cumae (near Naples). She was granted long life by Apollo, as many years as grains of sand she held in her hand, but she had forgotten to ask to retain her youth. With her aging she withered away. Why do you think Eliot would begin his poem in this way?
2. Many of the lines of the poem are written so as to surprise and shock the reader. Give some examples of this in the first 10 lines of the poem, and explain why the poet may have wanted to create this effect.
3. The poem is replete with absurdities and incoherencies. While it undoubtedly required artistic talent to write, do you think it is worth the time to make sense of these absurdities and incoherencies?
4. What do you think is the main point the poet is seeking to convey in the poem? Why?
5. Eliot concludes the poem with allusions to the Hindu Upanishads and the Christian Bible. The words "Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata." are Sanskrit from the *Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad*. They mean "Give. Sympathize. Control." The word "Shantih", meaning "peace", is repeated three times, and is also from the Upanishads, but has allusion as well to the verse "And the Peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" of Philippians 4:7 in the Christian Bible. Why do you think Eliot ends the poem in this way?
6. The biography of an author explains a lot about his work. How do you think Eliot's biography influenced the poem, after conducting an investigation into his biography?
7. Describe the trends in literature you have observed after reading representative literature from the last 2000 years.

Waste Land notes:

<http://world.std.com/~raparker/exploring/thewasteland/table/explore5.html>

Latin and Greek - From the *Satyricon* of Petronius (d. A.D. 66), chapter 48.

With my own eyes I saw the Sybil of Cumae hanging in a bottle; and when the boys said to her: "[Sybil, what do you want?]" she replied, "[I want to die.]"

The Sibyl was a prophetess and was suspended in a bottle in the temple of Hercules at Cumae (near Naples). She was granted long life by Apollo, as many years as grains of sand she held in her hand, but she had forgotten to ask to retain her youth. With her aging she withered away.

First is the surprise value of strange connections. April is the *cruellest month*? Winter kept us *warm*?

Another thing to notice in the opening lines is the lack of rhyme. Eliot uses rhyme later in the poem. It adds emphasis to selected sections and changes the tone of the poem. Here, instead of our listening for rhyme to follow the flow of the narrator's lines, we listen for his use of the *-ing* verbs.

And that is another surprise Eliot has given us, he has put emphasis on the words *breeding, mixing, stirring* and *feeding* by placing them on the end of the line and not at the beginning as the lines might be written by another poet.

German - From Richard Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde*
Frisch weht der Wind / Der Heimat zu / Mein Irisch Kind, / Wo weilest du?
Fresh blows the wind / To the homeland / My Irish darling / Where do you linger?

The hyacinth is a male symbol. The combination of *hyacinth* with *girl* is intriguing.

German - From Richard Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde*
Oed' und leer das Meer / Desolate and empty the sea

There is a choice of meanings here. Wicked may mean evil, non-Christian or it may be the American slang expression meaning extraordinary as in "wicked cool pack of cards".

French - From preface to Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal*
hypocrite lecteur!--mon semblable,--mon frère!
hypocrite reader!--my double,--my brother!

Several commentators suggest that this may refer to the rat infested battle trenches of World War I.

A typical call from the bartender to indicate that the bar is closing.

The four years of World War I (1914 - 1918).

If Albert has an affair Lil will suspect the speaker.

Line 155 Deserts his wife

Line 159 To induce an abortion.

Line 173 The trees shading the river are bare (thus the mention of leaves) or possibly this means the ice covering the river has broken up

Lac Lemman is the name by which Lake Geneva is known in Lausanne, Switzerland. There Eliot finished the draft of *The Waste Land* while undergoing treatment for a case of nerves. Lemman is an archaic English word for lover or paramour. Also, this line could be an allusion to *Psalms 137*, Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Rousseau's *Confessions*, or to the Wittelsbach family history.

Line 400 This is the thunder speaking. In the *Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad* the three offspring of Prajapati--gods, men, and devils--ask him in turn for sacred knowledge. He speaks as thunder and answers *Da* to each and each interprets the answer differently. They hear *damyata*, *datta* and *dayadhvam*.

Line 427

Provençal - From Dante's [Purgatorio, Canto XXVI](#) 148
Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina.
Then he hid himself in the fire that purifies them.
More fully:

«Ara vos prec, per aquella valor
que vos guida al som de l'escalina,
sovenha vos a temps de ma dolor!».
[Poi s'ascose nel foco che li affina.](#)

'And so I pray you, by that virtue
which guides you to the top of the stair,
be reminded in time of my pain.'
Then he hid himself in the fire that purifies them.

Although most of Dante's *The Divine Comedy* is written in Italian this is written in Provençal.

Line 428 Latin - From *Pervigilium Veneris (Vigil of Venus)*
Quando fiam uti chelidon
When shall I become like the swallow?

French - From Gérard de Nerval's *El Desdichado (The Disinherited)*
Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie
The prince of Aquitania in the abandoned tower

Sanskrit - From the *Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad*
Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.
Give. Sympathize. Control.

Line 433 Eliot translated Shantih as "The Peace which passeth understanding".

Philippians iv, 7: And the Peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Tarot cards used for telling fortunes.