M.A. ENGLISH – I YEAR

DKE11 : MODERN LITERATURE – I

SYLLABUS

Poetry : Detailed

Geoffrey Chaucer
- The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales
- The Knight
- The Clerk
- The Wife of Bath

Edmund Spenser - Epithalamion

John Donne - For Whom the Bell Tolls

Poetry : Non – Detailed

Thomas Wyatt - The country Mouse and the Town Mouse

Andrew Marvell - To His Coy Mistress

Prose : Detailed

Philip Sidney - Apology for Poetry

Francis Bacon - Of Marriage and Single Life, Of Friendship, Of Anger, Of Ambition, Of Vain Glory

Prose : Non – Detailed

Thomas More - Utopia

The Bible - The Gospel According to Mark

Drama : Detailed

Christopher Marlowe - Edward II

Drama : Non – Detailed

Ben Jonson - Volpone

John Webster - The Duchess of Malfi

MODERN LITERATURE I

General Introduction

Civil wars were frequent in England in the fifteenth century, and the cultivation of letters met little encouragement. Accordingly, there was no great work in prose or poetry in this period. But if no literature appeared, that which had already been produced took deeper root and spread wider its branches, mainly through the work of **William Caxton** (1422-1491), the "Father of the English Press," as he has been called. He began to print books in London about the year 1474. This man, whose name has very great significance in the history of English literature, had long been a writer when he took up the business of printing. He was not only author and printer, but compositor, proof-reader, binder, and publisher as well. Caxton's press produced about fifty important works, nearly all of them in English. A number of his publications were translations, made by Caxton himself, of notable foreign books. He printed the poems of Chaucer and of Gower, and the *History of King Arthur* by Sir Thomas Malory.

The sixteenth century was remarkable for its production of ballads which were widely circulated among the common people. A ballad tells a story in verse. Its verse form generally consists of alternate rimes, with four accents in one line and three in the other. For example, the following is a stanza of four lines form an old ballad:--

Towards | his house | in Not | tingham |
He fled | full fast | *away*, |
And so | did all | his com | pany, |
Not one | behind | did *stay*. |

The syllables are words (four in the first and third lines, and three in the second and fourth) that receive the rhythmic stress are marked. The two rhyming syllables are in italics.

The first half of this century witnessed also the dawn of a new era in poetry, marked by the appearance of **Sir Thomas Wyatt** (1503-1542) and of **Henry Howard**, **Earl of Surrey** (1517-1547). Both these writers had travelled many years in Italy. They had learned to appreciate the greatness of Italian literature, and they have been called "the first reformers of English meter and style." Surrey translated part of a Latin work in blank verse, and her shares with Wyatt the credit of introducing the sonnet lines into English literature. The sonnet is a poem of fourteen lines, no more, no less. The simplest definition of blank verse is that it is verse without rime. The Earl of Surrey first used the English blank verse.

Two prose writers of this time deserve notice. **Sir Thomas More** (1478-1535) wrote in a plain, vigorous, impressive style, the *Life and Reign of Richard III*. This is the first work deserving the name of history that appeared in the English language. The book, however, which comes first to mind at the mention of Thomas More's name is his *Utopia*, a description of the "Land of Nowhere." This favoured country is a republic, and in it there are no saloons, no fashions, no wars, and no lawyers.

William Tyndale (1484-1536) is famous for his translation of the Bible. His English is remarkably pure and vigorous. Very few of the words used in his translation have become out of date, and the work is therefore a landmark in the history of the English language.

Certain conditions and influences of the last quarter of the sixteenth and the first years of the seventeenth century strongly disposed English letters to the dramatic form of expression. For several centuries the representations in the form of plays had been rude. They had consisted of the miracle-plays, which deal with the events given in the Bible. These plays were performed sometimes within the monasteries and sometimes in the churches.

Then, as time passed, something new was demanded by the people, and by gradual steps the so-called "moral plays" took the place of those representing Bible stories. Next came translations of the ancient tragedies and comedies; then crude plays founded on Italian romance. Companies of players travelled from place to place, performing in town-halls or in such other buildings as could give accommodation to their audiences.

The first regular public theater in England was established just outside of the city limits of London in the year 1575. The number of the players and the prosperity of the playhouse steadily increased. We are now ready to consider William Shakespeare and the other great writers of Queen Elizabeth's time.

Poetry: Detailed

The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales – Geoffrey Chaucer

Geoffrey Chaucer Biography (c. 1343–1400)

Poet Geoffrey Chaucer was born in London, England in 1340. In 1357 he became a public servant to Countess Elizabeth of Ulster and continued in that capacity with the British court throughout his lifetime. *The Canterbury Tales* became his best known and most acclaimed work. He died October 25, 1400 in London, England, and was the first to be buried in Westminster Abbey's Poet's Corner.

Early Life

Chaucer's family was of the bourgeois class, descended from an affluent family who made their money in the London wine trade. Chaucer is believed to have attended the St. Paul's Cathedral School, where he probably first became acquainted with the influential writing of Virgil and Ovid.

In 1357, Chaucer became a public servant to Countess Elizabeth of Ulster, the Duke of Clarence's wife, for which he was paid a small stipend, enough to pay for his food and clothing. In 1359, the teenage Chaucer went off to fight in the Hundred Years' War in France, and at Rethel he was captured for ransom. King Edward III helped pay his ransom. After Chaucer's release, he joined the Royal Service, traveling throughout France, Spain and Italy on diplomatic missions throughout the early to mid-1360s. For his services, King Edward granted Chaucer pension.

In 1366, Chaucer married Philippa Roet, the daughter of Sir Payne Roet, and the marriage conveniently helped further Chaucer's career in the English court.

Major Works

Chaucer's body of best-known works includes the *Parliament of Fouls*, otherwise known as the *Parlement of Foules*, in the Middle English spelling. Chaucer is believed to have written the poem *Troilus and Criseyde* sometime in the mid-1380s. *Troilus and Criseyde* is broadly considered one of Chaucer's greatest works, and has a reputation for being more complete and self-contained than most of Chaucer's writing, his famed *The Canterbury Tales* being no exception.

The period of time over which Chaucer penned *The Legend of Good Women* is uncertain, although most scholars do agree that Chaucer seems to have abandoned it before its completion. The queen mentioned in the work is believed to be Richard II's wife, Anne of Bohemia. Chaucer's mention of the real-life royal palaces Eltham and Sheen serve to support

this theory. In writing *The Legend of Good Women*, Chaucer played with another new and innovative format: The poem comprises a series of shorter narratives, along with the use of iambic pentameter couplets seen for the first time in English.

The Canterbury Tales is by far Chaucer's best known and most acclaimed work. Initially Chaucer had planned for each of his characters to tell four stories a piece. The first two stories would be set as the character was on his/her way to Canterbury, and the second two were to take place as the character was heading home. Apparently, Chaucer's goal of writing 120 stories was an overly ambitious one. In actuality, *The Canterbury Tales* is made up of only 24 tales and rather abruptly ends before its characters even make it to Canterbury. The tales are fragmented and varied in order, and scholars continue to debate whether the tales were published in their correct order. Despite its erratic qualities, *The Canterbury Tales* continues to be acknowledged for the beautiful rhythm of Chaucer's language and his characteristic use of clever, satirical wit. *A Treatise on the Astrolabe* is one of Chaucer's nonfiction works.

Later Life

From 1389 to 1391, after Richard II had ascended to the throne, Chaucer held a draining and dangerous position as Clerk of the Works. He was robbed by highwaymen twice while on the job, which only served to further compound his financial worries. To make matters even worse, Chaucer had stopped receiving his pension. Chaucer eventually resigned the position for a lower but less stressful appointment as sub-forester, or gardener, at the King's park in Somersetshire.

When Richard II was deposed in 1399, his cousin and successor, Henry IV, took pity on Chaucer and reinstated Chaucer's former pension. With the money, Chaucer was able to lease an apartment in the garden of St. Mary's Chapel in Westminster, where he lived modestly for the rest of his days.

Death

The legendary 14th century English poet Geoffrey Chaucer died October 25, 1400 in London, England. He died of unknown causes and was 60 years old at the time. Chaucer was buried in Westminster Abbey. His gravestone became the center of what was to be called Poet's Corner, a spot where such famous British writers as Robert Browning and Charles Dickens were later honoured and interred.

Summary

"The Canterbury Tales" begins with the introduction of each of the pilgrims making their journey to Canterbury to the shrine of Thomas Becket. These pilgrims include a Knight, his son the Squire, the Knight's Yeoman, a Prioress, a Second Nun, a Monk, a Friar, a Merchant, a Clerk, a Man of Law, a Franklin, a Weaver, a Dyer, a Carpenter, a Tapestry-Maker, a Haberdasher, a Cook, a Shipman, a Physician, a Parson, a Miller, a Manciple, a Reeve, a Summoner, a Pardoner, the Wife of Bath, and Chaucer himself. Congregating at the Tabard Inn, the pilgrims decide to tell stories to pass their time on the way to Canterbury. The Host of the Tabard Inn sets the rules for the tales. Each of the pilgrims will tell two stories on the way to Canterbury, and two stories on the return trip. The Host will decide whose tale is best for meaningfulness and for fun. They decide to draw lots to see who will tell the first tale, and the Knight receives the honour.

The Knight

The Knight rides at the front of the procession described in the General Prologue, and his story is the first in the sequence. The Host clearly admires the Knight, as does the narrator. The narrator seems to remember four main qualities of the Knight. The first is the Knight's love of ideals—"chivalrie" (prowess), "trouthe" (fidelity), "honour" (reputation), "fredom" (generosity), and "curteisie" (refinement) (General Prologue, 45–46). The second is the Knight's impressive military career. The Knight has fought in the Crusades, wars in which Europeans travelled by sea to non-Christian lands and attempted to convert whole cultures by the force of their swords. By Chaucer's time, the spirit for conducting these wars was dying out, and they were no longer undertaken as frequently. The Knight has battled the Muslims in Egypt, Spain, and Turkey, and the Russian Orthodox in Lithuania and Russia. He has also fought in formal duels. The third quality the narrator remembers about the Knight is his meek, gentle, manner. And the fourth is his "array," or dress. The Knight wears a tunic made of coarse cloth, and his coat of mail is rust-stained, because he has recently returned from an expedition.

The Knight's interaction with other characters tells us a few additional facts about him. In the Prologue to the Nun's Priest's Tale, he calls out to hear something more lighthearted, saying that it deeply upsets him to hear stories about tragic falls. He would rather hear about "joye and greet solas," about men who start off in poverty climbing in fortune and attaining wealth (Nun's Priest's Prologue, 2774). The Host agrees with him, which is not surprising, since the Host has mentioned that whoever tells the tale of "best

sentence and moost solaas" will win the storytelling contest (General Prologue, 798). And, at the end of the Pardoner's Tale, the Knight breaks in to stop the squabbling between the Host and the Pardoner, ordering them to kiss and make up. Ironically, though a soldier, the romantic, idealistic Knight clearly has an aversion to conflict or unhappiness of any sort.

The Clerk

The Clerk, an Oxford student who has remained quiet throughout the journey, tells the next tale on the orders of the Host. The Clerk's Tale recounts a story about Walter, an Italian marquis who finally decides to take a wife after the people of his province object to his longtime status as a bachelor. Walter marries Griselde, a low-born but amazingly virtuous woman whom everybody loves. However, Walter decides to test her devotion. When their first child, a daughter, is born, Walter tells her that his people are unhappy and wish for the child's death. He takes away the child, presumably to be murdered, but instead sends it to his sister to be raised. He does the same with their next child, a son. Finally, Walter tells Griselde that the pope demands that he divorce her. He sends her away from his home. Each of these tragedies Griselde accepts with great patience. Walter soon decides to make amends, and sends for his two children. He tells Griselde that he will marry again, and introduces her to the presumed bride, whom he then reveals is their daughter. The family is reunited once more. The Clerk ends with the advice that women should strive to be as steadfast as Griselde, even if facing such adversity is unlikely and perhaps impossible.

The Merchant praises Griselde for her steadfast character, but claims that his wife is far different from the virtuous woman of the Clerk's story. He instead tells a tale of an unfaithful wife. The Merchant's Tale tells a story of January, an elderly blind knight who decides to marry a young woman, despite the objections of his brother, Placebo. January marries the young and beautiful May, who soon becomes dissatisfied with his sexual attentions to her and decides to have an affair with his squire, Damian, who has secretly wooed her by signs and tokens. When January and May are in their garden, May sneaks away to have sex with Damian. The gods Pluto and Proserpina come upon Damian and May and Pluto restores January's sight so that he may see what his wife is doing. When January sees what is occurring, May tells him not to believe his eyes – they are recovering from the blindness - and he believes her: leading to an on-the-surface happy ending.

The Wife of Bath

One of two female storytellers, the Wife has a lot of experience under her belt. She has travelled all over the world on pilgrimages, so Canterbury is a jaunt compared to other

perilous journeys she has endured. Not only has she seen many lands, she has lived with five husbands. She is worldly in both senses of the word: she has seen the world and has experience in the ways of the world, that is, in love and sex.

Rich and tasteful, the Wife's clothes veer a bit toward extravagance: her face is wreathed in heavy cloth, her stockings are a fine scarlet color, and the leather on her shoes is soft, fresh, and brand new. All of which demonstrate how wealthy she has become. Scarlet was a particularly costly dye, since it was made from individual red beetles found only in some parts of the world. The fact that she hails from Bath, a major English cloth-making town in the Middle Ages, is reflected in both her talent as a seamstress and her stylish garments. Bath at this time was fighting for a place among the great European exporters of cloth, which were mostly in the Netherlands and Belgium. So the fact that the Wife's sewing surpasses that of the cloth makers of "Ipres and of Gaunt" (Ypres and Ghent) speaks well of Bath's and England's attempt to outdo its overseas competitors.

Although she is argumentative and enjoys talking, the Wife is intelligent in a commonsense, rather than intellectual, way. Through her experiences with her husbands, she has learned how to provide for herself in a world where women had little independence or power. The chief manner in which she has gained control over her husbands has been in her control over their use of her body. The Wife uses her body as a bargaining tool, withholding sexual pleasure until her husbands give her what she demands.

Attempt a critique on Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*

The Canterbury Tales is more than an estates satire because the characters are fully individualized creations rather than simple good or bad examples of some ideal type. Many of them seem aware that they inhabit a socially defined role and seem to have made a conscious effort to redefine their prescribed role on their own terms. For instance, the Squire is training to occupy the same social role as his father, the Knight, but unlike his father he defines this role in terms of the ideals of courtly love rather than crusading. The Prioress is a nun, but she aspires to the manners and behavior of a lady of the court, and, like the Squire, incorporates the motifs of courtly love into her Christian vocation. Characters such as the Monk and the Friar, who more obviously corrupt or pervert their social roles, are able to offer a justification and a rationale for their behaviour, demonstrating that they have carefully considered how to go about occupying their professions.

The narrator begins his character portraits with the Knight. In the narrator's eyes, the Knight is the noblest of the pilgrims, embodying military prowess, loyalty, honour,

generosity, and good manners. The Knight's Tale is a tale about two knights, Arcite and Palamon, who are captured in battle and imprisoned in Athens under the order of King Theseus. While imprisoned in a tower, both see Emelye, the sister of Queen Hippolyta, and fall instantly in love with her. Both knights eventually leave prison separately: a friend of Arcite begs Theseus to release him, while Palamon later escapes. Arcite returns to the Athenian court disguised as a servant, and when Palamon escapes he suddenly finds Arcite. They fight over Emelye, but their fight is stopped when Theseus finds them. Theseus sets the rules for a duel between the two knights for Emelye's affection, and each raise an army for a battle a year from that date. Before the battle, Arcite prays to Mars for victory in battle, Emelye prays to Diana that she may marry happily, and Palamon prays to Venus to have Emelye as his wife. All three gods hear their prayers and argue over whose should get precedence, but Saturn decides to mediate. During their battle, Arcite indeed is victorious, but as soon as he is crowned victor, he is killed. Before he dies, he reconciles with Palamon and tells him that he deserves to marry Emelye. Palamon and Emelye marry.

The Knight conducts himself in a polite and mild fashion, never saying an unkind word about anyone. The Knight’s son, who is about twenty years old, acts as his father’s squire, or apprentice. Though the Squire has fought in battles with great strength and agility, like his father, he is also devoted to love. A strong, beautiful, curly-haired young man dressed in clothes embroidered with dainty flowers, the Squire fights in the hope of winning favor with his “lady.” His talents are those of the courtly lover like singing, playing the flute, drawing, writing, and riding. He loves so passionately that he gets little sleep at night. He is a dutiful son, and fulfills his responsibilities toward his father, such as carving his meat. Accompanying the Knight and Squire is the Knight’s Yeoman, or freeborn servant. The Yeoman wears green from head to toe and carries an enormous bow and beautifully feathered arrows, as well as a sword and small shield. His gear and attire suggest that he is a forester.

When the Knight finishes his tale, everybody is pleased with its honourable qualities, but the drunken Miller insists that he shall tell the next tale. The Cook's Tale was intended to follow the Reeve's Tale, but this tale only exists as a fragment. Following this tale is the Man of Law's Tale, which tells the story of Constance, the daughter of a Roman emperor who becomes engaged to the Sultan of Syria on the condition that he converts to Christianity.

The Wife of Bath begins her tale with a long dissertation on marriage in which she recounts each of her five husbands. Her first three husbands were old men whom she would hector into providing for her, using guilt and refusal of sexual favors. However, the final two

husbands were younger men, more difficult to handle. The final husband, Jankin, was a twenty-year-old, half the Wife of Bath's age. He was more trouble, as he refused to let the Wife of Bath dominate him and often read literature that proposed that women be submissive. When she tore a page out of one of his books, Jankin struck her, causing her to be deaf in one ear. However, he felt so guilty at his actions that from that point in the marriage, he was totally submissive to her and the two remained happy. The Wife of Bath's Tale is itself a story of marriage dynamic. It tells the tale of a knight who, as punishment for raping a young woman, is sentenced to death. However, he is spared by the queen, who will grant him freedom if he can answer the question "what do women want?" The knight cannot find a satisfactory answer until he meets an old crone, who promises to tell him the answer if he marries her. He agrees, and receives his freedom when he tells the queen that women want sovereignty over their husbands. However, the knight is dissatisfied that he must marry the old, low-born hag. She therefore tells him that he can have her as a wife either old or ugly yet submissive, or young and beautiful yet dominant. He chooses to have her as a young woman, and although she had authority in marriage the two were completely happy from that point.

The Friar asks to tell the next tale, and asks for pardon from the Summoner, for he will tell a tale that exposes the fraud of that profession. The Friar's Tale tells about a wicked summoner who, while delivering summons for the church court, comes across a traveling yeoman who eventually reveals himself to be the devil himself. The Summoner was enraged by the Friar's Tale. Before he begins his tale, he tells a short anecdote.

Next, the narrator describes the Prioress, named Madame Eglentyne. Although the Prioress is not part of the royal court, she does her best to imitate its manners. The Monk is the next pilgrim the narrator describes. Extremely handsome, he loves hunting and keeps many horses. The next member of the company is the Friar, a member of a religious order who lives entirely by begging. This friar is jovial, pleasure-loving, well-spoken, and socially agreeable. He hears confessions, and assigns very easy penance to people who donate money. Tastefully attired in nice boots and an imported fur hat, the Merchant speaks constantly of his profits. The merchant is good at borrowing money, but clever enough to keep anyone from knowing that he is in debt. After the Merchant comes the Clerk, a thin and threadbare student of philosophy at Oxford, who devours books instead of food.

The Clerk's Tale is the story of how a nobleman named Walter tests the loyalty of his virtuous, lowborn wife in a series of horrendous ordeals. As the Clerk tells us in his Prologue, the tale doesn't originate with him; it comes from the Italian poet Petrarch. Petrarch, in turn,

translated the tale from a famous Italian story collection, Boccaccio's *Decameron.* It's a popular story, and people have been telling and retelling it for centuries.

In some ways, the plot of the "Clerk's Tale" might be a contemporary retelling of the Biblical story of Job, in which God tests Job's devotion to him by allowing Satan to make his life miserable. The Clerk does, in fact, claim that the story is meant as an allegory of the soul's relationship to God, with the figure of Grisilde representing the devotion and obedience of the ideal Christian toward God.

The Merchant praises Griselde for her steadfast character, but claims that his wife is far different from the virtuous woman of the Clerk's story. He instead tells a tale of an unfaithful wife. The Squire tells the next tale, which is incomplete. The Squire's Tale begins with a mysterious knight arriving at the court of Tartary. The Franklin's Tale that follows tells of the marriage between the knight Arviragus and his wife, Dorigen. The Physician's Tale that follows tells of Virginius, a respected Roman knight whose daughter, Virginia, was an incomparable beauty. The Pardoner prefaces his tale with an elabourate confession about the deceptive nature of his profession. He tells the secrets of his trade, including the presentation of useless items as saints' relics. The next story, The Shipman's Tale, is the story of a thrifty merchant and his wife. The Prioress' Tale tells the story of a young Christian child who lived in a town in Asia that was dominated by a vicious Jewish population. Chaucer himself tells the next tale, The Tale of Sir Thopas, a florid and fantastical poem in rhyming couplets that serves only to annoy the other pilgrims. The Parson tells the final tale. The Parson's Tale is not a narrative tale at all, however, but rather an extended sermon on the nature of sin and the three parts necessary for forgiveness: contrition, confession, and satisfaction.

Questions:

Answer the following : 5 marks

1. Why is the Knight first in the General Prologue and first to tell a tale?
2. Compare the ideals of courtly love in the Knight's Tale with those in the Wife of Bath's Tale.

Answer the following : 15 marks

1. Discuss Chaucer as the gentle critic of the 14 century English society.

2. Chaucer gives us microcosm of English society in prologue itself. Explain in detail.

Epithalamion by Edmund Spenser

Edmund Spenser Biography

Edmund Spenser was born in 1552, London, England. He died on January 13, 1599 in London. He is an English poet whose long allegorical poem *The Faerie Queene* is one of the greatest in the English language. It was written in the Spenserian stanza.

Early Life and Education

Little is certainly known about Spenser. He was related to a noble Midlands family of Spenser, whose fortunes had been made through sheep raising. His own immediate family was not wealthy. He was entered as a "poor boy" in the Merchant Taylors' grammar school, where he would have studied mainly Latin, with some Hebrew, Greek, and music.

In 1569, when Spenser was about 16 years old, his English versions of poems by the 16th-century French poet Joachim du Bellay and his translation of a French version of a poem by the Italian poet Petrarch appeared at the beginning of an anti-Catholic prose tract, *A Theatre for Voluptuous Worldlings*. They were no doubt commissioned by its chief author, the wealthy Flemish expatriate Jan Baptista van der Noot.

From May 1569 Spenser was a student in Pembroke Hall of the University of Cambridge, where, along with perhaps a quarter of the students, he was classed as a sizar, a student who, out of financial necessity, performed various menial or semi-menial duties. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1573. Because of an epidemic, Spenser left Cambridge in 1574, but he received the Master of Arts degree in 1576.

His best-known friend at Cambridge was the slightly older Gabriel Harvey, a fellow of Pembroke, who was learned, witty, and enthusiastic for ancient and modern literature but also pedantic, devious, and ambitious. There is no reason to believe that Spenser shared the most distasteful of these qualities, but, in the atmosphere of social mobility and among the new aristocracy of Tudor England, it is not surprising that he hoped for preferment to higher position.

Spenser's period at the University of Cambridge was undoubtedly important for the acquisition of his wide knowledge not only of the Latin and some of the Greek classics but also of the Italian, French, and English literature of his own and earlier times. His knowledge of the traditional forms and themes of lyrical and narrative poetry provided foundations for him to build his own highly original compositions. Without the Roman epic poet Virgil's *Aeneid*, the 15th-century Italian Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, and, later, Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* (1581), Spenser could not have written his heroic, or

epic, poem *The Faerie Queene*. Without Virgil's *Bucolics* and the later tradition of pastoral poetry in Italy and France, Spenser could not have written *The Shepheardes Calender*. And without the Latin, Italian, and French examples of the highly traditional marriage ode and the sonnet and canzone forms of Petrarch and succeeding sonneteers, Spenser could not have written his greatest lyric, *Epithalamion*, and its accompanying sonnets, *Amoretti*. The patterns of meaning in Spenser's poetry are frequently woven out of the traditional interpretations—developed through classical times and his own—of pagan myth, divinities, and philosophies and out of an equally strong experience of the faith and doctrines of Christianity; these patterns he further enriched by the use of medieval and contemporary story, legend, and folklore.

Spenser's religious training was the most important part of his education. He could not have avoided some involvement in the bitter struggles that took place in his university over the path the new Church of England was to tread between Roman Catholicism and extreme Puritanism, and his own poetry repeatedly engages with the opposition between Protestantism and Catholicism and the need to protect the national and moral purity of the Elizabethan church. Contrary to a former view, there is little reason to believe that he inclined toward the Puritanical side. His first known appointment was in 1578 as secretary to Bishop John Young of Rochester, former master of Spenser's college at Cambridge. Spenser's first important publication, *The Shepheardes Calender*, is more concerned with the bishops and affairs of the English church than is any of his later work.

Early Works

The Shepheardes Calender can be called the first work of the English literary Renaissance. Following the example of Virgil and of many later poets, Spenser was beginning his career with a series of eclogues in which various characters, in the guise of innocent and simple shepherds, converse about life and love in a variety of elegantly managed verse forms, formulating weighty, often satirical opinions on questions of the day. The paradoxical combination in pastoral poetry of the simple, isolated life of shepherds with the sophisticated social ambitions of the figures symbolized or discussed by these shepherds has been of some interest in literary criticism.

The *Calender* consists of 12 eclogues, one named after each month of the year. One of the shepherds, Colin Clout, who excels in poetry but is ruined by his hopeless love for one Rosalind, is Spenser himself. The eclogue "Aprill" is in praise of the shepherdess Elisa, really the queen (Elizabeth I) herself. "October" examines the various kinds of verse composition

and suggests how discouraging it is for a modern poet to try for success in any of them. Most of the eclogues, however, concern good or bad shepherds that is pastors of Christian congregations. The *Calender* was well received in its day, and it is still a revelation of what could be done poetically in English after a long period of much mediocrity and provinciality. The archaic quality of its language, sometimes deplored, was partly motivated by a desire to continue older English poetic traditions, such as that of Geoffrey Chaucer.

The years 1578–80 probably produced more changes in Spenser's life than did any other corresponding period. He appears by 1580 to have been serving the fascinating, highly placed, and unscrupulous Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester and to have become a member of the literary circle led by Sir Philip Sidney, Leicester's nephew, to whom the *Calender* was dedicated and who praised it in his important critical work *The Defence of Poesie* (1595). Spenser remained permanently devoted to this brilliant writer and good nobleman, embodied him variously in his own poetry, and mourned his early death in an elegy. By 1580 Spenser had also started work on *The Faerie Queene*, and in the previous year he had apparently married one Machabyas Chylde. Interesting sidelights on his personal character, of which next to nothing is known, are given in a small collection of letters between Spenser and Gabriel Harvey that was printed in 1580. The ironies in that exchange of letters are so intricate, however, as to make it difficult to draw many conclusions from them about Spenser, except that he was young, ambitious, accomplished, and sincerely interested in the theory and practice of poetry. In 1580 Spenser was made secretary to the new lord deputy of Ireland, Arthur Lord Grey, who was a friend of the Sidney family.

Epithalamion Summary

Epithalamion is an ode written to commemorate the nuptials of the speaker and his bride. The song begins before dawn and progresses through the wedding ceremony and into the consummation night of the newlywed couple. Throughout *Epithalamion*, the speaker marks time by referencing the physical movements of the wedding party, the positions of the sun and other celestial bodies, and the light and darkness that fill the day.

Although firmly within the classical tradition, *Epithalamion* takes its setting and several of its images from Ireland, where Edmund Spenser's wedding to Elizabeth Boyle actually took place. Some critics have seen in this Irish connection a commentary within the poem of the proper relationship between ruling England (the groom) and subject Ireland (the bride). Spenser's love for the Irish countryside is clear through his vivid descriptions of the

natural world surrounding the couple, while his political views regarding English supremacy is hinted at in the relationship between the bride and groom themselves.

Other critics have seen Spenser's gift to his bride not simply as a celebration of their wedding day, but a poetic argument for the kind of husband-wife relationship he expects the two of them to have.

Spenser's Epithalamion

Paraphrase of Epithalamion Stanzas 1 through 12

Epithalamion is an ode written by Edmund Spenser as a gift to his bride, Elizabeth Boyle, on their wedding day. The poem moves through the couples' wedding day, from the groom's impatient hours before dawn to the late hours of night after the husband and wife have consummated their marriage. Spenser is very methodical in his depiction of time as it passes, both in the accurate chronological sense and in the subjective sense of time as felt by those waiting in anticipation or fear.

As with most classically-inspired works, this ode begins with an invocation to the Muses to help the groom; however, in this case they are to help him awaken his bride, not create his poetic work. Then follows a growing procession of figures who attempt to bestir the bride from her bed. Once the sun has risen, the bride finally awakens and begins her procession to the bridal bower. She comes to the "temple" and is wed, then a celebration ensues. Almost immediately, the groom wants everyone to leave and the day to shorten so that he may enjoy the bliss of his wedding night. Once the night arrives, however, the groom turns his thoughts toward the product of their union, praying to various gods that his new wife's womb might be fertile and give him multiple children.

Stanza 1

Summary

The groom calls upon the muses to inspire him to properly sing the praises of his beloved bride. He claims he will sing to himself, "as Orpheus did for his own bride." As with most of the following stanzas, this stanza ends with the refrain "The woods shall to me answer and my Eccho ring."

Analysis

In the tradition of classical authors, the poet calls upon the muses to inspire him. Unlike many poets, who called upon a single muse, Spenser here calls upon all the muses, suggesting his subject requires the full range of mythic inspiration. The reference to Orpheus is an allusion to that hero's luring of his bride's spirit from the realm of the dead using his beautiful music;

the groom, too, hopes to awaken his bride from her slumber, leading her into the light of their wedding day.

Stanza 2

Summary

Before the break of day, the groom urges the muses to head to his beloved's bower, there to awaken her. Hymen, god of marriage, is already awake, and so too should the bride arise. The groom urges the muses to remind his bride that this is her wedding day, an occasion that will return her great delight for all the "paynes and sorrowes past."

Analysis

Another classical figure, Hymen, is invoked here, and not for the last time. If the god of marriage is ready, and the groom is ready, then he expects his bride to make herself ready as well. The focus is on the sanctity of the wedding day--this occasion itself should urge the bride to come celebrate it as early as possible. Here it is the marriage ceremony, not the bride (or the groom) which determines what is urgent.

Stanza 3

Summary

The groom instructs the muses to summon all the nymphs they can to accompany them to the bridal chamber. On their way, they are to gather all the fragrant flowers they can and decorate the path leading from the "bridal bower," where the marriage ceremony is to take place, to the door of the bride's chambers. If they do so, she will tread nothing but flowers on her procession from her rooms to the site of the wedding. As they adorn her doorway with flowers, their song will awaken the bride

Analysis

This celebration of Christian matrimony here becomes firmly entrenched in the classical mythology of the Greeks with the summoning of the nymphs. No more pagan image can be found than these nature-spirits strewing the ground with various flowers to make a path of beauty from the bride's bedchamber to the bridal bower. Although Spenser will later develop the Protestant marriage ideals, he has chosen to greet the wedding day morning with the spirits of ancient paganism instead.

Stanza 4

Summary

Addressing the various nymphs of other natural locales, the groom asks that they tend to their specialties to make the wedding day perfect. The nymphs who tend the ponds and lakes

should make sure the water is clear and unmolested by lively fish, that they may see their own reflections in it and so best prepare themselves to be seen by the bride. The nymphs of the mountains and woods, who keep deer safe from ravening wolves, should exercise their skills in keeping these selfsame wolves away from the bride this wedding day. Both groups are to be present to help decorate the wedding site with their beauty.

Analysis

Here Spenser further develops the nymph-summoning of Stanza 3. That he focuses on the two groups' abilities to prevent disturbances hints that he foresaw a chance of some misfortune attending the wedding. Whether this is conventional "wedding day jitters" or a more politically-motivated concern over the problem of Irish uprisings is uncertain, but the wolves mentioned would come from the forests, the same place. Irish resistance groups use to hide their movements and strike at the occupying English with impunity.

Stanza 5

Summary

The groom now addresses his bride directly to urge her to awaken. Sunrise is long since gone and Phoebus, the sun-god, is showing "his glorious hed." The birds are already singing, and the groom insists their song is a call to joy directed at the bride.

Analysis

The mythical figures of Rosy Dawn, Tithones, and Phoebus are here invoked to continue the classical motif of the ode. Thus far, it is indistinguishable in content from a pagan wedding-song. That the groom must address his bride directly demonstrates both his impatience and the ineffectiveness of relying on the muses and nymphs to summon forth the bride.

Stanza 6

Summary

The bride has finally awakened, and her eyes likened to the sun wit their "goodly beams/More bright then Hesperus." The groom urges the "daughters of delight" to attend to the bride, but summons too the Hours of Day and Night, the Seasons, and the "three handmayds" of Venus to attend as well. He urges the latter to do for his bride what they do for Venus, sing to her as they help her dress for her wedding.

Analysis

There is a second sunrise here as the "darksome cloud" is removed from the bride's visage and her eyes are allowed to shine in all their glory. The "daughters of delight" are the nymphs, still urged to attend on the bride, but here Spenser introduces the personifications of

time in the hours that make up Day, Night, and the seasons. He will return to this time motif later, but it is important to note that here he sees time itself participating as much in the marriage ceremony as do the nymphs and handmaids of Venus.

Stanza 7

Summary

The bride is ready with her attendant virgins, so now it is time for the groomsmen and the groom himself to prepare. The groom implores the sun to shine brightly, but not hotly lest it burn his bride's fair skin. He then prays to Phoebus, who is both sun-god and originator of the arts, to give this one day of the year to him while keeping the rest for himself. He offers to exchange his own poetry as an offering for this great favor.

Analysis

The theme of light as both a sign of joy and an image of creative prowess begins to be developed here, as the groom addresses Phoebus. Spenser refers again to his own poetry as a worthy offering to the god of poetry and the arts, which he believes has earned him the favor of having this one day belong to himself rather than to the sun-god.

Stanza 8

Summary

The mortal wedding guests and entertainment move into action. The minstrels play their music and sing, while women play their timbrels and dance. Young boys run throughout the streets crying the wedding song "Hymen io Hymen, Hymen" for all to hear. Those hearing the cries applaud the boys and join in with the song.

Analysis

Spenser shifts to the real-world participants in the wedding ceremony, the entertainment and possible guests. He describes a typical Elizabethan wedding complete with elements harking back to classical times. The boys' song "Hymen io Hymen, Hymen" can be traced back to Greece, with its delivery by Gaius Valerius Catullus in the first century B.C.

Stanza 9

Summary

The groom beholds his bride approaching and compares her to Phoebe (another name for Artemis, goddess of the moon) clad in white "that seems a virgin best." He finds her white attire so appropriate that she seems more angel than woman. In modesty, she avoids the gaze of the myriad admirers and blushes at the songs of praise she is receiving.

Analysis

This unusual stanza has a "missing line"-- a break after the ninth line of the stanza (line 156). The structure probably plays into Spenser's greater organization of lines and meter, which echo the hours of the day with great mathematical precision. There is no aesthetic reason within the stanza for the break, as it takes place three lines before the verses describing the bride's own reaction to her admirers.

The comparison to Phoebe, twin sister of Phoebus, is significant since the groom has essentially bargained to take Phoebus' place of prominence this day two stanzas ago. He sees the bride as a perfect, even divine, counterpart to himself this day, as Day and Night are inextricably linked in the passage of time.

Stanza 10

Summary

The groom asks the women who see his bride if they have ever seen anyone so beautiful in their town before. He then launches into a list of all her virtues, starting with her eyes and eventually describing her whole body. The bride's overwhelming beauty causes the maidens to forget their song to stare at her.

Analysis

Spenser engages the blason convention, in which a woman's physical features are picked out and described in metaphorical terms. Unlike his blasons in Amoretti, this listing has no overarching connection among the various metaphors. Her eyes and forehead are described in terms of valuable items (sapphires and ivory), her cheeks and lips compared to fruit (apples and cherries), her breast is compared to a bowl of cream, her nipples to the buds of lilies, her neck to an ivory tower, and her whole body compared to a beautiful palace.

Stanza 11

Summary

The groom moves from the external beauty of the bride to her internal beauty, which he claims to see better than anyone else. He praises her lively spirit, her sweet love, her chastity, her faith, her honour, and her modesty. He insists that could her observers see her inner beauty, they would be far more awestruck by it than they already are by her outward appearance.

Analysis

Although not a blason like the last stanza, this set of verses is nonetheless a catalogue of the bride's inner virtues. Spenser moves for a moment away from the emphasis on outward

beauty so prominent in this ode and in pagan marriage ceremonies, turning instead to his other classical influence: Platonism. He describes the ideal woman, unsullied by fleshly weakness or stray thoughts. Could the attendants see her true beauty--her absolute beauty--they would be astonished like those who saw "Medusaes mazeful hed" and were turned to stone.

Stanza 12

Summary

The groom calls for the doors to the temple to be opened that his bride may enter in and approach the altar in reverence. He offers his bride as an example for the observing maidens to follow, for she approaches this holy place with reverence and humility.

Analysis

Spenser shifts the imagery from that of a pagan wedding ceremony, in which the bride would be escorted to the groom's house for the wedding, to a Protestant one taking place in a church. The bride enters in as a "Saynt" in the sense that she is a good Protestant Christian, and she approaches this holy place with the appropriate humility. No mention of Hymen or Phoebus is made; instead the bride approaches "before th' almighties vew." The minstrels have now become "Choristers" singing "praises of the Lord" to the accompaniment of organs.

Stanza 13

Summary

The bride stands before the altar as the priest offers his blessing upon her and upon the marriage. She blushes, causing the angels to forget their duties and encircle here, while the groom wonders why she should blush to give him her hand in marriage.

Analysis

Now firmly entrenched in the Christian wedding ceremony, the poem dwells upon the bride's reaction to the priest's blessing, and the groom's reaction to his bride's response. Her blush sends him toward another song about her beauty, but he hesitates to commit wholly to that. A shadow of doubt crosses his mind, as he describes her downcast eyes as "sad" and wonders why making a pledge to marry him should make her blush.

Stanza 14

Summary

The Christian part of the wedding ceremony is over, and the groom asks that the bride to be brought home again and the celebration to start. He calls for feasting and drinking, turning his

attention from the "almighty" God of the church to the "God Bacchus," Hymen, and the Graces.

Analysis

Spenser slips easily away from the Protestant wedding ceremony back to the pagan revelries. Forgotten is the bride's humility at the altar of the Christian God. Instead he crowns Bacchus, god of wine and revelry, and Hymen was requesting the Graces to dance. Now he wants to celebrate his "triumph" with wine "poured out without restraint or stay" and libations to the aforementioned gods. He considers this day to be holy for himself, perhaps seeing it as an answer to his previous imprecation to Phoebus that this day belong to him alone.

Stanza 15

Summary

The groom reiterates his affirmation that this day is holy and calls everyone to celebrate in response to the ringing bells. He exults that the sun is so bright and the day so beautiful, then changes his tone to regret as he realize his wedding is taking place on the summer solstice, the longest day of the year, and so his nighttime nuptial bliss will be delayed all the longer, yet last only briefly.

Analysis

By identifying the exact day of the wedding (the summer solstice, June 20), Spenser allows the reader to fit this poetic description of the ceremony into a real, historical context. As some critics have noted, a timeline of the day superimposed over the verse structure of the entire ode produces an accurate, line-by-line account of the various astronomical events (sunrise, the position of the stars, sunset).

Stanza 16

Summary

The groom continues his frustrated complaint that the day is too long, but grows hopeful as at long last the evening begins its arrival. Seeing the evening start in the East, he addresses is as "Fayre childe of beauty, glorious lampe of loue," urging it to come forward and hasten the time for the newlyweds to consummate their marriage.

Analysis

Again focused on time, the speaker here is able to draw hope from the approach of twilight. He is eager to be alone with his bride, and so invokes the evening star to lead the bride and groom to their bedchamber.

Stanza 17

Summary

The groom urges the singers and dancers to leave the wedding, but take the bride to her bed as they depart. He is eager to be alone with his bride, and compares the sight of her lying in bed to that of Maia, the mountain goddess with whom Zeus conceived Hermes.

Analysis

The comparison to Zeus and Maia is significant in that it foreshadows another desire of the groom, procreation. Besides being eager to make love to his new bride, the speaker is also hoping to conceive a child. According to legend and tradition, a child conceived on the summer solstice would grow into prosperity and wisdom, so the connection to the specific day of the wedding cannot be ignored.

Stanza 18

Summary

Night has come at last, and the groom asks Night to cover and protect them. He makes another comparison to mythology, this time Zeus' affair with Alcmene and his affair with Night herself.

Analysis

Here again Spenser uses a classical allusion to Zeus, mentioning not only the woman with whom Zeus had relations, but also their offspring. Alcmene was a daughter of Pleiades and, through Zeus, became the mother of Hercules. The focus has almost shifted away from the bride or the act of consummation to the potential child that may come of this union.

Stanza 19

Summary

The groom prays that no evil spirits or bad thoughts would reach the newlyweds this night. The entire stanza is a list of possible dangers he pleads to leave them alone.

Analysis

At the moment the bride and groom are finally alone, the speaker shifts into an almost hysterical litany of fears and dreads. From false whispers and doubts, he declines into superstitious fear of witches, "hob Goblins," ghosts, and vultures, among others. Although some of these night-terrors have analogs in Greek mythology, many of them come from the folklore of the Irish countryside. Spenser reminds himself and his readers that, as a landed Englishman on Irish soil, there is danger yet present for him, even on his wedding night.

Stanza 20

Summary

The groom bids silence to prevail and sleep to come when it is the proper time. Until then, he encourages the "hundred little winged loues" to fly about the bed. These tiny Cupids are to enjoy themselves as much as possible until daybreak.

Analysis

The poet turns back to enjoying his beloved bride, invoking the "sonnes of Venus" to play throughout the night. While he recognizes that sleep can and must come eventually, he hopes to enjoy these "little loves" with his bride as much as possible.

Stanza 21

Summary

The groom notices Cinthia, the moon, peering through his window and prays to her for a favorable wedding night. He specifically asks that she make his bride's "chaste womb" fertile this night.

Analysis

Spenser continues his prayer for conception, this time addressing Cinthia, the moon. He asks her to remember her own love of the "Latmian shephard" Endymion--a union that eventually produced fifty daughters, the phases of the moon. He specifically calls a successful conception "our comfort," placing his emotional emphasis upon the fruit of the union above the act of union itself. The impatient lover of the earlier stanzas has become the would-be father looking for completion in a future generation.

Stanza 22

Summary

The groom adds more deities to his list of patron. He asks Juno, wife of Zeus and goddess of marriage, to make their union strong and sacred, then turns her attention toward making it fruitful. So, too, he asks Hebe and Hymen to do the same for them.

Analysis

While asking Juno to bless the marriage, the speaker cannot refrain from asking for progeny. So, too, he invokes Hebe (goddess of youth) and Hymen to make their wedding night one of fortunate conception as well as wedded bliss. While he does return to the hope or prayer that the marriage will remain pure, the speaker still places conception as the highest priority of the night.

Stanza 23

Summary

The groom utters and all-encompassing prayer to all the gods in the heavens, that they might bless this marriage. He asks them to give him "large posterity" that he may raise up generations of followers to ascend to the heavens in praise of the gods. He then encourages his bride to rest in hope of their becoming parents.

Analysis

Spenser brings this ode to a major climax, calling upon all the gods in the heavens to bear witness and shower their blessings upon the couple. He states in no uncertain terms that the blessing he would have is progeny--he wishes nothing other than to have a child from this union. In typical pagan bargaining convention, the speaker assures the gods that if they give him children, these future generations will venerate the gods and fill the earth with "Saints."

Stanza 24

Summary

The groom addresses his song with the charge to be a "goodly ornament" for his bride, whom he feels deserves many physical adornments as well. Time was too short to procure these outward decorations for his beloved, so the groom hopes his ode will be an "endlesse moniment" to her.

Analysis

Spenser follows Elizabeth convention in returning to a self-conscious meditation upon his ode itself. He asks that this ode, which he is forced to give her in place of the many ornaments which his bride should have had, will become an altogether greater adornment for her. He paradoxically asks that it be "for short time" and "endless" monument for her, drawing the reader's attention back to the contrast between earthly time, which eventually runs out, and eternity, which lasts forever in a state of perfection.

Critical appreciation of *Epithalamion*

Epithalamion is Spenser's masterpiece, recalling the greatness of *The Faerie Queene*, and the greatest poem in the English language. In it, Spenser creates a complex celebration of life and living. Its form, as explained by Arnold Sanders, Goucher College, is the genre of wedding song originated in Latin, e.g., Catullus, sung by a choir accompanying the bride and groom to the groom's home. It comprises 23 stanzas of 18 lines and varying rhyme schemes, with a final envoy. Each stanza, shown by A. Kent Hieatt, corresponds to the hours of *Midsummer's Day*.

Each stanza has a refrain, 6 of which, John B. Lord states, repeat one version or another, resulting in 17 variations to the refrain during which the "echo" rings from morning to night and to silence. There are 365 long lines and 68 short lines. The long lines correspond to the days of a year (365). The short lines correspond to the number of weeks in a year (52), added to the number of months in a year (12), added to the number of seasons in a year (4): 52 + 12 + 4 = 68. This complex calendar (perhaps inspired by his earlier *The Shepherd's Calendar*(1579)) represents a thematic element.

Prominent literary devices Spenser uses are allusion and conventional motif. Following an allusion tradition begun by Chaucer in English vernacular poems, Spenser combines classical Pagan allusions ("And thou great Juno, which with awful might...") with Christian sentiment ("Of blessed Saints for to increase the count"). Conventional motif use occurs, described by Arnold Sanders, in the envoy (427-433), which modifies the French "devouring time" motif: Spenser writes, "...short time an endlesse moniment." Shakespeare later employs and develops the "devouring time" motif (Sonnet 18).

Of the themes in *Epithalamion*, one connects with its calendrical structure. Thematically, the 365 long lines (days) represent our daily experience of life and living. The 68 short lines (weeks, month, seasons), represent our organizational and cyclical experience of life and living: We accomplish by weeks; we measure and designate by months and years; we grow and wane, fortunes and happinesses rise and fall, with the seasons of the year and of our lives.

Written as the culmination of *Amoretti*, *Epithalamion* celebrates the marriage on June 11, 1594 of Spenser to his second wife Elizabeth Boyle, daughter of James Boyle, relation of Earl of Cork, Richard Boyle. *Amoretti* chronicles their courtship, her disinterestedness (eventually won over) a rupture and a reunion and engagement. *Epithalamion* is the resolution of the tale begun in *Amoretti.* The first three books of *The Faerie Queene* had just been published when he met Elizabeth.*Amoretti* and *Epithalamion* cover the time from early 1591 to 1594; both were published in 1595.

The major structure gives the summary. Spenser/the speaker is alone before the wedding and feast, which he anticipates. He summons to the wedding and feast the muses and all the guests from divinity to friends to neighbors. The bride comes with her wedding train; the wedding is made; and the feast begins. The groom encourages loud and joyful merriment until the time is past, then he bids them leave. They slowly leave bringing a transition from public life to private lives as the bride and groom are now alone. He then

welcomes Night, the Moon, and Silence, bidding that they cover the couple with the dark, safe and comfortable. The envoy proclaims that she will be remembered eternally in his poetry.

Questions:

Answer the following : 5 marks

1. How is the passage of time prominent in ***Epithalamion***?
2. How does Spenser mix pagan, Christian, and local lore in ***Epithalamion***?
3. How does the groom's goals seem to change over the course of ***Epithalamion***?
4. How does the passage of time in ***Epithalamion*** parallel the stages of human life?

Answer the following : 15 marks

1. What qualities make *Epithalamion* an ode?
2. *Epithalamion* is a bridal ode. Discuss.

For Whom the Bell Tolls - by John Donne

John Donne Biography

John Donne, leading English poet of the Metaphysical school, is often considered the greatest loved poet in the English language. John Donne was born into a Catholic family in 1572, during a strong anti-Catholic period in England. Donne's father, also named John, was a prosperous London merchant. His mother, Elizabeth Heywood, was the grand-niece of Catholic martyr Thomas More. Religion would play a tumultuous and passionate role in John's life.

Donne's father died in 1576, and his mother remarried a wealthy widower. He entered Oxford University at age 11 and later the University of Cambridge, but never received degrees, due to his Catholicism. At age 20, Donne began studying law at Lincoln's Inn and seemed destined for a legal or diplomatic career. During the 1590s, he spent much of his inheritance on women, books and travel. He wrote most of his love lyrics and erotic poems during this time. His first books of poems, "Satires" and "Songs and Sonnets," were highly prized among a small group of admirers.

In 1593, John Donne's brother, Henry, was convicted of Catholic sympathies and died in prison soon after. The incident led John to question his Catholic faith and inspired some of his best writing on religion. At age 25, Donne was appointed private secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England. He held his position with Egerton for several years and it's likely that around this period Donne converted to Anglicanism.

On his way to a promising career, John Donne became a Member of Parliament in 1601. That same year, he married 16-year-old Anne More, the niece of Sir Egerton. Both Lord Egerton and Anne's father, George More, strongly disapproved of the marriage, and, as punishment, More did not provide a dowry. Lord Egerton fired Donne and had him imprisoned for a short time. The eight years following Donne's release would be a struggle for the married couple until Anne's father finally paid her dowry.

In 1610, John Donne published his anti-Catholic polemic "Pseudo-Martyr," renouncing his faith. In it, he proposed the argument that Roman Catholics could support James I without compromising their religious loyalty to the pope. This won him the king's favour and patronage from members of the House of Lords. In 1615, Donne was ordained soon thereafter was appointed Royal Chaplain. His elabourate metaphors, religious symbolism and flair for drama soon established him as a great preacher.

In 1617, John Donne's wife died shortly after giving birth to their 12th child. The time for writing love poems was over, and Donne devoted his energies to more religious subjects. In 1621, Donne became dean of St. Paul's Cathedral. During a period of severe illness, he wrote "Devotions upon Emergent Occasions," published in 1624. This work contains the immortal lines "No man is an island" and "never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." That same year, Donne was appointed Vicar of St. Dunstan's-in-the-West and became known for his eloquent sermons.

As John Donne's health continued to fail him, he became obsessed with death. Shortly before he died, he delivered a pre-funeral sermon, "Death's Duel." His writing was charismatic and inventive. His compelling examination of the mortal paradox influenced English poets for generations. Donne's work fell out of favor for a time, but was revived in the 20th century by high-profile admirers such as T.S. Eliot and William Butler Yeats.

The first two editions of John Donne's poems were published posthumously, in 1633 and 1635, after having circulated widely in manuscript copies. Readers continue to find stimulus in his fusion of witty argument with passion, his dramatic rendering of complex states of mind, and his ability to make common words yield up rich poetic meaning. Donne also wrote songs, sonnets and prose.

Text

PERCHANCE he for whom this bell tolls may be so ill, as that he knows not it tolls for him; and perchance I may think myself so much better than I am, as that they who are about me, and see my state, may have caused it to toll for me, and I know not that. The church is Catholic, universal, so are all her actions; all that she does belongs to all. When she baptizes a child, that action concerns me; for that child is thereby connected to that body which is my head too, and ingrafted into that body whereof I am a member. And when she buries a man, that action concerns me: all mankind is of one author, and is one volume; when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language; and every chapter must be so translated; God employs several translators; some pieces are translated by age, some by sickness, some by war, some by justice; but God's hand is in every translation, and his hand shall bind up all our scattered leaves

again for that library where every book shall lie open to one another. As therefore the bell that rings to a sermon calls not upon the preacher only, but upon the congregation to come, so this bell calls us all; but how much more me, who am brought so near the door by this sickness. There was a contention as far as a suit (in which both piety and dignity, religion and estimation, were mingled), which of the religious orders should ring to prayers first in the morning; and it was determined, that they should ring first that rose earliest. If we understand aright the dignity of this bell that tolls for our evening prayer, we would be glad to make it ours by rising early, in that application, that it might be ours as well as his, whose indeed it is. The bell doth toll for him that thinks it doth; and though it intermit again, yet from that minute that this occasion wrought upon him, he is united to God. Who casts not up his eye to the sun when it rises? but who takes off his eye from a comet when that breaks out? Who bends not his ear to any bell which upon any occasion rings? but who can remove it from that bell which is passing a piece of himself out of this world? No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee. Neither can we call this a begging of misery, or a borrowing of misery, as though we were not miserable enough of ourselves, but must fetch in more from the next house, in taking upon us the misery of our neighbours. Truly it were an excusable covetousness if we did, for affliction is a treasure, and scarce any man hath enough of it. No man hath affliction enough that is not matured and ripened by it, and made fit for God by that affliction. If a man carry treasure in bullion, or in a wedge of gold, and have none coined into current money, his treasure will not defray him as he

travels. Tribulation is treasure in the nature of it, but it is not current money in the use of it, except we get nearer and nearer our home, heaven, by it. Another man may be sick too, and sick to death, and this affliction may lie in his bowels, as gold in a mine, and be of no use to him; but this bell, that tells me of his affliction, digs out and applies that gold to me: if by this consideration of another's danger I take mine own into contemplation, and so secure myself, by making my recourse to my God, who is our only security.

John Donne: Poems "For whom the bell tolls"

"No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee."

--*Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, "Meditation XVII"

These are perhaps the most famous lines in John Donne's oeuvre, especially since they were used in the 20th century by Ernest Hemingway for the title of his novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*). It is often suggested that the lines come from Donne's poetry, but they come from a prose work, the *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions, and severall steps in My Sicknes*, written in 1624 while Donne was Dean of St. Paul's (a very high honour in the Church of England). The book expresses his reflections in light of his very serious bout with spotted fever.

Donne dedicated this set of 23 short prose "Meditations" to Prince Charles, the son of King James I. The elder Stuart had elevated Donne to this high ecclesiastical position and had, essentially, made Donne's fortune. But these works are hardly the toadying efforts of a sycophant to royalty; they are personal thoughts about the nature of the universe and humanity's place in it. That they would be addressed to the royal personage who provided his clerical appointment was only fitting in Donne's time.

The bell metaphor is carried over into this meditation (number XVII) from the previous one, in which Donne, remembering himself as a very ill man lying in his bed at home, recounted that he had heard the tolling of the funeral bell in the neighboring church day after day. Thinking himself near death, he imagines himself like these dead, passing from

this life into the next. This morbid fascination has come over him because of enforced solitude, the people around him being loath to come near him for fear of infection. Hearing the bell, he considers that, perhaps, these people have "caused it to toll for mee, and I know not that" (Coffin 441). This leads him to a profound metaphysical realization, not unlike what fills much of his poetry (Coffin 440):

The Church is Catholike, universall, so are all her Actions; All that she does, belongs to all. When she baptizes a child, that action concerns mee, for that child is thereby connected to that Head which is my Head too, and engraffed into that body, whereof I am a member … All mankinde is of one Author, and is one volume; when one Man dies, one Chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language.

In the Catholic tradition, all humanity is connected in the Body of Christ, and all are equal before God. In the Afterlife, there is no more male or female, Jew or Greek. The Bible states that "we are many parts, but we are all part of one body in Christ" and that "there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

The implication for the individual living on Earth is that he is part of a greater whole, such that the death-bell has deep and significant meaning for everyone who hears it. We are all in this life together and part of the same divine plan, so the bell does toll for the sake of all who have ears to hear it.

The toll for another's death is also a reminder to the individual hearer to get his own affairs in order in the short time remaining before his own death. The civic-mindedness that comes from seeing oneself as part of a greater whole also provides direction for voluntary charity as an expression of spiritual devotion as one tries to live by divine standards.

John Donne: Poems Summary and Analysis

Donne is approaching death. Hearing a church bell signifying a funeral, he observes that every death diminishes the large fabric of humanity. We are all in this world together, and we ought to use the suffering of others to learn how to live better so that we are better prepared for our own death, which is merely a translation to another world.

Analysis

Perhaps Donne's most famous prose, "Meditation 17," is the source of at least two popular quotations: "No man is an island" and "Ask not for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for

thee." In his meditations, Donne sought to examine some aspect of daily life usually a regular religious rite and explicate its meaning for himself and, by extension, all Christians or humanity in general.

In this two-paragraph meditation, Donne meditates upon the sounding of a church bell signifying a funeral and connects it to his own present illness. He wonders if the person is aware that the bell has sounded for him. If someone is dead, he does not know and it is too late for him to meditate upon the sound of the bell. Donne then applies the idea to himself, using the bell to become aware of his own spiritual sickness, and to everyone else by noting that the church is a universal establishment. Every human action affects the rest of humanity in some way. The church's universality comes from God, who is in charge of all "translations" from earthly to spiritual existence which occur at death. Although God uses various means to achieve this changeover, God is nonetheless the author and cause of each death. Donne also compares this death-knell to the church bell calling the congregation to worship, as both bells apply to all and direct their attention to matters more spiritual than material.

Donne uses an interesting image when he considers how God is the "author" of every person and every death: "all mankind is of one author, and is one volume; when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language; and every chapter must be so translated." Whether a man dies of old age, in battle, from disease or accident, or even through the actions of the state dispensing its idea of justice, God has in a sense decided the terms of each death. As universal author, God will bind together these various "translated" pages, each man a chapter, into a volume which is open to all. In the new universal "library" of mankind, "every book shall lie open to one another." Yet all of this imagery takes up only one sentence, and Donne returns in the next sentence to the meaning of the bell.

Donne also recounts how the various religious orders disagreed about which group should be given the privilege of ringing the first bell calling everyone to prayer; the decision was made to allow the order which rose first in the morning to ring that bell. Again Donne connects this to the death-knell and urges himself and his readers to take its imminence into account when deciding what to do each day. After all, the bell really tolls for the person who has the ears to hear it.

At the opening of the second paragraph, Donne returns to his idea that "no man is an island," indicating that everyone is connected to every other human being in some way. Just

as dirt and sand clods are part of the European continent, so too is each man part of the entire human race; the removal of a clod diminishes the continent, and the removal of a human life diminishes mankind. Since every death diminishes the rest of mankind in some way, when the bell tolls for a funeral it tolls in a sense for everyone.

Donne concludes by stating that his meditation is not an effort to "borrow misery," since everyone has enough misery for his life. He does, however, argue that affliction is a treasure in that it causes men to grow and mature; therefore we inherit wisdom from perceiving another's suffering. Although a man may not be able to make use of that wisdom himself as he suffers and dies, those who observe it can better prepare themselves for their own fate.

Questions:

Answer the following: 5 marks

1. Explain the poetic devices used by John Donne in the poem *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

Answer the following: 5 marks

1. Critically analyse the poem *For Whom the Bell Tolls* by John Donne.

Poetry: Non-Detailed

The Country Mouse and the Town Mouse by Thomas Wyatt

The Life of Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542)

Thomas Wyatt was born to Henry and Anne Wyatt at Allington Castle, near Maidstone, Kent, in 1503. Little is known of his childhood education. His first court appearance was in 1516 as Sewer Extraordinary to Henry VIII. In 1516 he also entered St. John's College, University of Cambridge. Around 1520, when he was only seventeen years old, he married Lord Cobham's daughter Elizabeth Brooke. She bore him a son, Thomas Wyatt, the Younger, in 1521. He became popular at court, and carried out several foreign missions for King Henry VIII, and also served various offices at home.

Around 1525, Wyatt separated from his wife, charging her with adultery; it is also the year from which his interest in Anne Boleyn probably dates.1 He accompanied Sir Thomas Cheney on a diplomatic mission to France in 1526 and Sir John Russell to Venice and the papal court in Rome in 1527. He was made High Marshal of Calais (1528-1530) and Commissioner of the Peace of Essex in 1532. Also in 1532, Wyatt accompanied King Henry and Anne Boleyn, who was by then the King's mistress, on their visit to Calais. Anne Boleyn married the King in January 1533, and Wyatt served in her coronation in June.

Wyatt was knighted in 1535, but in 1536 he was imprisoned in the Tower for quarreling with the Duke of Suffolk, and possibly also because he was suspected of being one of Anne Boleyn's lovers. During this imprisonment Wyatt witnessed the execution of Anne Boleyn on May 19, 1536 from the Bell Tower, and wrote "V. Innocentia Veritas Viat Fides Circumdederunt me inimici mei." He was released later that year. Henry, Wyatt's father died in November 1536.

Wyatt was returned to favour and made ambassador to the court of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, in Spain. He returned to England in June 1539, and later that year was again ambassador to Charles until May 1540. Wyatt's praise of country life, and the cynical comments about foreign courts, in his verse epistle Mine Own John Poins derive from his own experience.

In 1541 Wyatt was charged with treason on a revival of charges originally levelled against him in 1538 by Edmund Bonner, now Bishop of London. Bonner claimed that while ambassador, Wyatt had been rude about the King's person, and had dealings with Cardinal Pole, a papal legate and Henry's kinsman, with whom Henry was much angered over Pole's siding with papal authority in the matter of Henry's divorce proceedings from Katharine of

Aragón. Wyatt was again confined to the Tower, where he wrote an impassioned 'Defence'. He received a royal pardon, perhaps at the request of then queen, Catharine Howard, and was fully restored to favor in 1542. Wyatt was given various royal offices after his pardon, but he became ill after welcoming Charles V's envoy at Falmouth and died at Sherborne on 11 October 1542.

None of Wyatt's poems had been published in his lifetime, with the exception of a few poems in a miscellany entitled The Court of Venus. His first published work was Certain Psalms (1549), metrical translations of the penitential psalms. It wasn't until 1557, 15 years after Wyatt's death, that a number of his poetry appeared alongside the poetry of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey in printer Richard Tottel's Songs and Sonnets written by the Right Honourable Lord Henry Howard late Earl of Surrey and other. Until modern times it was called simply Songs and Sonnets, but now it is generally known as Tottel's Miscellany. The rest of Wyatt's poetry, lyrics, and satires remained in manuscript until the 19th and 20th centuries "rediscovered" them.

Wyatt, along with Surrey, was the first to introduce the sonnet into English, with its characteristic final rhyming couplet. He wrote extraordinarily accomplished imitations of Petrarch's sonnets, including 'I find no peace' ('Pace non trovo') and 'Whoso List to Hunt'—the latter, quite different in tone from Petrarch's 'Una candida cerva', has often been seen to refer to Anne Boleyn as the deer with a jewelled collar. Wyatt was also adept at other new forms in English, such as the terza rima and the rondaeu. Wyatt and Surrey often share the title "father of the English sonnet."

Summary

In the original tale, a proud town mouse visits his cousin in the country. The country mouse offers the city mouse a meal of simple country cuisine, at which the visitor scoffs and invites the country mouse back to the city for a taste of the "fine life" and the two cousins dine like emperors. But their rich and delicious metropolitan feast is interrupted by a couple of dogs which force the rodent cousins to abandon their meal and scurry to safety. After this, the country mouse decides to return home, preferring security to opulence or, as the 13th-century preacher Odo of Cheriton phrased it, "I'd rather gnaw a bean than be gnawed by continual fear".

The story was widespread in Classical times and there is an early Greek version by Babrius (Fable 108). Horace included it as part of one of his satires (II.6), ending on this story in a poem comparing town living unfavorable to life in the country. Marcus

Aurelius alludes to it in his Meditations, Book 11.22; "Think of the country mouse and of the town mouse, and of the alarm and trepidation of the town mouse".

However, it seems to have been the 12th century Anglo-Norman writer Walter of England who contributed most to the spread of the fable throughout medieval Europe. His Latin version (or that of Odo of Cheriton) has been credited as the source of the fable that appeared in the Spanish Libro de Buen Amor of Juan Ruiz in the first half of the 14th century. Walter was also the source for several manuscript collections of Aesop's fables in Italian and equally of the popular Esopi fabulas by Accio Zucca, the first printed collection of Aesop's fables in that language (Verona, 1479), in which the story of the town mouse and the country mouse appears as fable 12. This consists of two sonnets, the first of which tells the story and the second contains a moral reflection.

Critical Analysis of the poem *The country Mouse and the Town Mouse*

Truth is a crucial term in the poetry of Sir Thomas Wyatt. The word and its derivatives, with closely related terms like "trust" and "faith," and their derivatives and opposites, appear in nearly 50 percent of his poems. These terms frequently clump together, three and four to a poem, although it is equally true that there are major poems raising the issue of truth in which none of them appears. Their frequency in Wyatt is an index of the importance of a cluster of ideas: truth in its various senses, particularly the value and power of truth.

Wyatt's "truth" has become a touchstone of competing critical methods. Older critical approaches, despite their own differences, have found in the poet's work a stable core of belief, in which speaking truth is central. Whether the core is seen as Tudor humanism, the "inner man," Senecan-stoic disregard of circumstance, religious affirmation, or the stabilizing value of ironic statement, the poems that embody the core of belief are seen as those in which Wyatt lays aside his characteristic "doubleness" and speaks directly. A contrasting strand of New Historicist interpretation has challenged the existence of any such stable core. In Stephen Greenblatt's influential formulation, a Wyatt poem is "not a direct expression of the author's mind," but an instrument "to manifest and augment his power." Hence the ostensible subject -- "the single self, the affirmation of wholeness or stoic apathy or quiet of mind" -- is actually "a rhetorical construction designed to enhance the speaker's power, allay his fear, disguise his need." The real drama of the poems, in such a reading, comes in the inadvertent bleeding through of these fears and needs, which makes it possible to see behind the façade.

Through extraordinary poetic craft Wyatt constitutes a self that is definable though concealed, and definable *through* its concealment.

New Historicist interpretation has often argued that "autonomous self and text are mere holograms, effects that intersecting institutions produce"; that "the creation of modern subjectivity [lies] in the necessary failures to produce a stable subject" (Veeser, xiii; Gallagher, 47). Wyatt, indeed, has served as one vehicle for such arguments. Simultaneously, much New Historicist criticism has assumed that a society's structures of power permeate the entire field of cultural production, so that all cultural works, willingly or not, reproduce the ruling ideology; in Greenblatt's apothegm, "There is subversion, no end of subversion, only not for us" (*Negotiations*, 39, 65). The issues are of course linked, in that denial of a relatively stable subjectivity removes one arena in which oppositional thought could take form. In contention between proponents of this view and some of their critics has been the degree to which culture reflects dominant ideology -- whether artistic works can embody a consciousness that is counter to the ruling ideology, in whole or in part, within the framework of other powerfully supported cultural norms, such as ethical or religious values.

Acknowledging that Greenblatt's approach "makes no space for change or for contestation," Louis A. Montrose has formulated a modified New Historicist position to take account of the differing "interests," "social positionalities," and "properties" of the makers, receivers, and media of cultural communications, and so to recognize "the manifold mediations involved in the production, reproduction and appropriation of an ideological dominance" (33n, 22). Montrose wishes to acknowledge "the *relative* autonomy of specific discourses and their capacity to impact upon the social formation, to make things happen" (23; Montrose's emphasis). Yet there are two problems with these loosened formulations. The first lies in the phrase "production, reproduction and appropriation of an ideological dominance." Despite a nod toward Elizabethan "heterodoxy" (24), this formula still pictures culture at any moment as a "dominance," thus minimizing the ways it can be opposed within a larger consensus or given different meanings in practice. The second, more subtle problem is that of how "discourses" shift. This problem involves an avoidance of that problematic element (for New Historicists), the individual and collective self. The idea of the dominance of a discourse, even when modified by the specification that other discourses have "relative autonomy," provides no Meaning: of how discourses merge, recombine, change the reference and meaning of their terms, and develop new terms. Such an Meaning: requires not merely the idea of relatively autonomous *discourses,* but that of relatively distinct individual and

group *identities* whose communications or reactions rework them. Though Montrose does not necessarily share the view that the self is mere artifact, it is not among the elements of the New Historicist paradigm that he chooses to recast.

To criticize such approaches, it is not necessary to return to ideas of a presocial, autonomous self or of art standing apart from social structures. It is only necessary to recognize that subjectivities shaped by often crosscutting social contexts acquire their own hardness and resilience, in varying degrees. A historical period such as the English Renaissance, marked by increased personal mobility for the elite, by overlapping intellectual vocabularies -- those of changing Christian doctrine, classical traditions, courtly politics, courtly love, and so on -- and by conflicts between public discourse and backstage conduct, need not produce only a self whose discourse mirrors career vicissitudes. Such a period may also produce a self that takes defined form around archaic or non dominant discourses; additionally, and centrally for my purposes, it may produce one that simply holds back, creating a second layer of ideas open only to a few. In our own time, the career of an Andrei Sakharov, and the practice of others in Communist regimes who kept their own truths while repeating approved slogans, should remind us of these possibilities. The basic weakness of New Historicist formulations is not their attack on the notion of an individuality apart from society. It is that they insist on a concept of self as vector sum of social pressures. This conception reifies one aspect of a complex relation -- between social existence and subjectivity -- into the only determining aspect, just as humanism and romanticism did, though in the opposite direction.

Wyatt's treatment of truth is a corrective to such conceptions. Neither confidently resting on inner truth nor uneasily betraying inner anxiety, Wyatt works through purposeful concealment to present a "truth" that is primarily a negative social criticism. Its central messages are that truth and personal integrity are not to be relied on in a world of power and, in the satires, that neither honest counsel nor withdrawal is a solution to traditional dilemmas of truth versus service. Wyatt's characteristic tone of embattled honesty, implying that the speaker is entangled in false social relations but not false statements, is thus a surface one; underneath it is the more radical suggestion that truth is powerless. Wyatt's poems veil truth by concealing risky meanings under conventional ones, suggesting *latenter* what they deny or slur over on the surface.[4]

Wyatt's evasions and ambiguities are a purposeful defense that secures a genuine subjectivity at the price of careful concealment. The base-level value of this subjectivity lies

in its power of covert social criticism. While Wyatt, as a court poet and Henrician diplomat, does not question the court system's fundamental legitimacy, he does question its operations, the precariousness of honesty within this system, and the necessary dissimulation of political life. And he does so systematically, through art. The only evidence of an art of indirection, as opposed to simple contradiction between surface and subtext, is the existence of pattern. Methodical juxtaposition of different conceptions at distinct levels of text suggests conscious control. Such a patterning in Wyatt's career lyrics and satires allows us to observe Wyatt's control of his evasions and allows Wyatt, through this control, to get away with them. This art of indirection is Wyatt's truth about truth. Its emblem is the two mice of the second satire, who are at one level characters in a conventional moral fable, at a second level the objects of a latent political satire, and at a third, even more hidden level figures for the slipperiness needed to tell the truth and survive.

Questions

Answer the following: 5 marks

1. Why does the country mouse decide to go to the city?
2. Why does the country mouse decide to go back to the country?
3. What lesson is the author trying to teach us through this tale?

Answer the following: 15 marks

1. "A simple life in peace and safety is preferable to a life of luxury tortured by fear." Explain.

To His Coy Mistress by Andrew Marvell

Andrew Marvell Biography

Andrew Marvell was born in Winestead, South Yorkshire, England, on March 31, 1621. His father was a minister. The family moved to Hull, in the county of Humberside, when Andrew was three. There, he grew up and attended school. In 1639, a year after his mother died, Marvell received a bachelor's degree from Cambridge University's Trinity College. His father died in 1640. Between 1642 and 1646, Marvell travelled in continental Europe, visiting France, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, and Italy. In 1651, he accepted a position at Nun Appleton, Yorkshire, as tutor to 12-year-old Mary Fairfax, the daughter Sir Thomas Fairfax, commander of the Parliamentary army in the 1640's during the English Civil Wars. Marvell remained in that position until 1652.

While at Nun Appleton, he wrote several of his most acclaimed poems, including "To His Coy Mistress" and "The Garden." Between 1653 and 1657, he served as a tutor to a ward of Oliver Cromwell, the lord protector of England, Ireland, and Scotland during the Commonwealth period (1653-1658). Marvell had praised Cromwell in a 1650 poem, "An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland." In 1657, Marvell served under the great scholar and poet John Milton in the foreign office and in 1659 was elected to Parliament to represent Hull. Marvell was best known during his lifetime for his political achievements and his political satires in prose and verse. His best poetry was published in *Miscellaneous Poems*1681 from a manuscript his housekeeper found while going through his belongings shortly after his death in 1678. In the 20th Century, critics began to acknowledge him as an outstanding poet of his time and to acclaim "To His Coy Mistress" as a truly great poem. T.S. Eliot presents several allusions to the poem in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock."

Text

Had we but world enough and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love’s day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges’ side
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the flood,

And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.
But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found;
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long-preserved virginity,
And your quaint honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust;
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.
Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour
Than languish in his slow-chapped power.
Let us roll all our strength and all

Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Through the iron gates of life:
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

Glossary

1 coyness: Evasiveness, hesitancy, modesty, coquetry, reluctance; playing hard to get.
2 which . . . walk: Example of enjambment (carrying the sense of one line of verse over to the next line without a pause).
3 Ganges: River in Asia originating in the Himalayas and flowing southeast, through India, to the Bay of Bengal. The young man here suggests that the young lady could postpone her commitment to him if her youth lasted a long, long time. She could take real or imagined journeys abroad, even to India. She could also refuse to commit herself to him until all the Jews convert to Christianity. But since youth is fleeting (as the poem later points out), there is no time for such journeys. She must submit herself to him now.
4 rubies: Gems that may be rose red or purplish red. In folklore, it is said that rubies protect and maintain virginity. Ruby deposits occur in various parts of the world, but the most precious ones are found in Asia, including Myanmar (Burma), India, Thailand, Sri, Lanka, Afghanistan, and Russia.
5 Humber: River in northeastern England. It flows through Hull, Andrew Marvell's hometown.
6 Flood. . . Jews: Resorting to hyperbole, the young man says that his love for the young lady is unbounded by time. He would love her ten years before great flood that Noah outlasted in his ark (Gen. 5:28-10:32) and would still love her until all Jews became Christians at the end of the world.
vegetable love: love cultivated and nurtured like a vegetable so that it flourishes prolifically
8 this state: This lofty position; this dignity.
9 Time's wingèd chariot: In Greek mythology, the sun was personified as the god Apollo, who rode his golden chariot from east to west each day. Thus, Marvell here associates the sun god with the passage of time.
10 marble vault: The young lady's tomb.
11 worms: a morbid phallic reference.

12 quaint: Preserved carefully or skillfully.

13 dew: The 1681 manuscript of the poem uses *glew* (not *dew*), apparently as a coined past tense for *glow*.

14 transpires: Erupts, breaks out, emits, gives off.

15 slow-chapt: Chewing or eating slowly.

16 Thorough: Through.

Summary

"To His Coy Mistress" is divided into three stanzas or poetic paragraphs. It's spoken by a nameless man, who doesn't reveal any physical or biographical details about himself, to a nameless woman, who is also biography-less.

During the first stanza, the speaker tells the mistress that *if* they had more time and space, her "coyness" wouldn't be a "crime." He extends this discussion by describing how much he would compliment her and admire her, if only there was time. He would focus on "each part" of her body until he got to the heart (and "heart," here, is both a metaphor for sex, and a metaphor for love).

In the second stanza he says, "BUT," we don't have the time, we are about to die! He tells her that life is short, but death is *forever*. In a shocking moment, he warns her that, when she's in the coffin, worms will try to take her "virginity" if she doesn't have sex with him before they die. If she refuses to have sex with him, there will be repercussions for him, too. All his sexual desire will burn up, "ashes" for all time.

In the third stanza he says, "NOW," I've told you what will happen when you die, so let's have sex while we're still young. Hey, look at those "birds of prey" mating. That's how we should do it – but, before that, let's have us a little wine and time (cheese is for sissies). Then, he wants to play a game – the turn ourselves into a "ball" game. He suggests, furthermore, that they release all their pent up frustrations into the sex act, and, in this way, be free.

In the final couplet, he calms down a little. He says that having sex can't make the "sun" stop moving. In Marvell's time, the movement of the sun around the earth is thought to create time. Anyway, he says, we can't make time stop, but we can change places with it. Whenever we have sex, we pursue time, instead of time pursuing us. This fellow has some confusing ideas about sex and time. Come to think of it, we probably do, too. "To His Coy Mistress" offers us a chance to explore some of those confusing thoughts.

Type of Work

"To His Coy Mistress," acclaimed long after Marvell's death a masterly work, is a lyrical poem that scholars also classify as a metaphysical poem. Metaphysical poetry, pioneered by John Donne, tends to focus on the following:

- Startling comparisons or contrasts of a metaphysical (spiritual, transcendent, abstract) quality to a concrete (physical, tangible, sensible) object. In "To His Coy Mistress," for example, Marvell compares love to a vegetable (line 11) in a waggish metaphor.
- Mockery of idealized romantic poetry through crude or shocking imagery, as in lines 27 and 28 ("then **worms** shall try / That long preserved virginity').
- Gross exaggeration (hyperbole), as in line 15 ("two hundred [years] to adore each breast].
- Expression of personal, private feelings, such as those the young man expresses in "To His Coy Mistress."
- Presentation of a logical argument, or syllogism. In "To His Coy Mistress," this argument may be outlined as follows: (1) We could spend decades or even centuries in courtship if time stood still and we remained young. (2) But time passes swiftly and relentlessly. (3) Therefore, we must enjoy the pleasure of each other now, without further ado. The conclusion of the argument begins at Line 33 with "Now therefore."

The Title

The title suggests (1) that the author looked over the shoulder of a young man as he wrote a plea to a young lady and (2) that the author then reported the plea exactly as the young man expressed it. However, the author added the title, using the third-person possessive pronoun "his" to refer to the young man. The word "coy" tells the reader that the lady is no easy catch; the word "mistress" can mean *lady*, *manager*, *caretaker*, *courtesan*, *sweetheart*, and *lover*. It can also serve as the female equivalent of *master*. In "To His Coy Mistress," the word appears to be a synonym for lady or sweetheart. In reality, of course, Marvell wrote the entire poem.

The Persona (The Young Man)

Although Andrew Marvell writes "To His Coy Mistress" in first-person point of view, he presents the poem as the plea of another man. The poet enters the mind of the man and reports his thoughts as they manifest themselves. The young man is impatient, desperately so, unwilling to tolerate temporizing on the part of the young lady. His motivation appears to be

carnal desire rather than true love; passion rules him. Consequently, one may describe him as immature and selfish.

Summary and Analysis of Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress"

Summary:

The poem is spoken by a male lover to his female beloved as an attempt to convince her to sleep with him. The speaker argues that the Lady's shyness and hesitancy would be acceptable if the two had "world enough, and time." But because they are finite human beings, he thinks they should take advantage of their sensual embodiment while it lasts.

He tells the lady that her beauty, as well as her "long-preserved virginity," will only become food for worms unless she gives herself to him while she lives. Rather than preserve any lofty ideals of chastity and virtue, the speaker affirms, the lovers ought to "roll all our strength, and all / Our sweetness, up into one ball." He is alluding to their physical bodies coming together in the act of lovemaking.

Analysis:

Marvell wrote this poem in the classical tradition of a Latin love elegy, in which the speaker praises his mistress or lover through the motif of carpe diem, or "seize the day." The poem also reflects the tradition of the erotic blazon, in which a poet constructs elabourate images of his lover's beauty by carving her body into parts. Its verse form consists of rhymed couplets in iambic tetrameter, proceeding as AA, BB, CC, and so forth.

The speaker begins by constructing a thorough and elabourate conceit of the many things he "would" do to honour the lady properly, if the two lovers indeed had enough time. He posits impossible stretches of time during which the two might play games of courtship. He claims he could love her from ten years before the Biblical flood narrated in the Book of Genesis, while the Lady could refuse his advances up until the "conversion of the Jews," which refers to the day of Christian judgment prophesied for the end of times in the New Testament's Book of Revelations.

The speaker then uses the metaphor of a "vegetable love" to suggest a slow and steady growth that might increase to vast proportions, perhaps encoding a phallic suggestion. This would allow him to praise his lady's features – eyes, forehead, breasts, and heart – in increments of hundreds and even thousands of years, which he says that the lady clearly deserves due to her superior stature. He assures the Lady that he would never value her at a "lower rate" than she deserves, at least in an ideal world where time is unlimited.

Marvell praises the lady's beauty by complimenting her individual features using a device called an erotic blazon, which also evokes the influential techniques of 15th and 16th century Petrarchan love poetry. Petrarchan poetry is based upon rarifying and distancing the female beloved, making her into an unattainable object. In this poem, though, the speaker only uses these devices to suggest that distancing himself from his lover is mindless, because they do not have the limitless time necessary for the speaker to praise the Lady sufficiently. He therefore constructs an erotic blazon only to assert its futility.

The poem's mood shifts in line 21, when the speaker asserts that "Time's winged chariot" is always near. The speaker's rhetoric changes from an acknowledgement of the Lady's limitless virtue to insisting on the radical limitations of their time as embodied beings. Once dead, he assures the Lady, her virtues and her beauty will lie in the grave along with her body as it turns to dust. Likewise, the speaker imagines his lust being reduced to ashes, while the chance for the two lovers to join sexually will be lost forever.

The third and final section of the poem shifts into an all-out plea and display of poetic prowess in which the speaker attempts to win over the Lady. He compares the Lady's skin to a vibrant layer of morning dew that is animated by the fires of her soul and encourages her to "sport" with him "while we may." Time devours all things, the speaker acknowledges, but he nonetheless asserts that the two of them can, in fact, turn the tables on time. They can become "amorous birds of prey" that actively consume the time they have through passionate lovemaking.

Theme and Summary

"To His Coy Mistress" presents a familiar theme in literature—*carpe diem* (meaning *seize the day*), a term coined by the ancient Roman poet Quintus Horatius Flaccus, known as Horace (65-8 B.C.). Here is the gist of Andrew Marvell's poem: In response to a young man's declarations of love for a young lady, the lady is playfully hesitant, artfully demure. But dallying will not do, he says, for youth passes swiftly. He and the lady must take advantage of the moment, he says, and "sport us while we may." Oh, yes, if they had "world enough, and time" they would spend their days in idle pursuits, leisurely passing time while the young man heaps praises on the young lady. But they do not have the luxury of time, he says, for "time's wingéd chariot" is ever racing along. Before they know it, their youth will be gone; there will be only the grave. And so, the poet pleads his case: Seize the day.

Meter and Rhyme

The poem is in iambic tetrameter, with eight syllables (four feet) per line. Each foot consists of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. The last syllable of Line 1 rhymes with the last syllable of line 2, the last syllable of line 3 rhymes with the last syllable of line 4, the last syllable of line 5 rhymes with the last syllable of line 6, and so on. Such pairs of rhyming lines are called couplets. The following two lines, which open the poem, exhibit the meter and rhyme prevailing in most of the other couplets in the poem:

.....1.....2.....3.....4

Had **WE**..|..but **WORLD**..|..e **NOUGH**..|..and **TIME**

.....1..... ..2..... ....3.....4

This **COY**..|..ness **LA**..|..dy **WERE**..|..no **CRIME**

Setting

The poem does not present a scene in a specific place in which people interact. However, the young man and the young lady presumably live somewhere in England (the native land of the author), perhaps in northeastern England near the River Humber. The poet mentions the Humber in line 7.

Characters

Young Man: He pleads with a young lady to stop playing hard to get and accept his love.

Young Lady: A coquettish woman.

Comments

Lines 5 and 6, Lines 23 and 24, Lines 27 and 28: The final stressed vowel sounds of these pairs of lines do not rhyme, as do the final stressed vowel sounds of all the other pairs of lines. Three Sections of the Poem: Lines 1-20 discuss what would happen if the young man and young woman had unlimited time. Lines 21-32 point out that they do not have unlimited time. Lines 33-46 urge the young woman to seize the day and submit.

Questions

Answer the following **5 marks**

1. Why does Marvell use the word *echoing* in line 27?
2. What is Marvell's tone (or attitude) in lines 31 and 32?

Answer the following **15 marks**

3. Why does this poem, written in the 17th Century, remain popular in the 21st Century?
4. Write an essay that analyses the personality and character of the young man.

5. Identify examples in the poem of metaphor, alliteration, hyperbole, personification, and other figures of speech.

Prose: Detailed

An Apology for Poetry by Sir Philip Sidney

QUOTES

"If you have so earth-creeping a mind that it cannot lift itself up to look to the sky of poetry ... thus much curse I must send you, in the behalf of all poets, that while you live, you live in love, and never get favour for lacking skill of a sonnet; and, when you die, your memory die from the earth for want of an epitaph."

—Sir Philip Sidney

Sir Philip Sidney Biography Poet (1554–1586)

Elizabethan courtier Philip Sidney served as a Protestant political liaison for Queen Elizabeth I, but became famous for his poetry and death as a soldier during the English Renaissance.

Philip Sidney was born on November 30, 1554, at his family's state at Penshurst in Kent, England. From his youth, Sidney was respected for his high-minded intelligence, and frequently provided diplomatic service to Queen Elizabeth I as a Protestant political liaison. His opposition to her French marriage earned her displeasure, however, and he later left court and began writing his poetical works. In 1586, Sidney accompanied his uncle, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, to the Lowlands to defend the Protestants and was wounded in battle, dying a few weeks later, on October 17. Considered a national hero, Sidney was given a lavish funeral. When his poetry was subsequently published, he became lauded as one of the great Elizabethan writers.

Early Life

Philip Sidney was born on November 30, 1554, at the family estate at Penshurst in Kent, England. His father, Sir Henry Sidney, had been a close personal adviser to Edward VI (Henry VIII's son), but when the young king died, he managed to stay in favor with the Catholic Queen Mary, naming his first son after her husband, Philip II of Spain, who also agreed to be the child's godfather. Philip's mother was Lady Mary Dudley, sister to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who was for his lifetime a close confidant and personal favorite of Queen Elizabeth I.

Three more children were born to the couple, including Mary Sidney (later known as Countess of Pembroke), who adored her elder brother.

Young Philip began his education at the Shrewsbury School, where he proved an apt and eager student and forged a lifelong friendship with Fulke Greville (later Baron Brooke),

who would write a laudatory epitaph and biography of his bosom buddy. At the age of 13, Sidney transferred to the University of Oxford's Christ Church College.

Diplomat Courtier and Poet

Three years later, Sidney was sent to the Continent to further his education, and in 1572, he was first enlisted in diplomatic service, functioning as an envoy to King Charles IX of France. While in Paris, Sidney witnessed the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of Protestant Huguenots by Catholics. He also met Hubert Languet, a politically influential humanist who became a lifelong friend and adviser, in Europe.

Sidney, like his father before him, provided frequent diplomatic service in Europe for Queen Elizabeth. Among his actions, he formed an exploratory alliance with Protestant German princes, and visited his father in Ireland when Henry Sidney was lord deputy there.

Courtier and Poet

Sidney joined the fad of Elizabethan courtier poets, penning a play, *The Lady of May*, that was performed at his uncle, Earl of Leicester's royal entertainment for the queen in 1578. The production included political undertones about Elizabeth's consideration of a Catholic marriage alliance with France.

In 1579, a heated fracas known as the "tennis-court quarrel" between Sidney and Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, was ostensibly about rank and the rights of play, but beneath the facade were tensions between factions for and against the queen's marriage.

The queen sternly admonished Sidney for his behavior, and he subsequently left court for his sister Mary's estate at Wilton, where he took up writing a long narrative poem, *The Arcadia*, for her entertainment. During this time, he also wrote a sonnet cycle, *Astrophil and Stella*, and his critical treatise, *An Apologie for Poetry* (also known as *A Defence of Poesy)*. Sidney's compatriots in poetry included Edmund Spenser, Edward Dyer, Samuel Daniel and Gabriel Harvey.

Sidney is lampooned in several Shakespeare plays, including the character Master Slender in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, referencing his marriage negotiations with Anne Cecil, and Sir Andrew Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night* (Sidney's face was scarred from a bout with smallpox and his birthday is St. Andrew's Day).

Death & Legacy

Philip Sidney died at Arnhem in the Netherlands on October 17, 1586, after a gunshot that he'd sustained in a battle at Zutphen against the Spanish Catholic forces turned gangrenous. According to legend, in his pained state, Sidney eschewed a cup of water in

favor of another wounded soldier, saying, "Thy necessity is yet greater than mine," underscoring a carefully cultivated persona of nobility. His lavish state funeral, which almost bankrupted his father-in-law, Sir Francis Walsingham, the queen's spymaster, was delayed until February of the following year—just eight days after the beheading of Mary Queen of Scots, drawing attention away from that political powder keg. He is buried at St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

Forty-two years after Sidney's death, schoolfellow Fulke Greville had engraved on his tombstone: *Servant to Queene Elizabeth/ Conceller to King James/ and Frend to Sir Philip Sidney.* His biography of Sidney was published in 1652.

Summary

Philip Sidney in his "Apology for Poetry" reacts against the attacks made on poetry by the puritan, Stephen Gosson. To, Sidney, poetry is an art of imitation for specific purpose, it is imitated to teach and delight. According to him, poetry is simply a superior means of communication and its value depends on what is communicated.

So, even history when it is described in a lively and passionate expression becomes poetic. He prefers imaginative literature that teaches better than history and philosophy. Literature has the power to reproduce an ideal golden world not just the brazen world.

Stephen Gosson makes charges on poetry which Sidney answers.

The charges are:

1. Poetry is the waste of time.

2. Poetry is mother of lies.

3. It is nurse of abuse.

3. Plato had rightly banished the poets from his ideal world.

Against these charges, Sidney has answered them in the following ways- Poetry is the source of knowledge and a civilizing force, for Sidney. Gossoon attacks on poetry saying that it corrupts the people and it is the waste of time, but Sidney says that no learning is so good as that which teaches and moves to virtue and that nothing can both teach and amuse so much as poetry does. In essay societies, poetry was the main source of education. He remembers ancient Greek society that respected poets. The poets are always to be looked up. So, poetry is not wasted of time.

To the second charge, Sidney answers that poet does not lie because he never affirms that his fiction is true and can never lie. The poetic truths are ideal and universal. Therefore, poetry cannot be a mother of lies.

Sidney rejects that poetry is the source of abuses. To him, it is people who abuses poetry, not the vice- versa. Abuses are more nursed by philosophy and history than by poetry, by describing battles, bloodshed, violence etc. On the contrary, poetry helps to maintain morality and peace by avoiding such violence and bloodsheds. Moreover it brings light to knowledge.

Sidney views that Plato in his Republic wanted to banish the abuse of poetry not the poets. He himself was not free from poeticality, which we can find in his dialogues. Plato never says that all poets should be banished. He called for banishing only those poets who are inferior and unable to instruct the children.

For Sidney, art is the imitation of nature but it is not slavish imitation as Plato views. Rather it is creative imitation. Nature is dull, incomplete and ugly. It is artists who turn dull nature in to golden color. He employs his creative faculty, imagination and style of presentation to decorate the raw materials of nature. For Sidney, art is a speaking picture having spatiotemporal dimension. For Aristotle human action is more important but for Sidney nature is important.

Artists are to create arts considering the level of readers. The only purpose of art is to teach and delight like the whole tendency of Renaissance. Sidney favors poetic justice that is possible in poet's world where good are rewarded and wicked people are punished.

Plato's philosophy on ' virtue' is worthless at the battlefield but poet teaches men how to behave under all circumstances. Moral philosophy teaches virtues through abstract examples and history teaches virtues through concrete examples but both are defective. Poetry teaches virtue by example as well as by percept (blend of abstract + concrete). The poet creates his own world where he gives only the inspiring things and thus poetry holds its superior position to that of philosophy and history.

In the poet's golden world, heroes are ideally presented and evils are corrupt. Didactic effect of a poem depends up on the poet's power to move. It depends up on the affective quality of poetry. Among the different forms of poetry like lyric, elegy, satire, comedy etc. epic is the best form as it portrays heroic deeds and inspires heroic deeds and inspires people to become courageous and patriotic.

In this way, Sidney defines all the charges against poetry and stands for the sake of universal and timeless quality of poetry making us know why the poets are universal genius.

Examine in detail the main ideas in Sidney's "An Apology for Poetry" and comment on its significance.

An Apologie for Poetrie may for purposes of convenience be divided into sixteen sections.

1. The Prologue

Before launching a defence of poetry, Sidney justified his stand by referring in a half-humorous manner to a treatise on horseman-ship by pietro Pugliano. If the art of horsemanship can deserve such an eloquent euology and vindication, surely poetry has better claims for euology and vindication. There is a just cause to plead a case for poetry since it has fallen from the highest estimation of learning to be 'the laughing stock of children.'

2. Some Special Arguments in Favour of Poetry

Poetry has been held in high esteem since the earliest times. It has been *'the first light-giver to ignorance.'* The earlier Greek philosophers and historians were, in fact, poets. Even among the uncivilized nations, in Turkey, among the American Indians, and m Wales, poetry enjoys an undiminishing popularity. To attack poetry is, therefore, to cut at the roots of culture and intelligence.

3. The Prophetic Character of Poetry

The ancient Romans paid high reverence to the poet by calling him *Vates,* which means a Diviner, a Prophet, or a Foreseer. The etymological origin of Greek word 'poet' is *Poiein,* and this means 'to make'. Hence the Greeks honour the poet as a maker or creator. This suggests the divine nature of poetry.

4. The Nature and Function of Poetry

Poetry is an art of 'imitation' and its chief function is to teach and delight. Imitation does not mean mere copying or a reproduction of facts. It means a representing or transmuting of the real and actual, and sometimes creating something entirely new. The poet, so Sidney declares, "lifted upwith the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect another nature, in making things either better than Nature bringeth forth, or, quite a new, forms such as never were in Nature, as the Heroes, Demigods, Cyclops, Chimeras, Furies, and such like."

Commenting on the creative powers of the poet, Sidney further states: "Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as divers poets have done, neither with pleasant rivers,

fruitful trees, sweet smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make the too much loved earth more lovely. Her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden."

5. The Three Kinds of **Poetry**

The three kinds of poetry, according to Sidney, are : (a) religious poetry, (b) philosophical poetry, and (c) poetry as an imaginative treatment of life and nature. He calls special attention to the third class of poets, for 'these be they that, as the first and most noble sort may justly be termed *vates.'* They 'most properly do imitate to teach and delight, and to imitate borrow nothing of what is, has been, or shall be, but range, only with learned discretion, into the divine consideration of what may be, and should be.'

6. Various Sub-divisions of the Third Kind of Poetry

Poetry proper may further be divided into various species: the heroic, lyric, tragic, comic, satiric, iambic, elegiac, pastoral and others. Poets generally make use of verse to apparel their poetical inventions. But verse is 'an ornament and no cause to poetry since there have been many most excellent poets that never versified, and now swarm many versifiers that need never answer to the name of poets.'

7. Superiority of Poetry to Philosophy and History

In the promotion of virtue, both philosophy and history play their parts. Philosophy deals with its theoretical aspects and teaches virtue by precept. History teaches practical virtue by drawing concrete examples from life. But poetry gives both precepts and practical examples. Philosophy, being based on abstractions, is 'hard of utterance and mystery to be conceived.' It cannot be a proper guide for youth. On the other hand, the historian is tied to empirical facts that his example drags no necessary consequence. Poetry gives perfect pictures of virtue which are far more effective than the mere definitions of philosophy. It also gives imaginary examples which are more instructive than the real examples of history. The reward of virtue and the punishment of vice is more clearly shown in Poetry than in History. Poetry is superior to Philosophy in the sense that it has the power to move and to give incentive for virtuous action. It presents moral lessons in a very attractive form. Things which in themselves are horrible as cruel battles, unnatural monsters, are made delightful in poetic imitation. Poet is, therefore, the monarch of all sciences. 'For he doth not only show the way but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way, as will entice any man to enter into it.' The poet does not begin with obscure definitions which load the memory with doubtfulness, 'but he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well enchanting skill of music; and with a tale forsooth he cometh unto you, with a

tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner. And pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue.

8. Various Species of Poetry

The pastoral poetry treats of the beauty of the simple life, and sometimes, of the miseries of the people under hard Lords. Why should it be disliked? Elegiac poetry deals with the weakness of mankind and wretchedness of the world. It should evoke pity rather than blame. Satiric poetry laughs at folly, and iambic poetry tries to unmask villainy. These also do not deserve to be condemned.

Nobody should blame the right use of comedy. Comedy is an imitation of the common errors of our life presented in a ridiculous manner. It helps men keeping away from such errors. Tragedy, which opens the greatest wounds in our hearts, teaches the uncertainty of this world. Nobody can resist the 'sweet violence' of a tragedy.

The lyric which gives moral precepts and soars to the heavens in singing the praises of the Almighty, cannot be displeasing. Nor can the epic or heroic poetry be disliked because it inculcates virtue to the highest degree by portraying heroic and moral goodness in the most effective manner. Sidney asserts that the heroical is 'not only a kind, but the best and most accomplished kind of poetry.'

9. Main Objections Brought Against Poetry by its Enemies

A common complaint against poetry is that it is bound up with 'rhyming and versing'. But verse is not essential for poetry. 'One may be a poet without versing, and a versifier without poetry' Verse is used for convenience. It produces verbal harmony and lends itself easily to memorizing. It is the only fit speech for music. It adds to words a sensuous and emotional quality.

10. Four Chief Objections to Poetry

There are some more serious objections to poetry, namely :

(a) that there being many other more fruitful knowledges, a man might better spend his time in them than in this;

(b) that it is the mother of lies :

(c) that it is the nurse of abuse, infecting us with many pestilent desires; and,

(d) that Plato had banished poets from his ideal republic.

11. Replies to These Objections

Sidney dismisses the first charge by saying that he has already established that 'no learning is so good as that which reacheth and moveth to virtue, and that none can both teach and move thereto so much as poetry.'

His answer to the second objection that poets are liars is that of all writers under the sun the poet is the least liar. The Astronomer, the Geometrician, the historian, and others, all make false statements. But the poet 'nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth,' his aim being 'to tell not what is or is not, but what should or should not be.' So what he presents is not fact but fiction embodying truth of an ideal kind.

The third charge against poetry is that all its species are infected with love themes and amorous conceits, which have a demoralising effect on readers. To this charge Sidney replies that poetry does not abuse man's wit, it is man's wit that abuseth poetry. All arts and sciences misused bad evil effects, but that did not mean that they were less valuable when rightly employed. Shall the abuse of a thing make the right use odious? Certainly not.

Sidney is rather perplexed at the last charge, namely Plato's rejection of poetry. He wonders why Plato found fault with poetry. In fact, Plato warned men not against poetry but against its abuse by his contemporary poets who filled the world with wrong opinions about the gods. So Plato's objection was directed against the theological concepts. In *Ion*, Plato gives high and rightly divine commendation to poetry. His description of the poet as 'a light winged and sacred thing' in that dialogue reveals his attitude to poetry. In fact by attributing unto poetry a very inspiring of a divine force, Plato was making a claim for poetry which he for his part could not endorse. Not only Plato but, Sidney tells us, all great men have honoured poetry.

12. Why is Poetry not honoured in England as it is elsewhere?

"Why has England grown so hard a step-mother to Poets?" asks Sidney. He thinks that it is so because poetry has came to be represented by 'base men with servile wits' or to men who, however studious, are not born poets. He says that 'a poet no industry can make, if his own genius be not carried unto it'. Another cause is the want of serious cultivation of the Poetic Art. Threeihings necessary for producing good poetry are Art, Imitation, and Exercise which are lacking in the present generation of poets.

13. A Brief Review of the State of Poetry in England from Chaucer to Sidney's own Time

Sidney says that few good poems have been produced in England since Chaucer. Chaucer did marvellously well in *Troilus and Cresseida. The Mirrour of Magistrates* also contains some beautiful passages. Earl of Surrey's *Lyrics*also deserve praise. Spenser's *The Shepherds Calender* is worth reading. English lyric poetry is scanty and poor. Love lyrics and sonnets lack genuine fire and passion. They make use of artificial diction and swelling phrases.

14. Condition of Drama

The state of drama is also degraded. The only redeeming tragedy is *Gorboduc* which itself is a faulty work. A tragedy should be tied to the laws of poetry and not of history. A dramatist should have liberty to frame the history to his own tragical convenience. Again many things should be told which cannot be shown on the stage. The dramatists should know the difference between reporting and representing. They should straightway plunge into the principal point of action which they want to represent in their play. There should be no mingling of tragedies and comedies, English comedy is based on a false hypothesis. It aims at laughter, not delight. The proper aim of comedy is to afford delightful teaching, not mere coarse amusement. Comedy should not only amuse but morally instruct.

15. Advantages of the English Language

The English language has some definite advantages. It is appreciable for its adaptability to ancient and modern systems of versification. It admits both the unrhymed quantitative system of the ancient poetry and the rhyme peculiar to modern language.

16. Virtue of Poetry

Poetry is full of virtue-breeding delightfulness. It is void of no gift that ought to be in the noble name of learning. All the charges laid against it are false and baseless. The poets were the ancient treasurers of the Grecian divinity; they were the first bringers of all civility. There are many mysteries contained poetry. A poet can immortalize people in his verses.

Questions

Answer the following **5 marks**

1. What, according to Sidney, is the relationship between pleasure and learning? To what extent, ultimately, does he agree with Horace about the aim or "end" of poetry?
2. What are the four "most important imputations" that, according to Sidney, have been "laid to the door of poets"?

3. How does Sidney reply to the argument against poetry based on Plato's authority? What does Plato, according to Sidney, attribute "unto poetry more than myself do"?
4. What argument does Sidney make concerning the unity of place which states "the stage should always represent but one place"?

Answer the following **15 marks**

1. How does Sir Philip Sidney defend poetry in his essay “Apology of Poetry”
2. Is Sidney's idea of mimesis Platonic or Aristotelian? Defend your argument with illustrations.

Bacon's Essays

QUOTES

"To be ignorant of causes is to be frustrated in action."

—Francis Bacon

Francis Bacon Biography (1561–1626)

Francis Bacon was born on January 22, 1561 in London, England. Bacon served as attorney general and Lord Chancellor of England, resigning amid charges of corruption. His more valuable work was philosophical. Bacon took up Aristotelian ideas, arguing for an empirical, inductive approach, known as the scientific method, which is the foundation of modern scientific inquiry.

Early Life

Statesman and philosopher Francis Bacon was born in London on January 22, 1561. His father, Sir Nicolas Bacon, was Lord Keeper of the Seal. His mother, Lady Anne Cooke Bacon, was his father's second wife and daughter to Sir Anthony Cooke, a humanist who was Edward VI's tutor. Francis Bacon's mother was also the sister-in-law of Lord Burghley.

The younger of Sir Nicholas and Lady Anne's two sons, Francis Bacon began attending Trinity College, Cambridge, in April 1573, when he was 12 years old. He completed his course of study at Trinity in December 1575. The following year, Bacon enrolled in a law program at Honourable Society of Gray's Inn, the school his brother Anthony attended. Finding the curriculum at Gray's Inn stale and old fashioned, Bacon later called his tutors "men of sharp wits, shut up in their cells if a few authors, chiefly Aristotle, their dictator." Bacon favored the new Renaissance humanism over Aristotelianism and scholasticism, the more traditional schools of thought in England at the time.

A year after he enrolled at Gray's Inn, Bacon left school to work under Sir Amyas Paulet, British ambassador to France, during his mission in Paris. Two and a half years later, he was forced to abandon the mission prematurely and return to England when his father died unexpectedly. His meager inheritance left him broke. Bacon turned to his uncle, Lord Burghley, for help in finding a well-paid post as a government official, but Bacon's uncle shot him down. Still just a teen, Francis Bacon was scrambling to find a means of earning a decent living.

Of Marriage and Single Life

Text

HE that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief. Certainly the best works, and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men; which both in affection and means have married and endowed the public. Yet it were great reason that those that have children should have greatest care of future times; unto which they know they must transmit their dearest pledges. Some there are, who though they lead a single life, yet their thoughts do end with themselves, and account future times impertinences. 1Nay, there are some other that account wife and children but as bills of charges. Nay more, there are some foolish rich covetous men, that take a pride in having no children, because they may be thought so much the richer. For perhaps they have heard some talk,Such an one is a great rich man, and another except to it, Yea, but he hath a great charge of children; as if it were an abatement to his riches. But the most ordinary cause of a single life is liberty, especially in certain self-pleasing and humorous 2 minds, which are so sensible of every restraint, as they will go near to think their girdles and garters to be bonds and shackles. Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants; but not always best subjects; for they are light to run away; and almost all fugitives are of that condition. A single life doth well with churchmen; for charity will hardly water the ground where it must first fill a pool. It is indifferent for judges and magistrates; for if they be facile and corrupt, you shall have a servant five times worse than a wife. For soldiers, I find the generals commonly in their hortatives put men in mind of their wives and children; and I think the despising of marriage amongst the Turks maketh the vulgar soldier more base. Certainly wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity; and single men, though they may be many times more charitable, because their means are less exhaust, yet, on the other side, they are more cruel and hardhearted (good to make severe inquisitors), because their tenderness is not so oft called upon. Grave natures, led by custom, and therefore constant, are commonly loving husbands, as was said of Ulysses,vetulam suam prætulit immortalitati [he preferred his old wife to immortality]. Chaste women are often proud and froward, as presuming upon the merit of their chastity. It is one of the best bonds both of chastity and obedience in the wife, if she think her husband wise; which she will never do if she find him jealous. Wives are young

men's mistresses; companions for middle age; and old men's nurses. So as a man may have a quarrel 3 to marry when he will. But yet he 4 was reputed one of the wise men, that made answer to the question, when a man should marry,—A young man not yet, an elder man not at all. It is often seen that bad husbands have very good wives; whether it be that it raiseth the price of their husband's kindness when it comes; or that the wives take a pride in their patience. But this never fails, if the bad husbands were of their own choosing, against their friends' consent; for then they will be sure to make good their own folly.

Summary

The first line includes one of his most often quoted phrases: "He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune [italics mine]; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief." 'Hostage to Fortune' is the title of Jardine & Stewart's biography of Bacon (discussed briefly Biographical posts.) The phrase just means that people with spouses and kids are no longer free to choose as they please. They have to make sensible choices, which tend to be moderate. Great enterprises entail risk.

Caring for a family teaches a man mercy. Bacon calls it 'a kind of discipline of humanity" and observes that "single men, though they may be many times more charitable, because their means are less exhaust, yet, on the other side, they are more cruel and hardhearted… because their tenderness is not so oft called upon.

Society needs singles

Bacon has praise for the single state and seems like a single man throughout his life, even though he did eventually marry. (He was 45, she was 14, but don't worry; the marriage was probably chaste. He needed her father's money very badly.)

He wrote, "Certainly the best works, and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men; which both in affection and means, have married and endowed the public."

This is quite a bold assertion which is unlikely to hold up to scholarly scrutiny, if only because most people reproduce and therefore the parent clan has numbers on their side.

Parents do tend to focus inward, on their own families, although nowadays their perspectives may expand again as their kids grow up and leave home. In my observation, many people lose the habit, although perhaps they never had it. We should also remember

that in the sixteenth century, marriage implied children. That's not true today, when childfree couples can engage in enterprises with the single-mindedness of singles.

"Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants; but not always best subjects; for they are light to run away…" Friends, certainly, because they're available socially. Servants too, because they'd have no one competing against your interests. I don't know about subjects. You couldn't run very far, unless your monarch granted you a passport. I should think they would make worse masters, because they'd have more time to micro-manage you and also lack those lessons in humanity.

No more girdles

Singles, as noted above, may be less charitable towards others. They may "account future times impertinences" and be glad not to have to spend their money supporting children.

"But the most ordinary cause of a single life, is liberty, especially in certain self-pleasing and humorous minds, which are so sensible of every restraint, as they will go near to think their girdles and garters, to be bonds and shackles."

Bacon doesn't consider single women, although there a few in his time. It wasn't a great option in those days and they would certainly not be allowed to engage in great enterprises. Unless their name was "Elizabeth Tudor."

He does have some thoughts about chastity. "Chaste women are often proud and froward, as presuming upon the merit of their chastity. It is one of the best bonds, both of chastity and obedience, in the wife, if she think her husband wise; which she will never do, if she find him jealous."

That one makes me laugh. It's one of those basic human truths and it proves Bacon was capable of observing women and understanding their motives, even though he spent the majority of his life in the company of men. (But is that really true? He lived at Gray's most of his life, but he was a courtier all his adult life, serving a regnant queen and a king whose wife led a merry court. However shy, however male-oriented, he would have been obliged to make conversation with many women in the course of an ordinary week.)

When to marry?

Bacon originated this oft-quoted observation: "Wives are young men's mistresses; companions for middle age; and old men's nurses."

Certainly men who are looking for in-house mistresses will marry a young woman, but in my admittedly limited observation, young couples seem more equitable than those of

my peers and older. Young men don't get bent out of shape if their wife is the more successful partner. Women still live longer and are healthier longer, so the last part holds up pretty well, 400 years later.

Critical Analysis of Bacon's Essay "Of Marriage and of Single Life"

The first master of the essay form in English, Francis Bacon was confident that of all his works Essays or Counsels, Civill and Morall (1625) would "last as long as books last." One of the best known essays from that enduring collection is "Of Marriage and Single Life." In his analysis of the essay, contemporary rhetorician Richard Lanham describes Bacon's style as "clipped," "curt," "compressed," and "pointed":

No climax at the end; no sign the whole chain of reasoning had been thought out beforehand; somewhat abrupt transitions ("Some there are," "Nay, there are," "Nay, more"), several antithetical contrasts, the whole built on a single, pointed and condensed moral reflection. It is from this last characteristic that the name "pointed style" comes. The "point" is the condensed, pithy, often proverbial and always memorable statement of a general truth. It is worthwhile to compare Bacon's aphoristic observations with the lengthier reflections in Joseph Addison's "Defence and Happiness of Married Life."

Of Friendship

Text

IT HAD been hard for him that spake it to have put more truth and untruth together in few words, than in that speech, Whatsoever is delighted in solitude, is either a wild beast or a god. For it is most true, that a natural and secret hatred, and aversation towards society, in any man, hath somewhat of the savage beast; but it is most untrue, that it should have any character at all, of the divine nature; except it proceed, not out of a pleasure in solitude, but out of a love and desire to sequester a man's self, for a higher conversation: such as is found to have been falsely and feignedly in some of the heathen; as Epimenides the Candian, Numa the Roman, Empedocles the Sicilian, and Apollonius of Tyana; and truly and really, in divers of the ancient hermits and holy fathers of the church. But little do men perceive what solitude is, and how far it extendeth. For a crowd is not company; and faces are but a gallery of pictures; and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love. The Latin adage meeteth with it a little: Magna civitas, magna solitudo; because in a great town friends are scattered; so that there is not that fellowship, for the most part, which is in less neighborhoods. But we may go further, and affirm most truly, that it is a mere and miserable solitude to want true friends;

without which the world is but a wilderness; and even in this sense also of solitude, whosoever in the frame of his nature and affections, is unfit for friendship, he taketh it of the beast, and not from humanity.

A principal fruit of friendship, is the ease and discharge of the fulness and swellings of the heart, which passions of all kinds do cause and induce. We know diseases of stoppings, and suffocations, are the most dangerous in the body; and it is not much otherwise in the mind; you may take sarza to open the liver, steel to open the spleen, flowers of sulphur for the lungs, castoreum for the brain; but no receipt openeth the heart, but a true friend; to whom you may impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels, and whatsoever lieth upon the heart to oppress it, in a kind of civil shrift or confession.

It is a strange thing to observe, how high a rate great kings and monarchs do set upon this fruit of friendship, whereof we speak: so great, as they purchase it, many times, at the hazard of their own safety and greatness. For princes, in regard of the distance of their fortune from that of their subjects and servants, cannot gather this fruit, except (to make themselves capable thereof) they raise some persons to be, as it were, companions and almost equals to themselves, which many times sorteth to inconvenience. The modern languages give unto such persons the name of favorites, or privadoes; as if it were matter of grace, or conversation. But the Roman name attaineth the true use and cause thereof, naming them participes curarum; for it is that which tieth the knot. And we see plainly that this hath been done, not by weak and passionate princes only, but by the wisest and most politic that ever reigned; who have oftentimes joined to themselves some of their servants; whom both themselves have called friends, and allowed other likewise to call them in the same manner; using the word which is received between private men.

L. Sylla, when he commanded Rome, raised Pompey (after surnamed the Great) to that height, that Pompey vaunted himself for Sylla's overmatch. For when he had carried the consulship for a friend of his, against the pursuit of Sylla, and that Sylla did a little resent thereat, and began to speak great, Pompey turned upon him again, and in effect bade him be quiet; for that more men adored the sun rising, than the sun setting. With Julius Caesar, Decimus Brutus had obtained that interest as he set him down in his testament, for heir in remainder, after his nephew. And this was the man that had power with him, to draw him forth to his death. For when Caesar would have discharged the senate, in regard of some ill presages, and specially a dream of Calpurnia; this man lifted him gently by the arm out of his chair, telling him he hoped he would not dismiss the senate, till his wife had dreamt a better

dream. And it seemeth his favor was so great, as Antonius, in a letter which is recited verbatim in one of Cicero's Philippics, calleth him venefica, witch; as if he had enchanted Caesar. Augustus raised Agrippa (though of mean birth) to that height, as when he consulted with Maecenas, about the marriage of his daughter Julia, Maecenas took the liberty to tell him, that he must either marry his daughter to Agrippa, or take away his life; there was no third way, he had made him so great. With Tiberius Caesar, Sejanus had ascended to that height, as they two were termed, and reckoned, as a pair of friends. Tiberius in a letter to him saith, Haec pro amicitia nostra non occultavi; and the whole senate dedicated an altar to Friendship, as to a goddess, in respect of the great dearness of friendship, between them two. The like, or more, was between Septimius Severus and Plautianus. For he forced his eldest son to marry the daughter of Plautianus; and would often maintain Plautianus, in doing affronts to his son; and did write also in a letter to the senate, by these words: I love the man so well, as I wish he may over-live me. Now if these princes had been as a Trajan, or a Marcus Aurelius, a man might have thought that this had proceeded of an abundant goodness of nature; but being men so wise, of such strength and severity of mind, and so extreme lovers of themselves, as all these were, it proveth most plainly that they found their own felicity (though as great as ever happened to mortal men) but as an half piece, except they mought have a friend, to make it entire; and yet, which is more, they were princes that had wives, sons, nephews; and yet all these could not supply the comfort of friendship.

It is not to be forgotten, what Comineus observeth of his first master, Duke Charles the Hardy, namely, that he would communicate his secrets with none; and least of all, those secrets which troubled him most. Whereupon he goeth on, and saith that towards his latter time, that closeness did impair, and a little perish his understanding. Surely Comineus mought have made the same judgment also, if it had pleased him, of his second master, Lewis the Eleventh, whose closeness was indeed his tormentor. The parable of Pythagoras is dark, but true; Cor ne edito; Eat not the heart. Certainly, if a man would give it a hard phrase, those that want friends, to open themselves unto, are carnnibals of their own hearts. But one thing is most admirable (wherewith I will conclude this first fruit of friendship), which is, that this communicating of a man's self to his friend, works two contrary effects; for it redoubleth joys, and cutteth griefs in halves. For there is no man, that imparteth his joys to his friend, but he joyeth the more; and no man that imparteth his griefs to his friend, but he grieveth the less. So that it is in truth, of operation upon a man's mind, of like virtue as the alchemists use to attribute to their stone, for man's body; that it worketh all contrary effects, but still to the

good and benefit of nature. But yet without praying in aid of alchemists, there is a manifest image of this, in the ordinary course of nature. For in bodies, union strengtheneth and cherisheth any natural action; and on the other side, weakeneth and dulleth any violent impression: and even so it is of minds.

The second fruit of friendship, is healthful and sovereign for the understanding, as the first is for the affections. For friendship maketh indeed a fair day in the affections, from storm and tempests; but it maketh daylight in the understanding, out of darkness, and confusion of thoughts. Neither is this to be understood only of faithful counsel, which a man receiveth from his friend; but before you come to that, certain it is, that whosoever hath his mind fraught with many thoughts, his wits and understanding do clarify and break up, in the communicating and discoursing with another; he tosseth his thoughts more easily; he marshalleth them more orderly, he seeth how they look when they are turned into words: finally, he waxeth wiser than himself; and that more by an hour's discourse, than by a day's meditation. It was well said by Themistocles, to the king of Persia, That speech was like cloth of Arras, opened and put abroad; whereby the imagery doth appear in figure; whereas in thoughts they lie but as in packs. Neither is this second fruit of friendship, in opening the understanding, restrained only to such friends as are able to give a man counsel; (they indeed are best;) but even without that, a man learneth of himself, and bringeth his own thoughts to light, and whetteth his wits as against a stone, which itself cuts not. In a word, a man were better relate himself to a statua, or picture, than to suffer his thoughts to pass in smother.

Add now, to make this second fruit of friendship complete, that other point, which lieth more open, and falleth within vulgar observation; which is faithful counsel from a friend. Heraclitus saith well in one of his enigmas, Dry light is ever the best. And certain it is, that the light that a man receiveth by counsel from another, is drier and purer, than that which cometh from his own understanding and judgment; which is ever infused, and drenched, in his affections and customs. So as there is as much difference between the counsel, that a friend giveth, and that a man giveth himself, as there is between the counsel of a friend, and of a flatterer. For there is no such flatterer as is a man's self; and there is no such remedy against flattery of a man's self, as the liberty of a friend. Counsel is of two sorts: the one concerning manners, the other concerning business. For the first, the best preservative to keep the mind in health, is the faithful admonition of a friend. The calling of a man's self to a strict account, is a medicine, sometime too piercing and corrosive. Reading good books of morality, is a little flat and dead. Observing our faults in others, is sometimes improper for

our case. But the best receipt (best, I say, to work, and best to take) is the admonition of a friend. It is a strange thing to behold, what gross errors and extreme absurdities many (especially of the greater sort) do commit, for want of a friend to tell them of them; to the great damage both of their fame and fortune: for, as St. James saith, they are as men that look sometimes into a glass, and presently forget their own shape and favor. As for business, a man may think, if he win, that two eyes see no more than one; or that a gamester seeth always more than a looker-on; or that a man in anger, is as wise as he that hath said over the four and twenty letters; or that a musket may be shot off as well upon the arm, as upon a rest; and such other fond and high imaginations, to think himself all in all. But when all is done, the help of good counsel, is that which setteth business straight. And if any man think that he will take counsel, but it shall be by pieces; asking counsel in one business, of one man, and in another business, of another man; it is well (that is to say, better, perhaps, than if he asked none at all); but he runneth two dangers: one, that he shall not be faithfully counselled; for it is a rare thing, except it be from a perfect and entire friend, to have counsel given, but such as shall be bowed and crooked to some ends, which he hath, that giveth it. The other, that he shall have counsel given, hurtful and unsafe (though with good meaning), and mixed partly of mischief and partly of remedy; even as if you would call a physician, that is thought good for the cure of the disease you complain of, but is unacquainted with your body; and therefore may put you in way for a present cure, but overthroweth your health in some other kind; and so cure the disease, and kill the patient. But a friend that is wholly acquainted with a man's estate, will beware, by furthering any present business, how he dasheth upon other inconvenience. And therefore rest not upon scattered counsels; they will rather distract and mislead, than settle and direct.

After these two noble fruits of friendship (peace in the affections, and support of the judgment), followeth the last fruit; which is like the pomegranate, full of many kernels; I mean aid, and bearing a part, in all actions and occasions. Here the best way to represent to life the manifold use of friendship, is to cast and see how many things there are, which a man cannot do himself; and then it will appear, that it was a sparing speech of the ancients, to say, that a friend is another himself; for that a friend is far more than himself. Men have their time, and die many times, in desire of some things which they principally take to heart; the bestowing of a child, the finishing of a work, or the like. If a man have a true friend, he may rest almost secure that the care of those things will continue after him. So that a man hath, as it were, two lives in his desires. A man hath a body, and that body is confined to a place; but

where friendship is, all offices of life are as it were granted to him, and his deputy. For he may exercise them by his friend. How many things are there which a man cannot, with any face or comeliness, say or do himself? A man can scarce allege his own merits with modesty, much less extol them; a man cannot sometimes brook to supplicate or beg; and a number of the like. But all these things are graceful, in a friend's mouth, which are blushing in a man's own. So again, a man's person hath many proper relations, which he cannot put off. A man cannot speak to his son but as a father; to his wife but as a husband; to his enemy but upon terms: whereas a friend may speak as the case requires, and not as it sorteth with the person. But to enumerate these things were endless; I have given the rule, where a man cannot fitly play his own part; if he have not a friend, he may quit the stage.

Analysis of Bacon's Essay "Of Friendship"

"IT HAD been hard for him that spake it to have put more truth and untruth together in few words, than in that speech, Whatsoever is delighted in solitude, is either a wild beast or a god."

Meaning

Francis Bacon starts his essay with a grand statement modeled after the views of Aristotle. Finding pleasure in solicitude is contrary to human character and mind. He expresses his belief in rather strong words. Anyone, who shuns fellow human beings and retreats to isolation, is degraded to the level of a wild beast. The other possibility is that he is god.

"For it is most true, that a natural and secret hatred, and aversation towards society, in any man, hath somewhat of the savage beast; but it is most untrue, that it should have any character at all, of the divine nature; except it proceed, not out of a pleasure in solitude, but out of a love and desire to sequester a man's self, for a higher conversation: such as is found to have been falsely and feignedly in some of the heathen; as Epimenides the Candian, Numa the Roman, Empedocles the Sicilian, and Apollonius of Tyana; and truly and really, in divers of the ancient hermits and holy fathers of the church."

Meaning

Bacon, however, is not totally dismissive of people who assiduously shy away from the crowd, and head for the wilderness. Bacon realizes that remaining silent and cut off from others helps the mind to engage in deep contemplative thinking. Through such deep insightful dissection of mind, a person rediscovers himself. The truth and wisdom that dawn on the meditator's mind through such prolonged isolation, can be profoundly rewarding for the hermit. The consequence can be both questionable or desirable. In case of Epimenides the Candian, Numa the Roman, Epimenides the Candian, Numa the Roman, Empedocles the Sicilian, and Apollonius of Tyana, the theories they propounded were somewhat non-confirmist for the commoners, but were of great philosophical value. Spiritual men who retreat from public eye in and around places of worship have been instrumental in delivering sermons of immense spiritual benefit to mankind. So, voluntary abstention from society is not always a bad idea, after all.

"But little do men perceive what solitude is, and how far it extendeth. For a crowd is not company; and faces are but a gallery of pictures; and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love."

Meaning

One must learn to differentiate between a crowd and kinship; between society and friendship. One can be lonely inside a multitude too. Faces of people may turn out to be fleeting pictures, if the persons are not engaged with. A conversation devoid of passion or feelings may be akin to the sounds of a tinkling cymbal – a barren monologue which hardly causes a ripple.

"The Latin adage meeteth with it a little: Magna civitas, magna solitudo; because in a great town friends are scattered; so that there is not that fellowship, for the most part, which is in less neighborhoods. But we may go further, and affirm most truly, that it is a mere and miserable solitude to want true friends; without which the world is but a wilderness; and even in this sense also of solitude, whosoever in the frame of his nature and affections, is unfit for friendship, he taketh it of the beast, and not from humanity."

Meaning

The Latin adage says, 'Magna civitas, magna solitudo'. It means there is great solitude in a large city. This is so because people live in areas separated from one another by long distances. It makes it impractical to traverse such long distances to meet friends and relations. The large size of the city is, therefore, an impediment on the way of people cultivating friendship with one another. In a small city or town, people tend to live at a shorter distance from each other. So they befriend each other and live like a well-knit community.

"A principal fruit of friendship, is the ease and discharge of the fulness and swellings of the heart, which passions of all kinds do cause and induce."

Meaning

A friendship must have feelings and passions as its main strands. It should be a bond between the hearts where one shares the emotions of his friend in full measure.

"We know diseases of stoppings, and suffocations, are the most dangerous in the body; and it is not much otherwise in the mind; you may take sarza to open the liver, steel to open the spleen, flowers of sulphur for the lungs, castoreum for the brain; but no receipt openeth the heart, but a true friend; to whom you may impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels, and whatsoever lieth upon the heart to oppress it, in a kind of civil shrift or confession."

Meaning

We all know how debilitating and fatal heart ailments can be. Pleasant and intimate conversation with a friend brings back vigour to the heart. It elevates the mood, banishes depression and helps the heart patient to recover. There is no panacea for heart diseases which can match the curative value of the presence of good friends by the sick person's bedside. Through lively chat and friendly banters, they unburden the heart of the sick person and make him feel good again. However, there are medicines or devices to correct a malfunction of internal organs like sarza for the liver, steel for the spleen, flowers of sulphur for the lungs, castoreum for the brain etc.

It is a strange thing to observe, how high a rate great kings and monarchs do set upon this fruit of friendship, whereof we speak: so great, as they purchase it, many times, at the hazard of their own safety and greatness."

Meaning

Bacon then gives the examples of the monarchs and kings, and the elite who go to unusual lengths to befriend good and worthy people. The rich and the powerful with the reins of government in their hands seek out the crème of the society to give the pleasures of friendship. To bring in the good people, the kings and monarchs give them generous rewards through wealth and bestowal of honour. Such efforts to cultivate friendship can be fraught at times as the hand-picked friends may turn hostile causing harm to their benefactors.

"For princes, in regard of the distance of their fortune from that of their subjects and servants, cannot gather this fruit, except (to make themselves capable thereof) they raise some persons to be, as it were, companions and almost equals to themselves, which many times sorteth to inconvenience."

Meaning

A gulf difference always exists between the ruling elite and the subjects. The distance is so large that it cannot be bridged through normal means. At times, the princes develop liking for some individuals. To bring them nearer, the rulers raise their status and give them administrative powers. The intention is to win their friendship. However, such generosity and eagerness to elevate individuals to keep them in good humour may sometimes bring unanticipated harm. This becomes the possibility when the person chosen is intrinsically wicked in his intent.

"The modern languages give unto such persons the name of favorites, or privadoes; as if it were matter of grace, or conversation."

Meaning

The individuals entering the coterie of the sovereign are termed as 'favourites' or 'privadoes' in modern languages. These individuals merely add grace and give company like a friend.

"But the Roman name attaineth the true use and cause thereof, naming them participes curarum; for it is that which tieth the knot."

Meaning

But the true sense of the name is apparent in what the Romans called these individuals – 'participes curarum' meaning 'sharer of cares'. They are the ones who share the anxiety and worries of the monarch and not just give company. These hand-picked favoured few are called 'participes curarum'. It means 'sharer of cares', or those who share the anxiety and worries of the monarch. They are the close confidantes who offer their counsel to the rulers. It is this sharing of responsibilities/worries that builds the bond of friendship.

"And we see plainly that this hath been done, not by weak and passionate princes only, but by the wisest and most politic that ever reigned; who have oftentimes joined to themselves some of their servants; whom both themselves have called friends, and allowed other likewise to call them in the same manner; using the word which is received between private men."

Meaning

Such practice of co-opting some favoured individuals from among the subjects was followed not only by weak or emotional rulers, but also by very capable and hard-nosed ones having formidable strength and political acumen. The kings address these members of the coterie very graciously as 'friends', and they ask other members of the royalty and bureaucracy to address them so.

"Sylla, when he commanded Rome, raised Pompey (after surnamed the Great) to that height, that Pompey vaunted himself for Sylla's overmatch. For when he had carried the consulship for a friend of his, against the pursuit of Sylla, and that Sylla did a little resent thereat, and began to speak great, Pompey turned upon him again, and in effect bade him be quiet; for that more men adored the sun rising, than the sun setting."

Meaning

Pompey was designated as 'Pompey, the Great' by Sylla, the ruler of Rome. Sylla raised his friend Pompey to such great heights by naming him "Pompey the Great", that Pompey praised and boasted about being superior to Sylla. So much so that on one occasion when Sylla resented Pompey's decision, Pompey publicly reminded Sylla that more men adored the sun rising, than the sun setting hinting that he had more clout and power than Sylla.

"With Julius Caesar, Decimus Brutus had obtained that interest as he set him down in his testament, for heir in remainder, after his nephew. And this was the man that had power with him, to draw him forth to his death. For when Caesar would have discharged the senate, in regard of some ill presages, and specially a dream of Calpurnia; this man lifted him gently by the arm out of his chair, telling him he hoped he would not dismiss the senate, till his wife had dreamt a better dream. And it seemeth his favor was so great, as Antonius, in a letter which is recited verbatim in one of Cicero's Philippics, calleth him venefica, witch; as if he had enchanted Caesar."

Meaning

Brutus had, slowly made his way to Ceaser's heart. He was Ceaser's closest confidant and advisor. As a reward of the enduring companionship provided by Brutus, Ceaser in his will had made Brutus his heir after his nephew. Brutus had cast a spell over Ceaser, an influence the latter never suspected as wicked. This was to become Ceaser's nemesis later. Ceaser had all but dismissed the senate because some ill omen portended a calamity. His wife's deadly dream about an impending danger strengthened Ceaser's desire to do away with the senate. Brutus stepped in at the last moment to prevail upon Ceaser to hold back his decision of discharging the senate until Culpurina (Ceaser's wife) dreamt something better. So great was Brutus's sway on Ceaser that in one of Antonius' letter, mentioned by Cicero in his speech, Antonius has disparagingly called Brutus 'venefica'– a witch, who had 'enchanted' Ceaser for evil designs.

"Augustus raised Agrippa (though of mean birth) to that height, as when he consulted with Maecenas, about the marriage of his daughter Julia, Maecenas took the liberty to tell him, that he must either marry his daughter to Agrippa, or take away his life; there was no third way, he had made him so great."

Meaning

Augustus elevated Agrippa high up in the royal hierarchy despite the latter's mean birth (not from a noble family). Agrippa's clout in the royal court had soared ominously. He was enjoying enviable privilege and power. When Agustus consulted the royal counselor Maecenas about the marriage of his daughter Julia, the counselor proffered an awkward advice. He suggested to Augustus to give his daughter in marriage to Agrippa. There was no way anyone else could win her hand with Agrappa around. If this was not agreeable to the emperor, he would have to eliminate Agrippa. There was no third option.

"With Tiberius Caesar, Sejanus had ascended to that height, as they two were termed, and reckoned, as a pair of friends. Tiberius in a letter to him saith, Haec pro amicitia nostra non occultavi; and the whole senate dedicated an altar to Friendship, as to a goddess, in respect of the great dearness of friendship, between them two."

Meaning

The friendship between Tiberius and Sejanus is another example of the perils of water-tight friendship. Sejanus charmed Tiberius and became his most intimate companion. As a result, Sejanus began to enjoy unprecedented privileges and stature. People perceived them as an inseparable pair. In a letter to Sejanus Tiberus had declared boldly that he had not hidden from anyone the details of their enduring friendship. The senate sensed the mood and dedicated an altar to their friendship as if their companionship was as sublime as a goddess.

"The like, or more, was between Septimius Severus and Plautianus. For he forced his eldest son to marry the daughter of Plautianus; and would often maintain Plautianus, in doing affronts to his son; and did write also in a letter to the senate, by these words: I love the man so well, as I wish he may over-live me."

Meaning

A similar or even closer friendship had developed between Septimus Severus and Plautianus. Septimus had forced his son into marriage with the daughter of Plautianus. The bonding between the two was so strong that he found no difficulty to countenance Platianus' hurtful barbs aimed at his son. The latitude given to Platinus defied reason. Septimus's eulogizing of his friend had reached ridiculous levels. In one of his letters to the senate, he had raved over his love for Plautianus saying he wished his friend to outlive him in this world.

"Now if these princes had been as a Trajan, or a Marcus Aurelius, a man might have thought that this had proceeded of an abundant goodness of nature; but being men so wise, of such strength and severity of mind, and so extreme lovers of themselves, as all these were, it proveth most plainly that they found their own felicity (though as great as ever happened to mortal men) but as an half piece, except they mought have a friend, to make it entire; and yet, which is more, they were princes that had wives, sons, nephews; and yet all these could not supply the comfort of friendship."

Meaning

All the characters described above were not novices. They were not soft-hearted and noble-minded like Trajan, or Marcus Aurelius. In fact, these eminent members of Rome's royalty were hard-nosed pragmatists. They took no major decision relating to governance without enough care, caution and confabulation.

Yet, why did all of them fawn over their friends in such bizarre manner? This is explained by the fact that these powerful persons craved for friendship in their quest for worldly happiness. Bacon reiterates his contention by saying that all these eminent men had access to all pleasures of life, had families, wealth and power. They failed to draw a line in their relation with their chums. Later, the same adored friends brought them defeat, disaster and even death.

Analysis of Bacon's Essay "Of Friendship"

As a pragmatic and as an empirical thinker Bacon followed two fundamental Renaissance principles—Sepantia or search for knowledge and Eloquentia, the art of rhetoric. This explains, to some extent, the impassioned presentation of his ideas and views and the aphoristic style of his writing. But the essay "Of Friendship" is stylistically somewhat different in that it contains passionate and flattering statements along with profuse analogies and examples to support or explain his arguments perhaps because this essay was occasioned

by the request of his friend Toby Matthew. Bacon begins the essay by invoking the classical authorities on basic human nature. First, he refers to Aristotle's view in Politics: Whosoever is delighted in solitude is either a wild beast or a god. According to Aristotle, a man by nature and behaviour may be degraded to such an extent that he may be called unfit for society. Again, he may be so self-sufficient that he may not need society. In the first case, he resembles a wild beast and in the second, he resembles gods. Here it should be pointed out that Bacon is not ruling out the value of solitude; in fact, he is reserving solitude for higher kind of life, which is possible for a few great men like Epimenides, Numa, Empedocles, Apollonius and some Christian saints. Here too Bacon is following Aristotelian view on solitude as expressed in Ethics, where Aristotle prefers a contemplative life to an active life:"It is the highest kind of life, it can be enjoyed uninterruptedly for the greatest length of time..."Bacon's logic is that those who live in society should enjoy the bliss of friendship for more than one reason. First of all, friendship is necessary for maintaining good mental health by controlling and regulating the passions of the mind. In other words, Bacon here speaks of the therapeutic use of friendship though which one can lighten the heart by revealing the pent-up feelings and emotions: sorrows, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, advice and the like. Then in order to justify the value of friendship, Bacon points out the practice of friendship on the highest social level. He informs us that the kings and princes, in order to make friends, would raise some persons who would be fit for friendship. Then Bacon tries to glorify friendship by translating the Roman term for friendship, Participescurarum, which means 'sharers of their cares'. He gives instances of raising of men as friends from the Roman history: Sylla and Pompey the Great, Julius Caesar and Antonius, Augustus and Agrippa, Tiberius Caesar and Sejanus, Septimius Severus and Plautianus. Bacon also refers to what Comineus wrote of Duke Charles the Hardy's deterioration of his mental faculty just because of his reserve and loneliness and extends his judgement to the case of Comineus' second master, Louis XI. The point which Bacon strongly wants to assert is that friendship functions for a man in a double yet paradoxically contrary manner: "...it redoubleth joys, and cutteth griefs in halfs".

The second fruit of friendship, according to Bacon, is beneficial for the clarity of understanding. If a man has got a faithful friend, he can be consulted to clarify the confusions of the mind. He calls the counsel of a friend, citing Heraclitus, "drier and purer" than that a man gives himself out of self love, which clouds his judgement. Bacon then counsel of this sort into two kinds: "the one concerning manners and the other concerning

business." A friend's constructive criticism of the other friend's behaviour helps him more than a book of morality. In the matter of conducting practical business, Bacon thinks, a true friend's advice can also be helpful in undertaking a venture or averting a danger. Finally, Bacon speaks of the last fruit of friendship, which is manifold in the sense that there are so many things in life, which can be fulfilled only with the help of a friend. In fact, at a rare moment Bacon gets emotional and quotes classical maxim that "a friend is another self". His point is that a man may have many a desire, which may not be realized in his life-time, but if he has got a true friend, his unfulfilled desire will be taken care of by his friend. Not only this, a friend, unlike the near and dear ones and enemies, can talk to him on equal terms whenever situation demands. Keeping all these things, Bacon concludes that if a man does not have a friend, he may well leave this world. That is to say, he is not fit for the human society to live in.

Of Anger

Text

TO seek to extinguish anger utterly is but a bravery 1 of the Stoics. We have better oracles: Be angry, but sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your anger. Anger must be limited and confined both in race and in time. We will first speak how the natural inclination and habit to be angry may be attempered and calmed. Secondly, how the particular motions of anger may be repressed, or at least refrained from doing mischief. Thirdly, how to raise anger or appease anger in another.

For the first; there is no other way but to meditate and ruminate well upon the effects of anger, how it troubles man's life. And the best time to do this is to look back upon anger when the fit is thoroughly over. Seneca saith well, That anger is like ruin, which breaks itself upon that it falls. The Scripture exhorteth us to possess our souls in patience. Whosoever is out of patience, is out of possession of his soul. Men must not turn bees;

…animasque in vulnere ponunt

[that put their lives in the sting].

Anger is certainly a kind of baseness; as it appears well in the weakness of those subjects in whom it reigns; children, women, old folks, sick folks. Only men must beware that they carry their anger rather with scorn than with fear; so that they may seem rather to be above the injury than below it; which is a thing easily done, if a man will give law to himself in it.

For the second point; the causes and motives of anger are chiefly three. First, to be too sensible of hurt; for no man is angry that feels not himself hurt; and therefore tender and delicate persons must needs be oft angry; they have so many things to trouble them, which more robust natures have little sense of. The next is, the apprehension and construction of the injury offered to be, in the circumstances thereof, full of contempt: for contempt is that which putteth an edge upon anger, as much or more than the hurt itself. And therefore when men are ingenious in picking out circumstances of contempt, they do kindle their anger much. Lastly, opinion of the touch of a man's reputation doth multiply and sharpen anger. Wherein the remedy is, that a man should have, as Consalvo was wont to say, telam honouris crassiorem [an honour of a stouter web]. But in all refrainings of anger, it is the best remedy to win time; and to make a man's self believe, that the opportunity of his revenge is not yet come, but that he foresees a time for it; and so to still himself in the meantime, and reserve it.

To contain anger from mischief, though it take hold of a man, there be two things whereof you must have special caution. The one, of extreme bitterness of words, especially if they be aculeate 2 and proper; 3 for cummunia maledicta [common revilings] are nothing so much; and again, that in anger a man reveal no secrets; for that makes him not fit for society. The other, that you do not peremptorily break off, in any business, in a fit of anger; but howsoever you show bitterness, do not act anything that is not revocable.

For raising and appeasing anger in another; it is done chiefly by choosing of times, when men are frowardest and worst disposed, to incense them. Again, by gathering (as was touched before) all that you can find out to aggravate the contempt. And the two remedies are by the contraries. The former to take good times, when first to relate to a man an angry business; for the first impression is much; and the other is, to sever, as much as may be, the construction of the injury from the point of contempt; imputing it to misunderstanding, fear, passion, or what you will.

Summary

In his essay "Of Anger," Sir Francis Bacon lists various causes or motives of anger, including the following:

i) A "natural inclination and habit to be angry": in other words, a tendency toward anger may be part of a particular person's character and is probably also innate in human nature.

ii) An inability or disinclination to be patient, so that we behave like bees (in the words of Seneca):

. . . animasque in vulnere ponunt

[that put their lives in the sting].

iii) Weakness. Bacon suggests that weak persons are more likely to be angry than strong persons.

Bacon cites three causes of anger especially:

i) Being overly sensitive – in other words, having feelings that are too easily hurt.

ii) Assuming that any injuring one receives from others was full of contempt and disrespect – in other words, immediately assuming that one has been disrespected.

iii) Assuming that an injury will damage one's reputation.

Bacon suggests a number of ways of overcoming anger, including the following:

i) Don't assume, as did the Stoic philosophers of ancient Rome, that anger can be utterly extinguished by an act of mere will. Anger cannot be dealt with so easily; it must be allowed to diminish with the passage of time.

ii) Consider the negative effects that anger causes in the life of the person who is angry. Anger injuries the angry person most of all and is thus self-defeating.

iii) Try to be patient.

iv) Try not to be easily hurt or easily worried about one's reputation. An honourable person need not worry about his/her reputation. Therefore, truly honourable people are less likely to be angry.

v) Let time pass, even telling oneself that one can take revenge later for an injury suffered today. Meanwhile, the passage of time will diminish one's anger.

All in all, Bacon looks at anger from a Christian rather than from a Stoic perspective. At the same time, his advice is also highly pragmatic. In other words, he shows an awareness of how anger actually develops and can be dealt with in ordinary life. His comment about waiting to take revenge is especially intriguing. He knew that taking revenge was frowned about in Christianity, but instead of suggesting that a person refrain from revenge altogether, he suggests that any contemplated revenge should be postponed. He seems to have assumed that postponing revenge would make it ultimately less likely to occur. This is a bit of shrewd psychology on Bacon's part.

Analysis

"TO SEEK to extinguish anger utterly, is but a bravery of the Stoics."

Meaning

Anger is so innate to human nature that to banish it altogether is but an exercise in futility. Only the Stoics, who have absolute mastery over their minds, can ever try to subdue anger. Through patient pursuit of self-control, the Stoics attain a state of impassiveness. As a result, they keep anger along with its ruinous effects at bay. For common human beings, shaking off the savage instinct of anger is a Herculean task.

"We have better oracles: Be angry, but sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your anger. Anger must be limited and confined, both in race and in time."

Meaning

But, we have recourse to some sane counsel. We may get angry occasionally, but must rein it in so that it does not drive us to dome some heinous, immoral or sinful act. Anger must not find a permanent abode in the mind. It can come, but leave our mind as early as possible. Anger's fire must not be allowed to engulf our mind and burn down our self.

"We will first speak how the natural inclination and habit to be angry, may be attempted and calmed. Secondly, how the particular motions of anger may be repressed, or at least refrained from doing mischief. Thirdly, how to raise anger, or appease anger in another."

Meaning

Bacon proceeds to examine the different dimensions of anger. Fortunately, there are a few ways to keep anger under control. Secondly, there are ways to keep anger under wraps so that it does not affect our outward demeanor, and besmirch our lives with its toxicity. Thirdly, there are ways to arouse anger in others and also, douse it through clever means.

"For the first; there is no other way but to meditate, and ruminate well upon the effects of anger, how it troubles man's life. And the best time to do this, is to look back upon anger, when the fit is thoroughly over."

Meaning …. Meditation offers one of the most effective ways to stop anger from overpowering our minds. Honest and deep introspection and retrospection also is efficacious in staving off anger. The way it robs us of peace, unsettles our daily lives, and distorts our sense of judgment should warn us of keeping anger at arm's length. When we recover from a

fit of anger, we must look back at our conduct and scrutinize it dispassionately. Such self-scrutiny helps us to realize the harm caused to us when we are under the spell of anger.

"Seneca saith well, That anger is like ruin, which breaks itself upon that it falls. The Scripture exhorteth us to possess our souls in patience. Whosoever is out of patience, is out of possession of his soul. Men must not turn bees;… animasque in vulnere ponunt."

Meaning

Lucius Annaeus Seneca was a Roman Stoic philosopher. He was a man of profound wisdom with multifarious talent. Seneca had warned commoners about the destructive potential of anger. Anger harms the target as much as the person who harbours it and vents it. Like the ruins of a building burying the remnants of the building, anger shrouds the goodness of the beholder, and blights his error of judgment. The scriptures calls upon us to preserve the purity of ourselves and let any worldly feelings sully it. A person, who expends his patience, loses his soul too. His moral moorings are uprooted. Men must be like the weak bees who aggressively sting whoever comes their way. Such eagerness to hit back at the slightest provocation brings highly unpleasant experiences later.

"Anger is certainly a kind of baseness; as it appears well in the weakness of those subjects in whom it reigns; children, women, old folks, sick folks. Only men must beware, that they carry their anger rather with scorn, than with fear; so that they may seem rather to be above the injury, than below it; which is a thing easily done, if a man will give law to himself in it."

Meaning

Anger finds the weaker humans good and easy hosts. A strong man loses his cool only after intense and continuous provocation, where as a child, woman, a sick person, or a frail old man gets irritated easily. A man must reckon his propensity to get angry as an evil tendency, and not a desirable trait. He should keep it under a tight leash, and not fall prey to it easily. Such capacity to keep one's anger in check does not come easily. A great deal of discipline and self- control is essential to keep a lid on anger.

"For the second point; the causes and motives of anger, are chiefly three. First, to be too sensible of hurt; for no man is angry, that feels not himself hurt; and therefore tender and delicate persons must needs be oft angry; they have so many things to trouble them, which

more robust natures have little sense of."

Meaning …

Bacon now proceeds to analyze why people fall victim to anger. People who are unduly sensitive can not tolerate minor irritants, criticisms, jokes etc. They express their displeasure by behaving angrily. On the contrary, men who are robust and self-confident take criticisms and irritants on their stride and seldom lose their cool. These people get angry, no doubt, but only after grave provocation. The weaklings can not laugh off criticism, and get annoyed frequently.

"The next is, the apprehension and construction of the injury offered, to be, in the circumstances thereof, full of contempt: for contempt is that, which putteth an edge upon anger, as much or more than the hurt itself. And therefore, when men are ingenious in picking out circumstances of contempt, they do kindle their anger much."

Meaning

When people get angry, they begin to hate the person who hurts them, either intentionally or inadvertently. They think the insult heaped on them was a calculated move. This is why contempt for the offender always follows their anger. Such a combination of hurt feelings and loathing makes the man irascible and resentful. Such consequence bode ill for his well-being.

"Lastly, opinion of the touch of a man's reputation, doth multiply and sharpen anger. Wherein the remedy is, that a man should have, as Consalvo was wont to say, telam honouris crassiorem. But in all refrainings of anger, it is the best remedy to win time; and to make a man's self believe, that the opportunity of his revenge is not yet come, but that he foresees a time for it; and so to still himself in the meantime, and reserve it."

Meaning

When a man is maligned by criticism he feels very aggrieved, because his standing in society is called into question. At times, he seethes in anger to avenge the undeserved humiliation caused to him by vilification by some wicked elements. Bacon has a word of advice here. He wants his readers, aggrieved by mud-slinging, not to act impulsively against the offender. Instead, he should wait out the period of torment, and wait for the opportune time to strike back at the foe. He must learn to contain the rage and maintain equanimity in his conduct. This will help him to decide upon the best way to deal with the offender.

"To contain anger from mischief, though it take hold of a man, there be two things, whereof you must have special caution. The one, of extreme bitterness of words, especially if they be aculeate and proper; for cummunia maledicta are nothing so much; and again, that in anger a man reveal no secrets; for that, makes him not fit for society. The other, that you do not peremptorily break off, in any business, in a fit of anger; but howsoever you show bitterness, do not act anything, that is not revocable."

Meaning

Bacon says that it is not easy to hold back anger and hide it inside one's self. Anger leads to mischief, bringing very undesirable consequences at times. To avoid such a situation, one needs to exercise restraint on one's emotions. The angry man must eschew tendencies to utter hurtful words at his tormentors. In the heat of the moment, he can say something very unbecoming to his stature in the society or divulge some secrets to his own detriment. The consequences can be quite unpleasant for him in the long run. In the event of disagreement or acrimony with a business partner, one must not walk away in a huff, severing all ties. Similarly, one must not say or do something which can not be retracted later.

"For raising and appeasing anger in another; it is done chiefly by choosing of times, when men are frowardest and worst disposed, to incense them. Again, by gathering (as was touched before) all that you can find out, to aggravate the contempt. And the two remedies are by the contraries. The former to take good times, when first to relate to a man an angry business; for the first impression is much; and the other is, to sever, as much as may be, the construction of the injury from the point of contempt; imputing it to misunderstanding, fear, passion, or what you will."

Meaning

In conclusion, Bacon offers some practical advice. If you intend to annoy someone, or mollify him, you must be careful to select the opportune time to do so. When a man is in an awkward situation or vulnerable due to whatever reasons, it would be wise to turn on him. One must learn to garner all facts to add venom to one's assault on the offender. The contrary way is to counter the urge for contempt by assuming that the root cause was baseless fear, ignorance, and misunderstanding.

Of Ambition

Text

AMBITION is like choler; which is an humor that maketh men active, earnest, full of alacrity, and stirring, if it be not stopped. But if it be stopped, and cannot have his way, it becometh adust, and thereby malign and venomous. So ambitious men, if they find the way open for their rising, and still get forward, they are rather busy than dangerous; but if they be checked in their desires, they become secretly discontent, and look upon men and matters with an evil eye, and are best pleased, when things go backward; which is the worst property in a servant of a prince, or state. Therefore it is good for princes, if they use ambitious men, to handle it, so as they be still progressive and not retrograde; which, because it cannot be without inconvenience, it is good not to use such natures at all. For if they rise not with their service, they will take order, to make their service fall with them. But since we have said, it were good not to use men of ambitious natures, except it be upon necessity, it is fit we speak, in what cases they are of necessity. Good commanders in the wars must be taken, be they never so ambitious; for the use of their service, dispenseth with the rest; and to take a soldier without ambition, is to pull off his spurs. There is also great use of ambitious men, in being screens to princes in matters of danger and envy; for no man will take that part, except he be like a seeled dove, that mounts and mounts, because he cannot see about him. There is use also of ambitious men, in pulling down the greatness of any subject that overtops; as Tiberius used Marco, in the pulling down of Sejanus. Since, therefore, they must be used in such cases, there resteth to speak, how they are to be bridled, that they may be less dangerous. There is less danger of them, if they be of mean birth, than if they be noble; and if they be rather harsh of nature, than gracious and popular: and if they be rather new raised, than grown cunning, and fortified, in their greatness. It is counted by some, a weakness in princes, to have favorites; but it is, of all others, the best remedy against ambitious great-ones. For when the way of pleasuring, and displeasuring, lieth by the favorite, it is impossible any other should be overgreat. Another means to curb them, is to balance them by others, as proud as they. But then there must be some middle counsellors, to keep things steady; for without that ballast, the ship will roll too much. At the least, a prince may animate and inure some meaner persons, to be as it were scourges, to ambitions men. As for the having of them obnoxious to ruin; if they be of fearful natures, it may do well; but if they be stout and daring, it may precipitate their designs, and prove dangerous. As for the pulling of them down, if the affairs require it, and that it may not be done with safety suddenly, the only way is the interchange,

continually, of favors and disgraces; whereby they may not know what to expect, and be, as it were, in a wood. Of ambitions, it is less harmful, the ambition to prevail in great things, than that other, to appear in every thing; for that breeds confusion, and mars business. But yet it is less danger, to have an ambitious man stirring in business, than great in dependences. He that seeketh to be eminent amongst able men, hath a great task; but that is ever good for the public. But he, that plots to be the only figure amongst ciphers, is the decay of a whole age. Honour hath three things in it: the vantage ground to do good; the approach to kings and principal persons; and the raising of a man's own fortunes. He that hath the best of these intentions, when he aspireth, is an honest man; and that prince, that can discern of these intentions in another that aspireth, is a wise prince. Generally, let princes and states choose such ministers, as are more sensible of duty than of using; and such as love business rather upon conscience, than upon bravery, and let them discern a busy nature, from a willing mind.

1. Ambition is like choler; which is an humor that maketh men active, earnest, full of alacrity, and stirring, if it be not stopped.

Meaning: In medieval times, it was believed that the body has four bodily fluids– blood, phlegm, choler or yellow bile, melancholy or black bile. It was then thought to determine emotional and physical disposition. Choler or yellow bile makes people restless, irritable, and itching for action.

A person bubbling with ambitions can hardly lead an un-hurried, contented, and a relaxed life. Since he sets his eyes high, he will continuously think to do something newer, better, and harder. He will knowingly accept challenges, and strive to solve them. The more he succeeds, the more he will drive himself to do things which others don't dare to do. Such a person will be a go-getter, a perfectionist, and a workaholic. He will be continuously restless with ideas and energy. Naturally, he will find people around him indolent, mediocre, sulking and un-worthy.

2. But if it be stopped, and cannot have his way, it becometh adust, and thereby malign and venomous.

Meaning: If such an ambitious man is restrained, and not allowed to pursue his goal, he will feel stifled, angry and rebellious. Finally, all his creative energy and dynamism will be numbed and wasted. Due to his frustration, he will develop a negative mindset and hostility to other people.

3. So ambitious men, if they find the way open for their rising, and still get forward, they are rather busy than dangerous; but if they be checked in their desires, they become secretly

discontent, and look upon men and matters with an evil eye, and are best pleased, when things go backward; which is the worst property in a servant of a prince, or state.

Meaning: If a person, with ambition burning within him, gets a conducive environment to pursue his goal with little hindrance, he will be totally lost in his work. No ill-feeling will enter his mind. He will not harm anyone. On the other hand, if the same person is held back and not allowed to work towards his vision, he will seethe in frustration and anger. Driven by his internal discontent, he will begin to dislike others and perceive everyone as wicked and hideous. When something bad happens to his boss, the organization, society, or the government, he will derive some wicked pleasure out of the misfortune of others. Employees developing such negative mindset are a liability to the government, and the society, at large.

4. Therefore it is good for princes, if they use ambitious men, to handle it, so as they be still progressive and not retrograde; which, because it cannot be without inconvenience, it is good not to use such natures at all.

Meaning: It is, therefore, imperative that ambitious people be given sufficient freedom to let their creativity blossom. If this is made possible, the individuals will be an asset. They will not be hostile and angry. If it is not possible to afford or grant such freedom to an ambitious person, it will be a good idea not to employ them at all and invite problem later.

5. For if they rise not with their service, they will take order, to make their service fall with them.

Meaning: If these ambitious employees continue to remain disgruntled, they might bring disgrace and downfall to their employers.

6. But since we have said, it were good not to use men of ambitious natures, except it be upon necessity, it is fit we speak, in what cases they are of necessity.

Meaning: It is now realized that there is an inherent risk in employing ambitious men, so, unless essential, they should not be employed. But, this is not a rule written on stone (meaning ‘rigid’). There are situations where ambitious people should be the preferred choice for engagement..

7. Good commanders in the wars must be taken, be they never so ambitious; for the use of their service, dispenseth with the rest; and to take a soldier without ambition, is to pull off his spurs.

Meaning: While selecting the right person for positions of key commanders for the battlefield, existence of ambition in the commander-designate cannot be a disqualification. After all, for a man in arms, a contented, laid-back temperament is a huge negative trait. Such

a soldier can never fight. Shirking his responsibility, he will run away from the battlefield at the slightest sign of defeat. Only a brave ambitious and egoistic commander can confront the enemy boldly and vanquish it.

8. There is also great use of ambitious men, in being screens to princes in matters of danger and envy; for no man will take that part, except he be like a seeled dove, that mounts and mounts, because he cannot see about him.

Meaning: Ambitious men are also essential where safeguarding the personal safety of the king or government's senior-most functionaries are concerned. Ambitious men make reliable and astute body guards. For such responsibilities, the guard may have to shed his own life for saving the life of his employer. This calls for a spirit of extreme sacrifice on the call of duty. For the person employed as body guard, nothing is more sacrosanct than the life of the person he has to protect. Such single-minded dedication to duty is akin to the blind-folded dove (a small, robust bird) soaring higher and higher into the sky without bothering to worry about the distance and its limited energy. At one stage, it gets too exhausted to fly and comes crashing on to the ground. An ambitious guard can make similar sacrifice.

9. There is use also of ambitious men, in pulling down the greatness of any subject that overtops; as Tiberius used Marco, in the pulling down of Sejanus.

Meaning:

Sejanus was a gallant and ambitious warrior who was officiating as the emperor in Rome. Sejanus discharged royal duties in the absence of the real emperor Tiberious, who lived in a distant island. At one stage, receiving credible intelligence inputs, Tiberious began to suspect that Sejanus was contemplating to usurp power by dethroning and destroying him. He did not venture to challenge Sejanus frontally. Instead, he resorted to crafty intrigues to create confusion in the minds of the Senate members. He managed this subterrfuge by sending letters to them with ambiguous messages. Sometimes, he praised Sejanus in his letter, while deriding him in the next letter.

In Rome, Sejanus had created enough enemies by his boastful and brash manners. He was a brute too. Teberious plotted with the valiant and ambitious Marco to kill Sejanous. Teberious returned to Rome and summoned Sejanus early in the dawn ostensibly to decorate him. Marco seized this opportunity to take control of the mounted guards functioning under Sejanus's command till then. After this, he attacked Sejanus and killed him and threw his body unceremoniously to the river.

Had an ambitious man like Marco not been there, Teberious could not have neutralized Sejanus. Hence, kings, generals and senior government leaders need ambitious people around them.

10. Since, therefore, they must be used in such cases, there resteth to speak, how they are to be bridled, that they may be less dangerous.

Meaning:

Having thus pleaded in favour of engaging ambitious men, Bacon gives an advice of caution. He suggests that such people in the payroll must be kept under a leash either covertly or overtly. If this is not done, the danger of these men turning against their benefactors and employers is a real possibility.

11. There is less danger of them, if they be of mean birth, than if they be noble; and if they be rather harsh of nature, than gracious and popular: and if they be rather new raised, than grown cunning, and fortified, in their greatness.

Meaning:

If these ambitious men offering security to the heads of state or king are from the lower sections of the society, they pose lesser danger than those who are from the aristocratic class. If the security personnel are ill-mannered and boorish, they pose less danger to their employers than those who are suave and popular. Similarly, newer recruits are less dangerous than those bloated ones who have been around for a long time. Since they are privy to the affairs of the palace and the court, they might feel tempted to misuse their knowledge to harm their masters.

12. It is counted by some, a weakness in princes, to have favorites; but it is, of all others, the best remedy against ambitious great-ones.

Meaning:

In all ages, kings, heads of states and men of importance have preferred to employ their known and trusted people to form the security around them and to give them counsel during crises. Some say, this is an unsound and imprudent policy that smacks of nepotism. As per Bacon, this is a wise policy as it helps to keep unduly pretentious and scheming people reasonably satisfied with the cl;out they enjoy because of their proximity to the emperor. Some disgruntled ambitious people can upstage their superiors and employers whom they are duty-bound to serve. So, keeping them in good humour is a prudent policy.

13. For when the way of pleasuring, and displeasuring, lieth by the favorite, it is impossible any other should be overgreat.

Meaning: In course of his duty, the favoured person, chosen by the king to do the duty, may either endear himself or antagonize his master because of his proximity to him. This may not be detrimental to the interests of the state or the king (employer), because the man will not possibly harm his master. On the other hand, an unknown ambitious person, despite his quality and talent does not fit well to this responsibility. He may have hidden hostility which might tempt him to rebel against his master.

14. Another means to curb them, is to balance them by others, as proud as they.

Meaning:

If at all such ambitious persons are employed, it is essential to preempt any over-zealous tendency in him by employing another person of equivalent talent in a parallel position.

15. But then there must be some middle counsellors, to keep things steady; for without that ballast, the ship will roll too much.

Meaning:

Bacon says, even this is not enough. What if the two persons collude to plot against the king? They may also fall out with each other creating disharmony and undesirable hostility around the master. To prevent such a situation from happening, a few counselors or high-level officials or ministers may be appointed to bring stability and coherence to the set-up.

16. At the least, a prince may animate and inure some meaner persons, to be as it were scourges, to ambitions men.

Meaning:

The prince / king / employer / head of state may prop up and bring in a person of somewhat lesser upbringing and inferior attributes to the inner circle. Although these persons may appear misfits and, even, disagreeable to be in the inner circle, they offer a counterweight to the overly ambitious and crafty employee.

17. As for the having of them obnoxious to ruin; if they be of fearful natures, it may do well; but if they be stout and daring, it may precipitate their designs, and prove dangerous.

Meaning:

Bacon exhibits his keen sense of observation and judgment here. If the potential candidate for the post of security-in-charge and advisor (similar to a minister's job) has an awesome exterior, repulsive persona and an unpleasant aura around him, he may well be the right candidate for the job of the body-guard cum protector. In contrast, if the person is robustly-built with a daring nature, his appointment may invite disaster.

18. As for the pulling of them down, if the affairs require it, and that it may not be done with safety suddenly, the only way is the interchange, continually, of favors and disgraces; whereby they may not know what to expect, and be, as it were, in a wood.

Meaning:

If suspicion arises about the integrity and loyalty of the aides, and they are perceived to be potential usurpers, it would be advisable to ease them out cleverly. No rash action against them should be taken against them, lest they explode and do something nasty. In order not to upset them with the impression that they are facing dismissal, the ruler may confuse them through deception. He may reward them today, reprimand them tomorrow. Such ambiguous signals from the ruler will leave them wondering as to where they stand. Such confusion in their minds will unwittingly freeze their evil thoughts and put their unwanted ambitions in cold storage.

19. Of ambitions, it is less harmful, the ambition to prevail in great things, than that other, to appear in everything; for that breeds confusion, and mars business.

Meaning:

Bacon proceeds to argue that 'ambition', per se, is not bad. For example, a budding author wanting to write well to outshine his contemporaries is a good thing. A musician trying to blaze a new trail through his creative music is a great gift to society. A doctor trying to rise to world eminence by his medical skill is a boon to humanity. But, such burning ambition and zeal should be restricted to the area they excel in. It should not spill over to other domains like administration, military and other state's affairs. In such case, an overly ambitious person is a potential hazard. He carries the seed of destruction of the state.

20. But yet it is less danger, to have an ambitious man stirring in business, than great in dependences.

Meaning: So, it is welcome when ambitious people excel in their areas through single-minded effort. But it is fraught to have ambitious people in key administrative positions. The ruler depends on these functionaries to run the day-to-day administrations. Ambitious people may play havoc when they realize that the ruler leans on them to run the administration.

21. He that seeketh to be eminent amongst able men, hath a great task; but that is ever good for the public.

Meaning:

Pursuit of excellence, fame and adulation by gifted individuals can never be bad for the mankind. These people should be nurtured and rewarded.

22. But he, that plots to be the only figure amongst ciphers, is the decay of a whole age.

Meaning:

However, if a person wants to tower over others and sway ordinary people to his control, we can conclude that his rise is ominous for the state. If not nipped in the bud early, he will destroy his own state and his generation.

23. Honour hath three things in it: the vantage ground to do good; the approach to kings and principal persons; and the raising of a man's own fortunes.

Meaning:

Honour, as understood generally, brings the following benefits to an individual. a. Reaching an exalted position in society, b.The access to the king and the upper echelons of power, and c. Affluence, prosperity and well-being.

24. He that hath the best of these intentions, when he aspireth, is an honest man; and that prince, that can discern of these intentions in another that aspireth, is a wise prince.

Meaning:

An ambitious man who limits his aspirations to the above three goals is the right man to be engaged, encouraged and rewarded. The prince who correctly reads these attributes in an aspiring person and decides to take him on board is the wise ruler worthy of appreciation.

25. Generally, let princes and states choose such ministers, as are more sensible of duty than of using; and such as love business rather upon conscience, than upon bravery, and let them discern a busy nature, from a willing mind.

Meaning:

In conclusion, Bacon dons the garb of the modern HR manger for the princes, rulers and people in the highest authority of power. He wants a. People with their mind rigidly anchored to their duty to be nominated. b. People, who have propensity to use their position to further their own ambitions, should be shunned. c. People, who are driven by their conscience rather than by their bravery to discharge their duty, are to be chosen. d. People who love to remain engrossed in their work are to be given preference over those who exhibit obedience and servility.

Of Vain-glory

Text

IT WAS prettily devised of AEsop, The fly sat upon the axle-tree of the chariot wheel, and said, What a dust do I raise! So are there some vain persons, that whatsoever goeth alone, or moveth upon greater means, if they have never so little hand in it, they think it is they that carry it. They that are glorious, must needs be factious; for all bravery stands upon comparisons. They must needs be violent, to make good their own vaunts. Neither can they be secret, and therefore not effectual; but according to the French proverb, Beaucoup de bruit, peu de fruit; Much bruit little fruit. Yet certainly, there is use of this quality in civil affairs. Where there is an opinion and fame to be created, either of virtue or greatness, these men are good trumpeters. Again, as Titus Livius noteth, in the case of Antiochus and the AEtolians, There are sometimes great effects, of cross lies; as if a man, that negotiates between two princes, to draw them to join in a war against the third, doth extol the forces of either of them, above measure, the one to the other: and sometimes he that deals between man and man, raiseth his own credit with both, by pretending greater interest than he hath in either. And in these and the like kinds, it often falls out, that somewhat is produced of nothing; for lies are sufficient to breed opinion, and opinion brings on substance. In militar commanders and soldiers, vain-glory is an essential point; for as iron sharpens iron, so by glory, one courage sharpeneth another. In cases of great enterprise upon charge and adventure, a composition of glorious natures, doth put life into business; and those that are of solid and sober natures, have more of the ballast, than of the sail. In fame of learning, the flight will be slow without

some feathers of ostentation. Qui de contemnenda gloria libros scribunt, nomen, suum inscribunt. Socrates, Aristotle, Galen, were men full of ostentation. Certainly vain-glory helpeth to perpetuate a man's memory; and virtue was never so beholding to human nature, as it received his due at the second hand. Neither had the fame of Cicero, Seneca, Plinius Secundus, borne her age so well, if it had not been joined with some vanity in themselves; like unto varnish, that makes ceilings not only shine but last. But all this while, when I speak of vain-glory, I mean not of that property, that Tacitus doth attribute to Mucianus; Omnium quae dixerat feceratque arte quadam ostentator: for that proceeds not of vanity, but of natural magnanimity and discretion; and in some persons, is not only comely, but gracious. For excusations, cessions, modesty itself well governed, are but arts of ostentation. And amongst those arts, there is none better than that which Plinius Secundus speaketh of, which is to be liberal of praise and commendation to others, in that, wherein a man's self hath any perfection. For saith Pliny, very wittily, In commending another, you do yourself right; for he that you commend, is either superior to you in that you commend, or inferior. If he be inferior, if he be to be commended, you much more; if he be superior, if he be not to be commended, you much less. Glorious men are the scorn of wise men, the admiration of fools, the idols of parasites, and the slaves of their own vaunts.

Questions

Answer the following **5 marks**

1. What does Bacon say about vain glory in his essay "Of Vain glory"?

Answer the following **15 marks**

2. Give the critical analysis of Bacon's essay "Of Friendship"
3. Critically analyse Bacon's essay "Of Marriage and of Single Life"
4. Write a critical summary of Bacon's essay "Of Anger"
5. Write an essay on Bacon's essay "Of Ambition"

Prose: Non-Detailed

UTOPIA - Thomas More

QUOTE

"The king's good servant, but God's first."

—Thomas More

Sir Thomas More Biography (1478–1535)

Thomas More wrote *Utopia* in 1516, which was the forerunner of the utopian literary genre. More served as an important counselor to King Henry VIII of England, serving as his key counselor in the early 1500s, but after he refused to accept the king as head of the Church of England, he was tried for treason and beheaded (he died in London, England, in 1535). More is noted for coining the word "Utopia," in reference to an ideal political system in which policies are governed by reason. He was canonized by the Catholic Church as a saint in 1935, and has been commemorated by the Church of England as a "Reformation martyr."

Early Years

Many historical records suggest that Thomas More was born in London, England, on February 7, 1478, although some scholars believe the year of his birth to be 1477. He attended St. Anthony's School in London, one of the best schools of his day, and as a youth served as a page in the household of John Morton, archbishop of Canterbury and chancellor of England (and future cardinal). Morton is said to have thought that More would become a "marvellous man."

More went on to study at Oxford University, where he seems to have spent two years mastering Latin and formal logic, writing comedies, and studying Greek and Latin literature.

The Legal Profession and the Monastery

Around 1494, his father, a prominent attorney, brought More back to London to study common law. And in February 1496, More was admitted to Lincoln's Inn, one of England's four legal societies, to prepare for admission to the bar, and in 1501 he became a full member of the profession. More managed to keep up with his literary and spiritual interests while practicing law, and he read devotedly from both Holy Scripture and the classics.

Also around this time, More became close friends with Erasmus during the latter's first visit to England. It was the beginning of a lifelong friendship and professional relationship, and the pair worked on Latin translations of Lucian's works during Erasmus' second visit. On Erasmus' third visit, in 1509, he stayed in More's home and wrote *Praise of Folly*, dedicating it to More.

More was, meanwhile, torn between a life of civil service and a monastic calling, and he made the decision to work toward becoming a monk. To that end, in 1503, he moved to a monastery outside the London city limits and subjected himself to the discipline of the Carthusians, taking part of the monastic life as much as his legal career would allow. The prayer, fasting and partaking in penance would stay with him for the rest of his life (as would the practice of wearing a hair shirt), but his sense of duty to serve his country overcame his desire for monasticism, and he entered Parliament in 1504. He also was married for the first time around this time, either in 1504 or early the following year.

More is thought to have written *History of King Richard III* (in Latin and in English) between 1513 and 1518. The work is considered the first masterpiece of English historiography (the study of history, or the study of a particular historical subject), and, despite remaining unfinished, influenced subsequent historians, including William Shakespeare.

'Utopia'

In 1516, More published *Utopia*, a work of fiction primarily depicting a pagan and communist island on which social and political customs are entirely governed by reason. The description of the island of Utopia comes from a mysterious traveler to support his position that communism is the only cure for the egoism found in both private and public life.

Utopia covered such far-reaching topics as theories of punishment, state-controlled education, multi-religion societies, divorce, euthanasia and women's rights, and the resulting display of learning and skill established More as a foremost humanist. *Utopia* also became the forerunner of a new literary genre: the utopian romance.

In the Service of King Henry VIII

In 1520, reformer Martin Luther published three works setting out his doctrine of salvation, which, according to Luther, could be attained through grace alone; the series rejected certain Catholic practices and attacked others. In 1521, King Henry VIII responded to Luther with the assistance of More, in his *Defence of the Seven Sacraments*. By this time, More had become treasurer of England's exchequer, but he also served as "Henry's intellectual courtier," secretary and confidant, and, in 1523, he was elected speaker of the House of Commons.

At Odds With Henry & Subsequent Beheading

More's fate would begin to turn when, in the summer of 1527, King Henry tried to use the Bible to prove to More that Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon, who had failed to

produce a male heir, was void. More tried to share the king's viewpoint, but it was in vain, and More could not sign off on Henry's plan for divorce.

In 1532, More resigned from the House of Commons, citing poor health. The real reason, however, was probably his disapproval of Henry's recent disregard of the laws of the church and his divorce of Catherine. More did not attend the subsequent coronation of Anne Boleyn in June 1533, and the king did not view this in a very kind light, and his vengeance was imminent.

In February 1534, More was accused of being complicit with Elizabeth Barton, who opposed Henry's break with Rome. And in April, the final straw came when More refused to swear to Henry's Act of Succession and the Oath of Supremacy. This amounted to More essentially refusing to accept the king as head of the Church of England, which More believed would disparage the power of the pope. More was sent to the Tower of London on April 17, 1534, and was found guilty of treason.

Thomas More was beheaded on July 6, 1535. He left behind the final words: "The king's good servant, but God's first." More was beatified in 1886 and canonized by the Catholic Church as a saint in 1935. He has also been deemed a "Reformation martyr" by the Church of England.

Plot Summary

Thomas More travels to Antwerp as an ambassador for England and King Henry VIII. While not engaged in his official duties, More spends time conversing about intellectual matters with his friend, Peter Giles. One day, More sees Giles speaking to a bearded man whom More assumes to be a ship's captain. Giles soon introduces More to this new man, Raphael Hythloday, who turns out to be a philosopher and world traveler. The three men retire to Giles's house for supper and conversation, and Hythloday begins to speak about his travels.

Hythloday has been on many voyages with the noted explorer Amerigo Vespucci, traveling to the New World, south of the Equator, through Asia, and eventually landing on the island of Utopia. He describes the societies through which he travels with such insight that Giles and More become convinced that Hythloday would make a terrific counselor to a king. Hythloday refuses even to consider such a notion. A disagreement follows, in which the three discuss Hythloday's reasons for his position. To make his point, Hythloday describes a dinner he once shared in England with Cardinal Morton and a number of others. During this dinner, Hythloday proposed alternatives to the many evil civil practices of England, such as

the policy of capital punishment for the crime of theft. His proposals meet with derision, until they are given legitimate thought by the Cardinal, at which point they meet with great general approval. Hythloday uses this story to show how pointless it is to counsel a king when the king can always expect his other counselors to agree with his own beliefs or policies. Hythloday then goes on to make his point through a number of other examples, finally noting that no matter how good a proposed policy is, it will always look insane to a person used to a different way of seeing the world. Hythloday points out that the policies of the Utopians are clearly superior to those of Europeans, yet adds that Europeans would see as ludicrous the all-important Utopian policy of common property. More and Giles do disagree with the notion that common property is superior to private property, and the three agree that Hythloday should describe the Utopian society in more detail. First, however, they break for lunch.

Back from lunch, Hythloday describes the geography and history of Utopia. He explains how the founder of Utopia, General Utopus, conquered the isthmus on which Utopia now stands and through a great public works effort cut away the land to make an island. Next, Hythloday moves to a discussion of Utopian society, portraying a nation based on rational thought, with communal property, great productivity, no rapacious love of gold, no real class distinctions, no poverty, little crime or immoral behavior, religious tolerance, and little inclination to war. It is a society that Hythloday believes is superior to any in Europe.

Hythloday finishes his description and More explains that after so much talking, Giles, Hythloday, and he were too tired to discuss the particular points of Utopian society. More concludes that many of the Utopian customs described by Hythloday, such as their methods of making war and their belief in communal property, seem absurd. He does admit, however, that he would like to see some aspects of Utopian society put into practice in England, though he does not believe any such thing will happen.

Utopia Summary

Thomas More is a public servant living in London with his family. He writes a letter to a friend in Antwerp (Belgium) named Peter Giles. Giles is a printer and editor, as well as a clerk for the city. In More's letter, we read that More is sending Utopia to Giles for editing and publication. Utopia chronicles a conversation that More and Giles enjoyed with a man named Raphael Hythloday.

Thomas More and Peter Giles are real persons. In Utopia, they are fictionalized. Their mutual acquaintance, Raphael Hythloday, is entirely invented and fictional. In Book One, Utopia recounts the initial meeting of Hythloday, More and Giles. Book One introduces

Hythloday and vaguely mentions the New World island of Utopia. More visits Giles in Antwerp, and this is when Giles introduces Hythloday to More. Hythloday is a Portuguese man who sailed to the New World with the Italian explorer, Amerigo Vespucci. Hythloday stayed behind in the New World and travelled to a few additional locations, eventually making his way back home to Europe. During these travels, Hythloday became acquainted with the Utopians.

The three men make their way back to More's lodging place in the city and they enjoy a conversation in the garden. Hythloday is quite a talker; More and Giles can barely get a word in edgewise. Hythloday gives his opinions on a wide range of topics. Having toured Europe, Hythloday believes that many of the Utopian customs are morally superior to European customs. Hythloday especially focuses on political and economic issues (the distribution of labour, capital punishment for thieves, land reform, the abolition of private property). Hythloday's arguments are rather surprising and the Utopian society is quite unlike the European commonwealths.

Neither More nor Giles professes deep belief in or total support of Utopian policies. Nonetheless, both men are interested in hearing more about the island nation. The three men break for lunch and Book Two chronicles the continuation of Hythloday's presentation, in which he presents the details of Utopia.

Book Two is a long commentary on Hythloday's part. It is not very much of a dialogue and there are few interruptions from More or Giles. Hythloday describes Utopian history, geography, social customs, legal and political systems, economic structures, religious beliefs and philosophy. Utopia is quite unlike the negatively portrayed New World villages with primitive levels of social organization and development. 1760 years before Raphael's commentary on the island, the general Utopus conquered and civilized the area, giving the land and the people his name. As a demonstration of mastery over nature, Utopus formed the land into an island, organizing a labour force that cut through the thin isthmus connected Utopus from the rest of the continent.

Hythloday notes that the Utopians have retained many of the plans and values initially established by Utopus. The rulers are selected from the order of scholars. Language, social customs, religion, dress, architecture and education are identical in Utopia's fifty-four cities. There is a large degree of uniformity and very little individual expression. Laws and social customs heavily regulate the private decisions of individuals. A child is re-assigned to another household if the child wishes to learn a trade other than his or her father's.

Households are composed of extended families, but family members can be relocated to other households if the distribution of adults per household becomes uneven within a given city.

In terms of natural geography, the Utopians have capitalized on their natural resources. The capital city, Amaurot, is in the center of the island. The city is a major trade port, sitting on the banks of the Anyder River. Hythloday's depiction indicates that Amaurot is an improved London and the Anyder River is a cleaner version of the Thames River.

The Utopians are a morally developed people though they are not Christians. Hythloday mentions that the Utopians were eager to hear more about Christianity and that many Utopians had already converted. Most Utopians are monotheists and their religion is similar to Christianity. Some of the Utopians' beliefs run counter to the moral traditions of the Christian church. For instance, the Utopians encourage euthanasia when the patient is terminally ill. The Utopians believe that pride is the root of great evils. Accordingly, the Utopians have eliminated wealth, the nobility, private property, and currency. Labour and goods are distributed equally. Property is held in common. Everyone works the same hours and even though the rulers are exempt from public labour, they work to set a good example for the others. Work hours are equally distributed and there are no monasteries, convents, alehouses, or academies wherein an individual might withdraw from the rest of society. All Utopians are socially productive.

Utopia ends with another letter from More to Giles. In the letter, More positively reflects upon the initial reactions to the published work Utopia. More also gives the reader enough jokes and puns to fix the idea that Utopia is an imagined and unreal place. The writer has presented Utopia as an entertaining way to stir contemplation of serious issues. As such, the book is "medicine smeared with honey."

Analysis

In Book one, Thomas More who is not only the author, but also a main character arrives in Antwerp on a business trip where he runs into an old friend, Peter Giles and meets a new friend, Raphael Hythloday.

Hythloday is a great traveler and has all sorts of controversial opinions, so the three of them head over to Giles's garden to have an intense chat about whether or not it's possible for philosophy to influence politics. Giles and More say it totally is, whereas Hythloday insists that politics and philosophy are irreconcilable. He ends by just randomly mentioning this place called Utopia, that he thinks rocks, and Giles and More beg him to say more.

After taking a little lunch break, our eager trio returns in Book two to chat about Utopia. Hythloday essentially describes, topic-by-topic, various characteristics of this new island: geography, history, cities, houses, government, farming, other jobs, down time, lack of money, outfits, families and households, lack of private property, food, dining, conversation, travel, trade, wealth, education, religion, visitors, slavery, laws, war, holidays… phew.

Once he finishes, Hythloday says that he thinks the island is the absolute best, but More and Giles seem less-than-convinced. More ends by saying that he has many remaining questions, but they can wait for Hythloday to chill out.

Critically analyse Thomas More's *Utopia*

Utopia (published in 1516) attempts to offer a practical response to the crises of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries by carefully defining an ideal republic. Unlike Plato's *Republic*, a largely abstract dialogue about justice, *Utopia* focuses on politics and social organization in stark detail. The books begin a conversation between Thomas More and Raphael (Hebrew for 'God has healed'). Raphael is a traveler who has seen much of the world yet is impressed by little of it. Even monsters are hardly worthy of concern. After all, "There is never any shortage of horrible creatures who prey on human beings, snatch away their food, or devour whole populations; but examples of wise social planning are not so easy to find" (p. 40).

Before long, it becomes clear that Raphael offers shrewd analysis of various communities around the globe - and that he finds most of them to be faulty in some way. Even Tudor England offers little in the form of civilization. Raphael illustrates this rebuke by noting that thieves in English society are executed when, instead, they should be pitied and helped. The seizure of land by oligarchs, the maintenance of a wasteful standing army, the practice of gambling and gratuitous ornamentation - all of these social ills lead to a sick society, according to Raphael. Moreover, these ills produce a subjugated people: "you create thieves, and then punish them for stealing" (p. 49)

Of course, Raphael remains an outsider to civilization - despite his wisdom. When More asks if he might serve as counselor to some king, Raphael responds that no king or court would tolerate a counselor who might challenge their strongly held assumptions. Referring to Plato's *Republic*, Raphael notes that the likelihood of a king acting as a philosopher, or merely tolerating one, is coincidental at best: "I'd be promptly thrown out, or merely treated as a figure of fun" (p. 57). More responds that social reform is a pleasant ideal,

but that conservatism is more appropriate to these precarious days: "what you can't put right you must try to make as little wrong as possible. For things will never be perfect, until human beings are perfect - which I don't expect them to be for quite a number of years" (p. 64)! Raphael concludes Book One of *Utopia* by responding that cures for social ills demand systematic healing of the body politic. No improvement in public life can occur without the elimination of social illness at its deepest level. This is not mere fancy, Raphael reminds his friend; the good life can be realized, if it can be visualized. Throughout the second book, Raphael helps More visualize the perfected story by sketching his recollection of a distant island: Utopia. I've chosen to organize his narrative according to four principles:

- elimination of private property
- universal labour
- moderated pleasure
- family as microcosm of state

This primary organizing principle of Utopia is the elimination of private property. All goods are held in common and dispensed freely. The implications of this form of public life are significant:

In other 'republics' practically everyone knows that, if he doesn't look out for himself, he'll starve to death, however prosperous his country may be. He's therefore compelled to give his own interests priority over those of the public; that is, of other people. But in Utopia, where everything's under public ownership, no one has any fear of going short, as long as the public storehouses are full. Everyone gets a fair share, so there are never any poor men or beggars. Nobody owns anything, but everyone is rich - for what greater wealth can there be than cheerfulness, peace of mind, and freedom from anxiety? (p. 128)

There are no shortages in this community because so few things have value, as compared to English society in which valued things are necessarily in short supply. Gold and silver, prized among English possessions, are used in chamber pots and slave fetters in Utopia. Because everyone has a job producing basic staples of society, there is little reason for long workdays. Utopians produce only what the community needs to survive.

This leads to a second key principle: the universal nature of labour. In this way, *Utopia* is different from Plato's *Republic*. All people (with the exception of a handful of scholars and officials) must work - and all must benefit from their communal labour. Sullivan

(1983) illuminates this key distinction: "Whereas the common life is led only by the soldiers and guardians of the Republic who are also exempt from manual labour, all the Utopians share in the goods produced and all [with those exceptions noted above] work as farmers or craftsmen" (p. 33). In contrast to the Republic, More's Utopia seeks to create a largely classless society (with the key exception of slaves), rather than a society in which many work to sustain public life for a few.

In More's ideal community, labour serves as a means of social cohesion and control. Someone who leaves his or her town and workplace without permission will be severely punished. Even when a person visits another town on the island, s/he must work in order to eat:

Wherever you are, you always have to work. There's never any excuse for idleness. There are also no wine-taverns, no ale-houses, no brothels, no opportunities for seduction, no secret meeting-places. Everyone has his eye on you, so you're practically forced to get on with your job, and make some proper use of your spare time. (p. 84)

Despite this constant surveillance, utopian ethics and religion emphasize that a good life is spent in pleasurable pursuits - and that work is pleasurable. When not at labour, utopians read, enjoy conversations, play games, or attend public lectures.

This leads to the third principle of society in More's *Utopia*: the role of moderated pleasure in social life. Public life is organized around the principle that one can be happy on this earth insofar as one is moderate in one's pleasures and doesn't seek to limit the pleasures of others. Indeed, the highest pleasures follow those who willingly sacrifice their own happiness for the happiness of others. Religious tolerance follows this principle - people may believe in God however they wish, as long as they don't foist their views on other people who may believe differently. Most Utopians believe in some sort of God, but none are forced to follow a specific manner of faith. While this notion might seem common to the contemporary reader, one should remember that More wrote his philosophy in a age when the desires of individuals were easily thwarted by church and state. More, himself, was executed for his unwillingness to bow to a religious edict made by his king, Henry VIII. In Utopia, one may practice any religion because, right or wrong, faith in some manner of God serves to unite the community. Only an atheist who does not fear judgement in the afterlife is ostracized from the Utopian community.

A fourth principle of *Utopia* is the role of family as the microcosm of state. Family life is organized around the needs of the state, patterned according to trades more than

biological lineage. Thus, a child who prefers to be a woodworker would be moved to a family of woodworkers. Families are patriarchal: "When a girl grows up and gets married, she joins her husband's household, but the boys of each generation stay at home, under the control of their oldest male relative" (p. 79). This patriarchy manifests itself in utopian religion where women must admit their sins to their husbands even before attending church. As Hertzler (1965) notes: "More departed from Plato and most communist writers who have held the family as the complement or bulwark of property. They held that the abandonment of property meant the destruction of the family. But More was satisfied with a supervised mating and family life" (p. 139). In contrast to book five of *The Republic*, More's Utopian family represents the state at its smallest level in the individual lives of its citizens.

Utopia, like all fanciful works about public life, is really about the contemporary times of its author. The setting for public life, as in Plato's Republic, is the city - in this case a not-too veiled description of London as it might have appeared in the early sixteenth century. Of course, this London-that-isn't is improved and perfected by the Utopian social order:

The streets are well designed, both for traffic and for protection against the wind. The buildings are far from unimpressive, for they take the form of terraces, facing one another and running the whole length of the street. The fronts of the houses are separated by a twenty-foot carriageway. Behind them is a large garden, also as long as the street itself, and completely enclosed by the backs of other streets. Each house has a front door leading into the street, and a back door into the garden. In both cases, they're double swing-doors, which open at a touch, and close automatically behind you. So anyone can go in and out - for there's no such thing as private property. (p. 73)

In this way, Utopia is a sort of Gernsback Continuum - an ideal community that exists just slightly beyond the world of Thomas More and contemporary readers. This community exists through the communal longing of its readers to create it. Their artifacts - books, speeches, drawings, and the like - allow us to pass from the real to the ideal, even if just for a moment.

Questions

Answer the following: **5 marks**

1. What did Thomas More want to keep out of his Utopia?
2. What are the political problems discussed in Thomas More’s Utopia?

Answer the following: **15 marks**

1. Discuss the status of women in Utopia.
2. What is the nature of Utopian society? Is it an ideal society? If so, is it a society made up of ideal people?

The Gospel According to Mark

The Bible

Introduction to *The Gospel of Mark*

The Word *Gospel*. The second book of the English Bible that most of us read from is the Gospel of Mark. Mark is the second of the four gospel writings, yet there is only one gospel about Jesus Christ and there are four different writers: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The word "*Gospel*" means "*good news*", and the good news is about Jesus Christ dying on the cross and then 3 days later conquering death and rising from the dead, offering salvation to all mankind, this is the Gospel.

Summary of *The Book of Mark*

Brief Summary. Jesus of Nazareth is the suffering servant who came to die for the sins of all men. He did His work and "immediately" went to the cross, so be encouraged all who are suffering because Christ suffered for you.

Purpose. The Book of Mark is the shortest of the 4 Gospel accounts of the life of Jesus Christ. and he seems to write his account of the Gospel of Christ with a sense of urgency. He mentions the word "immediately" 27 times. In Mark many times Jesus exercises actions rather than words, which would impress his Roman readers who the Book seems to be addressing. He portrays Jesus as a man of power and miracles, who could set aside the laws of nature at will. Yet this powerful Son of God was the suffering servant who would give up His life as a ransom for all mankind (Mark 10:45). The clear purpose of mark was to encourage those suffering persecution that their master suffered first, and He suffered for them.

Audience. Apparently Mark wrote his Gospel account to encourage gentile Christians in Rome who were facing the persecutions of the Emperor Nero. History is clear about the atrocious behavior of the Romans and especially the insanity of Nero. The other evidence that scholars bring up concerning mark's audience as being gentiles is the fact that Mark does not deal with Jewish Laws and he only quotes one prophecy from the Old Testament. There is also careful thought into explaining Jewish customs and idioms. (Mark 3:7; 5:41; 7:2; 10:46; 14:36; 15:34; 9:43; 14:12; 15:42).

Authorship. The gospel of Mark does not proclaim who the author is within the document, yet the information that we know about Mark can be seen in the writer of this gospel. It is evident that the writer was Jewish, he was a Christian, and he was familiar with every day Jewish life, as well as the Jewish Scriptures. We know from the Scriptures that Mark was

Jewish, and he knew the teachings of Jesus very well. He also knew the teachings of the rest of the apostles. It is also important to notice that after Peter was imprisoned he went to the house of Mary, the mother of Mark (Acts 12:12-17). Also Peter mentions in his epistle "my son Mark" (1 Peter 5:13). During Paul's missionary journeys Mark became a companion of Paul and Barnabas, and he left them at Perga in Pamphylia (Acts 13:13), after Paul had rebuked him. Many years later Mark regained the favor of Paul (Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11). Early Church tradition unanimously ascribes the second gospel to Mark as a companion of Peter and the writer of the second Gospel. One prologue to the Gospels which was written around 160 AD has this statement: "Mark… Was Peter's interpreter, and after Peter's decease wrote down this gospel in the region of Italy." Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian also attest to Mark as the author.

Location. Nothing in the Gospel of Mark indicates where it was written from. Most of the early writers who boast of Mark as the author also name Rome as the place it was written.

Date. Early Christian writers and traditions place the Gospel of Mark sometime close to the end of Peter's life, around 60-65 AD. Most scholars agree that the Gospel of Mark was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, while the Second Temple in Jerusalem was still standing (Mark 13:1-2). Many scholars do not believe in the miracle of predictive prophecy and argue that the Gospel of Mark was written after the fall of Jerusalem, because of the accurate details of the events that Jesus spoke about. Mark's Gospel account seems to have been written as encouragement to the Christians who were facing the persecution of the Emperor Nero which took place in 64 AD.

Introduction

For a long time, the Gospel of Mark was the least popular of the Gospels, both among scholars and general readers. Mark’s literary style is somewhat dull—for example, he begins a great number of sentences with the word “then.” Luke and Matthew both contain the same story of Jesus’s life, but in more sophisticated prose. Mark also leaves out accounts of Jesus’s birth, the Sermon on the Mount, and several of the most well known parables. Mark became more popular, however, when biblical scholars discovered it was the earliest written of the four Gospels, and was probably the primary source of information for the writers of Luke and Matthew. Moreover, because neither Jesus nor his original disciples left any writings behind, the Gospel of Mark is the closest document to an original source on Jesus’s life that currently exists. The presumed author of the Gospel of Mark, John Mark, was familiar with Peter, Jesus’s closest disciple. Indeed, Mark is the New Testament historian who comes closest to

witnessing the actual life of Jesus. Though Mark's Gospel certainly comes to us through his own personal lens, scholars are fairly confident that Mark is a reliable source of information for understanding Jesus's life, ministry, and crucifixion. As a result of its proximity to original sources, the Gospel of Mark has transformed from a book disregarded for its lowly prose to one of the most important books in the New Testament. Its historical importance has affected its evaluation by literary scholars as well. Though crude and terse, the Gospel of Mark is vivid and concrete. Action dominates. A dramatic sense of urgency is present, and Mark has a developed sense of irony that permeates the Gospel.

Summary

"The Gospel According to Mark" has no story of Jesus's birth. Instead, Mark's story begins by describing Jesus's adult life, introducing it with the words, "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1:1). Mark tells of John the Baptist, who predicts the coming of a man more powerful than himself. After John baptizes Jesus with water, the Holy Spirit of God recognizes Jesus as his son, saying, "You are my Son, the Beloved" (1:11). Jesus goes to the wilderness, where Satan tests him for forty days, and Jesus emerges triumphant.

Jesus travels to Galilee, the northern region of Israel. He gathers his first disciples, Simon and Andrew, two Jewish brothers who are both fishermen. Jesus asks them to follow him, saying that he will show them how to fish for people rather than for fish. Simon and Andrew, as well as James and John, drop their nets and follow him. Jesus exhibits his authority in Galilee, where he cleanses a leper (1:40–45). Mark reports that Jesus heals a paralytic, Simon's sick mother-in-law, and a man with a withered hand. The miracles cause the crowds that gather to watch Jesus to become bewildered, fearful, and antagonistic. The Pharisees and followers of Herod begin plotting to kill Jesus. Jesus stays focused on his ministry.

Jesus's ministry attracts many followers. The miracle stories become increasingly longer and more elabourate, emphasizing the supernatural power of Jesus's authority. Mark says that "even wind and sea obey him" (4:35–41). Simultaneously, Jesus becomes increasingly misunderstood and rejected, even by his own apostles. Jesus notes his disciples' frequent misunderstandings of his message. Jesus's power continues to reveal itself in his control over nature: he calms a storm, cures a man possessed by a demon, and revives a dead young girl. Despite his successes, however, he continues to be reviled in his own hometown of Nazareth.

The story of Jesus's ministry reaches King Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee who beheaded John the Baptist. Jesus disperses the apostles, charging them with the responsibility to spread the Gospel and to heal the sick. When the apostles rejoin Jesus, they are once again swarmed with people eager to hear Jesus's message. Through a miracle, Jesus divides five loaves of bread and two fish and feeds all 5,000 people. His disciples, however, seem not to understand the magnitude of his miracle: when he walks on water, they are shocked. The Pharisees, who are upset at Jesus's abandonment of the traditional Jewish laws, question Jesus. He responds by pointing out that it is important to obey the spirit of the law rather than simply going through the technical actions that the law proscribes. Jesus preaches that human intention, not behavior, determines righteousness.

Jesus travels again through northern Palestine. He heals a deaf man and the child of a Gentile, and works a second miracle in which he multiplies a small amount of bread and fish to feed 4,000 people. His disciples, however, continue to misunderstand the significance of his actions. Peter, the foremost of the disciples, seems to be the only one who recognizes Jesus's divine nature. Jesus begins to foresee his own crucifixion and resurrection. He continues to travel across Galilee, but shifts his emphasis to preaching rather than working miracles. He appears to some of his disciples to be transfigured, made brilliantly white. Jesus explains that John the Baptist served as his Elijah, predicting his arrival. He preaches against divorce and remarriage. He announces that young children, in their innocence, are models for righteous behavior, and that the rich will have great difficulty entering the kingdom of God. He teaches, despite the sacrifices necessary to enter the kingdom, it will be worth it: "Many who are first will be last, and the last, first" (10:31).

Finally, Jesus journeys to Jerusalem, where he drives the money changers from the temple and begins preaching his Gospel. He is well received by the common people but hated by the priests and the scribes. However, he successfully defends himself against the priests' verbal attacks. He teaches that obedience to Caesar is important, that the dead will be resurrected, that loving one's neighbor is the greatest commandment, and that the End of Days will soon come, bringing God's retribution on the unjust and the return of the Son of man.

Eventually, Jesus allows himself to succumb to the conspiracy against him. At the Passover Seder, Jesus institutes the Christian sacrament of the Eucharist, telling his followers to eat and drink his symbolic body and blood. At the dinner, Jesus says that one of his disciples will betray him. The disciples are surprised, each asking, "Surely, not I?" (14:19).

After dinner, Jesus goes to a garden called Gethsemane and prays while Peter, James, and John wait nearby. The three disciples fall asleep three times, though Jesus returns each time and asks them to stay awake with him as he prays. Jesus prays to God that, if possible, he might avoid his imminent suffering.

Jesus is leaving the garden with Peter, James, and John when Judas Iscariot, one of the apostles, arrives with the city's chief priests and a crowd carrying swords and clubs. Judas kisses Jesus, indicating to the priests Jesus's identity. The priests arrest Jesus and take him to the court of the high priest. There, Jesus publicly claims that he is "the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One," and the Jews deliver him to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, who agrees to crucify him (14:61). On the cross, Jesus cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (15:34). He dies and is buried by Joseph of Arimathea, a righteous Jew. When Mary Magdalene and other women come to Jesus's grave on the third day after the crucifixion, however, they find it empty. A young man tells them that Jesus has risen from the grave. Jesus then appears in resurrected form to Mary, Mary Magdalene, and the apostles.

Analysis

Mark's Gospel is often disconnected, and at times difficult to read as a logically progressing narrative. This Gospel is brief and concise, reading almost like an outline, with little effort made to connect the roughly chronological list of incidents. Mark's Gospel also tends to interrupt itself by introducing information of marginal relevance. For example, Mark interrupts the story of the dispersal of the apostles and their return with the anecdote about Herod Antipas and John the Baptist. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke rely on Mark for much of their information, and they flesh out the bare-bones outline, adding additional information and employing a more fluid and elabourate style. The relationship between these first three Gospels is extremely complex. They are often approached as a group because of their strong similarities, and because of the way in which they appear to have been influenced by each other or by common sources. Because of their interconnectedness, they are called "synoptic," meaning that they can be looked at "with one glance."

The Gospel of Mark does show some evidence of tight, purposeful construction. Mark can be divided into two sections. The first, from1:1 to 8:26, concerns itself with Jesus's ministry in Galilee, beginning with John the Baptist's prophecy proclaiming the advent of the Messiah. The second, from 8:27 to 16:20, tells the story of Jesus's prediction of his own suffering, crucifixion, and resurrection.

Mark's Gospel constantly presumes that the end of the world is imminent. Therefore, when the end of time never came, early Christian communities had difficulty interpreting passages such as the thirteenth chapter of Mark, whose apocalyptic vision is urgent, striking, and confident. Another prominent motif of Mark is secrecy. Mark writes that the kingdom is near, the time has come, but only a few are privy to any knowledge of it. This motif is known as the Messianic Secret. For example, Mark refers to secrecy in relation to the kingdom of God in 4:11-12:

And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything comes in parables, in order that / 'they may indeed look but not perceive.'"

For Mark, Jesus's parables are riddles meant to be understood only by a select few. However, as the Gospel unfolds, the disciples do not maintain their privileged position.

As Mark tells his story, the twelve disciples persistently, even increasingly, fail to understand Jesus. Ultimately, two of them betray him, the rest abandon him, and at the end he is crucified alone until two of his bravest disciples, Mary Magdalene and Mary, return and find his tomb empty. If anyone is loyal in this Gospel, it is the Galilean women who look on Jesus's crucifixion from a distance and come to bury him. The Gospel of Mark is brutal on the disciples; some scholars suggest that Mark is trying to express his theme that when one follows Christ, one must be prepared for the experiences of misunderstanding and even persecution. Mark's model of discipleship includes the experiences of failure and doubt as part of the process of coming to understand the full meaning of Jesus. For Mark, discipleship means debating, questioning, stumbling, and learning. It involves suffering, service to others, poverty, and faithfulness despite persecution. It is strange that the Gospel of Mark ends so abruptly; scholars generally agree that the Gospel of Mark ends with verse 16:8, and that verses 16:9–20 were a later addition to the manuscript. The ending at 16:8 is confusing: Jesus's body is gone, and in his place an angel appears to Mary Magdalene and others, charging them to tell Peter of Jesus's resurrection. The women fail to fulfill this command: "So they went out and fled from the tomb, for the terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid" (16:8). This ending is hardly triumphant, and verses 16:9–20 preserve Mark's original message. Jesus appears to his apostles, and victory seems assured: "And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it" (16:20).

The Pre-Game Show

Upbeat music blares from the speakers, the lights are dimmed, spotlights circle the arena, and an announcer introduces the starting line-up, saving for the finale the team's MVP, who in Mark is not LeBron James, but Jesus the Messiah and Son of God. Pretty big deal especially since the prophet Isaiah totally called it.

Fans are super pumped when John the Baptist comes on the scene in the Judean wilderness donning an outfit of camel's hair, reminding everyone of the prophet Elijah. And we thought black socks with black shoes was pushing the envelope. Anyway, John baptizes people who are turning their lives around, but explicitly tells everyone that he's the warm-up act for someone much, much more important and stronger than he is.

He's talking about Jesus of Nazareth, of course, who arrives at the Jordan River, where John baptizes him. As Jesus comes up out of the water, some pretty amazing stuff happens. The heavens split open, a dove-looking Spirit descends upon Jesus, and a voice echoes through the heavenly loud speakers calling Jesus "my beloved son" (1:11). Yowza.
The Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness, where—no big deal—he beats a formidable demonic opponent named Satan. The end. Oh wait…not even close.

The Big Game

Jesus pursues his career at first mostly in Galilee, though he also takes a few business trips to non-Jewish territories like Sidon, Tyre, and Caesarea-Philippi. He's a busy guy as he teaches, performs miracles and exorcisms, trains his wayward disciples, and argues with religious leaders. He can barely even find time for a lunch break. Seriously (6:31).

His supernatural abilities are astounding, and the crowds love him. He's a serious celebrity. But no one's quite sure what to make of him. He's not a singer-songwriter, that's for sure. That means he must be some prophet of old like Elijah who has returned to the earth. Natch.

For those of us with back-stage passes, though, the narrator makes it clear that Jesus is a veritable God-man of supernatural parentage (see 1:1, 11 and 9:2-8). This means that even the demons are right about Jesus's identity (1:24; 3:11; 5:7). He's a walking epiphany.

But being a Son of God isn't all it's cracked up to be. Even while detailing Jesus's outstanding resume, the narrator introduces some pretty disheartening complications. It turns out that Herod, who ruled Galilee, arrested and beheaded Jesus's precursor, John the Baptist

(6:21-29). Yikes. Also, the religious leaders together with Herod's cronies begin a plot to crush Jesus as early as 3:6. So yeah, things aren't looking great.

Jesus's disciples are slow learners, if not downright dumb. They're supposed to be privileged recipients of God's secret messages (4:11-12), but one of them is a real back-stabber (3:19) and all of them understand very little of what Jesus actually teaches and does (4:13; 7:17; 6:52; 8:15-18). A lot of the time they're scared silly (4:41; 6:49-51)—although who wouldn't be, walking around with the Son of God and all?

Things just get worse for the disciples as they take a long road trip with Jesus to Jerusalem (8:27-10:52). While they're "on the road" (8:27; 9:33; 10:17, 32, 46), Jesus warns his disciples three times that he will suffer, die, and be resurrected in Jerusalem (8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34). Mark interprets Jesus's suffering as the model for how to be a disciple, and Jesus himself repeatedly underlines the point during their road trip (8:34-38; 9:33-37; 10:41-45). Disciples are supposed to risk their lives, choose last place, and compete over who can best serve the other.

The disciples don't get this counterintuitive stuff *at all*. Peter, James, and John are expecting Jesus to become king like the Messiah is supposed to. Just check out their reel of bloopers.

The Fourth Quarter

In Jerusalem, things turn out exactly as Jesus expects. Initially, crowds welcome him with a big party, but Jerusalem's top brass snub him and don't attend. Jesus doesn't really like them all too much anyway. He ticks them off big time when he closes the stores in the Temple's precinct, which is not a place for bling. Then he systematically proves himself a whole lot smarter than each of the religious leaders, who are unable to go toe-to-toe with Jesus while debating some weighty religious questions.

When Passover rolls around, Jesus and his disciples share a somber meal, where the table-talk is of betrayal, abandonment, body, and blood. Ah, dinner parties.

Meanwhile, Judas has already turned Jesus over to the authorities who want to arrest him on the sly. While he's praying in Gethsemane, an armed gang grabs him and his disciples abandon him. It is not long before the Jewish leaders declare him guilty of blasphemy for claiming to be the Son of God. They lead him to a Roman administrator named Pontius Pilate, who sentences him to crucifixion, giving in to the pressure of the crowd. The claim to be king is, after all, tantamount to treason against Rome.

Overtime

Jesus dies, and Joseph of Arimathea places his body in a tomb. Done and done.

Or not.

The body turns up missing when a few of his female followers arrive to prepare it for burial. But a youth dressed in white informs them that Jesus is no longer there because he was raised. He instructs the women to brief the disciples, but they say nothing, "for they were afraid" (16:8). These are likely the last words of Mark's gospel. Go figure.

Questions:

Answer the following: 5 marks

1) What is the general theme of the book of Mark?

2) How is the Trinity of the Godhead seen in these verses?

3) How long did the conflict with Satan last in wilderness with Jesus?

4) What Gospel did Jesus preach?

5) What did Jesus say that showed the man's testimony had the devil behind it?

Answer the following: 15 marks

1) Discuss how Jesus discern the touch of true faith?

2) Elaborate on the warnings laid by Jesus' to His followers in these chapters.

3) What is the significance of Israel's gathering together after her long dispersion?

Drama: Detailed

Edward II by Christopher Marlowe

Christopher Marlowe Biography

Christopher Marlowe was born in Canterbury, England, in 1564. While Christopher Marlowe's literary career lasted less than six years, and his life only 29 years, his achievements, most notably the play *The Tragicall History of Doctor Faustus*, ensured his lasting legacy.

Early Years

Christopher Marlowe was born in Canterbury on February 26, 1564. He went to King's School and was awarded a scholarship that enabled him to study at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, from late 1580 until 1587.

Marlowe earned his bachelor of arts degree in 1584, but in 1587 the university hesitated in granting him his master's degree. Its doubts were set to rest, or at least dismissed, when the Privy Council sent a letter declaring that he was now working "on matters touching the benefit of his country," and he was awarded his master's degree on schedule.

Marlowe as a Secret Agent?

The nature of Marlowe's service to England was not specified by the council, but the letter sent to Cambridge has provoked abundant speculation, notably the theory that Marlowe had become a secret agent working for Sir Francis Walsingham's intelligence service. No direct evidence supports this theory, but the council's letter clearly suggests that Marlowe was serving the government in some secret capacity.

Surviving Cambridge records from the period show that Marlowe had several lengthy absences from the university, much longer than allowed by the school's regulations. And extant dining room accounts indicate that he spent lavishly on food and drink while there, greater amounts than he could have afforded on his known scholarship income. Both of these could point to a secondary source of income, such as secret government work.

But with scant hard evidence and rampant speculation, the mystery surrounding Marlowe's service to the queen is likely to remain active. Spy or not, after attaining his master's degree, Marlowe moved to London and took up writing full-time.

Early Writing Career

After 1587, Christopher Marlowe was in London, writing for the theater and probably also engaging himself occasionally in government service. What is thought to be his first play, *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, was not published until 1594, but it is generally thought to

have been written while he was still a student at Cambridge. According to records, the play was performed by the Children of the Chapel, a company of boy actors, between 1587 and 1593.

Marlowe's second play was the two-part *Tamburlaine the Great* (c. 1587; published 1590). This was Marlowe's first play to be performed on the regular stage in London and is among the first English plays in blank verse. It is considered the beginning of the mature phase of the Elizabethan theater and was the last of Marlowe's plays to be published before his untimely death.

Arrest and Death

The constant rumors of Christopher Marlowe's atheism finally caught up with him on Sunday May 20, 1593, and he was arrested for just that "crime." Atheism, or heresy, was a serious offense, for which the penalty was burning at the stake. Despite the gravity of the charge, however, he was not jailed or tortured but was released on the condition that he report daily to an officer of the court.

On May 30, however, Marlowe was killed by Ingram Frizer. Frizer was with Nicholas Skeres and Robert Poley, and all three men were tied to one or other of the Walsinghams--either Sir Francis Walsingham (the man who evidently recruited Marlowe himself into secret service on behalf of the queen) or a relative also in the spy business. Allegedly, after spending the day together with Marlowe in a lodging house, a fight broke out between Marlowe and Frizer over the bill, and Marlowe was stabbed in the forehead and killed.

Conspiracy theories have abounded since, with Marlowe's atheism and alleged spy activities at the heart of the murder plots, but the real reason for Marlowe's death is still debated.

What is not debated is Marlowe's literary importance, as he is Shakespeare's most important predecessor and is second only to Shakespeare himself in the realm of Elizabethan tragic drama.

History of Edward II

Edward II is considered one of the earliest history plays. A history play is a play based on a historical event or on historical people. It condenses the entire problematic reign of Edward II into a single narrative and focuses primarily on his relationship with Piers Gaveston, a confidant and favorite of Edward II considered by many academics, such as Frederick Boas, to have been the king's lover and how the relationship affected the politics of the era.

Christopher Marlowe's play *Edward II: The Troublesome Reign and Lamentable Death of Edward the Second, King of England, with the Tragical Fall of Proud Mortimer* is an intense and swiftly moving account of a king controlled by his basest passions, a weak man who becomes a puppet of his homosexual lover, and pays a tragic price for forsaking the governance of his country. The action takes place in early fourteenth-century England, during a period when England was surrounded by enemies in Scotland, Ireland, Denmark, and France. Edward, preoccupied by the banishment of his lover, Gaveston, barely acknowledges the nascent crises that threaten his realm; he indulges his passions and abdicates his duties, failing to recognize that his willful and persistent refusal to attend to state affairs is eroding his royal authority. It is this resulting loss of power, which he has brought upon himself by his own irresponsibility, that irks him more than the absence of his lover. He picks his battles, preferring those petty skirmishes over Gaveston's fate to those that would benefit his rule and enhance the power of the state. When a group of nobles has Gaveston executed, Edward's own execution soon follows, and the play closes by unveiling the Machiavellian vices of the would-be saviors.

Marlowe found most of his material for this play in the third volume of Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1587). He stayed close to the account, but he embellished history with the character of Lightborn (or Lucifer) as Edward's assassin. First played in 1593 or 1594, *Edward II* was printed in 1594. It has played sporadically throughout the twentieth century, usually to audiences surprised by the power of a work by one of Shakespeare's contemporaries.

Act-wise summary

Act 1, Scene 1

Piers Gaveston enters reading an intimate letter from King Edward II, informing him that the old king has passed away and that he may return to England, which is received with much joy. Three poor men than accost Gaveston begging for assistance, and he ultimately tells them to come back later after he has spoken with the king. At this point, Gaveston steps aside, and the king and the lords enter from Parliament. The Mortimers, the Earl of Lancaster and others are unhappy with the fact that Gaveston has been recalled from exile and that he is being shown so much favor; the king is only defended by his brother, the Earl of Kent. Edward II does not care what the lords have to say and informs them that he has no intention of sending his beloved Gaveston away. The lords depart in anger, threatening open war if Gaveston is not expelled. Gaveston then comes forward and is received joyously by the king,

who then proceeds to make him lord chamberlain, the royal secretary and Earl of Cornwall and promises him any protection he needs against his enemies. The Bishop of Coventry, the man who passed the sentence of exile on Gaveston, then enters and is immediately upset to see the exiled man back in England. Coventry promises that there will be retribution for breaking the law, and the king responds by stripping the bishop of all his possessions, giving them to Gaveston and imprisoning him.

Act 1, Scene 2

The Earls of Lancaster and Warwick and the Mortimers discuss how they shall rid the realm of Gaveston and are disgusted with the new titles and positions he has been awarded, as well as the fact that the Bishop of Conventry's possessions now belong to Gaveston. The Archbishop of Canterbury enters and, also unhappy with the treatment of the bishop, agrees to join forces with the lords against Gaveston, but not the king. Queen Isabella then enters, lamenting the fact that the king cares not about her but dedicates all his attentions to Gaveston. The lords comfort her and tell her that they will deal with Gaveston. Isabella pleads with them not to raise arms against the king, but Mortimer says he must, if words do not work.

Act 1, Scene 3

Gaveston informs Kent that the lords have gone towards Lambeth.

Act 1, Scene 4

The lords have drawn up a document once again exiling Gaveston from England and mean to make the king sign it. Kent, Gaveston and the king enter and the lords immediately begin to plead their case. They have both Gaveston and Kent led off and urge the king to rid himself of the former. Despite the king's offerings of high offices for them, the lords persist on ridding themselves of Gaveston, and Edward ultimately signs the document, prompting the lords to depart in happiness. Gaveston enters and he and the king share an emotional farewell, before Edward leads off his friend to his exile in Ireland. When the two men leave, the queen laments her situation and decides that the best way to win the king's love is to stand up for Gaveston. The lords arrive and comfort the queen in her sadness, and she informs them that she wishes Gaveston to remain in England in order to please the king. Most of the lords are against this, but Isabella takes Mortimer aside and reasons with him that it would be more beneficial for Gaveston to remain, so that he may be killed. With this reasoning, the lords agree to repeal Gaveston's banishment. The king then enters, mourning, and is informed by the queen that Gaveston shall not be exiled. At this news, Edward is extremely happy and

says kind words to the queen and all the lords present, who all kneel to him. The king says that tournaments shall be assembled to celebrate his friend's return and that Gaveston shall marry his cousin, heiress to the Earl of Gloucester. All depart except for the Mortimers. Mortimer senior tells of how he must go to Scotland, and that his nephew should look after things at court, but not to worry much about Gaveston, since every king and great ruler has had his favorites. The younger Mortimer is worried that a man of such low birth has such a high influence on the king but vows to stay loyal to him nonetheless.

Act 2, Scene 1 Setting: Gloucester's house

Baldock asks Spencer Junior whose service he shall be in now that the Earl of Gloucester has passed away, and Spencer replies that he wishes to serve Gaveston, who has recently been recalled from exile, before lecturing Baldock on certain courtly manners. They talk about how happy the king's niece must be that Gaveston is recalled, and the lady then enters, joyously reading a letter that tells her of her love's return. Margaret and Spenser then depart to see Gaveston.

Act 2, Scene 2 Setting: Tynemouth

As he waits for Gaveston to return, Edward II irritates the lords by continuously talking about his friend and ignoring the matters of state that Mortimer is attempting to speak of. Mortimer and Lancaster then use poetic innuendos to tell the king of their hatred against Gaveston, which greatly angers him. Gaveston then arrives much to the king's joy. The lords, however, only give him a sarcastic and insincere welcome, which further angers the king and causes a squabble that ends in Mortimer wounding Gaveston, who is then led off. Edward reprimands the lords for their actions and threatens to muster an army to subdue them before departing in a rage. The lords then decide that they must do all they can to eliminate Gaveston. A messenger arrives and informs the lords that Mortimer Senior has been captured by the Scots. Mortimer immediately suggests that the king should pay his uncle's ransom since he was captured fighting in his war. The king reenters and Mortimer informs him of his uncle's capture and suggests he pay the ransom, which Edward outright refuses. Edward's refusal to ransom Mortimer Senior acts as the catalyst to set off Mortimer Junior and Lancaster, who then go off on a lengthy tirade, informing the king of all he has done wrong in the kingdom. They claim that Scotland, Ireland, France and northern England are out of control because of his lack of attention to them; the queen is left ignored and neglected; the people are in rebellion; and the one army the king led was a complete disaster. After they speak their minds, Mortimer and Lancaster depart, threatening rebellion. The king vents his anger to his

brother Kent, who tells him the lords are right about the Gaveston situation, furthering the king's anger and resulting in Kent's dismissal. Gaveston, the queen, Spencer and others enter, and the king complains of the rebellious behavior of Mortimer and the lords and promises advancement for Spencer and Baldock. Edward announces the marriage between Gaveston and Margaret before swearing revenge against the lords to end the scene.

Act 2, Scene 3 Setting: Near Tynemouth Castle

Kent wishes to join the lords in their fight against Gaveston. Though they are suspicious at first, he being the king's brother, they ultimately receive him openly. The lords then prepare to fight with their enemy to the last, once again stating that they mean no harm against the king, only Gaveston and his followers.

Act 2, Scene 4 Setting: Near Tynemouth Castle

The king, Gaveston, Spencer and Margaret are pursued by the lords and, panicking frantically, they flee. At this point, the lords enter and attempt to comfort the queen, who then tells them the king's strategy and where he and Gaveston have fled to. The lords pursue the king and his followers by boat, and the queen is left along to lament her sad situation, claiming that, if Edward does not start showing her the attention she deserves, she will leave England with her son for France, where her brother is king.

Act 2, Scene 5

The scene begins with the lords capturing Gaveston, who they then inform will be promptly executed for his misleading of the king. The Earl of Arundel arrives and tells the lords that the king knows of Gaveston's capture and pleads with them to allow him to see his friend one last time before he is executed. At first, the lords are firm in their resolve not to let Gaveston out of their sights until he is dead, but the Earl of Pembroke pledges his honour that he will take Gaveston to the king so they may have their final meeting and quickly return him to the lords to face his execution. To this, the lords agree, and Gaveston is left in the charge of Pembroke's servant James.

Act 3, Scene 1

Warwick arrives to seize Gaveston from Pembroke's men. After the earl is criticized for his treacherous behavior, he claims to be doing what's best for his country and departs with Gaveston as his prisoner.

Act 3, Scene 2

Edward laments the absence of Gaveston, and Spencer advises the king to be more firm with the rebels, which he agrees with. Spencer Senior then arrives with armed men to support the

king's cause and, when Edward discovers who he is, he promptly creates him Earl of Wiltshire for his loyal services. The queen and Prince Edward arrive and inform Edward that the King of France has seized the English territories in Normandy. To this Edward sends the queen and prince to France to handle the situation. The Earl of Arundel enters and informs the king that Gaveston is dead, having been abducted from Pembroke's custody by the Earl of Warwick. The king is devastated by this information and vows revenge on all the rebel lords. He then creates Spencer Junior Earl of Gloucester and Lord Chamberlain. A herald from the lords arrives and informs the king that they now wish him to dismiss Spencer from his presence if he wants peace to return to his kingdom. The king dismisses the herald with a message that the lords should prepare to do battle against him.

Act 3, Scene 3 Setting: The battlefield at Boroughbridge, Yorkshire

Edward and the Spencers rest from the battle against the rebels. The lords then enter and reprimand the king for ignoring the nobility and surrounding himself with base flatterers. To this the king says he will fight to the death and ultimately have the traitors' heads.

Act 3, Scene 4 Setting: The battlefield at Boroughbridge, Yorkshire

The king has won the Battle of Boroughbridge and has all the lords, including his brother Kent, as prisoners. He reprimands them for their treasonous actions and their deceitful murder of Gaveston before dismissing his brother and ordering the executions of Lancaster and Warwick and the imprisonment of Mortimer, before departing in triumph. Spencer Junior, Baldock and Levune then discuss a strategy against the queen, who is apparently striking a deal with her brother the French king against King Edward. Levune departs for France in an attempt to prevent this from happening.

Act 4, Scene 1 Setting: Near the Tower of London

Kent laments his brother's actions against the nobility and his favoring of flatterers and claims he will be traveling to France to aid the queen. Mortimer then escapes from the tower, and the two men depart for the continent.

Act 4, Scene 2 Setting: Paris, France

The queen discusses with Prince Edward how her brother will give them no aid in France, and the prince suggests they should return to England. Sir John of Hainault then arrives and comforts the queen, telling her that she and the prince may join him in Hainault, where they will find ample support for their cause. Kent and Mortimer then enter and the queen is happy that they have survived the rebel defeat. Mortimer vows to depose the king and place Prince Edward in his place, which the prince does not agree with. All present, except the prince, vow

to do whatever it takes to bring down the king and his flatterers and restore good government to England, before departing to Hainault.

Act 4, Scene 3

The king and Spencer brag about their triumph over the rebels, and it is said that, if Mortimer remains in England, he shall be recaptured and punished. A messenger enters and informs the king that the queen, prince, Mortimer and Kent are in Hainault receiving assistance to press the prince's claim to the throne. Edward is disappointed by this news and upset that his young son is caught in the middle, but vows to once again do battle against the rebels.

Act 4, Scene 4 Setting: Near Harwich

The rebel party arrives in England, and the queen and Mortimer tell of how they will liberate the country of the king and his flatterers and place Prince Edward on the throne.

Act 4, Scene 5 Setting: Near Bristol

The king and his party are forced to retreat from the rebels. Spencer suggests that they flee to Ireland, but the king persists on staying and fighting his enemies. They are forced to retreat anyway. Kent enters and delivers a soliloquy on how he regrets deserting his brother the king and joining forces with the rebels. The rebel party then arrives and are proud of their victory against the royal army, naming Prince Edward Lord Warden of the realm. Kent inquires as to what the king's fate shall be, and Mortimer tells him that it is up to Parliament to decide Edward's fate. Rice and Howell enters with Spencer Senior as his prisoner and the rebels praise him for his services. They are then informed that the king, Spencer Junior and the rest of the royal party have fled to Ireland. Mortimer orders Spencer Senior to be executed, and the rebels discuss their strategy.

Act 4, Scene 6 Setting: The abbey of Neath

The king, Spencer and Baldock are in an abbey disguised as monks. They lament their tragic situation and envy the monks for their quiet and simple existence before Rice and the Earl of Leicester arrive to have Spencer and Baldock arrested for high treason. Leicester also informs the king that he will be taken to Killingworth before he is led off. Rice then leads Spencer and Baldock off to their fates.

Act 5, Scene 1 Setting: A room in Kenilworth Castle

King Edward is present with Leicester, Trussell and the Bishop of Winchester, the latter two of whom are attempting to convince the king to resign his crown in favor of his son. The king delivers a lengthy, sad lament on his downfall, where he acknowledges the fact that it will be Mortimer, not Prince Edward, who will really be governing the realm. He then refuses to give

up his crown to the men, who begin to depart to give this answer to Parliament. Leicester convinces the king to call them back since, if he does not willingly resign, the prince will be disinherited. Edward calls the men back, gives up the crown and gives a handkerchief for his wife the queen, which they then depart with. Lord Berkeley then enters with orders from Mortimer that the king must be transferred to his custody, which he is.

Act 5, Scene 2 Setting: The Royal Palace

Mortimer tells Queen Isabella how the king's flatterers have been executed and how he shall be regent of England during her son's reign after the king is deposed. Isabella agrees to go along with any plans he may have when the Bishop of Winchester and a messenger arrive with news that the king has given up his crown. The bishop also informs Mortimer that Kent has made an attempt to free his brother from prison, and Berkeley is no less sympathetic than Leicester was towards the king's person, much to Mortimer's dismay. As a precaution, Mortimer calls in and assigns Matrevis and Gurney to take control of the king. He orders them to treat him harshly and move him from place to place so he may not be found. Isabella, who fells sympathy for her husband, gives the men a ring to give to the king before they depart. Kent and Prince Edward then arrive, and Mortimer agrees to speak kindly to Kent despite his attempt to free the king. Mortimer says that Kent should be regent to the prince, but the earl claims that it should be his mother who should take on that role. Kent clearly knows that Mortimer is being deceitful, who then chastises Kent for favoring a man he helped put in prison, attempting to turn the prince against his uncle. Prince Edward is upset by the situation and wishes they would let his father continue to be king so he does not have to reign at such a young age. Mortimer then forcibly leads off the prince, and Kent vows to rescue the king.

Act 5, Scene 3 Setting: Kenilworth Castle

Matrevis and Gurney convey the king to another location as they bathe him with channel water and shave his beard. Kent then enters in an attempt to rescue his brother but is instead taken prisoner himself and led off.

Act 5, Scene 4 Setting: The Royal Palace

Mortimer delivers a soliloquy where he claims that, if he hopes to maintain his status, the king must die. He then reveals a plot he has laid down to kill the king and make it look as if others were responsible. Mortimer then calls in Lightborn, the man he has hired to murder the king. Lightborn is told that it cannot look as if any harm has been done to the king, who then informs Mortimer that he is well-trained in committing murders before departing. Mortimer

then further brags of how he and the queen shall rule the king and the realm when Prince Edward, now King Edward III, enters from his coronation. Soon after, Kent is led in and is accused of once again attempting to rescue his brother from captivity. Despite the new king's pleadings, Mortimer orders that Kent be led off to execution. The queen does nothing to prevent Kent's execution and even does her best to convince her son that the act is justified.

Act 5, Scene 5 Setting: Berkeley Castle

Matrevis and Gurney both wonder at how the king has been living for over a week in poisonous filth without dieing when Lightborn enters and informs them of his charge. He tells the men that he will shortly require a table, a featherbed and a red hot poker before entering the chamber to speak with the king. Edward immediately knows that Lightborn is there to murder him, but the villain still pretends to be the king's friend, and a messenger from the queen to check on his well-being. After a lengthy lament by Edward and false sympathies by his soon-to-be murderer, Lightborn calls in Matrevis and Gurney with the materials he ordered. He then kills the king by sodomizing him with the hot poker. Gurney then kills Lightborn and dumps his body in the moat, before departing to bring the king's body to Mortimer.

Act 5, Scene 6 Setting: The Royal Palace

Matrevis informs Mortimer that the king has been murdered, as well as Lightborn, but that he already regrets committing the former murder and that Gurney has already fled and means to inform all of the plot. The queen enters and informs Mortimer that her son has already been told about Edward's murder and that they are responsible for it. Mortimer does not think much of this until the king himself enters and directly accuses the two of murdering his father. Despite Mortimer's denials and the queen's pleadings, the king shows them the letter that Mortimer wrote to order the murder and orders him to be executed immediately. Mortimer is then taken off to execution while the queen further pleads with her son to spare his life. The king pities his mother but tells her she will be punished if she is found to have anything to do with the late king's murder, before she is led off. A lord enters with Mortimer's head, and Edward III delivers a heartfelt eulogy for his fallen father to end the play.

Analysis of Christopher Marlowe's "Edward II" as a Historical Play

Man's eternal quest is to know the unknown, to see the unseen and is to discover the undiscovered things. That's the very spirit of the Elizabethan age. They have the nostalgia to sink into the historical past and fetch the pearl of spirit undaunted. Thus, Christopher Marlowe, the excellent Elizabethan writer squares the juice of historical

background and unlocked them in full-throated ease in his play Edward II. He just poured the 'new wine into old bottles' and stimulates the dozing spectators into frenzied drunkards. So if anyone raises the question *'Edward II – as a historical play'*, we must not hesitate to apt for other answers.

Marlowe is not the first Elizabethan to is write the historical play, there are so many *university wits* to flourish their blossoms. After writing a number of tragedies with gigantic figures, Marlowe were deeply inspired by Shakespeare's Henry VI. So his Edward II is the direct outcome of the historical agenda presented in episodes. But it mainly surpassed Shakespeare in dealing with *King Edward II*, a king deposed and assassinated one with his weaknesses. It is a marvel still in historical plays; it is modern in its outlook and anti-heroic in its approach. Edward, the king is not important, *Edward* the man claims our sympathy. It gives Shakespeare the model for his Richard II (1595).

Marlowe's Edward II is the finest flowering of a historical play. The historical fervour and the spirited zeal are well conceived here. Marlowe invites the *Elizabethans* who bubbled with national pride and looked is the dramatists for information about national heroes and their deeds. Marlowe depicts the narrow bar from the very historical threshold but by the rosy wings of poesy flights to the castle of *keatsian* world of imagination. Here we see 'the life of sensations rather than of thought! The historical background *Edward I* reigning England successively from 1272-1307 and banishment of his son's most dissolute friend Gascon can not be said tracked. Yet, Marlowe does not slavishly follow the chronological order of even. He adopts, abridges, transposes and juxtaposes them to create new situations. Gascon becomes piers Gaveston. He has abridged the time span and omitted certain events to compress the plot. The time span of 27 years following the arrest and execution of Gaveston has been compressed into consecutive scenes. The gap of about three years between the king's murder and execution of Mortimer has been completely eliminated.

Clumsy plot construction characterizes all historical plays. The playwright is interested mainly in episodes. But Edward II has a plot, well unit and it is the direct outcome of Marlowe's realism that a plot has to be coherent. Such scenes grow out of and are a continuation of the previous scene and it has beginning middle and an end.

Marlowe, the poet-playwright creates a tragedy but the tragedy is not his, it is the part of history. The characters are not puppets tied to strings; they are not wooden and flat-line *Shavian character*. His characters are vividly decorated rather than the historical figures. Like Pygmalion Marlowe injects the new blood to the petrified characters. In actual life

Edward was not so great a voluptuary figure as he is presented in the play. Nor did he so ill treat the queen as he is present in the play. To quote Prof. Tout –

"He has no other wish than to amuse himself… If he
did not like work he was out very vicious, he stuck
loyalty to his friends and was fairly harmless, being
nobody's enemy so much as his own".

Perhaps Gaveston was not so such deliberate Miss Leader of the king as Marlowe has presented him to be. He has attached to the king as his friend from childhood and sincerely loved and admired him.

Edward II of Marlowe shows several other historical digressions and inaccuracies. Marlowe has exercised great freedom in the treatment of Spensers. They were neither needy adventure, nor were they low-born. They were introduced to the king six years after the execution of Gaveston. To add some digressions, Mortimer's downfall in the play is too abrupt and sudden. He was accused of treason and was executed in 1330. the charges against him included that of having procured the late king's murder that of having been –

"more privy with Queen Isabella, the king's mother, than
stood either with God's law, or the king's pleasure".

But in spite of an these drawbacks Edward II stands supreme as the historical play. History has been well presented and dramatized. The characters are essentially historical. They speak for themselves. They audience may also mark Edward's weaknesses, his lowness to his wife, his dotage to Gaveston, his haughtiness to his barons and carelessness about the interests ofEngland and English people. They may also mark the insolence and haughtiness of barons, the selfish and unpatriotic spirit of Mortimer and faithlessness and hypocrisy of the queen.

The play may lack the vigorousness and vitality of Shakespeare's Richard. But to quote Charles Lamb we can say –

"The death scene of Marlowe's king moves pity and terror
beyond any scene, ancient or modern with
which I am acquainted".

History is a platform to Marlowe, to test the limit of human indulgence. Says Wilson, Marlowe manages his stuff from Holinshed's Oromiete but shapes out of the Chronicle History of "disagreeable reign into historical tragedy". Una Ellis Fermor remarks – the excellence of the play lies in Marlowe's delineation of Edward's character, 'he is not a

king but a man as a whole, a truly pathetic figure, the victim of maladjustment of circumstances.'

To conclude, Marlowe's Edward II owes to history and is historical. But the the play should not be interrelated as the two words – 'history' and 'historical'. History is only a record of events in the order they took place. But a play is a piece of art, meant to transport the readers to the world of 'beauty and truth'. It is an amalgamation of these two genres.

Attempt a critical analysis, with a note of dramatic significance of the deposition on Abdication Scene.

The abdication or Deposition scene is considered the most admirable piece of Marlow's dramatic art in his historical tragedy of Edward II. The scene appears almost as a long soliloquy of the fallen weak king. Yet in dramatic action and suspense, in dramatic poetry and pathos, it has but a few peers in the dramatic literature of England.

The scene (Act V, Scene I) is set in the castle of killing warth (Kenilwarth), where the king is kept imprisoned under the custody of the Duke of Leicester.

The scene opens with the pleading of Leicester with the king to have repose and security in mind. This is followed by a long soliloquy of the king in which he dwells on his fallen state and on the deep pathos of his royal fall. The king emerged by the secret working of Mortimer and Isabella, expresses his determination to cling to his crown. He will not yield his crown to make Mortimer the king of England.

The Bishop of Winchester who has come from Mortimer and Isabella to take the crown, along with the Duke of Leicester, entreats the King to yield his crown. But the king, still feaming with his passion and rage, is most unwilling and holds the crown dearly. He gives vent, in impulsive and imaginative poetry, to his profound eagerness for retaining the crown, and fondly puts on the same.

The followers of Mortimer who are extremely anxious to carry the crown safely away are sparing of words. Now the king agrees to give the crown but his passion. He makes over the crown most unwillingly, as he feels that his abdication is an inescapable doom.

As the Bishop of Winchester and others are about to leave, the king gives them a handkerchief, soaked with his tears and dried by his sighs, for presenting to Isabella.

The scene concludes with the arrival of Lord of Berkeley who comes with an order from the queen. The king, under this order, is placed under his custody and goes with him.

Dramatic Significance :

The abdication scene is truly a masterpiece of Marlowe's dramatic genius. From the structural standpoint the action reaches here the climax, no doubt. The king is pressed for abdication in favour of his son. With a serve mental pang, the unfortunate sovereign is compelled to give up that which he considers more precious than his life even. The abdication scene completes the fall of the king, and the retribution against Mortimer starts hereafter.

The scene, well represents Edward's nature in which much of Marlovian poetry is conspicuously evident. The king speaks here, like a poet and here his parallelism with Shakespeare's Richard II is distinct. The King dwells, with a remarkable poetic passion, on his acute suffering and torment. He reflects on the greatness of his rank which sets him always much above men, in adversity as well as in prosperity.

"The griefs of private men are soon allayed
But not of kings."

He muses with no less poetic vigour, on the irony of his lot, as a helpless captive at the hands of his powerful nobles—

"My nobles rule. I bear the name of king
I wear the crown, but am controlled by them."

The scene brings out clearly Edward's passionate nature in which his violent and ineffectual fits of anger are particularly noticeable. His soliloquy, rich in his peotic younger Mortimer irritates him and makes him reiterate his resolve to keep the crown at all costs.

The scene is well employed to win for the king sympathy and compassion. Marlow's hero in this play has nothing of the grandeur of a typical tragic hero, and is found too weak to be the hero of a high tragedy. Marlow's conception of the character of Edward is much controlled by his historical materials, and consequently his weak king never mounts to heroism. Yet Marlowe has the craft of a learn dramatic to derive pity even for his weak king. One of the effective means by which this is a achieved in this Abdication Scene. The pang of the fallen sovereign, compelled to give up his cherished crown, touches every one with compassion. The king now appears no more a foolish or inactive man, but a pitiful victim of a tyrannical ambition. His faults and follies are now the matters of the past. In his poetry and passion, he is not simply pathetic, but tragic, too. He does not win here the pity that, a tragic hero deserves, but a feeling of sympathy and a scene of awe dominate this scene of abdication.

This grand and moving scene has, however, one discardant note, and this is the incident of the handkerchief. It degenerates the tragic grandeur to which the character of Edward II partly reaches in this scene.

In conclusion, it need be noted that the scene is a necessary prelude to the tragic and of the king. The custody of the king is taken away from Liecester and given to Barkeley by Mortimer. Mortimer's purpose is to accomplish the execution of the king smoothly and secretly : this is his preparation to fulfill his tyrannical design.

Questions

Answer the following: **5 marks**

1. Sketch the character of Mortimer
2. Give the character sketch of Edward II

Answer the following: **15 marks**

1. Discuss *Edward II* as a historical play.
2. Contrast the rise and fall of Edward, Gaveston, and Mortimer. What are the crucial elements of each one's career?

Drama: Non-Detailed

Volpone by Ben Jonson

Ben Jonson Biography

The poet, essayist, and playwright Ben Jonson was born on June 11, 1572 in London, England. His father, a minister, died shortly before his birth and his mother remarried a bricklayer.

Jonson was raised in Westminster and attended St. Martin's parish school and Westminster School, where he came under the influence of the classical scholar William Camden. He left the Westminster school in 1589, worked briefly in his stepfather's trade as a bricklayer, then served in the military at Flanders, before working as an actor and playwright for Philip Henslowe's theater company.

In 1594, Jonson married Anne Lewis and began to work as an actor and playwright. Jonson and Lewis had at least two children, but little else is known of their marriage.

In 1598, Jonson wrote what is considered his first great play, *Every Man in His Humor*. In a 1616 production, William Shakespeare acted in one of the lead roles. Shortly after the play opened, Jonson killed Gabriel Spencer in a duel and was tried for murder. He was released by pleading "benefit of clergy". He spent only a few weeks in prison, but shortly after his release he was again arrested for failing to pay an actor.

Under King James I, Jonson received royal favor and patronage. Over the next fifteen years many of his most famous satirical plays, including *Volpone* (1606) and *The Alchemist* (1610), were produced for the London stage. In 1616, he was granted a substantial pension of 100 marks a year, and is often identified as England's first Poet Laureate.

His circle of admirers and friends, who called themselves the "Tribe of Ben," met regularly at the Mermaid Tavern and later at the Devil's Head. Among his followers were nobles such as the Duke and Duchess of Newcastle as well as writers including Robert Herrick, Richard Lovelace, Sir John Suckling, James Howell, and Thomas Carew.

Jonson was also friends with many of the writers of his day, and many of his most well-known poems include tributes to friends such as Shakespeare, John Donne, and Francis Bacon.

Ben Jonson died in Westminster on August 8, 1637. A tremendous crowd of mourners attended his burial at Westminster Abbey. He is regarded as one of the major dramatists and poets of the seventeenth century.

Character List

Volpone A rich Venetian nobleman who compounds his wealth by feigning fatal illness while promising several greedy friends he will make them his heir.

Mosca A parasite, Mosca is a fellow of no birth, without hope of worldly advancement beyond sharing the ill-gotten gains of his master. He is Volpone's chief minister and plot-maker.

Voltore This vulture is an advocate who can speak well in any cause. He aids Mosca to fleece others, thinking that the wealth will eventually come to him.

Corbaccio An extremely old gentleman, Corbaccio expects to dance on Volpone's grave. He disinherits his son to make his position as Volpone's heir secure.

Corvino A typical jealous husband who is persuaded by his greed to look like a cuckold.

Celia Corvino's beautiful wife.

Bonario A young gentleman of Venice, son to Corbaccio, and an honest man.

Sir Politic Would-be An English knight whose mind and notebooks are filled with naive intrigues and political plots.

Lady Would-be Sir Politic's loquacious and homely wife, who attempts to join the greedy gulls in fleecing Volpone.

Peregrine An English tourist in Venice.

Nano Volpone's dwarf.

Androgyno A hermaphrodite and professional fool employed in Volpone's household.

Castrone Volpone's servant, a eunuch.

Four Avocatori, a Notario, Officers of the Court, and three Mercatori These extras round out the persons needed to conduct the business of the court and expose the plotters.

***Volpone* Summary**

Volpone, wealthy and childless, is a con artist who attracts legacy hunters by pretending to be on the verge of death. Volpone's "clients" - including Corvino, Corbaccio, Voltore, and Lady Would-be Politic - bring him presents in the hopes of being included in his will. At the opening of the play, Volpone delivers a soliloquy in which he literally worships his gold while his servant Mosca, often called his Parasite, flits around and periodically interrupts him with flattery.Nano, Castrone, and Androgyno - Volpone's buffoons - enter and perform a skit which gives a sarcastic account of the transmigration of Pythagoras's soul. The entrance of Voltore, a lawyer, dispatches the buffoons. Voltore brings an antique plate and is told he will be Volpone's sole heir. Corbaccio

and Corvino enter in succession, bringing a bag of gold coins and a pearl, respectively, and are also told that they will be heir to Volpone's fortune. Mosca is responsible for their deception, including Corbaccio's false belief that disinheriting his son Bonario will eventually pay dividends. Lady Would-be also comes to the door but is told to return later. Mosca describes the beauty of Corvino's wife Celia to Volpone, who decides he must see her for himself. They agree to go to her house in disguise.

Fellow Englishmen Sir Politic Would-be and Peregrine are seen in the public square outside Corvino's house at the opening of Act Two. They discuss a series of rumors involving animals which Sir Politic interprets as bad omens for the English state. Mosca and Nano interrupt their discussion as they enter to set up a stage. Volpone, disguised as a mountebank, takes the stage and delivers a sales pitch for an elixir. When he asks for a handkerchief from the audience, Celia throws hers down to him. Corvino enters and furiously disperses the crowd.

Back at his house, Volpone swoons for Celia. He gives Mosca permission to use his fortune in whatever way is necessary to woo Celia. At Corvino's house, Corvino sharply reprimands Celia for showing favor to a mountebank. He brandishes his sword and threatens her with physical violence before Mosca knocks on the door. Mosca tells Corvino that Volpone is on the mend but is in need of a female companion to maintain his health. After due consideration, Corvino offers Celia and goes to tell her to prepare for a feast at Volpone's house.

Act Three begins in the street with a soliloquy from Mosca regarding the supposed superiority of natural-born parasites compared to learned parasites. Bonario enters and scorns Mosca, who breaks down crying. Mosca then tells Bonario that Corbaccio plans to disinherit Bonario. Mosca offers to bring Bonario hear it for himself. Back at Volpone's house, the entertainment provided by Nano, Castrone, and Androgyno is interrupted by the entrance of Lady Would-be, who talks Volpone's ear off and brings him a cap she made herself. Mosca enters and dispatches with her by telling her he saw her husband Sir Politic on a gondola with another woman. Mosca hides Bonario so that he may witness the conversation with Corbaccio. However, Corvino and Celia arrive early and Mosca is forced to move Bonario to the gallery. After considerable deliberation, Celia is forced to be alone with Volpone, who reveals to her that he is not actually sick. Volpone offers her his fortune, but she declines. Just as he begins to force himself on her, Bonario leaps out and rescues Celia, exiting through the

window. Mosca, who has been wounded by Bonario, enters and attends to Volpone. Mosca then convinces Corbaccio and Voltore to go after Bonario.

At the opening of Act Four, Sir Politic and Peregrine discuss the ways of a gentleman. Sir Politic details his get-rich-quick schemes, one of which involves selling the Venetian state to the Turks. Lady Would-be enters and accuses Peregrine of being a woman who is seducing her husband. Mosca enters and convinces Lady Would-be that her husband's seducer is actually Celia. Though Lady Would-be apologizes to him, Peregrine vows revenge on Sir Politic for his humiliation.

At the *Scrutineo*, Voltore, Corbaccio, Corvino, and Mosca get their story straight. Though they side with Bonario and Celia at the opening of the case, the Avocatori eventually align themselves with Voltore, who argues that Bonario committed adultery with Celia and attempted to kill his father. Lady Would-be testifies that Celia seduced her husband. Bonario and Celia have no witnesses of their own, so they lose the case.

Volpone's soliloquy at the beginning of Act Five foreshadows his punishment at the end of Act Five. He complains that, during the court case, he began to feel the pains which he has been faking for so long. He downs a glass of wine to "shake it off" (5.1.8) and Mosca enters to celebrate their unsurpassable masterpiece. Mosca goads Volpone to begin cozening his "clients," so Volpone writes a will naming Mosca as heir and spreads the word that he is dead. When Volpone's "clients" enter and discover that they have been duped, Mosca berates them one by one as Volpone looks on from behind the curtain. Volpone and Mosca decide to disguise themselves and continue tormenting the "clients" in the street.

At Sir Politic's house, Peregrine plays a practical joke on Sir Politic. Pretending to be a messenger, Peregrine tells Sir Politic that he has been reported for his plan to sell Venice to the Turks. Sir Politic panics, instructs his servants to burn his notes, and hides under a large tortoise shell just as three merchants, dressed as statesman, enter the house. Once the merchants discover Sir Politic under the shell, Peregrine tells him they are even and leaves. Sir Politic decides to leave Venice forever since his reputation has been so damaged.

In the street, Volpone, disguised as a *commendatore*, torments Corbaccio, Corvino, and Voltore by pretending he has heard news that they inherited a fortune. Voltore cracks and goes to the*Scrutineo* to confess that he lied during the previous court case. He gives his notes to the Avocatori but when Volpone, still disguised, tells him that Volpone is still alive, Voltore retracts his confession and pretends he was possessed while making it. While debating over whether to turn himself in, Volpone discovers that Mosca has locked him out

of his own house. After being summoned by the Avocatori, Mosca arrives at the Scrutineo and affirms that Volpone is dead. Volpone beseeches him to say that Volpone is still alive, but Mosca demands half of his fortune. When Mosca and Volpone cannot agree to share the fortune, Volpone is apprehended by officers of the court. Before he is led away, however, Volpone unmasks himself and brings Mosca down with him. The Avocatori then hand down punishments to Volpone, Mosca, and the rest of the "clients." To conclude the play, Volpone speaks to the audience and asks for applause.

Summary

Volpone takes place in seventeenth-century Venice, over the course of one day. The play opens at the house of Volpone, a Venetian nobleman. He and his "parasite" Mosca—part slave, part servant, part lackey—enter the shrine where Volpone keeps his gold. Volpone has amassed his fortune, we learn, through dishonest means: he is a con artist. And we also learn that he likes to use his money extravagantly.

Soon, we see Volpone's latest con in action. For the last three years, he has been attracting the interest of three legacy hunters: Voltore, a lawyer; Corbaccio, an old gentleman; and Corvino, a merchant—individuals interested in inheriting his estate after he dies. Volpone is known to be rich, and he is also known to be childless, have no natural heirs. Furthermore, he is believed to very ill, so each of the legacy hunters lavishes gifts on him, in the hope that Volpone, out of gratitude, will make him his heir. The legacy hunters do not know that Volpone is actually in excellent health and merely faking illness for the purpose of collecting all those impressive "get-well" gifts.

In the first act, each legacy hunter arrives to present a gift to Volpone, except for Corbaccio, who offers only a worthless vial of medicine. But Corbaccio agrees to return later in the day to make Volpone his heir, so that Volpone will return the favor. This act is a boon to Volpone, since Corbaccio, in all likelihood, will die long before Volpone does. After each hunter leaves, Volpone and Mosca laugh at each's gullibility. After Corvino's departure Lady Politic Would-be, the wife of an English knight living in Venice, arrives at the house but is told to come back three hours later. And Volpone decides that he will try to get a close look at Corvino's wife, Celia, who Mosca describes as one of the most beautiful women in all of Italy. She is kept under lock and key by her husband, who has ten guards on her at all times, but Volpone vows to use disguise to get around these barriers.

The second act portrays a time just a short while later that day, and we meet Sir Politic Would-be, Lady Politic's husband, who is conversing with Peregrine, an young

English traveler who has just landed in Venice. Sir Politic takes a liking to the young boy and vows to teach him a thing or two about Venice and Venetians; Peregrine, too, enjoys the company of Sir Politic, but only because he is hilariously gullible and vain. The two are walking in the public square in front of Corvino's house and are interrupted by the arrival of "Scoto Mantua," actually Volpone in diguise as an Italian mountebank, or medicine-show man. Scoto engages in a long and colorful speech, hawking his new "oil", which is touted as a cure-all for disease and suffering. At the end of the speech, he asks the crows to toss him their handkerchiefs, and Celia complies. Corvino arrives, just as she does this, and flies into a jealous rage, scattering the crows in the square. Volpone goes home and complains to Mosca that he is sick with lust for Celia, and Mosca vows to deliver her to Volpone. Meanwhile, Corvino berates his wife for tossing her handkerchief, since he interprets it as a sign of her unfaithfulness, and he threatens to murder her and her family as a result. He decrees that, as punishment, she will now no longer be allowed to go to Church, she cannot stand near windows, and, most bizarrely, she must do everything backwards from now on–she must even walk and speak backwards. Mosca then arrives, implying to Corvino that if he lets Celia sleep with Volpone, then Volpone will choose him as his heir. Suddenly, Corvino's jealousy disappears, and he consents to the offer.

The third act begins with a soliloquy from Mosca, indicating that he is growing increasingly conscious of his power and his independence from Volpone. Mosca then runs into Bonario, Corbaccio's son, and informs the young man of his father's plans to disinherit him. He has Bonario come back to Volpone's house with him, in order to watch Corbaccio sign the documents hoping that Bonario might kill Corbaccio then and there out of rage, thus allowing Volpone to gain his inheritance early. Meanwhile Lady Politic again arrives at Volpone's residence, indicating that it is now mid-morning, approaching noon. This time, Volpone lets her in, but he soon regrets it, for he is exasperated by her talkativeness. Mosca rescues Volpone by telling the Lady that Sir Politic has been seen in a gondola with a courtesan. Volpone then prepares for his seduction of Celia, while Mosca hides Bonario in a corner of the bedroom, in anticipation of Corbaccio's arrival. But Celia and Corvino arrive first—Celia complains bitterly about being forced to be unfaithful, while Corvino tells her to be quiet and do her job. When Celia and Volpone are alone together, Volpone greatly surprises Celia by leaping out of bed. Celia had expected and old, infirm man, but what she gets instead is a lothario who attempts to seduce her with a passionate speech. Always the good Christian, Celia refuses Volpone's advances, at which point Volpone says that he will

rape her. But Bonario, who has been witnessing the scene from his hiding place the entire time, rescues Celia. Bonario wounds Mosca on his way out. Corbaccio finally arrives, too late, as does Voltore. Mosca plots, with Voltore's assistance, how to get Volpone out of this mess.

A short while later, in the early afternoon, Peregrine and Sir Politic are still talking. Sir Politic gives the young traveler some advice on living in Venice and describes several schemes he has under consideration for making a great deal of money. They are soon interrupted by Lady Politic, who is convinced that Peregrine is the prostitute Mosca told her about admittedly, in disguise. But Mosca arrives and tells Lady Politic that she is mistaken; the courtesan he referred to is now in front of the Senate (in other words, Celia). Lady Politic believes him and ends by giving Peregrine a seductive goodbye with a coy suggestion that they see each other again. Peregrine is incensed at her behavior and vows revenge on Sir Politic because of it. The scene switches to the Scrutineo, the Venetian Senate building, where Celia and Bonario have informed the judges of Venice about Volpone's deceit, Volpone's attempt to rape Celia, Corbaccio's disinheritance of his son, and Corvino's decision to prostitute his wife. But the defendants make a very good case for themselves, led by their lawyer, Voltore. Voltore portrays Bonario and Celia as lovers, Corvino as an innocent jilted husband, and Corbaccio as a wounded father nearly killed by his evil son. The judge are swayed when Lady Politic comes in and identifies Celia as the seducer of her husband Sir Politic. Further, they are convinced when Volpone enters the courtroom, again acting ill. The judges order that Celia and Bonario be arrested and separated.

In the final act, Volpone returns home tired and worried that he is actually growing ill, for he is now feeling some of the symptoms he has been faking. To dispel his fears, he decides to engage in one final prank on the legacy hunters. He spreads a rumor that he has died and then tells Mosca to pretend that he has been made his master's heir. The plan goes off perfectly, and all three legacy hunters are fooled. Volpone then disguises himself as a Venetian guard, so that he can gloat in each legacy hunter's face over their humiliation, without being recognized. But Mosca lets the audience know that Volpone is dead in the eyes of the world and that Mosca will not let him "return to the world of the living" unless Volpone pays up, giving Mosca a share of his wealth.

Meanwhile, Peregrine is in disguise himself, playing his own prank on Sir Politic. Peregrine presents himself as a merchant to the knight and informs Politic that word has gotten out of his plan to sell Venice to the Turks. Politic, who once mentioned the idea in jest,

is terrified. When three merchants who are in collusion with Peregrine knock on the door, Politic jumps into a tortoise-shell wine case to save himself. Peregrine informs the merchants when they enter that he is looking at a valuable tortoise. The merchants decide to jump on the tortoise and demand that it crawls along the floor. They remark loudly upon its leg-garters and fine hand-gloves, before turning it over to reveal Sir Politic. Peregrine and the merchants go off, laughing at their prank, and Sir Politic moans about how much he agrees with his wife's desire to leave Venice and go back to England.

Meanwhile, Volpone gloats in front of each legacy hunter, deriding them for having lost Volpone's inheritance to a parasite such as Mosca, and he successfully avoids recognition. But his plan backfires nonetheless. Voltore, driven to such a state of distraction by Volpone's teasing, decides to recant his testimony in front of the Senate, implicating both himself but more importantly Mosca as a criminal. Corvino accuses him of being a sore loser, upset that Mosca has inherited Volpone's estate upon his death, and the news of this death surprises the Senators greatly. Volpone nearly recovers from his blunder by telling Voltore, in the middle of the Senate proceeding, that "Volpone" is still alive. Mosca pretends to faint and claims to the Senate that he does not know where he is, how he got there, and that he must have been possessed by a demon during the last few minutes when he was speaking to them. He also informs the Senators that Volpone is not dead, contradicting Corvino. All seems good for Volpone until Mosca returns, and, instead of confirming Voltore's claim that Volpone is alive, Mosca denies it. Mosca, after all, has a will, written by Volpone and in his signaure, stating that he is Volpone's heir. now that Volpone is believed to be dead, Mosca legally owns Volpone's property, and Mosca tells Volpone that he is not going to give it back by telling the truth. Realizing that he has been betrayed, Volpone decides that rather than let Mosca inherit his wealth, he will turn them both in. Volpone takes off his disguise and finally reveals the truth about the events of the past day. Volpone ends up being sent to prison, while Mosca is consigned to a slave galley. Voltore is disbarred, Corbaccio is stripped of his property, and Corvino is publicly humiliated, forced to wear donkey's ears while being rowed around the canals of Venice. At the end, there is a small note from the playwright to the audience, simply asking them to applaud if they enjoyed the play they just saw.

Analysis of Major Characters

Volpone

play's title character is its protagonist, though an inconsistent one He disappears in Act IV, seemingly replaced by Mosca, and is first an instrument and then a victim of Jonson's satire of money-obsessed society. He is an instrument of it because it is through his ingenuity and cleverness that Voltore, Corbaccio, and Corvino are duped and he seems to share in Jonson's satiric interpretation of the events, observing in I.v "What a rare punishment / Is avarice to itself." But the satire eventually turns back on him, when he becomes a victim of Mosca's "Fox-trap." The reason he is ensnared by Mosca is that he cannot resist one final gloat at his dupes, oblivious to the fact that in doing so, he hands over his entire estate to Mosca. This lack of rational forethought and commitment to his own sensual impulses, is characteristic of Volpone. He enjoys entertainment, banquets, feasts, and love- making. He hates having to make money through honest labour or cold, heartless banking, but he loves making it in clever, deceitful ways, especially as a means toward food and lovemaking. He is a creature of passion, an imaginative hedonist continually looking to find and attain new forms of pleasure, whatever the consequences may be. This dynamic in his character shapes our reaction to him throughout the play. At times, this hedonism seems fun, engaging, entertaining, and even morally valuable, such as when he is engaged in the con on his fortune hunters. But his attempted seduction of Celia reveals a darker side to his hedonism when it becomes an attempted rape. The incident makes him, in the moral universe of the play, a worthy target for satire, which is what he becomes in Act V, when because of his lack of restraint he ends up on his way to prison, the most unpleasurable situation imaginable.

Mosca

In a play that revolves around disguises, Mosca is the ultimate master of disguise. He is the person who continually executes Volpone's ideas and the one who comes up with the necessary lie whenever needed. The lie could be made in order to save Volpone from the charges laid against him by Bonario and Celia or to convince Corvino to let his wife sleep with the Fox—either way Mosca seems to have no scruples about deceit. But his most important deception is the one he effects on Volpone and the audience, hiding his true nature and intentions from both the Fox and us. In the opening acts, Mosca appears to be exactly what he is described as: a clinging, servile parasite, who only exists for Volpone and through Volpone. In other words, he exists to serve Volpone, and all that Volpone wants he wants. This impression is reinforced by several cringing speeches that he gives, all in praise of

Volpone. But in Act Three, we have the beginning of what seems an assertion of self-identity by Mosca, when he begins to grow confident in his abilities. But then this confidence again is left unvoiced, and Mosca seems to go back to being Volpone's faithful servant, helping him get out of the troublesome situation with Bonario and Celia. But it turns out that Mosca's aid in this situation may have been motivated as much by personal interest as it was by a desire to aid Volpone, for when he is presented with an opportunity to seize Volpone's wealth, he takes it. Mosca himself is possessed by greed, and he attempts to move out of his role as parasite, a harmless fly, circling around a great beast. But his attempt fails, as Volpone exposes them both. An interesting question is what significance his failure has in the context of the play and whether it is just punishment for his greed, his deceit, or his attempt to usurp the powers and privileges of the nobility and move above his social class.

Celia

While Volpone says "yes" to every single pleasure he can find—and pursues those pleasures vigorously—Celia is defined by her self-denial. This makes her a perfect foil for Volpone, since her self-restraint exposes his complete lack thereof, no more clearly than in Volpone's attempted seduction of her. The turning point of the play comes when she says "no" to Volpone's advances, thus denying him the lascivious pleasures he describes in his seduction speech. Celia seems willing to do anything to avoid dishonour, and this makes her character flat and predictable, too ready to sacrifice herself to be believable. Her willingness to subject herself to Corvino's harsh dictates and abuse may make her seem more weak than strong. But she has an inner moral sense, indicated by the fact that she refuses Volpone against her husband's express wishes. The fact that Jonson sides with her can be seen in his decision to put one of the strongest statements of the play's thesis in her mouth: "Whither, whither / Is shame fled human breasts? Is that, whichever was a cause for life , /Now placed beneath the basest circumstance? / And modesty an exile made, for money?" Jonson again chooses a name with symbolic meaning for Celia: it derives from the Latin word *caelum,* meaning "sky" or "heaven".

Voltore

Voltore is, like all the legacy hunters, named after a carrion-bird. In the case of Voltore, that bird is the vulture; for Corvino, it is the crow, and for Corbaccio, the raven. Voltore is the most pleasant of all the legacy hunters, for he is the least crass and the least obsessed with seeing Volpone die. His preferential status shows in Mosca's special regard for him: Mosca tries to make sure that Voltore gets enough payment for his services at the

Scrutineo in Act IV. But Voltore comes to regret his actions at the Scrutineo. Of course, this regret only comes after he has been denied his inheritance, and it seems to stem directly from his resentment at Mosca's leapfrogging over him on the social ladder. And when Volpone whispers to him that he might still get his inheritance, he stops confessing his lies to the Scrutineo and pretends that he was "possessed" by an evil demon. The verbal irony is that Voltore, in that statement and action, reveals his greed.

Themes

Greed

Volpone's satire is directed against "avarice," which can be thought of as greed that extends not just to money but also to all objects of human desire. The play's main thesis is stated by Volpone himself, "What a rare punishment / Is avarice to itself." The punishment and the central irony of the play is that while greed drives the search for money, power, and respect, it ends up making everyone in the play look foolish, contemptible, and poorer, both spiritually and financially. A similar idea is stated by both Celia, when she asks in III.vii, "Whither [where] is shame fled human breasts?" and by the judge at the end of the play in his plea that the audience should "learn" from the play what happens to those who succumb to greed, emphasizing that the play's stance on greed is a *didactic* one, intended to teach the audience what greed's real consequences are. Volpone himself starts out as an instrument of this lesson. He dupes the Corvino, Corbaccio and Voltore into parting with their goods in the hope of inheriting his but ends up an object of the lesson as well, for succumbing to his greedy want for sensual pleasure.

The Power of Stagecraft

There is a dichotomy in the play, never entirely resolved, between the devices of stagecraft and the conveyance of moral truth. In other words, there is a tension between the play itself and what goes on in the play, in which the devices of stagecraft that are involved in the play's actual production are a source of deceit, confusion, and moral corruption. In other words, Volpone does not merely lie, nor he does not merely deceive; he makes an entire production out of his game, using a special eye ointment to simulate an eye infection, creating a character using wardrobe, make-up, and props. He too seems to share the intention to expose moral folly, with the playwright, Jonson; but this is in the end seen to be another illusion. Likewise, Mosca and Voltore put on a production to convince the judges of their innocence. They use rhetoric and poetry to tell a story, complete with a shocking "surprise

witness" and the graphic use of imagery (the appearance of "impotent" Volpone). The play thus exposes us to many different forms of theatrical illusion as methods of lying, perhaps in the hope of allowing us to better discern which forms of theater are sensationalistic, unhelpful, and inaccurate in their portrayal of reality.

Parasitism

"Everyone's a parasite" to paraphrase Mosca (III.i), and over the course of the play he is proved right, in the sense that everyone tries to live off of the wealth or livelihood of others, without doing any "honest toil" of their own. Corvino, Corbaccio and Voltore all try to inherit a fortune from a dying man; and Volpone himself has built his fortune on cons such as the one he is playing now. Parasitism, thus portrayed, is not a form of laziness or desperation, but a form of superiority. The parasite lives by his wits, and feeds off of others, by skillfully manipulating their credulity and goodwill.

Motifs

The Sacred and the Profane

Volpone, both in his initial speech in Act I and in his seduction speech of Act III, mixes religious language and profane subject matter to a startling poetic effect. In Act I the subject of his worship is money; in Act III it is Celia, or perhaps her body, that inspires prayer-like language. As a foil against this, Celia pleads for a distinction to be restored between the "base" and the "noble," in other words, between the profane that which is firmly rooted in our animal natures, and the sacred that which is divine about humans. Through their respective fates, the play seems to endorse Celia's position, though Jonson invests Volpone's speeches with a great deal of poetic energy and rhetorical ornamentation that make his position attractive and rich, which is again, another source of tension in the play.

Disguise, Deception, and Truth

Jonson creates a complex relationship among disguise, deception, and truth in the play. Disguise sometimes serves simply to conceal, as it does when Peregrine dupes Sir Politic Would-be. But sometimes it reveals inner truths that a person's normal attire may conceal. Volpone, for example, publicly reveals more of his "true self" (his vital, healthy self) when he dresses as Scoto Mantua; and Scoto's speeches seem to be filled with authorial comment from Jonson himself. Furthermore, disguise is seen to exert a certain force and power all of its own; by assuming one, people run the risk of changing their identity, of being unable to escape the disguise. This is certainly the case for Mosca and Volpone in Act V, whose "disguised" identities almost supersede their actual ones.

"Gulling"

Gulling means "making someone into a fool." The question that the play teaches us to ask is who is being made a fool by whom?. Volpone plays sick to make the legacy-hunters fools, but Mosca plays the "Fool" the harmless assistant and entertainer in order to make Volpone into a fool. To make someone else into a fool is both the primary method characters have for asserting power over one another and the primary way Jonson brings across his moral message: the characters in the play who are made into fools like Corbaccio, Corvino, Voltore, Volpone are the characters whose morality we are supposed to criticize.

Symbols

Venice

As *the* seat of greed, corruption, and decadence, at least according to the prevailing prejudices, Venice was the beneficiary of years of stereotype in English drama. Italians in general were seen as sensuous, decadent beings, thanks to their extremely sophisticated culture, history of Machiavellian politicians (Lorenzo de Medici, Cesare Borgia, Machiavelli himself) and beautiful love poetry. Though not things considered particularly awful today, this type of decadence made English people wary of being infected with immorality, and Venetians were seen as the worst of the bunch. The direct influence of the "power of Venice" to corrupt can best be seen in the Sir Politic Would-be subplot, where the English knight Sir Politic "goes Venetian" and becomes a lying would-be thief. But the Venetian setting probably made the story more believable for most English audiences, signifying the fascination of the play with disguise and deceit, though also, perhaps against Jonson's intentions, distancing them from the play's moral message, by placing the greed in a historic far away place traditionally associated with greed, instead of right in the heart of London.

Animalia

There is a "fable" running throughout the play, through the associations the characters' names create with animals. It is very simple and tells the tale of a cunning "Fox" (*Volpone* in Italian), circled by a mischievous "Fly" (*Mosca* in Italian), who helps the Fox trick several carrion-birds—a vulture (*Voltore*), a crow (*Corvino*) and a raven (*Corbaccio*) into losing their feathers. The animal imagery emphasizes the theme of "parasitism" in the play, where one life form feeds off of another. And it should also be remembered that fables are tales with simple moral messages, told for a *didactic* purpose. Though much more complex, *Volpone*, at its heart shares the same purpose, making the use of "fable-like" symbolism appropriate and helpful in understanding the meaning of the play.

Questions

Answer the following **5 marks**

1. To what extent is justice served in *Volpone*.
2. Describe the court scene of *Volpone*.
3. Why does Volpone throw off his disguise in the last scene?

Answer the following: **15 marks**

1. Discuss *Volpone* as a greed and morality play.
2. "*Volpone* is a grim satire on man's acquisitive instincts"- Discuss.

The Duchess of Malfi by John Webster

John Webster Biography

Though John Webster is considered one of the major figures of Jacobean drama, relatively little is known about his life. He is best known for writing the tragedies *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The White Devil*, the two most frequently staged Jacobean plays not written by Shakespeare.

Webster was probably born close to 1578 in London, the son of a prominent coach-maker and member of the prestigious Company of Merchant Taylors. Webster most likely went to the Merchant Taylors' School. He would have presumably begun his study at this well-regarded institution in 1587. He served as the official poet of the Merchant Taylors Company and designed a lavish pageant for the investiture of Sir John Gore, a Merchant Taylor, as the Lord Mayor of London.

His work in the theater began with the writing of collaborative plays in the early 1600s, an activity that he continued throughout his career, though he remains best known for the works he wrote individually. Between 1602 and 1605, he is believed to have collaborated on five plays, including *Caesar's Fall*, *Lady Jane*, *Westward Ho!*, and *Northward Ho!*.

Around 1604 or 1605, Webster married Sara Peniall, who was about ten years his junior. Within about a year, their first son was born, also named John. It is not known how many children they had, but it is clear they had a large family and were of good standing in their community. They presumably had enough money to live comfortably, as Webster did not publish anything more until *The White Devil* in 1612.

The Duchess of Malfi, generally considered Webster's best play, was first staged by the prestigious King's Men, probably in 1614, and seems to have been well-received even then. His father probably died sometime before 1615, but not much else is known about this period of Webster's life.

Webster probably wrote *Guise*, a lost play, around that time, presumably followed by the tragicomedy *The Devil's Law-Case*, which was written sometime before 1622 and was the last of his non-collaborative plays. This is generally agreed to be the most difficult of Webster's plays to assess, in part because it is almost never staged. The rest of the collaborative plays associated with Webster are almost impossible to date, and in some cases the extent of his association with them is uncertain.

Webster died sometime before November 1634; no more specific information is available. As is the case with many of his contemporaries, Webster's reception since his death

has been inconsistent, even though his work has never entirely dropped off the radar. Since the 1920s, a great deal of critical work has been published on his plays, focusing primarily on *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The White Devil*. His most popular plays, these plays are dark and disturbing works that set the stage for the Gothic literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Character List

Bosola

Bosola is the tool through which the Cardinal and Ferdinand perpetrate most of their evil in *The Duchess of Malfi*. He is hired by Ferdinand to spy on the Duchess, for whom he serves as manager of her horses. He is an enigmatic figure, willing to murder for hire without hesitation, while initially reluctant to the commit to the seemingly less extreme vice of spying.

As his deeds lead to worse and worse consequences--the banishment of the Duchess and her family, the murder of the Duchess and her children, Antonio's accidental death--he shows more and more remorse for his actions. It is only when Ferdinand and the Cardinal refuse to reward him for all he has done, though, that he stops blindly following their orders, and avenges the Duchess and Antonio by murdering the Cardinal and Ferdinand.

The Duchess

At the opening of the play, the Duchess of Malfi, sister to the Cardinal and twin sister to Ferdinand, has just been widowed in her youth. Though she promises her domineering brothers that she won't remarry, she almost immediately proposes to Antonio, a decision that ultimately leads to the destruction of her entire family, save their oldest son. The Duchess is strong-willed, brave, passionate, proud, and a loving wife and mother. In the opening of the play, Antonio speaks of her incredible virtue, and though she marries him against custom and her brothers' wishes, her goodness and vitality stand in stark contrast to her brothers' evil.

Ferdinand

The Duke of Calabria and the Duchess's twin brother, Ferdinand boasts an impressive collection of vices: he has a terrible temper, is greedy, is lustful, and has an unhealthy obsession with his sister. He is powerful and corrupt, but as his anger over the Duchess's actions grows, he becomes more and more deranged. Once Bosola has, under his orders, killed the Duchess and two of her children, he immediately feels deep regret and then loses his mind completely. In the play, Ferdinand is often associated with fire imagery, and represents violent, choleric evil.

The Cardinal

The Duchess and Ferdinand's older brother, the Cardinal of Aragon represents cold and calculated evil in contrast to his hot-tempered brother. He is a Machiavellian character, using the power of his position to torture and counter the Duchess. Ultimately, though, he loses his ability to control events, a situation Bosola exploits to kill him.

Antonio

Antonio Bologna is the steward of the Duchess's household. She falls in love with him and they secretly wed, managing to keep this hidden from her brothers and Bosola. Antonio is an honest man, a good horseman, a good judge of character, and a loving husband and father, but he is also passive and largely ineffectual in a crisis, ultimately unable to protect his family from harm. He is also rather unremarkable when compared to the impressive Duchess.

Delio

Delio is Antonio's friend and the only one besides Cariola who is initially trusted with the secret of the Duchess's marriage to Antonio. He remains a faithful friend to the family through the end of the play. He also has a history with Julia, which he'd like to continue.

Cariola

Cariola is the Duchess's maid and confidant. She is the witness to the Duchess's marriage to Antonio, and thus the first to know about it. She keeps the secret faithfully, and in the end is killed by Bosola for doing so.

Julia

Julia is the Cardinal's mistress and Castruccio's wife. She is also wooed by Delio and later falls in love with Bosola. Bosola uses her as an unwitting tool to force a confession for the Duchess's death from the Cardinal, after which the Cardinal poisons her.

The Children

The Duchess and Antonio's three children never speak in the play, but are on stage in multiple scenes. The two youngest are viciously murdered by Bosola's men, while the oldest, in spite of his dire horoscope, is the only member of the family to survive, and symbolizes a hopeful future at the play's end.

Count Malateste

Malateste is known for presenting himself as a soldier but avoiding any battles, and thus is scorned as a coward. Ferdinand recommends him to the Duchess as a suitable husband, but she scorns the idea.

Marquis of Pescara

The Marquis of Pescara is a soldier, and the only courtier save Antonio and Delio who acts with any real honour. When Bosola attacks the Cardinal, he is the only lord to answer the cries for help, even at risk of being mocked for it.

Castruccio

Castruccio is a courtier under Ferdinand, and Julia's older husband. He represents the cuckolded fool.

Silvio

Silvio is a courtier under Ferdinand.

Roderigo

Roderigo is a courtier under Ferdinand.

Grisolan

Grisolan is a courtier under Ferdinand.

Old Lady

The Old Lady, a midwife, is ridiculed by Bosola at length for wearing makeup to try to cover what he perceives as her hideousness.

Doctor

The Doctor diagnoses and tries to treat Ferdinand's lycanthropia. His primary method of treatment is to make Ferdinand frightened of him.

Two Pilgrims

As the Cardinal enacts the ceremony that results in the Duchess's exile from Ancona, the two pilgrims watch the ceremony and provide commentary.

Mad Astrologer

Sent to the Duchess during her imprisonment, the Mad Astrologer lost his mind when they day he had predicted for the apocalypse came and went without incident.

Mad Doctor

Sent to the Duchess during her imprisonment, the Mad Doctor lost his mind due to jealousy.

Mad Priest

The Mad Priest is sent to the Duchess during her imprisonment to try to drive her crazy.

Mad Lawyer

The Mad Lawyer is sent to the Duchess during her imprisonment to try to drive her crazy.

***The Duchess of Malfi* Summary**

The Duchess of Malfi takes place in Italy, mostly at the Duchess's palace in Malfi, in the sixteenth century. The Duchess is a young widow whose two brothers, Ferdinand and the Cardinal, are visiting her from Rome at the play's start. Antonio, the manager of her household, has just returned from France. Before leaving the Duchess, Ferdinand engages Bosola, previously used by the Cardinal as a hit man, to ostensibly manage the Duchess's horses, but in reality to spy on her for the brothers so they can be sure she remains chaste and does not remarry. Bosola is reluctant, but eventually agrees.

Before they return to Rome, Ferdinand and the Cardinal lecture the Duchess about the impropriety of remarriage. She insists that she has no plans for remarriage, and shows some irritation at their attempts to control her. However, as soon as they leave, she sets in motion a plan to propose to Antonio with the help of her maid, Cariola. Antonio and the Duchess marry, and the Duchess reassures Antonio that they will find a way to appease her brothers.

Act Two is set about nine months later. The Duchess is pregnant and Bosola, suspecting her condition, hatches a plan to prove it to himself by giving her apricots, thought to induce labour. She accepts them, and immediately becomes ill, rushing off to her bedroom. Antonio and Delio discuss how to keep her labour secret.

Bosola now assumes his belief is correct, but finds further definitive proof through a horoscope Antonio wrote for the infant. With the information confirmed, Bosola he writes a letter to the Duchess's brothers to tell them the news. The brothers are both incensed, but the Cardinal maintains a cool calm, whereas Ferdinand grows erratically angry. Neither of them realizes that she is married, and hence assume the baby is a bastard. Ferdinand says he won't take any action until he knows who the baby's father is.

Act Three begins about two years later, with Delio's return to the Duchess's palace. Antonio and the Duchess have had two more children in the meantime. Ferdinand has recently arrived, and both Antonio and Delio suspect that he knows about the Duchess's children. Ferdinand surprises the Duchess in her bedroom, and when she tells him that she is married, he tells her she should never reveal to him the name of her lover lest terrible violence then be unleashed on all of them. He further banishes her forever from his sight.

The Duchess, who wishes to protect Antonio by removing him from Malfi, falsely claims he has stolen from her and hence has him banished to Ancona. Once he has left, Bosola defends his virtue to the Duchess so emphatically that she admits the secret of their marriage. Bosola pretends to support her, and she sends him after Antonio with money and

news that she will soon follow him. In Ancona a few days later, the Cardinal catches up to them and banishes the Duchess and her family from there.

On their way out of town, Bosola brings her an ostensibly forgiving but actually threatening letter from Ferdinand, and so the Duchess, fearing an ambush, tells Antonio to separate from her with their oldest son. Immediately after they part, Bosola and a group of soldiers take the Duchess and her two remaining children captive and bring them back to her palace.

In Act Four, Bosola tells Ferdinand that the Duchess is bearing her imprisonment nobly, which angers him. In an effort to make her insane with despair, he presents her with wax corpses of her family to convince her they have died. Though Bosola pleas with Ferdinand to cease his torture, he won't listen, and instead sends a group of madmen to torment her. Bosola returns, disguised as a tomb-maker, and prepares the Duchess for her impending death. Executioners follow with a cord to strangle her, but the Duchess remains steadfastly calm and courageous, at peace with the idea of rejoining her family, who she still believes are dead. They strangle her.

Bosola next orders her children and Cariola killed. Cariola pleads for her life, to no avail. When Ferdinand confronts the Duchess's body, he is suddenly overtaken with remorse and angry at Bosola for following his orders. He not only betrays Bosola by refusing the latter a promised reward, but also shows signs of insanity before he exits. The Duchess shows a final sign of life, and before she truly dies, Bosola tells her that Antonio is still alive. Bosola shows genuine sadness when she dies.

In Act Five, Antonio, ignorant of his wife and children's deaths, plans to beg the Cardinal that night for a reconciliation. Ferdinand has now completely lost his mind and is afflicted with lycanthropia, or the belief that he is a wolf.

Bosola arrives and the Cardinal pretends that he has no idea about the Duchess's death. He offers Bosola a great reward for the murder of Antonio, an offer Bosola accepts even though he is plotting revenge. Julia, the Cardinal's mistress, approaches Bosola, declaring her love for him, and Bosola uses her to get the Cardinal to admit his involvement in the Duchess's murder.

After the Cardinal kills Julia, Bosola reveals he has overheard the secret and demands his reward killing the Duchess. The Cardinal, once again, promises it will come after he has killed Antonio and helped him get rid of Julia's body. Bosola pretends to agree, but tells the

audience that he will find Antonio to either protect him or help him get his vengeance against the Cardinal and Ferdinand.

The Cardinal tells his courtiers to stay away no matter what they hear from him or Ferdinand, ostensibly because Ferdinand's madness gets worse when people are around, but actually because he wants privacy with which to dispose of Julia's body. Bosola, waiting outside the Cardinal's room, accidentally kills Antonio, who has come to see the Cardinal. Distraught, he goes into the Cardinal's room and attacks him.

Because of the Cardinal's warning, his courtiers at first ignore his cries for help. Ferdinand joins the fray and stabs both the Cardinal and Bosola. Bosola kills Ferdinand. The courtiers finally enter in time to see the Cardinal and Bosola die, but not before the latter has confessed the particulars of the situation. Delio enters with Antonio and the Duchess's oldest son, who is the sole survivor of the family. Delio and the courtiers promise to raise the boy as a legacy to his parents, which gives the play a final glimmer of hope.

***The Duchess of Malfi* Act-wise Summary and Analysis**

Act One, Scene One

The plays opens in its primary setting, the "presence-chamber" of the Duchess's palace in Malfi, Italy, in the sixteenth century.

At the Duchess's palace, Delio welcomes his friend Antonio home from a trip to France, and asks him how he liked it there. Antonio admits his admiration for the French prince, who had rooted out the sycophants and corrupt officials in order to prohibit corruption from spreading through the rest of the country. Antonio hears Bosolo arriving with the Cardinal, and jokes to Delio how Bosola rails against against vices only because he cannot afford to commit them himself.

As they enter, Bosola laments to the Cardinal how he has not been fairly rewarded for a service he performed for the Cardinal and which cost him a prison sentence in the galleys. In response, the Cardinal complains about Bosola's dishonest character and leaves. Bosola complains more to Antonio, describing how both the Cardinal and his brother, the Amalfi duke Ferdinand, are corrupt and unjust for having treated him improperly.

Delio tells Antonio that Bosola served seven years in the galleys for having committed a notorious murder, and the rumor was that the Cardinal did indeed commission him to do it. Antonio says it's too bad that the Cardinal won't give him Bosola due, as this will likely "poison all his goodness" (1.1.72).

Act One, Scene Two

The second scene plays continuously, without any stage interruption.

Delio reminds Antonio that the latter had promised to tell the former about the figures who populate the Amalfi court, their personalities and moral characters. Antonio agrees, but they are distracted by the entrance of several characters.

Almost immediately, Ferdinand enters with Silvio, Castruccio, Roderigo, and Grisolan. Ferdinand is informed that Antonio had won the most jousting contests and so rewards him, lamenting that they can only play games instead of fighting in a real war. Castruccio tells him he thinks it best for princes to send deputies to fight in their stead, since when rulers fight themselves, it breeds discontent at home. Castruccio further insinuates that his wife had been less than faithful while he was gone away, and Ferdinand continues to pun on his cuckoldry throughout the conversation. They further discuss Roderigo's new horse, and Ferdinand compliments Antonio's riding. The Cardinal enters with the Duchess and her lady, Cariola, and the three distract all of the group save Antonio and Delio.

In private, Antonio gives Delio a summary of the Cardinal and Ferdinand's characters. He says the Cardinal's rumored bravery and light-heartedness is superficial, and that he is truly a melancholy and corrupt man who will destroy anyone he is jealous of, so much so that he tried to bribe his way to becoming pope. He says Ferdinand is never what he seems, has a "perverse and turbulent nature," (1.1.160), is vengeful, and uses the law to destroy people at will and for his own gains.

Lastly, he describes their sister, the Duchess, as a great conversationalist, a beautiful woman, and a completely virtuous person. Delio accuses him of overstating her assets, but Antonio responds, "All her particular worth grows to this sum:/She stains the time past: lights the time to come--" (1.1.213-4). Cariola brings message to Antonio, to attend to the Duchess in half an hour's time.

Ferdinand asks the Duchess if she would take Bosola on as manager of her horses on his recommendation, and she accepts. In private, the Cardinal then tells Ferdinand to use Bosola as an informer as to their sister's behavior. When Ferdinand suggests they use Antonio instead of Bosola, the Cardinal protests that Antonio is far too honest for such an assignment. They see Bosola approaching, and the Cardinal leaves to avoid him.

Ferdinand tells Bosola that the Cardinal doesn't trust him. Bosola warns that to be distrusted without cause can lead one to actually deceive. Changing the subject, Ferdinand offers him gold to spy on the Duchess, explaining that she is recently widowed and they do

not want her to remarry; he does not give a reason for their concern. Bosola tries to return the money because he does not want to be a spy, but Ferdinand tells him he has already arranged Bosola the post of horse manager, and that to refuse would appear ungrateful. Bosola begrudgingly accepts and leaves.

Act One, Scene Three

The next scene has Ferdinand, the Duchess, Cardinal and Cariola on stage.

The Cardinal and Ferdinand prepare to leave the Duchess, and tell her that in their absence, she must be responsible for acting appropriately. They warn her not to be tempted by a man, as it would be shameful for a widow to remarry. The Duchess protests that she has no intention of marrying again, but they tell her that's what widows always say before they forget their vow and remarry anyway. After a few more warnings, they leave.

The Duchess ponders to herself whether her brothers' warnings should worry her, but decides that she will conversely let her fear spur her into action. She tells her lady Cariola of her intent, and insists that trusting Cariola with that secret is of greater value than trusting the maid with her life. Cariola vows that she will guard the Duchess's secret carefully. The Duchess tells her to hide behind the arras where she can overhear the scene to follow. Antonio enters to fulfill his appointment with the Duchess.

The Duchess asks Antonio to take dictation of what she says--she wants to write her will. They discuss the institution of marriage, and Antonio says that he thinks it is either heaven or hell; there is no in between. Impressed, she gives Antonio her wedding ring by way of proposal, insisting that her social status would prohibit him from wooing her, and so must she woo him. He accepts, and then Cariola reveals herself. Because she has witnessed the exchange, it is a binding ceremony.

The Duchess excuses Cariola so she can retreat to her marriage bed with Antonio--she tells him that he can lay a sword between them to keep them chaste if he likes, but she wishes to discuss how to get her brothers to accept their marriage--"We'll only lie, and talk together, and plot/T'appease my humorous kindred" (1.1.570-1). When they leave together, Cariola wonders aloud whether her mistress is taken with greatness or madness.

Analysis

The opening lines of *The Duchess of Malfi* set the tone for the struggle between good and evil that is to follow. Antonio, who we learn later in the scene is, by the Cardinal's own judgment, too honest to spy on the Duchess, praises the French court for its lack of sycophants and corruption. Then the Cardinal and Bosola enter, and Antonio tells Delio that

Bosola “rails at those things”--vices--”which he wants” (1.1.25), so not only is his appearance of virtue false, it is hypocritical and based around self-interest. The audience quickly realizes that these characters are the antithesis of the virtues Antonio praised as reflected in the French court. Further, in his private conversation, we learn immediately that Antonio is an archetypal man of virtue, one who not only lives honestly but esteems it in others. This analysis is validated throughout the play, and makes him something of an anomaly in this twisted court.

Antonio’s character sketches to Delio present a fuller picture of the Cardinal and Ferdinand’s evil--the Cardinal is cold and calculating, Ferdinand hot-tempered and deranged. There is nothing to temper these judgments--not one virtue is named for either character. In contrast, Antonio sees the Duchess as “right noble,” “full of rapture,” “divine,” and completely virtuous. Though this view of the Duchess will be complicated somewhat later in the play, the beginning of the first scene lays the ground for what will essentially become a battle of evil trying to corrupt and destroy good.

It also quickly becomes clear that Bosola does not fit perfectly into this dichotomy. Antonio’s first description of him, combined with Delio’s information that he committed a notorious murder, would seem to place him firmly on the side of the brothers, but Antonio himself quickly says, “I have heard/He’s very valiant” (1.1.70-1), and worries that the Cardinal’s mistreatment of him will “poison all his goodness” (1.1.72). So Antonio, at least, believes him to have some goodness. Thus from the beginning the audience is given hints that Bosola is an enigma, and will represent the battleground where the fight of good versus evil will play out.

This contradiction is quickly made manifest when Ferdinand recruits Bosola to be his informer. When Ferdinand hands him gold, Bosola’s immediate reaction is to ask “Whose throat must I cut?” (1.1.240). That he immediately assumes he is being hired to murder says much about his character, but so does the fact that he says “must.” Until Act Five, Bosola’s defining trait, besides his cynical melancholy, is his unflinching loyalty to Ferdinand and the Cardinal. Here we see the first hint of this--having been handed a piece of gold, he already feels compelled to do whatever Ferdinand asks, whether he wants to or not. Considering that he remains not only uncompensated but also unthanked for whatever the murder he had previously committed for the Cardinal, the loyalty is all the more befuddling and interesting.

Bosola's situation is further complicated when he learns he is being hired not to murder, but to spy. This seems like a significantly less evil task, especially as Bosola has no

particular loyalty to the Duchess, yet he is dismayed. Even though he has already murdered for money, he declares in reference to the coins, “should I take these they’d take me to hell” (1.1.257). Yet even against such strong reservations, Bosola gives in -- “I am your creature” (1.1.278). And “creature,” with its connotations of unthinking loyalty and inhumanity, is just the right word.

The distinction between Bosola and his masters has in it a touch of class commentary. First of all, the depravity represented by Ferdinand the Cardinal is most contemptible because of the hypocrisy their positions add to it. That the Duke and the religious figure, both authority figures of 'high' birth, would be the most ugly ensures an ugly world beneath them. In the same way Antonio praised the French prince for inspiring goodness through his realm through his positive example, so is the poor example of the Malfi authorities somewhat responsible for the depravity of their court. In contrast, Bosola's depravity or evil is conditioned, as discussed above. He believes himself to have less agency than they do, which helps explain Antonio's view of him as one who is valiant but whose valiance could be compromised if he is treated poorly. In some ways, Bosola is the central character of the text - Webster lists him first in the cast list, a rare occurrence in the day for characters of low rank - and he survives longer than the Duchess, ostensibly the heroine. This fact further suggests the way that questions of class and rank, especially in contrast to an individual's natural, moral virtues, provide a means to understand the play's central themes.

The dialogue between the Duchess and her brothers contains much foreshadowing. Most obviously, it reveals their desire to control her, and their incredible degree of concern over her marriage situation. A threat of violence hangs over the scene, with Ferdinand’s pulling out a knife--”This was my father’s poniard” (1.1.322)--and the Cardinal’s warning, “Wisdom begins at the end: remember it” (1.1.319), which rings ominously with its reference to the end of life.

This scene also hints, however, that the Duchess will not obey her brothers blindly. She uses her diamond analogy to argue that women who remarry are not so easily condemned or depraved, and when they ignore her, we see her impatience when she demands of them, “Will you hear me?” (1.1.292). The practiced rhythm of their lecture, which she points out to Ferdinand, suggests that the filial dynamic is long-gestating, and suggests that her willfulness to disobey them might have in it some share of petulance as well. Of course, even if this is the case, what is a game to her will soon be revealed as much more to them.

Her defiance is made much clearer once her brothers leave. Not only will she not be dissuaded from her planned marriage, she will “make them [her] low footsteps” (1.1.334), using them, in effect, to do what she wants in direct opposition to them. This is real defiance, not just of her brothers but of societal and religious mores of the time, and it is a first look at the Duchess’s great vitality, which is further reflected when she takes the lead in the proposal scene.

The marriage scene, in addition to contrasting the Duchess’s vivid personality with Antonio’s rather passive one, also foreshadows the tragedy to come. It opens with the Duchess telling Antonio she wants to write her will, immediately evoking the thought of death. The Duchess’s metaphors and allusions, too, often invoke death--she is not an alabaster statue kneeling at her husband’s tomb; she refers to her marriage to Antonio as a Gordian knot, a knot that could not be untied unless cut with “violence” (:470); and she says they can put an unsheathed sword between them in bed to keep them chaste, which introduces a weapon into their intimacy. Thus while this end of the act is largely happy, Webster gives the audience plenty of warning that such happiness will not last. The contradictions in the Duchess's character - between her valiant refusal to bow before social mores and her willfulness on directly and imprudently countering the protestations of her brothers - are summarized in Cariola's final soliloquy, which questions whether the Duchess is a model of greatness or simply a madwoman.

Act Two, Scene One

The scene is set in an apartment in the Duchess's palace. It begins
with Bosola and Castruccio enter.

Bosola mocks Castruccio for being a fool and having unrealized ambitions of being a great courtier. An Old Lady enters, and Bosola criticizes her ugliness and mocks her attempts to mask it with makeup. She and Castruccio leave, and Bosola muses on his suspicions that the Duchess is pregnant. He has bought the first apricots of the season, which he will use to try to find out if she is indeed pregnant. The apricots were believed to induce labour.

Delio and Antonio enter. Antonio has just told Delio of his secret marriage, and emphasizes that Delio must never breath a word of it to anyone, after which insistence they join Bosola. Antonio accuses Bosola of trying too hard not to appear “puffed up” (2.1.80-1) with his promotion, and of continually putting forth a mean and melancholy appearance instead.

The Duchess, out of breath, enters with her ladies, and asks Antonio if she has gotten fat. Bosola offers her the apricots, and the Duchess eats them. She immediately says they have made her ill and goes off to her bedroom. Antonio and Delio discuss how best to cover up that she has gone into labour, and Delio recommends saying that Bosola has poisoned her with the apricots.

Act Two, Scene Two

In a different location, Bosola muses to himself that the Duchess's reaction to the apricots means she is almost certainly pregnant. The Old Lady enters in a rush, and after Bosola berates her and women in general, she rushes off, presumably to act as midwife to the Duchess.

Antonio, Delio, Roderigo and Grisolan enter. Antonio tells them to shut and lock the court gates, claiming some of the Duchess's jewels are missing. A group of gossipy servants enter, and one reports a rumor that the Duchess has a Swiss mercenary in her bedroom with her. Antonio reports that, due to the Duchess's illness and the theft of her jewels, she would like all the officers to lock themselves in their rooms and send her keys to their chests and doors. They agree, and everyone leaves except Antonio and Delio.

Antonio tells Delio to go to Rome to keep watch over the Duchess's brothers. Though he trusts Delio, he is fearful, and Delio tells him it is just superstition and "Old friends (like old swords) still are trusted best." (2.2.87). He leaves.

Cariola enters carrying the new baby, a son, and the new father rejoices.

Act Two, Scene Three

Outside the palace that night, Bosola enters with a lantern. He thinks he heard a woman shriek from the direction of the Duchess's chambers, and is made more suspicious by Antonio's order to confine the officers to their rooms.

Antonio enters with a candle and his sword drawn, having heard someone. When he realizes it is Bosola, he asks if he heard a noise from the Duchess's chamber. Bosola denies hearing anything, and offers that he is ignoring the curfew order solely because he wanted to pray in peace.

Antonio claims he is calculating a horoscope to figure out who stole the jewels, and tells Bosola that he is the main suspect, as his apricots seem to have poisoned the Duchess at the same time that her jewels went missing. Bosola denies his guilt, and insults Antonio.

Antonio gets a sudden nose bleed, which is considered a bad omen. He tells Bosola not to pass the Duchess's chambers on his way back to his room and leaves. Bosola finds a

piece of paper Antonio dropped, which contains the infant's horoscope--it warns of a short life and violent death. Bosola knows now that the Duchess has had a child and that Antonio is in her confidence, but he doesn't realize Antonio is the father. He plans to send a letter to the brothers in Rome in the morning.

Act Two, Scene Four

At the Cardinal's palace in Rome, Julia, the Cardinal's mistress and Castruccio's wife, explains how she convinced her husband to let her go to Rome without him. Julia worries about the Cardinal's constancy, but he dismisses her concern as evidence of her own guilt over her infidelity. A servant enters to tell Julia that someone carrying post from Malfi desires to see her.

Delio, one of her former suitors, enters, and offers Julia money as a favor. Another servant enters to tell Julia that her husband is in Rome and has delivered a letter to Ferdinand that has left him in a foul mood. After the servant leaves, Delio asks Julia to be his mistress. She says she will ask her husband—he doesn't know if she's joking or not--and leaves. Delio fears Castruccio's delivery of bad news to Ferdinand means that Antonio and the Duchess have been found out.

Act Two, Scene Five

In a different location in the Roman palace, Ferdinand, carrying a letter, tells the Cardinal the news of the Duchess—he knows only that she is pregnant, not that she is married. He confesses that the knowledge has made him crazy. The two men rue her wantonness and the infidelity of women in general, but the Cardinal keeps his cool, while chiding Ferdinand for his extreme emotional reactions. Ferdinand threatens everyone the Duchess, the unknown father, the child, even himself and the Cardinal and then retires, saying he won't take any action until he figures out who the father is.

Act 2 Analysis

Act Two shows a new side to the Duchess that will become thematically very important--that of a reproductive figure and mother. This side of her stands in opposition to what her brothers would have her be, which is a monument, chaste, "alabaster," representing a good reputation and nothing else. When she appears on stage, she is out of breath, and Bosola tells the audience that she

Is sick o'days, she pukes, her stomach seethes,
The fins of her eyelids look most teeming blue,
She wanes i'th' cheek, and waxes fat i'th' flank (2.1.60-2).

He is obsessed with her physicality, and soon afterwards she eats apricots greedily. Considering they have been ripened in horse dung, the apricots stand as a strong image of the Earth, she is now characterized not as "alabaster" or as the untouchable saint Antonio described in Act I, but as a woman very much in touch with the physical Earth. Her love for Antonio and its resulting pregnancy has brought her closer to nature.

The Duchess' attempts to hide her pregnancy are a minor example of a theme that is significant in Act Two, that of disguising, of the contrast between being and seeming. In almost all cases in the play, this theme deals with the disguising of evil, and only with the Duchess and her family is this not the case. Rather, their disguising is necessitated by the evil of the characters around them and the way that eveil has warped the world. So depraved is the world that the truly good characters are forced to disguise their love and domestic bliss to protect them.

Bosola himself, who later wears multiple disguises, and as spy is constantly pretending, rails against having to disguise oneself in this act. For instance, he mocks the Old Lady for wearing makeup, leading him to scornfully meditate on how man delights "to hide" his true form "in rich tissue" (2.1.53-4). Immediately after, however, the audience sees his two-faces in stark clarity as he tricks the Duchess into eating apricots while showing his real motivations in his asides. Webster's use of asides, hidden characters, and disguises creates several levels of dramatic irony throughout the play that both raise the dramatic tension and elucidate his pessimistic view of human nature.

Superstition is a motif throughout the play, and it is used in Act Two to both foreshadow what is to come and to further develop the characters. At the end of the second scene, Delio says, "How superstitiously we mind our evils" (2.2.73) before listing possible bad omens, but though he uses the first person plural, in this case the only character showing superstition is Antonio.

In the very next scene, one of the bad omens Delio had just listed comes to pass--Antonio gets a nose bleed. Though he pretends that he is not affected by it, separating himself from "One that were superstitious" (2.3.43), his repeated insistence that "it merely comes by chance" (2.3.44), "mere accident" (2.3.47), shows that he is trying to convince and reassure himself because of how terribly the omen disturbs him. Further, this incident occurs while he is divining a horoscope for his son--another superstitious act.

The audience's knowledge that Bosola is a spy on the verge of discovering the Duchess and Antonio's secret makes these superstitions more ominous, but Antonio's

superstitious nature itself is not meant to be admired, as it makes him appear weak and highlights his ineffectual nature. This also further distinguishes Antonio's and the Duchess's natures when, later in Act Three, the Duchess calls Cariola a "superstitious fool" (3.2.321), showing her disdain for such things.

Act Two takes us from the pregnant Duchess and her worried husband in Malfi, all the way to Rome and the Cardinal's sinful relationship with the married Julia, and finally to the evil brothers' reactions to what they believe is the Duchess's deep shame. This final scene strikingly presents the contrast between the characters, fully clarifying what each brother signifies the hot-tempered Ferdinand, the cold and calculating Cardinal.

Both brothers mention blood and use blood imagery throughout the scene. However, they use it very differently, in ways that represent the difference between their reactions to their sister's behavior. The Cardinal says, "Shall our blood,/The royal blood of Aragon and Castile,/Be thus attainted?" (2.5.21-3). Here, he means blood metaphorically, as a stand-in for lineage, for family pride and honour, for rank. When Ferdinand speaks of purging "infected blood, such blood as hers" (2.5.26), he is not being figurative--he truly wants to spill her blood. His attitude is further emphasized when he says it is only her "whore's blood" (2.5.48) "that shall quench [his] wild-fire" (2.5.47). He believes his rage can only be calmed by the spilling of her blood. Fire imagery is connected to Ferdinand throughout the play, and in this scene alone he connects his fire to her blood twice. Earlier, he says that only fire can purge the infection in her blood. These two lines together show that he has already determined she must die—to cure her, his anger must spill her blood, and to cure his anger, her blood must spill. Forgiveness, clearly, is impossible.

One is left to wonder about the sexual nature of Ferdinand's intense obsession with his sister, who is his twin. Where the Cardinal - an ambitious man who has used his conniving skills to try and be Pope, according to Antonio - thinks in terms of wealth and Earthly protection, Ferdinand has a moral tone in his disdain for his sister's impurity. Though incest is never mentioned explicitly, it is hardly a rare theme for Jacobean dramatists and can provide an interesting lens into the motivations that drive Ferdinand, as well as a lens into the theme of repression that equally helps understand the Duchess's desire to declare her independence through her marriage.

Act Three, Scene One

Act Three begins some time later.

At the Duchess's palace, Delio has very recently returned from Rome with Ferdinand. Antonio tells Delio that since he left, the Duchess has had two more children. Delio asks if the brothers know about this yet, and Antonio says that he fears they do, because Ferdinand has been behaving suspiciously since his arrival in Malfi. Delio asks what the common people in Malfi know, and Antonio says they call the Duchess a strumpet, but no one has any idea that they are married.

Ferdinand, the Duchess, and Bosola enter. Ferdinand tells the Duchess that he has found a husband for her, Count Malateste. The Duchess protests and asks to address the rumors about her honour, but Ferdinand insists, "Let me be ever deaf to'it" (3.1.58), and that even if such rumors were true, his powerful love for her could forgive her anything.

Everyone leaves except Ferdinand and Bosola, and Ferdinand asks Bosola what he has uncovered. Bosola shares the rumor that the Duchess has birthed three bastards, but that he has no idea who the father is. Bosola thinks a man unworthy of her has used magic to seduce her, but Ferdinand will have none of it, saying that no herbs or potions can force the will.

Bosola has purloined a key to the Duchess's bedroom for Ferdinand, and though the latter accepts it, he will not tell Bosola what he intends to do with it. He says that anyone who can predict his behavior would have to know everything, but Bosola tells him he is overestimating himself. Ferdinand is pleased that Bosola speaks honestly instead of flattering him.

Act Three, Scene Two

In the Duchess's bedroom, she tells Antonio he can't sleep in her bed this night, but Antonio says he must, and they tease each other good-naturedly. Antonio teases Cariola about being single, and then they leave the Duchess alone so she can prepare for bed.

The Duchess muses to herself how she would expect Antonio to avoid her bed while Ferdinand was in the palace, but she imagines Antonio's response would be that "love mixed with fear is sweetest" (3.2.66). While she soliloquizes, Ferdinand sneaks in. When she notices him, he hands her a knife for her to kill herself with.

She tells him that she is married, and he warns her that he doesn't want to know who the husband is because it would lead to such violence as would destroy them both, and he

warns the Duchess that she must do everything she can—including cutting out her own tongue—to make sure Ferdinand never discovers his identity.

The Duchess protests that she has done nothing wrong—she is not the only widow to remarry, and she remains pure. Ferdinand tells her that once gone, a good reputation can never be regained, and since she has lost hers, he will never see her again.

He leaves, and Antonio and Cariola return, Antonio carrying a gun. Antonio suspects that Cariola let Ferdinand into the room, and threatens her with the gun, but the Duchess tells him he came in through the gallery and gave her a knife, presumably for her to kill herself with. Bosola knocks at the door and Antonio exits before they let him in.

Bosola reports that Ferdinand has left for Rome, and asks the Duchess why she seems upset. She makes up a story about Antonio falsifying her accounts, a lie that will force him to flee Malfi and hence escape potential harm. She tells Bosola to get her officers to arrest Antonio, and Bosala leaves.

Antonio returns, and the Duchess tells him of her plan. She demands he flee to Ancona, where she will send her treasure to him. When Bosola returns with the officers, the Duchess berates Antonio, but tells them to let him go freely, as she doesn't want the public to find out about his crimes and blame her. She banishes him, and he leaves.

The Duchess asks for the officers' opinions of Antonio, and they complain of his tight-fisted behavior towards them. When they leave, Bosola says they were flattering parasites to Antonio when he was doing well, and tells the Duchess that she has made a big mistake and treated the honest and virtuous Antonio unfairly. He speaks at length about Antonio's virtue, until the Duchess, moved to trust him, admits that he is her husband.

Bosola declares himself impressed that she would marry him for his virtues in spite of his lack of rank. The Duchess, comforted, asks him to help keep her secret, and to take her money to Antonio in Ancona where she will meet them in a few days. The Duchess and Cariola exit, leaving Bosola alone to lament that he must tell all to Ferdinand, although he looks forward to the promotion he will receive for doing so.

Act Three, Scene Three

Scene Three is again set in the Cardinal's palace at Rome.

Count Malateste is showing the Cardinal plans for a new fortification at Naples, when Ferdinand enters with Delio, Silvio, and Pescara. Delio and Silvio explain to Ferdinand that Malateste is a soldier only in name he avoids any real battles and only studies theories of war without actually engaging. They mock the care he takes with his mistress's scarf.

Bosola arrives and speaks to Ferdinand and the Cardinal privately, while the others discuss what his presence there could mean. They note that Ferdinand and the Cardinal both look furious in reaction to whatever Bosola is telling them.

Ferdinand and the Cardinal are especially distressed that the Duchess is escaping to meet Antonio by pretending to be on a pilgrimage, which Cariola had warned her against. The Cardinal says he'll have them banished from Ancona immediately, and Ferdinand orders Bosola to tell the Duchess's son from her previous marriage—who is not mentioned anywhere else in the play the news. Ferdinand makes plans to intercept her.

Act Three, Scene Four

Scene Four is set at the Shrine of Our Lady of Loretto. Here, the Cardinal gives up his cardinal's hat in a ceremony so that he can fight as a soldier. Antonio, the Duchess, and their children arrive, and are banished from Ancona. This all happens in pantomime while the churchmen sing a solemn song. They all exit except for two pilgrims, who discuss what happened and explain that the Pope, spurred by the Cardinal, took the Duchess's dukedom from her.

Act Three, Scene Five

Scene Five takes place nearby Loretto, following the banishment.

The Duchess and Antonio mourn their current state to Cariola, their children, and their last remaining servants. Bosola brings them a letter from Ferdinand, which asks for Antonio to be sent to him, using double-talk so as to threaten his murder while pretending to offer amity. The Duchess sees through his "riddles" (3.5.41) easily, and so Antonio refuses to go. Bosola scorns his refusal and leaves.

The Duchess, fearful of an ambush, pleads for Antonio to take their oldest son to Milan. He accepts, and they all say their farewells. After Antonio and the older son leave, Bosola and a troop of armed men approach to apprehend the Duchess and her remaining family. Bosola entreats her to forget her lowly husband, but she says that a man's actions, not his rank, are what matter. She and her family are taken back to her palace as prisoners.

Analysis

The theme of class becomes most developed here in Act Three. Interestingly, it is first explicitly discussed between Bosola and the Duchess, both of whom are speaking disingenuously in an effort to hide something from the other. They each thus end up acting as the other's mouthpiece on the issue, as when Bosola berates the Duchess for saying of Antonio, "But he was basely descended" (3.2.160), in response to Bosola listing Antonio's

virtues, for those virtues, he says, matter more than “men’s pedigrees” (3.2.262). The ironic presentation does not mean that the opinions voiced are not honest considerations of the way people approach an individual's status.

When, as a result of Bosola’s protestations, the Duchess admits that she is married to Antonio, Bosola pretends to be filled with joy and admiration that the Duchess would look past rank and wealth to give a man his true due for his character alone. The audience knows not to trust his effusive praise, of course, but it is worth noting that the final tragedy for the Duchess and her family comes out of this very moment, when Bosola uses this praise of looking beyond rank to get her to admit who her husband is.

Yet, as is often true with Bosola, it is impossible to know just how much truth is mixed in with his lies. Once he is alone again on stage, he expresses some reluctance to give his new information to Ferdinand, even though it’s the very information he has been trying to get for about two years. This implies that there may have been some truth to his “friendly speech” (3.2.301), especially since his pervasive melancholy is centered on his own inability to improve his position, and now he sees, embodied in Antonio, that it is, in fact, possible to rise past what custom usually dictates.

Though this contradiction may indicate that Bosola has some respect for the Duchess’s choice in marrying Antonio, he does much to dispel such an interpretation later in the act. For once he has told Ferdinand about Antonio, and so can speak forthrightly without having to lie to try to ensnare the Duchess, he shows much more snobbery about class. For example, when Antonio refuses to act as Ferdinand, through Bosola, wants him to, Bosola says, “This proclaims your breeding/Every small thing draws a base mind to fear” (3.5.52-3). Ferdinand is an obviously dangerous figure, and his attempt to get Antonio to come to him has a double, threatening meaning which is barely even hidden. The Duchess, the embodiment of pedigree, is the first to notice this, and yet Bosola would have it that it is only Antonio’s lack of breeding that makes him fearful of it.

After the sad parting of Antonio and the oldest son with the Duchess and the rest of the children, Bosola comes to take the Duchess into custody. In this powerful scene, Bosola holds up Antonio’s rank as reason enough for the Duchess to forget him completely—“Forget this base, low fellow” (3.5.116). This admonition is all the starker in juxtaposition to the sad leave-taking that preceded it, making Bosola’s directive, and thus his blind judgment based on rank, seem absurd.

When the Duchess responds angrily, he doesn't even bother to use a full sentence in his reply—"One of no birth" (3.5119)—as though his meaning is so obvious that he doesn't even need to declare it. This leaves the Duchess an opportunity to stand up for Antonio, and for the unimportance of birth, and she does so beautifully, having the last word in the argument for the moment. Though she first defends him positively, explaining that since a man who is great for his own actions, not his birth, is happiest, then the reverse is also true—"So, to great men, the moral may be stretched:/Men oft are valued high, when th'are most wretch'd" (3.5.140-141). The fixation on Antonio's rank in the third act, then, becomes also related to question of Ferdinand and the Cardinal's evil. They have the birth, the power, and the standing that Antonio lacks, but they are the symbol of evil throughout the play.

Act Three also further elucidates the stark differences between what the Duchess actually is, what Ferdinand believes her to be, and what he wants her to be. The image of the Duchess of a reproductive figure and mother that first came in Act Two is expanded here—one of the first things the audience learns in Act Three is that in what has been only moments in the time of the theater, the Duchess has had two more children--she has been an "excellent/Feeder of pedigrees" (3.1.5-6).

In the next scene, the domestic bliss of the Duchess's marriage is made clear. The Duchess, Antonio, and Cariola tease each other kindly in the Duchess's bedroom while she prepares to go to bed. The simplicity and easy domestic happiness of this scene create a very different image than all of Ferdinand's imaginings of the Duchess two scenes earlier, when he sees "her in the shameful act of sin" (2.5.41) in his mind, "Haply with some strong thighed bargeman,/Or one o'th' wood-yard, that can quoit the sledge" (2.5.42-3).

Ferdinand is incapable of imagining her in a loving relationship. If she has had a child, it must have been a product of her uncontrollable lust and resulting promiscuous behavior. The only other option he can imagine for her, that which he wants, is as a monumentalized figure, forever bowing chastely over her first husband's tomb, "cased up, like a holy relic" (3.2.140). The irony is of course that for someone so harshly moral about sex, he is most fixated upon it, again a contradiction that can be seen through a lens of repressed incestuous feelings for his twin.

Antonio marks the distinction between this chaste, marble figure the Duchess's brothers would like her to be and the more earthly figure she actually is when talking to Cariola:

O fie upon this single life. Forgo it.
We read how Daphne, for her peevish flight,
Became a fruitless bay-tree; Syrinx turned
To the pale empty reed; Anaxarete
Was frozen into marble: whereas those
Which married, or proved kind unto their friends,
Were, by a gracious influence, transshaped
Into the olive, pomegranate, mulberry. (3.2.24-31)

The women who remain single are "fruitless," "pale," "empty," "frozen," "marble," while the married women become fruit-bearing trees, both beautiful and nourishing to the world around them. This is so preferable to the marble women that Ferdinand and the Cardinal would have, and so far from the lusty widow that they believe the Duchess to be, that their evil against her and her family becomes all the more pronounced.

Finally, a word can be said about the inventive theatricality Webster employs to detail the Duchess and Antonio's banishment from Ancona. Performed as a pantomime dumb-show under a sung hymn, the scene has a great theatrical power both for its economy of storytelling and the irony of pilgrims celebrating through song such a perverse, demented, self-interested line of action.

Act Four, Scene One

Act Four begins back in Malfi, at the Duchess's palace.

Bosola tells Ferdinand that the Duchess is bearing her imprisonment nobly. Ferdinand is dissatisfied and leaves, and the Duchess enters. Bosola tells her that Ferdinand has come to visit her, but does not want to go against the vow he made to never see her again, so entreats her not to have any light in her room tonight so he can address her. She agrees, and Bosola walks away with the lights.

Ferdinand enters in the dark, and tells the Duchess that she has his pardon. He gives her a dead man's severed hand wearing her wedding ring on one of its fingers, hoping that because it is dark, she will believe it to be Antonio's. However, she assumes it is Ferdinand's and wonders why he is so cold. Ferdinand exits and Bosola brings up the light, and she sees what she holds. Bosola then pulls back a curtain, revealing the corpses of Antonio and their children. He says that Ferdinand wants her to see them so that she will stop grieving for them.

The Duchess believes him, and asks to be bound to Antonio's lifeless body and left to die there. Bosola tells her to forget her sorrow--now that everything is at its worst, it can only

get better--but she ignores him. She continues to mourn and finally asks Bosola to tell her brothers to come and kill her, and not prolong her torture.

She exits and Ferdinand enters, telling Bosola that the bodies are only wax figures and they have accomplished his goal--"to bring her to despair" (4.1.116). Bosola entreats him to stop torturing her and to simply send her to a convent, but Ferdinand wants her to go completely mad. He further insists he will have madmen placed near her chamber so that the sounds of their torture will rankle her. Bosola says in that case, he would prefer to never see her again, but Ferdinand says he must, so Bosola insists he will not do so as Ferdinand's spy. Ferdinand sends him to Milan, where Antonio waits.

Act Four, Scene Two

Cariola explains to the Duchess that the noises they hear are coming from the madmen that Ferdinand has placed all around her prison. The Duchess tells her that it is actually comforting—silence is worse—and that though she is in despair, she remains sane.

A servant enters to explain that Ferdinand has sent her several madmen to try to cure her sadness by making her laugh at them, a trick that previously worked on the Pope. The servant tells her about each one, and then brings them in. They sing, dance, and act crazy. The madmen include: the Mad Astronomer, who lost his mind when his prediction of the apocalypse proved incorrect; the Mad Doctor, who lost his mind due to jealousy; the Mad Priest; and the Mad Lawyer. Bosola, disguised like an old man, enters last, after which the madmen leave.

Bosola, whom she does not recognize, tells the Duchess that he has come to design her tomb. She protests that she isn't ill, and that she is still Duchess of Malfi, and he tells her that such glories mean nothing up close. The executioners enter with a coffin, cords, and a bell, and Bosola tells her this is her present from her brothers.

Cariola wants to call for help, but the only ones that might hear her are the nearby madmen. Bosola order the executioners to shut her up, and Cariola says she wants to die with the Duchess. She is taken off stage. Bosola tells the Duchess she will die by strangulation, and is surprised that she is not afraid, but rather ancticipates meeting her family in the afterlife.

The executioners strangle her, and Bosola tells them to next kill Cariola and the children. Cariola demands to know what crime she has committed to deserve death, and Bosola tells her she is being punished for keeping the Duchess's marriage a secret. She

protests as they try to kill her, saying she is engaged, she hasn't been to confession, and she is pregnant, but they kill her anyway.

Ferdinand enters, and Bosola shows him the dead bodies. Ferdinand is unmoved by the corpses of the children, but cries at the sight of the Duchess, and berates Bosola for following his orders and not taking her away to safety or defending her from Ferdinand. Ferdinand admits he was hoping she wouldn't remarry so that he could inherit her fortune, which is why her marriage so incensed him.

Bosola, seeing Ferdinand is quickly turning against him, asks for his reward. Ferdinand refuses to give him anything beyond pardoning him for the murder. Bosola insists he be paid, but Ferdinand tells him to banish himself from Ferdinand's sight forever. Ferdinand, showing signs of his coming madness, says he is leaving to hunt badger, and exits.

Bosola is greatly distressed, seeing that he has done all this evil for no reward. He notices the Duchess is still alive, but fears calling for help since Ferdinand might still be within range. She says, "Antonio," (4.2.42), and Bosola quickly tells her that he is alive and has been pardoned, not dead as she believed, and then she dies. He confesses in a soliloquy that he feels repentant, and wonders how he can make amends or gain revenge.

Analysis

In Act Four, the final showdown between the Duchess and Ferdinand occurs, acted largely through Bosola. In the most basic sense, Ferdinand is the victor--the Duchess is killed and so truly becomes a monument, a name only, with no domestic or life-bearing side remaining. The purity he demands of her will not again be compromised. The symbolic reality is more complicated, however, for Ferdinand fails to destroy her spirit, "to bring her to despair" (4.1.116), and his attempts to do so only further highlight how far her spirit rises above him. She does not die despairing, but bravely and honourably, and the only one truly brought to despair in this scene is he himself.

Though, at the beginning of the act, the Duchess has been separated from her loving husband and oldest child, stripped of her wealth and power, and imprisoned, she bears it "nobly" (4.1.2). When Ferdinand cruelly tries to fool her into thinking she holds Antonio's dead hand, the trick fails and she at first thinks it is Ferdinand's own hand, and even after all his awful treatment of her, she shows worry for him, saying, "I fear you are not well after your travel" (4.1.52). Rather than be moved by this, Ferdinand takes the trick further, showing her the faked corpses of her family. That the Duchess stands for good and Ferdinand for evil is nowhere more clear than this.

At this moment, when the Duchess believes her family to be dead, she is now deprived of the last external thing she had to derive strength from—her hope. Her title, her standing, her freedom were gone, and now she truly has nothing left. But still, she shows profound strength in her death scene, which allows her to defeat the cruel machinations of her brothers, even in her death, for she never gives in to despair, never regrets her choice to marry Antonio and create a family, never is brought down to her brothers' level in any way.

The madmen surrounding her room only make her calmer, and those brought into her room only stand as an example of what she could have been brought to, and how very far she still is from that. When she learns that it is her time to die, she shows no fear, no anger, no remorse. The true courage this takes is made clear to the audience through the contrast of Cariola. Where Cariola at first showed bravely in insisting she wishes to die alongside her mistress, she acts quite differently in the moment, in which she begs, lies, delays, and fights physically to try to fend it off.

The grotesqueness of the theatricality surrounding the Duchess's death also highlights her majestic nature. She is at peace while madmen dance and sing around her, while fake corpses surround her, while Bosola changes personas again and again, and while Cariola fights desperately for her life. Further, there is a great theatricality in the use of the madmen, whose several speeches creates a creepy theatrical atmosphere. Her ability to ignore them is another sign of her strength. The horrors surrounding her also serve to show that her dying is not synonymous with her being defeated by her brothers, for she is escaping this hell on earth that they have created, and into which they will fall prey to themselves during the final act.

Act Four also serves as a turning point for Bosola. In keeping with the pattern of contradiction in his character, his showings of remorse are seemingly genuine, but far from pure. Within the course of one scene, he orders the Duchess's murder, then her children's and Cariola's, without any hesitation or remorse. His regrets come only after Ferdinand has made it clear that Bosola will not be rewarded for these gruesome tasks. But even then, his remorse is not pure, for when the Duchess shows signs of life again, and he prays, "Return, fair soul, from darkness" (4.2.334), it is so that she can assuage his guilt, lead him "out of this sensible hell" (4.2.335), save him, not so that she can live for her own sake.

Bosola has, with Ferdinand's regret at the sight of the Duchess's corpse, lost his one excuse for all of his evil deeds. He has throughout the play "rather sought/To appear a true servant than an honest man" (4.2.324-5)—he has chosen to be loyal to Ferdinand and the Cardinal rather than act according to his instincts "to do good" (4.2.352). But Ferdinand, who

most gained from this unblinking loyalty, berates him for it—"Why didst not thou pity her?" (4.2.265). Even this man who embodies mindless evil, who shows no remorse at the sight of two infant corpses, thinks that Bosola should have felt enough in himself to prevent him from following his orders.

These contradictions reframe all of Bosola's actions in the play, and makes it clear just how meaningless his expressions of remorse, of hesitation, of regret that he must do such evil action are, for he, in fact, could have said no, and if Ferdinand is to be believed, he would have been rewarded for that better than for going through with it. When Bosola tells Ferdinand he executed "this bloody sentence" (4.2.290) on Ferdinand's authority, Ferdinand responds,

Mine? Was I her judge?
Did any ceremonial form of law
Doom her to not-being? Did a complete jury
Deliver her conviction up i'th' court? (4.2.291-294)

, completely dismantling Bosola's attempts to believe that he was acting within a system, and that it was the system that was malicious, not he himself. It is a tribute to Webster's talent that we can both despise Bosola for his actions and pity him for his feelings of helplessness before social expectation, and all the while believe those contradictions.

Act Five, Scene One

Act Five begins in a public place in Milan.

Delio counsels Antonio that the proffered peace from the Cardinal and Ferdinand is likely to be a trap. When the Marquis of Pescara approaches, Antonio hides and Delio asks to be granted some of the land that had been seized from Antonio. Pescara denies his request, and Julia approaches with a letter from the Cardinal, asking for the same land. Pescara grants it to her, and when Delio confronts him about his refusal, Pescara tells him that he wouldn't want to give land taken from someone in such a shameful way to a friend—Delio—but as Julia is a strumpet, it's good enough for her.

Pescara says that Ferdinand has come to Milan and is rumored to be sick or crazy. He leaves to visit him. Antonio comes out from hiding and tells Delio he plans to visit the Cardinal in his bedroom tonight to either reconcile, or face his punishment and get it over with.

Act Five, Scene Two

Scene Two is set in the residence of the Cardinal and Ferdinand.

Ferdinand's doctor tells Pescara that Ferdinand is suffering from lycanthropia--he believes himself to be a wolf, and goes to dig up bodies in graveyards at night. He's been doing better since the doctor started treating him, but the doctor fears a relapse.

Ferdinand enters with Malateste and the Cardinal, and Bosola enters separately. Ferdinand asks to be alone, and then proceeds to attack his own shadow. The doctor tries to intimidate Ferdinand so that he'll follow his orders, but it doesn't work and Ferdinand leaves, followed by the doctor.

Pescara asks the Cardinal how Ferdinand came to this state, and the Cardinal makes up a story about Ferdinand seeing a ghost, which started his loss of sanity. Everyone leaves except Bosola and the Cardinal, who doesn't want Bosola to know he was involved in planning the Duchess's death, so he pretends to not know she is dead. He tells Bosola that if he finds and kills Antonio, the Cardinal will give him whatever advancement he desires.

Right after the Cardinal leaves, Julia enters with a gun, threatening to kill Bosola so that her obsessive love for him will end which she believes he caused with a love potion. Bosola denies having given her anything, and they embrace. Bosola asks her to prove her love for him by finding out what's wrong with the Cardinal, and she agrees, telling him to hide and she'll do it right away.

Bosola hides and the Cardinal enters with his servants. He says, aside, that he is wearying of Julia and wants to get rid of her any way he can. She asks him what's bothering him, and though at first he refuses to tell, finally he confesses to having engineered his sister's death. He makes her swear to keep his secret by kissing on a bible, but he has poisoned it and she dies almost immediately.

Bosola reveals himself to ask for his reward for killing the Duchess, since Ferdinand is too crazy to give it. The Cardinal tells him he will have it once he kills Antonio, which Bosola agrees to do. The Cardinal gives him a key so he can come after dark to help him remove Julia's body. The Cardinal leaves, and Bosola reveals that he will search out Antonio to protect him, or to offer to join him in avenging the Duchess's murder.

Act Five, Scene Three

Delio and Antonio are near the Cardinal's palace, discussing the haunting echo that comes from the Duchess's tomb. Antonio is particularly haunted by it, as it does indeed seem to repeat snippets of his speech that have agency and meaning. Delio tries to convince

Antonio not to go to the Cardinal's chamber, but Antonio says he would rather die than continue to half-live.

Act Five, Scene Four

Scene Four returns to the residence of the Cardinal and Ferdinand.

The Cardinal, Pescara, Malateste, Roderigo, and Grisolan enter. The Cardinal tells them not to stay with Ferdinand tonight because having people around makes him worse, although in reality he simply wants to ensure that no one is around when he gets rid of Julia's body. He further tells them of a plan to imitate Ferdinand's insanity in an attempt to get his confidence, and so they should ignore any extreme sounds or cries they might hear. They swear they won't go to Ferdinand no matter what they hear from his room. Everyone leaves except the Cardinal. He confesses to himself a plan to kill Bosola as soon as Bosola has killed Antonio and removed Julia's body.

The Cardinal exits, and Bosola enters, having overheard the Cardinal's plan to kill him. Ferdinand enters, speaking of strangling, which Bosola assumes is about him. Antonio and a servant follow, and Bosola, frightened and not realizing who it is, stabs Antonio fatally. Before he dies, Bosola tells Antonio what happened to his family. Bosola is devastated by his mistake, and tells the servant to take Antonio's body to Julia's room.

Act Five, Scene Five

The final scene is set in a different chamber in the same Milan residence.

The Cardinal enters, debating to himself the nature of hell and wondering aloud "how tedious is a guilty conscience!" (5.5.4). Bosola enters, followed by a servant who carries Antonio's body. Bosola tells the Cardinal that he has come to kill him, and though the Cardinal first tries to call for help, then to bribe Bosola to let him live, but Bosola is determined. Above, Pescara, Malateste, Roderigo, and Grisolan hear the Cardinal's cries for help, but they think he is testing them as he told them he might, so they don't go to him, except for Pescara, who thinks he sounds truly in trouble. The others follow because they want to see Pescara humiliated.

Bosola tells the Cardinal that he is going to kill him to avenge the Duchess and Antonio's deaths, and then stabs him. The Cardinal continues to call for help. Ferdinand comes in and, not understanding the situation, wounds the Cardinal further, after which he stabs Bosola. Bosola kills Ferdinand.

Pescara, Malateste, Roderigo, and Grisolan enter. Bosola explains why he has killed Ferdinand and the Cardinal, but the Cardinal blames Ferdinand for their sister's death before

he dies. Bosola explains that he killed Antonio accidentally, and then he too dies. Delio enters with the eldest son of Antonio and the Duchess's marriage, the sole survivor of the family, and the men pledge to help give him a good life to honour his mother and father.

Analysis

The Duchess is unquestionably the heroine of *The Duchess of Malfi*, so many critics have questioned Webster's choice to have her tragic, heroic death scene in the fourth act rather than the fifth. This placement leaves room for the play's themes to be tied up, and for the tragic destruction of the Duchess and her family to be avenged through Bosola, who in this act finally gets to fight on the side of the good that he claimed to have had inside him all along. In many ways, this structure suggests that Bosola is the central figure of the play. Validating this claim is the fact that Webster listed Bosola first in the cast list, a rather rare occurrence in the day for characters of low rank.

The opening lines of the act underscore Antonio's weakness. He does not yet know that his wife and two of his children are dead, but the audience has just seen them tragically murdered, so when he asks, "What think you of my hope of reconcilement/To the Aragonian brethren" (5.1.1-2), the dramatic irony paints him as not only only naive but horrifically callous. In his insistence on meeting with the Cardinal to beg peace, his ultimate ineffectiveness as a husband and father and protector of his family is made brutally clear, and the fact that even his death is no more than a tragic accident shows how he has never really been more than a frame to the vivacity, power, and courage of the Duchess. None of this is meant to negate his honour and goodness, but rather to suggest the ineffectiveness of such virtues in a world this corrupt.

This act also reveals the cracks in the seemingly all powerful Cardinal's strength. He represents cold, calculating, removed evil, having managed to exert his will throughout the play while keeping his hands clean, and as such he has seemed indomitable. This illusion has been maintained partially by his brief presence on stage in the previous acts—he usually comes on, has a few lines and directives, and goes off again. In Act Five, however, he is more present, and he fails to maintain control when exposed for longer periods of time.

His first mistake is to believe that he can still control Bosola with the promise of rewards to come but never intended, as he and his brother have done all along. Though Bosola does accidentally kill Antonio, as the Cardinal wished, it was the opposite of his intent, and the Cardinal's trust allows him to access the Cardinal alone and so kill him. The Cardinal also overestimates Julia's love for him, and underestimates her cunning, and thereby

exposes the secret that gives the hidden Bosola imperative to put the final chain of events in motion. These mistakes, and the fact that he signs his own death warrant in his schemes to keep the courtiers from coming to his chamber, show that his Machiavellian scheming is in fact short-sighted and fallible.

The Cardinal and Ferdinand both, on different scales, show the destructive power that evil ultimately has on the very perpetrators of that evil. With Ferdinand, this is very obvious. Though he has shown some small signs of madness all along, and certainly irrationality, in the fifth act, he is completely undone, fighting his own shadow and digging up corpses, believing himself to be a wolf. Though there is foreshadowing of this lycanthropia throughout the play, the real turning point comes when Ferdinand is faced with the face of his sister's corpse. Her goodness, and the price she paid because of his evil, is too much for him, and he goes off to hunt a badger—clearly an indication that his total loss of sanity has begun. One can also understand this from a psychological standpoint - if we think of his intense hatred of his sister's sexuality as symptomatic of repressed incestuous feeling, then his insanity here represents a transference of those perverted feelings once she has died and can no longer serve as a receptacle for his displaced feelings.

For the Cardinal, his self-destruction is more subtle, but still distinct. Besides the chips in his facade already mentioned and the mistakes that allow Bosola to kill him, in the last scene his spirit is diminished. The scene opens with him fearing hell, and what it has in store for him, and for the first time he shows signs of guilt for all of the evil he has done. In stark opposition to the Duchess and her calm, dignified death, he cries for help repeatedly as he is attacked. Bosola tells him, "Now it seems thy greatness was only outward,/For thou fall'st faster of thyself than calamity/Can drive thee" (5.5.42-44), and this is reflected in his powerlessness to draw aid, to help himself, and in his final, melancholic plea to "Be laid by, and never thought of" (5.5.89).

The pattern of death in Act Five is utterly distinct from that in Act Four, further cementing the image of the courageous Duchess. The Duchess gets a long lead up, elabourate rituals, and her body is left isolated on the stage to set her apart, not to mention the courage and dignity with which she faces her executioners, and the hope with which she looks to the afterlife. In Act Five, however, Antonio dies in a case of mistaken identity, the Cardinal calls uselessly for help while both Bosola and Ferdinand attack him, Ferdinand gives Bosola his death blow seemingly at random—all is chaos, cowardice, and hopelessness in the face of death. For she who lived her life virtuously and in pursuit of her own happiness, a dignified

death in possible. For most of us, who it seems Webster believes would live our lives mired in self-interest, deception, and cruelty, death will come in an undignified manner.

Though the play is mostly overwrought with evil, it does end on a hopeful note. One member of the Duchess's family survives, her and Antonio's oldest son. The representatives of evil have all destroyed each other, and "These wretched eminent things/Leave no more fame behind 'em than should one/Fall in a frost, and leave his print in snow" (5.5.112-4) which will melt in the sun. They can do no more harm from beyond the grave, but though the Duchess is also dead, she can do good, for it is in the Duchess's "right" (5.5.112) that Delio and the surviving gentlemen intend to raise the son, this symbol of hope, who the Duchess and Antonio created in and left as a testament to their love. The only dark spot on this otherwise hopeful ending is the worldview that Webster paints so vividly, one where evil and human self-interest is the status quo, and so even what starts pure has the potential to grow corrupt.

The Duchess of Malfi Themes

Hell on Earth

The Duchess of Malfi is a play replete with darkness, both literal and figurative. There are good figures, and these characters are associated with light. On the other hand, the brothers, who exhibit unrelenting evil, are associated with motifs of darkness, fire, the devil, and sin.

The idea that the brothers have unleashed hell on Earth is most apparent in the fourth act, which includes utter horrors like fake corpses, a severed hand, a plethora of madmen, and most centrally, the vicious murders of the Duchess and her children. The Duchess, a symbol of motherhood and light, is unfazed by these horrors because she believes her family already dead, but she does explain that "the earth" seems made "of flaming sulphur" (4.2.26). And when Bosola tells her she must keep living, she makes it clear that hell is truly on Earth—"That's the greatest torture souls feel in hell,/In hell: that they must live, and cannot die" (4.1.70-1),

The Cardinal and Ferdinand are particularly responsible for bringing this fire to her world. Ferdinand is constantly associated with fire, by others and in his own language. He says only the Duchess's "whore's blood" can put out his "wild-fire" (2.5.46-7), he imagines killing her children by having them "burning in a coal-pit" (2.5.69), lighting "them like a match" after dipping them in "sulphur" (2.5.71-2). Additionally, he is associated with salamanders—at the time of the play, thought to live in fire—multiple times.

Both brothers are also even more directly connected to hell through constant associations with the devil. Antonio says “the devil speaks in” (1.1.177) the Cardinal’s lips, and Bosola describes Ferdinand's manipulation as: “Thus the devil/Candies all sins o’er” (1.1.266-7). These are but two of several instances.

This hell on Earth serves to emphasize just how virtuous the Duchess is, and how much better for the world her kind of domestic love and child-rearing is than the greed and selfishness of her brothers. The hell that they create in the end destroys them, too—as Ferdinand says, “Like diamonds, we are cut with our own dust” (5.5.72). Ferdinand goes mad, the Cardinal loses all hope, and both die, leaving no legacy behind them.

Disguise

Disguise—masking reality, hiding one’s true intentions, presenting a false front—is a major theme in *The Duchess of Malfi*. The most obvious symbol of this is Bosola. The distinction between what he says and how he acts is so vast that even the audience, who is given access to his private thoughts through soliloquies and asides, has trouble understanding his motivations.

He is a spy, and is thus constantly disguising his motives and his true feelings. Further, in the fourth act, he literally disguises himself as an old man. However, he also repeatedly shows disgust for the act of disguising. He is reluctant to take on the role of spy, and notes that “the devil/Candies all sin o’er” (1.1.266-7), thus associating the act of disguising with evil, and he scorns how men “delight/To hide” (2.1.53-4) their “rotten and dead body” (2.1.53) “eaten up of lice and worms” (2.1.51) “in rich tissue” (2.1.54). Thus, he is both the character who most thoroughly employs disguise, and the one most aware of its sinful, unattractive nature.

Disguise is so prevalent in the play that even the Duchess, the paragon of light, must employ it. In her first appearance on stage, she tells her brothers, “I’ll never marry” (1.1.293), and then before the scene is even over, she has proposed to and married Antonio. Clearly, she had disguised her true intentions from them. She then manages to have three children with Antonio without ever revealing their marriage, and even when the discovery of the marriage becomes imminent, she quickly devises an excuse to send Antonio out of harm’s way.

Yet this dishonesty is not meant to reflect poorly on the Duchess. Instead, it shows just how profoundly corrupt her brothers have made the world, in that the Duchess must disguise a good and pure love simply to survive. Her use of disguise reveals her energy and resourcefulness in her fight for what is good on this Earth.

The Fertile Woman

Evil in *The Duchess of Malfi* is a powerful and pervasive force that manages to destroy almost all that is good, but it is not all-powerful. At the end of the play, the Duchess's oldest son survives to carry on her and Antonio's legacy, which provides a symbol of hope tied in with the play's greatest force for good: the fertile and reproductive female.

Ferdinand and the Cardinal both express dark views on female sexuality. When they find out that the Duchess has a son, they cannot imagine this being the result of love, or of a legitimate marriage, but they instead imagine the boy as a product of wanton lust. Ferdinand goes so far as to describe the men he imagines having sex with his sister.

The reality of a woman's fertility, though, is the complete opposite. After Antonio and the Duchess wed, she says they can remain chaste if he wants, suggesting that their marriage is not based on an all-consuming lust. They do, clearly, sleep together and produce three children, but this reflects only the loving creation of family. The scene in which Antonio, the Duchess, and Cariola tease each other reveals a comfortable domestic bliss, not a hotbed of fiery passion. And, also in this scene, the goodness of such a love is emphasized when Antonio berates Cariola for wanting to stay single. He argues that in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, those women who scorned love and lovers were turned into barren plants or stone, while those who married became fruitful trees, bestowing gifts to the world.

Though Antonio's first description of the Duchess is arguably unrealistic, she is revealed through the play as figure very much of the earth. She is fat with pregnancy in the second act, "an excellent/Feeder of pedigrees" (3.1.5-6), and manages to birth three children over two acts. Even when she is about to die, rather than transition into a saintly figure, she retains her ties to the earth for one last moment, asking Cariola to give her son some cold medicine, and to let her daughter say her prayers. Her domestic duties remain paramount to her, even as she prepares to leave the earth forever.

Once all the evil has been done, all that remains of this family that had epitomized domestic bliss is its eldest son. In the midst of all the destruction, this product of love and the reproductive woman, will be raised as a testament to the goodness of his mother. Thus, her power as a good mother, in the end, is greater than her brothers' evil.

The Perversion of Justice

In *The Duchess of Malfi*, justice fails completely as a force for good; instead, it is corrupted into a tool for Ferdinand and the Cardinal. The rules that govern their world are perverse and immoral, so the justice they seek to enact inherently becomes perverse and

immoral itself. Delio prepares the audience for this in the first act, when he says of Ferdinand,

Then the law to him
Is like a foul black cobweb to a spider:
He makes it his dwelling, and a prison
To entangle those shall feed him. (1.1.168-71)

The law, which should uphold peace and fairness, is instead a "foul" trap that Ferdinand uses to benefit himself.

Once the Duchess is dead and Ferdinand is overcome with regret, he himself points out how he has misused justice, when he asks, "Did any ceremonial form of law/Doom her to not-being?" (4.2.292-3). Bosola, to assuage his own guilt, has imagined the Duchess's murder as an officially sanctioned act. He describes himself as "the common bellman/That usually is sent to condemned persons" (4.2.164-5), as if she had actually been condemned by a judge or jury. When Ferdinand disabuses this notion by arguing he (Ferdinand) holds no authority with which to condemn the Duchess to death, Bosola says, "The office of justice is perverted quite/When one thief hangs another" (4.2.298-9). Only now, when it corrupted justice is working directly against him, does he realize how perverted their system truly is.

Class

The importance of class and rank is questioned throughout *The Duchess of Malfi*. Those characters who place the most value on it are those who do the most damage to the world of the play, while the Duchess fights for the idea that a man's worth is reflected by his actions and character, not by his title.

The Duchess's marriage to Antonio is clearly a happy one, at least until exposed to the machinations of her brothers. They have three children and a clearly-expressed love for each other. Ferdinand and the Cardinal's disgust about her marriage is thus particularly repulsive, especially since their only specific complaint revolves around his lower class.

Ironically, Bosola is first to defend the Duchess's choice to marry Antonio regardless of his class, although he is arguably lying when he does so. He takes it so far as to praise not just the Duchess, but their progressive age for allowing such a union, and he says that her example will spread hope to all those who aspire to rise above their natural station. His speech is tempered by the dramatic irony, the audience's knowledge that he is being disingenuous, and indeed, his success in fooling the Duchess by lavishing such praise on

Antonio is what inspires her to confess her secret to him, a confession that will cost her her life.

Once the need for deceit is gone, Bosola makes his true feelings known, and he, like the Cardinal and Ferdinand, thinks Antonio's class make him an unworthy match for the Duchess. This gives the Duchess the chance to defend her choice, and in doing so she shows that not only does Antonio's worth greatly exceed many men of higher rank Count Malateste, for one but many noble men are the "most wretch'd" (3.5.141), like her brothers. Nobility is not inherently evil, as the Duchess herself is noble, but it has "neither heat, nor light" (4.2.137), and thus isn't inherently good, either.

The Costs of Evil

Evil is incontrovertibly destructive in *The Duchess of Malfi*, taking a loving family of five and reducing it to one young survivor. It is also, however, deeply destructive to those who perpetrate it, and not just their victims. Not only do the three pillars of evil in the play--the Cardinal, Ferdinand, and Bosola--all die by the end of the fifth act, but they also each pay a special penance that elucidates just how terrible evil can be to those who employ it.

Ferdinand is the most obvious example. Throughout the play, his anger is so intense that he seems almost deranged, but he does not truly lose his mind until the murder of his twin sister. The change comes so suddenly after her death--he leaves the stage to go hunt badger--that it is clearly a result of the evil he has done. In addition, the form his lunacy takes--digging up corpses and believing himself to be a wolf--is also intricately connected to his guilt, as he says that "The wolf shall find her grave, and scrape it up" "to discover/The horrid murder" (4.2.301-3).

For the Cardinal, the costs are more subtle. He pays with his life, of course, but he also gives up what he values most throughout the play--his reputation. Whereas the cause of Ferdinand's anger towards his sister is not entirely clear, the Cardinal's resentment is clearly based around the family's reputation--"Shall our blood/The royal blood of Aragon and Castile,/Be thus attainted?" (2.5.21-3). When he dies, the state of their family is in such shambles that he wants to be blotted out completely--"I pray, let me/Be laid by, and never thought of" (5.5.88-9), and Delio makes it clear that he will get his wish, since the evil brothers have left nothing behind to be remembered.

The price Bosola pays is more complicated, in the same way that his participation in the evil is more complicated. By the end, he wants to redeem himself, at least partially, for all he has done. Instead, he accidentally kills Antonio, destroying his last chance to perpetrate

good. He does succeed in killing Ferdinand and the Cardinal, but arguably only because Ferdinand gets involved and wounds the Cardinal himself. Bosola has a small amount of peace in knowing that he loses his life in ending theirs, but because of the evil he has perpetrated, he finds no true peace, evidenced by his final speech, in which he reflects on the darkness he helped create in the world.

Thus, the characters who employ evil in the play ultimately pay for it with more than simply their lives.

Reputation and Legacy

The characters in *The Duchess of Malfi* are deeply concerned about reputation and legacy. Ferdinand and the Cardinal are obsessed with the Duchess's reputation, and how it affects their own. When they warn her not to be a "lusty widow" (1.1.331) before leaving her alone in Malfi, they are driven by a fear that her behavior will "poison" her "fame" (1.1.299). Later, when they discover that she has had a child, it is partially the tainting of their "royal blood" (2.5.22) that concerns them. Ferdinand tells the Duchess that, having parted from her good reputation, he will never see her, his twin sister, again.

Yet because of their obsessive concern with their family's reputation, the brothers ironically leave no legacy. The Cardinal's very last words are a plea to be "never thought of" (5.5.89), and Delio explains that the brothers' legacy will last no longer than a print in snow when the sun comes out. The Duchess, conversely, doesn't care about her reputation or her family's name, and her goodness creates a lasting and positive legacy that might outlive her and her brothers, represented in the care Delio and the others will take to raise her surviving son in her honour. This idea is so central to the play that it gets the closing lines--"Integrity of life is fame's best friend/Which nobly, beyond death, shall crown the end" (5.5.119-20). The Duchess needed no shallow concern with reputation in order to ensure a noble legacy "beyond death," but rather simply the "integrity of life" that she reflected.

Critical Summary of *The Duchess of Malfi*

Act I: The Duchess of Malfi is divided into five acts, each comprising several scenes. In the three scenes of act 1, the major characters and conflicts are introduced. The setting is the Italian city of Amalfi in the sixteenth century, in the audience chamber or "presence" of the widowed Duchess. Antonio, the Duchess's steward, talks with his friend Delio as they observe the others who pass through the chamber. The first to enter are the Cardinal and Bosola. Although Bosola has recently been released after serving seven years for a murder he

committed at the behest of the Cardinal, the Cardinal is cold to him and will not acknowledge his debt.

Ferdinand, the Duke of Calabria, enters with his entourage. Ferdinand learns that Antonio has proven himself the best at a knightly competition, and he congratulates Antonio for his prowess and for his eloquent speech. When the Cardinal reenters with the Duchess, Antonio gives Delio his impression of the three siblings: the Cardinal is jealous and vengeful, Ferdinand is """""perverse and turbulent,""""""" and the Duchess is sweet and noble. Ferdinand asks the Duchess to accept Bosola as a servant, and she agrees; in fact, the brothers have hired Bosola to spy on the Duchess.

The two brothers warn the Duchess not to remarry, and she promises that she will not. However, as soon as they leave her chamber, she summons Antonio and the two perform a private marriage ceremony, with the Duchess's trusted servant Cariola as witness.

Act II: The second act, which has five scenes, begins several months later, as the Duchess is about to give birth to a child. Her marriage to Antonio is still secret, and she has concealed her pregnancy by wearing loose clothing. Bosola, however, suspects that she is pregnant and tries to trap her by giving her a present of apricots. When she devours them hungrily and then vomits, he has confirmation of the pregnancy but does not reveal what he knows. The incident sends the Duchess into labour, and she is rushed to her chamber.

To avoid suspicion that the Duchess is giving birth, a ruse is invented: it is announced that jewels have been stolen, and everyone must stay in his or her room while a search is conducted. The Duchess delivers a healthy son, and when Cariola tells Antonio the good news, he prepares a set of calculations based on astrology to determine the baby's future. Meanwhile, Bosola sneaks out to the courtyard beneath the Duchess's window and hears her crying out. Antonio finds him there, and they argue about Bosola having left his room. As he leaves Bosola, Antonio accidentally drops the paper on which he has written his astrological notes, and Bosola retrieves it, discovering that a baby has been born to the Duchess—a baby who will have a short life. Bosola knows that Antonio is in on the secret but does not consider that a man of Antonio's social class could be the father.

In Rome, the Cardinal meets in his chamber with Julia, his mistress. Delio arrives and propositions Julia, but she refuses him. In another part of the Cardinal's palace, Ferdinand has received a letter from Bosola, telling him of the baby's birth. The Cardinal and Ferdinand discuss their sister's betrayal, and Ferdinand's rage takes him to the brink of insanity.

Act III: Several years pass before the five scenes in act 3 take place. The Duchess has given birth to two more children, but her marriage is still a secret, and Bosola still has not discovered the identity of the father. Ferdinand, finally stirred to action, arrives at the Duchess's palace to confront her. To play an affectionate joke on her, Antonio and Cariola step out of the room while the Duchess is talking to herself in the mirror, and Ferdinand comes into the room at the same moment. He accuses her of shaming the family with her promiscuity, and although she tells him that she is married, he vows never to look at her again.

Afraid of Ferdinand's anger, the Duchess sends Antonio to safety by pretending that he has stolen money and been banished. Tenderly, the couple say goodbye to each other, planning to reunite in Ancona. In her grief, the Duchess confides in Bosola, telling him everything. Bosola plots to entrap the Duchess and Antonio. He speeds to Rome to tell what he knows and find his reward, and the brothers respond with expected fury. The Cardinal decides to contact the authorities at Ancona and have the Duchess and her family banished.

At the Shrine of Our Lady of Loretto, the Duchess and Antonio review their situation. Bosola brings a letter from Ferdinand calling for Antonio's death, and Antonio and the Duchess say goodbye again. They know that this will be their final parting. Antonio takes their oldest son and flees to Milan. The Duchess is arrested by Bosola, in disguise, and taken by guards to her palace.

Act IV: Act 4: with its two scenes set in the Duchess's chambers, moves quickly. Trying to drive her to despair so that she will be damned as well as killed, Ferdinand arranges for a series of horrors. He visits the Duchess in a darkened room (because he has vowed never to see her again) and places in her hand a dead man's hand that she will assume to be Antonio's. He shows her wax figures that look like the bodies of Antonio and the three children. He

arranges for eight madmen to scream outside her window. Through it all, the Duchess maintains her quiet nobility, saying """""""I am Duchess of Malfi still,""""""" and Bosola begins to feel a grudging respect for her.

Finally, Bosola brings two executioners to the Duchess's chamber, and they strangle her. She faces her death with dignity. Cariola is also strangled, though she resists her death with all her energy. Off stage, the two younger children are strangled. When Ferdinand sees his dead sister, he has a dramatic change of heart, and rather than rewarding Bosola, he blames him for the murders.

Act V: The action of the five scenes of act 5 is also rapid. Four days after the events in the Cardinal has had all of Antonio's property seized. Antonio decides to visit the Cardinal and attempt a reconciliation. Ferdinand's madness has increased, and he has been seen digging up bodies in the cemetery and carrying a man's leg over his shoulder. Bosola arrives in Milan, and he and the Cardinal try to determine what the other knows. The Cardinal pretends that he does not know the Duchess is dead, so that he will not seem to have been involved in the murder, but Bosola persuades Julia to find out the truth. The Cardinal confesses to Julia that he has had his sister killed, but then he immediately kills Julia with a poisoned book.

Outside the Cardinal's home, Antonio and Delio speak with a ghostly echo that comes from the Duchess's grave. Bosola vows to protect Antonio from harm, but he accidentally kills Antonio with his sword, mistaking him for the Cardinal, who has promised to kill Bosola. In the final scene, an anguished Bosola kills the Cardinal's servant and stabs the Cardinal. Ferdinand rushes in and stabs Bosola and the Cardinal. Bosola stabs Ferdinand. As they all lie dead, Delio enters with Antonio's son and calls for a unified effort to support the young man as the new Duke.

***The Duchess of Malfi* Glossary**

court-gall: bitter figure of the court

durance: imprisonment

engendering: propagating, reproducing

enginous: cunning, crafty

equivocation: misleading use of, in this case, an example.

familiars: evil spirits, or, at the time of the play, officers of the Catholic Church who arrested heretics

goes to wrack: is devastated

gossips: godparents

galleries: trickery

lecherous: exhibiting excessive sexual desire or lewdness

lenitive: the meaning of this word is unclear in this context, but most scholars go with soothing

lycanthropia: a form of insanity in which the patient believes himself to be a wolf

mandragora: a narcotic

mortification: the state preceding death

osier: a willow tree

physiognomy: the art of understanding a person's character by their features

poniard: a long knife with a crossed handle, historically worn by the upper classes

radical: a technical term from astrology meaning fit to be judged or decided

scourge: whip, or instrument used to inflict pain or punishment

seise: to take possession of, legally

Spanish jennet: a small Spanish horse

suborned: bribed, coerced with money

supportation: support

Switzer: a Swiss mercenary, a common figure at the time

sycophants: suck-ups, flatterers

unbeneficed: unprivileged, poor

Questions:

Answer the following : 5 marks

1. Do you think the death of the Duchess and the aftermath indicates a significant change in the social world of Malfi ?
2. What is the role played by Delio in the play The Duchess of Malfi?
3. Write a short note on the character of Bosola in The Duchess of Malfi.
4. Discuss the character portrayal of Ferdinand in The Duchess of Malfi.

Answer the following: 15 marks

1. Discuss on the melodramatic elements in *The Duchess of Malfi*.
2. Write a note on the theme of appearance and reality in *The Duchess of Malfi*.
3. "Bosola remains the most consumate character in *The Duchess of Malfi*". Discuss.
4. Evaluate *The Duchess of Malfi* as a play in the revenge tradition.
5. Compare and contrast the Duchess' death with those of her husband and brothers, and explain the importance.

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