

QUESTIONS FOR EARLY BRITISH LITERATURE TO AROUND 1760

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***2023 Note: This document's contents are over a decade old, so some links may no longer function, and page numbers need updating to the latest edition/s.**

This document contains questions on the following authors, in alphabetical order (titles / pages / editions are included along with the questions; I generally used Stephen Greenblatt et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. New York: Norton, 2006. Package 1 (Vols. ABC) ISBN 0-393-92833-0.

- Addison, Joseph and Richard Steele.** Various essays.
- Ancrene Riwe.** "The Parable of the Christ-Knight."
- Bacon, Francis.** From *Essays, Advancement of Learning, Novum Organum, New Atlantis*.
- Battle of Maldon.** Anonymous.
- Bede.** "Caedmon's Hymn" from *Ecclesiastical History*.
- Behn, Aphra.** *Oroonoko, or, the Royal Slave*.
- Beowulf Poet.** *Beowulf*.
- Boswell, James.** *Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*
- Browne, Thomas.** From *Religio Medici*, from *Hydriotaphia, or Urn Burial*.
- Bunyan, John.** *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*.
- Burney, Frances.** From *Essays and Journals*.
- Chaucer, Geoffrey.** *General Prologue, Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale, The Nun's Priest's Tale, The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale* from *The Canterbury Tales*.
- Collins, William.** "Ode on the Poetical Character," "Ode to Evening."
- Congreve, William.** *The Way of the World*.
- Cowper, William.** Various poems.
- Crashaw, Richard.** "On the Wounds of Our Crucified Lord"; "The Flaming Heart."
- Defoe, Daniel.** *A Journal of the Plague Year*.
- Donne, John.** "The Canonization," various poems.
- Dream of the Rood.** Anonymous.
- Dryden, John.** "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy."
- Elizabeth I.** "The Golden Speech," other prose.
- Everyman.** Anonymous.
- Gay, John.** *The Beggar's Opera*.
- Goldsmith, Oliver.** *The Vicar of Wakefield, She Stoops to Conquer*.
- Gray, Thomas.** "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," other poems.
- Hariot, Thomas.** From *Report on Virginia, 1585*.
- Herbert, George.** "The Alter," "Easter Wings," other poems from *The Temple*.
- Herrick, Robert.** "Corinna's Going A-Maying," "The Hock-Cart," Other Poems.
- Hobbes, Thomas.** From *Leviathan*.

Hoby, Sir Thomas. From *The Courtier*.
Hogarth, William. *Marriage à la Mode*.
Johnson, Samuel. *Rasselas*, from *Idler*, *Rambler*, "Preface to Shakespeare," etc.
Jonson, Ben. *Volpone*, *The Masque of Blacknesse*, "To Penshurst," various poems.
Kempe, Margery. From *The Book of Margery Kempe*.
Kyd, Thomas. *The Spanish Tragedy*.
Langland, William. From *Piers Plowman*.
Mackenzie, Henry. *The Man of Feeling*.
Malory, Sir Thomas. From *Morte D'Arthur*.
Marie de France. "Lanval," "The Wolf and the Lamb," etc.
Marlowe, Christopher. *Doctor Faustus*, "Hero and Leander," various poems.
Milton, John. *Comus*, *Paradise Lost*, *Lycidas*, various sonnets.
More, Sir Thomas. From *Utopia*. (To update from 7th edition.)
Pearl Poet. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.
Pepys, Samuel. "The Great Fire" from *Diary*.
Pope, Alexander. *The Rape of the Lock*, "Eloisa to Abelard," "Essay on Criticism."
Raleigh, Sir Walter. Various Poems and Prose Works.
Shakespeare, William. See Questions Gallery document entitled "brit_shakespeare.docx."
Sidney, Philip. "A Defense of Poesy," from *Astrophil and Stella*.
Spenser, Edmund. "Epithalamion," *The Faerie Queene*.
Sterne, Laurence. *A Sentimental Journey*.
Surrey, Earl (W. H. Howard). "Love, That Doth Reign," Various Poems.
Swift, Jonathan. From *Gulliver's Travels*.
Vaughan, Henry. "The World."
Wakefield Master. *The Second Shepherds' Play*.
Webster, John. *The Duchess of Malfi*.
Wyatt, Sir Thomas. Various poems.

ADDISON AND STEELE QUESTIONS

Assigned: "The Spectator's Club" (2470-73); "The Aims of the *Spectator*" (2473-75); "Inkle and Yariko" (2476-78); "The Royal Exchange" (2478-81); "Wit: True, False, Mixed" (2481-85); "*Paradise Lost*: General Critical Remarks" (2485-88); "The Pleasures of the Imagination" (2488-90); "On the Scale of Being" (2490-92).

"The Spectator's Club" (Steele)

1. What contrasts does Richard Steele make between Sir Roger de Coverly and Sir Andrew Freeport? How do these two characters in part typify the class structure of early 18th-century England?

"The Aims of the *Spectator*" (Addison)

2. What goals does Addison set for himself as a periodical essay-writer? To whom does he say he addresses his words, and why?

3. Name one prominent periodical writer or newspaper columnist today and briefly discuss that writer's strengths and weaknesses. Do you think that such journalism is vital to the formation of public opinion today? What other sources of opinion can you name?

"Inkle and Yariko" (Steele)

4. Steele makes Arietta retell from Ligon's 1657 *The True and Exact History of Barbados* a story later woven into many literary works, including George Coleman's 1787 opera version. (The story was also used by C18 English abolitionists in their successful stand against the British slave trade.) What counter-narrative does the tale oppose to the usual stereotyping of women as fickle and dissembling? What instruction does it offer literate women in waging a kind of "guerrilla warfare" against sexism reinforced by the literary canon?

"The Royal Exchange" (Addison)

5. What is the value of a merchant, in Addison's view? Much later, Karl Marx wrote admiringly, if also scathingly, of the way in which capitalism tears down old barriers between nations and cultures, replacing an economy of need with an economy driven by desire -- how does Addison pay tribute to this quality of market economics?

"Wit: True, False, Mixed" (Addison)

6. How does Addison define the three kinds of wit? Why is judgment, as opposed to wit, "contrary to metaphor and allusion"?

7. What characterizes "mixed wit"? Who are the "Goths in poetry," and what reproach does Addison make against them? In what sense is his argument "neoclassical," as you understand that term?

"Paradise Lost: General Remarks" (Addison)

8. Against what criticisms does Addison defend Milton's epic? How does Addison enlist neo-Aristotelian ideas on the dramatic unities in the service of his argument?

"The Pleasures of the Imagination" (Addison)

9. Why is sight "the most perfect and most delightful of all our senses" (2488), according to Addison -- what does it do that the other senses can't?

10. What does "imagination" mean in Addison's essay? And while this author doesn't give imagination the nod over understanding, what benefits does imagination nonetheless bring to those most capable of exercising it?

11. If my current syllabus has included Sidney's "Defense of Poesy," to what extent do you find Addison's remarks about "the pleasures of the imagination" compatible with Sidney's claims about what art can do for us?

"On the Scale of Being" (Addison)

12. Addison elaborates on the Great Chain of Being, a notion of the universe commonly set forth during the Renaissance and for some time afterwards. What further developments of the basic idea of life's interconnectedness does he offer, and what notions about God accord with the Great Chain of Being?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. C. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

From the Seventh Edition

"The Gentleman; the Pretty Fellow" (Steele) {2481-82}

1. According to Richard Steele, what constitutes "the height of good breeding"? (2481-82) How would you sum up Steele's portrait of the gentleman and the society in which he moves?
2. What is "the pretty fellow"? How is he related to the gentleman? What does Richard Steele thereby imply about the tendencies of polite society?

"Dueling" (Steele) {2482-84}

3. Why, according to Richard Steele, does the custom of dueling persist even though the average 18th century man wishes it would go away? What misconceptions about the term "honor" does this essay expose? What does the term "satisfaction" have to do with the problem?
4. To modernize Richard Steele's commentary somewhat, what seems to be the connection between common notions of masculinity and violence? Why is there a demand that men should always be ready to offer or receive violence?

"Sir Roger at Church" and "Sir Roger at the Assizes" (Addison) {2488-92}

5. How does Addison's representation of Sir Roger and his influence differ from Steele's?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. 1C. 7th. ed. New York: Norton, 2000. ISBN 0393975673.

ANCRENE RIWLE QUESTIONS

Assigned: from *Ancrene Riwele*, "The Parable of the Christ-Knight" (157-59).

1. The comparison between Christ and a knight in arms is obvious, and the moral lesson is clear. What, then, makes this parable better than a plain statement that "Christ died for our sins?" How is it still a parable, even though it isn't overly puzzling or complex?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. A. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

SIR FRANCIS BACON QUESTIONS

Assigned: from *Essays* (1552-63); *The Advancement of Learning* (1563-65); *Novum Organum* (1565-69); *The New Atlantis* (1569-73).

From *Essays*

1. Bacon explores a variety of topics. Describe his general method for handling them. What seems to be the aim of the essays with respect to the ideas Bacon entertains -- does he set ideas forward directly to convince us of something, or does some other purpose seem to guide him? Choose one or more essays and discuss.
2. After you have read the Norton selections from *The Advancement of Learning* and *Novum Organum*, discuss how well Bacon's treatment of his topics accords with his views about our tendencies towards misperception (i.e. his theory of the four Idols) and with his promotion of the scientific (i.e. "inductive") method for arriving at truth.

From *The Advancement of Learning*

3. On 1563, what does Bacon credit Martin Luther with accomplishing in the realm of learning? What broader historical current does Bacon refer to here?
4. On page 1564, what criticism does Bacon level against even those who challenged medieval Scholasticism's tendencies to philosophical hair-splitting and abstraction? How do his remarks on this issue connect with his warnings in *Novum Organum* about human tendencies towards misperception of real things and events?
5. On 1564-65, what concession does Bacon offer imagined opponents in his paragraph beginning, "But yet notwithstanding..."? Why do you suppose he would make such a concession?

From *Novum Organum*

6. On 1566, what are the main Idols of the Tribe, and what is their source?
7. On 1566, what are the Idols of the Cave, and from what source do they derive? (If you are familiar with Plato's "Parable of the Cave" from Book 7 of *The Republic*, relate Bacon's term "Idol" to that story about human limitations in discerning truth.)
8. On 1566-67, what are the Idols of the Marketplace," and what is their source? What might Bacon say is the proper relationship between words and things? Which kinds of terms are least faulty, and why?
9. On 1566-67, what are the Idols of the Theater"? And their source? Why is the term "theater" appropriate here? (Hint: consider Aristotle's definition of drama as an *imitative* or representational art.)
10. The romantic-era poet William Blake includes Bacon, along with John Locke and Isaac Newton, in his unholy Trinity of atheists and materialists. But how do Bacon's tone and certain specific statements in our selections furnish matter for a defense against such charges? What, according to Bacon, is scientific research and discovery *for*? In what spirit is it to be carried on?

From *The New Atlantis*

11. In this last section of Bacon's incomplete utopian text, what goal does the member of Solomon's House advance for the various activities he describes? How does this goal relate to the remarks about scientific endeavor in our other Bacon prose selections?
12. What relationship between humans and the natural world is implied by the experimental goings-on at Solomon's House?
13. General question: Bacon is often said to be the founder of modern scientific methodology. But we live in an era in which science is much more developed than it was in Bacon's day; it is much more a part of our lives and expectations than it was for our predecessors. So what do you consider to be the proper role of contemporary science? Have recent advances (the Genome Project, powerful computers, etc.) outstripped our capacity to make scientific research and technology serve us? Or is science still the best way to ameliorate the human condition? Is there any practical alternative?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. B. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

BATTLE OF MALDON QUESTIONS

Assigned: *The Battle of Maldon* (103-09).

The Battle of Maldon

1. At what points does this poem emphasize the triple values of courage, kinship loyalty, and revenge?
2. How, and at what points, does the poet enlist the unheroic behavior of some warriors to highlight the value of those whom he praises, such as Birhtnoth?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. 1A. 7th. ed. New York: Norton, 2000. ISBN 0393975657. (Not in the 8th edition.)

BEDE QUESTIONS

Assigned: "Caedmon's Hymn" from *Ecclesiastical History* (24-27).

1. Christian theology says that fallen humanity must imitate the life of Christ. What pattern of life takes shape as Bede tells the story he has heard about Caedmon -- that is, what sort of person was Caedmon, how did his powers come to him, and what seems to be Bede's attitude towards the story he tells?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. A. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

APHRA BEHN QUESTIONS

Assigned: Aphra Behn. *Oroonoko, or The Royal Slave* (2178-2200).

Narrator Describes Surinam (Guiana) in South America (2183-85).

1. What truth-status does the narrator claim for her story at the outset? What expectations might such a claim generate regarding the manner and content of the tale that is about to unfold?
2. How does the narrator describe the natives of Surinam—what are their qualities, according to her? How do the European settlers treat them, and why?

Oroonoko's African Homeland, Coramantien (2186-2200).

3. On 2186-87, how does the narrator describe the physical and intellectual character of Oroonoko? What distinguishes him from the ordinary inhabitants of Coramantien?
4. On 2188-91, how does Oroonoko meet Imoinda, and what causes the quarrel that arises between Oroonoko and Coramantien's elderly king? What conflicted feelings does the king himself reveal about this quarrel?
5. On 2192-97, what role do Onahal (the king's former mistress) and Aboan (a friend of Oroonoko) play as the quarrel between Oroonoko and the king develops? What "mistake" does Oroonoko make that brings matters to a head, and how does the king attempt to smooth matters over after this incident?
6. On 2198-2200, what heroic qualities does Oroonoko display in his conduct of the war against Jamoan?

Oroonoko's Enslavement, Sea Voyage to Surinam (2200-04).

7. On 2200-01, what prior dealings has Oroonoko had with the English captain who arrives soon after he returns to the court? What does the captain seem to think of his African "friend"? How does this captain manage to enslave him, and in what sense does Oroonoko make this task easy to accomplish?
8. On 2201-03, how does the English captain handle the difficulty that arises when first the Prince and then the other Africans on his ship refuse to eat? How does he induce Oroonoko to assist him in defusing the crisis? What might a reader learn about Oroonoko and his European captor from this episode?
9. On 2203-04 top, how does Oroonoko bear himself when he learns that the captain has betrayed him yet again? How does he view the captain's supposed religious convictions by this point?

Oroonoko's Captivity as "Caesar" in Surinam (2203-16).

8. On 2204-06, what happens to Oroonoko soon after he lands on Surinam's soil? How is he treated by the man who buys him (Trefry) and by his fellow Africans? How does he respond to this treatment?

9. On 2206-09, under what circumstances does Oroonoko meet Imoinda in Surinam? What happens between them, and what complication soon sets in with regard to Oroonoko's current situation as an enslaved man who nonetheless commands uncommon regard from his fellows and his captors?
10. On 2208-09, what relationship does the narrator apparently have with Oroonoko? What role does she play in mediating between the English colonists and Oroonoko?
11. On 2210-15, what does the narrator reveal about her own history, and what personal courage does she display in the company of Oroonoko during his hunting adventures?

Oroonoko's Rebellion in Surinam (2216-26).

11. On 2216-18, what leads Oroonoko to decide that the time has come to free himself from slavery? What plan does he determine upon to accomplish this?
12. On 2218-21, how does Governor Byam deal with the rebellion, and how does he manage to take Oroonoko prisoner? What does he do to Oroonoko afterwards? Where is the narrator during the rebellion, and what does she do when she returns?
13. On 2222-25, what is Oroonoko's plan now that he has been recaptured? Why does he find it necessary to kill Imoinda, and what effect does this dreadful act have upon him afterwards?
14. On 2226, in what manner does the Governor have Oroonoko executed? How does Oroonoko bear up under this treatment, and what concluding thoughts does the narrator offer concerning the Prince's life and death?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. C. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

BEOWULF QUESTIONS

Assigned: *Beowulf* (29-100).

Beowulf

1. What sense of the poem's heroic values can you draw from reading the Prologue (34-36)? Who is the implied audience, and what expectations does the Prologue create about the rest of the poem's significance for this audience? What is the audience expected to learn?
2. On 36-38 ("Heorot is Attacked"), how does the narrator describe Grendel? What laws does Grendel violate in attacking Heorot, and how do the thanes and their leader respond to the monster's attacks?
3. On 38-44 ("The Hero Comes to Heorot"), when Beowulf sails from his home in Geatland to Hrothgar's troubled Danish land, how is he received by Hrothgar? What does Beowulf promise, and what does he require of his hosts?

4. On 44-47 ("The Feast at Heorot"), Unferth is driven by envy to insult Beowulf. Characterize the style or manner in which Beowulf (here and in the previous section) makes his promises and his demands: what seems to be the etiquette of "Viking boasts"? And how does Beowulf put Unferth in his place?
5. On 47-51 ("The Fight with Grendel"), why is Beowulf so certain that he can defeat Grendel when so many others have failed? How do the narrator's Christian comments reinforce this certainty? By what precise means does Beowulf mortally injure Grendel?
6. On 51-61 ("Celebration at Heorot"), Beowulf is honored for saving Heorot from the monster, and the Bard or Scop sings two heroic songs -- what is the subject and moral of the two tales he relates? How do they color the achievement of Beowulf up to this point?
7. Regarding 61-64 ("Another Attack") and 64-69 ("Beowulf Fights Grendel's Mother"), Grendel's mother kills Aeschere and retreats to her underwater lair. What point about the nature of evil does the narrator reinforce by endowing Grendel with a mother and locating her dwelling in a deep "mere"? Finally, by what means does Beowulf manage to kill her -- what does the specific means add to our understanding of what he has accomplished?
8. On 69-72 ("Another Celebration at Heorot"), what warning based on personal experience does Hrothgar impart to Beowulf? How is the current celebration handled differently by the narrator than the first one?
9. On 72-80 ("Beowulf Returns Home"), what are his thoughts on the virtues of Geatland's King Hygelac and his Queen, Hygd? How does he describe his exploits in Denmark? What do we learn about Beowulf towards the end of this section, and (throughout) about the duties of a subject towards his lord?
9. Regarding 80-86 ("The Dragon Wakes"), the years pass, and (when Hygelac is killed and his son Heardred is betrayed by Onela of Sweden) Beowulf rules wisely for half a century. But then comes the Dragon -- what is this dragon's office? What moral pattern and themes in *Beowulf* does his "accidental" re-awakening drive home?
10. On 86-93 ("Beowulf Fights the Dragon"), in what spirit does Beowulf go forth to fight the Dragon? What kind of heroism does he exhibit, both during the fight and after it, when he tells Wiglaf he wants to see the treasure-hoard that has caused so much trouble?
11. On 93-100 ("Beowulf's Funeral"), what lessons does Wiglaf draw, what predictions does he make, in the wake of Beowulf's lonesome sacrifice for the Geats? Characterize the note of pessimism and sadness that runs through this last section (and, of course, through much of the text) -- what are its causes? Finally, how does the narrator sum up the virtue and achievements of Beowulf?
12. General question: how does the author of *Beowulf* handle the passage of time, the specifics of location, or the revelation of character? Choose one instance of one of these matters and discuss. In your response, consider the role played by repetition of events and amplification of details.

13. General question: What stylistic and/or thematic patterns can you find in *Beowulf*? Choose one such pattern and discuss it. "Secrecy versus openness" would be one excellent thematic choice.

14. General question: read *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* Chapter 6 (Google the title -- it's easy to find). Which of Jesus' commands would condemn the pagan hero Beowulf's actions and values? Might any part of Jesus' speech make a Christian audience sympathetic to Beowulf and his culture? Find a few relevant passages in Matthew and *Beowulf* and discuss.

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. A. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

JAMES BOSWELL QUESTIONS

Assigned: *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (2781-2810).

From *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*

1. From 2781-82 ("Plan of the *Life*"), how does Boswell describe and justify his biographical project?
2. From 2782-85 ("Johnson's Early Years, Marriage and London"), Boswell writes about Johnson's years at Oxford and his marriage to the older, widowed Mrs. Porter. How does Boswell use his own insider's perspective to give us a fuller, more accurate understanding of his friend's personality?
3. From 2786-90 ("Johnson's Early Years, Marriage and London"; "The Letter to Chesterfield"), Boswell recounts Johnson's friendship with the rakish poet Richard Savage and his dealings with the insidious Lord Chesterfield. What "Johnsonian" virtues do Boswell's anecdotes and remembrances bring to light? What does Johnson seem to value most in his friends and acquaintances?
4. From 2790-97 ("A Memorable Year..."; "Goldsmith, Sundry Opinions, Johnson Meets His King"), Boswell tells us about his own first meeting with Johnson, passes along some of his friend's wit, and recounts Johnson's meeting with King George III. Why do you suppose Johnson treated Boswell so gruffly at their first meeting? What most aptly characterizes Johnson's "wit" and his tact with respect to the King?
5. Regarding 2797 ("Fear of Death"), read the concluding verse paragraph (lines 343-68) of Johnson's poem "The Vanity of Human Wishes" (pg. 2674) and compare that poetic advice to his personal, private remarks to Boswell concerning death. Is there a contradiction here, or can the two attitudes be reconciled?
6. From 2797-2804 ("Ossian. Talking for Victory"; "Dinner with Wilkes"), we hear from Boswell how Johnson's bluntness and firm social and political views could generate friction at times. How does Boswell use his knowledge of his friend's cast of mind to get him to dine with the notorious radical John Wilkes? Why does the dinner turn out successful?
7. From 2805-06 ("A Bottom of Good Sense. Bet Flint. Clear Your Mind of Cant"), Boswell provides an instance of Johnson's ongoing "war on cant." What exactly is cant, in Johnson's view? Why does he

condemn Boswell's statements about "public affairs"? What is Johnson arguing here -- that people should be blunt to the point of rudeness? Or is there some other point to his remarks?

8. From 2806-10 ("Johnson Prepares for Death"; "Johnson Faces Death"), Boswell describes Johnson's last illness (a paralytic stroke) and his preparation for death. How does Johnson's conduct offer a pattern for others to emulate in terminal illness?
9. Based on what Boswell has told us about Dr. Johnson, do you think you would like him if you knew him personally? Why or why not? What sort of accommodations would a person have to make in order to like a man such as Samuel Johnson?
10. Do you think Boswell is offering us instances and details in the life of his friend to set forth his attitudes and actions as a pattern to be followed, or is Boswell's aim rather to present his friend as an individual of unique qualities that few, if any, could successfully imitate? Explain.

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. C. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE QUESTIONS

Assigned: from *Religio Medici* (1581-90); *Hydriotaphia, or Urn Burial* (1590-94).

From *Religio Medici* (The Religion of a Doctor)

1. How might you compare Bacon's attitude towards the relationship between words and things with that of Browne? This question might be turned into a paper taking into account the two authors' writing style as well as their basic comportment towards what they consider "error."
2. How does Browne deal in this selection with what calls the errors of others? See, for example, his remarks on 1583-84 about Catholicism's emphasis on ceremony and holy objects? Is he consistent in his attitude towards others' beliefs?
3. On 1584-87, what is the proper function of reason in Browne's view? To what extent and in what circumstances does he say we ought to depend upon our capacity to reason instead of resorting to simple faith? What limitations does he place on reason?
4. Browne is sometimes considered a quirky individualist because his essays, while dealing with moral subjects, often seem whimsical and wandering. But on 1584-85 and elsewhere, he makes some interesting suggestions about our prospects for genuine uniqueness of opinion and personality. Discuss.
5. On 1587-88, how does Browne deal with the value of nature to humans? In what sense is nature "art," for example?
6. On 1588-89, how does Browne address the status of humankind in relation to all else in the created order? What does he make of the traditional Renaissance notion that a human being is a microcosm, a "little world"?

7. On 1589-90, what kind of political bent emerges in Browne's musings? What does he imply about class distinctions, for instance -- what really distinguishes one person from another?

From *Hydriotaphia, or Urn-Burial*

8. What seems to be Browne's interest in exploring the burial customs of different civilizations -- what is there to gain from such a study, given his Christian beliefs about the primacy of the spirit over the body?

9. How might this selection be taken as suggestive regarding Browne's view not only of burial practices but of human history as a whole? Explain.

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. B. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

JOHN BUNYAN QUESTIONS

Assigned: *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*.

Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners

1. How does the narrator "Bunyan" describe his early life? He calls himself the worst of sinners -- with what sins does he reproach himself? What is the rhetorical point of calling oneself the worst sinner imaginable when one has not, for instance, committed a murder or some other heinous crime? Explain.

2. Describe the process whereby Bunyan goes from sinner to honest Christian -- why does he keep backsliding even after he begins to make progress? What is it that makes him keep returning to his wicked ways?

3. How does Bunyan handle the problem of despair? What tempts him to fall into a state of despair? In responding, consider Bunyan's repeated references to the story of Esau from *Genesis* Chapter 25 and following -- why does he think his case might be similar?

4. What finally convinces Bunyan that God will forgive his sins? What role does his reading of the Scriptures play here? Briefly discuss one or two additional examples of how Scripture influences Bunyan at key points.

5. To what extent does Bunyan show concern for the other characters in his text? What value do they seem to hold for him?

6. The autobiography ends with Bunyan still imprisoned for what the post-Restoration authorities consider his unacceptable doctrines -- how does he interpret his imprisonment in connection with his spiritual progress?

7. In the separate account of his trial and imprisonment, how does Bunyan defend himself? What attitude does he adopt towards those who have imprisoned him?

8. If you have read Saint Augustine's *Confessions*, what would you say are the main points of comparison between Bunyan's spiritual autobiography and Augustine's work in the same genre? How do their accounts differ?

Edition: Bunyan, John. *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. ISBN: 0192821326.

FRANCES BURNEY QUESTIONS

Assigned: from *Journals and Letters* (2783-2805).

From *Journals and Letters*

1. In the selection "Mr. Barlow's Proposal" (2812-15), how does Burney capture the "genre-like" quality of proposal and rejection? What things generally -- one might almost say universally -- happen when one person professes love for another person who cannot accept it?
2. In the selection "Down with Her, Burney!" (2815-16), how does Burney's account of Samuel Johnson compare to the characterizations we find in Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D*? Is Burney's Dr. Johnson much like Boswell's, or are they different? Explain.
3. In the selection "A Young and Agreeable Infidel" (2816-19), what exactly makes the woman Burney describes an "infidel"? How does Frances manage the conversation to bring out the woman's opinions and qualities, and what judgment does she make of them?
4. In the selection "Encountering the King" (2819-21), what symptoms does George III (who suffered from porphyria) show during his chance meeting with Frances? But more particularly, what is it about Burney's narrative style that makes her account so effective in conveying a sense of her encounter with the King?
5. In the selection "A Mastectomy" (2822-2827), how does Burney accomplish the difficult task of making readers understand what it felt like to undergo a radical mastectomy without anesthesia? (See the offsite excerpt [Surgery Before Anesthesia](http://neurosurgery.mgh.harvard.edu/History/beforeth.htm). (<http://neurosurgery.mgh.harvard.edu/History/beforeth.htm>). It is difficult even to imagine this sort of experience today -- but what is it about Burney's "life writing" that makes it to some degree accessible?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. C. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER QUESTIONS

Assigned: *Canterbury Tales*. General Prologue lines 1-164 (218-22); *Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale* (256-84); *The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale* (284-98); *The Nun's Priest's Tale* (298-312).

Assigned: *Canterbury Tales*. General Prologue lines 1-164 (218-22).

"General Prologue" to *Canterbury Tales*

1. What is the basic purpose of the "General Prologue" -- what does it need to do to set up the stories that follow?
2. Study lines 1-18. What seem to be the motives offered for the pilgrimage that is about to begin? In what way are the season and the nature imagery important factors?
3. Again in relation to lines 1-18, what is the relationship between fertility and religion?
4. Study lines 19-42 and 727-48. With what sort of "personality" does Chaucer provide his narrator? In what does this narrator think his task consists?
5. Read lines 749-860 if time permits. How does the host affect the nature of the journey, if he does? What does he propose to the pilgrims, and what will the winner receive?

Assigned: *The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale* (256-84).

The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale

Prologue

6. How does the Wife of Bath oppose the patriarchal "auctoritee" (authority) of the bible and the Church fathers -- what basic contrast does she make between herself and men who have written about marriage and sexuality?
7. How does the Wife of Bath reinterpret the scriptures to suit her argument? Do you find her arguments credible? Do you think Chaucer's audience would have found them credible? Explain.
8. During the interlude with the Pardoner, in what spirit does the Wife claim she offers her tale?
9. As the Prologue unfolds, what view of marriage does the Wife set forth? How does it affect your view of her?
10. What male assumptions about women does the Wife battle, and by what means?
11. Follow out the changes in relations from the Wife's first marriages through her fifth. How would you describe this progression? How might it be said to undercut her authority as an "expert" on marriage?
12. What devices does the wife employ to gain her fifth husband, Janekin? How does she describe the latter stages of this fifth marriage? How does her recounting undermine her claims to have got the better of the situation?

The Tale

13. How does the romance frame of the Wife's tale change or complicate the gender relations issues she addresses in her prologue?
14. In what sense might the story be interpreted as "wish-fulfillment" on the Wife's part?

Assigned: *The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale* (284-98).

The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale

1. Regarding lines 671-716, the description of the Pardoner: What are the Pardoner's physical attributes? Of what "color" is he? Whose companion is he, and what sort of relationship does it appear to be? From lines 674-76, the Pardoner and the Summoner sing a song. How does this song affect your view of the Pardoner? What does the narrator emphasize from lines 709-16?
2. What demands are made upon the Pardoner in the brief "Introduction"? How does he propose to work himself up to the task of telling the tale in either case? When he says at lines 39-40 that "I moot thinke/ Upon som honeste thing," do you take his statement seriously?
3. Is the Pardoner's prologue a well-formed, smooth speech? What does the Pardoner emphasize about his method and intent when he preaches? What relationship does he establish between himself and his present audience? How should what he says here affect their reception of the tale he will tell? Following on this question, examine lines 171-73: "For though myself be a ful vicious man, / A moral tale yit I you telle can, / Which I am wont to preche for to winne." Is the logic of these lines sound?
4. The Pardoner's tale itself begins only at line 373. What, then, is the function of lines 175-372? What is the Pardoner doing in this long preamble and why does he need to do it?
5. What is the plot of the tale about the three "riotoures"? What moral does the tale exemplify, if any? Is there an analogy to be made between the three riotoures' understanding of "death" and the Pardoner's understanding of his own words?
6. Regarding lines 425-50, the part of the tale in which the "olde man" laments his inability to die, what is the significance of this lament? Does it reveal anything about the Pardoner, and if it does, do you think he realizes what he may have revealed about his own moral condition?
7. What does the Pardoner do after he finishes his tale? To whom is he speaking in this "application" (lines 616-30) of his tale's significance? (An "application" is the part of a sermon in which a preacher says, "and this lesson applies to you in the audience as well.")
8. When the Pardoner ends his tale at lines 627-30, do you take his phrase, "I wol you nat deceive" seriously? Moreover, are you a bit confused as to whom the Pardoner is speaking from lines 627-30? If so, how does that confusion arise?
9. In the Epilogue, what seems to be the Pardoner's attitude toward his present audience? What happens in the interchange between the Pardoner and the Host, and why does the Pardoner fall silent?
10. Has the Pardoner's "tale" had any effect upon his present audience of pilgrims? How can you determine whether it has made an impact or not?
11. How is order restored after the Pardoner and Host argue? Does the Pardoner ever realize anything about his spiritual condition? Does he understand the import of his words and his performance?

Assigned: *The Nun's Priest's Tale* (298-312).

The Nun's Priest's Tale

1. In this tale, Chauntecleer has always been a believer in dreams, while Pertelote scorns them, putting her faith in herbs to ease her lover's anxiety. Does Chaucer's tale as a whole venture an opinion about the status of dreams? Do some web-research and explain the ancient theory of dreams Chaucer must be drawing upon.
2. This story is of the popular "beast fable" genre. Do some web-research and discuss the provenance (i.e. origin) and common purposes of this genre -- what do the authors of beast fables generally intend as the effect of their stories, which endow animals with human qualities and opinions?
3. Discuss at least two specific parts of this tale in which the Nun's Priest, as narrator, seems to be toying with his listeners. For example, at what points does he play with our desire to "cut to the action"? What events in the story, what moral pronouncements, doesn't he seem to take seriously, whether he says them or others say them?
4. There is a great deal of erudition on display in this tale, as we can see from the many ancient authors cited by Chauntecleer, Pertelote, and the narrator himself. To what extent, if at all, does the story privilege direct experience over book-learning? Explain with reference to specific parts of the story.
5. It's obvious that in this beast fable, Chaucer is poking fun at the moral tradition of his time, even drawing the Nun's Priest as narrator into the web of inflated comparisons and overblown moral "sententia." Still, Chaucer's Christian framework guarantees that he wouldn't dream of dismissing morality, either. What, then, might we identify as the "moral" of *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, aside from the pronouncements against flattery?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. A. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

WILLIAM COLLINS QUESTIONS

Assigned: "Ode on the Poetical Character" (2871-73); "Ode to Evening" (2873-74).

"Ode on the Poetical Character"

1. What is the origin of the "poetical character," according to the speaker? What are the main powers of this character or capacity?
2. In what way is this a poem that comments on the English literary tradition?

"Ode to Evening"

3. What does the speaker identify as the benefits of evening-time, both for composing poetry and for aspects of life that have nothing to do with art?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. C. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

WILLIAM CONGREVE QUESTIONS

Assigned: *The Way of the World* (2228-84).

The Way of the World

Act 1

1. In the Prologue, what goal does the playwright (by proxy) announce for his play? Does he connect the poet's craft in any way with the action that follows?
2. Based on your understanding of the first act, what is the fundamental source of the drama in this comic play -- i.e. what kinds of tensions should we expect to find, and what kind of resolution to them might we expect?
3. Waitwell and Foible have married at the behest of Mirabell -- what is the purpose of this marriage in relation to the main plot involving Mirabell and Millamant?
4. "Wit" is a big concern in this play -- which characters best demonstrate it in this first act? What does the aptly named "Witwoud" have against his half-brother Sir Wilfull Witwoud?

Act 2

5. What reasons does Mrs. Marwood give for disliking men, and why does Mrs. Fainall have little regard for Mr. Fainall?
6. What is the situation between Mr. Fainall and Mrs. Marwood? What is the plan to resolve their dilemma?
7. In scenes 5-7, describe the interchange between Mirabell and Millamant -- what makes them a good match?

Act 3

8. What first impression do we get of Lady Wishfort, who has been the subject of so much talk in the first few acts? What makes her susceptible to being duped? And why is she so set on accepting "Sir Rowland's" hand in marriage?

Act 4

9. What conditions for marrying does Millamant lay down in scene 5? What would you say is the source of Millamant's hesitation when it comes to marriage, and what insight might we draw from her advance demands concerning the relative freedom or "unfreedom" of women in Congreve's post-Restoration era?

10. At the end of the fourth act, what near-disaster comes about regarding Mirabell's plot against Lady Wishfort, and how do "Sir Rowland" (Waitwell) and Foible contrive to escape the disaster?

Act 5

11. This play has entailed duplicity and intrigue on the part of Mirabell and others -- most particularly Fainall and Mrs. Marwood. How do the final scenes sort out which acts of intrigue and dishonesty are acceptable, and which to be condemned? What endeavors and motives might be said actually to justify some degree of insincerity?

12. On the whole, what relationship does the play suggest between financial/dynastic concerns and "true love"? What balance does the play arrive at, or suggest, between these two different agenda?

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WILLIAM COWPER QUESTIONS

Assigned: Selections from *The Task* (2891-95); and "The Castaway" (2895-97).

Selections from *The Task*

1. Regarding the selection from Book 1, "A Landscape" (2891-92) consider the qualities in such a passage that might inspire a poet such as Wordsworth (who, like some other romantic poets, admired Cowper's work). How well does Cowper convey his perceptions and feelings in nature's presence? And what about the next selection, "Crazy Kate" (2892-93)? Does the characterization of this woman remind you of anything in Wordsworth's poetry, if you have read much by that poet?

2. Regarding the selection from Book 2, "The Stricken Deer" (2893), explain the religious significance of the verses. What common sentiment does the selection offer regarding what Dr. Johnson called "the vanity of human wishes"?

3. In the selection from Book 4, "The Winter Evening: A Brown Study" (2893-95), what is the connection between Cowper's description of the landscape's natural processes and the workings of the human mind? Why is evening a favorite time for the speaker?

"The Castaway"

4. In "The Castaway" (2895-97), aside from the narrative about an unfortunate sailor, what is the poem's subject? How do you understand the final stanza (lines 61-66)?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. C. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

RICHARD CRASHAW QUESTIONS

Assigned: "On the Wounds of Our Crucified Lord" (1644-45); "The Flaming Heart" (1651-53).

“On the Wounds of Our Crucified Lord”

1. The imagery of this poem is rather grotesque, with Jesus’ wounds envisioned as “mouths” and “eyes.” What seems to be the goal, in religious terms, of such a poem?
2. Do you find it effective? Why or why not?

“The Flaming Heart”

3. What fault does the speaker find with the painting of Saint Teresa -- how does he suggest it misrepresents her, and how would he change the painting?
4. At what point does the speaker transition to invoking Teresa as a pattern for his own life? What qualities does he want to draw from her?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. B. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

DANIEL DEFOE QUESTIONS

Assigned: *A Journal of the Plague Year*.

A Journal of the Plague Year

1. The novel is perhaps the most realistic art form -- the one most in need of describing a world that contemporary readers find authentic. By what means does Defoe establish his account of the plague as genuine and accurate? Is there more to this accomplishment than facts and statistics? Explain.
2. What sort of narrator is H. F.? What seem to be his main characteristics, and how do those characteristics enhance the authenticity of his account? (It might be useful to examine the narrator’s account of his decision to remain in London rather than fleeing to the countryside, as many others did.)
3. How does the narrator handle the flow of information (rumor, legal pronouncements, medical data and advice, etc.) in London during the time of plague? What would you say he means us to understand about the City’s efforts to keep track of the plague’s movement and ultimately control it?
4. What moral lessons does the narrator draw from the specific events and/or behavior patterns he details throughout his account? In responding, discuss one or two significant instances of how infected people react to their condition, how the healthy deal with their dread of the disease and its victims, how Londoners respond to the authorities’ preventive and disciplinary regimens, etc. (This question could be developed into a paper.)
5. Do the narrator’s conduct and commentary always support what you see as the moral purpose that informs his text? Explain. Moreover, how do you characterize that moral purpose -- what statements does the narrative make about the relationship between human beings and God?

6. How does Defoe's conclusion to his narrative address (or not address) the issue of Providence and God's offer of redemption for sinful humanity? Do you think that Defoe wants to offer a comforting ending, or a disquieting one? Which has he offered, in your view?

Edition: Defoe, Daniel. *A Journal of the Plague Year*. New York: Norton, 1992. ISBN: 0393961885.

JOHN DONNE QUESTIONS

Assigned: "The Flea" (1263); "The Good Morrow" (1263-64); "Song -- Go and Catch a Falling Star" (1264-65); "The Sun Rising" (1266); "The Canonization" (1267-68); "A Nocturnal upon Saint Lucy's Day" (1272-73); "The Bait" (1274); "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" (1275-76); "The Ecstasy" (1276-78); "A Lecture upon the Shadow" (1281); "Holy Sonnets" (1295-99); "Good Friday, 1613: Riding Westward" (1299-1300); "from *Devotions*" (1303-07); and selection from "Death's Duel" (1307-08).

"The Flea"

1. How does the opportunistic speaker keep pace with the events he is describing?
2. How seriously are we to take the sacred overtones of the poem -- the references to the Trinity, etc.? How important is "honor" to the speaker?

"The Good Morrow"

3. What use does the speaker make of the public realms he mentions -- court, exploration, philosophy?
4. How is time's passage handled in this poem? What kind of temporality seems to govern Donne's love poetry?
5. How does Donne's reference to the court here (and in other poems) compare to Wyatt's or Surrey's?

"Song, Go and Catch a Falling Star"

6. What principle does "woman" stand for in this poem? The speaker's view may or may not closely resemble Donne's own, but how does it square with the compelling view of love relations we find in some of his sonnets?

"The Sun Rising"

7. What relationship is there between the public and the private spheres in this poem?
8. What is the speaker's attitude towards the sun? Also, if you are familiar with Petrarchan and Troubadour poetry, how is he revising traditional complaints here?

"The Canonization"

9. How does the poem illustrate the idea that metaphysical poetry is characterized as much by logical precision as by a union of thought and feeling? (See T. S. Eliot's reference in "The Metaphysical Poets" to the "dissociation of sensibility" that he says set in after Donne's time.)
10. Explore one or more of the figures the speaker employs to describe love's mystery. What is striking about the way such figures are pursued?
11. What variation on the "immortalization through verse" theme does this poem set forth? How will the poem's "pretty rooms" (stanzas) become evidence in favor of the lovers' canonization?
12. As for the term "canonization," what does it mean? By what process is someone canonized? What is the balance or relationship in this poem between spirituality and erotic love?

"A Nocturnal upon St. Lucy's Day"

13. How might this poem be said to reject or leave behind the love relations explored in poems such as "The Canonization"?
14. What does the speaker's self-definition by means of negatives prepare him to do or to accept?
15. What are lovers expected to learn from the speaker's unhappy experience?

"The Bait"

16. Compare this poem to Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" (also in Vol. 1B). How do the speakers' purposes appear to differ?

"A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning"

17. What is the speaker's strategy to keep away mourning? How does the conceit of "stiff twin compasses" figure in this strategy?

"The Ecstasy"

18. How does the speaker articulate the relationship between body and soul?
19. How do the poem's first eight stanzas illustrate or set up the philosophical claims made afterwards?

"A Lecture upon the Shadow"

20. Explain the poem's conceit. What warning does the lecture make?

"Holy Sonnets"

21. The Holy Sonnets address God rather than an earthly female lover. But what links Donne's sacred poetry to his love poetry?

22. What connection to God do these sonnets try to establish? What seems to be necessary for salvation?

23. Compare Holy Sonnets 17 and/or 18 to Milton's "Methought I Saw My Late Espoused Saint." Which poem emphasizes the speaker's plight more insistently? What is the status of the beloved in each?

"Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward"

24. How does this poem connect its ordinary time frame and event with eschatological (religious, referring to "end things" such as death and resurrection) time and significance?

25. For example, what will happen when the speaker finally "turn{s his} face" towards God? What must happen before he can do that?

"Devotions: Meditation 4"

26. What relation between human beings and the natural world does this meditation assert?

27. Who is the "physician," and what can this physician do?

"Devotions: Meditation 17"

28. This selection emphasizes the union of all human beings. But focus more particularly on the relationship that Donne tries to establish with his audience: how does he establish that relationship, and in what does it consist?

29. Is the emphasis in this devotion more on the union of one person with all others, or on the union of one person with God? Or are both equally stressed? Explain.

"Devotions: Expostulation 19"

30. Why, according to Donne, does God find of metaphor an appropriate way of referring to and revealing himself?

31. How does this prose piece justify Donne's own poetry, if it does that?

From "Sermon 76" (This appears to have been removed from 7th. ed.)

32. What psychological effect does Donne seek to have upon his hearers? If you find this sermon effective, what makes it so?

33. How does Donne establish his authority or credibility to convey the message he does?

34. What is worse, according to Donne, than even the worst torments of damnation? How does he reinforce this point?

35. If you have read Jonathan Edwards' fire and brimstone sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," you might compare and contrast Donne's selection with that piece.

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. B. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

DREAM OF THE ROOD QUESTIONS

Assigned: "Dream of the Rood" (27-29).

"Dream of the Rood"

1. Personification -- the bestowal of human capacities upon animals or objects -- seems to have been a fairly common poetic device in medieval times. What special perspective on Christ's sacrifice does that device offer in this short meditative poem?
2. What lesson about life and faith does the dreamer-poet draw from his vision?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. A. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

JOHN DRYDEN QUESTIONS

Assigned: from "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy" (2125-29).

From "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy"

1. On 2125-28, what "two sorts of bad poetry" does Dryden censure? And what does he apparently mean by his term "universal" in connection with poetry in translation? What is it that comes through to us from an excellent work even in translation?
2. On 2128-29, how does Dryden compare Shakespeare and Ben Jonson? What are their relative merits and limitations?

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ELIZABETH I QUESTIONS

Assigned: Queen Elizabeth I. From "A Speech to a Joint Delegation of Lords and Commons, Nov. 5, 1566" (692-94); "A Letter to Sir Amyas Paulet, August 1586" (697); "A Letter to King James VI of Scotland, February 14, 1587" (697-98); "Verse Exchange between Elizabeth and Sir Walter Raleigh" (698-99); "Speech to the Troops at Tilbury" (699-700); "Golden Speech" (1700-03).

1. Discuss the sense of Elizabeth's diplomatic and rhetorical skills that emerges from your reading of any of the prose selections. How does Elizabeth represent herself (i.e. her motives and character) and her regard for her subjects?

2. To what extent, in any of the prose or poetry selections, does a sense of Elizabeth as an individual come through -- that is, what sense do you get of a flesh-and-blood human being aside from the pageantry and public rhetoric surrounding such a grand figure as "Her Majesty Elizabeth I"? Discuss with reference to specific passages.

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. B. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

EVERYMAN QUESTIONS

Assigned: *Everyman* (463-84).

Everyman

1. What can be said about the play's setting? What are its characteristics, and what is its moral significance? To what extent does the playwright describe the setting as if it were an actual landscape?
2. Characterize the "journey" Everyman takes -- what sort of trip is it? Also, does the word "journey" (line 103) help the author make some further point about the trip to be undertaken? (Look up *jour* and *journée* in French.)
3. What attributes of Everyman are embodied in the allegorical characters? Which is most important, and why? A fun elaboration: test your Hollywood acumen: whom would you cast in the role of each character? Who should play "Good Deeds," "Fellowship," and so on? Why?
4. What view of human nature does this play present? How do you derive this view? Point to and discuss some specific passages.
5. What sort of attitude towards man does God take in this play? What "emotions" does he seem to exhibit? What judgments does he make?
6. This play is, of course, a moral allegory, but it has no trouble holding a modern reader's attention. Many people would probably agree that it still packs a considerable emotional punch. Try to explain how the play generates such a response.

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. A. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

JOHN GAY QUESTIONS

Assigned: *The Beggar's Opera* (2611-56).

The Beggar's Opera

Act 1

1. In the Prologue, what is the point of making the "Beggar" (Gay's fictional author) converse with the Player (i.e. an actor)? How does the Beggar size up what he will have accomplished with his opera by the evening's end? What does he see as his responsibilities towards the audience?
2. In Scenes 1-4, what exactly does Peachum do for a living -- what sorts of concerns press upon him and his wife? How would you describe his station in life?
3. In Scenes 4-5, what do Mr. and Mrs. Peachum say about women and marriage at this point -- before they find out about Polly's secret marriage to the highway robber Macheath?
4. In Scenes 7-10, how do Mr. and Mrs. Peachum react to (and then manage) the news of their daughter Polly's marriage with Macheath? What outlook on life asserts itself in the remarks the parents make in the course of these scenes?
5. In Scenes 11-13, what feelings does Polly reveal towards Macheath? What challenge does her outlook pose to that of her parents? How do the brief songs or "airs" that pepper her conversation with Macheath relate to prose parts of that conversation?

Act 2

6. In Scenes 1-2, what sort of company does Macheath keep? What plans does he make with them regarding the trap that he now knows Polly's parents are going to set for him?
7. In Scenes 3-8, what does Macheath reveal about his treatment of Polly and his attitude towards women more generally? How does the conversation and behavior of Macheath's prostitute friends in Scene 4 make fun of the upper classes? That is, explain with the help of this scene the satirical method that John Gay employs effectively throughout the opera.
8. In Scene 9, how does Macheath try to placate his other lover, Lucy Lockit (the jailor's daughter), who is pregnant by him? And in Scene 10, how do Peachum and Lockit manage the quarrel that arises between them?
9. In Scenes 11-15, how does the rivalry between Polly and Lucy develop? Why does Lucy agree to help Macheath escape from jail? What differences have you found so far between Polly and Lucy in the way they view their respective relationships with Macheath?

Act 3

10. In Scene 1, how does Lockit react to the fact that his own daughter Lucy has helped Macheath escape? And in Scenes 2-3, what is Lockit's plan for undermining his "friend" Peachum's designs on the now at-large prisoner? What is Filch up to in Scene 3?
11. In Scenes 5-6, who is Mrs. Trapes, and how does she fit into Peachum and Lockit's plan to recapture Macheath? How does Mrs. Trapes regard her co-conspirators, and (as throughout the opera) what elements in these scenes amount to a satirical comment on the upper classes?

12. In Scenes 7-10, what is Lucy trying to do to Polly? Why doesn't she succeed? How do the two women explain their situation and feelings about men to each other?

13. In Scenes 11-15 (the play's climax), how does Macheath hold up against the fate that now confronts him once he has been recaptured? How does he sum up his career and the events that have brought him to this point? What are his thoughts about women and wives in particular?

14. In Scenes 16-17, the Beggar strides onto the stage and explains to the Player why he has decided to change the course of the play so abruptly from tragedy to comedy. What is his reasoning on this point? With what observations does Macheath himself cap off the opera, and in what sense might the audience relate to his final point on a broader level as social commentary?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. C. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH QUESTIONS

Assigned: *She Stoops to Conquer*.

She Stoops to Conquer

Act One

1. Where is the play set?
2. How would you say Mr. and Mrs. Hardcastle relate to each other?
3. Consider the same question with respect to Mr. Hardcastle and his daughter, Miss Hardcastle ("Kate"). Also, why do you think she's worried about the report of her expected suitor Marlow's bashfulness?
4. Why does Miss Neville keep stringing Mrs. Hardcastle along about her intentions towards Tony?
5. Why do you think Tony misleads Marlow and Hastings? What sort of a chap is Tony?

Act Two

1. Observe Mr. Hardcastle's treatment of his servants at the beginning of the act. What do you make of this?
2. Notice how the two gentlemen behave towards Mr. Hardcastle while they believe he is an innkeeper. Work out what relations are being explored in this funny scene that turns on a misrecognition.
3. Why does Hastings want to keep Marlow in the dark even after the former finds out that he isn't staying at an inn?

4. Examine the dialogue between Marlow and Miss Hardcastle. What seems to be the status of females in this play?
5. How does the play “imagine” the outside world?

Act Three

1. At the beginning of this act, Mr. Hardcastle and Kate air their antithetical opinions about Marlow’s character. This is a good point at which to ask, whom is this play “about?”
2. Do you find any thematic significance in Tony’s having had the key to his inheritance all along? (He has been pilfering his inheritance bit by bit.)
3. When Miss Neville asks for her jewels, Mrs. Hardcastle balks, and Tony advises the latter to pretend that they have disappeared -- which they have. Tony then has a great time making a fool of his mother Mrs. Hardcastle. What do you make of his taking such delight in that phrase, “I can bear witness to that?”
4. What are Kate’s multiple motives for continuing to deceive Marlow about her identity? Of what use to her is the aggressive exchange with Marlow?

Act Four

1. What do you understand from the description of Kate (as a barmaid) that Marlow gives when he speaks to Hastings?
2. Well, Mr. Hardcastle, disgusted with Marlow and his drunken democratic servants, blows up at last and reveals that he is no innkeeper. Nonetheless, Miss Hardcastle still keeps Marlow guessing about her identity. How does Marlow react to Kate’s new role -- that of a “poor relation” to the Hardcastles -- and what does Kate learn from this encounter?
3. If this comedy is a protest against sentimental dribble, how do you read the passionate sentiments that Marlow professes in the rest of the act? (He is moved by Miss Hardcastle’s acting and by Miss Neville’s plight.) Also -- is Kate’s own emotion sincere during her exchange (as a barmaid) with Marlow?
4. In what way, or ways, is Tony central to the latter half of Act Four?

Act Five

1. I am going to leave it to you to make up two questions about this act and come up with responses of your own. A few of the main things upon which to concentrate, of course, are the wonderful trip that Mrs. Hardcastle is duped into taking and the resolution of all these mix-ups. It is also important to focus on Marlow -- how far does he have to develop in this act in order to be a good match for Kate?

Edition: Goldsmith, Oliver. *She Stoops to Conquer*. New York: Dover, 1991. ISBN-10: 0486268675.

THOMAS GRAY QUESTIONS

Assigned: Gray's "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College" (2863-65); "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (2867-70).

"Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"

1. The poem's title implies that the poem was actually written in a country churchyard, not merely that it is an imaginative reconstruction of such a scene. Why is this claim significant to any interpretation of the poem's meaning?
2. How does the pastoral environment affect the narrator's emotional state?
3. The purpose of this poem is to memorialize and reflect upon the memorialization of otherwise unremarkable people. What ties still bind the living and the dead in the churchyard? What does the speaker most regret about their passing, and what lessons does he draw from that passing?
4. An elegy is by definition about someone else, but how does the speaker fold himself into this poem, making himself as much an object of reflection as the scene and those buried in the cemetery?

"Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College"

5. Do you think that the solemn speaker's mood overshadows the youthful sporting he surveys? Or does something of it come through in spite of that? Explain.
6. If time permits, compare this poem to Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality" ode -- it's in *The Norton Anthology* Volume 2A, Romanticism, and is also available from many internet sites via Google search -- does Gray offer us a similar understanding of childhood, or a very different one? Explain.

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. C. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

THOMAS HARIOT QUESTIONS

Assigned: from *Report on Virginia, 1585* (938-43)

From *Report on Virginia, 1585*

1. What main reason does Hariot supply for the writing of his report -- what relationship does he evidently believe should obtain between the natives and the European colonists who go to live in the New World?
2. What picture of the natives does Hariot offer? What are their most important characteristics -- the best ones and the worst? What seems to motivate the author's choices in this regard -- in other words, how might the portrait he offers appeal to potential investors and colonists?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. B. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

GEORGE HERBERT QUESTIONS

Assigned: "The Altar" (1607); "Redemption" (1607); "Easter" (1608); "Easter Wings" (1609); "Affliction 1" (1609-11); "Prayer 1" (1611) "Jordan 1" (1611-12); "Denial" (1613); "Jordan 2" (1615-16); "Time" (1616-17); "The Bunch of Grapes" (1617); "The Pilgrimage" (1618); "The Pulley" (1620); "The Flower" (1621-22); "Discipline" (1623); "Death" (1624).

"The Altar"

1. The speaker describes his heart as a stone altar; what else does the stone-motif refer to? What collaboration between the human and the divine is necessary to make a Christian poem?
2. How might Herbert be alluding in this "shaped" poem to the risk that his poetic craftsmanship will displace the doctrines and texts of the Anglican Church as mediator between God and man?

"Redemption"

3. Who is the "rich Lord?" Explain the basic conceit of the poem.
4. Examine Herbert's use of a "courtly" context and of "narrative" -- are these uses somewhat unusual for a sonnet? (Think about our brief definitions of lyric and the sonnet.) Why?
5. Is Herbert's handling of the courtly context and narrative ironic? To explore the question, examine the final couplet -- what effect does it have upon the first three quatrains and upon the basic conceit those quatrains develop?

"Easter" ("The Song" is part of this poem)

6. What relationship does the poem suggest should hold between heart and word? How do you derive that relationship from the poem?
7. How does the "song" connect with the first three stanzas? How, that is, do they form a unit?

"Easter Wings"

8. How does this poem reinforce the traditional theme that the individual's life should be an "imitation of Christ's life" (*Imitatio Christi*, after the text of that name by Thomas à Kempis)? How does the shape of the poem reinforce that theme?
9. What is the "flight" to which the speaker refers? How is this wing-shaped poem a prayer of sorts for God's blessing on the vocation of poetry -- The Temple as a book of religious verse?

10. How certain of the task's appropriateness does the speaker seem to be? Explain with reference to the poem's lines.

"Affliction (1)"

11. Briefly compare this poem that addresses God with one of Donne's *Holy Sonnets*. What differences in tone and procedure do you find?

12. The speaker suggests that he is affirming his life's course and declaring love for God? How might one qualify these claims based on the poem as a whole?

"Prayer 1"

13. Why do you think that Herbert avoids using the verb "to be" throughout the sonnet?

14. Try to make some connections and contrasts between the various "descriptions" in the sonnet. Do you think these connections and contrasts make some statement when you put them together? (The phrase, "Church-bells beyond the stars heard" is particularly helpful here.)

15. Consider the phrase, "something understood." What is understood? How would you connect this little "summary phrase" that ends the sonnet with the subject ("prayer") and/or with the catalog of noun phrases throughout the sonnet?

"Jordan 1"

16. Why is the title important to one's understanding of the poem's subject? Consider that in the Bible, the river Jordan is associated with Jesus' baptism. It is also the river that the Israelites crossed as they approached the Promised Land.

17. In what way is this sonnet similar in theme to Sidney's "Sonnet 1?" What argument about language, i.e. poetry, does Herbert raise and then, in the final stanza, try to answer?

18. Is Herbert's "answer" convincing? (Consider the language and style in some of his other poems.) Why or why not?

"Denial"

19. What does the title "Denial" refer to? What is being denied, by whom and to whom? Is it still denied when the poem is finished? Explain.

20. How does the poem's form underscore or illuminate the speaker's difficulty?

"Jordan (2)"

21. How does this poem relate to "Jordan (1)"? Does it assert the same thing, or something different? How does the poem compare stylistically to its predecessor?

"Time"

22. What does the character Time understand about the speaker by the poem's conclusion, and how did Time come to know what it does?

23. How might this poem be taken as "metapoetic" -- a commentary on the writing of poetry?

"The Bunch of Grapes"

24. Here the speaker employs the *New Testament's* presentation of Jesus' redemptive sacrifice as a comfort over against the discontentment he is experiencing. Do you find the final stanza a convincing "rounding-off" to the poem? Why or why not?

"The Pilgrimage"

25. What saves the speaker from despair on his journey? How certain is he of success in reaching the desired destination? Explain with reference to the poem's lines.

"The Pulley"

26. What image of God emerges from this poem? Respond with reference to the poem's lines.

27. What happens in this poem to the notion of original sin as a cause for human misery? (Not that Herbert denies this doctrine; the question is instead one of poetic emphasis.)

"The Flower"

28. At what points does the garden or natural imagery refer merely to nature, if it does, and when does it refer to spiritual matters? Use this question to explore the poem's structure as a vehicle for the speaker's aspirations.

"Discipline"

29. Compare this poem briefly to Donne's striking way of addressing God in one of the *Holy Sonnets* and/or in "Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward." How does the approach taken by Herbert's speaker differ?

"Death"

30. Compare this poem to Donne's "Holy Sonnet 10." How does the approach taken by Herbert's speaker differ?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. B. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

ROBERT HERRICK QUESTIONS

Assigned: "Corinna's Going A-Maying" (1658-59); "The Hock-Cart, or Harvest Home" (1660-61); "Upon the Nipples of Julia's Breast" (1661-62).

"Corinna's Going A-Maying"

1. What is the speaker's design upon Corinna? What stages of rhetoric does he follow to accomplish his wish?
2. How might a reader take the emphasis of the poem differently than the imaginary recipient Corinna? In other words, if we read this poem contemplatively, what "message" does it suggest to us?

"The Hock-Cart, or Harvest Home"

3. To whom besides the Earl of Westmoreland is the poem addressed? What seems to be the speaker's attitude toward those other addressees?
4. What social vision can you draw from this poem -- that is, what is the ideal state of society according to Herrick's speaker?

"Upon the Nipples of Julia's Breast"

5. Compare this poem to the treatment of the beloved's material qualities you are familiar with from conventional Petrarchan lyric -- how does Herrick's poem differ in this regard?

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THOMAS HOBBS QUESTIONS

Assigned: from *Leviathan* (1594-1605).

From *Leviathan*

1. On 1596 ("The Artificial Man"), what sort of being is "Leviathan," Hobbes' figure for the State? In what sense is Leviathan or the State a product of "artifice"? What does Hobbes apparently mean by his term "artificial"?
2. On 1596-97 (Part 1, Ch. 1. "Of Sense"), how, according to Hobbes, does knowledge arise from sensory experience? And how does "sense" itself operate? How does he differentiate his theory of sense reception from that of the Aristotelian Scholastic philosophers of the Middle Ages?

3. On 1598-99 (Part 1, Ch. 13. "Of the Natural Condition of Mankind..."), why, according to Hobbes, do people seek to augment their power in the state of nature? What "three principal causes of quarrel" does Hobbes identify, and what results flow from them?
4. On 1599-1600 (Part 1, Ch. 13. "Of the Natural Condition of Mankind..."), how does Hobbes define and elaborate upon the term "war"? In "the war of all against all," what *can't* people do that they can when the social contract is in effect?
5. On 1600 (Part 1, Ch. 13. "Of the Natural Condition of Mankind..."), Hobbes discusses the terms "justice" and "injustice." What is their source? Why can't there be justice in a state of nature?
6. On 1600-01 (Part 1, Ch. 14. "Of the First and Second Natural Laws"), how does Hobbes explain the relationship *ius naturale* and *lex naturalis*? What's the distinction between them? In what way does reason lead us to transfer our unrestricted individual liberties to an absolute ruler? Why is it reasonable to seek peace?
7. On 1601-02 (Part 1, Ch. 15. "Of Other Laws of Nature"), how does Hobbes deal with the fact that under a monarchy, violence does not altogether cease? What benefits does absolute sovereignty nonetheless bring? How does Hobbes finally define "justice"? What's the paradox in Hobbes' position about rebellions such as the one made by Oliver Cromwell's Puritans against King Charles I and the Anglican Church?
8. On 1602-05 (Part 2, Ch. 17. "Of ... Commonwealth"), Hobbes summarizes his position and further discusses how reason differentiates us from other creatures -- what social and political implications does Hobbes reinforce based on this differentiation? In addition, consider how Hobbes has been characterizing reason as the key to human nature -- would it make sense to say that our possession and use of reason renders us "unnatural"? If so, how?
9. In what ways would Hobbes fundamentally disagree with those who were later to make the American Revolution and draft its primary documents? What vision of human society did Americans such as Jefferson and Franklin set forth, and what principles of government did they enunciate?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. B. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

SIR THOMAS HOBY QUESTIONS

Assigned: from Hoby's translation of Baldassare Castiglione's *The Courtier* (645-61).

From *The Courtier*

1. On 647, Hoby translates Castiglione's term *sprezzatura* as "Recklessness." What is this quality? Why do people expect and admire it? Why might it be important in courtly politics, and not just a matter of fashion? Think of a job or endeavor in modern life that demands *sprezzatura*, and explain how this quality is required.

2. On 648-49, Peter Bembo defines love as “a certain coveting to enjoy beauty” (648) and expounds a common version of Renaissance psychology. Discuss that version -- what are the three “ways to know”? What role does reason play in this scheme?
3. On 649, in response to M. Morello, who claims he has met plenty of immoral but beautiful women, Bembo insists that “beauty is always good.” How does he go on, from 650-51, to defend this awkward position? (Is it really fair to insist that unattractive people are morally bad?) Why is it vital to Bembo to set forth such a position -- what role does it play in his larger argument?
4. On 652-54, Bembo turns his thoughts to the older courtier’s needs with regard to love. What must this older courtier begin to understand about the relationship between body and soul? What new attitude must he take towards his beloved? Nonetheless, why does a kiss still gain his approval?
5. On 655-57, Bembo explains that the mature courtier must eventually abandon even the most defensible kinds of physical interaction with the beloved. Why? What further stages must the courtier’s understanding of love pass through? Explain with reference to Bembo’s metaphor of the “stair of love” (656 middle) and his references to “fire.”
6. By 659, Bembo’s Neoplatonic talk has brought him near to ecstasy. No doubt we are to take this performance as sincere, but are there any signs (on this page or elsewhere) that this future Cardinal is not unversed in the ways of *sprezzatura*? Also, in what manner does Hoby contrive to bring Bembo back to earth from 659-61? Why should that be necessary, if the argument he makes is virtuous and true?
7. A general question: Hoby’s translation of Castiglione’s *Il Libro del cortegiano* sets forth the ideal of courtiership. What image of that ideal does our selection yield -- what are the characteristics of the perfect courtier? What are his limitations in the face of this ideal? What is the larger political and moral context surrounding courtiership?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. B. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

Older (UCI) Questions for the Norton Selection from Castiglione’s *The Book of the Courtier*

Assigned: from *The Courtier*.

From *The Courtier* (translated from Baldassare Castiglione’s *Il Libro del Cortegiano*)

1. What is the setting for Castiglione’s dialogue? Characterize the atmosphere that is generated by the setting and by the characters’ interaction. How are friction and disagreement dealt with in Castiglione? How much do the various characters participate in the discourse?
2. What is the role of “The Duchess” (Elizabetta Gonzaga of Urbino) in this dialogue? Is her social rank important in Castiglione’s scheme?
3. Describe the basic views of the meaning of “love” that are held by the various participants in Castiglione’s dialogue.

4. Now focus more closely on Peter Bembo's argument. How does he first examine the topic of "beauty?" Describe the progression of his argument -- at what conclusion about "love" does Bembo arrive?
5. Does anyone in the dialogue present a strong counter-argument to Bembo's Platonism?
6. Does this excerpt from *The Courtier* give you a positive sense about the Court of Urbino? If so, why? If not, what is missing from the Court's atmosphere?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. 1B. 7th. ed. New York: Norton, 2000. ISBN 0393975665.

WILLIAM HOGARTH QUESTIONS

Assigned: *Marriage à la Mode* (2656-63).

Small color reproductions can be viewed at the [Hogarth section of the National Gallery](#).

1. Hogarth's pictures tell a story and call for interpretation, much the same as literary texts. Choose one plate and add whatever you can to the already good Norton Anthology description and interpretation below it.
2. Since the plates, taken in sequence, tell a story, focus on any two plates and explain what the artist has chosen *not* to represent -- in other words, what has he passed by or left to surmise from one point in the picture-story to the next?
3. What modern visual equivalent/s to Hogarth's work can you think of -- that is, what sort of visual material in popular culture seems to demand interpretation rather than just "instant eye-consumption"? (Examples might include advertising, magazine images, certain kinds of art, and so forth.) Explain what you consider the cultural value of this material.
4. Compare Hogarth's *Marriage à la Mode* to John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* in terms of the moral lesson it sets forth -- how do both texts comment on class relations, for example, or relations between the sexes?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. C. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

SAMUEL JOHNSON QUESTIONS

Assigned: *Idler* #31 "On Idleness" (2678-80); *Rasselas* (2678-2712); *Rambler* #4 "On Fiction" (2743-46); *Rambler* #60 "Biography" (2746-49); "Preface to *A Dictionary of the English Language*" (2750-55); "Preface to Shakespeare" (2755-66); from "Cowley," "Milton," and "Pope" in *Lives of the English Poets* (2766-77).

"On Idleness" (Idler #31)

1. Everyone is familiar with the ordinary definition of idleness. But how does Johnson broaden or further refine the term to capture something fundamental about many of the *activities* people pursue? How can we be idle even while feverishly doing something? (2713)

From *Rasselas*

2. On 2680-82 (Chs. 1-2), Johnson describes the young prince Rasselas' childhood environment with much care. What state of mind does this setting allude to? What is the relationship between Rasselas and the world around him at the outset of the story?

3. On 2682-86 (Chs. 2-4), what causes Rasselas to become discontented with the way he lives? Why aren't his paradisaic surroundings enough for him? What does his unhappiness have to do with the ancient problem of desire?

4. On 2687-89 (Ch. 5), what might the episode about the mechanic's attempt to fly suggest to Rasselas and to us about the proper relationship between imagination and experience?

5. On 2693 (Ch. 10), what most surprises Imlac about people's judgment of ancient poets? What comparison does Imlac make between the earliest authors and those who come after them? We have examined Johnson's insistence on a writer's duty to choose subjects judiciously. What new thoughts about the conjunction between morality and representation ("imitation") does Imlac offer on these pages?

6. On 2694 (Ch. 10), Imlac claims that poets who know their trade do not "number the streaks of the tulip." Most readers today, as inheritors of the romantics' love for individuality and particularity, will surely disagree. But what is the basis of Imlac's argument -- in what vital way do "tulip-streakers," in his view, fail as artists and with respect to the potential of their audience? Furthermore, in what sense might Imlac actually *embrace* the notion artists should observe human nature and the environment closely?

7. On 2694 (Ch. 10), what does Imlac apparently mean when he says that the poet must write "as a being superior to time and place"? What is he suggesting about human nature and about the function of art? Can you recall echoes of this statement in later works of literary criticism? If so, which works and authors?

8. On 2694-96 (Ch. 11), what contrast does Imlac make between the east and the west? What does he seem to think about the impact of science and its favored "instrumental rationality"?

9. On 2701-03 (Ch. 16), why is Cairo an appropriate starting point for the intellectual and spiritual journey Rasselas has insisted upon undertaking? What is the first thing Rasselas learns while in the city?

10. On 2703-05 (Chs. 17-19), Rasselas consorts with the young and carefree, meets a wise philosopher, and then comes upon rustic shepherds while on the way to visit a hermit. What do these encounters teach Rasselas? For example, what does the philosopher's experience suggest about the relationship between philosophy and ordinary life?

11. On 2705-09 (Chs. 20-22), Rasselas and his companions finally meet the hermit. How does the hermit explain his choice of lifestyle, and what does he believe he has accomplished by it? How does Rasselas' encounter with the hermit prepare him to assess the claims of the sage philosopher he hears soon thereafter?
12. On 2710-12 and 2714-17 (Chs. 25-26, 28-29), Rasselas and his sister Nekayah discuss private life and the institution of marriage. What is the nature of their disagreement, especially with regard to the provenance of reason as a guide in marriage? Why isn't the family the ideal social unit that it ought to be, according to some?
13. On 2718-21 (Chs. 31-33), Rasselas and his companions, except the frightened servant Pekuah, visit the Pyramids. What lesson does Imlac draw from this experience? Why did the pharaohs build the Pyramids, according to him?
14. On 2730-34 (Chs. 40-44), the Prince decides to devote himself to learning. But how does his friendship with the Astronomer lead to disillusionment about the benefits of deep learning? According to Imlac, what error or tendency has led the Astronomer into madness, and why is that tendency due to more than just his own peculiarity?
15. On 2734-36 (Ch. 45), Rasselas and the others meet an old man to see what they can learn from him. What in fact does the Prince take away from that experience? What does Imlac understand that Rasselas does not?
16. On 2740-42 (Ch. 48), what reasoning leads Imlac to conclude in favor of the soul's existence?
17. On 2742-43 (Ch. 49), what paths do Rasselas, Princess Nekayah, Imlac and the Astronomer end up pursuing by the end of the story? Why is it appropriate that the conclusion should be so inconclusive, given the nature of what Rasselas has been seeking all along?

"On Fiction" (Rambler #4)

18. On 2743-33, how does Johnson sum up the "task of our present writers" as opposed to yesteryear's purveyors of romance epic and other such genres? In what sense has the gap between author and readership narrowed, and with what results to the status of the new texts? In addition, what sort of people does Johnson suggest are the main readers of the new kinds of fiction?
19. On 2744-45, why, according to Johnson, do "familiar histories" (realistic fiction, popular novels) prove more useful than "the solemnities of professed morality"? In what sense are they useful? What moral responsibility does Johnson suggest ought to be kept in mind by authors of realistic fiction, and why?
20. On 2745-46, what "chief advantage" does modern fiction have in comparison with the real-life objects it imitates or represents (ordinary people, events, and things)? How does Johnson turn this advantage into a moral imperative, and how does he refute those who insist that it's acceptable to represent morally ambivalent or composite characters?

21. General question: Johnson is obviously concerned about the moral welfare of the audience he says is reading his age's novels and stories, and some politicians, social critics, and religious folk show a similar concern today, even to the point of urging legal censorship (which Johnson isn't advocating). Plato, of course, is the father of all such "moral arguments" about the pragmatic effects of art. To what extent, if at all, do you think such arguments or concerns are valid? Discuss.

"Biography" (Rambler #60)

22. On 2747, what makes biography, in Johnson's view, one of the "most worthy" kinds of writing? What pleasure and instruction are we able to draw from biography that we might not be able to derive from grand histories?

23. On 2748-49, what kinds of things does Johnson suggest a biographer concentrate on? What should a biographer not mention or not deal with at length? What problems seem to be inherent in the enterprise of biography-writing?

"Preface" to *A Dictionary of the English Language*

24. On 2750-52, what main causes of alteration in a given language over time does Johnson identify? Which one is most important, and why? What forces resist change in a language, and why?

25. On 2752-53, what seems to be Johnson's attitude towards the changes that all languages in time undergo? What does he suggest as his purpose and hopes for the dictionary he has compiled with so much labor?

26. General question: do you take dictionary definitions as final and complete, or do you consider them somewhat less authoritative? Explain your reasons for thinking as you do.

"Preface to Shakespeare"

27. On 2756-57, what test does Johnson suggest should be applied to literary works "of which the excellence is not absolute and definite"? How does Johnson reason in support of this test -- what alone can please the majority of people over long periods of time? How does Shakespeare's drama exemplify the kind of art that passes this test of excellence?

28. On 2758-59, what praise does Johnson bestow on Shakespeare's handling of human nature, and how does he defend the playwright from charges leveled against him over his handling of traditional heroic characters, historical periods, and generic expectations about tragedy and comedy? Why, in particular, is Shakespeare right to include comic elements in his tragedies, and tragic potential in his comedies?

29. On 2759-61, Johnson meets the censors of Shakespeare half-way: what criticisms of his own does he level against the Bard? Which is the worst and least excusable fault, and why? Which faults seem less important, and partly or entirely understandable?

30. On 2762-64, how does Johnson refute critics who say dramatic illusion requires strict adherence to the “unities of time and place”? What is the exact nature of dramatic illusion, according to Johnson -- if we aren’t “taken in” by what we see on stage, why, then, do we respond to it, and in what manner do we respond? Another way to ask this question is, “in what sense is the audience’s experience at a drama *genuine* or *authentic* {my terms} in its own right, even though we don’t believe we are witnessing a real-life event?”

31. On 2764-66, Johnson comments briefly on Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* and *King Lear*. What criticism does he set forth on the first play (a comedy), and then on the second? To what extent does he excuse the elements of *King Lear* that have been most harshly criticized by others? What do you gather from these pages regarding Johnson’s personal response to the great tragic play?

32. General question: although it isn’t evident from our excerpts, Johnson shows a decided preference for Shakespeare’s comedies. (To adapt a line from Oscar Wilde, the charge is that Shakespeare put his genius into his comedies, but only his talent into the tragedies.) Which kind of Shakespeare do you prefer, and why? Does your response have to do mainly with your own personality (i.e. “brooders” usually go in for tragedy, while a sunny disposition may prefer comedy and romance), or with what you can point to as “objective” features of Shakespeare’s language, plots, and stagecraft? Explain.

33. General question: Johnson writes on 2763, “if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more.” He’s probably right in the sense that *direct* viewing of such things in real life would horrify most modern people. But what about *cinema*? To what extent might it be argued that we come very close to taking the powerful images on a movie screen as “real,” at least during the time we are watching the film? Does that affect your view of Johnson’s argument against extreme proponents of “dramatic illusion”? If so, how?

34. General question: how many of Sir Philip Sidney’s ideas can you find in Johnson’s “On Fiction”? In what ways do you think Johnson differs from Sidney’s expressly religious moral framework, or has transformed some of his ideas? Alternately, how much of Plato or Aristotle do you find in Johnson? For example, how close does Johnson come to Plato’s brand of moralism? How might Johnson’s explanation of how we can take pleasure in watching a tragic play be compared with Aristotle’s remarks on our response to representations of painful or otherwise troubling things?

35. General question: in Ch. 14 of *Biographia Literaria*, Samuel Taylor Coleridge observes that his contribution to the *Lyrical Ballads* involved concentrating upon “persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic, yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith.” Compare his notion of poetic illusion with Johnson’s ideas about dramatic illusion and the manner in which an audience “credits” a good play.

From “Cowley,” Milton,” and “Pope” in *Lives of the English Poets* (2766-77)

36. On 2766-68, what problems with metaphysical poetry does Johnson identify? Why did authors such as Donne or Cowley fail, in Johnson’s view, to write poetry that was justly representational,

emotionally moving or morally instructive -- what were they instead trying to do, and for what purpose?

37. On 2768-69, Johnson examines Milton's pastoral effort, "Lycidas," written to commemorate the death of a friend. Why doesn't he like this poem, which has been praised by so many readers and critics? Do you find his remarks accurate? Why or why not?

38. On 2769-74, Johnson turns his attention to Milton's *Paradise Lost*. What praise does he offer of this epic poem? How, on 2769-72, does he describe the fit between Milton's creative powers and the task he set himself as author of such a work? Why was *Paradise Lost* the perfect vehicle for a poet of Milton's character and abilities?

39. On 2773-74, Johnson declares his intention to offer "impartial criticism" of *Paradise Lost*, and then proceeds. How does he handle the one grand deficiency he identifies in Milton -- namely, the "beyond-it-all" quality of the events, which leads to a certain "want {lack} of human interest" in the story?

40. On 2774-77, how does Johnson assess Alexander Pope's "intellectual character" -- his way of selecting topics and refining his verses, his regard for the quality of his poems, and in general his "work ethic" as an artist?

41. On 2776-77, it seems that Johnson gives Pope's predecessor Dryden the nod at least in terms of "genius." How does Johnson define that term, and how much importance does he accord it? How does his definition of genius compare to the later "romantic" understanding of that quality?

42. To judge from the excerpts on Cowley, Milton, and Pope, what seem to be Johnson's aims as a critic -- what does he owe the authors and texts he examines? What duties does he implicitly take upon himself in relation to the reading public? What expectations does he implicitly have of that public? Do you think "impartial" is a good way to describe Johnson's literary criticism? Why or why not?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. C. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

BEN JONSON QUESTIONS

Assigned: *Volpone* (1334-1427); *The Masque of Blackness* (1326-34); "On My First Son" (1430); "On Lucy, Countess of Bedford" (1430); "Inviting a Friend to Supper" (1431-32); "To Penshurst" (1434-36); "Song: To Celia" (1436); from "A Celebration of Charis in Ten Lyric Pieces" (1437-38); "To the Memory of my Beloved, The Author, Mr. William Shakespeare..." (1444-46); from *Timber, or Discoveries* (1448-51).

Assigned: *Volpone* (1334-1427).

Volpone

Act One

1. Is Volpone a miser? Examine his apostrophe to gold in 1.1 and the explanation he gives Mosca for his motives.
2. Is there any point to the rhymed babble of Volpone's fools Nano, Androgyno, and Castrone? Does anything they say (or are) seem relevant to Volpone's statement of purpose or to anything important in the play?
3. What is the significance of names like Voltore, Corbaccio, Corvino, Mosca, and -- Volpone? (Look them up in Italian, *per favore!*)
4. From 1.4.144-59, Volpone marvels at the reluctance of old Corbaccio to accept age and death. How do Volpone's words reflect upon his own scheming?
5. What do you think of Mosca as of Act I? How independent or important is he? Should Volpone trust him?
6. So far, on whose side do you find yourself? Volpone's or Mosca's? Why?

Act Two

7. As for Sir Politic Would-Be, who is he and why is he here? What does he think he can accomplish in Venice?
8. In 2.2, Volpone appears as a mountebank in front of Corvino's house to woo Celia with his "oglio del Scoto." What is the analogy between the mountebank with his oil and Volpone with his gold?
9. Corvino rages at Celia in 2.5, but when he learns from Mosca that the doctors have prescribed a woman to cure Volpone, he promptly offers up Celia as the medicine. What is the significance of Corvino's references to "acting" and to "the public?"

Act Three

10. Mosca is allowed a fine soliloquy at the beginning of scene 3. Why is this speech placed where it is? How does Mosca interpret his role as parasite?
11. In scene 7, Celia is taken advantage of both by her husband, Corvino, and Volpone. What seems to be Celia's philosophy of life? Do you think that Jonson wants us to sympathize with her in her plight? Why or why not?
12. Also in scene 7, Volpone's so-called wooing of Celia leads him to say a great many things about her beauty and about the art of love. What does "love" apparently mean to Volpone? What does he think it can do for him?

Act Four

13. In scene 1, Sir Politic Would-Be is at his schemes again, and it is again worth asking about his role in this play. How do Sir Pol's schemes, especially as he details them here, affect your view of Volpone?

14. In scenes 4-6, the play's selfish rascals come together at the Scrutineo to complete the ruin of innocent Celia and Bonario. Who is most effective in getting them condemned? Do you blame the court for its verdict? Why or why not?

15. Could Act 4's "trial" scene almost be taken as conclusion to the play? Why so? Also, do Volpone and Mosca have your admiration when they triumph? To what extent and at what points in the play might Ben Jonson be aligning us with his villains rather than with his good characters?

Act Five

16. At the beginning of scene 1, Volpone says, "Well, I am here, and all this brunt is past." What is Volpone afraid of now? What drives him to take the steps that will prove his undoing?

17. Why is it structurally appropriate that in scene 4, Sir Politic winds up under that tortoise shell?

18. At last the Fox is trapped and receives what amounts to a death sentence. What is the Court's reason for condemning him and Mosca, and so harshly at that? Do you take the court as a true representative of "legitimate order?" Why or why not?

19. Why does Jonson seem to think that we, the audience, ought to let Volpone (or *Volpone* the play) off even though the Avocatori would not do so? (In responding, consider the Epilogue.)

Assigned: *The Masque of Blackness* (1527-34).

The Masque of Blackness

1. Briefly, describe the structural progression of this masque -- what happens, and in what order? In addition, choose one scene description and explain how it relates to the action.

2. The Norton editors insist that this masque is "subversive" (a common claim set forth by New Historicist literary critics). What factors might back up their argument? Can you find a way to counter the notion that Jonson is trying to subvert James I's authority?

3. Briefly compare and contrast the treatment of Africans in this masque to Thomas Hariot's non-fiction commentary about native Americans in the brief selection from that author's *Report on Virginia* (939-43).

Assigned: Various Poems (as listed below, 1430-46); from *Timber, or Discoveries* (1448-51).

"On My First Son" (1430)

4. Jonson describes his departed son Benjamin as his "joy." Aside from being an honest expression of grief at the child's passing, what descriptions of Benjamin's worth, and what resolutions about the proper way to deal with death, are noteworthy in this poem? How, for example, does the final couplet distinguish between "love" and "like" or liking?

"On Lucy, Countess of Bedford" (1430)

5. There's a classical device whereby the speaker mentions something while claiming it won't be mentioned -- (as in "I shall not mention my opponent's many treacheries"). This poem of praise doesn't quite fit in that category, but how is Jonson's descriptive strategy similar?

6. It is difficult to praise a person (especially the great, like Lucy of Bedford) without seeming like a flatterer, but Jonson is generally held to be quite good at praising appropriately. With reference to this poem, what accounts for his success in paying a compliment?

"Inviting a Friend to Supper" (1431-32)

7. Jonson's speaker says it isn't the food that makes a fine supper, but the conversation, and the qualities that the guest brings. But he also keeps describing the food and drink that he plans to serve. What use does the speaker make of this description, aside from simply whetting the guest's appetite? How, that is, does the speaker's treatment of the theme illustrate the art of conversation?

8. What serious note comes in with the poem's conclusion -- what dangers lurk in a pleasant, private evening of conversation, food, and drink?

"To Penshurst" (1434-36)

9. This poem turns upon the distinction Jonson makes at the end between "building" and "dwelling." In what sense is Robert Sidney's estate Penshurst more than a building -- how does it exemplify idyllic social relations between people and perfect harmony between the human and the natural?

"Song: To Celia" (1436)

10. Compare the style of praise in this poem with the one Jonson uses in "On Lucy, Countess of Bedford." What is similar, and what is different? And as in Question 6 above, how does this poem praise its object, Celia, without seeming fulsome or excessive?

From "A Celebration of Charis in Ten Lyric Pieces" (1437-38)

11. How does this "processional" excerpt build up a sense of what the Lady Charis is like? What sorts of comparisons does the speaker make between her attributes and natural or supernatural things?

"To the Memory of my Beloved, The Author, Mr. William Shakespeare..." (1444-46)

12. In the first fifteen lines, Jonson lays out the ways *not* to praise Shakespeare -- what styles of praise does he mention? By line 43, Jonson has made it clear why it's hard to praise Shakespeare properly -- what reason for this difficulty does he give?

13. From lines 47-65, Jonson considers Shakespeare's relationship with "nature" (in the double sense of "human nature" and "our physical environment") and works in a comment on the old Latin line, "*poeta nascitur, not fit*" (a poet is born, not made). How does Jonson describe Shakespeare's way of handling human nature and the physical environment -- what is so special about his plays in that regard?

14. With respect to the Latin phrase just mentioned, how much credit does Jonson give to the playwright's native genius, and how much to his development as a craftsman?

From *Timber, or Discoveries* (1448-51)

15. On 1448-49, Jonson reproaches the taste of those who praise Shakespeare for *not* editing the text of his plays. What criticism does Jonson make of Shakespeare in this regard? What point is he making about craft thereby?

16. On 1449-50, Jonson offers sage advice on the relationship between "invention" and "judgment" -- basically, a writer's fresh thoughts or flights of fancy and his or her return to such notions by way of correction or elaboration. What is the proper relationship between these faculties? And what is the value of studying the work of others, according to Jonson?

17. On 1450-51, Jonson deals with the sway of custom in matters of language -- after all, language is only capable of "meaning something" because it's a system of publicly agreed-upon conventions, not a private invention. How does Jonson define the term "custom," and, in keeping with his definition, to what extent is a writer bound to honor linguistic custom?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. B. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

MARGERY KEMPE QUESTIONS

Assigned: from *The Book of Margery Kempe* (383-97).

From *The Book of Margery Kempe*

1. On 384-85 ("The Birth of Her First Child and Her First Vision"), describe the pattern of spiritual trial and recovery that Margery's recountings form -- what does she suggest caused her "vexation," what form did it take, and how did she recover?

2. On 385-86 ("Margery and Her Husband Reach a Settlement"), what seems to underlie Margery's intense desire to arrive at a "settlement" with her husband? What are the terms of that settlement, and what do those terms imply about earthly attempts at perfection?

3. On 388-89 ("Pilgrimage to Jerusalem"), what effect does her pilgrimage to Jerusalem have on Margery? How do others react to her transformation?

4. On 389-92 ("Margery's Marriage to and Intimacy with Christ"), what reason does Margery give for the marriage she describes, and of what nature is this marriage? How does Christ relate to her as a "wife"?

5. On 394-95 ("Margery Nurses Her Husband in His Old Age"), Margery's husband is badly injured but survives, eventually slipping into senility. How do these events, and her vision as recounted from 395-97 ("Margery's Vision of the Passion Sequence") complete the life pattern of Margery Kempe?

How is God's intervention and Margery's conversation with him typical of the role religion has played in her life?

6. How do you react to Margery Kempe's combination of third-person narration of her life with the intimacy of her revelations? Do you find them appealing or disturbing? Why?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. A. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

THOMAS KYD QUESTIONS

Assigned: *The Spanish Tragedy*.

The Spanish Tragedy

Act 1

1. In scene 1, we are introduced to Don Andrea, the ghostly Spanish courtier whose discussions with Revenge conclude each act. Why does he want revenge -- how did he meet his death? Follow his reactions to the unfolding plot -- what is his role in this play?
2. In scene 2, how does the King of Spain handle the chivalric argument that arises after the capture of Don Balthazar by Horatio and Lorenzo? Is the King's solution adequate?
3. In scene 3, consider how the Viceroy of Portugal deals with Villupo, who falsely accuses Alexandro of betraying Don Balthazar in battle. Why is the Viceroy so quick to believe Villupo, and how is this scene connected thematically to Hieronimo's experiences later in the play?
4. In scene 4, what unites Bel-Imperia and Horatio? Moreover, what contrast arises between matters of state and private matters involving love?

Act 2

5. In scenes 1 and 4, how does Lorenzo manipulate the action? In what sense might he be called the "Machiavellian" in this play? (See also 3.2 if necessary.) Who else fits that description, either entirely or in part? Is it the predominant spirit or attitude in the play, or are other attitudes more powerful still? Explain with reference to specific characters or events in the play.
6. In scenes 2 and 4, Horatio and Bel-Imperia act upon their love -- describe the exchanges between them in both substantive and formal terms. (Hint: look up the term "stichomythia" on the internet or in a literary guidebook. Why the martial metaphors -- what's the irony here?)
7. In scenes 4-5, how do Hieronimo and Isabella, respectively, react to the murder of their son? In particular, how does Hieronimo learn of his son's death, and what shape do his first thoughts about revenge take? What about Isabella -- what comes to her mind first?

Act 3

8. In scene 2, what complaint does Hieronimo lodge against “the heavens” (i.e. divine authority)? And why does he hesitate when he receives a letter from Bel-Imperia explaining her son’s murder -- what is the underlying cause of his fear and hesitation?
9. In scenes 3 and 6, the rascal Pedringano is quite certain that Lorenzo’s pardon is on the way. What is the point of this episode, other than comic relief -- how, for example, does Pedringano’s attitude towards death compare with that of others facing danger or destruction?
10. In scene 7, Hieronimo decides to seek justice from the Spanish King he serves, while in the next scenes Isabella “runs lunatic” and Bel-Imperia reconciles herself to wait out imprisonment at Lorenzo’s hands. In scenes 11-12, which of Hieronimo’s actions and speeches seem lucid, and which indicate disturbance? To what extent can you extricate his eccentric words and actions from the saner ones? Finally, why can’t he get through to the King?
11. In scenes 13-14, at what decisions does Hieronimo arrive, now that his attempt to get justice from the King has failed? What sustenance does he derive from the plight of the Old Man (Don Bazulto) who comes petitioning to him? What is the symbolic significance of Hieronimo’s curt treatment of the Three Citizens who have come to him with their legal troubles?

Act 4

12. In scene 1, Hieronimo gets his opportunity for revenge -- as Hamlet will say later, “the play’s the thing.” How does he convince Lorenzo and Don Balthazar to take part as actors? Why must this “play within the play” be enacted in Greek, Latin, Italian, and French rather than in Spanish? Why is it possible for Hieronimo to gain his revenge in a work of art -- what advantage does art offer him that “real life” doesn’t?
13. In scene 2, Isabella finally commits suicide, leaving Hieronimo altogether ready to carry out his plot, which he does promptly in scene 4. How much of what happens do the King and the Viceroy (both of whose children are main actors) understand, even after Hieronimo explains why he has contrived the murder of Lorenzo and Balthazar and allowed Bel-Imperia to take her own life in the act of revenge? Does Hieronimo fully justify what he has done, or is his commentary inadequate? Explain. Why does he resist revealing his “confederates” (to the point of biting off his tongue) when he has none except the now-dead Bel-Imperia?
14. In scene 5, Don Andrea’s Ghost professes himself satisfied by the bloody revenge Hieronimo has taken. What further “classical” twist does he add to Hieronimo’s revenge? In Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, there is a clash between the pagan heroic demand for revenge and the Christian imperative to let God punish miscreants. Is anything of that sort going on in *The Spanish Tragedy*, or does the play straightforwardly proceed in accordance with the revenge code? Explain with specific reference to the text.

Edition: Maus, Katharine E., ed. *Four Revenge Tragedies*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. ISBN 0192838784.

WILLIAM LANGLAND QUESTIONS

Assigned: from *Piers Plowman* (331-67).

From *Piers Plowman*

From Prologue: "The Field of Folk" (333-36)

1. The narrator's dream lends him a vision of a diverse "field" full of people. What spiritual error do these people seem to be mired in? What is the source of their troubles?
2. Why should a doctrinal poem be put in the form of a dream? What can a dream offer that everyday waking narrative cannot?

From *Passus 5: "The Treasure of Truth" (336-40) and "Piers Plowman Shows the Way to Saint Truth" (340-43)*

3. What is "the treasure of Truth"? Who teaches it, and how may it be acquired by an ordinary Christian?
4. Summarize the steps of the journey towards Truth that Piers lays for the pilgrims. What are the most important stages, and why?

From *Passus 6: "The Plowing of Piers's Half-Acre" (343-350)*

5. What vision of the ideal community are we offered in this passus? Even so, what tendencies or problems keep this ideal community from coming to fruition? See in particular what happens to Hunger and Waster, and the trouble they cause.
6. In what sense is Piers an exemplary figure for the pilgrims? Why doesn't he judge them harshly, as they seem to deserve when they go astray?

From *Passus 7: "Piers Tears Truth's Pardon" (350-52)*

7. As the editors point out, this is a controversial part of the text in terms of doctrine. How do you interpret what Piers does when he receives the pardon -- why does he tear it up?

From The C-Text: "The Dreamer Meets Conscience and Reason" (352-54)

8. For what supposed error does Reason upbraid the Dreamer? How does he justify his choice of livings? What hierarchies does this selection defend?

Older Questions -- for the 7th edition, not the 8th.

From *Passus 5: "The Confessions of Envy and Gluttony" (322-25)*

- . What are the Seven Deadly Sins? List them, aside from Envy and Gluttony, which this passus personifies. Aside from being bad things to do, what is it about such sins that makes them so deadly? How does Gluttony's confession and subsequent behavior reinforce the deadliness of the sin he embodies?

From *Passus* 18: “The Harrowing of Hell” (336-46)

. In this *passus*, Langland’s dreamer describes Christ’s Harrowing of Hell (an event described in the C5 Gospel of Nicodemus and mentioned in the Apostles’ Creed). How does Langland employ both reason and mysticism to drive home central doctrines about Christian theology’s “end things” (Heaven and Hell, Death and Resurrection)?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. A. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

HENRY MACKENZIE QUESTIONS

Assigned: *The Man of Feeling* (separate edition).

The Man of Feeling

Visit [http://niehorster.orbat.com/000_admin/009_roman-numerals.html| Roman Numerals] if you are not familiar with that numbering system. It was taught in primary school when I was a kid, but it seems not to be universally covered anymore. If you find it a bit confusing a first, well, *repetitio mater studiarum*!

Author’s Introduction (3-5)

1. What are the circumstances in which the narrative we are about to hear has come down to us, according to the introduction? What attitude does the editor himself seem to take towards it, and what tone does the introduction and the framing device (an anonymous editor) suggest regarding how we as readers should process the story to come?

Chapter XI—On Bashfulness—A Character—His Opinion on that Subject (7-9) and Chapter XII—Of Worldly Interests (9-12)

2. With what disposition is Harley, the novel’s protagonist, said to be endowed? What does the narrator (his friend Charles, as we later find out) tell us about Harley’s upbringing and his prospects for the future?

Chapter XIII—The Man of Feeling in Love (12-15)

3. What draws Harley to Miss Walton, the daughter of his would-be benefactor Mr. Walton? What seems to account for her attraction to him? In addition, how does the narrator characterize Miss Walton’s emotional cast?

Chapter XIV—He Sets Out on His Journey—The Beggar and His Dog (15-18)

4. What prompts Harley to stop and talk with the Beggar he meets on his way to seek preferment from the Baronet? What is the Beggar’s story, and what might be learned from it by way of moral instruction and, more broadly, “human interest”?

Chapter XIX—He Makes a Second Expedition to the Baronet’s. The Laudable Ambition of a Young Man to Be Thought Something by the World (18-23)

5. In attempting again to call on the Baronet, Harley meets a man with “a red laced waistcoat.” As a result of the episode recounted in this chapter, what lesson does Harley learn about appearances and respectability? At the end of the chapter, how well does he seem to appreciate the life-lesson the encounter has afforded him?

Chapter XX—He Visits Bedlam.—The Distresses of a Daughter (23-27)

6. What is the occasion for Harley’s meeting the young woman who tells him her story in this chapter? How does he react to her plight? Follow out his developing reaction in word and deed to the unfolding tale and his actions on the point of departing from the madhouse. Taking into account the chapter as a whole, what seems to be the value to Harley of this experience in Bedlam? What might the intended value of the chapter be for us as readers who must assess Harley’s reactions as well as the young woman’s sad story?

Chapter XXI—The Misanthropist (27-33)

7. Harley’s friend does him the favor of introducing him to a misanthrope. What is this fellow’s story—what has driven him to his present dislike of all humanity? And what is his view of human nature and the much-vaunted eighteenth-century term “benevolence”?

Chapter XXV—His Skill in Physiognomy (33-36) and Chapter XXVII—His Skill in Physiognomy Doubted (39-40)

8. What is “physiognomy”? Look up the term on the web and set down some of the more worthwhile information you find about the nature and purpose of this common eighteenth-century preoccupation.

9. How does Harley’s propensity to engage in physiognomic interpretations of others get him in trouble in Chapter XXV (25), and how do his companions try to set him right on this issue in Chapter XXVII (27)? What vulnerabilities has the “man of feeling” shown in these two chapters taken together, and what attitude does the text adopt towards his tendency to excuse the faults of others?

Chapter XXVI—The Man of Feeling in a Brothel (37-39) and Chapter XXVIII—He Keeps His Appointment (40-50)

10. Harley meets a prostitute named Emily Atkins in Chapter XXVI (26), and then learns in Chapter XXVIII (28) what has brought her to her present condition. What story does she relate to Harley about her downfall? To what causes does she attribute her misfortune? How might this recounting revise our opinion of Harley from what it might have been in the previous few chapters, now that we have gotten to know his unfortunate acquaintance better?

Chapter XXIX—The Distresses of a Father (51-55)

11. Emily’s father (who had burst into her quarters in the previous chapter ready to kill Harley) is now reconciled to his long-lost daughter. How does the narrative handle (i.e. represent) the powerful

emotions that beset all three characters throughout the chapter? Choose a few key moments and discuss them in terms of their manner of conveying the characters' strong feelings.

12. At page 52 middle, the narrator interjects, "We would attempt to describe the joy which Harley felt on this occasion {of hearing his own benevolence described by Emily to her father}, did it not occur to us, that one half of the world could not understand it though we did; and the other half will, by this time, have understood it without any description at all." What is he thereby suggesting about the scope and limits of his task as a relater of affecting scenes? What seems to be the balance between narrator and reader with regard to the story's emotional and moral impact?

A Fragment. Showing His Success with the Baronet (56-57) and Chapter XXXIII—He Leaves London—Characters in a Stage-Coach (57-62)

13. In "A Fragment," Harley learns that the preferment he had sought has gone instead to the rogue with a red lace coat whom he had met a while back. Then in Chapter XXXIII (33), he converses with an old gentleman named Ben Silton about the virtues of poetry and sentiment as well as the importance of education. What is said by each man on such topics, and what general picture of the times emerges from the conversation?

Chapter XXXIV—He Meets an Old Acquaintance (63-71)

14. Harley's stage-coach portion of his return from London accomplished, he sets off on foot and promptly walks into another "affective moment." What tale of woe does Harley's old neighbor Edwards recount? How does the tale in part amount to a critique of certain British economic and colonial practices during the eighteenth century? How does Edwards' benevolent disposition help him towards the end of his stay in the East Indies?

Chapter XXXV—He Misses an Old Acquaintance—An Adventure Consequent Upon It (71-74)

15. How do things turn out for Edwards when he arrives home after his long stay in the East Indies—what does he discover about the family he left behind? The chapter ends with a graveyard scene—how (by means of what details) does the narrator convey the appearance, thoughts, and feelings of the characters involved in this scene?

Chapter XXXVI—He Returns Home—A Description of His Retinue (74-76) and A Fragment. The Man of Feeling Talks of What He Does Not Understand—An Incident (76-78)

16. Harley offers Edwards a small farm in his possession, and the offer is accepted. Then, in the Fragment, the two men discuss British colonialism. What does Harley say about this issue, and how does Edwards respond to his opinions?

Chapter XL—The Man of Feeling Jealous (79-84) and Lavinia. A Pastoral (84-87)

17. Harley finds himself disappointed in love when he learns that Miss Walton is engaged to Sir Harry Benson. How does the "man of feeling" respond to this painful frustration of his hopes? How does his pastoral poem "Lavinia" express this frustration and help him come to terms with it?

The Pupil—A Fragment (87-94)

18. Edward Sedley recounts to Harley the tale of his youthful travels with the impoverished nobleman Mountford. What is the moral lesson of the story he tells—what did he learn about the prevalence of wickedness, about the difficulty of discerning the good from the bad, honor from knavery? How does this “fragment” reinforce or modify the lessons we may have derived from Harley’s life events as related in the rest of the novel?

Chapter LV—He Sees Miss Walton, and Is Happy (94-97), Chapter LVI—The Emotions of the Heart (97), and the Conclusion (98)

19. The narrator (Charles) fills us in on Harley’s final days. What are Harley’s main concerns and reflections as he declines towards death from a lingering illness? How does he think of his life’s course now that it is coming to an end? Do his thoughts encourage us to think of his life with a satisfactory sense of closure, or do they set him apart from others and from the flow of life?

20. How do the narrator and others react to the death of Harley—what sentiments do they express, and what moral do they draw from Harley’s life, virtues, and passing? What lasting impact has Harley made upon Charles himself, as revealed by the graveyard “tableau” with which the novel concludes?

Edition: Mackenzie, Henry. *The Man of Feeling*. Oxford University Press, USA; 2nd edition. 2001. ISBN-10: 0192840320. ISBN-13: 978-0192840325.

THOMAS MALORY QUESTIONS

Assigned: from *Morte D’Arthur* (438-56).

From *Morte D’Arthur***“The Conspiracy against Lancelot and Guinevere”**

1. On 439, how does the author exploit the ancient myth of the seasons in relation to his story? What message is thereby suggested concerning the chivalric order and its ideal of human perfection?
2. On 440-41, when Sir Agravain and Sir Mordred make known their suspicions about Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere, how do their fellow knights and King Arthur receive the news? What problem does King Arthur introduce when he admits that Sir Lancelot is “the best knight among us all”? (441)
3. On 442-44, what impression of Sir Lancelot emerges from his successful fight to escape the snare set for him by his opponents?

“War Breaks Out Between Arthur and Lancelot”

4. On 444-47, when Sir Lancelot rescues Queen Guinevere from her trial and execution, what does King Arthur most lament about the current situation? What key event triggers the revenge cycle that is about to begin?

“The Death of Arthur”

5. On 448-49, a treaty is concluded but goes awry. What are the terms of the treaty? What mischance spoils it, and what lesson about violence and human “order” do we learn thereby?
6. On 450-53, King Arthur is mortally wounded even as he kills Sir Mordred. What final command does he give? Why does Sir Bedivere twice betray Arthur’s command? What biblical overtones does the passing of Arthur carry? (Consider the Bible’s accounts of Jesus’s last days on earth -- to what extent is King Arthur a Christ-like figure for his people?)
7. On 453-56, Queen Guinevere and Sir Lancelot meet their respective ends. Chivalry is, of course, a Christian code, but how well do religion and chivalric ideals go together in this episode? Explain with reference to the final acts and thoughts of Guinevere and Lancelot as well as the remaining Knights of the Round Table.

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. A. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

MARIE DE FRANCE QUESTIONS

Assigned: “Lanval” (141-55). {“The Wolf and the Lamb”; “The Wolf and the Sow” from 7th ed.}

“Lanval”

1. What does this brief romance tale reveal about chivalric or “courtly” love? For example, how do the two lovers treat each other? What qualities do they seem to find most attractive in each other?
2. How does the poet represent King Arthur’s Court? How much nobility in word and deed is in the place, and how much politics? How does the Court present an obstacle to Lanval and his lover?
3. Explain what makes the happy ending possible -- how does Lanval’s lover win the day? Why is it appropriate, nonetheless, that the pair should disappear after their victory?

“The Wolf and the Lamb” and “The Wolf and the Sow”

4. In Aesop’s Fables (which may have been a source for Marie, at least indirectly), what we might call “power relations” between very unequal parties is often at the center of the story’s significance. In the case of Marie’s lamb and sow, what is required of these underlings if they are to survive?
5. What are the predatory wolf’s defining characteristics? How does he get what he wants? How can he be foiled?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. A. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE QUESTIONS

Assigned: "Hero and Leander" (1004-22); "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" (1022); *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (1023-57). Note: I may want to upgrade the *Faustus* questions to scene-by-scene format, but the ones below seem adequate.

Assigned: "Hero and Leander" (1004-22); "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" (1022).

"Hero and Leander"

1. How does the narrator establish distance from the story told? What results from this distance for you as a reader?
2. What is the relationship between the gods' amorous affairs and the affair of Hero and Leander? Consider both the set-piece references to the gods and their actual interaction with the two lovers in the poem.
3. What view of love emerges from this poem? Is the focus on idealism, eroticism, both? Explain.
4. Compare this poem's handling of sexual love with Spenser's treatment of sexuality in the "Epithalamion."

Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" and Sir Walter Raleigh's "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd"

5. Judge for yourself: whose argument wins between Marlowe's poem and Raleigh's on 917-18? Why?
6. Try writing your own reply to Marlowe's poem, or a counter-reply to Raleigh's rebuttal.

Assigned: *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (1023-57).

The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus

1. To what degree do you find Faustus a sympathetic character? Are there any sympathetic characters in this play? If so, how much influence do they have? Explain.
2. Why, exactly, does Faustus make his bargain? What does he expect to gain for selling his soul? Is it that he desires to know more, or would you characterize Faustus' rationale otherwise?
3. How does the play handle the passage of time in its beginning, middle, and end? Trace the tempo of the play in terms of its logical divisions, and try to account for the differences you find.
4. How are the serious and the comic scenes related? (Scenes 3, 4, and 5 would be a good example.) What does the relationship between comic and serious scenes suggest about the quality of Faustus' bargain?

5. To what extent does Faustus take Mephistopheles seriously? How does Mephistopheles handle Faustus' occasional bouts of remorse or fear for his future? That is, how does he bring Faustus around to his point of view?
6. When Faustus sees Helen, he asks, "Is this the face that launched a thousand ships?" Do you think Faustus sees Helen the same way the audience sees her? Why or why not? What is Helen or what is her significance, in the context of Marlowe's play?
7. By the end of the play, why can't Faustus repent when he is called upon to do so? How does he seem to understand his situation? What lesson is Marlowe imparting about the effects of sin?
8. Some critics have seen this play as a moral comedy, not a tragedy in the classical, Aristotelian sense. Do you agree or disagree? That is, what constitutes a tragedy, and what in Marlowe's play is or is not tragic?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. B. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

JOHN MILTON QUESTIONS

Assigned: *Comus*.

Comus

1. Lines 1-92 make up the Prologue spoken by the Attendant Spirit. What does this Prologue accomplish?
2. What is Comus' role in this masque? Some things to think about: a) Does Comus represent some principle? b) What does the Attendant Spirit say about him in the Prologue? c) Examine the description of Comus' entry -- what seems to be his realm, or "turf"?
3. What are the two brothers' arguments while they are separated from their sister? Who has the better argument? How effective are the brothers in coming to the Lady's rescue?
4. As for Lady Alice -- what is expected of her in this masque? What challenges does she face? Does she need a guardian? From lines 230-43, she sings a song to Echo, the disappointed lover of Narcissus. What is the purpose of this song, and what effects does it have? Does anyone ever answer this song, whether directly or indirectly?
5. Examine the main masque speeches that Comus makes to Lady Alice. What are Comus' arguments? Do his designs upon Alice remain constant? And what are her counter-arguments?
6. What does Sabrina seem to represent in this piece? Also, describe the way in which she makes her entrance into the masque.

Edition: [<http://www.mith.umd.edu/comus/final/>] John Milton's *A Masque or Comus*] or similar.

Assigned: "Lycidas" (1805-11).

"Lycidas"

1. How does Milton realign the pagan genre of pastoral eclogue to suit his Christian beliefs?
2. To what extent, and in what ways, does "Lycidas" (written in 1637, when Milton was 29) address his vocation as a poet?

"Lycidas"

Assigned: from Sonnets (1825-29): "How Soon Hath Time" (1826); "On the New Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament" (1826-27); "To the Lord General Cromwell, May 1652" (1827-28); "When I Consider How My Light is Spent" (1828); "On the Late Massacre in Piedmont" (1828-29); "Methought I Saw My Late Espoused Saint" (1829).

"How Soon Hath Time"

3. Describe the tension in this poem between what the young speaker considers his lack of inner maturity and the Providential order he believes in. How, mainly, do you interpret the relationship between the poem's first two quatrains (four-line units) and the sestet (final six lines)?

"On the New Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament"

4. During the Long Parliament of 1640-49 (which overlaps the English Civil War of 1642-51), the Presbyterian faction tried to get itself declared England's National Church. What are Milton's complaints about the maneuverings he describes—what tendency of organized religion does he oppose?

"To the Lord General Cromwell, May 1652"

5. What advice does the speaker offer the victorious Oliver Cromwell concerning freedom of conscience and the relationship between Church and State? Why, according to the editor's notes, was this advice necessary?

"When I Consider How My Light is Spent"

6. Milton had been Secretary of Foreign Tongues since March of 1649, and went blind in February, 1652, so he is not only a poet but also an important Cromwellian Minister of State, responsible for defending the Puritan Revolution to England's European neighbors. What tension does this poem suggest between Milton's "political self" and his "poetic self" (i.e. his literary aspirations)?
7. What stance does the speaker adopt towards the workings of Providence? What does he appear to mean by the claim, "They also serve who only stand and wait"?

"On the Late Massacre in Piedmont"

Questions TBD.

“Methought I Saw My Late Espoused Saint”

8. What is characteristically “Miltonic” about the linguistic choices and the tone or attitude of this poem that commends Waldensian martyrs to God’s favor?

Assigned: *Paradise Lost*, Books 1-12 (1631-2055).

Paradise Lost

Book One

1. Examine the narrator’s invocation (lines 1-25) and his epic question and answer (lines 26-49).

a) What is the source of the narrator’s authority?

b) What kind of persona would you say is established when one puts all three elements -- the invocations, question, and answer -- together? Characterize this poet-narrator -- comparing him to the narrators of Spenser and Chaucer would be helpful.

2. What purposes do the lines (50-83) serve that immediately follow the invocation and question and answer?

3. Examine the first speech that Satan makes, the one he makes only to his arch-lieutenant, Beëlzebub. Also examine the latter’s response to this speech as well as Satan’s counter-response to Beëlzebub’s words. (84-124, 128-55, 157-91)

a) Work out what the arguments of these two speakers are.

b) Is Satan a skilled rhetorician? How so?

c) Try to explain some of Satan’s errors in logic.

d) Does Beelzebub know something Satan doesn’t; or does he admit something that Satan will not admit?

4. From lines 195-210, we are treated to Milton’s first major extended simile. Actually, it is a series of similes, and a complex one at that. Examine these lines -- in what way are they relevant, even vital, to the task of Milton and his narrator in describing heavenly things that really are not describable from a fallen human perspective?

5. Examine Satan’s primal poetic elegy -- lines 242-55. What purpose/s does it serve? What resolution or statement does this elegy lead Satan to make?

6. Yet another extended series of similes occurs from lines 283-313. Again, how do these similes dramatize the situation in which Milton and his narrator find themselves?

7. In general, what purpose do lines 337-522 serve?
8. Read Satan's speech to his whole army from lines 622-62.
 - a) This speech is in part a "revisionist" history of the bad angels' fall -- explain how this is so. Why is Satan's version in error?
 - b) What is Satan's basic plan for the "future?"
9. What human impulse do lines 670-738 describe?
10. Observe the end of Book One, the assembling of the council (752-98). Concentrate especially upon lines 777-98. In what way is Milton having some fun at the angels' expense here? What is he saying about the degree of "reality" that one can attribute to them?

Book Two

11. The great consult begins. Observe the opinions and rhetorical shifts of the following "debaters":
 - a) Satan (11-42)
 - b) Moloch (43-108)
 - c) Belial (108-225) and the narrator's lines, (226-28)
 - d) Mammon (229-83) and similes about angels' applause, (284-91).
 - e) Beëlzebub (310-416)
 - f) Satan again (416-67)
12. From lines 522-628, a very interesting dispersion of devils occurs. What do the devils do? (Characterize the behavior of the different "bands.") What drives them to do these things?
13. Now to Satan's encounter with Death and to the allegory of the birth of Sin and Death. (629-726, 727-814) This is a long episode. Why is the subject so important to Paradise Lost? What does it tell you about Satan's understanding of the consequences of his behavior?
14. At line 917, Satan beholds the abyss into which he must plunge. Observe his plunge and progress from lines 927-961. What would you say is the narrator's attitude toward Satan's enterprise?
15. Examine lines 1034-55, the end of Book Two. What dramatic purpose does this birdseye view serve?

Book Three

16. Read the invocation (1-55) carefully -- observe the narrator's tone and the basic rhetorical structure of the passage: "Hail. . .but thou. . .but not. . .So much the rather. . . ." What would you say Milton is trying to achieve by making the narrator speak these lines?
17. Examine lines 80-143. Characterize God's "personality," his manner of speaking. Also, describe the theological argument that God makes in this speech. Moreover, what prediction does he make about the future?
18. Follow the dialogue between Christ and God from lines 144-216 as well as the narrator's characterization of the pause for a reply to God's question, lines 217-26. Find some clue or clues in these lines as to why we are hearing this dialogue. (Lines 167-72 and 217-26 are especially helpful.)
19. "Meanwhile upon the firm opacous globe. . . / Satan alighted walks" (418,422). Here, we pan back to Satan, almost cinema-style. Observe lines 418-501 -- why do you think that Milton's narrator is made to describe this "location" so carefully? What effect does it have on our perspective of Satan's enterprise?

Book Four

20. Examine Satan's soliloquy from lines 32-113.
- a) What is the basic dramatic purpose of such a speech -- why should we hear all this? What impression does it give us of Satan?
- b) Follow Satan's logic through this passage. How well does Satan understand the nature of God's rule, and why does he say that he would never be able to reconcile himself to that rule?
21. Examine the narrator's "portraits" of Adam and Eve (lines 288-324).
- a) How is each figure described? How is the language that describes Eve different from the language that describes Adam? To answer this question, you really must read the descriptions out loud to yourself.
- b) What is the proper relationship of Adam and Eve to each other? to God?
22. Read the fine account that Eve gives of her first day of life, lines 449-91. What is the significance of her first act, that of seeing her reflection in a pool? What warning, however mild, does this scene give us about Eve?
23. Read lines 634-58 and 659-88. Who has the higher "IQ" -- Adam or Eve? Seriously, what is the difference between them with respect to their way of treating language?
24. Examine lines 720-36. What does this brief passage tell us about Adam and Eve's basic purpose on earth? Also, why is it important that Adam and Eve speak this evening prayer in unison and without rehearsal?

25. Examine lines 1006-15, the end of Book Four. What effect does the ending have on your reaction to the long quarrel that has just taken place between Gabriel and the unmasked Satan?

Book Five

26. Examine Eve's bad dream (lines 31-93).

- a) Why is this dream so dangerous to Eve? What is the key temptation in it?
- b) How does Adam instruct Eve as to the meaning of her dream? (95-128) Describe his "explanation."
- c) If you had to explain the function of dialogue in PL solely on the basis of this conversation between Adam and Eve, how would you describe this function?

27. Concentrate upon the mutual "orison" (morning prayer) that Adam and Eve sing jointly. (153-208)

- a) What is the purpose of unfallen (i.e. "prelapsarian") poetry? That is, what basic purpose does the morning prayer of Adam and Eve serve?
- b) Nonetheless, does this prayer or poem serve some further purpose? Does it somehow satisfy Adam's and Eve's desire to know more about the universe, more about the design of an "unspeakable" (156) God's design?

28. From lines 211-19, Adam and Eve set out to do their daily gardening. Clearly, tending the flowers and trees is an important activity in paradise. What does the need to perform this activity tell us about the "place" that Adam and Eve hold in the universe and about their responsibilities to God? (Think of the plants they tend as figures for the tenders themselves.)

29. From line 350 onwards, Raphael holds a genial conversation with Adam and Eve. (The conversation, of course, is replete with a warning.)

- a) At line 451, Adam becomes curious about "things above his world" (456). How does Raphael answer him? Explain the promise he makes to Adam concerning his and Eve's spiritual progress?
- b) In addition, explain the warning Raphael delivers to Adam from lines 500-05.

30. By line 544, Adam has become very curious, and Raphael, gentle angel that he is, assents at line 562 to continue the story.

- a) Why does Raphael pause, even if only for a moment? Explain the reasons for his hesitation.
- b) Yet, Raphael does assent to speak of Chaos, of the War in Heaven, and -- eventually -- of the very act of creation. Contrast the narration that Adam hears with the kind of narratives that Satan has spun about some of the same events. In what way is Raphael's knowledge of things different from that of Satan?

Book Six

31. What purpose does the War in Heaven serve? (667-79, 699-709)
32. From lines 749-74, the Chariot of Christ is described. What is the nature of this chariot?
33. Find as many scenes, contrasts, etc. in Book Six as you can that relate to the War in Heaven. How many of them seem to have been intended humorously?

Book Seven

34. The narrator makes his third invocation from lines 1-39. In what respect does this invocation to "Urania" mark a significant turning point in the poem? Also, how does the figure of Bellerophon reflect upon what Milton's narrator has been describing in the first half of PL?
35. By lines 87-89, Adam has become so curious that he asks Raphael, "How first began this heav'n which we behold/ Distant so high." Observe Raphael's response from lines 110-130. Explain the warning that these lines convey to Adam and Eve.
36. Christ the Word goes to work from line 216 onwards.
- a) Contrast the figure of Christ in Books Six and Seven.
- b) Note that several passages describing the creation are taken almost verbatim from *Genesis*. What do you make of such extensive borrowing?
- c) What effect do the length and specificity of the narrator's description of the creation have upon Adam and Eve?

Book Eight

37. Examine lines 15-75, 167-78.
- a) What does Adam want to know? What is Raphael's response, and why does he so respond?
- b) Why does Eve go off at this point to do some gardening? Think of her action in terms of Renaissance psychology and contrast her way of receiving knowledge with that of Adam.
38. From lines 250-559, Adam recounts his own story, telling Raphael of his "birth" and of his dialogue with God and subsequent reception of Eve.
- a) Examine lines 250-318. Contrast Adam's reaction to his own creation with the attitude that Satan bears towards his "Father."
- b) Examine lines 338-55. Why is it important that unfallen Adam has such capacity for aptly naming God's creatures?
- c) On to Adam's dialogue with God, lines 370-451. What is God up to here? What is he "teasing" Adam into realizing about himself and his limitations, about his place in the created order?

d) Read lines 452-90. Register the intensity of Adam's yearning for Eve. In what way is this both good, and yet worrisome?

e) Eve's flattery of Adam (see 4.635-56) seemed appropriate, but why is Adam's high praise of Eve from lines 546-59 in Book Eight inappropriate?

Book Nine

26. From lines 205-384, Eve and Adam debate whether or not to separate.

a) What arguments does Eve make for parting?

b) What arguments does Adam make for remaining together?

c) What is the attitude of each to the other at parting?

27. From lines 532-732, Satan, in the form of a serpent, tempts Eve. Follow Satan's rhetoric to its conclusion. What arguments does Satan use? What is his best argument or appeal? (You might want to refer to your handouts on classical rhetoric.)

28. Compare the rhetoric that Eve uses after her fall to Satan's well-worn themes. Find the parallels, that is, between the motives and speech patterns of Eve and Satan.

Book Ten

29. Lines 354-409 mark a dysfunctional-family reunion of sorts for Satan and his daughter and son/grandchild. (Sin and Death have been busy building a great bridge from hell to earth, and Satan pauses to admire their work.) What is different this time about Satan's behavior towards these two?

30. From lines 410-577, Satan returns to Pandemonium. He is in for a big surprise. Try to work out the multiple ironies within this passage.

31. From lines 720-862, Adam laments his fallen condition; then, he catches sight of Eve and hurls misogynistic abuse at her. How does Eve respond to these angry words? (see lines 914-36) In what sense does Eve's plea to Adam mark a turning point, an upward swing from the lowest point of the fall?

32. Follow out the rest of the conversation between Adam and Eve. Mark Adam's correction from lines 1012-96 of Eve's suicidal advice. Again, how does this conversation mark a positive turning point with respect to Adam and Eve's relationship with God?

Book Eleven

33. The main event in this book is the prophetic vision that the archangel Michael gives to Adam. What does Adam see? Why should he need to see all this?

Book Twelve

34. Again, follow Michael's instructive prophecy.

- a) What shift takes place with regard to the story Michael is telling?
- b) What is Michael's ultimate command to Adam and Eve?
- c) How does Michael's advice speak to politically disillusioned John Milton, supporter of true commonwealth?

Prof. Harold Toliver's Note on the Structure of *Paradise Lost*

Books 1-2 correspond to Books 11-12: Permanent fall of Satan vs. fortunate fall of Adam and Eve.

Books 3-4 correspond to Books 9-10: God's prophecies; Satan's enterprising trips and temptations; focus on dialogue between Adam and Eve; explanation of relations between heaven and earth.

Books 5-6 correspond to Books 7-8: Books 5-8 make up a separable, yet combined, block. Adam and Eve are instructed about events in heaven and about their place in the created order. The whole block 5-8 concerns the War in Heaven and its consequences. Christ appears as a warrior in 5-6; he appears as the Word in 7-8.

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. B. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

THOMAS MORE QUESTIONS

Assigned: from *Utopia* (503-25 7th edition; 518-90 8th; questions should be updated to cover full text).

From *Utopia*

"More Meets a Returned Traveler"

1. How does the preliminary information provided by Peter Giles establish a reader's expectation about the way to take Raphael Hythloday's narrative?
2. What is Raphael's view of the court, and of participation in its affairs? In what sense are his statements in part a justification of author Thomas More's purpose in offering his readers the book *Utopia*?

"The Geography of Utopia"

3. How did Utopus found his kingdom? Why do you suppose he preferred his people to be island dwellers rather than mainlanders?
4. How does the development of Utopia's urban areas differ from the way cities develop in the real world? What implied criticism is More making of town life and growth in his day?

5. How does the society Raphael describes amount to something like “communism,” at least in a pre-Marxian (i.e. pre-technological) sense?

“Their Gold and Silver”

6. Raphael says that the Utopians, unlike Europeans, make utility rather than scarcity the basis of their economic system. What does he suggest lies at the root of systems that privilege scarcity as an index of value? How does the anecdote about the pompous Anemolian ambassador help him illustrate his argument?

7. What is the use of such criticisms of what we would now call “market economics,” given that the principles of scarcity and competition were already rather deeply entrenched even in More’s day?

“Marriage Customs”

8. Observe Raphael’s comments about the Utopian view of a successful marriage. What value do the Utopians place on marriage? How, that is, does the institution serve the people and the State?

9. What is the contrast between Utopian marriage customs and European ones in More’s time? Do we moderns have something in common with the Utopians when it comes to relations before marriage?

“Religions”

10. How does Raphael say he first represented Christian doctrine to the Utopians? What effect did his presentation have?

11. What is the status of religion in Utopia? Is religion closely connected to the State, or is it independent? How might Utopian customs imply criticism of European religious practices?

12. What view of human nature emerges from the Utopians’ handling of religious beliefs? To what extent do they favor reason as the basis of religion -- that is, what is the balance or relationship between intellect and emotion in religion?

“Conclusion”

13. Raphael frankly condemns the money-based economy of Western Europe, based on his favorable experience with Utopia’s practices. To what extent do his criticisms ring true? What points of his do you agree with and disagree with? Why?

14. After Raphael has finished his story, the narrator “More” (not to be simply identified with Thomas More the real-life author) weighs in with his view of what he has heard. What is the basis of his (silent) defense of Europe’s nascent market economics? What does he say disparity in the distribution of wealth makes possible? Does he make a strong defense, or a flawed one? Explain.

15. The narrator “More” admits to being dubious about achieving the reforms suggested by Raphael’s presentation of Utopian customs. What, then, is the point of comparing a non-existent society with a

real one, if the result doesn't seem likely to change the real society? What danger lies in *not* constructing Utopias?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. 1B. 7th. edition. New York: Norton, 2000. ISBN: 1B = 0393975665.

PEARL POET QUESTIONS

Assigned: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (160-213).

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Part 1

1. On pages 162-65, how does the narrator situate King Arthur's Court in historical or mythic terms? What expectations does he establish for us as readers with respect to the rest of the story?
2. On pages 165-67, what sort of entrance does the Green Knight make? Describe his appearance and manner. What connection is implied by this appearance and manner with the ancient symbolism of the seasons?
3. On pages 168-72, what exact terms does the Green Knight offer for his "sporting wager"? How might this wager of his be associated with Christian symbolism and sacrifice? What prompts Sir Gawain to accept the challenge in Arthur's place?
4. The narrator's descriptions of King Arthur and his Court in Part 1 are on the whole positive, but what hints has the narrator offered that the Arthurians are not to be taken as idols of chivalric perfection? List as many of these hints in Part 1 as you can, and discuss two of them at least briefly.

Part 2

5. On pages 172-76, how does the Court take Sir Gawain's impending departure -- that is, what do they seem to think of the bargain he has made with the Green Knight? How do the narrator's seasonal references further establish the "atmosphere" or mood at the outset of Gawain's quest?
6. On pages 175-76, the narrator mentions that Sir Gawain's shield is embossed with a pentangle. How does he explain the symbolic importance of this ancient image? (Check the [Wikipedia Pentangle](#) entry to see what more you can add about the pentangle's symbolism and history.)
7. On pages 176-78, fighting ferocious beasts and wild men along the way, Sir Gawain rides Gringolet in search of the Green Knight, and at last comes upon a "wondrous dwelling" (line 764). On 179-85, what reception does Sir Gawain meet there? How does this Courtly setting compare to Arthur's Round Table? And what are the terms of the game that the host pledges his visitor Gawain to take part in?

Part 3

8. On pages 185-88, with the Lord out hunting as planned, the Lady makes her first trial of Sir Gawain's virtue. Describe her strategy in some detail -- what means does she employ to tempt him into an illicit encounter? How, and how well, does Gawain defend himself?
9. On pages 189-90, the narrator recounts the Lord's first hunt, which of course takes place right as the Lady is tempting Sir Gawain. Explain any further parallels you can find between the first temptation and this first hunt. Also, what do you make of the narrator's precision in describing the hunt and its aftermath, when the game must be dressed and distributed?
10. On page 190-91, the two men exchange "payment" as previously bargained, and the second part of the game begins -- another hunt, another temptation. On 188-92, as with the first sequence, explain any parallels you find between the temptation and the hunt. Consider also how this second sequence and its immediate aftermath -- exchange of "gains" and the dinner that follows -- differs from the first sequence or marks a progression in Sir Gawain's trial.
11. On pages 196-202, the narrator recounts a third and final temptation/hunt parallel sequence. How does this sequence mark a progression in Sir Gawain's trial? Why exactly does Gawain accept the girdle when the Lady offers it to him? In what sense does he deceive the Lord afterwards, before departing for the Green Chapel?

Part 4

12. On page 205, Sir Gawain is directed to the Green Chapel -- what warning does his guide make, and how does Gawain respond to this tempting offer? On pages 20-07, what misgivings does he begin to have about the whole quest thus far, and why?
13. On pages 207-10, Sir Gawain undertakes to fulfill his pledge from the previous year, taking his blow -- well, three of them, as it turns out -- from the Green Knight's axe. What explanation for his conduct does the Green Knight give on 210, and, also on 210, why does he give Gawain a clean validation of his knightly honor?
14. On pages 210-11, how does Sir Gawain react to both parts of what the Green Knight has said? What analysis does Gawain make of his own failures and the lessons he has learned, and why is it important that he voice such sentiments at this point?
15. On pages 212-13, how do King Arthur and his Knights interpret Sir Gawain's green girdle when he returns home to tell his story? On the whole, what seems to have been the point of the poem's exploration of the chivalric order -- what Christian lesson is set forth regarding the limits of virtue and the grounds for salvation?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. A. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

SAMUEL PEPYS QUESTIONS

Assigned: "The Great Fire" (2133-38); "The Deb Willet Affair" from *Diary* (2138-42).

1. What does Pepys find most striking in Londoners' response to the fire? What is most noteworthy, in your view, about his own reactions?
2. How does Pepys as a narrator handle the passage of time -- the fire seems to have raged for around four days at the beginning of September, 1666? What sorts of things does he do as the fire makes its way through the City?
3. Optional: for further information about the Great Fire of September 1666, visit [The Pepys Home Page \(http://www.pepys.info/fire.html\)](http://www.pepys.info/fire.html) or some other site on the web and set down what you find most interesting about this historical event.
4. How well, or how badly, does Pepys conduct himself with regard to the young woman Deb and his wife? What are his reflections on his feelings towards Deb and the effect it had on his marriage?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. C. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

ALEXANDER POPE QUESTIONS

Assigned: "An Essay on Criticism" (2496-2513); *The Rape of the Lock* (2513-32); "Eloisa to Abelard" (2532-40).

"An Essay on Criticism"

Part 1

1. From lines 1-45, what problems does Pope identify with his era's literary critics -- what inherent problem besets the exercise of criticism, and what additional factor makes the difficulty worse than it really needs to be?
2. From lines 46-75, what does Pope suggest good critics must understand about their capacities? Moreover, to what standard should critics adjust their individual judgments, and why should they do so?
3. Define the terms "wit" and "judgment" in Pope's eighteenth-century context. From lines 76-87, how does Pope describe the proper relationship between wit and judgment? What classical metaphor does he employ to reinforce his argument?
4. From lines 88-91, Pope identifies "Nature" as the source of poetry's "rules" -- what does he apparently mean by this term, and how did Nature serve as the source of poetic convention?
5. From lines 92-117, how does Pope characterize the golden age of criticism that he says held for a time in ancient Greece -- what was the relationship between poet and critic in those times? What subsequently went wrong, and what were the consequences?

6. From lines 118-40, what task does Pope set for modern critics with respect to classical authors, and most particularly Homer? How is the work of Homer's successor Virgil a testament to proper execution of this task? Why should modern poet and critics hold ancient texts and conventions in such high regard -- what is to be learned from them?
7. From lines 141-80, how does Pope ward off an overly prescriptive or rigid understanding of what he has just written about adhering to "the rules"? Why were the ancients sometimes right to bend or even break the rules that governed their own works? What rights do modern poets and critics have in that regard?
8. From lines 181-200, in what spirit, according to Pope, should a modern critic or artist approach the ancients? Why so? In what sense is this verse passage, taken in context, more than a mere assertion of the ancients' superiority -- how does Pope assert the power of excellent literature in any age?

Part 2

9. From lines 233-84, how does Pope follow up on the counsel against pride of individual or capricious judgment he has given in lines 201-32 -- how should a critic treat what seem to be a work's petty faults or its failures to adhere to rigorous theoretical demands? In what sense is excellence not to be confused with "perfection"?
10. From lines 285-383, Pope lays out some of the ways in which critics may be overly "fond of some subservient art" (263) -- what failings of perspective and taste does he mention in these lines?
11. From lines 285-319, a subset of the lines just mentioned, Pope offers excellent definitions of "true wit" and "true expression." What is the relationship between "true wit" and "nature"? And how does "true expression" perform a valuable service to the objects it describes -- in what sense, that is, do apt words honor the world they represent?
12. From lines 394-474, Pope weighs in on his era's quarrel over the respective merits of the ancients and the moderns, and censures critical pretensions. Where does Pope apparently come down with respect to the quarrel over the ancients and moderns? What critical fashions and affectations does he condemn? How does excellent art nonetheless triumph over such pettiness?
13. From lines 474-525, how does Pope characterize literary longevity in his own era? How does he turn this elegiac point into an argument in favor of a critic's duty to recognize excellence in his or her own time?
14. From lines 530-559, what tendencies in his era's poetry does Pope say should obtain no pardon from critics? Why -- what relationship between literary corruption and social / political corruption does he assert in these lines?

Part 3

15. The first two parts of the “Essay” deal with the relationship between critics and literary texts. But from lines 560-642, what attitude does Pope suggest critics ought to take towards their own readers? What should readers expect from the critics they consult, in addition to sound judgments about the merits of a given work of art?
16. From lines 643-80, what examples of excellent criticism does Pope provide from his knowledge of the ancients?
17. From lines 681-744, what narrative does Pope offer for the development of criticism from the fall of Rome to his own day? What are Pope’s wishes for the near future with respect to English criticism and literature?

The Rape of the Lock

18. What contemporary forms of entertainment or art take the place of a formal mock epic such as Pope’s? How many current approaches to social satire can you identify, ranging from the rough to the more refined? List them and connect the types or genres to groups or individuals.
19. Satire is usually about very specific or “topical” subjects. What things do you think most deserve a good send-up today, and what satirical or otherwise humorous approaches have you found most effective in getting across serious criticisms on those issues? Explain your reasoning.
20. What would you say is the main thing or tendency that Pope’s mock epic criticizes? Is Pope concerned to offer an alternative to the foolish ideas and pretensions he mocks, or is that not the point of his poem? Explain.
21. What might satire and comedy have as an advantage over more serious forms of art and direct criticism when it comes to making a point about politics or morals? And conversely, what risk do satirists take in employing their peculiar methods instead of criticizing things more directly?

Canto 1

22. What does the first canto suggest about the nature of the poem’s subject matter, and what does it suggest about the concept of honor? What is the connection between honor and beauty here?
23. Belinda is given a warning by her guardian spirit Ariel. How specific is this warning? How does it compare to, say, the warnings that Adam and Eve get in *Paradise lost*? How well prepared is Belinda to face her ordeal? Does the ordeal itself have anything to do with morality, or is it about something else? Explain.

Canto 2

24. What drives the Baron to form his nefarious plot? Why is the extremely serious term “rape” used to describe such a ridiculous act? (Hint: look up the Latin verb from which this word derives -- *rapio*.) What classical stories about rape or abduction might lie behind Pope’s description of Belinda’s plight?

25. What echoes of Milton's *Paradise Lost* do you find in this canto regarding what the spirits say about their task? How does Pope's style in this canto deflate or confound the seriousness of the threat the heroine faces?

Canto 3

26. This section revolves around a card game called Ombre. Why is this game particularly appropriate to the poem's subject matter, and even more specially to the relations between men and women in Pope's time?

27. Why does the guardian spirit Ariel withdraw at the crucial moment when Belinda is about to lose her lock to the Baron? And what does the Baron apparently think he has accomplished by his deed?

Canto 4

28. What classical motif does Pope borrow to describe the kindling of Belinda's wrath? What does his handling of this episode suggest about "feminine nature"?

29. How does Pope mock the pretensions of masculine honor in the figure of Sir Plume? What significance attaches to the name "Plume"?

30. What does Belinda feel she has lost -- what does she believe will be the consequences of her having lost a lock of hair to the Baron?

Canto 5

31. What is Clarissa's counsel to Belinda? Why does Belinda reject this advice?

32. Why is it better that the lock of hair should be whisked up to heaven rather than restored to its rightful owner? What does Belinda gain thereby?

"Eloisa to Abelard"

33. Many readers have found that Pope conveys a genuine sense of Eloisa's passion for Abelard. Yet, this is a very formal poem consisting in rhymed couplets. If you find the formal approach effective, what makes it so? How might rhyme, in the hands of a master like Pope, actually work in his favor?

34. How do this poem's medieval sentiment and setting assist Pope in conveying a real sense of passion flowing from his heroine to her onetime lover?

35. Eloisa's intense concentration on Abelard entails serious danger to her faith. So how does she deal with the tension between her affection for God and for Abelard? Would you call her an heroic figure by the end of the poem? Why or why not?

36. While Eloisa's words have all the fire of speech, she is writing a reply to a letter Abelard wrote for another. How does Pope turn this circumstance into an advantage -- that is, why is focusing on the

thoughts of a character writing such a letter an effective way to capture the role passion plays in even the most devout life?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. C. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

SIR WALTER RALEGH QUESTIONS

Assigned: "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd" (917-18); "What is our life? (918); "...to His Son" (918-19); "The Lie" (919-21); "Farewell, False Love" (921); "Methought I saw the grave where Laura lay" (921-22); "Nature, that washed her hands in milk" (922-23); "The Author's Epitaph..." (923); from *The discovery of the large, rich, and beautiful Empire of Guiana* (923-26) and *The History of the World* (926).

"The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd"

1. Sum up the Nymph's objection to the Shepherd's courting song -- what are her main reasons for rejecting it? Study Marlowe's original poem in Volume 1B so you can refer to it in your response.
2. Explain, with reference to a few of Raleigh's poems and prose selections that deal with the subject of death ("The Author's Epitaph, Made by Himself" and selection from *The History of the World* -- Conclusion: "On Death," "What is our life?") what his attitude towards it seems to be.

"The Lie"

3. In Elizabethan parlance, what does "giving the lie" to someone mean? What consequence is to be expected after giving another person the lie?
4. If you put all the objects of Raleigh's speaker's criticism together, what outlook on life do you come up with? Compare this outlook to what you find in one of Sir Thomas Wyatt's poems -- for example, "Mine own John Poins" (535-37).

"Farewell, False Love," "Methought I saw the grave where Laura lay," "Nature, that washed her hands in milk"

5. Like many fellow courtiers, Raleigh is well versed in Petrarchan conventions and poses. What use of Petrarchan assumptions about love, beauty, and poetic immortality does he make in one or more of these poems?

From *The discovery of the large, rich, and beautiful Empire of Guiana*

6. What is the main rhetorical emphasis of this selection -- what is it designed to do? What points about Guiana does the author enlist in service of this goal?
7. On the whole, what stance does Raleigh adopt towards the native people of Guiana?

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EDMUND SPENSER QUESTIONS

Assigned: "Epithalamion" (907-16); Book 1 from *The Faerie Queene* (714-856).

"Epithalamion" (Wedding Song -- a Classical Genre)

1. Sketch the poem's structure as suggested in the editors' note. What thematic movements can you connect with this intricately wrought structure?

1 introductory stanza

10 stanzas as pre-wedding unit (3-4-3 subunits)

2 Wedding Stanzas: the ceremony proper

10 stanzas as post-wedding unit (3-4-3 subunits)

1 brief concluding stanza, for a total of 24 stanzas

2. Why is this wedding song set in the woods? How does the forest prove significant with regard to the poet's task and his hopes and duties as a lover? Consider, for example, each stanza's varied final-line references to the echoing of sounds through the forest: why is the echoing important for more than mere physical description?

3. With what qualities does the poet invest his bride to be? We never hear her voice in this poem -- how does that affect your view of her?

4. How do the two middle stanzas (beginning "Open the temple gates unto my love...") stand out from the surrounding stanzas? How, that is, do they render the wedding ceremony special?

5. After the ceremony, the poem moves on towards night. With what qualities does the poet invest night -- what kinds of night does he refer to?

6. "Epithalamion" ends on a traditional note about the memorializing power of verse. How has the poem both invited the passage of time and resisted it?

Assigned: Book 1 from *The Faerie Queene*.

The Faerie Queene, Book One

"A Letter of the Author's"

1. What is Spenser's attitude towards allegory?

2. What does he state as the purpose of his poem?

"The Proem"

1. What is the poet-narrator saying about his role as poet in the *FQ*?

2. What change in the poet's career is announced in lines 1-4?

3. Whom does the poet address in his invocation? Is there a logic to the changes in the "object" addressed?
4. What is the poet's view of his own powers? Does the poet's stated relationship with higher powers tell us anything about our role as interpreters of the *FQ*?
5. What conceptions of "history" does the poet invoke?

Canto 1

1. Why does the poem begin *in medias res* ("in the middle of things")? Why don't we get a recounting of the "Gentle Knight's" past?
2. Examine stanza 3. How does the knight (subsequently to be called "Red Crosse Knight"; I'll abbreviate the name as RCK), through the poet's description, 2.2 conceive of himself and the nature of his journey? What kind of generic or narrational expectations does this description set up for us?
3. Examine stanzas 11-12: a) How does the knight behave when he encounters the "hollow cave?" b) What is the lady's counsel to the knight? How does he answer her? (The lady will soon be called "Una.") c) Put this counsel and response together -- what is Spenser telling his audience about its expectations/experience of this event and of the poem as a whole?
4. Examine stanzas 14-27: a) Describe the dragon and her brood. What does she represent? See stanza 18. b) What does the fact that "Her vomit full of bookes and papers was" (20.6) tell us about the nature of the struggle? c) Describe RCK's fight with the dragon; how does he manage to win? d) What do you make of the fate suffered by the dragon's "scattered brood" in stanzas 25-26?
5. Examine stanzas 29-38, in which Archimago (here referred to as an old hermit) is introduced to RCK and to us. a) Describe the way in which the presentation of Archimago as an "aged Sire" unfolds through these stanzas. b) How much of a gap is there between what we can tell about Archimago and what RCK understands? Is this gap wider than it was in the encounter with the "hollow cave" and the dragon?
6. Examine stanzas 38-55, in which we see the creation of "Duessa," the false double of Una, and the subsequent encounter of RCK with Duessa. a) In terms of Renaissance psychology, what is the function of the dream in stanzas 46-48? How does it "soften up" RCK? b) Is RCK's encounter with Duessa qualitatively different than his encounter with the dragon? How so? c) How well has Duessa's ploy worked by the end of "Canto 1?"

Canto 2:

1. Read stanzas 1-6, in which RCK catches Duessa and her lover "in the act": a) What finally works for Archimago? What feeling has he aroused in RCK? b) Compare RCK's response to what he sees here to his response to the dragon's challenge in the first canto. c) Why does "that aged Sire" Archimago *restrain* RCK, and what effect does that have on RCK? d) When RCK and his dwarf "both away do fly" at the end of stanza 6, what in fact is RCK fleeing? Where is he going?

2. For stanzas 9-11, in which Archimago schemes to undo wandering Una: a) When Archimago is characterized in stanza 10 as “Protean” and as often taking the shape of birds, fishes, foxes, and dragons, what is Spenser saying about this villain’s ontological status? b) To what “element” does each animal refer us? What is Spenser saying about Archimago’s range of power? c) Think about the comparison of Archimago to a dragon. Now, where have we come upon this animal in the poem? Does this tell us anything about Spenser’s methodology in using images?
3. As for the action in stanzas 12-27, when the real RCK conquers Sans Foy and inherits that “Sarazin’s” shield and lady, “Fidessa,” what exactly has he won? Who or what is the lady, and what is embossed on the shield?
4. Now to the encounter with Fradubio from stanzas 28-45: a) Does stanza 28 call to mind an earlier “place?” Explain the pattern you see here. b) Describe Fradubio’s story briefly. What sort of man was he once, and why has he metamorphosed into a tree? What error in love did he commit? Why is it important that he has turned specifically into a tree? c) Does the fact that Fradubio has “metamorphosed” connect him to any other figure in this canto? Which one would that be, and what does this connection imply about Fradubio?
5. Fradubio, continued: d) What should RCK take as the lesson of Fradubio’s sad story? What should he presently do, or not do? e) Does RCK understand the warning implied by Fradubio’s story by the end of the canto? f) As for the nature of this warning -- would you say that the medium in which it is delivered is more, or less, explicit than that of previous warnings?

Canto 3

1. In the second canto Spenser was appealing to RCK’s (and the audience’s) intellect, but what is he appealing to in “Canto 3?” Refer to the narrator’s description of Una in stanzas 1-4 and notice his own attitude towards her.
2. In stanzas 5-7, a fierce lion prepares to attack Una but thinks better of it. a) Why does the lion stop? What wins him over? b) To whom does Una compare the lion, and what does that comparison say about the lion’s function in this canto?
3. In stanzas 10-25, wandering Una asks for refuge in the home of Abessa and her mother Corceca. Una stays the night, and leaves after the lion has killed Kirkrapine: a) What is the significance of the characters’ names -- Abessa, Corceca, and Kirkrapine? What is the allegorical meaning of this episode? b) When Una first seeks refuge, what response does she receive? See stanza 13. c) Is there any lesson for Una in this episode?
4. In stanzas 26-39, Una meets up with Archimago, whom she takes for RCK. Archimago is defeated in battle by Sans Loy, brother of Sans Foy. Sans Loy and Una recognize the wounded Archimago. a) What is Una’s fault in allowing herself to be deceived by Archimago? Why, that is, does she so eagerly accept this mirage of her own RCK? In what way does this fault differ from that of RCK in abandoning her? b) Why does Sans Loy come after Sans Foy? What is Spenser saying by this order? c) Why is Sans Loy able to defeat Archimago?

5. Why is the lion's power inadequate to defeat Sans Loy? (Think about this question in spiritual or religious terms.)
6. How does the canto end? What does the phrase "wandering woe" imply about Una's journey at this point? Is she, in fact, *going* anywhere?

Canto 4

1. In what way does Spenser's "poet" pass judgment in stanza 7 on RCK's behavior so far?
2. RCK has been wandering around in the wilderness for most of the first three cantos, except for his short stay with Archimago. So what does the sight/site of a *city* seem to offer him?
3. Analyze the description of the "Pallace" in stanzas 4-5: a) Of what is the palace essentially composed, and why is that important? b) How does the line, "High lifted up were many lofty towres" in stanza 5 look back to an episode in the Hebrew Scriptures (*Genesis* 11)? c) At the very top of the highest tower is a clock that tells "the timely howres" (stanza 5.9). What is the point of this?
4. In stanza 8, the poet says of Pride, the "mayden Queene," that "her bright blazing beauty did assay/
To dim the brightnesse of her glorious throne,/ As envying her selfe that too exceeding shone" (7.9). What does such jealousy aimed at a material object say about Lucifera?
5. Examine stanzas 10-11. What is ironic about the Queene's "vertical" ambitions? Perhaps one can only get at the root of this question by considering, literally, the "emplotment," the embedding, of the House of Pride within the large narrative progression of the *FQ*. In order to "get somewhere" (at least in some sense) in Spenser's poem, what does one have to do? But what have Queene Lucifera and her servants done?
6. Follow out the progression of Lucifera's six counselors, the other deadly sins of Idleness, Gluttony, Lechery, Avarice, Envy, and Wrath from stanzas 18-34: a) What is the point of parading the Sins around like this? b) What must RCK be doing during all this commotion, and why is the contrast significant?
7. RE stanzas 36-38.3, in which Satan is shown to be behind all the sins and in which all the residents of the House of Pride go for a circular jaunt: a) The residents *seem* to be going somewhere, but how is the very idea of "motion" (in any meaningful sense) undercut by several images in these stanzas? b) Considering the quality of the journey-makers here, what do you make of the fact that they return in what seems to us so little time? c) What is RCK's attitude towards the jaunt?
8. From stanza 38 to the end of the fourth canto, we are introduced to Sans Joy, the last of the "paynim" (i.e. pagan) brothers; Sans Joy fights briefly with RCK, but then a more "civil" (?) contest is set up, and on the eve of this tournament, Duessa secretly promises aid to Sans Joy. a) What is Sans Joy's purpose in challenging RCK? How would you characterize his code of honor, and why is his name so appropriate in light of that code? b) If RCK wins the battle, what will he have gained?

Canto 5

1. Well, RCK has won his fight with Sans Joy. Examine his behavior in stanzas 15-16. How is the real motive of the fight revealed in stanza 15? What should alarm us about RCK's actions in stanza 16?
2. Duessa descends to Hell to save Sans Joy. When Odysseus and Aeneas visited Hades, they brought back knowledge, hope for the future. But examine Duessa's descent -- what, if anything, does she learn? How well does her "discovery," Aesculapius, do in healing Sans Joy? (Stanzas 20-44)
3. In stanzas 45-53, RCK discovers Lucifera's dungeon. a) How does he manage to do this? b) Compare what RCK learns about the House of Pride with what we as readers have been allowed to see, thanks to our view of Duessa's descent to Hell. How does the gap in knowledge help us to assess the current status of RCK's understanding of himself and his mission?

Canto 6

1. a) What is the role of the fauns and satyrs in this canto through stanza 19? b) Whom do they replace in this role, and why is this substitution important? c) What historical age do the fauns and satyrs represent? d) Examine stanza 19 -- why is the behavior of the fauns and satyrs inappropriate?
2. In stanza 20 and onwards, we are introduced to Sir Satyrane.
 - a) How does he differ from the fauns and satyrs? b) Examine his behavior in the rest of the canto -- to what extent is he successful in his role as Una's guardian? At what point or level does he fall short? Why?

Canto 7

1. Observe the natural setting and RCK's behavior through the first seven stanzas -- does it call to mind a previous pattern?
2. The "hideous Geant" Orgoglio appears in stanza 7. Why is it important that he appears just when he does? What does he represent?
3. What role does the dwarf play from stanzas 19-28?
4. Arthur appears from stanza 29 onwards. Contrast the description of Arthur's appearance, bearing, and shield with similar aspects of RCK in both "Canto 1" (at the very beginning of the poem) and the beginning of "Canto 7." What shift or advance in the poem does Arthur represent?

Canto 8

1. From the beginning of the canto to stanza 24, Arthur is engaged in a long battle to rescue RCK from the evil clutches of Orgoglio.
 - a) Here we need to think about what Orgoglio represents -- think back to "Canto 7." b) How exactly -- by what means -- does Arthur defeat Orgoglio? Examine Arthur's use of his armor and the progression of injuries he deals Orgoglio. What do the armor and the actions symbolize?

2. When RCK is “liberated” from the dungeon of Orgoglio, what is his physical condition?
3. Concentrate on the unmasking of Duessa after Orgoglio, her champion, is defeated. (See stanzas 46-50.) What is particularly noteworthy about the *way* in which Duessa’s evil is finally presented?

Canto 9

1. The first twenty stanzas detail Arthur’s history, his quest for the Faerie Queene. To get at the significance or lesson for RCK embedded in this history that is recounted to him, examine the presentation of Arthur’s dream in stanzas 13-15. What does the queen ask of Arthur? What does he resolve upon awakening?
2. Arthur departs on his quest after giving RCK some “drops of liquor pure” (19.3) representing “grace.” RCK, in turn, gives Arthur the *New Testament*. With Arthur gone, RCK meets up with the terrified Sir Trevisan, who is fleeing Despair. Needless to say, RCK himself decides in stanza 32 to go and find this character. Observe RCK’s argument with Despair from stanzas 37-47, and then his reaction afterwards to what he has heard from Despair. (See stanzas 48-54.) Whom would you say wins the argument, and why?

Canto 10

1. Now RCK moves on to the House of Holiness, where, for one thing, he is introduced to some striking allegorical characters -- Fidelia, Esperanza, Charissa, Obedience, Patience, Mercy, Contemplation, and so on. How does Spenser’s presentation of this allegory differ from his treatment of earlier allegorical scenes and characters, and in particular to the evil characters?
2. What is the significance of the “treatment” first prescribed to RCK by Patience in stanzas 24-28?
3. Examine the vision of the New Jerusalem, or Heavenly City (beginning at stanza 53), that Contemplation finally grants to RCK. a) In what way is RCK’s later reaction to this vision erroneous? (See stanza 58.) b) Why does Contemplation have to tell RCK his lineage immediately following the latter’s reaction to the sight of the New Jerusalem?

Canto 11

1. Concentrate on Day One of the fight between RCK and the dragon, stanzas 1-30: a) The style of Spenser’s verse here is indeed heroic, but can you see how he seems to downplay the apocalyptic overtones of the fight? (Refer to stanzas 6-7.) b) Examine the description of the dragon and then the long fight. Why does RCK get the worst of it on this first day? Stanzas 29-30 should be helpful here, if you consider that RCK’s fall into the Well of Life symbolizes baptism.
2. Day two is covered by stanzas 33-48: a) Round two also goes to the dragon, though RCK’s performance improves. Examine stanza 45 -- why is it significant that RCK is again afraid of the heat generated by the dragon? Think back to earlier cantos -- what does heat symbolize? b) RCK takes another fortunate fall just in time in stanzas 46-48. Why is the blood of Christ more efficacious than RCK’s first baptism?

3. Round three -- a knockout for RCK in stanzas 51-55: a) What point is Spenser making by allowing RCK to win this final round so quickly? b) Examine stanza 54 closely. What do you make of Spenser's tactic of repetition -- "so down he fell" -- in this stanza? What does the variety of descriptions of the dragon's final defeat tell us about the nature of what has happened? c) Now examine stanza 55. Here RCK is actually said to tremble at what he has accomplished. Again, what is Spenser telling us by this description about the nature of the whole fight with the dragon?

Canto 12

1. In this canto, Spenser's language turns from heroic tones to something far simpler. Note particularly his repeated claims or insinuations that his language is inadequate to the task at hand. Refer to stanzas 14.5-6, 22.6-9, and 23 entire. Why does he do this? Consider what this town is that RCK has liberated.
2. Examine stanzas 17-18. Why is RCK's wise response to the King's advice or entreaty crucial as an indicator of the spiritual progress that the former has made?
3. In stanza 24, Archimago scurries onto the scene. What does he want to achieve now, and why does he fail?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. B. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

LAURENCE STERNE QUESTIONS

Assigned: *A Sentimental Journey*.

A Sentimental Journey

1. What seems to be the attitude of our narrator Yorick regarding the value of travel, both for the individual and for humankind generally? What relationship between sentiment (character, moral feelings, etc.) and travel does this book suggest? To what extent would you say this book is a serious instance of travel narrative, and to what extent is Sterne just having fun with this popular and highly regarded genre?
2. How does the narrator deal with the causes of his feelings and his conduct towards others? How is his narrative indebted to the prevalent doctrine of "the association of ideas" as we have discussed it in class? In what sense, that is, does Sterne make fun of this doctrine, without necessarily denying its validity?
3. Sterne said that criticisms of *Tristram Shandy* led him to write something more innocent than that quibblesome book. To what extent might we take *A Sentimental Journey* as "innocent" in spite of the narrator's references to the sexual feelings aroused by his interaction with the women he meets? What is the suggested relationship, for instance, between high and noble states such as "benevolence" and basic erotic passion?

4. Yorick offers a number of observations about the French people and their language. What view on the whole emerges regarding them? How do French people and their language supposedly differ from the English? What affinities make them kin nonetheless?
5. The travel narrative relies on the eighteenth-century Enlightenment notion that there is such a thing as “universal human nature.” That’s why travel writers can detail so many differences from one culture and language to another, and yet maintain a sense of intelligibility and narrative coherence. It’s tempting to say that Sterne is somehow too modern-tending to believe in such coherence, but in what sense might his narrative not be denying such claims about the existence of “universal human nature”?

Edition: Sterne, Laurence. *A Sentimental Journey and Other Writings*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003. ISBN: 0192839969.

HENRY HOWARD, EARL OF SURREY QUESTIONS

Assigned: “The soote season” (608); “Love, that doth reign” (608-09); “So cruel prison how could betide” (610-11); “Wyatt resteth here, that quick could never rest” (612-13); “O happy dames, that may embrace” (613-14); “Martial, the things that do attain” (614).

Edition: Sterne, Laurence. *A Sentimental Journey and Other Writings*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003. ISBN: 0192839969.

“The soote season”

1. How does this poem show the potential in the new English Sonnet verse form? How do the final two lines sum up the sonnet’s meaning, allowing the speaker to reflect on what he has seen and experienced?

“Love, that doth reign and live within my thought”

2. Compare and contrast this poem with Wyatt’s “The long love.” How does the lover’s attitude differ?

“So cruel prison, how could betide “

3. Compare this poem to Wyatt’s “Whoso list his wealth and ease” and “Mine Own John Pains” in terms of the speaker’s emotional state and strategy for dealing with his circumstances.
4. How and why does the speaker reflect upon his past as a child? What insight does this reflection provide him and us?

“Wyatt resteth here, that quick could never rest”

5. What were the best of Wyatt’s qualities as an ideal courtier?

“O happy dames, that may embrace”

6. The speaker is female. How does the poet convey this female speaker's passions, and how do the elements play with and against the her emotions?

7. In what relation does the speaker stand to the "happy dames"? What does she ask of them?

"Martial, the things that do attain "

8. What value lies in this glorification of a "mean estate" for the poet? What contrast is he making?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. B. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

JONATHAN SWIFT QUESTIONS

Assigned: *Gulliver's Travels* (2323-2462).

Part 1

1. On 2324-27, how does Gulliver appear to regard his own story's publication -- what effect, if any, does he expect it will have on readers?
2. On 2328, what first led Gulliver to follow the course of life he did -- that of an adventurer and traveler? Do his motives change as time passes? Explain with reference to at least one later passage.
3. Gulliver's first meeting is with the tiny Lilliputians. How would you compare their characteristics and practices with those of Gulliver's society, Britain and Europe generally? Are the Lilliputians better, worse, the same? Explain your reasoning, with specific reference to a few brief episodes in Part 1.

Part 2

4. In what sense is Gulliver diminished in more than size when he meets up with the giant Brobdingnagians? What does the king, for example, think of him around 2377? And what does Gulliver come to think of himself as the text continues, in this part and later on?
5. How does Swift's depiction of the Brobdingnagians reflect on ordinary humans like his readership and us? As a general question, what do you think the point of a fiction like Swift's might be? What is accomplished by so many strange comparisons between creatures of different size and shape?
6. From 2390-94, how does the King react to Gulliver's description of his native Britain? Is the King's realm similar to or very different from what Gulliver has described on behalf of England?

Part 3

7. In his account of the Lagado Academy, what basic philosophical position is Gulliver mocking? To what extent do you think that *Gulliver's Travels* as a whole (or rather the parts we are reading) counters this philosophy?

8. On 2413-18, how does Gulliver's account of the long-lived Struldbruggs deal with the problem of desire? What error or errors does this account suggest is the cause of much human folly and failure?

Part 4

9. What sort of society are the Houyhnhnms? How, for instance, do they resemble the famous Spartans of ancient Greek days? What is the guiding power in Houyhnhnm life? Are these horses flawed or incomplete in any way, or are they perfect?

10. What view of humanity emerges from the comparison Gulliver is forced to make between himself and his near-twins the Yahoos? How are the Yahoos to be differentiated from Europeans like Gulliver, if indeed they are different at all? What has happened to Gulliver's self-image and self-respect by the time he returns to England?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. C. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

HENRY VAUGHAN QUESTIONS

Assigned: "The World" (1632-33).

"The World"

1. Often Vaughan's speaker is solitary and meditative. What is the speaker's perspective in this poem? What kind of connection does he have with those he surveys in his vision?
2. What links the lover, the statesman, and the miser?
3. How do you interpret the poem's final stanza -- what is "this ring"? Why does the respondent whisper? What religious message does the stanza impart?
4. To what extent does the biblical passage at the end explain the poem?

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THE WAKEFIELD MASTER QUESTIONS

Assigned: *The Second Shepherds' Play* (406-35).

The Second Shepherds' Play

1. What makes the Shepherds realistic characters? For instance, what sorts of things do they complain about? What lies at the bottom of their several complaints?
2. What is the relationship between Daw and his masters Coll and Gib? Do they get along well?

3. What is the significance of the harsh weather?
4. What makes the Shepherds suspicious of Mak from the outset? What does he complain about? Is he “just Mak,” or does he stand for something larger than himself?
5. How does Mak manage to steal the sheep?
6. How does Mak’s plan to hide his stolen sheep turn out to be a blasphemous parody of both the Nativity and the Incarnation? (Look up these terms if they are not clear to you.)
7. Why do the Shepherds return to Mak’s home? And why do they decide to show him mercy? What is the theological point of such mercy; what does it allow to happen?

Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. A. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 1 (Vols. ABC) 0-393-92833-0.

JOHN WEBSTER QUESTIONS

Assigned: *The Duchess of Malfi* (1461-1535).

The Duchess of Malfi

Act 1

1. In Act 1, Scene 1, what does Antonio suggest about how best to maintain a court or govern a realm, based on his observances in France, from whence he has just returned? What is his opinion of Daniel de Bosola?
2. In Act 1, Scene 1, what “suit” does Bosola press upon the Cardinal? What grievances does he lay bare to Delio after the Cardinal leaves the stage? What does he think of the Cardinal and Duke Ferdinand of Calabria?
3. In Act 1, Scene 2, what “portrait” of the Duchess of Malfi does Antonio offer Delio—what virtues does he claim she possesses? Does any other exchange in this scene call Antonio’s idyllic portrait into question? If so, what is it?
4. In Act 1, Scene 2, what employments do Ferdinand and the Cardinal determine upon for Bosola, and why? How does Bosola react to the requests and offers he receives? The scene certainly proves him a villain, but what complexity and subtlety of character might it also be said to introduce as well?
5. In Act 1, Scene 3, why doesn’t Ferdinand want his sister the Duchess to remarry? As for the Duchess, how does she respond to the Duke’s challenge, and what determination does she reveal after he exits and before her conversation with Antonio?
6. In Act 1, Scene 3, the Duchess courts and informally weds her steward Antonio. In what manner does she woo him? How does Antonio take the news of her desire to marry him? What concerns seem to account for his reaction?

7. In Act 1, Scene 3, to what extent does the Duchess understand the dangers her secret marriage has created for her as ruler of Malfi? To what extent does she understand the power of the resistance she will continue to meet?

Act 2

8. In Act 2, Scene 1 (lines 20-57), Bosola speaks with an old woman about the art of makeup. What philosophical lesson does Bosola infer from his “meditation” on face-painting?

9. In Act 2, Scene 1, what stratagem does Bosola devise for exposing the Duchess, whom he correctly suspects to be pregnant? What is the outcome of this plan in the next two scenes—how much does Bosola know about the Duchess’ situation at this point, and what does Antonio do to manage the danger to himself and the Duchess?

10. In Act 2, Scene 5, how does Duke Ferdinand react to the news that his sister the Duchess has had a child against his wishes? Does it seem rational? What would you suggest underlies his reaction?

Act 3

11. In Act 3, Scene 1, what assumptions are the public beginning to make about the Duchess, and about Antonio as her steward? Also in this scene, what accounts for the respect Ferdinand shows for Bosola when the two confer about the Duchess?

12. In Act 3, Scene 2, when she is surprised by Duke Ferdinand, how well does the Duchess defend herself against his angry condemnation of her determination to follow her desires? What exactly is her counter-argument, and how sound is it, considering her status as a political or public figure?

13. In Act 3, Scene 2, how does Bosola win the Duchess’ confidence regarding her scheme to leave Malfi for Ancona—what qualities as a “politician” (in his Machiavellian sense of intelligence-gatherer and manipulator) does he show in this scene?

14. In Act 3, Scene 3, what plan do the Cardinal and Ferdinand settle on to deal with the Duchess? Why is the Cardinal resigning his high position in the Church?

15. In Act 3, Scene 4, why do you suppose Webster represents the banishment of the Duchess and Antonio in a “dumb show” rather than handling this event in a more realistic manner?

16. In Act 3, Scene 5, when Bosola arrives with a guard to escort the Duchess back to her Palace, how does she take this turn of events that leaves her a prisoner in her own realm? What philosophical observations does she offer to explain her reaction?

Act 4

17. In Act 4, Scene 1, in what state of mind does the Duchess meet her death? Is her death what you would call that of a “tragic hero”? Why or why not? Also, what purpose does the playwright’s representation of Cariola’s death serve in this scene?

18. In Act 4, Scene 2, what part does Bosola play in the Duchess' murder? In the wake of her death (including the point where she briefly revives), how credible do you find Bosola's change of heart about his role in the evil that has been done? Does it redeem him to any significant degree? Why or why not?

Act 5

19. In Act 5, Scene 2, what does Bosola find out about the Cardinal, and by what means? What motivates the Cardinal to plot the death of Antonio, and why does he poison Julia? What change has taken place in Bosola by this point?

20. How does Antonio understand his own situation in Scenes 1 and 3? What does he suppose concerning the Duchess, and what hint does his conversation with an Echo provide? What tragic misunderstanding causes Bosola to kill Antonio?

21. In Act 5, Scene 5, what features make this final scene, in which Ferdinand, the Cardinal, and Bosola meet their fates, a classic "revenge tragedy" ending (beyond the simple fact that several characters die)? How are the deaths particularly appropriate to each man, and what lesson might an audience draw from them?

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SIR THOMAS WYATT QUESTIONS

Assigned: "The long love..." (594); "Whoso list to hunt" (595); "My galley" (597); "Divers doth use" (598); "Madam, withouten many words" (599); "They flee from me," both versions (599-600); "My lute, awake!" (600-01); "Forget not yet" (601-02); "Blame not my lute" (602-03); "Who list his wealth and ease retain" (603-04); "Mine Own John Pains" (604-06).

General Questions

1. After reading the poems referred to below, what sense do you get about the speaker's view of court life?
2. Again, after reading the poems, what can you say about Wyatt's attitude towards women? By what means does he construct images of females in each poem?

"The long love that in my thought doth harbor"

3. What is the basic conceit, or extended metaphor, of this poem?
4. Now examine the conceit more closely; is it more than just a one-dimensional emblem for a physiological reaction? Follow the conceit through line 11 -- what does it reveal about the speaker's psyche?

5. Put the speaker, the "I," of the poem into some relation with the "warrior" of the conceit. What does this relationship reveal about the speaker? Lines 12-14 are important here.
6. What sense do you get of the female in this poem? What sort of character would you say she has?
7. What are the laws of love referred to in the first line? Does this idea that love has "laws" get contradicted in this poem and elsewhere?

"Whoso list to hunt"

8. Study the guide (included at bottom) that contains Petrarch's "Una Candida Cerva" and the passage from The Gospel of Saint John. Compare Wyatt's adaptation to its parent, Petrarch's poem. In bold terms, what is the difference between Petrarch's "white deer" and Wyatt's "hind?"
9. Describe the attitude of each sonnet's speaker towards his predicament and towards his "deer." How does each speaker characterize himself?
10. Despite the seeming worldliness of Wyatt's sonnet, how might his religious allusions be important to our reading?

Note on Wyatt's "Whoso List to Hunt": Refer to *John* 20:15-17: "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." Note: the Vulgate Bible's "touch me not" is "noli me tangere."

"My galley"

11. Explain the poem's conceit. For example, what is the ocean? What is the galley? What are the stars mentioned at the end of the poem?
12. How is this poem typical of Wyatt's love poems in its handling of the speaker's expectations and assumptions?

"Divers doth use"

13. How does the speaker's attitude differ from what you have observed in other Wyatt poems? Does his presentation of the female beloved differ? Explain.

"Madam, withouten many words"

14. How does the poem contrast words and acts within the rituals of courtship?
15. In line 4, what does the word "wit" mean? What exactly is the lover asking for? How does he try to protect himself?

16. What view of courtly love emerges from this poem? Describe it.

“They flee from me” (See also “The Lover Showeth...”)

17. Consider this poem’s twists and turns on the basis of the opposition “aggression/passivity” or “domination/submission.” How do images of the speaker and his female companions change through each stanza?

18. What mental process would you suggest that the poem’s speaker is undergoing? How does he capture the psychology of the lover?

19. How does the twisting quality of this poem relate to the matter of the speaker’s reflections?

20. How do you interpret the phrase, “strange fashion of forsaking” as well as the poem’s final two lines? Is the speaker challenging Petrarchan handling of the female?

“My lute, awake!”

21. What is the function of the speaker’s address to his lute? Who else does he address?

22. How is the poem an attempt to bring order to the passions?

“Forget not yet”

23. What is the irony of this poem -- to what does “forget not this” refer?

24. How does the poet place the writing of verses among the tasks proper to a lover?

“Blame not my lute”

25. In what way is lute-playing metaphorical? What is the speaker suggesting about the source of courtly poetry and of its significance?

“Who list his wealth and ease retain”

26. How does this poem resemble a psalm?

27. What is its purpose in light of the circumstances to which it refers? What lesson does the speaker draw from his predicament?

“Mine Own John Poins”

28. How would you characterize the speaker’s state of mind, his feelings about being separated from the courtly world? And what view does the speaker offer regarding the monarch, center of the courtly sphere?

29. What contrast between seeming and being does he make? And what contrast between the active and contemplative life do you find?

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Edition: Abrams, M. H. et al. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. 1B. 7th. ed. New York: Norton, 2000. ISBN 0393975665.