

INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE

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SUMMER SEMESTER

SESSION 1

INTRODUCTORY

In the first class of summer semester we will be discussing four pieces of verse. Read the poems and consider the following questions with a view to discussing them in class.

1. What kind of attitude to the natural world is indicated in each poem?
2. What is the role of the speaker in each poem?
3. How do the formal aspects of the poems differ?
4. When, approximately, do you think each of the poems was written and why (basing your judgement on your answers to the previous three questions)?

A. Windsor Forest

The Groves of *Eden*, vanish'd now so long,
Live in description, and look green in song:
These, were my breast inspir'd with equal flame
Like them in beauty, should be like in fame.
Here hills and vales, the woodland and the plain, 5
Here earth and water seem to strive again,
Not *Chaos*-like together crush'd and bruis'd
But, as the world, harmoniously confus'd:
Where order in variety we see,
And where, tho' all things differ, all agree. 10
Here waving groves a chequer'd scene display,
And part admit, and part exclude the day;
As some coy nymph her lover's warm address
Nor quite indulges, nor can quite repress.
There, interspers'd in lawns and op'ning glades, 15
Thin trees arise that shun each other's shades.

Here in full light the russet plains extend;
 There wrapt in clouds the blueish hills ascend:
 Ev'n the wild heath displays her purple dyes,
 And 'midst the desert fruitful fields arise 20
 That crown'd with tufted trees and springing corn
 Like verdant isles the sable waste adorn.
 Let *India* boast her plants, nor envy we
 The weeping amber, or the balmy tree,
 While by our oaks the precious loads are born, 25
 And realms commanded which those trees adorn.
 Not proud *Olympus* yields a nobler sight,
 Tho' Gods assembled grace his tow'ring height,
 Than what more humble mountains offer here,
 Where, in their blessings, all those Gods appear. 30
 See *Pan* with flocks, with fruits *Pomona* crown'd,
 Here blushing *Flora* paints th' enamel'd ground,
 Here *Ceres*' gifts in waving prospect stand,
 And nodding tempt the joyful reaper's hand,
 Rich industry¹ sits smiling on the plains, 35
 And peace and plenty tell, a *Stuart* reigns.

B. ["I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"]

I wandered lonely as a cloud
 That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
 When all at once I saw a crowd,
 A host, of golden daffodils;
 Beside the lake, beneath the trees, 5
 Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
 And twinkle on the milky way,
 They stretched in never-ending line
 Along the margin of a bay: 10
 Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
 Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
 Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
 A poet could not but be gay, 15
 In such a jocund company:
 I gazed – and gazed – but little thought
 What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
 In vacant or in pensive mood, 20
 They flash upon that inward eye
 Which is the bliss of solitude;
 And then my heart with pleasure fills,
 And dances with the daffodils.

C. Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Whose woods these are I think I know.
 His house is in the village though;

¹ Systematic work or labour.

He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer 5
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake. 10
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

D. Ravens

As we came through the gate to look at the few new lambs
On the skyline of lawn smoothness,
A raven bundled itself into air from midfield
And slid away under hard glistenings, low and guilty.
Sheep nibbling, kneeling to nibble the reluctant nibbled grass. 5
Sheep staring, their jaws pausing to think, then chewing again,
Then pausing. Over there a new lamb
Just getting up, bumping its mother's nose
As she nibbles the sugar coating off it
While the tattered banners of her triumph swing and drip from her rear-end. 10
She sneezes again and again, till she's emptied.
She carries on investigating her new present and seeing how it works.
Over here is something else. But you are still interested
In that new one, and its new spark of voice,
And its tininess. 15
Now over here, where the raven was,
Is what interests you next. Born dead,
Twisted like a scarf, a lamb of an hour or two,
Its insides, the various jellies and crimsons and transparencies
And threads and tissues pulled out 20
In straight lines, like tent ropes
From its upward belly opened like a lamb-wool slipper,
The fine anatomy of silvery ribs on display and the cavity,
The head also emptied through the eye-sockets,
The woolly limbs swathed in birth-yolk and impossible 25
To tell now which in all this field of quietly nibbling sheep
Was its mother. I explain
That it died being born. We should have been here, to help it.
So it died being born. "And did it cry?" you cry.
I pick up the dangling greasy weight by the hooves soft as dogs' pads 30
That had trodden only womb-water
And its raven-drawn strings dangle and trail,
Its loose head joggles, and "Did it cry?" you cry again.
Its two-fingered feet splay in their skin between the pressures
Of my finger and thumb and there is another, 35
Just born, all black, splaying its tripod, inching its new points

Towards its mother, and testing the note
 It finds in its mouth. But you have eyes now
 Only for the tattered bundle of throwaway lamb.
 “Did it cry?” you keep asking, in a three-year-old field-wide 40
 Piercing persistence. “Oh yes” I say “it cried.”

Though this one was lucky insofar
 As it made the attempt into a warm wind
 And its first day of death was blue and warm
 The magpies gone quiet with domestic happiness 45
 And skylarks not worrying about anything
 And the blackthorn budding confidently
 And the skyline of hills, after millions of hard years,
 Sitting soft.

SESSION 2

ANGLO-SAXON LITERATURE

A. *The Battle of Maldon*

This Anglo-Saxon poem is based on a battle fought between English forces led by Byrhtnoth, ealdorman of Essex, and a Danish raiding force at the mouth of a river near Maldon. This event is also recorded laconically in *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*: “991: In this year ealdorman Byrhtnoth was slain at Maldon, and in the same year it was decided for the first time to pay tribute to the Danes on account of the atrocities they wrought along the sea coast... . This course was adopted on the advice of Archbishop Sigeric.” Read the abridged version of the poem that follows, and consider:

1. Evidence that it records historical facts (perhaps even being based on an eye-witness account), as well as obviously invented material.
2. The views the poem reflects (on personal valour, social relations, secular and religious values, and so on).

At the point where the poem begins (in the fragmentary copy that survived until 1731, when it was destroyed in a fire), Byrhtnoth is preparing his men for battle when a Viking messenger tries to persuade him to pay a sum of money to them to stop them from attacking. Byrhtnoth angrily refuses:

“Can you hear, you pirate, what these people say? 45
 They will pay you a tribute of whistling spears,
 of deadly darts and proven swords,
 weapons to pay you, pierce, slit
 and slay you in the storm of battle.
 Listen, messenger! Take back this reply: 50
 break the bitter news to your people
 that a noble earl and his troop stand over here –
 guardians of the people and of the country, the home
 of C thelred, my prince – who will defend this land
 to the last ditch. We’ll sever the heathens’ heads 55
 from their shoulders. We would be shamed greatly
 if you took our tribute and embarked without battle
 since you’ve barged so far and brazenly into this country.
 No! You’ll not get your treasure so easily,
 The spear’s point and sword’s edge, savage battle-play, 60
 must teach us first that we have to yield tribute.”

When the flood tide of the river goes out, Byrhtnoth's men guard the causeway, but the Vikings demand to be allowed to cross the ford. Byrhtnoth, over-confident, agrees, thus giving up his tactical advantage. The Vikings cross the causeway and the fight commences.

Then the battle,
with its chance of glory, was about to begin.
The time had come for all the doomed men 105
to fall in the fight. The clamour began:
the ravens wheeled and the eagle circled overhead,
craving for carrion; there was shouting on earth.

At first Byrhtnoth and his men are successful, but luck changes quickly. When a Viking hurls a spear at him:

Byrhtnoth broke the shaft on the edge of his shield;
the imbedded spear-head sprang out of his wound.
Then he flung his spear in fury at the proud Viking
who dared inflict such pain. His aim was skilful.
The spear split open the warrior's neck. 140
Thus Byrhtnoth put paid to his enemy's life.
Then he swiftly hurled a second spear
which burst the Viking's breastplate, wounding him cruelly
in the chest; the deadly point pierced his heart.
The brave earl, Byrhtnoth, was delighted at this; 145
he laughed out loud and gave thanks to the Lord
that such good fortune had been granted to him.
But one of the seafarers sent a sharp javelin
speeding from his hand; it pierced the body
of earl Byrhtnoth, Æthelred's brave thane. 150

Another Viking advances on the fatally wounded Byrhtnoth, intending to strip him of his rich weapons:

Byrhtnoth drew out his sword from his sheath,
broad-faced and gleaming, and slashed at the man's corselet,
but one of the seafarers stopped him all too soon, 165
he destroyed the earl Byrhtnoth's arm.
The golden-hilted sword dropped from his hand.
He could hold it no longer, nor wield
A weapon of any kind. Then still the old warrior
spoke these words, encouraged the warriors, 170
called on his brave companions to do battle again.
He no longer stood firmly on his feet
but swayed, and raised his eyes to heaven:
"O Guardian of the people, let me praise and thank you
for all the joys I have known in this world. 175
Now, gracious Lord, as never before,
I need your grace, that my soul may set out
on its journey to You, O Prince of Angels,
that my soul may depart into Your power in peace.
I pray that the devils may never destroy it." 180
Then the heathens hewed him down
and the two men who stood supporting him;
Ælfnoth and Wulfmær fell to the dust,
both gave their lives in defence of their lord.

Once their leader is killed, his forces fall into disarray:

Then certain cowards beat a hasty retreat: 185
the sons of Odda were the first to take flight;
Godric fled from the battle, forsaking Byrhtnoth.
Forgetting how often his lord had given him
the gift of a horse, he leaped into the saddle
of his lord's own horse, most unlawfully, 190
and both his brothers, Godwine and Godwig,
galloped beside him; forgetting their duty
they turned from the fight and headed for the forest,
they fled to that fastness and saved their lives.
And more men followed them than was at all right 195
had they remembered the former rewards
that the prince had given them, generous gifts.

But some of the men rally, determined to fulfill their duty to their lord:

So Æthelred's earl, the prince of that people,
fell; all his hearth-companions could see
for themselves that their lord lay low.
Then the proud thanes went forth there, 205
the brave men hastened eagerly:
they all wished, then, for one of two things –
to avenge their lord or to leave this world.
Then the son of Ælfric, a warrior young in winters,
chose his words and urged them on; 210
Ælfwine said (and he spoke bravely):
“Think of all the times we boasted
at the mead-bench, heroes in the hall
predicting our own bravery in battle.
Now we shall see who meant what he said. 215
I will make known my ancestry to one and all:
I come from a mighty family of Mercian stock;
my grandfather was Ealhelm, a wise ealdorman,
well endowed with earthly riches.
No thanes shall every reproach me amongst the people 220
with any desire to desert this troop
and hurry home, now that my prince has been hewn down
in battle. This is the most bitter sorrow of all:
he was my kinsman and my lord.”

The rest of what remains of the poem describes the heroic deeds and resolute speeches of those who have stayed to fight. Perhaps most memorable are the words of an “old companion” of Byrhtnoth, Byrhtwold:

“Mind must be the firmer, heart the more fierce,
courage the greater, as our strength diminishes.
Here lies our leader, hewn down,
an heroic man in the dust. 315
He who now longs to escape will lament for ever.
I am old. I will not go from here,
but I mean to lie by the side of my lord,
lie in the dust with the man I loved so dearly.”

B. *The Battle of Maldon* – the original text

Ðā wearð āfeallen þæs folces ealdor,	202
Æþelrēdes eorl. Ealle gesāwon	203
heorðgenēatas þæt hyra heorra læg.	204
Þā ðær wendon forð wlance þegenas	205
unearge men efston georne:	206
hī woldon þā ealle oðer twēga;	207
lif forlātan oððe lēofne gewrecan.	208

1. Using the glossary below, trace the connection between the original Anglo-Saxon text and its modern English translation by writing a rough translation.
2. What features strike you about Anglo-Saxon as a language? You might wish to consider such things as declension, word-order, typography and so on.
3. In class you will be listening to a recording of the extract. Guided by this spoken text, try to mark the main stresses.
4. What do you notice about the stressed syllables?

Line 202:	wendan – to go (forth)
þā – then	forð – forth
weorðan – to come to be, to happen	wlance – proud, exulting
feallan – to fall (in battle)	þegn – thane, nobleman (nom. sing.)
se – this/that/the (nominative case)	Line 206:
folc – people, army (nom.sing.)	un-earg – fearless, brave (nom. sing.)
ealdor – lord, prince (nom.sing.)	efstan – hasten
	georne – eagerly
Line 203:	Line 207:
eorl – ealdorman, nobleman (nom. sing.)	hī – they
eal(l) – all	willan – to wish, to want, to will
sēon – to see	oðer – one (of two)
Line 204:	twēgen – two
heorðgenēat – hearth companion (nom. sing.)	Line 208:
þæt – that	lif – life
hyra – their (genitive pl.)	forlātan – to lose
heorra – lord (nom.sing.)	oððe – or, either...or
licgan – to lie	lēof – dear (nom.)
Line 205:	gewrecan – to avenge
ðær – there	

C. Riddles

Riddles were a favourite form of verse in Anglo-Saxon times. Here are some in modern English translation. Try to discover what things the poems describe.

There is on earth a warrior wonderfully engendered:
Between two dumb creatures it is drawn into brightness
For the use of men. Meaning harm, a foe
Bears it against his foe. Fierce in its strength,
A woman may tame it. Well will he heed
And meekly serve both men and women
If they have the trick of tending him,
And feed him properly. He promotes their happiness,
Enhances their lives. Allowed to become

Proud, however, he proves ungrateful.

My home is not silent; I myself am not loud.
The Lord has provided for the pair of us
A joint expedition. I am speedier than he
And sometimes stronger; he stays the course better.
Sometimes I rest, but he runs on.
For as long as I live I live in him;
If we leave one another it is I who must die.

Swings by his thigh a thing most magical!
Below the belt, beneath the folds
Of his clothes it hangs, a hole in its front end,
Stiff-set and stout, but swivels about.
Levelling the head of this hanging instrument,
Its wielder hoists his hem above the knee:
It is his will to fill a well-known hole
That it fits fully when at full length.
He has often filled it before. Now he fills it again.

I have to strive against the sea and struggle with the wind,
Often battle with both. Abandoning homeland,
I go in search of ground under water.
If I stay still I have strength for the fight;
If this fails to happen, their force is the greater;
Tearing at me, they soon turn me to flight.
They wish to plunder what I am employed to guard.
Yet I can stop them, if the strain is taken
By the rocks – and my tail. Tell my name.

I was a pure girl and a grey-maned woman
And, at the same time, a singular man.
I flew with the birds, breasted the sea,
Sank beneath the wave, dissolved among fish
And alighted on land. I had a living soul.

D. Kennings

The kenning was a poetic device common in Anglo-Saxon poetry. Its roots were in ordinary language, where two words (most often two nouns) were often combined to create a logical new word.

rod-fæstnian – to cross-fasten [to crucify]
cynestöl – king's seat [throne, chief city, capital]
æfter-genga – after-comer [successor]

In poetry, the meaning of the new word is often less obvious, for it is in fact a kind of metaphor, or a condensed, hidden simile.

Look at the kennings below and try to imagine what they mean in ordinary modern English.

medu-ærn – mead-building
hran-rād – whale-road (whale riding-place)
mere-hengest – sea-horse
hilde-nædre – war-serpent
mere-hrægel – sea-garment
freoðu-webbe – peace-weaver
hilde-leōma – light of battle
deāþ-ræced – death chamber
bān-hring – bone-ring

E. "The Seafarer"

Much, perhaps most, of Anglo-Saxon lyric poetry is in the elegiac mood. Below there are three versions of parts of one such poem, The Seafarer (lines 26-52 and 58-64): the original Anglo-Saxon and two modern versions, the first by Kevin Crossley-Holland and the second by Ezra Pound. Read the modern versions, and compare them with each other and, to the extent possible, with the original.

<p>Forþon him gelyfeð lýt, sē þe āh lifes wyn 26 gebiden in burgum, bealosīþa hwön, wlonc ond wīngāl, hū ic wērig oft in brimlāde bīdan sceolde. Nāp nihtscua, norþan snīwde, hrīm hrūsan bond, hægl fēol on eorþan, corna caldast. Forþon cnysað nū heortan geþōhtas, þæt ic hēan strēamas, sealtýþa gelæc sylf cunnige; 35 monað mōdes lust mæla gehwylce ferð tō fēran, þæt ic feor heonan elþeodigra eard gesēce. Forþon nis þæs mōdwlonc mon ofer eorþan, nē his gifena þæs gōd, nē in geoguþe tō þæs hwæt, nē in his dædum tō þæs dēor, nē him his dryhten tō þæs hold, þæt hē ā his sǣfore sorge næbbe, tō hwon hine dryhten gedōn wille. Nē biþ him tō hearpanhyge nē to hringþege, nē tō wīfe wyn nē tō worulde hyht, 45 nē ymbe ōwiht elles, nefne ymb yða gewealc, ac ā hafað longunge sē þe on lagu fundað. Bearwas blōstmum nimað, byrig fægriað, wongas wlitigað, woruld ōnetted; ealle þā gemoniað mōdes fūsne sefan tō sīþe, þām pe swā þenceð on flōdwegas feor gewītan. Forþon nū mīn hyge hweorfeð ofer hreþerlocan, mīn mōdsefa mid mereflōde 59 ofer hwæles eþel hweorfeð wīde,</p>	<p>Wherefore he who is used to the comforts of life 26 and, proud and flushed with wine, suffers little hardship living in the city, will scarcely believe how I, weary, have had to make the ocean paths my home. The night-shadow grew long, it snowed from the north, frost fettered the earth; hail fell on the ground, coldest of grain. But now my blood is stirred that I should make trial of the mountainous streams, the tossing salt waves; 35 my heart's longings always urge me to undertake a journey, to visit the country of a foreign people far across the sea. On earth there is no man so self- assured, so generous with his gifts or so bold in his youth, so daring in his deeds or with such a gracious lord, that he harbours no fears about his seafaring as to what the Lord will ordain for him. He thinks not of the harp nor of receiving rings, nor of rapture in a woman nor of worldly joy, 45 nor of anything but the rolling of the waves; the seafarer will always feel longings. The groves burst with blossom, towns become fair, meadows grow green, the world revives; All these things urge the heart of the eager man to set out on a journey, he who means to travel far over the ocean paths. Wherefore my heart leaps within me, my mind roams with the waves 59 over the whale's domain, it wanders far and wide across the face of the earth, returns</p>	<p>This he little believes, who aye in winsome life 26 Abides 'mid burghers some heavy business, Wealthy and wine-flushed, how I weary oft Must bide above brine. Neareth nightshade, snoweth from north, Frost froze the land, hail fell on earth then, Corn of the coldest. Nathless there knocketh now The heart's thought that I on high streams The salt-wavy tumult traverse alone. 35 Moaneth alway my mind's lust That I fare forth, that I afar hence Seek out a foreign fastness. For this there's no mood-lofty man over earth's midst, Not though he be given his good, but will have in his youth greed; Nor his deed to the daring, nor his king to the faithful But shall have his sorrow for sea-fare Whatever his lord will. He hath not heart for harping, nor in ring-having Nor winsomeness to wife, nor world's delight 45 Nor any whit else save the wave's slash Yet longing comes upon him to fare forth on the water. Bosque taketh blossom, cometh beauty of berries, Fields to fairness, land fares brisker, All this admonisheth man eager of mood, The heart turns to travel so that he then thinks On flood-ways to be far departing. My mood 'mid the mere-flood, So that but now my heart burst from my breastlock, 59 Over the whale's acre, would wander wide. On earth's shelter cometh oft to me</p>
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eorþan scēatas,
 cymeð eft tö mē
 gifre ond grādig,
 gielleð ānfloga,
 hweteð on hwælweg
 hreþer unwearnum
 ofer holma gelagu. 64

again to me
 eager and unsatisfied;
 the solitary bird screams,
 irresistible, urges the heart
 to the whale's way
 over the stretch of the seas. 64

Eager and ready, the crying lone-flyer,
 Whets for the whale-
 path the heart
 irresistibly,
 O'r tracks of ocean 64

1. Which of the modern versions do you prefer? Why?
2. In what ways have the translators tried to retain aspects of the original poem and of Anglo-Saxon verse technique?
3. How would you describe the mood of the extract, its depiction of the natural world and its narrator's response to the sea?

SESSION 3

THE MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

Preparation:

1. Listen to the short interview entitled "Joseph Campbell – 'Let's Talk about Love'", which can be found on a cassette available in the SAC; reflect on what he suggests about the nature of love.

A. Read the following passages from the *Morte D'Arthur* by Sir Thomas Malory (c. 1408 – c. 1471).

(*The Conspiracy against Lancelot and Guinevere*)

So when the night came, Sir Lancelot told Sir Bors² how he would go that night and speak with the Queen.

"Sir," said Sir Bors, "ye shall not go this night by my counsel."

"Why?" said Sir Lancelot.

"Sir," said Sir Bors, "I dread me³ ever of Sir Agravain that waiteth upon⁴ you daily to do shame and us all. And never gave my heart against no going that ever ye went⁵ to the queen so much as now, for I mistrust⁶ that the King is out of this night from the Queen because peradventure he hath lain⁷ some watch for you and the Queen. Therefore, I dread me sore of some treason."

"Have ye no dread," said Sir Lancelot, "for I shall go and come again and make no tarrying."

"Sir," said Sir Bors, "that me repents,⁸ for I dread me sore that your going this night shall wrath⁹ us all."

"Fair nephew," said Sir Lancelot, "I marvel me much why ye say thus, sithen¹⁰ the Queen hath sent for me. And wit you well, I will not be so much a coward, but she shall understand I will¹¹ see her good grace."

"God speed you well," said Sir Bors, "and send you sound and safe again!"

So Sir Lancelot departed and took his sword under his arm, and so he walked in his mantel,¹² that noble knight, and put himself in great jeopardy. And so he passed on till he came to the Queen's

2 Nephew and confidant of Sir Lancelot.

3 I am afraid.

4 Lies in wait.

5 Never misgave my heart against any visit you made.

6 Suspect.

7 Perhaps he has set.

8 I regret.

9 Cause injury to.

10 Since.

11 Wish to.

12 Cloak. Lancelot goes unarmed.

chamber, and so lightly he was had¹³ into the chamber. And then, as the French book saith, the Queen and Sir Lancelot were together. And whether they were abed or at other manner of disports,¹⁴ me list¹⁵ not thereof make no mention, for love that time¹⁶ was not as love is nowadays.

But thus as they were together came Sir Agravain and Sir Mordred with twelve knights with them of the Round Table, and they said with great crying and scaring¹⁷ voice: "Thou traitor, Sir Lancelot, now are thou taken!" And thus they cried with a loud voice that all the court might hear it. And these fourteen knights all were armed at all points,¹⁸ as¹⁹ they should fight in a battle.

"Alas!" said Queen Guinevere, "now are we mischieved²⁰ both!"

"Madam," said Sir Lancelot, "is there here any armor within your chamber that I might cover my body withal? And if there be any, give it me, and I shall soon stint²¹ their malice, by the grace of God!"

"Now, truly," said the Queen, "I have none armor neither helm, shield, sword, neither spear, wherefore I dread me sore our long love is come to a mischievous end. For I hear by their noise there be many noble knights, and well I woot they be surely²² armed, and against them ye may make no resistance. Wherefore ye are likely to be slain, and then shall I be burned! For and²³ ye might escape them," said the Queen, "I would not doubt but that ye would rescue me in what danger that ever I stood in."

"Alas!" said Sir Lancelot, "in all my life thus was I never bestead²⁴ that I should be thus shamefuley slain for lack of mine armor."

But ever in one²⁵ Sir Agravain and Sir Mordred cried: "Traitor knight, come out of the Queen's chamber! For wit thou well thou art beset so that thou shalt not escape."

"Ah, Jesu mercy!" said Sir Lancelot, "this shameful cry and noise I may not suffer, for better were death at once than thus to endure this pain." Then he took the Queen in his arms and kissed her and said, "Most noblest Christian queen, I beseech you, as ye have been ever my special good lady, and I at all times your poor knight and true unto²⁶ my power, and as I never failed you in right nor in wrong sithen the first day King Arthur made me knight, that ye will pray for my soul if that I be slain. For well I am assured that Sir Bors, my nephew, and all the remnant²⁷ of my kin, with Sir Lavain and Sir Urry, that they will not fail you to rescue you from the fire. And therefore, mine own lady, recomfort yourself,²⁸ whatsoever come of me, that ye go with Sir Bors, my nephew, and Sir Urry and they all will do you all the pleasure that they may, and ye shall live like a queen upon my lands."

"Nay, Sir Lancelot, nay!" said the Queen. "Wit thou well that I will not live long after thy days. But and ye be slain I will take my death as meekly as ever did martyr take his death for Jesu Christ's sake."

"Well, Madam," said Sir Lancelot, "sith it is so that the day is come that our love must depart,²⁹ wit you well I shall sell my life as dear as I may. And a thousandfold," said Sir Lancelot, "I am more heavier³⁰ for you than for myself! And now I had liefer³¹ than to be lord of all Christendom that I had sure armor upon me, that men might speak of my deeds ere ever I were slain."

13 Quickly he was received.

14 Pastimes.

15 I care.

16 At that time.

17 Terrifying.

18 Completely.

19 As if.

20 Come to grief.

21 Stop.

22 Securely.

23 If

24 Beset.

25 In unison.

26 To the utmost of.

27 Rest.

28 Take heart again.

29 Come to an end.

30 More grieved.

31 Rather.

“Truly,” said the Queen, “and it might please God, I would that they would take me and slay me and suffer³² you to escape.”

“That shall never be,” said Sir Lancelot. “God defend me from such a shame! But, Jesu Christ, be Thou my shield and mine armor!” And therewith Sir Lancelot wrapped his mantel about his arm well and surely; and by then they had gotten a great form³³ out of the hall, and therewith they all rushed at the door. “Now, fair lords,” said Sir Lancelot, “leave³⁴ your noise and your rushing, and I shall set open this door, and then may ye do with me what it liketh you.”³⁵

“Come off,³⁶ then,” said they all, “and do it, for it availeth thee not to strive against us all. And therefore let us into this chamber, and we shall save thy life until thou come to King Arthur.”

Then Sir Lancelot unbarred the door, and with his left hand he held it open a little, that but one man might come at once. And so there came striding a good knight, a much³⁷ man and a large, and his name was called Sir Colgrevice of Gore. And he with a sword stuck at Sir Lancelot mightily. And he put aside³⁸ the stroke and gave him such a buffet³⁹ upon the helmet that he fell groveling dead within⁴⁰ the chamber door. Then Sir Lancelot with great might drew the knight within the chamber door. And then Sir Lancelot, with help of the Queen and her ladies, he was lightly⁴¹ armed in Colgrevice’s armor. And ever stood Sir Agravain and Sir Mordred, crying, “Traitor knight! Come forth out of the Queen’s chamber!”

“Ah, sirs,” said Sir Lancelot, “is there none other grace with you? Then keep⁴² yourself!” And then Sir Lancelot set all open the chamber door and mightily and knightly he strode in among them. And anon⁴³ at the first stroke he slew Sir Agravain, and after twelve of his fellows. Within a little while he had laid them down cold to the earth, for there was none of the twelve knights might stand Sir Lancelot one buffet.⁴⁴ And also he wounded Sir Mordred, and therewithal he fled with all his might.

And then Sir Lancelot returned again unto the Queen and said, “Madam, now wit you well, all our true love is brought to an end, for now will King Arthur ever be my foe. And therefore, Madam, and it like you⁴⁵ that I may have you with me, I shall save you from all manner adventurous⁴⁶ dangers.”

“Sir, that is not best,” said the Queen, “me seemeth, for now ye have done so much harm, it will be best that ye hold you still with this. And if ye see that as tomorn they will put me unto death, then may ye rescue me as ye think best.”

“I will well,”⁴⁷ said Sir Lancelot, “for have ye no doubt, while I am a man living I shall rescue you.” And then he kissed her, and either of them gave other a ring, and so there he left the Queen and went until⁴⁸ his lodging.

(The Death of Lancelot)

Then Sir Lancelot never after ate but little meat,⁴⁹ nor drank, till he was dead, for then he sickened more and more and dried and dwined⁵⁰ away. For the Bishop nor none of his fellows might not make him to eat, and little he drank, that he was waxen by a kibbet⁵¹ shorter than he was, that the people could not know him. For evermore, day and night, he prayed, but sometime he slumbered a

32 Allow.

33 Bench.

34 Stop.

35 Pleases you.

36 Go ahead.

37 Big.

38 Fended off.

39 Blow.

40 Inside.

41 Quickly.

42 Defend.

43 Right away.

44 Withstand Sir Lancelot one blow.

45 If it please you.

46 Perilous.

47 Agree.

48 To.

49 Food.

50 Wasted.

51 Grown by a cubit.

broken sleep. Ever he was lying groveling on the tomb of King Arthur and Queen Guinevere, and there was no comfort that the Bishop nor Sir Bors, nor none of his fellows could make him – it availed not.

So when Sir Bors and his fellows came to his bed, they found him stark dead. And he lay as he had smiled, and the sweetest savor⁵² about him that ever they felt. Then was there weeping and wringing of hands, and the greatest dole they made that ever made men. And on the morn the Bishop did his mass of Requiem.

And right thus as they were at their service, there came Sir Ector de Maris that had seven year sought all England, Scotland, and Wales, seeking his brother, Sir Lancelot. And when Sir Ector heard such noise and light in the choir of Joyous Garde, he alight and put his horse from him and came into the choir. And there he saw men sing and weep, and all they knew Sir Ector, but he knew not them. Then went Sir Bors unto Sir Ector and told him how there lay his brother, Sir Lancelot, dead. And then Sir Ector threw his shield, sword, and helm from him, and when he beheld Sir Lancelot's visage, he fell down in a swoon. And when he waked, it were hard any tongue to tell the doleful complaints that he made for his brother.

“Ah, Lancelot!” he said, “thou were head of all Christian knights. And now I dare say,” said Sir Ector, “thou Sir Lancelot, there thou liest, that thou were never matched of earthly knight's hand. And thou were the courtest⁵³ knight that ever bore shield. And thou were the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrode horse, and thou were the truest lover, of a sinful man,⁵⁴ that ever loved woman, and thou were the kindest man that ever struck with sword. And thou were the goodliest person that ever came among press of knights, and thou was the meekest man and the gentlest that ever ate in hall among ladies, and thou were the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in the rest.”⁵⁵

Then there was weeping and dolor out of measure.

1485

1. What sort of picture do the passages give of the ideal knight? What features of his character are stressed? How does this differ from the Anglo-Saxon ideal as personified, for example, in Byrhtnoth?
2. Consider the importance of “courtly love” in the text.
3. The *Morte d'Arthur* is the first major prose work in English. What are the main features of its narrative style? What role does “believability” play in the text? How is the author present?

B. Here are two passages from the “General Prologue” to *The Canterbury Tales*, the crowning work of Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1344-1400). One is the original text, the other a version in modern English; they describe the Knight and his son, the Squire.

A Knight ther was, and that a worthy man, That fro the time that he first bigan To riden out, he loved chivalrye, Trouthe ⁵⁶ and honour, freedom and curteisye. 4 Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre, ⁵⁷ And therto hadde he riden, no man ferre, ⁵⁸ As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse, ⁵⁹ And ⁶⁰ evere honoured for his worthnesse. At Alisandre ⁶¹ he was whan it was wonne; Ful ofte time he hadde the boord bigonne ⁶² 10	There was a <i>Knight</i> , a most distinguished man, Who from the day on which he first began To ride abroad had followed chivalry, Truth, honour, generous thought and courtesy, 4 He had done nobly in his sovereign's war And ridden into battle, no man more, As well in christian as in heathen places, And ever honoured for his noble graces. He saw the town of Alexandria fall; Often, at feasts, the highest place of all 10
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52 Odor. A sweet scent is a conventional sign in saints' lives of a sanctified death.

53 Most courteous.

54 Of any man born in original sin.

55 Support for the butt of the lance.

56 Integrity. “Freedom” here means generosity of spirit, while “curteisye” is courteous behaviour, graceful politeness.

57 War.

58 Further.

59 Heathen lands.

60 And he was.

61 The Knight's campaigns involved all three groups of pagans who threatened Europe in the fourteenth century: the Moslems in the Near East; the northern barbarians in Prussia, Lithuania and Russia; and the Moors in North Africa.

62 Sat in the seat of honour at military feasts.

Aboven alle nacions in Pruce;
 In Lettou had he reised,¹ and in Ruce,
 No Christen man so ofte of his degree;
 In Gernade at the sege eek hadde he be
 Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye; 15
 At Lyeis was he, and at Satalye,
 Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete See²
 At many a noble arivee³ hadde he be.
 At mortal batailes⁴ hadde he been fiteene,
 And foughten for oure faith at
 Tramissene 20
 In listes⁵ thries,⁶ and ay⁷ slain his fo.
 This ilke⁸ worthy Knight hadde been also
 Sometime with the lord of Palatye⁹
 Again¹⁰ another hethen in Turkye;
 And everemore he hadde a sovereign
 pris.¹¹ 25
 And though that he were worthy,¹² he was
 wis,
 And of his port¹³ as meeke as is a maide.
 He nevere yit no vilainye¹⁴ ne saide
 In al his lif unto no manere wight.¹⁵
 He was a verray,¹⁶ parfit,¹⁷ gentil knight. 30
 But for to tellen you of his array,
 His hors were goode, but he was nat gay.
 Of fustian he wered¹ a gipoun²
 Al bismotered with his haubergeoun,³
 For he was late⁴ come from his
 viage,⁵ 35
 And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.
 With him ther was his sone, a young Squier,
 A love and a lusty bachelor,
 With lokkes crulle as⁶ they were laid in presse.
 Of twenty yeer of age he was,
 I gesse. 40
 Of his stature he was of evene⁷ lengthe,
 And wonderly delivere,⁸ and of greet⁹
 strengthe.
 And he hadde been som time in chivachye¹¹
 In Flandres, in Artois, and Picardye,
 And born him wel as of so litel space,¹² 45
 In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
 Embrouded¹³ was he as it were a mede,¹⁴
 Al ful of fresshe flowers, white and rede,
 Singing he was, or floiting,¹⁵ al the day:

Among the nations fell to him in Prussia.
 In Lithuania he had fought, and Russia,
 No christian man so often, of his rank.
 And he was in Granada when they sank
 The town of Algeciras, also in 15
 North Africa, right through Benamarin;
 And in Armenia he had been as well
 And fought when Ayas and Attalia fell,
 For all along the Mediterranean coast
 He had embarked with many a noble
 host. 20
 In fifteen mortal battles he had been
 And jouted for our faith at Tramissene
 Thrice in the lists, and always killed his man.
 This same distinguished knight had led the van
 Once with the Bey of Balat, doing work
 For him against another heathen Turk;
 He was of sovereign value in all eyes 25
 And though so much distinguished, he was
 wise
 And in his bearing modest as a maid.
 He never yet a boorish thing had said
 In all his life to any, come what might,
 He was a true, a perfect gentle-knight. 30
 Speaking of his appearance, he possessed
 Fine horses, but he was not gaily dressed.
 He wore a fustian tunic stained and dark
 With smudges where his armour had left mark;
 Just home from service, he had joined our
 ranks 35
 To do his pilgrimage and render thanks.
 He had his son with him, a fine young *Squire*,
 A lover and cadet, a lad of fire
 With curly locks, as if they had been pressed.
 He was some twenty years of age,
 I guessed. 40
 In stature he was of a moderate length,
 With wonderful agility and
 strength.
 He'd seen some service with the cavalry
 In Flanders and Artois and Picardy
 And had done valiantly in little space
 Of time, in hope to win his lady's grace.
 He was embroidered like a meadow bright
 And full of freshest flowers, red and white.
 Singing he was, or fluting all the day;
 He was as fresh as is the month

-
- 1 Campaigned.
 - 2 The Mediterranean.
 - 3 Military landing.
 - 4 Tournaments fought to the death.
 - 5 Lists, tournament grounds.
 - 6 Thrice, three times.
 - 7 Always.
 - 8 Same.
 - 9 "The lord of Palatye" was a pagan; alliances of convenience were often made during the Crusades between Christians and pagans.
 - 10 Against.
 - 11 Reputation.
 - 12 I.e., a valiant knight.
 - 13 Demeanour.
 - 14 Rudeness.
 - 15 "No manere wight": any sort of person. Note the use of multiple negatives in Middle English.
 - 16 True.
 - 17 Perfect.

He was as fressh as is the month of May.	50	of May.	50
Short was his gowne, with sleeves longe and wide.		Short was his gown, the sleeves were long and wide;	
Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire ride; He coude songes make, and wel endite, ¹⁶		He knew the way to sit a horse and ride. He could make songs and poems and recite,	
Juste ⁶³ and eek ⁶⁴ daunce, and wel portraye ⁶⁵ and write.		Knew how to joust and dance, to draw and write.	
So hote ⁶⁶ he loved that by nightertale ⁶⁷	55	He loved so hotly that till dawn grew pale	
He slepte namore than dooth a nightingale.		He slept as little as a nightingale.	
Curteis he was, lowely, ⁶⁸ and servisable,		Courteous he was, lowly and serviceable,	
And carf biform his fader at the table. ⁶⁹		And carved to serve his father at the table.	

1386-1400

-
- 1 Wore.
 - 2 A tunic worn underneath the coat of mail.
 - 3 All rust-stained from his hauberk (coat of mail).
 - 4 Lately, recently.
 - 5 Expedition.
 - 6 Curly.
 - 7 As if.
 - 8 Moderate.
 - 9 Agile.
 - 10 Great.
 - 11 On cavalry expeditions (in the frequent skirmishes between the French and English).
 - 12 I.e. considering the little time he had been in service.
 - 13 Embroidered.
 - 14 Mead, meadow.
 - 15 Whistling.
 - 16 Compose poetry.
-

1. What features of character does Chaucer emphasize in these “cameo portraits”? How do they correspond to those of Lancelot?
2. What are some of the key words used to describe the figures’ qualities, and how have they changed in meaning between Chaucer’s time and now? (Compare the original text with the modern version.)
3. In class you will be given a chance to listen to a taped reading of the passage; this will enable you to comment on how English was spoken at the end of the 14th century, and how that is reflected in the verse.

C. Here are two examples of the lyric verse of the period, one a piece of secular poetry (such as the Squire might have sung), the other a religious poem.

In April

When the nightgale sings, the woodes waxen⁷⁰ greene,
Leaf and grass and blossme springes in Averil, I wene⁷¹;
And love is to mine hearte gone with one spear so keene,
Night and day my blood it drinks, mine hearte deth to tene.⁷²

I have loved all this year, that I may love no more; 5

-
- 63 Joust, fight in a tournament.
 - 64 Also.
 - 65 Sketch.
 - 66 Hotly.
 - 67 At night.
 - 68 Humble.
 - 69 It was a squire's duty to carve his lord's meat.
 - 70 Grow.
 - 71 Suppose.
 - 72 Compel to tears.

I have siked⁷³ many a sik, lemman,⁷⁴ for thine ore;⁷⁵
 Me nis⁷⁶ love never the near,⁷⁷ and that me reweth sore;⁷⁸
 Sweete lemman, think on me, I have loved thee yore.⁷⁹

Sweet lemman, I pray thee of love one speche;
 While I live in world so wide other nulle⁸⁰ I seek. 10
 With thy love,⁸³ my sweet leof,⁸¹ my bliss thou mightes eche;⁸²
 A sweet cos⁸⁵ of thy mouth mighte be my leche.⁸⁴

Sweet lemman, I pray thee of a love-bene;⁸⁵
 If thou me lovest, as men says, lemman, as I wene,
 And if it thy will be, thou look that it be seene; 15
 So much I think upon thee that all I waxe greene.⁸⁶

I Sing of a Maiden

I sing of a maiden
 That is makeles;⁸⁷
 King of all kinges
 To her son she ches.⁸⁸
 He cam also stille⁸⁹ 5
 Ther⁹⁰ His moder⁹¹ was,
 As dew in Aprille
 That falleth on the gras.
 He cam also stille
 To his moderes bowr,⁹² 10
 As dew in Aprille
 That falleth on the flowr.
 He cam also stille
 Ther his moder lay,
 As dew in Aprille 15
 That falleth on the spray.⁹³
 Moder and maiden
 Was never none but she;
 Wel may swich⁹⁴ a lady
 Godès moder be. 20

73 Sighed.
 74 Sweetheart.
 75 Mercy.
 76 Is not.
 77 No nearer.
 78 Makes me sorely unhappy.
 79 Long.
 80 Will not.
 81 Sweetheart.
 82 Increase.
 83 Kiss.
 84 Healer.
 85 Boon (i.e. blessing).
 86 Pale.
 87 Matchless.
 88 Chose.
 89 As silently.
 90 Where.
 91 Mother.
 92 Bower, room; thus, womb.
 93 Branch, twig.
 94 Such.

1. Compare these two poems in terms of:

- i) the relationship between earthly and heavenly love in the Middle Ages;
- ii) their use of rhyme, rhythm, repetition and parallelism (compare them, for example, to the more “Renaissance” form of the sonnet, which we looked at in the first semester).

D. The following passage is the nativity scene from a medieval miracle play. Read it and try to imagine it being staged.

Joseph. I am beguiled; how, know I not.
My young wife is with child full great;
That makes me now sorrow unsought.
The child certes is not mine;
That reproof does me pine 5
And gars me flee from home.
My life though I resign,
She is a clean virgin
For me, withouten blame. 10
But wel I wit through prophecy
A maiden clean should bear a child ...
But yet it is not so, surely,
Because I wit I am beguiled.
Nevertheless 'tis my intent 15
To ask her who got her her bairn –
That would I fain wit ere I went.
All hail! God be herein.

[Enter MARY.]

Mary. Welcome, as God me speed;
Doubtless to me he is full dear. 20
Joseph, my spouse, welcome are ye.

Joseph. Gramercy, Mary. Say, what cheer?
Tell me in sooth, how is't with thee?
Who has been there?
Thy womb is waxen great, think me. 25
Thou art with bairn, alas! For care.
Whose is't, Mary?

Mary. Sir, God's and yours.

Joseph. Whe! Why gab ye at me so?
And feign such fantasy? 30
Alas, me is full woe;
For dole might I not die?
To me this is a careful case;
Reckless I rave; rest is my rede.
I dare look no man in the face; 35
For heavy dole would I were dead;
Me loathe my life.

Whose is the child thou art withal?

Mary. Yours, sir, and the king's of bliss.

Joseph. Thou art young and I am old; 40
Such works if I do would,
These games from me are gone.
Therefore tel me in privy,
Whose is the child thou art with now?

Mary. (appealing to the ANGEL GABRIEL)
Now great God of his might, 45

That all may dress and dight,
 Meekly to thee I bow.
 Rue on this weary wight,
 That in his heart may light
 The truth to ken and know. 50

Joseph. Who had thy maidenhead, Mary?
 Has thy aught mind?

Mary. Forsooth, I am a maiden clean.

Joseph. Nay, thou speakest now against kind. 55
 Such thing might no man signify –
 A maiden to be with child!
 These words from thee are wild –
 She is not born, I ween.

Mary. Joseph, you are beguiled.
 With sin was I never defiled. 60
 God's sending is on me seen.

Joseph. God's sending? Yah, Mary! God help!

 [*Music.* THE ANGEL GABRIEL *appears.*]

Chorus. Shay fan yan lay
 Shay fan yan lay
 Shay fan yan lay 65
 Yrie ralt nah maginah gow
 In mannan hyum.

Gabriel. I Gabriel am; God's angel I,
 That have taken Mary to my keeping,
 And sent to thee aloud to cry, 70
 In leal wedlock lead thee.
 Leave her not, I forbid thee;
 No sin of her imply,
 But to her fast thou speed thee;
 And of her nought thou dread thee. 75
 God's word this, from on high:
 The child that shall be born of her,
 It is conceived of the Holy Ghost.
 All joy and bliss then shall be after,
 And to mankind of all the most. 80
 Jesus his name thou call;
 Such hap shall him befall,
 As thou shalt see in haste.
 His people save he shall
 Of evils and angers all 85
 That they are now embraced.
 Wend forth to Mary thy wife all ways.
 Bring her to Beth'lem this ilk night.
 There shall a child born be;
 God's son of heaven is he 90
 And man aye most of might.

Joseph. Yea, Mary. I am to blame
 For words long since I to thee spake.
 But gather up now all our gear,
 Such worn weeds as we wear. 95
 And press them in a pack.

To Beth'lem must I it bear,
 For little things will women fear.
 Help up now, on my back.
 Now would I fain we had some light, 100
 What so befall.
 I wakes right murk unto my sight,
 And cold withal.
 I will go get us light this tide,
 And fuel find with me to bring. 105

[*Candles lit. Song: 'Lay Me Low'.⁹⁵*]

Chorus. Lay me low
 Lay me low
 Lay me low
 Where no one can see me
 Where no one can find me 110
 Where no one can hurt me.

Show me the way
 Help me to say
 All that I need to
 All that I needed you gave me 115
 All that I wanted you made me
 When I stumbled you saved me.

Lay me low
 Lay me low
 Lay me low 120
 Where no one can see me
 Where no one can find me
 Where no one can hurt me.

Joseph. Ah, Lord God! What light is this
 That comes shining thus suddenly? 125

Mary. You are welcome, sir.

Joseph. Say, Mary daughter, what cheer
 with thee?

Mary. Right good, Joseph as has been aye.

Joseph. Oh, Mary – what sweet thing
 is that on thy knee? 130

Mary. It is my son, the sooth to say.
 That is so good.

Joseph. Now welcome, flower fairest of hue,
 I shall thee marvel main and might. 135
 Hail, my Maker! Hail, Christ Jesu!
 Hail, royal king, root of all right!
 Hail Saviour!
 Hail, my Lord, leamer of light!
 Hail, blessed flower! 140

1. What features in the play strike you most?
2. How is character created in this scene?
3. What sort of effects does the playwright achieve through the use of different kinds of juxtaposition?

95 The words and music of this song are not medieval. They were adapted from a nineteenth-century hymn of the Shakers, an American sect.

4. How do you think it might be staged? (You will be seeing a modern production by the British National Theatre on video, and will be able to compare your interpretation to theirs.)

SESSION 4

THE RENAISSANCE

A. Read the following poem by Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542).

They Flee from Me

They flee from me, that sometime⁹⁶ did me seek,
With naked foot stalking⁹⁷ in my chamber.
I have seen them, gentle, tame, and meek⁹⁸,
That now are wild, and do not remember
That sometime they put themselves in danger 5
To take bread at my hand; and now they range⁹⁹,
Busily seeking with a continual change.

Thanked be fortune it hath been otherwise,
Twenty times better; but once in special,
In thin array¹⁰⁰, after a pleasant guise¹⁰¹, 10
When her loose gown from her shoulders did fall,
And she me caught in her arms long and small¹⁰²,
Therewithall¹⁰³ sweetly did me kiss
And softly said, “Dear heart, how like you this?”

It was no dream, I lay broad waking. 15
But all is turned, thorough¹⁰⁴ my gentleness,
Into a strange fashion of forsaking¹⁰⁵;
And I have leave¹⁰⁶ to go, of her goodness,
And she also to use newfangledness¹⁰⁷.
But since that I so kindly¹⁰⁸ am served, 20
I fain would¹⁰⁹ know what she hath deserved.

1557

1. What can one conclude about the situation and the attitude of the speaker?
2. What regularities/parallelisms does the poem display, and how are they balanced by irregularities?
3. What can one say about the language of the poem (lexis, syntax)?
4. How are women, and the relationship between the speaker and women, represented in the poem?

96 At one time or another in the past (*archaic*).

97 Walking slowly and carefully.

98 Submissive.

99 Move freely without control.

100 Fine dress.

101 Style of clothing.

102 Slim (*archaic*).

103 Immediately after that.

104 Through, because of (*archaic*).

105 New and unusual kind of desertion.

106 Permission.

107 Fickleness.

108 Naturally (with an ironic hint of the modern meaning of “unkindly”).

109 I would like to (*archaic*)

B. The sonnet below is from a sequence by Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586). Read it and consider the questions that follow.

Who will in fairest book of Nature know
 How Virtue may best lodged in beauty be,
 Let him but learn of *Love* to read in thee,
 Stella, those fair lines, which true goodness show.
 There shall he find all vices' overthrow, 5
 Not by rude force, but sweetest sovereignty
 Of reason, from whose light those night-birds¹¹⁰ fly;
 That inward sun in thine eyes shineth so.
 And not content to be Perfection's heir
 Thyself, dost¹¹² strive all minds that way to move, 10
 Who mark¹¹³ in thee what is in thee most fair.
 So while thy beauty draws¹¹⁴ the heart to love,
 As fast thy Virtue bends¹¹⁵ that love to good;
 "But, ah," Desire still cries, "give me some food."

1582

1. How do the mood and argument of this poem differ from those of the first poem?
2. How are the formal qualities of the sonnet used to help develop the ideas of the poem?
3. How does the representation of woman differ in this and the preceding poem?

C. Read the following poem by John Donne (1572-1631). It was addressed to his wife, probably on the occasion of his setting out on a trip to the Continent in 1611.

A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning

As virtuous men pass mildly away,
 And whisper to their souls, to go,
 Whilst some of their sad friends do say,
 The breath goes now, and some say, no:
 So let us melt¹¹⁶, and make no noise, 5
 No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move,
 'Twere¹¹⁷ profanation of our joys
 To tell the laity our love.
 Moving of th'earth¹¹⁸ brings harms and fears,
 Men reckon what it did and meant, 10
 But trepidation of the spheres¹¹⁹,
 Though greater far, is innocent¹²⁰.
 Dull sublunary¹²¹ lovers' love
 (Whose soul¹²² is sense¹²³) cannot admit

110 Contained.

111 The owl, for example, was an emblem of various vices.

112 Do.

113 Notice, observe.

114 Attracts, directs.

115 Shifts the direction of.

116 Disappear.

117 It would be (*archaic*).

118 Earthquake(s).

119 Vibration of the ninth sphere (in the Ptolemaic system) as it moved.

120 Harmless, non-destructive.

121 "Beneath the moon", mundane, subject to change.

122 Essence.

Absence, because it doth remove Those things which elemented ¹²⁴ it.	15
But we by a love, so much refined, That our selves know not what it is, Inter-assured of the mind, Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss.	20
Our two souls therefore, which are one, Though I must go, endure not yet A breach, but an expansion, Like gold to aery thinness beat.	
If they be two, they are two so As stiff twin compasses are two, Thy soul the fixed foot, makes no show To move, but doth, if th' other do.	25
And though it in the centre sit, Yet when the other far doth roam, It leans, and hearkens ¹²⁵ after it, And grows erect, as that comes home.	30
Such wilt thou be to me, who must Like th' other foot, obliquely run; Thy firmness makes my circle just, And makes me end, where I begun.	35

1633

1. Explain the basic argument of the poem, and the series of comparisons by which it is created.
2. Compare this poem with the preceding two in terms of its formal aspects (figures of speech, lexis, mode of address, and so on).
3. How is the social situation of this poem different from those of the other two poems?

SESSION 5

SHAKESPEARE

A. In the first part of this lesson, we shall be looking at a video of Shakespeare's *Henry V* in order to gain some idea of the way in which plays were staged in the Elizabethan period. Using this as a basis for discussion, we shall explore some of the implications of the physical setting for which the plays were created and the social context in which they were produced for an understanding of the Elizabethan drama in general.

B. The second part of the lesson will be devoted to a discussion of Act I, Scene I of *King Lear*. (For a full understanding of the text, you may wish to compare the original with some Czech translation.)

SCENE I. (*A State Room in King Lear's Palace*)

[*Enter KENT, GLOUCESTER, and EDMUND.*]

123 Related to the senses, corporeal.

124 Composed.

125 Listens to, desires to be close to.

Kent. I thought the King had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall.

Glou. It did always seem so to us; but now, in the division of the kingdom, it appears not which of the Dukes he values most; for equalities are so weigh'd that curiosity in neither can make choice of either's moiety. 5

Kent. Is not this your son, my Lord ?

Glou. His breeding, Sir, hath been at my charge: I have so often blush'd to acknowledge him, that now I am braz'd to't.

Kent. I cannot conceive you.

Glou. Sir, this young fellow's mother could; whereupon she grew round-womb'd, and had, indeed, Sir, a son for her cradle ere she had a husband for her bed. Do you smell a fault? 10

Kent. I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.

Glou. But I have a son, Sir, by order of law, some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer in my account: though this knave came something saucily to the world before he was sent for, yet 15

was his mother fair; there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged. Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

Edm. No, my Lord.

Glou. My Lord of Kent: remember him hereafter as my honourable friend. 20

Edm. My services to your Lordship.

Kent. I must love you, and sue to know you better.

Edm. Sir, I shall study deserving.

Glou. He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again. The King is coming. 25

[*Sennet. Enter one bearing a coronet, KING LEAR, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA, and Attendants.*]

Lear. Attend the Lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester.

Glou. I shall, my Liege. [*Exeunt Gloucester and Edmund*].

Lear. Meantime, we shall express our darker purpose.

Give me the map there. Know that we have divided
In three our kingdom; and tis our fast intent 30

To shake all cares and business from our age,
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburthen'd crawl toward death. Our son of Cornwall,
And you, our no less loving son of Albany,
We have this hour a constant will to publish 35

Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife
May be prevented now. The Princes, France and Burgundy,
Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,
Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,
And here are to be answer'd. Tell me, my daughters, 40
(Since now we will divest us both of rule,
Interest of territory, cares of state)

Which of you shall we say doth love us most?
That we our largest bounty may extend
Where nature doth with merit challenge. Goneril, 45
Our eldest-born, speak first.

Gon. Sir, I love you more than word can wield the matter;

Dearer than eye-sight, space and liberty;
Beyond what can be valued rich or rare;

No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour; 50
As much as child e'er lov'd, or father found;

A love that makes breath poor and speech unable;

Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

Cor. [*Aside*] What shall Cordelia speak ? Love, and be silent.

Lear. Of all these bounds, even from this line to this 55
 With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd,
 With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,
 We make thee lady: to thine and Albany's issues
 Be this perpetual. What says our second daughter
 Our dearest Regan, wife of Cornwall ? 60

Reg. I am made of that self metal as my sister,
 And prize me at her worth. In my true heart
 I find she names my very deed of love;
 Only she comes too short: that I profess 65
 Myself an enemy to all other joys
 Which the most precious square of sense possesses,
 And find I am alone felicitate
 In your dear highness' love.

Cor. [*Aside.*] Then poor Cordelia !
 And yet not so; since I am sure my love's 70
 More ponderous than my tongue.

Lear. To thee and thine, hereditary ever,
 Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom,
 No less in space, validity, and pleasure,
 Than that conferr'd on Goneril. Now, our joy, 75
 Although our last, and least; to whose young love
 The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
 Strive to be interest'd; what can you say to draw
 A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

Cor. Nothing, my lord.

Lear. Nothing ? 80

Cor. Nothing.

Lear. Nothing will come of nothing: speak again.

Cor. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
 My heart into my mouth: I love your Majesty 85
 According to my bond; no more nor less.

Lear. How, how, Cordelia! Mend your speech a little,
 Lest you may mar your fortunes.

Cor. Good my Lord,
 You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me: I
 Return those duties back as are right fit, 90
 Obey you, love you, and most honour you.
 Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
 They love you all? Happily, when I shall wed,
 That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
 Half my love with him, half my care and duty:
 Sure I shall never marry like my sisters, 95
 To love my father all.

Lear. But goes thy heart with this?

Cor. Ay, my good Lord.

Lear. So young, and so untender?

Cor. So young, my Lord, and true.

Lear. Let it be so; thy truth then be thy dower: 100
 For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,
 The mysteries of Hecate and the night,
 By all the operation of the orbs
 From whom we do exist and cease to be,

Here I disclaim all my paternal care, 105
 Propinquity and property of blood,
 And as a stranger to my heart and me
 Hold thee from this for ever. The barbarous Scythian,
 Or he that makes his generation messes
 To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom 110
 Be as well neighbour'd, pitied, and reliev'd,
 As thou my sometime daughter.

Kent. Good my Liege,
Lear. Peace, Kent!
 Come not between the Dragon and his wrath.
 I lov'd her most, and thought to set my rest 115
 On her kind nursery. Hence, and avoid my sight!
 So be my grave my peace, as here I give
 Her father's heart from her! Call France. Who stirs?
 Call Burgundy. Cornwall and Albany,
 With my two daughters' dowers digest the third; 120
 Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.
 I do invest you jointly with my power,
 Pre-eminence, and all the large effects
 That troop with majesty. Ourself, by monthly course,
 With reservation of an hundred knights 125
 By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode
 Make with you by due turn. Only we shall retain
 The name and all th'addition to a king; the sway,
 Revenue, execution of the rest,
 Beloved sons, be yours: which to confirm, 130
 This coronet part between you.

Kent. Royal Lear,
 Whom I have ever honour'd as my King,
 Lov'd as my father, as my master follow'd,
 As my great patron thought on in my prayers, –

Lear. The bow is bent and drawn; make from the shaft. 135
Kent. Let it fall rather, though the fork invade
 The region of my heart: be Kent unmannerly,
 When Lear is mad. What would'st thou do, old man?
 Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak
 When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's bound 140
 When majesty falls to folly. Reserve thy state;
 And, in thy best consideration, check
 This hideous rashness: answer my life my judgment,
 Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least;
 Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sounds 145
 Reverb no hollowness.

Lear. Kent, on thy life, no more.
Kent. My life I never held but as a pawn
 To wage against thine enemies; nor fear to lose it,
 Thy safety being motive.

Lear. Out of my sight!
Kent. See better, Lear; and let me still remain 150
 The true blank of thine eye.

Lear. Now, by Apollo, –
Kent. Now, by Apollo, King,
 Thou swear'st thy Gods in vain.
Lear. O, vassal! miscreant!

[*Laying his hand upon his sword.*]
Alb., Corn. Dear Sir, forbear.

Kent. Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow 155
 Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy gift;
 Or, whilst I can vent clamour from my throat,
 I'll tell thee thou dost evil.

Lear. Hear me, recreant!
 On thine allegiance, hear me!
 That thou hast sought to make us break our vow, 160
 Which we durst never yet, and with strain'd pride
 To come betwixt our sentence and our power,
 Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,
 Our potency made good, take thy reward.
 Five days we do allot thee for provision 165
 To shield thee from disasters of the world;
 And on the sixth to turn thy hated back
 Upon our kingdom: if on the tenth day following
 Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions
 The moment is thy death. Away! By Jupiter, 170
 This shall not be revok'd.

Kent. Fare thee well, King; sith thus thou wilt appear,
 Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here.

[*To Cordelia.*] The Gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid,
 That justly think'st and hast most rightly said! 175
 [*To Goneril and Regan.*] And your large speeches may your deeds approve,
 That good effects may spring from words of love.
 Thus Kent, O Princes! bids you all adieu;
 He'll shape his old course in a country new. [*Exit.*]

[*Flourish. Re-enter GLOUCESTER,*
with FRANCE, BURGUNDY, and Attendants.]

Glou. Here's France and Burgundy, my noble Lord. 180

Lear. My Lord of Burgundy,
 We first address toward you, who with this king
 Hath rivall'd for our daughter. What, in the least,
 Will you require in present dower with her,
 Or cease your quest of love?

Bur. Most royal Majesty, 185
 I crave no more than hath your Highness offer'd,
 Nor will you tender less.

Lear. Right noble Burgundy,
 When she was dear to us we did hold her so,
 But now her price is fallen. Sir, there she stands:
 If aught within that little-seeming substance, 190
 Or all of it, with our displeasure piec'd,
 And nothing more, may fitly like your Grace,
 She's there, and she is yours.

Bur. I know no answer.

Lear. Will you, with those infirmities she owes,
 Unfriended, new-adopted to our hate, 195
 Dower'd with our curse and stranger'd with our oath
 Take her, or leave her?

Bur. Pardon me, royal Sir;
 Election makes not up in such conditions.

Lear. Then leave her, sir; for, by the power that made me,
 I tell you all her wealth. [*To France.*] For you, great King, 200
 I would not from your love make such a stray
 To match you where I hate; therefore beseech you
 T' avert your liking a more worthier way
 Than on a wretch whom Nature is asham'd
 Almost t' acknowledge hers.

France. This is most strange, 205
 That she, whom even but now was your best object,
 The argument of your praise, balm of your age,
 The best, the dearest, should in this trice of time
 Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle
 So many folds of favour. Sure, her offence 210
 Must be of such unnatural degree
 That monsters it, or your fore-vouch'd affection
 Fall into taint; which to believe of her,
 Must be a faith that reason without miracle
 Should never plant in me.

Cor. I yet beseech your Majesty, 215
 (If for I want that glib and oily art
 To speak and purpose not, since what I well intend,
 I'll do't before I speak), that you make known
 It is no vicious blot, murder or foulness,
 No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step, 220
 That hath depriv'd me of your grace and favour,
 But even for want of that for which I am richer,
 A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue
 That I am glad I have not, though not to have it
 Hath lost me in your liking.

Lear. Better thou 225
 Hadst not been born than not t' have pleased me better.

France. Is it but this? a tardiness in nature
 Which often leaves the history unspoke
 That it intends to do? My Lord of Burgundy,
 What say you to the lady? Love's not love 230
 When it is mingled with regards that stand
 Aloof from th' entire point. Will you have her?
 She is herself a dowry.

Bur. Royal King,
 Give but that portion which yourself propos'd,
 And here I take Cordelia by the hand, 235
 Duchess of Burgundy.

Lear. Nothing: I have sworn; I am firm.

Bur. I am sorry, then, you have so lost a father
 That you must lose a husband.

Cor. Peace be with Burgundy!
 Since that respect and fortunes are his love, 240
 I shall not be his wife.

France. Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being poor;
 Most choice, forsaken; and most lov'd, despis'd!
 Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon:
 Be it lawful I take up what's cast away. 245
 Gods, gods! 'tis strange that from their cold'st neglect
 My love should kindle to inflam'd respect.
 Thy dowerless daughter, King, thrown to my chance,

Is Queen of us, of ours, and our fair France:
 Not all the dukes of wat'rish Burgundy 250
 Can buy this unpriz'd precious maid of me.
 Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind:
 Thou losest here, a better where to find.
Lear. Thou hast her, France; let her be thine, for we
 Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see 255
 That face of hers again; therefore be gone
 Without our grace, our love, our benison.
 Come, noble Burgundy.

*[Flourish. Exeunt Lear, Burgundy, Cornwall,
 Albany, Gloucester, and Attendants.]*

France. Bid farewell to your sisters.
Cor. The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes
 Cordelia leaves you: I know you what you are;
 And like a sister am most loth to call 260
 Your faults as they are named. Love well our father:
 To your professed bosoms I commit him:
 But yet, alas! stood I within his grace,
 I would prefer him to a better place.
 So farewell to you both. 265
Reg. Prescribe not us our duty.
Gon. Let your study
 Be to content your lord, who hath receiv'd you
 At Fortune's alms; you have obedience scanted,
 And well are worth the want that you have wanted.
Cor. Time shall unfold what plighted cunning hides; 270
 Who covers faults, at last with shame derides.
 Well may you prosper!
France. Come, my fair Cordelia.

[Exeunt France and Cordelia.]

Gon. Sister, it is not little I have to say of what most nearly appertains to us both. I think our
 father will hence to-night.
Reg. That's most certain, and with you; next month with us. 275
Gon. You see how full of changes his age is; the observation we have made of it hath not
 been little: he always lov'd our sister most; and with what poor judgment he hath now
 cast her off appears too grossly.
Reg. 'Tis the infirmity of his age; yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself. 280
Gon. The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash; then must we look from his age,
 to receive not alone the imperfections of long-engrafted condition, but therewithal the
 unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them.
Reg. Such unconstant starts are we like to have from him as this of Kent's banishment.
Gon. There is further compliment of leave-taking between France and him. Pray you, let us
 hit together: if our father carry authority with such disposition as he bears, this last
 surrender of his will but offend us.
Reg. We shall further think of it. 290
Gon. We must do something, and i'th'heat. *[Exeunt.]*

1605

1. In the opening part of the scene, Kent and Gloucester discuss two things. What are they? How do they become of increasing relevance as the scene develops?

2. The king, Lear, then makes a speech explaining how he will divide his kingdom and links his proposal to the question “Which of you shall we say doth love us most?” (line 43) How do his three daughters respond to this question, and what significance can be attached to their responses, in particular that of Cordelia? Look very carefully at the language they use to describe their love for and relationship to their father.
3. In what terms does Kent, the king’s chief adviser, support his defence of Cordelia and his opposition to the king? How do the other nobles present react?
4. In the last part of the scene Regan and Goneril discuss in private their father and his decision. How does what they say here relate to their earlier speeches, made for public consumption?
5. Twenty years after the first printing of *King Lear*, the relationship between king and parliament rapidly deteriorated. Twelve years after that, shortly after the calling of the next parliament, civil war erupted. The opening scene of *King Lear* significantly explores the relationship between what people say and what they do, as well as the social and political implications of that relationship. In what ways does it do this?

SESSION 6

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

A. This poem by Ben Jonson (1572-1637) was the first of a long line of “country-house poems” in English literature.

To Penshurst¹²⁶

Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious show,	
Of touch ¹²⁷ or marble; nor canst boast a row	
Of polished pillars, or a roof of gold;	
Thou hast no lantern ¹²⁸ whereof tales are told,	
Or stair, or courts; but stand'st an ancient pile,	5
And, these grudged at, ¹²⁹ art revered the while.	
Thou joy'st in better marks, of soil, of air,	
Of wood, of water; therein thou art fair.	
Thou hast thy walks for health, as well as sport;	
Thy mount, to which the dryads do resort,	10
Where Pan and Bacchus their high feasts have made,	
Beneath the broad beech and the chestnut shade;	
That taller tree, which of a nut was set	
At his great birth where all the Muses met. ¹³⁰	
There in the writhed bark are cut the names	15
Of many a sylvan, taken with his flames; ¹³¹	
And thence the ruddy satyrs oft provoke	
The lighter fauns to reach thy Lady's Oak. ¹³²	
Thy copse too, named of Gamage, ¹³³ thou hast there,	
That never fails to serve thee seasoned deer	20

126 The country seat of the Sidney family (famous for Sir Philip) in Kent.

127 Touchstone, a fine black (and expensive) variety of basalt.

128 Cupola.

129 More pretentious houses attract criticism.

130 Sir Philip Sidney was born at Penshurst; an oak tree, planted the day of his birth, is still shown as “Sidney’s oak”.

131 Woodsman, in love because of reading Sidney’s poems. “His flames” are the fires of love.

132 Lady Leicester’s oak, named after a lady of the house who once entered into labor under its branches. “Provoke”: challenge to a race.

133 Lady Barbara Gamage gave her name to a grove near the park entrance.

When thou wouldst feast or exercise thy friends.
 The lower land, that to the river bends,
 Thy sheep, thy bullocks, kine, and calves do feed;
 The middle grounds thy mares and horses breed. 25
 Each bank doth yield thee conies,¹³⁴ and the tops,
 Fertile of wood, Ashore and Sidney's copse,¹³⁵
 To crown thy open table, doth provide
 The purpled pheasant with the speckled side;
 The painted partridge lies in every field,
 And for thy mess¹³⁶ is willing to be killed. 30
 And if the high-swollen Medway¹³⁷ fail thy dish,
 Thou hast thy ponds, that pay thee tribute fish:
 Fat aged carps that run into thy net,
 And pikes, now weary their own kind to eat,
 As loath the second draught or cast to stay, 35
 Officiously at first themselves betray;
 Bright eels that emulate them, and leap on land
 Before the fisher, or into his hand.
 Then hath thy orchard fruit, thy garden flowers,
 Fresh as the air, and new as are the hours. 40
 The early cherry, with the later plum,
 Fig, grape, and quince, each in his time doth come;
 The blushing apricot and woolly peach
 Hang on thy walls, that every child may reach.
 And though thy walls be of the country stone, 45
 They are reared with no man's ruin, no man's groan;
 There's none that dwell about them wish them down;
 But all come in, the farmer and the clown,¹³⁸
 And no one empty-handed, to salute
 Thy lord and lady, though they have no suit.¹³⁹ 50
 Some bring a capon,¹⁴⁰ some a rural cake,
 Some nuts, some apples; some that think they make
 The better cheeses bring them, or else send
 By their ripe daughters, whom they would commend
 This way to husbands, and whose baskets bear 55
 An emblem of themselves in plum or pear.
 But what can this (more than express their love)
 Add to thy free provisions, far above
 The need of such? whose liberal board doth flow
 With all that hospitality doth know; 60
 Where comes no guest but is allowed to eat,
 Without his fear, and of thy lord's own meat;¹⁴¹
 Where the same beer and bread, and selfsame wine,
 That is his lordship's shall be also mine,
 And I not fain¹⁴² to sit (as some this day 65
 At great men's tables), and yet dine away.¹⁴³

134 Rabbits.

135 Little woods and thickets of the estate, still surviving under their ancient names.

136 A prepared dish (*archaic*).

137 The local river.

138 Yokel.

139 Obligatory attendance by a tenant at the court of his Lord.

140 A castrated cock.

141 Food in general (*archaic*).

142 Obligated (*archaic*).

143 When tables were large, different courses might be served at the two ends; hence one could sit at a man's table and dine

- iv) the use of symbolic classical and also more contemporary allusions;
- v) the use of rhyme, rhythm and sound patterns.

B. The following extract is from Book IV of *Paradise Lost*, by John Milton (1608-1674).

Thus was this place,

A happy rural seat of various view:¹⁴⁹
 Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm;
 Others whose fruit, burnished with golden rind,
 Hung amiable¹⁵⁰ – Hesperian fables true, 250
 If true, here only – and of delicious taste.
 Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks
 Grazing the tender herb, were interposed,
 Or palmy hillock; or the flowery lap
 Of some irriguous¹⁵¹ valley spread her store, 255
 Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose.¹⁵²
 Another side, umbrageous¹⁵³ grots and caves
 Of cool recess, o’er which the mantling vine
 Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps
 Luxuriant; meanwhile murmuring waters fall 260
 Down the slope hills dispersed, or in a lake,
 That to the fringed bank with myrtle crowned
 Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams.
 The birds their choir apply,¹⁵⁴ airs, vernal airs,
 Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune 265
 The trembling leaves, while universal Pan,¹⁵⁵
 Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,
 Led on th’ eternal spring.¹⁵⁶ Not that fair field
 Of Enna, where Proserpin gathering flowers,
 Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis 270
 Was gathered, which cost Ceres all that pain
 To seek her through the world; nor that sweet grove
 Of Daphne,¹⁵⁷ by Orontes and th’ inspired
 Castalian spring, might with this Paradise
 Of Eden strive; nor that Nyseian isle, 275
 Girt¹⁵⁸ with the river Triton, where old Cham,
 Whom Gentiles Ammon call and Libyan Jove,
 Hid Amalthea and her florid son

Young Bacchus from his stepdame Rhea’s eye;¹⁵⁹

149 Aspect.

150 Lovely. These were real golden apples like those said to have existed in the Hesperides, fabulous islands of the Western Ocean; Paradise was the only place where the fable of the Hesperides was literally true.

151 Well-watered.

152 Figuratively and literally, there was no need for thorns in Paradise.

153 Shady.

154 Practice their song. “Airs” may be either “breezes” or “melodies,” and probably are both.

155 The god of all nature. “Pan” in Greek means “all,” but it is also the name of the goat-legged nature god.

156 The god of nature dances with the Graces and Hours, an image of perfect harmony.

157 Milton is comparing Paradise with the famous beauty spots of antiquity. Enna in Sicily was a lovely meadow from which “Proserpin” was kidnapped by “gloomy Dis” (i.e. Pluto); her mother Ceres sought her throughout the world. The grove of Daphne, near Antioch and the Orontes River in the Near East, had a spring called “Catalia” in imitation of the Muses’ fountain near Delphi.

158 Surrounded.

159 The isle of Nysa in the river Triton in Tunisia was where Ammon hid Bacchus, his bastard child by Amalthea, from the eye of his wife Rhea. “Florid” (wine-flushed) Bacchus, when he grew up, received the name of Dionysus in honour of his birthplace. The identification of the Egyptian god Ammon or Hammon with Cham or Ham, the son of Noah, is a piece of comparative mythology.

Nor where Abassin kings their issue guard 280
Mount Amara¹⁶⁰ (though this by some supposed
True Paradise) under the Ethiop line
By Nilus' head, enclosed with shining rock,
A whole day's journey high, but wide remote
From this Assyrian garden, where the fiend 285
Saw undelighted all delight, all kind
Of living creatures, new to sight and strange.
Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
Godlike erect,¹⁶¹ with native honor clad
In naked majesty, seemed lords of all, 290
And worthy seemed; for in their looks divine,
The image of their glorious Maker, shone
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure –
Severe, but in true filial freedom¹⁶² placed,
Whence true authority in men; though both 295
Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed;
For contemplation he and valor formed,
for softness she and sweet attractive grace;
He for God only, she for God in him.
His fair large front¹⁶³ and eye sublime declared 300
Absolute rule; and hyacinthine¹⁶⁴ locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung
Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad:
She, as a veil down to the slender waist,
Her unadorned golden tresses wore 305
Disheveled, but in wanton ringlets waved
As the vine curls her tendrils,¹⁶⁵ which implied
Subjection, but required with gentle sway,
And by her yielded, by him best received,
Yielded with coy¹⁶⁶ submission, modest pride, 310
And sweet, reluctant, amorous delay.
Nor those mysterious parts were then concealed;
Then was not guilty shame. Dishonest shame
Of Nature's works, honor dishonorable,
Sin-bred, how have ye troubled all mankind 315
With shows instead, mere shows of seeming pure,
And banished from man's life his happiest life,
Simplicity and spotless innocence!
So passed they naked on, nor shunned the sight
Of God or angel; for they thought no ill; 320
So hand in hand they passed, the loveliest pair
That ever since in love's embraces met:
Adam the goodliest man of men since born
His sons; the fairest of her daughters Eve.¹⁶⁷

160 Finally, Paradise („this Assyrian garden”) is finer than the royal residences atop Mt. Amara, where the “Abassin” (Abyssian) kings had a splendid palace.

161 By emphasizing the word “erect”, Milton means to distinguish man from the beasts of the field, who went “prone”.

162 Though almost a paradox, the phrase suggests Milton's idea that true freedom always involves respect for authority and hierarchy.

163 Forehead.

164 A classical metaphor, often applied to hair, and implying “dark” or perhaps “flowing”.

165 Eve's hair is curly, abundant, uncontrolled; like the vegetation in Paradise, it clings seductively about a severe and masculine virtue.

166 Shy.

167 Logically these constructions are absurd; Adam was not born since his day, Eve was not one of her own daughters.

Under a tuft of shade that on a green 325
 Stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountain-side,
 They sat them down; and after no more toil
 Of their sweet gardening labor than sufficed
 To recommend cool Zephyr,¹⁶⁸ and made ease
 More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite 330
 More grateful, to their supper fruits they fell,
 Nectarine fruits which the compliant boughs
 Yielded them, sidelong as they sat recline
 On the soft downy bank damasked with flowers.
 The savory pulp they chew, and in the rind 335
 Still as they thirsted scoop the brimming stream;
 Nor gentle purpose,¹⁶⁹ nor endearing smiles
 Wanted, nor youthful dalliance, as beseems
 Fair couple linked in happy nuptial league,
 Alone as they. About them frisking played 340
 All beasts of th' earth, since wild, and of all chase¹⁷⁰
 In wood or wilderness, forest or den.
 Sporting the lion ramped,¹⁷¹ and in his paw
 Dandled the kid; bears, tigers, ounces, pards,¹⁷²
 Gamboled before them; th' unwieldy elephant 345
 To make them mirth used all his might, and wreathed
 His lithe proboscis; close the serpent sly,
 Insinuating,¹⁷³ wove with Gordian twine
 His braided train,¹⁷⁴ and of his fatal guile
 Gave proof unheeded. Others on the grass 350
 Couched and now filled with pasture, gazing sat,
 Or bedward ruminating;¹⁷⁵ for the sun
 Declined, was hastening now with prone career
 To th' ocean isles,¹⁷⁶ and in th' ascending scale
 Of heaven the stars that usher evening rose: 355
 When Satan, still in gaze as first he stood,
 Scarce thus at length failed speech recovered sad:¹⁷⁷
 "O Hell! what do mine eyes with grief behold?
 Into our room of bliss thus high advanced
 Creatures of other mold, Earth-born perhaps, 360
 Not spirits, yet to heavenly spirits bright
 Little inferior; whom my thoughts pursue
 With wonder, and could love; so lively shines
 In them divine resemblance, and such grace
 The hand that formed them on their shape hath
 poured.¹⁷⁸ 365

Milton combines comparative with superlative forms for emphatic effect.

168 I.e., to make a cool breeze welcome.

169 Conversation. "Wanted": lacked.

170 Who lurk in every sort of cover.

171 Reared up.

172 Lynxes and leopards.

173 Writhing and twisting, but with a glance at the Tempter's rhetorical techniques.

174 Checkered body. "Gordian twine": knots, like the Gordian knot, cut by Alexander the Great.

175 The animals are chewing their cuds before bedtime; in Paradise, where the animal kingdom is not yet subject to death, they are perforce vegetarians.

176 The Azores.

177 The choked, laborious line mirrors Satan's heavy, congested mind.

178 Though Satan's moral values are topsy-turvy („Evil, be thou my good," he has said in the first part of Book 4), his aesthetic values are strictly orthodox.

Ah! gentle pair, ye little think how nigh
 Your change approaches, when all these delights
 Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe,
 More woe, the more your taste is now of joy:
 Happy, but for so happy¹⁷⁹ ill secured 370
 Long to continue, and this high seat, your Heaven,
 Ill fenced for Heaven to keep out such a foe
 As now is entered; yet no purposed foe
 To you, whom I could pity thus forlorn,
 Though I unpitied. League with you I seek, 375
 And mutual amity so strait, so close,
 That I with you must dwell, or you with me,
 Henceforth.¹⁸⁰ My dwelling, haply, may not please,
 Like this fair Paradise, your sense; yet such
 Accept your Maker's work; he gave it me 380
 Which I as freely give. Hell shall unfold,
 To entertain you two, her widest gates,
 And send forth all her kings; there will be room,
 Not like these narrow limits, to receive
 Your numerous offspring; if no better place, 385
 Thank him who puts me, loath, to this revenge
 On you, who wrong me not, for him who
 wronged.¹⁸¹
 And should I at your harmless innocence
 Melt, as I do, yet public reason just –
 Honor and empire with revenge enlarged 390
 By conquering this new world – compels me now
 To do what else, though damned, I should
 abhor.”¹⁸²

1667

1. This extract, like “To Penshurst”, is written mostly in the past tense, though sometimes in the present. What reasons can be given for this? What is the significance of changes in tense?
2. What similarities does “Paradise” have with “Penshurst”, if any? In what ways is it a different place?
3. Consider the use of syntax, collocations, symbols and sound patterning in Milton’s poem. In what way are they similar to and different from Jonson’s?
4. How does Milton’s description of the relationship between Adam and Eve compare with that of Jonson’s of the lord and lady of Penshurst?
5. How is Satan divided in his feelings towards Adam and Eve? What motivates him to behave the way he does? Can any comparisons be made between his role here and the “darker” elements of “To Penshurst”?

C. In the text of the political pamphlet by Jerrard Winstanly (1609-1660) that follows, the original seventeenth-century spelling has been retained.

A Watch-word to the City of London, and the Armie:

Wherein you may see that Englands freedome, which should be the result of all our Victories, is sinking deeper under the Norman power, as appears by this relation of the unrighteous proceedings of Kingstone – Court against some of the Diggers at George-hill, under colour of Law; but yet thereby

179 Such happiness.

180 Though it starts in simple admiration, Satan’s friendship for mankind is at the end grisly and sardonic. The turning point seems to be “though I unpitied” (line 375).

181 I.e., it is not my fault; Satan’s favorite evasion.

182 Satan’s final reason for destroying Adam and Eve is thoroughly Satanic; it is reason of state, the public interest.

the cause of the Diggers is more brightened and strengthened: so that every one singly may truly say what his freedom is, and where it lies.

To the City of London, Freedom and Peace desired.

Thou City of London, I am one of thy sons by freedom, and I do truly love thy peace; while I had an estate in thee, I was free to offer my Mite into thy publike Treasury Guild-hall, for a preservation to thee, and the whole Land; but by thy cheating sons in the theiving art of buying and selling, and by the burdens of, and for the Souldiery in the beginning of the war, I was beaten out both of estate and trade, and forced to accept of the good will of friends crediting of me, to live a Countrey-life, and there likewise by the burthen of Taxes and much Free-quarter, my weak back found the burthen heavier then I could bear; yet in all the passages of these eight yeers troubles I have been willing to lay out what my Talent was, to procure Englands peace inward and outward, and yet all along I have found such as in words have professed the same cause, to be enemies to me. Not a full yeere since, being quiet at my work, my heart was filled with sweet thoughts, and many things were revealed to me which I never read in books, nor heard from the mouth of any flesh, and when I began to speak of them, some people could not bear my words, and amongst those revelations this was one, *That the earth shall be made a common Treasury of livelihood to whole mankind, without respect of persons*; and I had a voice within me bad me declare it all abroad, which I did obey, for I declared it by word of mouth wheresoever I came, then I was made to write a little book called, *the new Law of righteousness*, and therein I declared it; yet my mind was not at rest, because nothing was acted, and thoughts run in me, that words and writings were all nothing, and must die, for action is the life of all, and if thou dost not act, thou dost nothing. Within a little time I was made obedient to the word in that particular likewise; for I tooke my spade and went and broke the ground upon George-hill in Surrey, thereby declaring freedom to the Creation, and that the earth must be set free from intanglements of Lords and Landlords, and that it shall become a common Treasury to all, as it was first made and given to the sonnes of men: For which doing the Dragon presently casts a flood water to drown the manchild, even that freedom that now is declared, for the old Norman Prerogative Lord of that Mannour M Drake, caused me to be arrested for a trespasse against him, in digging upon that barren Heath, and the unrighteous proceedings of Kingstone Court in this businesse I have here declared to thee, and to the whole land, that you may consider the case that England is in; all men have stood for freedom, thou hast kept fasting daies, and prayed in morning exercises for freedom; thou hast given thanks for victories, because hopes of freedom; plentie of Petitions and promises thereupon have been made for freedom, and now the common enemy is gone, you are all like men in a mist, seeking for freedom, and know not where, nor what it is: and those of the richer sort of you that see it, are ashamed and afraid to owne it, because it comes clothed in a clownish garment and open to the best language that scoffing Ishmael can afford, or that railing Rabsheka can speak, or furious Pharoah can act against him; for freedom is the man that will turn the world upside downe, therefore, no wonder he hath enemies.

And assure your selves, if you pitch not right now upon the right point of freedom in action, as your Covenant hath it in words, you will wrap up your children in greater slavery than ever you were in: the Word of God is Love, and when all thy actions are done in love to the whole Creation, then thou advancest freedom, and freedom is Christ in you, and Christ among you; bondage is Satan in you, and Satan among you: no true freedom can be established for Englands peace, or prove you faithfull in Covenant, but such a one as hath respect to the poor, as well as the rich; for if thou consent to freedom to the rich in the City and givest freedom to the Freeholders in the Countrey, and to Priests and Lawyers, and Lords of Mannours, and Impropriators, and yet allowest the poor no freedom, thou art then a declared hypocrite, and all thy prayers, fasts, and thanksgivings are, and will be proved an abomination to the Lord, and freedom himselfe will be the poors portion, when thou shalt lie groaning in bondage.

I have declared this truth to the Army and Parliament, and now I have declared it to thee likewise, that none of you that are the fleshly strength of this Land may be left without excuse, for now you have been all spoken to, and because I have obeyed the voice of the Lord in this thing, therefore doe the Free-holders and Lords of Mannours seek to oppresse me in the outward livelihood of the world, but I am in peace. And London, nay England look to thy freedom, I'le assure thee, thou art very neere to be cheated of it, and if thou lose it now after all thy boasting, truly thy posterity will curse thee, for thy unfaithfulnesse to them: every one talks of freedom, but there are but few that act

for freedome, and the actors for freedome are oppressed by the talkers and verball professors of freedome; if thou wouldst know what true freedome is, read over this and other my writings, and thou shalt see it lies in the community in spirit, and community in the earthly treasury, and this is Christ the true manchild spread abroad in the Creation, restoring all things into himselfe; and so I leave thee, August 26. 1649.

Being a free Denizon of thee, and a true lover of thy peace,

Jerrard Winstanly

1. In this declaration, oppositions are established between the right use of nature, the earth and community, and corrupt uses. How can these be compared with those presented in Jonson's and Milton's writing? What similarities and differences are there?
2. What kinds of historical and textual allusions are made in the passage?
3. Consider the mode and tone of the writing. How are they notably different from those of Jonson and Milton? What might the reasons for this be?

SESSION 7

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

A. *A Modest Proposal*, by Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), was one of a number of pamphlets he wrote dealing with the unhappy situation in Ireland.

A MODEST PROPOSAL

FOR PREVENTING THE CHILDREN OF POOR PEOPLE IN IRELAND FROM BEING A BURDEN TO THEIR PARENTS OR COUNTRY, AND FOR MAKING THEM BENEFICIAL TO THE PUBLIC

It is a melancholy object to those who walk through this great town,¹⁸³ or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads, and cabin-doors, crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, *all in rags* and importuning every passenger for an alms. These mothers, instead of being able to work for their honest livelihood, are forced to employ all their time in strolling to beg sustenance for their helpless infants, who, as they grow up, either turn thieves for want of work, or leave their dear Native Country to fight for the Pretender¹⁸⁴ in Spain, or sell themselves to the Barbadoes.¹⁸⁵

I think it is agreed by all parties that this prodigious number of children in the arms, or on the backs or at the heels of their mothers, and frequently of their fathers, is in the present deplorable state of the kingdom a very great additional grievance; and therefore whoever could find out a fair, cheap, and easy method of making these children sound, useful members of the commonwealth would deserve so well of the public as to have his statue set up for a preserver of the nation. But my intention is very far from being confined to provide only for the children of professed beggars; it is of a much greater extent, and shall take in the whole number of infants at a certain age who are born of parents in effect as little able to support them as those who demand our charity in the streets.

As to my own part, having turned my thoughts for many years upon this important subject, and maturely weighed the several schemes of other projectors, I have always found them grossly mistaken in their computation. It is true, a child just dropped from its dam may be supported by her milk for a solar year, with little other nourishment, at most not above the value of two shillings, which

183 Dublin.

184 James Francis Edward Stuart (1688– 1766), the son of James II, was claimant („Pretender”) to the throne of England. Catholic Ireland felt loyal to him, and considerable numbers of Irishmen joined him in his exile on the Continent.

185 The poverty in Ireland led many Irishmen to emigrate to the West Indies and other British colonies in America; in return for signing agreements to work for employers there for a number of years, their passage to the New World was paid for by the latter.

the mother may certainly get, of the value in scraps, by her lawful occupation of begging; and it is exactly at one year old that I propose to provide for them in such a manner, as, instead of being a charge upon their parents or the parish, or wanting food and raiment for the rest of their lives, they shall, on the contrary, contribute to the feeding, and partly to the clothing, of many thousands.

There is likewise another great advantage in my scheme, that it will prevent those voluntary abortions, and that horrid practice of women murdering their bastard children, alas, too frequent among us, sacrificing the poor innocent babes, I doubt, more to avoid the expense, than the shame, which would move tears and pity in the most savage and inhuman breast.

The number of souls in this kingdom¹⁸⁶ being usually reckoned one million and a half, of these I calculate there may be about two hundred thousand couple whose wives are breeders, from which number I subtract thirty thousand couples who are able to maintain their own children, although I apprehend there cannot be so many under the present distresses of the kingdom, but this being granted, there will remain an hundred and seventy thousand breeders. I again subtract fifty thousand for those women who miscarry, or whose children die by accident or disease within the year. There only remain an hundred and twenty thousand children of poor parents annually born. The question therefore is, how this number shall be reared and provided for, which, as I have already said, under the present situation of affairs, is utterly impossible by all the methods hitherto proposed. For we can neither employ them in handicraft, or agriculture; we neither build houses (I mean in the country) nor cultivate land. They can very seldom pick up a livelihood by stealing till they arrive at six years old, except where they are of towardly¹⁸⁷ parts; although I confess they learn the rudiments much earlier, during which time they can however be looked upon only as *probationers*, as I have been informed by a principal gentleman in the County of Cavan, who protested to me that he never knew above one or two instances under the ages of six, even in a part of the kingdom so renowned for the quickest proficiency in that art.

I am assured by our merchants that a boy or a girl before twelve years old is no saleable commodity, and even when they come to this age they will not yield above three pounds, or three pounds and half a crown at most on the Exchange, which cannot turn to account either to the parents or the kingdom, the charge of nutriment and rags having been at least four times that value.

I shall now therefore humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least objection. I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled, and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricassee or a ragout.

I do therefore humbly offer it to public consideration that of the hundred and twenty thousand children already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for breed, whereof only one fourth part to be males, which is more than we allow to sheep, black cattle, or swine, and my reason is that these children are seldom the fruits of marriage, a circumstance not much regarded by our savages, therefore one male will be sufficient to serve four females. That the remaining hundred thousand may at a year old be offered in sale to the persons of quality and fortune through the kingdom, always advising the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump and fat for a good table. A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends, and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in winter.

I have reckoned upon a medium, that a child just born will weigh twelve pounds, and in a solar year if tolerably nursed increaseth to twenty-eight pounds.

I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very proper for landlords who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children.

Infants' flesh will be in season throughout the year, but more plentiful in March, and a little before and after. For we are told by a grave author, an eminent French physician,¹⁸⁸ that fish being a prolific diet, there are more children born in Roman Catholic countries about nine months after Lent than at any other season; therefore, reckoning a year after Lent, the markets will be more glutted than

186 Ireland.

187 Dutiful, tractable.

188 François Rabelais.

usual, because the number of popish infants is at least three to one in this kingdom; and therefore it will have one other collateral advantage, by lessening the number of Papists among us.

I have already computed the charge of nursing a beggar's child (in which list I reckon all cottagers, labourers, and four-fifths of the farmers) to be about two shillings *per annum*, rags included, and I believe no gentleman would repine to give ten shillings for the carcass of a good fat child, which, as I have said, will make four dishes of excellent nutritive meat, when he hath only some particular friend or his own family to dine with him. Thus the squire will learn to be a good landlord, and grow popular among the tenants; the mother will have eight shillings net profit, and be fit for the work till she produces another child.

Those who are more thrifty (as I must confess the times require) may flay the carcass; the skin of which artificially¹⁸⁹ dressed will make admirable gloves for ladies, and summer boots for fine gentlemen.

As to our city of Dublin, shambles¹⁹⁰ may be appointed for this purpose in the most convenient parts of it, and butchers we may be assured will not be wanting, although I rather recommend buying the children alive, and dressing them hot from the knife as we do roasting pigs.

A very worthy person, a true lover of his country, and whose virtues I highly esteem, was lately pleased in discoursing on this matter to offer a refinement upon my scheme. He said that many gentlemen of this kingdom, having of late destroyed their deer, he conceived that the want of venison might be well supplied by the bodies of young lads and maidens, not exceeding fourteen years of age nor under twelve, so great a number of both sexes in every county being now ready to starve for want of work and service; and these to be disposed of by their parents, if alive, or otherwise by their nearest relations. But with due deference to so excellent a friend and so deserving a patriot, I cannot be altogether in his sentiments; for as to the males, my American acquaintance assured me from frequent experience that their flesh was generally tough and lean, like that of our schoolboys, by continual exercise, and their taste disagreeable, and to fatten them would not answer the charge. Then as to the females, it would, I think with humble submission, be a loss to the public, because they soon would become breeders themselves. And besides, it is not improbable that some scrupulous people might be apt to censure such a practice (although indeed very unjustly) as a little bordering upon cruelty, which, I confess, hath always been with me the strongest objection against any project how well soever intended.

But in order to justify my friend, he confessed that this expedient was put into his head by the famous Psalmanazar,¹⁹¹ a native of the island Formosa, who came from thence to London above twenty years ago, and in conversation told my friend that in his country when any young person happened to be put to death, the executioner sold the carcass to persons of quality as a prime dainty, and that in his time the body of a plump girl of fifteen, who was crucified for an attempt to poison the emperor, was sold to his Imperial Majesty's prime minister of state, and other great mandarins of the court, in joints from the gibbet, at four hundred crowns. Neither indeed can I deny that if the same use were made of several plump young girls in this town, who without one single groat to their fortunes cannot stir abroad without a chair, and appear at the playhouse and assemblies in foreign fineries which they never will pay for, the kingdom would not be the worse.

Some persons of a desponding spirit are in great concern about that vast number of poor people who are aged, diseased, or maimed, and I have been desired to employ my thoughts what course may be taken to ease the nation of so grievous an encumbrance. But I am not in the least pain upon that matter, because it is very well known that they are every day dying and rotting by cold and famine, and filth and vermin, as fast as can be reasonably expected. And as to the younger labourers, they are now in almost as hopeful a condition. They cannot get work, and consequently pine away for want of nourishment to a degree that if at any time they are accidentally hired to common labor, they have not strength to perform it; and thus the country and themselves are happily delivered from the evils to come.

189 Skilfully.

190 Slaughterhouses.

191 George Psalmanazar (ca. 1679-1763) a famous imposter. A Frenchman, he imposed himself on English bishops, noblemen and scientists as a Formosan. He wrote an entirely fictitious account of Formosa, in which he described human sacrifices and cannibalism.

I have too long digressed, and therefore shall return to my subject. I think the advantages by the proposal which I have made are obvious and many, as well as of the highest importance.

For first, as I have already observed, it would greatly lessen the number of Papists, with whom we are yearly overrun, being the principal breeders of the nation as well as our most dangerous enemies, and who stay at home on purpose to deliver the kingdom to the Pretender, hoping to take their advantage by the absence of so many good Protestants, who have chosen rather to leave their country than stay at home and pay tithes against their conscience to an Episcopal curate.¹⁹²

Secondly, the poorer tenants will have something valuable of their own, which by law may be made liable to distress,¹⁹³ and help to pay their landlord's rent, their corn and cattle being already seized and *money a thing unknown*.

Thirdly, whereas the maintenance of an hundred thousand children, from two years old and upwards, cannot be computed at less than ten shillings a piece *per annum*, the nation's stock will be thereby increased fifty thousand pounds *per annum*, besides the profit of a new dish introduced to the tables of all gentlemen of fortune in the kingdom who have any refinement in taste. And the money will circulate among ourselves, the goods being entirely of our own growth and manufacture.

Fourthly, the constant breeders, besides the gain of eight shillings sterling *per annum* by the sale of their children, will be rid of the charge of maintaining them after the first year.

Fifthly, this food would likewise bring great custom to taverns, where the vintners will certainly be so prudent as to procure the best receipts¹⁹⁴ for dressing it to perfection, and consequently have their houses frequented by all the fine gentlemen, who justly value themselves upon their knowledge in good eating; and a skillful cook, who understands how to oblige his guests, will contrive to make it as expensive as they please.

Sixthly, this would be a great inducement to marriage, which all wise nations have either encouraged by rewards or enforced by laws and penalties. It would increase the care and tenderness of mothers toward their children, when they were sure of a settlement for life to the poor babes, provided in some sort by the public, to their annual profit instead of expense. We should see an honest emulation among the married women which of them could bring the fattest child to the market. Men would become as fond of their wives during the time of their pregnancy as they are now of their mares in foal, their cows in calf, or sows when they are ready to farrow, nor offer to beat or kick them (as is too frequent a practice) for fear of a miscarriage.

Many other advantages might be enumerated. For instance, the addition of some thousand carcasses in our exportation of barrelled beef, the propagation of swine's flesh, and improvement in the art of making good bacon, so much wanted among us by the great destruction of pigs, too frequent at our tables, which are no way comparable in taste or magnificence to a well-grown, fat, yearling child, which roasted whole will make a considerable figure at a Lord Mayor's feast or any other public entertainment. But this and many others I omit, being studious of brevity.

Supposing that one thousand families in this city would be constant customers for infants' flesh, besides others who might have it at merry meetings, particularly weddings and christenings, I compute that Dublin would take off annually about twenty thousand carcasses, and the rest of the kingdom (where probably they will be sold somewhat cheaper) the remaining eighty thousand.

I can think of no one objection that will possibly be raised against this proposal, unless it should be urged that the number of people will be thereby much lessened in the kingdom. This I freely own, and it was indeed one principal design in offering it to the world. I desire the reader will observe that I calculate my remedy *for this one individual kingdom of Ireland and for no other that ever was, is, or I think ever can be upon earth*. Therefore let no man talk to me of other expedients: *Of taxing our absentees at five shillings a pound: Of using neither clothes nor household furniture except what is of our own growth and manufacture: Of utterly rejecting the materials and instruments that promote foreign luxury: Of curing the expensiveness of pride, vanity, idleness, and gaming in our women: of introducing a vein of parsimony, prudence, and temperance: Of learning to love our country, in the want of which we differ even from Laplanders and the inhabitants of Topinamboo.*¹⁹⁵ *Of quitting our*

192 The Church of Ireland (the Episcopal Church) was the established church in the country, and every individual had to pay tithes to it, whether he belonged to it or not.

193 Distrain, i.e. the seizing, through legal action, of property for the payment of debts and other obligations.

194 Recipes.

195 I.e., even Laplanders love their frozen, infertile country and the savage tribes of Brazil their city in the jungle more than

*animosities and factions, nor acting any longer like the Jews, who were murdering one another at the very moment their city was taken.*¹⁹⁶ *Of being a little cautious not to sell our country and conscience for nothing: Of teaching landlords to have at least one degree of mercy toward their tenants. Lastly, of putting a spirit of honesty, industry, and skill into our shopkeepers, who, if a resolution could now be taken to buy only our native goods, would immediately unite to cheat and exact upon us in the price, the measure, and the goodness, nor could ever yet be brought to make one fair proposal of just dealing, though often and earnestly invited to it.*¹⁹⁷

Therefore I repeat, let no man talk to me of these and the like expedients, till he hath at least some glimpse of hope that there will ever be some hearty and sincere attempt to put them in practice.

But as to myself, having been wearied out for many years with offering vain, idle, visionary thoughts, and at length utterly despairing of success, I fortunately fell upon this proposal, which, as it is wholly new, so it hath something solid and real, of no expense and little trouble, full in our own power, and whereby we can incur no danger in *disobliging* England. For this kind of commodity will not bear exportation, the flesh being of too tender a consistence to admit a long continuance in salt, *although perhaps I could name a country which would be glad to eat up our whole nation without it.*

After all, I am not so violently bent upon my own opinion as to reject any offer proposed by wise men which shall be found equally innocent, cheap, easy, and effectual. But before something of that kind shall be advanced in contradiction to my scheme, and offering a better, I desire the author or authors will be pleased maturely to consider two points. First, as things now stand, how they will be able to find food and raiment for an hundred thousand useless mouths and backs. And secondly, there being a round million of creatures in human figure throughout this kingdom, whose sole subsistence put into a common stock would leave them in debt two millions of pounds sterling, adding those who are beggars by profession to the bulk of farmers, cottagers, and labourers, with their wives and children, who are beggars in effect. I desire those politicians who dislike my overture, and may perhaps be so bold to attempt an answer, that they will first ask the parents of these mortals whether they would not at this day think it a great happiness to have been sold for food at a year old in the manner I prescribe, and thereby have avoided such a perpetual sense of misfortunes as they have since gone through by the oppression of landlords, the impossibility of paying rent without money or trade, the want of common sustenance, with neither house nor clothes to cover them from the inclemencies of the weather, and the most inevitable prospect of entailing the like or greater miseries upon their breed forever.

I profess, in the sincerity of my heart, that I have not the least personal interest in endeavouring to promote this necessary work, having no other motive than the *public good of my country, by advancing our trade, providing for infants, relieving the poor, and giving some pleasure to the rich.* I have no children by which I can propose to get a single penny; the youngest being nine years old, and my wife past childbearing.

1729

1. In the previous lesson, we looked at “A Watch-word to the City of London”. What characteristics does this piece of writing share with it? In what ways is it markedly different in its use of tone, persona in particular? How is the tone in this piece achieved?
2. What are some of the debating strategies used in the argument (e.g. the use of shared assumptions; the appeal to objectivity; a stance of moderation, the manipulation of language)?
3. The piece is clearly (?) satirical. How does the satire work? What values seem to be presented as positive and how are they ultimately shown to be negative?
4. The eighteenth century is often described as the “Age of Reason”, encouraging rational rather than conventionally dogmatic approaches to social, philosophical and religious problems. In what ways does this passage complicate that view?

B. The following extract is from Epistle II of the *Essay on Man*, by Alexander Pope (1688-1744).

the Anglo-Irish love Ireland.

196 During the siege of Jerusalem by the Emperor Titus, who captured and destroyed the city in AD 70, the city was torn by bloody fights between factions of Jewish fanatics.

197 Swift himself had actually made all these proposals in various pamphlets he had published.

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,
 The proper study of mankind is man.
 Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,
 A being darkly wise, and rudely great:
 With too much knowledge for the sceptic side, 5
 With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
 He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;
 In doubt to deem himself a God, or beast;
 In doubt his mind or body to prefer;
 Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err; 10
 Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
 Whether he thinks too little or too much:
 Chaos of thought and passion, all confus'd;
 Still by himself abus'd¹⁹⁸ or disabus'd;
 Created half to rise, and half to fall; 15
 Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
 Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd:
 The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!
 Go, wondrous creature! mount where science guides,
 Go, measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides; 20
 Instruct the planets in what orbs to run,
 Correct old time, and regulate the sun;
 Go, soar with Plato to th'empyrean¹⁹⁹ sphere,
 To the first good, first perfect, and first fair;
 Or tread the mazy round his follow'rs trod, 25
 And quitting sense²⁰⁰ call imitating²⁰¹ God;
 As eastern priests in giddy circles run,
 And turn their heads to imitate the sun.
 Go, teach eternal wisdom how to rule –
 Then drop into thyself, and be a fool! 30
 Superior beings, when of late they saw
 A mortal man unfold all nature's law,
 Admir'd such wisdom in an earthly shape,
 And shew'd a Newton as we shew an ape.
 Could he, whose rules the rapid comet bind, 35
 Describe or fix one movement of his mind?
 Who saw its fires here rise, and there descend,
 Explain his own beginning, or his end;
 Alas what wonder! man's superior part
 Uncheck'd may rise, and climb from art to art; 40
 But when his own great work is but begun,
 What reason weaves, by passion is undone.
 Trace science then, with modesty thy guide;
 First strip off all her equipage of pride;²⁰²
 Deduct what is but vanity or dress, 45
 Or learning's luxury, or idleness;
 Or tricks to shew²⁰³ the stretch of human brain,
 Mere curious pleasure, or ingenious pain;
 Expunge the whole, or lop th' excrescent parts

198 Deceived.

199 Pertaining to the highest heaven (the empyrean), which contained the element of fire.

200 Ecstatic intuition.

201 Uniting with.

202 Splendour, magnificence, display.

203 Show.

Of all our vices have created arts;²⁰⁴ 50
Then see how little the remaining sum,
Which serv'd the past, and must the times to come!

1734

1. The stated aim of Milton's *Paradise Lost* was to "justify the ways of God to man". What aims does this extract seem to have? Why do you think it is called an "essay"?
2. What picture does Pope give of human nature, and what does he see as humans' main task?
3. Examine the formal means of expression of the poem – such things as the use of lexis and syntax, collocation, sound-patterning – and their interrelation. What differences and similarities between Pope's poetry and that of Jonson and Milton can you discover?
4. How do the formal aspects of the poem reflect the point(s) Pope is trying to make?

C. Thomas Gray (1716-1771) wrote the following poem around the middle of the eighteenth century, when the firm neo-classicism of the earlier part of the century was moving towards the stress on sentiment characteristic of its latter half.

Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes

Tw'as on a lofty vase's side,
Where China's gayest art had dyed
The azure flowers, that blow;²⁰⁵
Demurest of the tabby kind,
The pensive Selima reclined, 5
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declared;
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,
Her coat that with the tortoise²⁰⁶ vies, 10
Her ears of jet and emerald eyes,
She saw; and purred applause.

Still had she gazed; but 'midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
The Genii of the stream: 15
Their scaly armour's Tyrian²⁰⁷ hue
Through richest purple to the view
Betrayed a golden gleam.

The hapless nymph with wonder saw:
A whisker first and then a claw, 20
With many an ardent wish,
She stretched in vain to reach the prize.
What female heart can gold despise?
What cat's averse to fish?

Presumptuous maid! with looks intent 25
Again she stretched, again she bent,
Nor knew the gulf between.
(Malignant Fate sat by and smiled)

204 Of all those devices of luxury that our vices have created into arts.

205 Blow.

206 Domestic cats having fur with a mottled pattern of brown, black and yellowish markings are referred to as "tortoiseshells".

207 Purple.

The slippery verge her feet beguiled, She tumbled headlong in.	30
Eight times emerging from the flood She mewed to every watery god, Some speedy aid to send. No dolphin came, no Nereid stirred: Nor cruel Tom nor Susan ²⁰⁸ heard. A favourite has no friend!	35
From hence, ye beauties, undeceived, Know, one false step is ne'er retrieved And be with caution bold. Not all that tempts your wandering eyes And heedless hearts is lawful prize; Nor all that glisters gold.	40

1748

1. "Mock-heroic" is a term principally associated with the eighteenth century. In what ways is it applicable to this poem? Consider the tone, use of language and allusion, and syntactical organization of the poem.
2. Comment on the mixture of the learned and the familiar, the formal and the casual, in the poem.
3. How does the movement between the serious and the comic in the poem compare with the satirical humour of Swift and Pope?

SESSION 8

ROMANTICISM

A. Read this extract (Chapter 10) from *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley (1797-1851), and consider the questions that follow.

I spent the following day roaming through the valley. I stood beside the sources of the Arveiron, which take their rise in a glacier, that with slow pace is advancing down from the summit of the hills, to barricade the valley. The abrupt sides of vast mountains were before me; the icy wall of the glacier overhung me; a few shattered pines were scattered around; and the solemn silence of this glorious presence-chamber of imperial nature was broken only by the brawling waves or the fall of some vast fragment, the thunder sound of the avalanche or the cracking, reverberated along the mountains, of the accumulated ice, which, through the silent working of immutable laws, was ever and anon rent and torn, as if it had been but a plaything in their hands. These sublime and magnificent scenes afforded me the greatest consolation that I was capable of receiving. They elevated me from all littleness of feeling, and although they did not remove my grief, they subdued and tranquillized it. In some degree, also, they diverted my mind from the thoughts over which it had brooded for the last month. I retired to rest at night; my slumbers, as it were, waited on and ministered to by the assemblance of grand shapes which I had contemplated during the day. They congregated round me; the unstained snowy mountaintop, the glittering pinnacle, the pine woods, and ragged bare ravine, the eagle, soaring amidst the clouds – they all gathered round me and bade me be at peace.

Where had they fled when the next morning I awoke? All of soul-inspiring fled with sleep, and dark melancholy clouded every thought. The rain was pouring in torrents, and thick mists hid the summits of the mountains, so that I even saw not the faces of those mighty friends. Still I would penetrate their misty veil and seek them in their cloudy retreats. What were rain and storm to me? My

208 Common names for servants.

mule was brought to the door, and I resolved to ascend to the summit of Montanvert. I remembered the effect that the view of the tremendous and ever-moving glacier had produced upon my mind when I first saw it. It had then filled me with a sublime ecstasy that gave wings to the soul and allowed it to soar from the obscure world to light and joy. The sight of the awful²⁰⁹ and majestic in nature had indeed always the effect of solemnizing my mind and causing me to forget the passing cares of life. I determined to go without a guide, for I was well acquainted with the path, and the presence of another would destroy the solitary grandeur of the scene.

The ascent is precipitous, but the path is cut into continual and short windings, which enable you to surmount the perpendicularity of the mountain. It is a scene terrifically desolate. In a thousand spots the traces of the winter avalanche may be perceived, where trees lie broken and strewed on the ground, some entirely destroyed, others bent, leaning upon the jutting rocks of the mountain or transversely upon other trees. The path, as you ascend higher, is intersected by ravines of snow, down which stones continually roll from above; one of them is particularly dangerous, as the slightest sound, such as even speaking in a loud voice, produces a concussion of air sufficient to draw destruction upon the head of the speaker. The pines are not tall or luxuriant, but they are sombre and add an air of severity to the scene. I looked on the valley beneath; vast mists were rising from the rivers which ran through it and curling in thick wreaths around the opposite mountains, whose summits were hid in the uniform clouds, while rain poured from the dark sky and added to the melancholy impression I received from the objects around me. Alas! Why does man boast of sensibilities superior to those apparent in the brute; it only renders them more necessary beings. If our impulses were confined to hunger, thirst, and desire, we might be nearly free; but now we are moved by every wind that blows and a chance word or scene that that word may convey to us.

We rest; a dream has power to poison sleep.

We rise; one wand'ring thought pollutes the day.

We feel, conceive, or reason; laugh or weep,
Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away;

It is the same: for, be it joy or sorrow,
The path of its departure still is free.

Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow;
Nought may endure but mutability!

It was nearly noon when I arrived at the top of the ascent. For some time I sat upon the rock that overlooks the sea of ice. A mist covered both that and the surrounding mountains. Presently a breeze dissipated the cloud, and I descended upon the glacier. The surface is very uneven, rising like the waves of a troubled sea, descending low, and interspersed by rifts that sink deep. The field of ice is almost a league in width, but I spent nearly two hours in crossing it. The opposite mountain is a bare perpendicular rock. From the side where I now stood Montanvert was exactly opposite, at the distance of a league; and above it rose Mont Blanc, in awful majesty. I remained in a recess of the rock, gazing on this wonderful and stupendous scene. The sea or rather the vast river of ice, wound among its dependent mountains, whose aerial summits hung over its recesses. Their icy and glittering peaks shone in the sunlight over the clouds. My heart, which was before sorrowful, now swelled with something like joy; I exclaimed, "Wandering spirits, if indeed ye wander, and do not rest in your narrow beds, allow me this faint happiness, or take me, as your companion, away from the joys of life."

As I said this I suddenly beheld the figure of a man, at some distance, advancing towards me with superhuman speed. He bounded over the crevices in the ice, among which I had walked with caution; his stature, also, as he approached, seemed to exceed that of man. I was troubled: a mist came over my eyes, and I felt a faintness seize me; but I was quickly restored by the cold gale of the mountains. I perceived, as the shape came nearer (sight tremendous and abhorred!) that it was the wretch whom I had created. I trembled with rage and horror, resolving to wait his approach and then close with him in mortal combat. He approached; his countenance bespoke bitter anguish, combined with disdain and malignity, while its unearthly ugliness rendered it almost too horrible for human

209 Worthy of profound respect.

eyes. But I scarcely observed this; rage and hatred had at first deprived me of utterance, and I recovered only to overwhelm him with words expressive of furious detestation and contempt.

“Devil,” I exclaimed, “do you dare approach me? And do not you fear the fierce vengeance of my arm wreaked on your miserable head? Begone, vile insect! Or rather, stay, that I may trample you to dust! And, oh! that I could, with the extinction of your miserable existence, restore those victims whom you have so diabolically murdered!”

“I expected this reception,” said the demon. “All men hate the wretched; how, then, must I be hated, whom am miserable beyond all living things! Yet you, my creator, detest and spurn me, thy creature, to whom thou art bound by ties only dissoluble by the annihilation of one of us. You purpose to kill me. How dare you sport thus with life? Do your duty towards me, and I will do mine towards you and the rest of mankind. If you will comply with my conditions, I will leave them and you at peace; but if you refuse, I will glut the maw of death, until it be satiated with the blood of your remaining friends.”

“Abhorred monster! Fiend that thou art! The tortures of hell are too mild a vengeance for thy crimes. Wretched devil! You reproach me with your creation; come on, then, that I may extinguish the spark which I so negligently bestowed.”

My rage was without bounds; I sprang on him, impelled by all the feelings which can arm one being against the existence of another.

He easily eluded me and said, “Be calm! I entreat you to hear me before you give vent to your hatred on my devoted head. Have I not suffered enough, that you seek to increase my misery? Life, although it may only be an accumulation of anguish, is dear to me, and I will defend it. Remember, thou hast made me more powerful than thyself; my height is superior to thine, my joints more supple. But I will not be tempted to set myself in opposition to thee. I am thy creature, and I will be even mild and docile to my natural lord and king if thou wilt also perform thy part, the which thou owest me. Oh, Frankenstein, be not equitable to every other and trample upon me alone, to whom thy justice, and even thy clemency and affection, is most due. Remember that I am thy creature; I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed. Everywhere I see bliss, from which I alone am irrevocably excluded. I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous.”

“Begone! I will not hear you. There can be no community between you and me; we are enemies. Begone, or let us try our strength in a fight, in which one must fall.”

“How can I move thee? Will no entreaties cause thee to turn a favourable eye upon thy creature, who implores thy goodness and compassion? Believe me, Frankenstein, I was benevolent; my soul glowed with love and humanity; but am I not alone, miserably alone? You, my creator, abhor me; what hope can I gather from your fellow creatures, who owe me nothing? They spurn and hate me. The desert mountains and dreary glaciers are my refuge. I have wandered here many days; the caves of ice, which I only do not fear, are a dwelling to me, and the only one which man does not grudge. These bleak skies I hail, for they are kinder to me than your fellow beings. If the multitude of mankind knew of my existence, they would do as you do, and arm themselves for my destruction. Shall I not then hate them who abhor me? I will keep no terms with my enemies. I am miserable, and they shall share my wretchedness. Yet it is in your power to recompense me, and deliver them from an evil which it only remains for you to make so great, that not only you and your family, but thousands of others, shall be swallowed up in the whirlwinds of its rage. Let your compassion be moved, and do not disdain me. Listen to my tale; when you have heard that, abandon or commiserate me, as you shall judge that I deserve. But hear me. The guilty are allowed, by human laws, bloody as they are, to speak in their own defence before they are condemned. Listen to me, Frankenstein. You accuse me of murder, and yet you would, with a satisfied conscience, destroy your own creature. Oh, praise the eternal justice of man! Yet I ask you not to spare me; listen to me, and then, if you can, and if you will, destroy the work of your hands.”

“Why do you call to my remembrance,” I rejoined, “circumstances of which I shudder to reflect, that I have been the miserable origin and author? Cursed be the day, abhorred devil, in which you first saw light! Cursed (although I curse myself) be the hands that formed you! You have made me wretched beyond expression. You have left me no power to consider whether I am just to you or not. Begone! Relieve me from the sight of your detested form.”

“Thus I relieve thee, my creator,” he said, and placed his hated hands before my eyes, which I flung from me with violence; “thus I take from thee a sight which you abhor. Still thou canst listen to me and grant me thy compassion. By the virtues that I once possessed, I demand this from you. Hear my tale; it is long and strange, and the temperature of this place is not fitting to your fine sensations; come to the hut upon the mountain. The sun is yet high in the heavens; before it descends to hide itself behind yon snowy precipices and illuminate another world, you will have heard my story and can decide. On you it rests, whether I quit forever the neighbourhood of man and lead a harmless life or become the scourge of your fellow creatures and the author of your own speedy ruin.”

As he said this he led the way across the ice; I followed. My heart was full, and I did not answer him; but as I proceeded, I weighed the various arguments that he had used and determined at least to listen to his tale. I was partly urged by curiosity, and compassion confirmed my resolution. I had hitherto supposed him to be the murderer of my brother, and I eagerly sought a confirmation or denial of this opinion. For the first time, also, I felt what the duties of a creator towards his creature were, and that I ought to render him happy before I complained of his wickedness. These motives urged me to comply with his demand. We crossed the ice, therefore, and ascended the opposite rock. The air was cold, and the rain again began to descend; we entered the hut, the fiend with an air of exultation, I with a heavy heart and depressed spirits. But I consented to listen, and seating myself by the fire which my odious companion had lighted, he thus began his tale.

1818

1. The first part of the chapter is concerned with the feelings of the narrator towards the landscape in which he finds himself. What kinds of physical features does the description focus on? What kinds of words are used to describe them? What kinds of effect does the landscape have on the narrator?
2. In the second part of the chapter the narrator encounters his “creation”. In what terms does he describe him? What arguments does the creature offer in its defence? Does anyone win the argument? Consider the points made by each speaker and the tone and language in which they are presented. Do you find one more convincing than the other? What other relationships in Western literary culture is this one reminiscent of? In what ways is the relationship presented differently here?
3. The first part of the text concerns itself with the relationship of an individual to a certain kind of physical environment, the second part with the relationship between a creator and his creation. How are these concerns connected?

B. The three poems that follow are by William Blake (1757-1827).

The Garden of Love

I went to the Garden of Love,
And saw what I never had seen:
A Chapel was built in the midst
Where I used to play on the green.

And the gates of this Chapel were shut, 5
And “Thou shalt not” writ over the door;
So I turned to the Garden of Love
That so many sweet flowers bore,

And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tombstones where flowers should be; 10
And Priests in black gowns were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars my joys & desires.

1794

1. What oppositions are established in this poem?
2. How does repetition contribute to the dramatic force?
3. What is “Thou shalt not” a reference to?

London

I wander thro' each chartered street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every man,
In every infant's cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forged manacles I hear. 5

How the Chimney-sweeper's cry
Every black'ning Church appals,
And the hapless Soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls. 10

But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlot's curse
Blasts the new-born Infant's tear,
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse. 15

1794

4. What features of the first poem reappear in this one?
5. What unusual forms of lexical combination occur in the poem? What is their effect?

The Tyger

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire? 5

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet? 10

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp? 15

When the stars²¹⁰ threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee? 20

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye

210 The stars in their courses often serve Blake as a symbol of cold rationality and imposed regularity.

Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

1794

6. The passage from *Frankenstein* has a great deal to say about nature and the relations between creator and created. How does this poem compare in its attitudes to these topics?

7. How does Blake use language and sound-patterning in his poems? How are they markedly different from the poetry in the previous three periods we have looked at?

C. The three poems that follow (often referred to as the “Lucy” poems) were written in 1799 by William Wordsworth (1770-1850). Read them and try to answer the questions that follow.

Song

She dwelt among th’ untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love.

A violet by a mossy stone 5
Half hidden from the eye!
Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know 10
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and oh!
The difference to me!

Three Years She Grew

Three years she grew in sun and shower,²¹¹
Then Nature said, “A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This Child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make 5
A Lady of my own.

“Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower, 10
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

“She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs; 15
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

“The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend; 20
Nor shall she fail to see

211 I.e., Lucy was three years old when Nature made this promise; line 37 makes clear that Lucy had reached the maturity foretold in the sixth stanza when she died.

Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear 25
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face. 30

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live 35
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake – the work was done –
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene; 40
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal

A slumber did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force; 5
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnall course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

1. In what ways is the form of "She Dwelt Among th' Untrodden Ways" and "A Slumber Did My Spirit Steal" similar to Blake's poems?
2. Why are tone and ambiguity particularly significant in these poems?
3. What would you consider typical Romantic features of "Three Years She Grew"?
4. Consider Wordsworth's use of language and sound-patterning in relation to that of Jonson, Milton, Pope and Grey.

SESSION 9

AMERICAN LITERATURE – THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The first truly distinctive American writers emerged between the late 1830's and 1860, a period that has been termed the American Renaissance. This week we shall be looking at writers from this period whose works were crucial in determining the future shape of American literature.

A. Read the following extract, part of a review of Nathaniel Hawthorne's collection of stories *Mosses from an Old Manse* written by Herman Melville (1819-1891).

* * * Where Hawthorne is known, he seems to be deemed a pleasant writer, with a pleasant style – a sequestered, harmless man, from whom any deep and weighty thing would hardly be anticipated: a man who means no meanings. But there is no man, in whom humor and love, like mountain peaks, soar to such a rapt height, as to receive the irradiations of the upper skies; there is no man in whom humor and love are developed in that high form called genius – no such man can exist without also possessing, as the indispensable complement of these, a great, deep intellect which drops down into the universe like a plummet. Or, love and humor are only the eyes, through which such an intellect views this world.

For in spite of all the Indian-summer sunlight on the hither side of Hawthorne's soul, the other side – like the dark half of the physical sphere – is shrouded in a blackness, ten times black. But this darkness but gives more effect to the ever-moving dawn, that forever advances through it, and circumnavigates his world. Whether Hawthorne has simply availed himself of this mystical blackness as a means to the wondrous effects he makes it to produce in his lights and shades; or whether there really lurks in him, perhaps unknown to himself, a touch of Puritanic gloom – this, I cannot altogether tell. Certain it is, however, that this great power of blackness in him derives its force from its appeals to that Calvinistic sense of Innate Depravity and Original Sin, from whose visitations, in some shape or other, no deeply thinking mind is always and wholly free. For, in certain moods, no man can weigh this world without throwing in something, somehow like Original Sin, to strike the uneven balance. At all events, perhaps no writer has ever wielded this terrific thought with greater terror than this same harmless Hawthorne. Still more: this black conceit pervades him, through and through. You may be witched by his sunlight, transported by the bright gildings in the skies he builds over you, but there is the blackness of darkness beyond; and even his bright gildings but fringe and play upon the edges of thunder-clouds. – In one word, the world is mistaken in this Nathaniel Hawthorne. He himself must often have smiled at its absurd misconception of him. He is immeasurably deeper than the plummet of the mere critic. For it is not the brain that can test such a man; it is only the heart. You cannot come to know greatness by inspecting it; there is no glimpse to be caught of it, except by intuition; you need not ring it, you but touch it, and you find it is gold.

Now it is that blackness in Hawthorne, of which I have spoken, that so fixes and fascinates me. It may be, nevertheless, that it is too largely developed in him. Perhaps he does not give us a ray of his light for every shade of his dark. But however this may be, this blackness it is that furnishes the infinite obscure of his background – that background, against which Shakespeare plays his grandest conceits, the things that have made for Shakespeare his loftiest but most circumscribed renown, as the profoundest of thinkers. For by philosophers Shakespeare is not adored as the great man of tragedy and comedy. – “Off with his head! so much for Buckingham!” This sort of rant, interlined by another hand,²¹² brings down the house – those mistaken souls, who dream of Shakespeare as a mere man of Richard-the-Third humps, and Macbeth daggers. But it is those deep far-away things in him; those occasional flashings-forth of the intuitive Truth in him; those short, quick probings at the very axis of reality, – these are the things that make Shakespeare Shakespeare. Through the mouths of the dark characters of Hamlet, Timon, Lear, and Iago, he craftily says, or sometimes insinuates, the things which we feel to be so terrifically true that it were all but madness for any good man, in his own proper character, to utter, or even hint of them. Tormented into desperation, Lear the frantic king tears off the mask, and speaks the sane madness of vital truth. But, as I before said, it is the least part of genius that attracts admiration. And so, much of the blind, unbridled admiration that has been heaped upon Shakespeare has been lavished upon the least part of him. And few of his endless commentators and critics seem to have remembered, or even perceived, that the immediate products of a great mind are not so great as that undeveloped, and sometimes undevelopable yet dimly discernible greatness, to which these immediate products are but the infallible indices. In Shakespeare's tomb lies infinitely more than Shakespeare ever wrote. And if I magnify Shakespeare, it is not so much for what he did do, as for what he did not do, or refrained from doing. For in this world of lies, Truth is forced to fly like a scared white doe in the woodlands; and only by cunning glimpses will she reveal herself, as in

212 By Colley Cibber (1671-1757), an inferior writer; he revised Shakespeare's *Richard III* and interpolated this line.

Shakespeare and other masters of the great Art of Telling the Truth – even though it be covertly, and by snatches.

But if this view of the all-popular Shakespeare be seldom taken by his readers, and if very few who extol him have ever read him deeply or, perhaps, only have seen him on the tricky stage (which alone made, and is still making, him his mere mob renown) – if few men have time, or patience, or palate, for the spiritual truth as it is in that great genius – it is, then, no matter of surprise that in a contemporaneous age, Nathaniel Hawthorne is a man as yet almost utterly mistaken among men. Here and there, in some quiet armchair in the noisy town, or some deep nook among the noiseless mountains, he may be appreciated for something of what he is. But unlike Shakespeare, who was forced to the contrary course by circumstances, Hawthorne (either from simple disinclination, or else from inaptitude) refrains from all the popularizing noise and show of broad farce, and blood-besmeared tragedy; content with the still, rich utterances of a great intellect in repose, and which sends few thoughts into circulation except they be arterialized at his large warm lungs, and expanded in his honest heart.

Nor need you fix upon that blackness in him, if it suit you not. Nor, indeed, will all readers discern it, for it is, mostly, insinuated to those who may best understand it, and account for it; it is not obtruded upon every one alike.

Some may start to read of Shakespeare and Hawthorne on the same page. They may say, that if an illustration were needed, a lesser light might have sufficed to elucidate this Hawthorne, this small man of yesterday. But I am not, willingly, one of those who, as touching Shakespeare at least, exemplify the maxim of Rochefoucauld, that “we exalt the reputation of some, in order to depress that of others”; who, to teach all noble-souled aspirants that there is no hope for them, pronounce Shakespeare absolutely unapproachable. But Shakespeare has been approached. There are minds that have gone as far as Shakespeare into the universe. And hardly a mortal man, who, at some time or other, has not felt as great thoughts in him as any you will find in Hamlet. We must not inferentially malign mankind for the sake of any one man, whoever he may be. This is too cheap a purchase of contentment for conscious mediocrity to make. Besides, this absolute and unconditional adoration of Shakespeare has grown to be a part of our Anglo-Saxon superstitions. The Thirty-Nine Articles²¹³ are now Forty. Intolerance has come to exist in this matter. You must believe in Shakespeare’s unapproachability, or quit the country. But what sort of a belief is this for an American, a man who is bound to carry republican progressiveness into Literature, as well as into Life? Believe me, my friends, that men not very much inferior to Shakespeare are this day being born on the banks of the Ohio. And the day will come when you shall say; who reads a book by an Englishman that is a modern?²¹⁴ The great mistake seems to be that even with those Americans who look forward to the coming of a great literary genius among us, they somehow fancy he will come in the costume of Queen Elizabeth’s day, be a writer of dramas founded upon old English history, or the tales of Boccaccio. Whereas great geniuses are parts of the times; they themselves are the times, and possess a correspondent coloring. It is of a piece with the Jews, who, while their Shiloh²¹⁵ was meekly walking in their streets, were still praying for his magnificent coming: looking for him in a chariot, who was already among them on an ass. Nor must we forget that, in his own lifetime, Shakespeare was not Shakespeare, but only Master William Shakespeare of the shrewd, thriving business firm of Condell, Shakespeare & Co., proprietors of the Globe Theatre in London, and by a courtly author, of the name of Chettle, was looked at as an “upstart crow” beautified “with other birds’ feathers.”²¹⁶ For, mark it well, imitation is often the first charge brought against real originality. Why this is so, there is not space to set forth here. You must have plenty of searoom to tell the Truth in; especially when it seems to have an aspect of newness, as America did in 1492, though it was then just as old, and perhaps older than Asia, only those sagacious philosophers, the common sailors, had never seen it before, swearing it was all water and moonshine there.

Now, I do not say that Nathaniel of Salem is a greater than William of Avon, or as great. But the difference between the two men is by no means immeasurable. Not a very great deal more, and Nathaniel were verily William.

213 The authoritative statement of the Anglican faith.

214 Adaptation of “Who reads an American book?” asked by the Englishman Sydney Smith (1771-1845) in 1820.

215 Hebrew for “Messiah”.

216 Actually made by the jealous Robert Greene (1558-1592) in *A Groatworth of Wit* (1592).

This, too, I mean – that if Shakespeare has not been equaled, give the world time, and he is sure to be surpassed, in one hemisphere or the other. Nor will it at all do to say that the world is getting gray and grizzled now, and has lost that fresh charm which she wore of old, and by virtue of which the great poets of past times made themselves what we esteem them to be. Not so. The world is as young today as when it was created and this Vermont morning dew is as wet to my feet as Eden's dew to Adam's. Nor has Nature been all over ransacked by our progenitors, so that no new charms and mysteries remain for this latter generation to find. Far from it. The trillionth part has not yet been said, and all that has been said but multiplies the avenues to what remains to be said. It is not so much paucity as superabundance of material that seems to incapacitate modern authors.

Let America then prize and cherish her writers; yea, let her glorify them. They are not so many in number as to exhaust her good will. And while she has good kith and kin of her own, to take to her bosom, let her not lavish her embraces upon the household of an alien. For believe it or not, England, after all, is, in many things, an alien to us. China has more bowels of real love for us than she. But even were there no strong literary individualities among us, as there are some dozen at least, nevertheless, let America first praise mediocrity even, in her own children, before she praises (for everywhere, merit demands acknowledgment from every one) the best excellence in the children of any other land. Let her own authors, I say, have the priority of appreciation. I was much pleased with a hot-headed Carolina cousin of mine, who once said, "If there were no other American to stand by, in Literature – why, then, I would stand by Pop Emmons and his *Fredoniad*,²¹⁷ and till a better epic came along, swear it was not very far behind the *Iliad*." Take away the words, and in spirit he was sound.

Not that American genius needs patronage in order to expand. For that explosive sort of stuff will expand though screwed up in a vise, and burst it, though it were triple steel. It is for the nation's sake, and not for her authors' sake, that I would have America be heedful of the increasing greatness among her writers. For how great the shame if other nations should be before her, in crowning her heroes of the pen! But this is almost the case now. American authors have received more just and discriminating praise (however loftily and ridiculously given, in certain cases) even from some Englishmen, than from their own countrymen. There are hardly five critics in America; and several of them are asleep. As for patronage, it is the American author who now patronizes his country, and not his country him. And if at times some among them appeal to the people for more recognition, it is not always with selfish motives, but patriotic ones.

It is true that but few of them as yet have evinced that decided originality which merits great praise. But that graceful writer, who perhaps of all Americans has received the most plaudits from his own country for his productions – that very popular and amiable writer,²¹⁸ however good and self-reliant in many things, perhaps owes his chief reputation to the self-acknowledged imitation of a foreign model, and to the studied avoidance of all topics but smooth ones. But it is better to fail in originality than to succeed in imitation. He who has never failed somewhere, that man can not be great. Failure is the true test of greatness. And if it be said that continual success is a proof that a man wisely knows his powers, it is only to be added that, in that case, he knows them to be small. Let us believe it, then, once for all, that there is no hope for us in these smooth pleasing writers that know their powers. Without malice, but to speak the plain fact they but furnish an appendix to Goldsmith, and other English authors. And we want no American Goldsmiths; nay, we want no American Miltons. It were the vilest thing you could say of a true American author, that he were an American Tompkins. Call him an American, and have done; for you cannot say a nobler thing of him. – But it is not meant that all American writers should studiously cleave to nationality in their writings; only this, no American writer should write like an Englishman, or a Frenchman; let him write like a man, for then he will be sure to write like an American. Let us away with this leaven of literary flunkysm towards England. If either must play the flunky in this thing, let England do it, not us. While we are rapidly preparing for that political supremacy among the nations, which prophetically awaits us at the close of the present century, in a literary point of view we are deplorably unprepared for it, and we seem studious to remain so. Hitherto, reasons might have existed why this should be; but no good reason exists now. And all that is requisite to amendment in this matter is simply this: that, while freely acknowledging all excellence, everywhere, we should refrain from unduly lauding foreign

217 Richard Emmons (1788-1840); his "epic" of the War of 1812 was a bombastic failure.

218 Probably Washington Irving.

writers and, at the same time duly recognize the meritorious writers that are our own; those writers who breathe that unshackled, democratic spirit of Christianity in all things, which now takes the practical lead in this world, though at the same time led by ourselves – us Americans. Let us boldly condemn all imitation, though it comes to us graceful and fragrant as the morning, and foster all originality, though, at first, it be crabbed and ugly as our own pine knots. And if any of our authors fail or seem to fail, then in the words of my enthusiastic Carolina cousin, let us clap him on the shoulder, and back him against all Europe for his second round. The truth is that, in our point of view, this matter of a national literature has come to such a pass with us that in some sense we must turn bullies, else the day is lost, or superiority so far beyond us, that we can hardly say it will ever be ours. * * *

1850

1. What does Melville see as the outstanding feature of Hawthorne's writing? Why does he praise it so highly? Where does he place its origins?
2. What is Melville's attitude to American writing? How does he think it should develop, and what features does he believe should characterize it?
3. What evidence can you find of a strong Romantic element in Melville's views?

B. Read this, the final passage from *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*, by Henry David Thoreau (1817-1860).

Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth. I sat at a table where were rich food and wine in abundance, and obsequious attendance, but sincerity and truth were not; and I went away hungry from the inhospitable board. The hospitality was as cold as the ices. I thought that there was no need of ice to freeze them. They talked to me of the age of the wine and the fame of the vintage, but I thought of an older, a newer, and purer wine, of a more glorious vintage which they had not got, and could not buy. The style, the house and grounds and "entertainment" pass for nothing with me. I called on the king, but he made me wait in his hall, and conducted like a man incapacitated for hospitality. There was a man in my neighborhood who lived in a hollow tree. His manners were truly regal. I should have done better had I called on him.

How long shall we sit in our porticoes practising idle and musty virtues which any work would make impertinent? As if one were to begin the day with long-suffering, and hire a man to hoe his potatoes; and in the afternoon go forth to practise Christian meekness and charity with goodness aforethought! Consider the China²¹⁹ pride and stagnant self-complacency of mankind. This generation inclines a little to congratulate itself on being the last of an illustrious line; and in Boston and London and Paris and Rome, thinking of its long descent, it speaks of its progress in art and science and literature with satisfaction. There are the Records of the Philosophical Societies, and the public Eulogies of *Great Men*! It is the good Adam contemplating his own virtue. "Yes, we have done great deeds, and sung divine songs, which shall never die." – that is, as long as *we* can remember them. The learned societies and great men of Assyria; where are they? What youthful philosophers and experimentalists we are! There is not one of my readers who has yet lived a whole human life. These may be but the spring months in the life of the race. If we have had the seven-years' itch, we have not seen the seventeen-year locust yet in Concord. We are acquainted with a mere pellicle of the globe on which we live. Most have not delved six feet beneath the surface, nor leaped as many above it. We know not where we are. Beside, we are sound asleep nearly half our time. Yet we esteem ourselves wise, and have an established order on the surface. Truly, we are deep thinkers, we are ambitious spirits! As I stand over the insect crawling amid the pine needles on the forest floor, and endeavoring to conceal itself from my sight and ask myself why it will cherish those humble thoughts, and hide its head from me who might, perhaps, be its benefactor, and impart to its race some cheering information, I am reminded of the greater Benefactor and Intelligence that stands over me the human insect.

There is an incessant influx of novelty into the world, and yet we tolerate incredible dulness. I need only suggest what kind of sermons are still listened to in the most enlightened countries. There are such words as joy and sorrow, but they are only the burden of a psalm, sung with a nasal twang, while we believe in the ordinary and mean. We think that we can change our clothes only. It is said that the British Empire is very large and respectable, and that the United States are a first-rate power.

219 China was regarded as deliberately isolating itself from the surrounding world out of a sense of cultural superiority.

We do not believe that a tide rises and falls behind every man which can float the British Empire like a chip, if he should ever harbor it in his mind. Who knows what sort of seventeen-year locust will next come out of the ground? The government of the world I live in was not framed, like that of Britain, in after-dinner conversations over the wine.

The life in us is like the water in the river. It may rise this year higher than man has ever known it, and flood the parched uplands; even this may be the eventful year, which will drown out all our muskrats. It was not always dry land where we dwell. I see far inland the banks which the stream anciently washed before science began to record its freshets. Every one has heard the story which has gone the rounds of New England, of a strong and beautiful bug which came out of the dry leaf of an old table of apple-tree wood, which had stood in a farmer's kitchen for sixty years, first in Connecticut, and afterward in Massachusetts, – from an egg deposited in the living tree many years earlier still, as appeared by counting the annual layers beyond it; which was heard gnawing out for several weeks, hatched perchance by the heat of an urn. Who does not feel his faith in a resurrection and immortality strengthened by hearing of this? Who knows what beautiful and winged life, whose egg has been buried for ages under many concentric layers of woodenness in the dead dry life of society, deposited at first in the alburnum of the green and living tree, which has been gradually converted into the semblance of its well-seasoned tomb, – heard perchance gnawing out now for years by the astonished family of man, as they sat round the festive board, – may unexpectedly come forth from amidst society's most trivial and handselled furniture, to enjoy its perfect summer life at last!

I do not say that John or Jonathan²²⁰ will realize all this; but such is the character of that morrow which mere lapse of time can never make to dawn.

The light which puts out our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star.

1854

1. The passage is marked by a strong idealism. Consider the various ways in which this element is revealed and treated. How does the tone of the passage fit in with what you have learned about the development of American society?
2. In what ways are the ideas expressed in this passage different from and similar to those advanced by Melville?
3. What is Thoreau's main thesis? What rhetorical strategies does he use to develop it?
4. Consider Thoreau's use of figurative language, in particular the use of metaphor.

C. Walt Whitman (1819-1892) published his epoch-making *Leaves of Grass* in 1855. Read the following passage, section 24 of his *Song of Myself*, which made up the bulk of the book.

24.

Walt Whitman, a kosmos, of Manhattan the son,
Turbulent, fleshy, sensual, eating, drinking and breeding,
No sentimentalist, no stander above men and women or apart from them,
No more modest than immodest.

Unscrew the locks from the doors! 5
Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!

Whoever degrades another degrades me,
And whatever is done or said returns at last to me.

Through me the afflatus²²¹ surging and surging, through me the current and index.
I speak the pass-word primeval, I give the sign of democracy, 10
By God! I will accept nothing which all cannot have their counterpart of on the same terms.

Through me many long dumb voices,
Voices of the interminable generations of prisoners and slaves,

220 "John Bull" and "Brother Jonathan" were the personifications of England and the United States.

221 Divine spirit, poetic inspiration.

Voices of the diseas'd and despairing and of thieves and dwarfs,
 Voices of cycles of preparation and accretion, 15
 And of the threads that connect the stars, and of wombs and of the father-stuff,
 And of the rights of them the others are down upon,
 Of the deform'd, trivial, flat, foolish, despised,
 Fog in the air, beetles rolling balls of dung.

Through me forbidden voices, 20
 Voices of sexes and lusts, voices veil'd and I remove the veil,
 Voices indecent by me clarified and transfigur'd.

I do not press my fingers across my mouth,
 I keep as delicate around the bowels as around the head and heart,
 Copulation is no more rank to me than death is. 25

I believe in the flesh and the appetites,
 Seeing, hearing, feeling, are miracles, and each part and tag of me is a miracle.

Divine am I inside and out, and I make holy whatever I touch or am touch'd from
 The scent of these arm-pits aroma finer than prayer,
 This head more than churches, bibles, and all the creeds. 30

If I worship one thing more than another it shall be the spread of my own body, or any part
 of it,
 Translucent mould of me it shall be you!
 Shaded ledges and rests it shall be you!
 Firm masculine colter²²² it shall be you!
 Whatever goes to the tilth²²³ of me it shall be you! 35
 You my rich blood! your milky stream pale strippings of my life!
 Breast that presses against other breasts it shall be you!
 My brain it shall be your occult convolutions!
 Root of wash'd sweet-flag!²²⁴ timorous
 pond-snipe! nest of guarded duplicate eggs! it shall be you!
 Mix'd tussled hay of head, beard, brawn, it shall be you! 40
 Trickling sap of maple, fibre of manly wheat, it
 shall be you!
 Sun so generous it shall be you!
 Vapors lighting and shading my face it shall be you!
 You sweaty brooks and dews it shall be you! 44
 Winds whose soft-tickling genitals rub against me it shall be you!
 Broad muscular fields, branches of live oak, loving lounge in my winding paths, it shall be
 you!
 Hands I have taken, face I have kiss'd, mortal I have ever touch'd, it shall be you.

I dote on myself, there is that lot of me and all so luscious,
 Each moment and whatever happens thrills me with joy,
 I cannot tell how my ankles bend, nor whence the cause of my faintest wish, 50
 Nor the cause of the friendship I emit, nor the cause of the friendship I take again.

That I walk up my stoop, I pause to consider if it really be,
 A morning-glory at my window satisfies me more than the metaphysics of books.

222 Iron blade at the front of a plow.

223 Cultivation.

224 The calamus, a plant with green flowers and aromatic roots.

To behold the day-break!
The little light fades the immense and diaphanous shadows, 55
The air tastes good to my palate.

Hefts²²⁵ of the moving world at innocent gambols silently rising, freshly exuding,
Scooting obliquely high and low.

Something I cannot see puts upward libidinous prongs,
Seas of bright juice suffuse heaven. 60

The earth by the sky staid with, the daily close of their junction,
The heav'd challenge from the east that moment over my head,
The mocking taunt, See then whether you shall be master!

1. What persona does Whitman present in this extract (consider in particular the implications of the first two lines)? What role does self-conscious irony play in this presentation?
2. How is his characterization of himself reflected in the actual form the verse takes?
3. What are some of the unusual views (especially for their period) that Whitman puts forth in this section?
4. What formal features of the verse strike you as powerful and original? How would you characterize Whitman's use of language?

D. Read the following typically short poems by Emily Dickinson (1830-1886), all of them written around 1862.

303

The Soul selects her own Society –
Then – shuts the Door –
To her divine Majority –
Present no more –

Unmoved – she notes the Chariots – pausing – 5
At her low Gate –
Unmoved – an Emperor be kneeling
Upon her Mat –

I've known her – from an ample nation –
Choose One – 10
Then – close the Valves of her attention –
Like Stone –

435

Much Madness is divinest Sense –
To a discerning Eye –
Much Sense – the starkest Madness –
'Tis the Majority
In this, as All, prevail – 5
Assent – and you are sane –
Demur – you're straightway dangerous –
And handled with a Chain –

465

A Heard a Fly buzz – when I died –

225 Mass, main parts.

The stillness in the Room
Was like the Stillness in the Air –
Between the Heaves of Storm –

The Eyes around – had wrung them dry – 5
And Breaths were gathering firm
For that last Onset – when the King
Be witnessed – in the Room –

I willed my Keepsakes – Signed away 10
What portion of me be
Assignable – and then it was
There interposed a Fly –

With Blue – uncertain stumbling Buzz –
Between the light – and me –
And then the Windows failed – and then 15
I could not see to see –

1. How would you characterize the view of personality that Dickinson presents in the first two poems? How does it differ from that in Whitman's poetry?
2. Dickinson challenges many conventions of the language and of prosody. Try to discover as many kinds of deviation as possible (especially deviations of form [lexis and syntax]) and of substance, as well as deviations relating to the "rules" of poetry). What is the effect of this style? How does it relate to the kind of individual described in the first two poems?
3. The situation described in the third poem is, obviously, not one that Dickinson herself could have experienced. What kind of persona does she create here? How does she make the experience of dying/death vivid?

SESSION 10

THE VICTORIAN PERIOD

A. Read this extract from the beginning of Chapter 8 of *Middlemarch*, by George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans, 1819-1880), with the questions that follow in mind.

Mr Casaubon, as might be expected, spent a great deal of his time at the Grange in these weeks, and the hindrance which courtship occasioned to the progress of his great work – the *Key to all Mythologies* – naturally made him look forward the more eagerly to the happy termination of courtship. But he had deliberately incurred the hindrance, having made up his mind that it was now time for him to adorn his life with the graces of female companionship, to irradiate the gloom which fatigue was apt to hang over the intervals of studious labour with the play of female fancy, and to secure in this, his culminating age, the solace of female tendance for his declining years. Hence he determined to abandon himself to the stream of feeling, and perhaps was surprised to find what an exceedingly shallow rill it was. As in drougthy regions baptism by immersion could only be performed symbolically, so Mr Casaubon found that sprinkling was the utmost approach to a plunge which his stream would afford him; and he concluded that the poets had much exaggerated the force of masculine passion. Nevertheless, he observed with pleasure that Miss Brooke showed an ardent submissive affection which promised to fulfil his most agreeable previsions of marriage. It had once or twice crossed his mind that possibly there was some deficiency in Dorothea to account for the moderation of his abandonment; but he was unable to discern the deficiency, or to figure to himself a woman who would have pleased him better; so that there was clearly no reason to fall back upon but the exaggerations of human tradition.

“Could I not be preparing myself now to be more useful?” said Dorothea to him, one morning early in the time of courtship; “could I not learn to read Latin and Greek aloud to you, as Milton’s daughters did to their father, without understanding what they read?”

“I fear that would be wearisome to you,” said Mr Casaubon, smiling; “and, indeed, if I remember rightly, the young women you have mentioned regarded that exercise in unknown tongues as a ground for rebellion against the poet.”

“Yes but in the first place they were very naughty girls, else they would have been proud to minister to such a father; and in the second place they might have studied privately and taught themselves to understand what they read, and then it would have been interesting. I hope you don’t expect me to be naughty and stupid?”

“I expect you to be all that an exquisite young lady can be in every possible relation of life. Certainly it might be a great advantage if you were able to copy the Greek character, and to that end it were well to begin with a little reading.”

Dorothea seized this as a precious permission. She would not have asked Mr Casaubon at once to teach her the languages, dreading of all things to be tiresome instead of helpful; but it was not entirely out of devotion to her future husband that she wished to know Latin and Greek. Those provinces of masculine knowledge seemed to her a standing-ground from which all truth could be seen more truly. As it was, she constantly doubted her own conclusions, because she felt her own ignorance: how could she be confident that one-roomed cottages were not for the glory of God, when men who knew the classics appeared to conciliate indifference to the cottages with zeal for the glory? Perhaps even Hebrew might be necessary – at least the alphabet and a few roots – in order to arrive at the core of things, and judge soundly on the social duties of the Christian. And she had not reached that point of renunciation at which she would have been satisfied with having a wise husband: she wished, poor child, to be wise herself. Miss Brooke was certainly very naive with all her alleged cleverness. Celia, whose mind had never been thought too powerful, saw the emptiness of other people’s pretensions much more readily. To have in general but little feeling, seems to be the only security against feeling too much on any particular occasion.

1872

1. What do you learn about Mr Casaubon and his attitude to love and marriage in paragraph 1?
2. What do he and Dorothea discuss? In what ways do their attitudes to women and work differ?
3. How would you describe the tone of the narrative? How is the narrative voice handled?

B. Robert Browning (1812-1889) is a master of the genre known as dramatic monologue, a monologue in verse in which the speaker addresses a silent listener, revealing, in dramatic irony, things about himself or herself of which he/she is unaware. Keep this basic characteristic in mind as you read the following poem.

Pophyria’s Lover

The rain set early in tonight,
The sullen wind was soon awake,
It tore the elm-tops down for spite,
And did its worst to vex the lake:
I listened with heart fit to break. 5
When glided in Porphyria; straight
She shut the cold out and the storm,
And kneeled and made the cheerless grate
Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;
Which done, she rose, and from her form 10
Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,
And laid her soiled gloves by, untied
Her hat and let the damp hair fall,
And, last, she sat down by my side
And called me. When no voice replied, 15
She put my arm about her waist

And made her smooth white shoulder bare,
 And all her yellow hair displaced,
 And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,
 And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair, 20
 Murmuring how she loved me – she
 Too weak, for all her heart's endeavor,
 To set its struggling passion free
 From pride, and vainer ties dissever,
 And give herself to me forever. 25
 But passion sometimes would prevail,
 Nor could tonight's gay feast restrain
 A sudden thought of one so pale
 For love of her, and all in vain:
 So, she was come through wind and rain. 30
 Be sure I looked up at her eyes
 Happy and proud; at last I knew
 Porphyria worshipped me: surprise
 Made my heart swell, and still it grew
 While I debated what to do. 35
 That moment she was mine, mine, fair,
 Perfectly pure and good: I found
 A thing to do, and all her hair
 In one long yellow string I wound
 Three times her little throat around, 40
 And strangled her. No pain felt she;
 I am quite sure she felt no pain.
 As a shut bud that holds a bee,
 I warily oped her lids: again
 Laughed the blue eyes without a stain. 45
 And I untightened next the tress
 About her neck; her cheek once more
 Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:
 I propped her head up as before,
 Only, this time my shoulder bore 50
 Her head, which droops upon it still:
 The smiling rosy little head,
 So glad it has its utmost will,
 That all it scorned at once is fled,
 And I, its love, am gained instead! 55
 Porphyria's love: she guessed not how
 Her darling one wish would be heard.
 And thus we sit together now,
 And all night long we have not stirred,
 And yet God has not said a word! 60

1836

1. What do we learn about the speaker, as opposed to what we are told about him? In particular, what do we learn about his attitudes, and about his relationship to Poryphria?
2. Browning both uses and subverts Romantic conventions in the poem. How does he do this?
3. How and why does the tone shift (more than once) in the course of the poem?
4. What problems of belief does the poem raise? How?

C. Read this poem by Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) and consider the questions that follow.

Dover Beach

The sea is calm to-night.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits; on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay. 5
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
Listen ! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling, 10
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago 15
Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea. 20

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.²²⁶
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar, 25
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems 30
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain 35
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

1867

1. In what ways do the form, setting, and perspective of the poem resemble and differ from the previous poem? (Pay particular attention to the beginnings of each poem.)
2. How is the question of belief handled in the poem? What comparisons might you make with Browning's poem?
3. How would you characterize the tone of the poem?

226 This difficult line means, in general, that at high tide the sea envelopes the land closely. Its forces are "gathered" up like the "folds" of bright clothing („girdle") which have been compressed („furled"). At ebb tide, as the sea retreats, it is unfurled and spread out. It still surrounds the shoreline but does not enclose it.

SESSION 11

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY – AMERICAN MODERNIST POETRY

A. One of those who initiated the movement in poetry known as “Imagism” was Ezra Pound (1885-1972). This technique is well exemplified in these brief poems.

The Jewel Stairs’ Grievance

The jewelled steps are already quite white with dew,
It is so late that the dew soaks my gauze stockings,
And I let down the crystal curtain
And watch the moon through the clear autumn.

By Rihaku

Note: – Jewel stairs, therefore a palace. Grievance, therefore there is something to complain of. Gauze stockings, therefore a court lady, not a servant who complains. Clear autumn, therefore he has no excuse on account of weather. Also she has come early, for the dew has not merely whitened the stairs, but has soaked her stockings. The poem is especially prized because she utters no direct reproach. [Pound’s note.]

Liu Ch’e

The rustling of the silk is discontinued,
Dust drifts over the court-yard,
There is no sound of footfall, and the leaves
Scurry into heaps and lie still,
And she the rejoicer of the heart is beneath them:

A wet leaf that clings to the threshold.

In a Station of the Metro

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.

1916

1. Consider the importance of juxtaposition in the Pound poems. How is it used and what is its effect?

B. Read the following brief poem by William Carlos Williams (1883-1963).

The Locust Tree in Flower
(First version)

Among
the leaves
bright

green
of wrist-thick
tree

5

and old
stiff broken
branch

ferncool
swaying

10

loosely strung –

come May

again

white blossom

15

clusters

hide

to spill

their sweets

almost

unnoticed

20

down

and quickly

fall

1935

1. Pick out the ten words you think are most important for understanding the poem. Be prepared to discuss your choice in class.
2. In class you will also be given Williams's second version of the poem and be asked to compare the two.
3. Consider the use of rhyme and rhythm (or the lack of them) in this poem and the preceding poems by Pound. What is the effect of the absence of these elements? What means do the poems use to attain coherence without them? Why do you think these "traditional" elements of European verse were abandoned?

C. "Preludes" is an early work by the poet, dramatist and critic T.S. Eliot (1888-1965).

Preludes

I

The winter evening settles down

With smell of steaks in passageways.

Six o'clock.

The burnt-out ends of smoky days.

And now a gusty shower wraps

5

The grimy scraps

Of withered leaves about your feet

And newspapers from vacant lots;

The showers beat

On broken blinds and chimney-pots,

10

And at the corner of the street

A lonely cab-horse steams and stamps.

And then the lighting of the lamps.

II

The morning comes to consciousness

Of faint stale smells of beer

15

From the sawdust-trampled street

With all its muddy feet that press

To early coffee-stands.

With the other masquerades

That time resumes,

20

One thinks of all the hands

That are raising dingy shades

In a thousand furnished rooms.

III

You tossed a blanket from the bed,
You lay upon your back, and waited; 25
You dozed, and watched the night revealing
The thousand sordid images
Of which your soul was constituted;
They flickered against the ceiling.
And when all the world came back 30
And the light crept up between the shutters
And you heard the sparrows in the gutters,
You had such a vision of the street
As the street hardly understands;
Sitting along the bed's edge, where 35
You curled the papers from your hair,
Or clasped the yellow soles of feet
In the palms of both soiled hands.

IV

His soul stretched tight across the skies
That fade behind a city block, 40
Or trampled by insistent feet
At four and five and six o'clock;
And short square fingers stuffing pipes,
And evening newspapers, and eyes
Assured of certain certainties, 45
The conscience of a blackened street
Impatient to assume the world.

I am moved by fancies that are curled
Around these images, and cling:
The notion of some infinitely gentle 50
Infinitely suffering thing.

Wipe your hand across your mouth, and laugh;
The worlds revolve like ancient women
Gathering fuel in vacant lots.

1917

1. Why is the title of the poem "Preludes" and not "Images" or "Impressions"?
2. Consider the use of personal pronouns in the poem (e.g. "one", "you", "he", "I"). What effect do these have on the perspective(s) the poem presents?
3. Much of the poem is concerned with presenting scenes or land- (or rather town-) scapes. Consider the types of scene presented and how they compare with other poems in this lesson, but also with poems from previous periods (particularly the Romantics and Victorians).
4. How precisely are these scenes presented? Consider especially tone, use of rhyme and rhythm, and adjectival premodification of nouns.
5. As with much nineteenth-century and earlier poetry, the poem is concerned with spiritual and existential questions (consider the use of the word "soul", for instance). How is its treatment of these concerns similar to and different from that of previous poems we have looked at?

D. Read the following poem by Wallace Stevens (1879-1955).

The Idea of Order at Key West²²⁷

She sang beyond the genius of the sea.
The water never formed to mind or voice,
Like a body wholly body, fluttering
Its empty sleeves; and yet its mimic motion
Made constant cry, caused constantly a cry, 5
That was not ours although we understood,
Inhuman, of the veritable ocean.

The sea was not a mask. No more was she.
The song and water were not medleyed sound
Even if what she sang was what she heard, 10
Since what she sang was uttered word by word.
It may be that in all her phrases stirred
The grinding water and the gasping wind;
But it was she and not the sea we heard.

For she was the maker of the song we sang. 15
The ever-hooded, tragic-gestured sea
Was merely a place by which she walked to sing.
Whose spirit is this? we said, because we knew
It was the spirit that we sought and knew
That we should ask this often as she sang. 20

If it was only the dark voice of the sea
That rose, or even colored by many waves;
If it was only the outer voice of sky
And cloud, of the sunken coral water-walled,
However clear, it would have been despair, 25
The heaving speech of air, a summer sound
Repeated in a summer without end
And sound alone. But it was more than that,
More even than her voice, and ours, among
The meaningless plungings of water and the wind, 30
Theatrical distances, bronze shadows heaped
On high horizons, mountainous atmospheres
Of sky and sea.

It was her voice that made
The sky acutest at its vanishing. 35
She measured to the hour its solitude.
She was the single artificer of the world
In which she sang. And when she sang, the sea,
Whatever self it had, became the self
That was her song, for she was the maker. Then we, 40
As we beheld her striding there alone,
Knew that there never was a world for her
Except the one she sang and, singing, made.

227 "In 'The Idea of Order at Key West' life has ceased to be a matter of chance. It may be that every man introduces his own order into the life about him and that the idea of order in general is simply what Bishop Berkeley might have called a fortuitous concurrence of personal orders. But still there is order.... But then, I never thought that it was a fixed philosophic proposition that life was a mass of irrelevancies any more than I now think that it is a fixed philosophic proposition that every man introduces his own order as part of a general order. These are tentative ideas for the purposes of poetry" (Stevens in a letter to Ronald Lane Latimer).

Ramon Fernandez,²²⁸ tell me, if you know,
 Why, when the singing ended and we turned 45
 Toward the town, tell why the glassy lights,
 The lights in the fishing boats at anchor there,
 As the night descended, tilting in the air,
 Mastered the night and portioned out the sea,
 Fixing emblazoned zones and fiery poles, 50
 Arranging, deepening, enchanting night.

Oh! Blessed rage for order, pale Ramon,
 The maker's rage to order words of the sea,
 Words of the fragrant portals, dimly starred,
 And of ourselves and of our origins, 55
 In ghostlier demarcations, keener sounds.

1936

1. As in Eliot, the poem presents us with people (here an anonymous individual, “she”) in relationship to a particular setting. Consider what is described and how it is described, and the formal aspects previously referred to (rhythm, tone, collocation, adjectival premodification, use of novel sounds and rhyme).
2. Pay particular attention to syntax and sentence construction in the poem, which is complex and problematic. How does this element contribute to the concerns of the poem in general (look especially at the way syntax combines with semantics and phonetics in its problematicity)?
3. Stevens, like Eliot, is clearly concerned with metaphysical issues, in particular the question of the relationship between art and “reality” (note the last section especially). Examine how these are approached in comparison with Eliot and the Romantic and nineteenth century poets we have looked at.

SESSION 12

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY – BRITISH MODERNIST PROSE

A. Read this extract from *The Rainbow*, by D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930).

Christmas passed, the wet, drenched, cold days of January recurred monotonously, with now and then a brilliance of blue flashing in, when Brangwen went out into a morning like crystal, when every sound rang again, and the birds were many and sudden and brusque in the hedges. Then an elation came over him in spite of everything, whether his wife were strange or sad, or whether he craved for her to be with him, it did not matter, the air rang with clear noises, the sky was like crystal, like a bell, and the earth was hard. Then he worked and was happy, his eyes shining, his cheeks flushed. And the zest of life was strong in him.

The birds pecked busily round him, the horses were fresh and ready, the bare branches of the trees flung themselves up like a man yawning, taut with energy, the twigs radiated off into the clear light. He was alive and full of zest for it all. And if his wife were heavy, separated from him, extinguished, then, let her be, let him remain himself. Things would be as they would be. Meanwhile he heard the ringing crow of a cockerel in the distance, he saw the pale shell of the moon effaced on a blue sky.

So he shouted to the horses, and was happy. If, driving into Ilkeston, a fresh young woman were going in to do her shopping, he hailed her, and reined in his horse, and picked her up. Then he was glad to have her near him, his eyes shone, his voice, laughing, teasing in a warm fashion, made

228 “Ramon Fernandez was not intended to be anyone at all. I chose two everyday Spanish names” (Stevens in a letter to Bernard Heringman).

the poise of her head more beautiful, her blood ran quicker. They were both stimulated, the morning was fine.

What did it matter that, at the bottom of his heart, was care and pain? It was at the bottom, let it stop at the bottom. His wife, her suffering, her coming pain – well, it must be so. She suffered, but he was out of doors, full in life, and it would be ridiculous, indecent, to pull a long face and to insist on being miserable. He was happy, this morning, driving to town, with the hoofs of the horse spanking the hard earth. Well he was happy, if half the world were weeping at the funeral of the other half. And it was a jolly girl sitting beside him. And Woman was immortal, whatever happened, whoever turned towards death. Let the misery come when it could not be resisted.

The evening arrived later very beautiful, with a rosy flush hovering above the sunset, and passing away into violet and lavender, with turquoise green north and south in the sky, and in the east, a great, yellow moon hanging heavy and radiant. It was magnificent to walk between the sunset and the moon, on a road where little holly trees thrust black into the rose and lavender, and starlings flickered in droves across the light. But what was the end of the journey? The pain came right enough, later on, when his heart and his feet were heavy, his brain dead, his life stopped.

One afternoon, the pains began, Mrs Brangwen was put to bed, the midwife came. Night fell, the shutters were closed, Brangwen came in to tea, to the loaf and the pewter teapot, the child, silent and quivering, playing with glass beads, the house, empty, it seemed, or exposed to the winter night, as if it had no walls.

Sometimes there sounded, long and remote in the house, vibrating through everything, the moaning cry of a woman in labour. Brangwen, sitting downstairs, was divided. His lower, deeper self was with her, bound to her, suffering. But the big shell of his body remembered the sound of owls that used to fly round the farmstead when he was a boy. He was back in his youth, a boy, haunted by the sound of the owls, waking up his brother to speak to him. And his mind drifted away to the birds, their solemn, dignified faces, their flight so soft and broad-winged. And then to the birds his brother had shot, fluffy, dust-coloured, dead heaps of softness with faces absurdly asleep. It was a queer thing, a dead owl.

He lifted his cup to his lips, he watched the child with the beads. But his mind was occupied with owls, and the atmosphere of his boyhood, with his brothers and sisters. Elsewhere, fundamental, he was with his wife in labour, the child was being brought forth out of their one flesh. He and she, one flesh, out of which life must be put forth. The rent was not in his body, but it was of his body. On her the blows fell, but the quiver ran through to him, to his last fibre. She must be torn asunder for life to come forth, yet still they were one flesh, and still, from further back, the life came out of him to her, and still he was the unbroken that has the broken rock in its arms, their flesh was one rock from which the life gushed, out of her who was smitten and rent, from him who quivered and yielded.

He went upstairs to her. As he came to the bedside she spoke to him in Polish.

“Is it very bad?” he asked.

She looked at him, and oh, the weariness to her, of the effort to understand another language, the weariness of hearing him, attending to him, making out who he was, as he stood there fair-bearded and alien, looking at her. She knew something of him, of his eyes. But she could not grasp him. She closed her eyes.

He turned away, white to the gills.

“It’s not so very bad,” said the midwife.

He knew he was a strain on his wife. He went downstairs.

The child glanced up at him, frightened.

“I want my mother,” she quavered.

“Ay, but she’s badly,” he said mildly, unheeding.

She looked at him with lost, frightened eyes.

“Has she got a headache?”

“No – she’s going to have a baby.”

The child looked round. He was unaware of her. She was alone again in terror.

“I want my mother,” came the cry of panic.

“Let Tilly undress you,” he said. “You’re tired.”

There was another silence. Again came the cry of labour.

“I want my mother,” rang automatically from the wincing, panic-stricken child, that felt cut off and lost in a horror of desolation.

Tilly came forward, her heart wrung.

“Come an’ let me undress her then, pet-lamb,” she crooned. “You s’ll have your mother in th’ mornin’, don’t you fret, my duckie; never mind, angel.”

But Anna stood upon the sofa, her back to the wall.

“I want my mother,” she cried, her little face quivering, and the great tears of childish, utter anguish falling.

“She’s poorly, my lamb, she’s poorly to-night, but she’ll be better by mornin’. Oh don’t cry, don’t cry, love, she doesn’t want you to cry, precious little heart, no, she doesn’t.”

Tilly took gently hold of the child’s skirts. Anna snatched back her dress, and cried, in a little hysteria:

“No, you’re not to undress me – I want my mother,” – and her child’s face was running with grief and tears, her body shaken.

“Oh, but let Tilly undress you. Let Tilly undress you, who loves you, don’t be wilful to-night. Mother’s poorly, she doesn’t want you to cry.”

The child sobbed distractedly, she could not hear.

“I want my mother,” she wept.

“When you’re undressed, you s’ll go up to see your mother – when you’re undressed, pet, when you’ve let Tilly undress you, when you’re a little jewel in your nightie, love. Oh don’t you cry, don’t you –”

Brangwen sat stiff in his chair. He felt his brain going tighter. He crossed over the room, aware only of the maddening sobbing.

“Don’t make a noise,” he said.

And a new fear shook the child from the sound of his voice. She cried mechanically, her eyes looking watchful through her tears, in terror, alert to what might happen.

“I want – my – mother,” quavered the sobbing, blind voice.

A shiver of irritation went over the man’s limbs. It was the utter, persistent unreason, the maddening blindness of the voice and the crying.

“You must come and be undressed,” he said, in a quiet voice that was thin with anger.

And he reached his hand and grasped her. He felt her body catch in a convulsive sob. But he too was blind, and intent, irritated into mechanical action. He began to unfasten her little apron. She would have shrunk from him, but could not. So her small body remained in his grasp, while he fumbled at the little buttons and tapes, unthinking, intent, unaware of anything but the irritation of her. Her body was held taut and resistant, he pushed off the little dress and the petticoats, revealing the white arms. She kept stiff, overpowered, violated, he went on with his task. And all the while she sobbed, choking:

“I want my mother.”

He was unheedingly silent, his face stiff. The child was now incapable of understanding, she had become a little, mechanical thing of fixed will. She wept, her body convulsed, her voice repeating the same cry.

“Eh dear o’ me!” cried Tilly, becoming distracted herself. Brangwen, slow, clumsy, blind, intent, got off all the little garments, and stood the child naked in its shift upon the sofa.

“Where’s her nightie?” he asked.

Tilly brought it, and he put it on her. Anna did not move her limbs to his desire. He had to push them into place. She stood, with fixed, blind will, resistant, a small, convulsed, unchangeable thing weeping ever and repeating the same phrase. He lifted one foot after the other, pulled off slippers and socks. She was ready.

“Do you want a drink?” he asked.

She did not change. Unheeding, uncaring, she stood on the sofa, standing back, alone, her hands shut and half lifted, her face, all tears, raised and blind. And through the sobbing and choking came the broken:

“I – want – my – mother.”

“Do you want a drink?” he said again.

There was no answer. He lifted the stiff, denying body between his hands. Its stiff blindness made a flash of rage go through him. He would like to break it.

He set the child on his knee, and sat again in his chair beside the fire, the wet, sobbing, inarticulate noise going on near his ear, the child sitting stiff, not yielding to him or anything, not aware.

A new degree of anger came over him. What did it all matter? What did it matter if the mother talked Polish and cried in labour, if this child were stiff with resistance, and crying? Why take it to heart? Let the mother cry in labour, let the child cry in resistance, since they would do so. Why should he fight against it, why resist? Let it be, if it were so. Let them be as they were, if they insisted.

And in a daze he sat, offering no fight. The child cried on, the minutes ticked away, a sort of torpor was on him.

It was some little time before he came to, and turned to attend to the child. He was shocked by her little wet, blinded face. A bit dazed, he pushed back the wet hair. Like a living statue of grief, her blind face cried on.

“Nay,” he said, “not as bad as that. It’s not as bad as that, Anna, my child. Come, what are you crying for so much? Come, stop now, it’ll make you sick. I wipe you dry, don’t wet your face any more. Don’t cry any more wet tears, don’t, it’s better not to. Don’t cry – it’s not so bad as all that. Hush now, hush – let it be enough.”

His voice was queer and distant and calm. He looked at the child. She was beside herself now. He wanted her to stop, he wanted it all to stop, to become natural.

“Come,” he said, rising to turn away, “we’ll go an’ supper-up the beast.”

He took a big shawl, folded her round, and went out into the kitchen for the lantern.

“You’re never taking the child out, of a night like this,” said Tilly.

“Ay, it’ll quieten her,” he answered.

It was raining. The child was suddenly still, shocked, finding the rain on its face, the darkness.

“We’ll just give the cows their something-to-eat, afore they go to bed,” Brangwen was saying to her, holding her close and sure.

There was a trickling of water into the butt, a burst of rain-drops sputtering on to her shawl, and the light of the lantern swinging, flashing on a wet pavement and the base of a wet wall. Otherwise it was black darkness: one breathed darkness.

He opened the doors, upper and lower, and they entered into the high, dry barn, that smelled warm even if it were not warm. He hung the lantern on the nail and shut the door. They were in another world now. The light shed softly on the timbered barn, on the white-washed walls, and the great heap of hay; instruments cast their shadows largely, a ladder rose to the dark arch of a loft. Outside there was the driving rain, inside, the softly-illuminated stillness and calmness of the barn.

Holding the child on one arm, he set about preparing the food for the cows, filling a pan with chopped hay and brewer’s grains and a little meal. The child, all wonder, watched what he did. A new being was created in her for the new conditions. Sometimes a little spasm, eddying from the bygone storm of sobbing, shook her small body. Her eyes were wide and wondering, pathetic. She was silent, quite still.

In a sort of dream, his heart sunk to the bottom, leaving the surface of him still, quite still, he rose with the panful of food, carefully balancing the child on one arm, the pan in the other hand. The silky fringe of the shawl swayed softly, grains and hay trickled to the floor; he went along a dimly-lit passage behind the mangers, where the horns of the cows pricked out of the obscurity. The child shrank, he balanced stiffly, rested the pan on the manger wall, and tipped out the food, half to this cow, half to the next. There was a noise of chains running, as the cows lifted or dropped their heads sharply; then a contented, soothing sound, a long snuffing as the beast ate in silence.

The journey had to be performed several times. There was the rhythmic sound of the shovel in the barn, then the man returned walking stiffly between the two weights, the face of the child peering out from the shawl. Then the next time, as he stooped, she freed her arm and put it round his neck, clinging soft and warm, making all easier.

The beast fed, he dropped the pan and sat down on a box, to arrange the child.

“Will the cows go to sleep now?” she said, catching her breath as she spoke.

“Yes.”

“Will they eat all their stuff up first?”

“Yes. Hark at them.”

And the two sat still listening to the snuffing and breathing of cows feeding in the sheds communicating with this small barn. The lantern shed a soft, steady light from one wall. All outside was still in the rain. He looked down at the silky folds of the paisley shawl. It reminded him of his mother. She used to go to church in it. He was back again in the old irresponsibility and security, a boy at home.

The two sat very quiet. His mind, in a sort of trance, seemed to become more and more vague. He held the child close to him. A quivering little shudder, re-echoing from her sobbing, went down her limbs. He held her closer. Gradually she relaxed, the eyelids began to sink over her dark, watchful eyes. As she sank to sleep, his mind became blank.

When he came to, as if from sleep, he seemed to be sitting in a timeless stillness. What was he listening for? He seemed to be listening for some sound a long way off, from beyond life. He remembered his wife. He must go back to her. The child was asleep, the eyelids not quite shut, showing a slight film of black pupil between. Why did she not shut her eyes? Her mouth was also a little open.

He rose quickly and went back to the house.

“Is she asleep?” whispered Tilly.

He nodded. The servant-woman came to look at the child who slept in the shawl, with cheeks flushed hot and red, and a whiteness, a wanness round the eyes.

“God-a-mercy!” whispered Tilly, shaking her head.

He pushed off his boots and went upstairs with the child.

He became aware of the anxiety grasped tight at his heart, because of his wife. But he remained still. The house was silent save for the wind outside, and the noisy trickling and splattering of water in the water-butts. There was a slit of light under his wife’s door.

He put the child into bed wrapped as she was in the shawl, for the sheets would be cold. Then he was afraid that she might not be able to move her arms, so he loosened her. The black eyes opened, rested on him vacantly, sank shut again. He covered her up. The last little quiver from the sobbing shook her breathing.

This was his room, the room he had had before he married. It was familiar. He remembered what it was to be a young man, untouched.

He remained suspended. The child slept, pushing her small fists from the shawl. He could tell the woman her child was asleep. But he must go to the other landing. He started. There was the sound of the owls – the moaning of the woman. What an uncanny sound! It was not human – at least to a man.

He went down to her room, entering softly. She was lying still, with eyes shut, pale, tired. His heart leapt, fearing she was dead. Yet he knew perfectly well she was not. He saw the way her hair went loose over her temples, her mouth was shut with suffering in a sort of grin. She was beautiful to him – but it was not human. He had a dread of her as she lay there. What had she to do with him? She was other than himself

Something made him go and touch her fingers that were still grasped on the sheet. Her brown-grey eyes opened and looked at him. She did not know him as himself. But she knew him as the man. She looked at him as a woman in childbirth looks at the man who begot the child in her: an impersonal look, in the extreme hour, female to male. Her eyes closed again. A great, scalding peace went over him, burning his heart and his entrails, passing off into the infinite.

When her pains began afresh, tearing her, he turned aside, and could not look. But his heart in torture was at peace, his bowels were glad. He went downstairs, and to the door, outside, lifted his face to the rain, and felt the darkness striking unseen and steadily upon him.

The swift, unseen threshing of the night upon him silenced him and he was overcome. He turned away indoors, humbly. There was the infinite world, eternal, unchanging, as well as the world of life.

1915

1. The opening part of the passage is concerned, like much of the poetry and prose we have been looking at, with the relationship of people to their environment, to each other, and to spiritual matters. How are these things interrelated in this first part?

2. How are these things dramatized in a more focused fashion in the long scene in which the man relates to his wife and the little girl?
3. Consider the use of perspective and focalization in the text. Most of the passage is concerned with the man's thoughts, but these are complexly and subtly juxtaposed with the description of his actions and relations to other people. What can you say about the way(s) in which this is achieved?

B. The following passage is from *Mrs Dalloway*, by Virginia Woolf (1882-1941).

She put the pad on the hall table. She began to go slowly upstairs, with her hand on the banisters, as if she had left a party, where now this friend now that had flashed back her face, her voice; had shut the door and gone out and stood alone, a single figure against the appalling night, or rather, to be accurate, against the stare of this matter-of-fact June morning; soft with the glow of rose petals for some, she knew, and felt it, as she paused by the open staircase window which let in blinds flapping, dogs barking, let in, she thought, feeling herself suddenly shrivelled, aged, breastless, the grinding, blowing, flowering of the day, out of doors, out of the window, out of her body and brain which now failed, since Lady Bruton, whose lunch parties were said to be extraordinarily amusing, had not asked her.

Like a nun withdrawing, or a child exploring a tower, she went upstairs, paused at the window, came to the bathroom. There was the green linoleum and a tap dripping. There was an emptiness about the heart of life; an attic room. Women must put off their rich apparel. At mid-day they must disrobe. She pierced the pincushion and laid her feathered yellow hat on the bed. The sheets were clean, tight stretched in a broad white band from side to side. Narrower and narrower would her bed be. The candle was half burnt down and she had read deep in Baron Marbot's Memoirs. She had read late at night of the retreat from Moscow. For the House sat so long that Richard insisted, after her illness, that she must sleep undisturbed. And really she preferred to read of the retreat from Moscow. He knew it. So the room was an attic; the bed narrow; and lying there reading, for she slept badly, she could not dispel a virginity preserved through childbirth which clung to her like a sheet. Lovely in girlhood, suddenly there came a moment – for example on the river beneath the woods at Clieveden – when, through some contraction of this cold spirit, she had failed him. And then at Constantinople, and again and again. She could see what she lacked. It was not beauty; it was not mind. It was something central which permeated; something warm which broke up surfaces and rippled the cold contact of man and woman, or of women together. For that she could dimly perceive. She resented it, had a scruple picked up Heaven knows where, or, as she felt, sent by Nature (who is invariably wise); yet she could not resist sometimes yielding to the charm of a woman, not a girl, of a woman confessing, as to her they often did, some scrape, some folly. And whether it was pity, or their beauty, or that she was older, or some accident – like a faint scent, or a violin next door (so strange is the power of sounds at certain moments), she did undoubtedly then feel what men felt. Only for a moment; but it was enough. It was a sudden revelation, a tinge like a blush which one tried to check and then, as it spread, one yielded to its expansion, and rushed to the farthest verge and there quivered and felt the world come closer, swollen with some astonishing significance, some pressure of rapture, which split its thin skin and gushed and poured with an extraordinary alleviation over the cracks and sores. Then, for that moment, she had seen an illumination; a match burning in a crocus; an inner meaning almost expressed. But the close withdrew; the hard softened. It was over – the moment. Against such moments (with women too) there contrasted (as she laid her hat down) the bed and Baron Marbot and the candle half-burnt. Lying awake, the floor creaked; the lit house was suddenly darkened, and if she raised her head she could just hear the click of the handle released as gently as possible by Richard, who slipped upstairs in his socks and then, as often as not, dropped his hot-water bottle and swore! How she laughed!

But this question of love (she thought, putting her coat away), this falling in love with women. Take Sally Seton; her relation in the old days with Sally Seton. Had not that, after all, been love?

She sat on the floor – that was her first impression of Sally – she sat on the floor with her arms round her knees, smoking a cigarette. Where could it have been? The Mannings'? The Kinloch-Jones's? At some party (where she could not be certain), for she had a distinct recollection of saying to the man she was with, "Who is that?" And he had told her, and said that Sally's parents did not get on (how that shocked her – that one's parents should quarrel!). But all that evening she could not take her

eyes off Sally. It was an extraordinary beauty of the kind she most admired, dark, large-eyed, with that quality which, since she hadn't got it herself, she always envied – a sort of abandonment, as if she could say anything, do anything; a quality much commoner in foreigners than in Englishwomen. Sally always said she had French blood in her veins, an ancestor had been with Marie Antoinette, had his head cut off, left a ruby ring. Perhaps that summer she came to stay at Bourton, walking in quite unexpectedly without a penny in her pocket, one night after dinner, and upsetting poor Aunt Helena to such an extent that she never forgave her. There had been some awful quarrel at home. She literally hadn't a penny that night when she came to them – had pawned a brooch to come down. She had rushed off in a passion. They sat up till all hours of the night talking. Sally it was who made her feel, for the first time, how sheltered the life at Bourton was. She knew nothing about sex – nothing about social problems. She had once seen an old man who had dropped dead in a field – she had seen cows just after their calves were born. But Aunt Helena never liked discussion of anything (when Sally gave her William Morris, it had to be wrapped in brown paper). There they sat, hour after hour, talking in her bedroom at the top of the house, talking about life, how they were to reform the world. They meant to found a society to abolish private property, and actually had a letter written, though not sent out. The ideas were Sally's, of course – but very soon she was just as excited – read Plato in bed before breakfast; read Morris; read Shelley by the hour.

Sally's power was amazing, her gift, her personality. There was her way with flowers, for instance. At Bourton they always had stiff little vases all the way down the table. Sally went out, picked hollyhocks, dahlias – all sorts of flowers that had never been seen together – cut their heads off, and made them swim on the top of water in bowls. The effect was extraordinary – coming in to dinner in the sunset. (Of course Aunt Helena thought it wicked to treat flowers like that.) Then she forgot her sponge, and ran along the passage naked. That grim old housemaid, Ellen Atkins, went about grumbling – “Suppose any of the gentlemen had seen?” Indeed she did shock people. She was untidy, Papa said.

The strange thing, on looking back, was the purity, the integrity, of her feeling for Sally. It was not like one's feeling for a man. It was completely disinterested, and besides, it had a quality which could only exist between women, between women just grown up. It was protective, on her side; sprang from a sense of being in league together, a presentiment of something that was bound to part them (they spoke of marriage always as a catastrophe), which led to this chivalry, this protective feeling which was much more on her side than Sally's. For in those days she was completely reckless; did the most idiotic things out of bravado; bicycled round the parapet on the terrace: smoked cigars. Absurd, she was – very absurd. But the charm was overpowering, to her at least, so that she could remember standing in her bedroom at the top of the house holding the hot-water can in her hands and saying aloud, “She is beneath this roof... She is beneath this roof!”

No, the words meant absolutely nothing to her now. She could not even get an echo of her old emotion. But she could remember going cold with excitement and doing her hair in a kind of ecstasy (now the old feeling began to come back to her, as she took out her hairpins, laid them on the dressing-table, began to do her hair), with the rooks flaunting up and down in the pink evening light, and dressing, and going downstairs, and feeling as she crossed the hall “if it were now to die 'twere now to be most happy.” That was her feeling – Othello's feeling, and she felt it, she was convinced, as strongly as Shakespeare meant Othello to feel it, all because she was coming down to dinner in a white frock to meet Sally Seton!

She was wearing pink gauze – was that possible? She seemed, anyhow, all light, glowing, like some bird or air ball that has flown in, attached itself for a moment to a bramble. But nothing is so strange when one is in love (and what was this except being in love?) as the complete indifference of other people. Aunt Helena just wandered off after dinner; Papa read the paper. Peter Walsh might have been there, and old Miss Cummings; Joseph Breitkopf certainly was, for he came every summer, poor old man, for weeks and weeks, and pretended to read German with her, but really played the piano and sang Brahms without any voice.

All this was only a background for Sally. She stood by the fireplace talking, in that beautiful voice which made everything she said sound like a caress, to Papa, who had begun to be attracted rather against his will (he never got over lending her one of his books and finding it soaked on the terrace), when suddenly she said, “What a shame to sit indoors!” and they all went out on to the terrace and walked up and down. Peter Walsh and Joseph Breitkopf went on about Wagner. She and

Sally fell a little behind. Then came the most exquisite moment of her whole life passing a stone urn with flowers in it. Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips. The whole world might have turned upside down! The others disappeared; there she was alone with Sally. And she felt that she had been given a present, wrapped up, and told just to keep it, not to look at it – a diamond, something infinitely precious, wrapped up, which, as they walked (up and down, up and down), she uncovered, or the radiance burnt through, the revelation, the religious feeling! – when old Joseph and Peter faced them:

“Star-gazing?” said Peter.

It was like running one’s face against a granite wall in the darkness! It was shocking; it was horrible!

Not for herself. She felt only how Sally was being mauled already, maltreated; she felt his hostility; his jealousy; his determination to break into their companionship. All this she saw as one sees a landscape in a flash of lightning – and Sally (never had she admired her so much!) gallantly taking her way unvanquished. She laughed. She made old Joseph tell her the names of the stars, which he liked doing very seriously. She stood there: she listened. She heard the names of the stars.

“Oh this horror!” she said to herself, as if she had known all along that something would interrupt, would embitter her moment of happiness.

Yet how much she owed Peter Walsh later. Always when she thought of him she thought of their quarrels for some reason – because she wanted his good opinion so much, perhaps. She owed him words: “sentimental”, “civilized”; they started up every day of her life as if he guarded her. A book was sentimental; an attitude to life sentimental. “Sentimental”, perhaps she was to be thinking of the past. What would he think, she wondered, when he came back?

That she had grown older? Would he say that, or would she see him thinking when he came back, that she had grown older? It was true. Since her illness she had turned almost white.

Laying her brooch on the table, she had a sudden spasm, as if, while she mused, the icy claws had had the chance to fix in her. She was not old yet. She had just broken into her fifty-second year. Months and months of it were still untouched. June, July, August! Each still remained almost whole, and, as if to catch the falling drop, Clarissa (crossing to the dressing-table) plunged into the very heart of the moment, transfixed it, there – the moment of this June morning on which was the pressure of all the other mornings, seeing the glass, the dressing-table, and all the bottles afresh, collecting the whole of her at one point (as she looked into the glass), seeing the delicate pink face of the woman who was that very night to give a party; of Clarissa Dalloway; of herself.

How many million times she had seen her face, and always with the same imperceptible contraction! She pursed her lips when she looked in the glass. It was to give her face point. That was her self – pointed; dart-like; definite. That was her self when some effort, some call on her to be her self, drew the parts together, she alone knew how different, how incompatible and composed so for the world only into one centre, one diamond, one woman who sat in her drawing-room and made a meeting-point, a radiancy no doubt in some dull lives, a refuge for the lonely to come to, perhaps; she had helped young people, who were grateful to her; had tried to be the same always, never showing a sign of all the other sides of her – faults, jealousies, vanities, suspicions, like this of Lady Bruton not asking her to lunch; which, she thought (combing her hair finally), is utterly base! Now, where was her dress?

Her evening dresses hung in the cupboard. Clarissa, plunging her hand into the softness, gently detached the green dress and carried it to the window. She had torn it. Some one had trod on the skirt. She had felt it give at the Embassy party at the top among the folds. By artificial light the green shone, but lost its colour now in the sun. She would mend it. Her maids had too much to do. She would wear it to-night. She would take her silks, her scissors, her – what was it? – her thimble, of course, down into the drawing-room, for she must also write, and see that things generally were more or less in order.

Strange, she thought, pausing on the landing, and assembling that diamond shape, that single person, strange how a mistress knows the very moment, the very temper of her house! Faint sounds rose in spirals up the well of the stairs; the swish of a mop; tapping; knocking; a loudness when the front door opened; a voice repeating a message in the basement; the chink of silver on a tray; clean silver for the party. All was for the party.

(And Lucy, coming into the drawing-room with her tray held out, put the giant candlesticks on the mantelpiece, the silver casket in the middle, turned the crystal dolphin towards the clock. They would come; they would stand; they would talk in the mincing tones which she could imitate, ladies and gentlemen. Of all, her mistress was loveliest – mistress of silver, of linen, of china, for the sun, the silver, doors off their hinges, Rumpelmayer’s men, gave her a sense, as she laid the paper-knife on the inlaid table, of something achieved. Behold! Behold! she said, speaking to her old friends in the baker’s shop where she had first seen service at Caterham, prying into the glass. She was Lady Angela, attending Princess Mary, when in came Mrs Dalloway.)

“Oh, Lucy,” she said, “the silver does look nice!”

“And how,” she said, turning the crystal dolphin to stand straight, “how did you enjoy the play last night?” “Oh, they had to go before the end!” she said. “They had to be back at ten!” she said. “So they don’t know what happened,” she said. “That does seem hard luck,” she said (for her servants stayed later, if they asked her). “That does seem rather a shame,” she said, taking the old bald-looking cushion in the middle of the sofa and putting it in Lucy’s arms, and giving her a little push, and crying:

“Take it away! Give it to Mrs Walker with my compliments! Take it away!” she cried.

And Lucy stopped at the drawing-room door, holding the cushion, and said, very shyly, turning a little pink, couldn’t she help to mend that dress?

But, said Mrs Dalloway, she had enough on her hands already, quite enough of her own to do without that.

“But, thank you, Lucy, oh, thank you,” said Mrs Dalloway, and thank you, thank you, she went on saying (sitting down on the sofa with her dress over her knees, her scissors, her silks), thank you, thank you, she went on saying in gratitude to her servants generally for helping her to be like this, to be what she wanted, gentle, generous-hearted. Her servants liked her. And then this dress of hers – where was the tear? and now her needle to be threaded. This was a favourite dress, one of Sally Parker’s, the last almost she ever made, alas, for Sally had now retired, lived at Ealing, and if ever I have a moment, thought Clarissa (but never would she have a moment any more), I shall go and see her at Ealing. For she was a character, thought Clarissa, a real artist. She thought of little out-of-the-way things; yet her dresses were never queer. You could wear them at Hatfield; at Buckingham Palace. She had worn them at Hatfield; at Buckingham Palace.

Quiet descended on her, calm, content, as her needle, drawing the silk smoothly to its gentle pause, collected the green folds together and attached them, very lightly, to the belt. So on a summer’s day waves collect, overbalance, and fall; collect and fall; and the whole world seems to be saying “that is all” more and more ponderously, until even the heart in the body which lies in the sun on the beach says too, that is all. Fear no more, says the heart. Fear no more, says the heart, committing its burden to some sea, which sighs collectively for all sorrows, and renews, begins, collects, lets fall. And the body alone listens to the passing bee; the wave breaking, the dog barking, far away barking and barking.

1925

1. Consider the similarities of this passage to that by Lawrence in terms of its focalization. What differences are there in terms of i) the people described and their relationships and ii) the approach to the relationship between belief and existence?
2. What significance are we to attach to the fact that this is a woman writing about the world as perceived by a female character? What, for instance, is the significance of her love for Sally?
3. What does the passage have to say about the relation of the individual to the wider world? Consider, for instance, the part of the passage beginning “How many million times she had seen her face...”
4. What words can you find to describe the tone and the movement or rhetorical patterning of the passage? How do they relate to the feelings described?

C. The passage that follows comes from James Joyce’s (1882-1941) novel *Ulysses*.

Mr Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls. He liked thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart, liver slices fried with crustcrumbs, fried hencod’s roes. Most of all he liked grilled mutton kidneys which gave to his palate a fine tang of faintly scented urine.

Kidneys were in his mind as he moved about the kitchen softly, righting her breakfast things on the humpy tray. Gelid light and air were in the kitchen but out of doors gentle summer morning everywhere. Made him feel a bit peckish.

The coals were reddening.

Another slice of bread and butter: three, four: right. She didn't like her plate full. Right. He turned from the tray, lifted the kettle off the hob and set it sideways on the fire. It sat there, dull and squat, its spout stuck out. Cup of tea soon. Good. Mouth dry. The cat walked stiffly round a leg of the table with tail on high.

– Mkgnao!

– O, there you are, Mr Bloom said, turning from the fire.

The cat mewed in answer and stalked again stiffly round a leg of the table, mewing. Just how she stalks over my writingtable. Prr. Scratch my head. Prr.

Mr Bloom watched curiously, kindly, the lithe black form. Clean to see: the gloss of her sleek hide, the white button under the butt of her tail, the green flashing eyes. He bent down to her, his hands on his knees.

– Milk for the pussens, he said.

– Mrkgnao! the cat cried.

They call them stupid. They understand what we say better than we understand them. She understands all she wants to. Vindictive too. Wonder what I look like to her. Height of a tower? No, she can jump me.

– Afraid of the chickens she is, he said mockingly. Afraid of the chookchooks. I never saw such a stupid pussens as the pussens.

Cruel. Her nature. Curious mice never squeal. Seem to like it.

– Mrkrngnao! the cat said loudly.

She blinked up out of her avid shameclosing eyes, mewing plaintively and long, showing him her milk-white teeth. He watched the dark eyeslits narrowing with greed till her eyes were green stones. Then he went to the dresser, took the jug Hanlon's milkman had just filled for him, poured warmbubbled milk on a saucer and set it slowly on the floor.

– Gurrhr ! she cried, running to lap.

He watched the bristles shining wirily in the weak light as she tipped three times and licked lightly. Wonder is it true if you clip them they can't mouse after. Why? They shine in the dark, perhaps, the tips. Or kind of feelers in the dark, perhaps.

He listened to her licking lap. Ham and eggs, no. No good eggs with this drouth. Want pure fresh water. Thursday: not a good day either for a mutton kidney at Buckley's. Fried with butter, a shake of pepper. Better a pork kidney at Dlugacz's. While the kettle is boiling. She lapped slower, then licking the saucer clean. Why are their tongues so rough? To lap better, all porous holes. Nothing she can eat? He glanced round him. No.

On quietly creaky boots he went up the staircase to the hall, paused by the bedroom door. She might like something tasty. Thin bread and butter she likes in the morning. Still perhaps: once in a way.

He said softly in the bare hall:

– I am going round the corner. Be back in a minute.

And when he had heard his voice say it he added:

– You don't want anything for breakfast?

A sleepy soft grunt answered:

– Mn.

No. She did not want anything. He heard then a warm heavy sigh, softer, as she turned over and the loose brass quoits of the bedstead jingled. Must get those settled really. Pity. All the way from Gibraltar. Forgotten any little Spanish she knew. Wonder what her father gave for it. Old style. Ah yes, of course. Bought it at the governor's auction. Got a short knock. Hard as nails at a bargain, old Tweedy. Yes, sir. At Plevna that was. I rose from the ranks, sir, and I'm proud of it. Still he had brains enough to make that corner in stamps. Now that was farseeing.

His hand took his hat from the peg over his initialled heavy overcoat, and his lost property office secondhand waterproof. Stamps: stickyback pictures. Daresay lots of officers are in the swim

too. Course they do. The sweated legend in the crown of his hat told him mutely: Plasto's high grade ha. He peeped quickly inside the leather headband. White slip of paper. Quite safe.

On the doorstep he felt in his hip pocket for the latchkey. Not there. In the trousers I left off. Must get it. Potato I have. Creaky wardrobe. No use disturbing her. She turned over sleepily that time. He pulled the halldoor to after him very quietly, more, till the footleaf dropped gently over the threshold, a limp lid. Looked shut. All right till I come back anyhow.

He crossed to the bright side, avoiding the loose cellarflap of number seventyfive. The sun was nearing the steeple of George's church. Be a warm day I fancy. Specially in these black clothes feel it more. Black conducts, reflects (refracts is it?), the heat. But I couldn't go in that light suit. Make a picnic of it. His eyelids sank quietly often as he walked in happy warmth. Boland's breadvan delivering with trays our daily but she prefers yesterday's loaves turnovers crisp crowns hot. Makes you feel young. Somewhere in the east: early morning: set off at dawn, travel round in front of the sun, steal a day's march on him. Keep it up for ever never grow a day older technically. Walk along a strand, strange land, come to a city gate, sentry there, old ranker too, old Tweedy's big moustaches leaning on a long kind of a spear. Wander through awned streets. Turbaned faces going by. Dark caves of carpet shops, big man, Turko the terrible, seated crosslegged smoking a coiled pipe. Cries of sellers in the streets. Drink water scented with fennel, sherbet. Wander along all day. Might meet a robber or two. Well; meet him. Getting on to sundown. The shadows of the mosques along the pillars: priest with a scroll rolled up. A shiver of the trees, signal, the evening wind. I pass on. Fading gold sky. A mother watches from her doorway. She calls her children home in their dark language. High wall: beyond strings twanged. Night sky moon, violet, colour of Molly's new garters. Strings. Listen. A girl playing one of these instruments what do you call them: dulcimers. I pass.

Probably not a bit like it really. Kind of stuff you read: in the track of the sun. Sunburst on the titlepage. He smiled, pleasing himself. What Arthur Griffith said about the headpiece over the *Freeman* leader: a homerule sun rising up in the northwest from the laneway behind the bank of Ireland. He prolonged his pleased smile. They touch that: homerule sun rising up in the north-west.

He approached Larry O'Rourke's. From the cellar grating floated up the flabby gush of porter. Through the open doorway the bar squirted out whiffs of ginger, teadust, biscuitmush. Good house, however: just the end of the city traffic. For instance M'Auley's down there: n. g. as position. Of course if they ran a tramline along the North Circular from the cattle market to the quays value would go up like a shot.

Bald head over the blind. Cute old codger. No use canvassing him for an ad. Still he knows his own business best. There he is, sure enough, my bold Larry, leaning against the sugarbin in his shirtsleeves watching the aproned curate swab up with mop and bucket. Simon Dedalus takes him off to a tee with his eyes screwed up. Do you know what I'm going to tell you? What's that, Mr O'Rourke? Do you know what? The Russians, they'd only be an eight o'clock breakfast for the Japanese.

Stop and say a word: about the funeral perhaps. Sad thing about poor Dignam, Mr O'Rourke.

Turning into Dorset street he said freshly in greeting through the doorway:

– Good day, Mr O'Rourke.

– Good day to you.

– Lovely weather, sir.

– 'Tis all that.

Where do they get the money? Coming up redheaded curates from the county Leitrim, rinsing empties and old man in the cellar. Then, lo and behold, they blossom out as Adam Findlaters or Dan Tallons. Then think of the competition. General thirst. Good puzzle would be cross Dublin without passing a pub. Save it they can't. Off the drunks perhaps. Put down three and carry five. What is that? A bob here and there, dribs and drabs. On the wholesale orders perhaps. Doing a double shuffle with the town travellers. Square it with the boss and we'll split the job, see?

How much would that tot to off the porter in the month? Say ten barrels of stuff. Say he got ten per cent off. O more. Ten. Fifteen. He passed Saint Joseph's, National school. Brats' clamour. Windows open. Fresh air helps memory. Or a lilt. Ahbeesee defeesee kelomen opeeecue rustyouvee double you. Boys are they? Yes. Inishturk. Inishark. Inishboffin. At their joggerfry. Mine. Slieve Bloom.

He halted before Dlugacz's window, staring at the hanks of sausages, polonies, black and white. Fifty multiplied by. The figures whitened in his mind unsolved: displeased, he let them fade. The shiny links packed with forcemeat fed his gaze and he breathed in tranquilly the lukewarm breath of cooked spicy pig's blood.

A kidney oozed bloodgouts on the willowpatterned dish: the last. He stood by the nextdoor girl at the counter. Would she buy it too, calling the items from a slip in her hand. Chapped: washing soda. And a pound and a half of Denny's sausages. His eyes rested on her vigorous hips. Woods his name is. Wonder what he does. Wife is oldish. New blood. No followers allowed. Strong pair of arms. Whacking a carpet on the clothesline. She does whack it, by George. The way her crooked skirt swings at each whack.

The ferreteyed porkbutcher folded the sausages he had snipped off with blotchy fingers, sausagepink. Sound meat there like a stallfed heifer.

He took up a page from the pile of cut sheets. The model farm at Kinnereth on the lakeshore of Tiberias. Can become ideal winter sanatorium. Moses Montefiore. I thought he was. Farmhouse, wall round it, blurred cattle cropping. He held the page from him: interesting: read it nearer, the blurred cropping cattle, the page rustling. A young white heifer. Those mornings in the cattlemarket the beasts lowing in their pens, branded sheep, flop and fall of dung, the breeders in hobnailed boots trudging through the litter, slapping a palm on a ripemeated hindquarter, there's a prime one, unpeeled switches in their hands. He held the page aslant patiently, so bending his senses and his will, his soft subject gaze at rest. The crooked skirt swinging whack by whack by whack.

The porkbutcher snapped two sheets from the pile, wrapped up her prime sausages and made a red grimace.

– Now, my miss, he said.

She tendered a coin, smiling boldly, holding her thick wrist out.

– Thank you, my miss. And one shilling threepence change. For you, please?

Mr Bloom pointed quickly. To catch up and walk behind her if she went slowly, behind her moving hams. Pleasant to see first thing in the morning. Hurry up, damn it. Make hay while the sun shines. She stood outside the shop in sunlight and sauntered lazily to the right. He sighed down his nose: they never understand. Sodachapped hands. Crusted toenails too. Brown scapulars in tatters, defending her both ways. The sting of disregard glowed to weak pleasure within his breast. For another: a constable off duty cuddled her in Eccles Lane. They like them sizeable. Prime sausage. O please, Mr Policeman, I'm lost in the wood.

– Threepence, please.

His hand accepted the moist tender gland and slid it into a sidepocket. Then it fetched up three coins from his trousers' pocket and laid them on the rubber prickles. They lay, were read quickly and quickly slid, disc by disc, into the till.

– Thank you, sir. Another time.

A speck of eager fire from foxeyes thanked him. He withdrew his gaze after an instant. No: better not: another time.

– Good morning, he said, moving away.

– Good morning, sir.

No sign. Gone. What matter?

He walked back along Dorset street, reading gravely. Agendath Netaim: planter's company. To purchase vast sandy tracts from Turkish government and plant with eucalyptus trees. Excellent for shade, fuel and construction. Orangegroves and immense melonfields north of Jaffa. You pay eight marks and they plant a dunam of land for you with olives, oranges, almonds or citrons. Olives cheaper: oranges need artificial irrigation. Every year you get a sending of the crop. Your name entered for life as owner in the book of the union. Can pay ten down and the balance in yearly instalments. Bleibtreustrasse 34, Berlin, W 15.

Nothing doing. Still an idea behind it.

He looked at the cattle, blurred in silver heat. Silvered powdered olivetrees. Quiet long days: pruning ripening. Olives are packed in jars, eh? I have a few left from Andrews. Molly spitting them out. Knows the taste of them now. Oranges in tissue paper packed in crates. Citrons too. Wonder is poor Citron still alive in Saint Kevin's parade. And Mastiansky with the old cither. Pleasant evenings we had then. Molly in Citron's basketchair. Nice to hold, cool waxen fruit, hold in the hand, lift it to

the nostrils and smell the perfume. Like that, heavy, sweet, wild perfume. Always the same, year after year. They fetched high prices too Moisel told me. Arbutus place: Pleasants street: pleasant old times. Must be without a flaw, he said. Coming all that way: Spain, Gibraltar, Mediterranean, the Levant. Crates lined up on the quayside at Jaffa, chap ticking them off in a book, navvies handling them in soiled dungarees. There's whatdoyoucallhim out of. How do you? Doesn't see. Chap you know just to salute bit of a bore. His back is like that Norwegian captain's. Wonder if I'll meet him today. Watering cart. To provoke the rain. On earth as it is in heaven.

A cloud began to cover the sun wholly slowly wholly.

Grey. Far.

No, not like that. A barren land, bare waste. Volcanic lake, the dead sea: no fish, weedless, sunk deep in the earth. No wind would lift those waves, grey metal, poisonous foggy waters. Brimstone they called it raining down: the cities of the plain: Sodom, Gomorrah, Edom. All dead names. A dead sea in a dead land, grey and old. Old now. It bore the oldest, the first race. A bent hag crossed from Cassidy's clutching a noggin bottle by the neck. The oldest people. Wandered far away over all the earth, captivity to captivity, multiplying, dying, being born everywhere. It lay there now. Now it could bear no more. Dead: an old woman's: the grey sunken cunt of the world.

Desolation.

Grey horror seared his flesh. Folding the page into his pocket he turned into Eccles Street, hurrying homeward.

1922

1. Like the other passages, this text primarily looks at events from the perspective of an individual's consciousness. How is Joyce's approach to this perspective different from that of Woolf or Lawrence? Consider especially: i) the use of sentence structure and its relations to "everyday" thought or speech; ii) the use of association (how and why Bloom's mind moves from one thing to another).
2. Though the passage deals only with a few ordinary events in the morning of a Dublin citizen (the whole book is concerned with the events of the lives of some people in Dublin on one day, rather like *Mrs Dalloway*), the passage has a much wider resonance. How is this achieved and why do you think the author is interested in creating such an effect?

SESSION 13

POSTMODERNISM(S) AND POSTCOLONIALISM(S)

A. Frank O'Hara (1926-1966) was a member of a group referred to as the "New York poets".

The Day Lady²²⁹ Died

It is 12:20 in New York a Friday
three days after Bastille day, yes
it is 1959 and I go get a shoeshine
because I will get off the 4:19 in Easthampton²³⁰
at 7:15 and then go straight to dinner 5
and I don't know the people who will feed me

I walk up the muggy street beginning to sun
and have a hamburger and a malted²³¹ and buy
an ugly NEW WORLD WRITING to see what the poets
in Ghana are doing these days 10

229 Billie Holiday (1915-1959), known as Lady Day, a famous black blues and jazz singer.

230 Summer resort in eastern Long Island.

231 A frothy milkshake (with malt powder added).

I go on to the bank
 and Miss Stillwagon (first name Linda I once heard)
 doesn't even look up my balance for once in her life
 and in the GOLDEN GRIFFIN²³² I get a little Verlaine
 for Patsy with drawings by Bonnard²³³ although I do 15
 think of Hesiod, trans. Richmond Lattimore or
 Brendan Behan's new play or *Le Balcon* or *Les Negres*
 of Genet, but I don't, I stick with Verlaine
 after practically going to sleep with quandariness

and for Mike I just stroll into the PARK LANE 20
 Liquor Store and ask for a bottle of Strega and
 then I go back where I came from to 6th Avenue
 and the tobacconist in the Ziegfeld Theatre and
 casually ask for a carton of Gauloises and a carton
 of Picayunes, and a NEW YORK POST with her face on it

and I am sweating a lot by now and thinking of
 leaning on the john door in the 5 SPOT²³⁴
 while she whispered a song along the keyboard
 to Mal Waldron²³⁵ and everyone and I stopped breathing

1960

1. In what ways can this piece of writing justifiably be called a poem (it has no rhyme or obviously regular form of rhythm, for instance)? In what ways does it challenge conventional conceptualizations of what poetry should be? Compare it in this respect to Whitman and the American modernists: what similarities and differences of approach do you find?
2. What significance can you attach to the subject matter of the poem in relation to when it was written?

B. Read the following short poem by the Scottish poet Tom Leonard (b. 1944).

this is thi
 six a clock
 news thi
 man said n
 thi reason 5
 a talk wia
 BBC accent
 iz coz yi
 widny wahnt
 mi ti talk 10
 aboot thi
 trooth wia
 voice lik
 wanna yoo
 scruff. If 15
 a toktaboot
 thi trooth
 like wanna yoo

232 Bookstore.

233 Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947) French painter who illustrated a volume of poems by the French poet Paul Verlaine (1844-1896).

234 Jazz nightclub.

235 Accompanist for Billie Holiday.

scruff yi	
widny thingk	20
it wuz troo.	
jist wanna yoo	
scruff tokn.	
thirza right	
way ti spell	25
ana right way	
ti tok it. this	
is me tokn yir	
right way a	
spelling. this	30
is ma trooth.	
yooz doant no	
thi trooth	
yirsellz cawz	
yi canny talk	35
right. this is	
the six a clock	
nyooz. belt up.	

1983

1. Why is the poem written the way it is? Why is this central to its significance?
2. Why does the six o'clock news tell the listener to "belt up"?
3. How and why does the poem establish a connection between talking, spelling and truth?

C. The following story is by the Canadian writer Thomas King (b. 1943); his mother is of mixed European (Greek and German) descent, his father a Cherokee Native. "Coyote" appears in the mythology of many North American Natives. A "trickster figure", he/she/it is supernatural, but with human foibles, a being that has to be watched carefully, but who as often as not gets tripped up by his/her/its own cleverness.

One Good Story, That One

Alright.

You know, I hear this story up north. Maybe Yellowknife, that one, somewhere. I hear it maybe a long time. Old story this one. One hundred years, maybe more. Maybe not so long either, this story.

So.

You know, they come to my place. Summer place, pretty good place, that one. Those ones, they come with Napiao, my friend. Cool. On the river. Indians call him Ka-sin-ta, that river, like if you did nothing but stand in one place all day and maybe longer. Ka-sin-ta also call Na-po. Napiao knows that one, my friend. Whiteman call him Saint Merry, but I don't know what that mean. Maybe like Ka-sin-ta. Maybe not.

Napiao comes with those three. Whiteman, those.

No Indianman.

No Chinaman.

No Frenchman.

Too bad, those.

Sometimes the wind come along say hello. Pretty fast, that one. Blow some things down on the river, that Ka-sin-ta. Sometimes he comes up too, pretty high. Moves things around, that Ka-sin-ta.

Three men come to my summer place, also my friend Napiao. Pretty loud talkers, those ones. One is big. I tell him maybe looks like Big Joe. Maybe not.

Anyway.

They come and Napiao, too. Bring greetings, how are you, many nice things they bring to says. Three.

All white.

Too bad, those.

Ho, my friend says, real nice day. Here is some tobacco.

All those smile. Good teeth.

Your friend Napiao, they says, that one says you tell a good story, you tell us your good story.

They says, those ones.

I tell Napiao, sit down, rest, eat something. Those three like to stand. Stand still. I think of Ka-sin-ta, as I told you. So I says to Napiao, Ka-sin-ta, in our language and he laugh. Those three laugh, too. Good teeth. Whiteman, white teeth.

I says to them, those ones stand pretty good. Napiao, my friend, says tell these a good story. Maybe not too long, he says. Those ones pretty young, go to sleep pretty quick. Anthropologist, you know. That one has a camera. Maybe.

Okay, I says, sit down.

These are good men, my friend says, those come a long ways from past Ta-pe-loo-za. Call him Blind Man Coulee, too. Ta-pe-loo-za means like a quiet place where the fish can rest, deep quiet place. Blind man maybe comes there later. To that place. Maybe fish.

Alright.

How about a story, that one says.

Sure, I says. Maybe about Jimmy runs the store near Two Bridges. His brother become dead and give Jimmy his car. But Jimmy never drives.

Napiao hold his hand up pretty soft. My friend says that good story, Jimmy and his car. These ones don't know Jimmy.

Okay, I says. Tell about Billy Frank and the dead-river pig. Funny story, that one, Billy Frank and the dead-river pig. Pretty big pig. Billy is real small, like Napiao, my friend. Hurt his back. Lost his truck.

Those ones like old stories, says my friend, maybe how the world was put together. Good Indian story like that, Napiao says. Those ones have tape recorders, he says.

Okay, I says.

Have some tea.

Stay awake.

Once upon a time.

Those stories start like that, pretty much, those ones, start on time. Anyway. There was nothing. Pretty hard to believe that, maybe.

You fellows keep listening, I says. Watch the floor. Be careful.

No water, no land, no stars, no moon. None of those things. Must have a sun someplace. Maybe not. Can't say. No Indians are there once upon a time. Lots of air. Only one person walk around. Call him god.

So.

They look around, and there is nothing. No grass. No fish. No trees. No mountains. No Indians, like I says. No whiteman, either. Those come later, maybe one hundred years. Maybe not. That one god walk around, but pretty soon they get tired. Maybe that one says, we will get some stars. So he does. And then he says, maybe we should get a moon. So, they get one of them, too.

Someone write all this down, I don't know. Lots of things left to get.

Me-a-loo, call her deer.

Pa-pe-po, call her elk.

Tsling-ta, call her Blue-flower-berry.

Ga-ling, call her moon.

So-see-ka, call her flint.

A-ma-po, call her dog.

Ba-ko-zao, call her grocery store.

Pe-to-pa-zasling, call her television.

Pretty long list of things to get, that. Too many, maybe those ones say, how many more that one needs for world. So. Pretty soon that one can fix up real nice place. Not too hot. Not too cold. Like here, we sit here. My summer place is like that one.

I call my summer place O-say-ta-he-to-peo-teh. Means cool sleeping place. Other place, they call her Evening's garden. Good time to fish, that. Evening. Cool, not so hot. That Evening's garden like here.

Two human beings that one puts there. Call the man Ah-damn. Call the woman, Evening. Same as garden.

Okay.

She looks around her garden. Pretty nice place, that one. Good tree. Good deer. Good rock. Good water. Good sky. Good wind. No grocery store, no television.

Ah-damn and Evening real happy, those ones. No clothes, those, you know. Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha. But they pretty dumb, then. New, you know.

Have some tea.

Stay awake.

Good part is soon here.

That woman, Evening, she is curious, nosy, that one. She walk around the garden and she look everywhere. Look under rock. Look in grass. Look in sky. Look in water. Look in tree.

So.

She find that tree, big one. Not like now, that tree. This one have lots of good things to eat. Have potato. Have pumpkin. Have corn. Have berries, all kind. Too many to say now.

This good tree also have some mee-so. Whiteman call them apples. This first woman look at the tree with the good things and she gets hungry. Make a meal in her head.

Leave that mee-so alone. Someone says that. Leave that mee-so alone. Leave that tree alone. The voice says that. Go away someplace else to eat!

That one, god. Hello, he's back.

Hey, says Evening, this is my garden.

You watch out, says that one, pretty loud voice. Sort of shout. Bad temper, that one. Maybe like Harley James. Bad temper, that one. Always shouting. Always with pulled-down mean look. Sometimes Harley come to town, drives his truck to town. Gets drunk. Drives back to that house. That one goes to town, get drunk, come home, that one, beat his wife. His wife leave. Goes back up north. Pretty mean one, that one. You boys know Harley James? Nobody there to beat up, now. Likes to shout, that one. Maybe you want to hear about Billy Frank and the dead-river pig?

Boy, my friend says, I can taste those mee-so. These boys pretty excited about those mee-so, I think.

Okay, I says.

Keep your eyes open, look around.

Evening, that one says, look pretty good, these. So she eat one, that mee-so. Boy, not bad, real juicy, that one. She is generous, Evening, good woman, that one. Brings mee-so to Ah-damn. I think he is busy then, writing things down. All the animals' names he writes somewhere, I don't know. Pretty boring that.

Deer come by, says Me-a-loo.

Elk come by, says Pa-pe-o.

Blue-flower-berry come by, says Tsling-ta.

Ah-damn not so smart like Evening, that one thinks Blue-flower-berry is animal, maybe.

Dog come by, says A-ma-po.

Raven come by, says Ne-co-tah.

Coyote come by, says Klee-qua.

Snail come by, says E-too.

Squirrel come by, says Qay-tha.

Owl come by, says Ba-tee-po-tah.

Weasel come by, says So-tha-nee-so.

Rabbit come by, says Klaaa-coo.

Flint come by, says So-see-ka.

Fish come by, says Laa-po.

Crayfish come by, says Tling.

Beaver come by, says Khan-yah-da.

Boy, all worn out. All those animals come by. Coyote come by maybe four, maybe eight times. Gets dressed up, fool around.

Says Pusto-pa.

Says Ho-ta-go.

Says Woho-i-kee.

Says Caw-ho-ha.

Ha, ha, ha, ha.

Tricky one, that coyote. Walks in circles. Sneaky.

That Ah-damn not so smart. Like Harley James, whiteman, those. Evening, she be Indian woman, I guess.

Evening come back. Hey, she says, what are all these coyote tracks come around in a circle. Not so smart, Ah-damn, pretty hungry though. Here, says Evening, mee-so, real juicy. So they do. Ah-damn, that one eat three mee-so. Ah-damn, says Evening, I better get some more mee-so.

Pretty soon that one, god, come by. He is pretty mad. You ate my mee-so, he says.

Don't be upset, says Evening, that one, first woman. Many more mee-so back there. Calm down, watch some television, she says.

But they are upset and that one says that Evening and Ah-damn better leave that good place, garden, Evening's garden, go somewhere else. Just like Indian today.

Evening says, okay, many good places around here. Ah-damn, that one wants to stay. But that fellow, god, whiteman I think, he says, you go too, you ate those mee-so, my mee-so.

Ah-damn is unhappy. He cry three times, ho, ho, ho. I only ate one, he says.

No, says that god fellow. I see everything. I see you eat three of my mee-so.

I only ate two, says Ah-damn but pretty quick that one throw him out.

Ha!

Throw him out on his back, right on those rocks. Ouch, ouch, ouch, that one says. Evening, she have to come back and fix him up before he is any good again. Alright.

There is also a Ju-poo-pea, whiteman call him snake. Don't know what kind. Big white one maybe, I hear, maybe black, something else. I forgot this part. He lives in tree with mee-so. That one try to get friendly with Evening so she stick a mee-so in his mouth, that one. Crawl back into tree. Have trouble talking, hissss, hissss, hissss, hissss. Maybe he is still there. Like that dead-river pig and Billy Frank lose his truck.

So.

Evening and Ah-damn leave. Everybody else leave, too. That tree leave, too. Just god and Ju-poo-pea together.

Ah-damn and Evening come out here. Have a bunch of kids.

So.

That's all. It is ended.

Boy, my friend says, better get some more tea. One good story, that one, my friend, Napiao says.

Those men push their tape recorders, fix their cameras. All of those ones smile. Nod their head around. Look out window. Shake my hand. Make happy noises. Say goodbyes, see you later. Leave pretty quick.

We watch them go. My friend, Napiao, put the pot on for some tea. I clean up all the coyote tracks on the floor.

1990

1. The story here is in fact a story within a story. What is the framing narrative for the "main" story and what other story is that "main" story referring to? What is different about this "version" and what significance can be attached to such differences?

2. All of the stories in the story are told in a distinctively "oral" style. As with the poems above, consider how this is achieved in terms of word-choice, syntax and so on and what these tell you about the story-teller(s) – that is, the narrator and Thomas King – and his/their relation to the listener/reader (including you).

3. Postmodernist writing is often characterized in terms of its emphasis on cultural (and even ontological) plurality. What significance can you attach to this story in the light of such an observation?

D. Read the following passage from Salman Rushdie's (b. 1947) novel *Midnight's Children*.

My view of Lila Sabarmati has mellowed with age; after all, she and I had one thing in common – her nose, like mine, possessed tremendous powers. Hers, however, was a purely worldly magic: a wrinkle of nasal skin could charm the steeliest of Admirals; a tiny flare of the nostrils ignited strange fires in the hearts of film magnates. I am a little regretful about betraying that nose; it was a little like stabbing a cousin in the back.

What I discovered: every Sunday morning at ten a.m., Lila Sabarmati drove Eyeslice and Hairoil to the Metro cinema for the weekly meetings of the Metro Cub Club. (She volunteered to take the rest of us, too; Sonny and Cyrus, the Monkey and I piled into her Indian-made Hindustan car.) And while we drove towards Lana Turner or Robert Taylor or Sandra Dee, Mr Homi Catrack was also preparing himself for a weekly rendezvous. While Lila's Hindustan pattered along beside railway-lines, Homi was knotting a cream silk scarf around his throat; while she halted at red lights, he donned a Technicolored bush-coat; when she was ushering us into the darkness of the auditorium, he was putting on gold-rimmed sunglasses; and when she left us to watch our film, he, too, was abandoning a child. Toxy Catrack never failed to react to his departures by wailing kicking thrashing-of-legs; she knew what was going on, and not even Bi-Appah could restrain her.

Once upon a time there were Radha and Krishna, and Rama and Sita, and Laila and Majnu; also (because we are not unaffected by the West) Romeo and Juliet, and Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn. The world is full of love stories, and all lovers are in a sense the avatars of their predecessors. When Lila drove her Hindustan to an address off Colaba Causeway, she was Juliet coming out on to her balcony; when cream-scarfed, gold-shaded Homi sped off to meet her (in the same Studebaker in which my mother had once been rushed to Dr Narlikar's Nursing Home), he was Leander swimming the Hellespont towards Hero's burning candle. As for my part in the business – I will not give it a name.

I confess: what I did was no act of heroism. I did not battle Homi on horseback, with fiery eyes and flaming sword; instead, imitating the action of the snake, I began to cut pieces out of newspapers. From GOAN LIBERATION COMMITTEE LAUNCHES SATYAGRAHA CAMPAIGN I extracted the letters "COM"; SPEAKER OF E-PAK ASSEMBLY DECLARED MANIAC gave me my second syllable, "MAN". I found "DER" concealed in NEHRU CONSIDERS RESIGNATION AT CONGRESS ASSEMBLY; into my second word now, I excised "SAB" from RIOTS, MASS ARRESTS IN RED-RUN KERALA: SABOTEURS RUN AMOK: GHOSH ACCUSES CONGRESS GOONDAS, and got "ARM" from CHINESE ARMED FORCES' BORDER ACTIVITIES SPURN BANDUNG PRINCIPLES. To complete the name, I snipped the letters "ATI" from DULLES FOREIGN POLICY IS INCONSISTENT ERRATIC, P.M. AVERS. Cutting up history to suit my nefarious purposes, I seized on WHY INDIRA GANDHI IS CONGRESS PRESIDENT NOW and kept the "WHY"; but I refused to be tied exclusively to politics, and turned to advertising for the "DOES YOUR" in DOES YOUR CHEWING GUM LOSE ITS FLAVOUR? BUT P. K. KEEPS ITS SAVOUR! A sporting human-interest story, MOHUN BAGAN CENTRE-FORWARD TAKES WIFE, gave me its last word, and "GO TO" I took from the tragic MASSES GO TO ABUL KALAM AZAD'S FUNERAL. Now I was obliged to find my words in little pieces once again: DEATH ON SOUTH COL: SHERPA PLUNGES provided me with a much-needed "COL", but "ABA" was hard to find, turning up at last in a cinema advertisement: ALI-BABA, SEVENTEENTH SUPERCOLOSSAL WEEK – PLANS FILLING UP FAST!... Those were the days when Sheikh Abdullah, the Lion of Kashmir, was campaigning for a plebiscite in his state to determine its future; his courage gave me the syllable "CAUSE", because it led to this headline: ABDULLAH "INCITEMENT" CAUSE OF HIS RE-ARREST – GOVT SPOKESMAN. Then, too, Acharya Vinobha Bhave, who had spent ten years persuading landowners to donate plots to the poor in his bhoodan campaign, announced that donations had passed the million-acre mark, and launched two new campaigns, asking for the donations of whole villages ("gramdan") and of individual lives ("jivandan"). When J. P. Narayan announced the dedication of his life to Bhave's work, the headline

NARAYAN WALKS IN BHAVE'S WAY gave me my much-sought "WAY". I had nearly finished now; plucking an "ON" from PAKISTAN ON COURSE FOR POLITICAL CHAOS: FACTION STRIFE BEDEVILS PUBLIC AFFAIRS, and a "SUNDAY" from the masthead of the Sunday Blitz, I found myself just one word short. Events in East Pakistan provided me with my finale. FURNITURE HURLING SLAYS DEPUTY E-PAK SPEAKER: MOURNING PERIOD DECLARED gave me MOURNING, from which, deftly and deliberately, I excised the letter "U". I needed a terminal question-mark, and found it at the end of the perennial query of those strange days: AFTER NEHRU, WHO?

In the secrecy of a bathroom, I glued my completed note – my first attempt at rearranging history – on to a sheet of paper; snake-like, I inserted the document in my pocket, like poison in a sac. Subtly, I arranged to spend an evening with Eyeslice and Hairoil. We played a game: "Murder in the Dark".... During a game of murder, I slipped inside Commander Sabarmati's almirah and inserted my lethal missive into the inside pocket of his spare uniform. At that moment (no point hiding it) I felt the delight of the snake who hits its target, and feels its fangs pierce its victim's heel...

COMMANDER SABARMATI (my note read)
WHY DOES YOUR WIFE GO TO COLABA
CAUSEWAY ON SUNDAY MORNING?

No, I am no longer proud of what I did; but remember that my demon of revenge had two heads. By unmasking the perfidy of Lila Sabarmati, I hoped also to administer a salutary shock to my own mother. Two birds with one stone; there were to be two punished women, one impaled on each fang of my forked snake's tongue. It is not untrue to say that what came to be known as the Sabarmati affair had its real beginnings at a dingy cafe in the north of the city, when a stowaway watched a ballet of circling hands.

I was secret; I struck from the cover of a bush. What drove me? Hands at the Pioneer Cafe; wrong-number telephone calls; notes slipped to me on balconies, and passed under cover of bedsheets; my mother's hypocrisy and Pia's inconsolable grief: "Hai! Ai-hai! Ai-hai-hai!"...

Mine was a slow poison; but three weeks later, it had its effect.

It emerged, afterwards, that after receiving my anonymous note Commander Sabarmati had engaged the services of the illustrious Dom Minto, Bombay's best-known private detective. (Minto, old and almost lame, had lowered his rates by then.) He waited until he received Minto's report. And then:

That Sunday morning, six children sat in a row at the Metro Cub Club, watching *Francis The Talking Mule And The Haunted House*. You see, I had my alibi; I was nowhere near the scene of the crime. Like Sin, the crescent moon, I acted from a distance upon the tides of the world... while a mule talked on a screen, Commander Sabarmati visited the naval arsenal. He signed out a good, long-nosed revolver; also ammunition. He held, in his left hand, a piece of paper on which an address had been written in a private detective's tidy hand; in his right hand, he grasped the unholstered gun. By taxi, the Commander arrived at Colaba Causeway. He paid off the cab, walked gun-in-hand down a narrow gully past shirt-stalls and toyshops, and ascended the staircase of an apartment block set back from the gully at the rear of a concrete courtyard. He rang the doorbell of apartment 18C; it was heard in 18B by an Anglo-Indian teacher giving private Latin tuition. When Commander Sabarmati's wife Lila answered the door, he shot her twice in the stomach at point-blank range. She fell backwards; he marched past her, and found Mr Homi Catrack rising from the toilet, his bottom unwiped, pulling frantically at his trousers. Commander Vinoo Sabarmati shot him once in the genitals, once in the heart and once through the right eye. The gun was not silenced; but when it had finished speaking, there was an enormous silence in the apartment. Mr Catrack sat down on the toilet after he was shot and seemed to be smiling.

Commander Sabarmati walked out of the apartment block with the smoking gun in his hand (he was seen, through the crack of a door, by a terrified Latin tutor); he strolled along Colaba Causeway until he saw a traffic policeman on his little podium. Commander Sabarmati told the policeman, "I have only now killed my wife and her lover with this gun; I surrender myself into your..." But he had been waving the gun under the policeman's nose; the officer was so scared that he dropped his traffic-conducting baton and fled. Commander Sabarmati, left alone on the policeman's pedestal amid the sudden confusion of the traffic, began to direct the cars, using the smoking gun as a baton. This is how he was found by the posse of twelve policemen who arrived ten minutes later, who

sprang courageously upon him and seized his hand and foot, and who removed from him the unusual baton with which, for ten minutes, he had expertly conducted the traffic.

A newspaper said of the Sabarmati affair: "It is a theatre in which India will discover who she was, what she is, and what she might become." . . . But Commander Sabarmati was only a puppet; I was the puppet-master, and the nation performed my play – only I hadn't meant it! I didn't think he'd. . . I only wanted to... a scandal, yes, a scare, a lesson to all unfaithful wives and mothers, but not that, never, no.

Aghast at the result of my actions, I rode the turbulent thought-waves of the city... at the Parsee General Hospital, a doctor said, "Begum Sabarmati will live; but she will have to watch what she eats."... But Homi Catrack was dead... And who was engaged as the lawyer for the defence? – Who said, "I will defend him free gratis and for nothing"? – Who, once the victor of the Freeze Case, was now the Commander's champion? Sonny Ibrahim said, "My father will get him off if anyone can."

Commander Sabarmati was the most popular murderer in the history of Indian jurisprudence. Husbands acclaimed his punishment of an errant wife; faithful women felt justified in their fidelity. Inside Lila's own sons, I found these thoughts: "We knew she was like that. We knew a Navy man wouldn't stand for it." A columnist in the *Illustrated Weekly of India*, writing a pen-portrait to go alongside the "Personality of the Week" full-colour caricature of the Commander, said: "In the Sabarmati Case, the noble sentiments of the Ramayana combine with the cheap melodrama of the Bombay talkie; but as for the chief protagonist, all agree on his upstandingness; and he is undeniably an attractive chap."

My revenge on my mother and Homi Catrack had precipitated a national crisis... because Naval regulations decreed that no man who had been in a civil jail could aspire to the rank of Admiral of the Fleet. So Admirals, and city politicians, and of course Ismail Ibrahim, demanded: "Commander Sabarmati must stay in a Navy jail. He is innocent until proven guilty. His career must not be ruined if it can possibly be avoided." And the authorities: "Yes." And Commander Sabarmati, safe in the Navy's own lock-up, discovered the penalties of fame – deluged with telegrams of support, he awaited trial; flowers filled his cell, and although he asked to be placed on an ascetic's diet of rice and water, well-wishers inundated him with tiffin-carriers filled with birianis and pista-ki-lauz and other rich foods. And, jumping the queue in the Criminal Court, the case began in double-quick time... The prosecution said, "The charge is murder in the first degree."

Stern-jawed, strong-eyed, Commander Sabarmati replied: "Not guilty."

My mother said, "O my God, the poor man, so sad, isn't it?"

I said, "But an unfaithful wife is a terrible thing, Amma..." and she turned away her head.

The prosecution said, "Here is an open and shut case. Here is motive, opportunity, confession, corpse and premeditation: the gun signed out, the children sent to the cinema, the detective's report. What else to say? The state rests."

And public opinion: "Such a good man, Allah!"

Ismail Ibrahim said: "This is a case of attempted suicide."

To which, public opinion: "?????????"

Ismail Ibrahim expounded: "When the Commander received Dom Minto's report, he wanted to see for himself if it was true; and if so, to kill himself. He signed out the gun; it was for himself. He went to the Colaba address in a spirit of despair only; not as killer, but as dead man! But there – seeing his wife there, jury members! – seeing her half clothed with her shameless lover! – jury members, this good man, this great man saw red. Red, absolutely, and while seeing red he did his deeds. Thus there is no premeditation, and so no murder in the first degree. Killing yes, but not cold-blooded. Jury members, you must find him not guilty as charged."

And buzzing around the city was, "No, too much... Ismail Ibrahim has gone too far this time... but, but... he has got a jury composed mostly of women... and not rich ones... therefore doubly susceptible, to the Commander's charm and the lawyer's wallet... who knows? Who can tell?"

The jury said, "Not guilty."

My mother cried, "Oh wonderful!... But, but: is it justice?" And the judge, answering her: "Using the powers vested in me, I reverse this absurd verdict. Guilty as charged."

O, the wild furor of those days! When Naval dignitaries and bishops and other politicians demanded, "Sabarmati must stay in the Navy jail pending High Court appeal. The bigotry of one judge

must not ruin this great man!” And police authorities, capitulating, “Very well.” The Sabarmati Case goes rushing upwards, hurtling towards High Court hearing at unprecedented speed... and the Commander tells his lawyer, “I feel as though destiny is no longer in my control; as though something has taken over... let us call it Fate.”

I say: “Call it Saleem, or Snotnose, or Sniffer, or Stainface; call it little-piece-of-the-moon.”

The High Court verdict: “Guilty as charged.” The press headlines: SABARMATI FOR CIVIL JAIL AT LAST? Ismail Ibrahim’s statement: “We are going all the way! To the Supreme Court!” And now, the bombshell. A pronouncement from the State Chief Minister himself: “It is a heavy thing to make an exception to the law; but in view of Commander Sabarmati’s service to his country, I am permitting him to remain in Naval confinement pending the Supreme Court decision.”

And more press headlines, stinging as mosquitoes: STATE GOVERNMENT FLOUTS LAW! SABARMATI SCANDAL NOW A PUBLIC DISGRACE!... When I realized that the press had turned against the Commander, I knew he was done for.

The Supreme Court verdict: “Guilty.”

Ismail Ibrahim said: “Pardon! We appeal for pardon to the President of India!”

And now great matters are to be weighed in Rashtrapati Bhavan – behind the gates of President House, a man must decide if any man can be set above the law; whether the assassination of a wife’s fancy-man should be set aside for the sake of a Naval career; and still higher things – is India to give her approval to the rule of law, or to the ancient principle of the overriding primacy of heroes? If Rama himself were alive, would we send him to prison for slaying the abductor of Sita? Great matters; my vengeful irruption into the history of my age was certainly no trivial affair.

The President of India said, “I shall not pardon this man.”

Nussie Ibrahim (whose husband had lost his biggest case) wailed, “Hai! Ai-hai!” And repeated an earlier observation: “Amina sister, that good man going to prison – I tell you, it is the end of the world!”

A confession, trembling just beyond my lips: “It was all my doing, Amma; I wanted to teach you a lesson. Amma, do not go to see other men, with Lucknow-work on their shirt; enough, my mother, of teacup-kissery! I am in long trousers now, and may speak to you as a man.” But it never spilled out of me; there was no need, because I heard my mother answering a wrong-number telephone call – and with a strange, subdued voice, speak into the mouthpiece as follows: “No; nobody by that name here; please believe what I am telling you, and never call me again.”

Yes, I had taught my mother a lesson; and after the Sabarmati affair she never saw her Nadir-Qasim in the flesh, never again, not as long as she lived; but, deprived of him, she fell victim to the fate of all women in our family, namely the curse of growing old before her time; she began to shrink, and her hobble became more pronounced, and there was the emptiness of age in her eyes.

My revenge brought in its wake a number of unlooked-for developments; perhaps the most dramatic of these was the appearance in the gardens of Methwold’s Estate of curious flowers, made out of wood and tin, and hand-painted with bright red lettering... the fatal signboards erected in all the gardens except our own, evidence that my powers exceeded even my own understanding, and that, having once been exiled from my two-storey hillock, I had now managed to send everyone else away instead.

Signboards in the gardens of Versailles Villa, Escorial Villa and Sans Souci; signboards nodding to each other in the sea-breeze of the cocktail hour. On each signboard could be discerned the same seven letters, all bright red, all twelve inches high: FOR SALE. That was the signboards’ message.

FOR SALE – Versailles Villa, its owner dead on a toilet seat; the sale was handled by the ferocious nurse Bi-Appah on behalf of poor idiot Toxy; once the sale was complete, nurse and nursed vanished forever and Bi-Appah held, on her lap, a bulging suitcase filled with banknotes... I don’t know what happened to Toxy, but considering the avarice of her nurse, I’m sure it was nothing good... FOR SALE the Sabarmati apartment in Escorial Villa; Lila Sabarmati was denied custody of her children and faded out of our lives, while Eyeslice and Hairoil packed their bags and departed into the care of the Indian Navy, which had placed itself in loco parentis until their father completed his thirty years in jail... FOR SALE, too, the Ibrahims’ Sans Souci, because Ishaq Ibrahim’s Embassy Hotel had been burned down by gangsters on the day of Commander Sabarmati’s final defeat, as though the criminal classes of the city were punishing the lawyer’s family for his failure; and then

Ismail Ibrahim was suspended from practice, owing to certain proofs of professional misconduct (to quote the Bombay Bar Commission's report); financially "embarrassed", the Ibrahims also passed out of our lives; and, finally FOR SALE, the apartment of Cyrus Dubash and his mother, because during the hue and cry of the Sabarmati affair, and almost entirely unnoticed, the nuclear physicist had died his orange-pip-choking death, thus unleashing upon Cyrus the religious fanaticism of his mother and setting in motion the wheels of the period of revelations which will be the subject of my next little piece.

The signboards nodded in the gardens, which were losing their memories of goldfish and cocktail-hours and invading cats; and who took them down? Who were the heirs of the heirs of William Methwold?... They came swarming out of what had once been the residence of Dr Narlikar: fat-bellied and grossly competent women, grown fatter and more competent than ever on their tetrapod-given wealth (because those were the years of the great land reclamations). The Narlikar women – from the Navy they bought Commander Sabarmati's flat, and from the departing Mrs Dubash her Cyrus's home; they paid Bi-Appah in used banknotes, and the Ibrahims' creditors were appeased by Narlikar cash.

My father, alone of all the residents, refused to sell; they offered him vast sums, but he shook his head. They explained their dream – a dream of razing the buildings to the ground and erecting on the two-storey hillock a mansion which would soar thirty stories into the skies, a triumphant pink obelisk, a signpost of their future; Ahmed Sinai, lost in abstractions, would have none of it. They told him, "When you're surrounded by rubble you'll have to sell for a song"; he (remembering their tetrapodal perfidy) was unmoved.

Nussie-the-duck said, as she left, "I told you so, Amina sister – the end! The end of the world!" This time she was right and wrong; after August 1958, the world continued to spin; but the world of my childhood had, indeed, come to an end.

Padma – did you have, when you were little, a world of your own? A tin orb, on which were imprinted the continents and oceans and polar ice? Two cheap metal hemispheres, clamped together by a plastic stand? No, of course not; but I did. It was a world full of labels: Atlantic Ocean and Amazon and Tropic of Capricorn. And, at the North Pole, it bore the legend: MADE AS ENGLAND. By the August of the nodding signboards and the rapaciousness of the Narlikar women, this tin world had lost its stand; I found Scotch Tape and stuck the earth together at the Equator, and then, my urge for play overcoming my respect, began to use it as a football. In the aftermath of the Sabarmati affair, when the air was filled with the repentance of my mother and the private tragedies of Methwold's heirs, I clanked my tin sphere around the Estate, secure in the knowledge that the world was still in one piece (although held together by adhesive tape) and also at my feet... until, on the day of Nussie-the-duck's last eschatological lament – on the day Sonny Ibrahim ceased to be Sonny-next-door – my sister the Brass Monkey descended on me in an inexplicable rage, yelling, "O God, stop your kicking, brother; you don't feel even a little bad today?" And jumping high in the air, she landed with both feet on the North Pole, and crushed the world into the dust of our driveway under her furious heels.

It seems the departure of Sonny Ibrahim, her reviled adorer, whom she had stripped naked in the middle of the road, had affected the Brass Monkey, after all, despite her lifelong denial of the possibility of love.

1981

1. This excerpt from Rushdie's novel deals with a plurality of worlds and cultures. How are these registered in the passage?
2. Consider the style of the writing – what similarities and differences does it have to that of King?
3. Consider the ways in which seriousness is intertwined with comedy in the passage in:
 - i) the narrator's well-intentioned "crime" and his use of headlines (and not only headlines) telling the story of the division between India and Pakistan;
 - ii) the description of the shooting and subsequent events, including the trial and its reception.
4. Compare Rushdie's political satire with that of Swift in "A Modest Proposal". What differences and similarities can you find? Consider, for instance, the use of the "well-meaning" narrator.