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Seminar on Renaissance Poetry

General questions for all these poems:

- * What is the *metre* and *rhyme scheme* of the poem?
- * What *stylistic devices* such as *imagery* (e.g. the use of metaphors, similes, personifications etc.) can be identified in the poem?
- * What is the *subject matter* of the poem?
- * How can the poem be said to be *expressive of the period* from which it is taken?

Shakespeare: 'O Mistress Mine'

Start by checking that you know the meaning of any unusual word (roaming, sweeting, mirth...). Also, note that there are some obsolete (föråldrade) grammatical forms in the poem: doth = does; 'tis = it is; hath = has.

1. Who is speaking? (And how do we know there is a speaker?)
2. Who is he speaking to?
3. What is he saying, and what means of persuasion is he using?
4. What do you think he means by 'sweet and twenty'?

Herrick: 'To Virgins to Make Much of Time'

What does 'coy' mean – or 'tarry'?
Ye = you; a-flying = flying.

1. Divide the poem up in stanzas (strofer, 'verser' – there are four of them), and summarise what the speaker is saying in each one.
2. Both this and the previous poem contain the word 'Then' near the end, and for similar reasons. Try to figure out why this is so!

Sidney: from *Astrophel and Stella*

Again, start by checking any difficult words – virtue, lodged, overthrow, sovereignty, strive...
Thine = your (plural); thy = your (singular); thyself = yourself; thee = you; shineth = shines.

1. Pay specific attention to the verse form in this and the two following poems!
2. This poem is fairly complicated, but try to make sense of it by rephrasing each sentence in your own words.
3. What are the 'night-birds' in line 7, do you think?

Spenser: from *Amoretti*

There are some unusual words here (baser, devise, subdue...), but also some that are deliberately archaic (ålderdomliga): assay = try, eke = also; quod = said).

1. This poem is written almost like a small dialogue. Go through it line by line and try to figure out who says what!
2. What is the argument of the speakers, and who gets the last word?

Shakespeare: from *Sonnets*

Check for example 'dun', 'damasked', 'grant', 'belied' so that you know what they mean.
Hath = has.

1. What body parts are enumerated, and what are they compared to?
2. Is the comparison favourable or not?
3. Judging from this poem, do you think the speaker admires his mistress or not?

RENAISSANCE POETRY

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)

O Mistress mine! Where are you roaming:
O! stay and hear; your true love's coming.
That can sing both high and low.
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journeys end in lovers meeting.
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure;
In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

ROBERT HERRICK (1591-1634)

“To Virgins to Make Much of Time”

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying:
And this same flower that smiles today
Tomorrow will be dying.
The glorious lamp of heaven, the Sun,
The higher he's a-getting
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.
That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times, still succeed the former.
Then be not coy, but use your time;
And while ye may, go marry:
For having lost but once your prime,
You may forever tarry.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY (1554-1586)

From *Astrophel and Stella* (1591)

Who will in fairest book of nature know
How virtue may best lodg'd 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,
Not by rude force, but sweetest sovereignty
Of reason, from whose light those night-birds fly;
That inward sun in thine eyes shineth so.
And, not content to be perfection's heir
Thyself, dost strive all minds that way to move,
Who mark in thee what is in thee most fair.
So while thy beauty draws thy heart to love,
As fast thy virtue bends that love to good:
But "Ah," Desire still cries, "Give me some food!"

EDMUND SPENSER (1552-1599)

From *Amoretti*

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
But came the waves and washed it away:
Again I wrote it with a second hand,
But came the tide, and made my pains his prey.
"Vain man," said she, "that dost in vain assay,
A mortal thing so to immortalize;
For I myself shall like to this decay,
And eke my name be wiped out likewise."
"Not so," (quod I) "let baser things devise
To die in dust, but you shall live by fame:
My verse your vertues rare shall eternize,
And in the heavens write your glorious name:
Where whenas death shall all the world subdue,
Our love shall live, and later life renew."

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)

From *Sonnets* (1609)

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red:
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound.
I grant I never saw a goddess go:
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

Keywords for Renaissance Poetry

Petrarchan sonnet English sonnet Sacred and Profane Love Carpe Diem Conceit

Commonwealth & Restoration, and the 18th Century

The Penguin Guide to Literature in English: Chapters 3, 4

James I (1603-25) Charles I (1625-45; beheaded 1649) Parliament
Puritans (Nonconformists) Civil War 1642-45 Cavaliers Roundheads Naseby
Commonwealth 1645-60 Oliver Cromwell Lord Protector (1653-58)
Restoration (1660) Charles II Test Act 1673 Whigs/Tories James II (1685-88)
The Glorious Revolution 1688 William of Orange The Battle of the Boyne 1690
Queen Anne (1702-1714) Hannover Walpole Pitt Bonnie Prince Charlie The Battle of Culloden 1746

John Milton (1608-74) Latin Secretary pamphlets *Paradise Lost*
Andrew Marvell (1621-78) **John Bunyan** (1628-88) *The Pilgrim's Progress*
John Dryden (1631-1700) ode satire (+plays) 1666 The Great Fire of London
Samuel Pepys (1633-1703) *Diary* (1660-69)
John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester (1647-80) **Aphra Behn** (1640?-1689)
Reason, thought Neoclassical Augustan Social (not solitary) man
1642: Civil War (>Theatres closed by Puritans) 1660> Restoration Drama
Comedy of manners taste, elegance, decorum **Dryden, Shadwell**
Wycherley *The Country Wife* **William Congreve** 1670-1729 *The Way of the World*
John Gay (1685-1732) *The Beggar's Opera* **Sheridan** *The School for Scandal*
Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762) letters
The Birth of Prose: political pamphlets; satire; journalism; travel books; letter-writing;
diaries; essays of criticism; encyclopedias and dictionaries; biography (Boswell/Dr Johnson)

The Birth of the Novel:

Daniel Defoe (1660-1731) fake journalism
Jonathan Swift (1667-1745)
Samuel Richardson (1689-1761) epistolary novel
Henry Fielding (1707-1754) picaresque novel
Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) Gothic horror
Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794)
Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (1798)
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818)
Fanny Burney (1752-1840) Maria Edgeworth (1768-1849)

Poetry: Augustan to Pre-Romantic

Alexander Pope (*The Rape of the Lock, An Essay on Criticism, An Essay on Man*, etc.)
Edward Young ('Night Thoughts'), Thomas Gray ('Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard')
Robert Burns (*Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, published 1786)
James McPherson, *The Works of Ossian* (1760>1765) Gaelic ancient poetry

John Bunyan (1628-88), from *The Pilgrim's Progress*

Valiant-For-Truth: Why, they told me that it was a dangerous way; yea, the most dangerous way in the World, said they, is that which the Pilgrims go.

Great-heart: Did they shew wherein this way is so dangerous?

Valiant-For-Truth: Yes, and that in many particulars.

Great-heart: Name some of them.

Valiant-For-Truth: They told me of the Slough of Dispond, where Christian was well nigh smothered. They told me that there were Archers standing ready in Beelzebub-castle to shoot them that should knock at the Wicket-gate for entrance. They told me also of the Wood and dark Mountains, of the Hill Difficulty, of the Lions, and also of the three Giants, Bloody-man, Maul and Slay-good. They said moreover that there was a foul Fiend haunted the Valley of Humiliation, and that Christian was by him almost bereft of Life. Besides, say they, you must go over the Valley of the Shadow of Death, where the Hobgoblins are, where the Light is Darkness, where the way is full of Snares, Pits, Traps, and Gins. They told me also of Giant Despair, of Doubting Castle and of the ruin that the Pilgrims met with there. Further, they said I must go over the Enchanted Ground, which was dangerous. And that after all this, I should find a River, over which I should find no Bridge, and that that River did lie betwixt me and the Coelestial Country.

John Dryden (1631-1700), from *Annus Mirabilis (1666)*

The title means the "year of wonders", the wonders (the word is used in a negative sense) being: war (against Holland, and, through Holland, Denmark and France); a terrible outbreak of the *plague* (killing nearly 70,000 people), and the *Great Fire of London*. Although Dryden started out as a writer praising Cromwell and Puritanism, he is now defending the Stuart King Charles II, claiming that he will rise from his trouble like a new Emperor Augustus, as the ruler of a great empire. In a similar way, a new and grander London, rebuilt by Christopher Wren, will rise like the phoenix from the ruins of the Great Fire:

Me-thinks already, from this chymic* flame *alchemic; purifying dross to gold
I see a city of more precious mold:
Rich as the town which gives the Indies name* *Mexico
With silver paved, and all divine with gold.

Already, laboring with a mighty fate,
She shakes the rubbish from her mounting brow
And seems to have renewed her charter's date,
Which Heaven will to the death of time allow.

More great than human, now, and more August,
New deified she from her fires does rise:
Her widening streets on new foundations trust,
And, opening, into larger parts she flies.

The silver Thames, her own domestic flood
Shall bear her vessels like a sweeping train;
And often wind (as of his mistress proud)
With longing eyes to meet her face again.

Samuel Pepys (1633-1703), from *The Diary* (1660-69)

When he wrote his famous diary, Samuel Pepys was secretary of the Admiralty, but also a true Londoner: he was interested in the theatre, music, the social whirl, business, religion, literary life, science, politics etc. and writes with utter frankness about everything, from affairs of state to quarrels with his wife. Here, he is giving us an eyewitness-account of the Great Fire of London, 2-6 September, 1666:

September 2 1666

Some of our maids sitting up late last night to get things ready against our feast today, Jane called up about three in the morning, to tell us of a great fire they saw in the City. So I rose, and slipped on my night-gown and went to her window, and thought it to be on the back side of Mark Lane at the farthest; but, being unused to such fires as followed, I thought it far enough off, and so went to bed again, and to sleep /---/ By and by Jane comes and tells me that she hears that above 300 houses have been burned down tonight by the fire we saw, and that it is now burning down all Fish Street, by London Bridge. So I made myself ready presently, and walked to the Tower; and there got up upon one of the high places /.../ and there I did see the houses at the end of the bridge all on fire, and an infinite great fire on this and the other side the end of the bridge /.../. So down [I went], with my heart full of trouble, to the Lieutenant of the Tower, who tells me that it began this morning in the King's baker's house in Pudding Lane, and that it hath burned St. Magnus's Church and most part of Fish Street already. So I rode down to the waterside /.../ and there saw a lamentable fire. /---/ Everybody endeavouring to remove their goods, and flinging into the river or bringing them into lighters that lay off; poor people staying in their houses as long as till the very fire touched them, and then running into boats, or clambering from one pair of stairs by the waterside to another. And among other things, the poor pigeons, I perceive, were loth to leave their houses, but hovered about the windows and balconies, till they some of them burned their wings and fell down.

Having stayed, and in an hour's time seen the fire rage every way, and nobody to my sight endeavouring to quench it, but to remove their goods and leave all to the fire /.../ I [went next] to Whitehall (with a gentleman with me, who desired to go off from the Tower to see the fire in my boat); and there up to the King's closet in the Chapel, where people came about me, and I did give them an account [that] dismayed them all, and the word was carried into the King. so I was called for, and did tell the King and Duke of York what I saw; and that unless His Majesty did command houses to be pulled down, nothing could stop the fire. They seemed much troubled, and the King commanded me to go to my Lord Mayor from him, and command him to spare no houses. . . .

[I hurried] to [St.] Paul's; and there walked along Watling Street, as well as I could, every creature coming away laden with goods to save and, here and there, sick people carried away in beds. Extraordinary goods carried in carts and on backs. At last [I] met my Lord Mayor in Cannon Street, like a man spent, with a [handkerchief] about his neck. To the King's message he cried, like a fainting woman, 'Lord, what can I do? I am spent: people will not obey me. I have been pulling down houses, but the fire overtakes us faster than we can do it.' /---/ So he left me, and I him, and walked home; seeing people all distracted, and no manner of means used to quench the fire. The houses, too, so very thick thereabouts, and full of matter for burning, as pitch and tar, in Thames Street; and warehouses of oil and wines and brandy and other things.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

To the King's Theatre, where we saw "Midsummer's Night's Dream," which I had never seen before, nor shall ever again, for it is the most insipid ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life. I saw, I confess, some good dancing and some handsome women, which was all my pleasure. (*Diary*, 29 Sept., 1662)

***Macbeth* again (previously seen on 28 December, 1666)**

... thence to the Duke's house and saw *Macbeth*; which though I saw it lately, yet appears a most excellent play in all respects, but especially in divertisement, though it be a deep tragedy; which is a strange perfection in a tragedy, it being most proper here and suitable. (*Diary*, 7 January, 1667)

John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester (1647-80)

The poet is cleverly trying to convince his mistress that since the past is over and the future not here yet, all that we have is this very moment; hence, all talk of inconstancy and unfaithfulness is pointless:

Love and Life

ALL my past life is mine no more
The flying hours are gone,
Like transitory dreams given o'er,
Whose images are kept in store
By memory alone.

The time that is to come is not;
How can it then be mine?
The present moment 's all my lot;
And that, as fast as it is got,
Phyllis, is only thine.

Then talk not of inconstancy,
False hearts, and broken vows;
If I by miracle can be
This live-long minute true to thee,
'Tis all that Heaven allows.

William Congreve (1670-1729), from *The Way of the World* (1700)

The plot of this complex, witty, cynical and elegant play includes such unlikeable characters as the ageing, amorous Lady Wishfort, always on the prowl for young men; Mr Fainall, who squanders his wife's fortune on his mistress; and that mistress, the nasty Mrs Marwood. The hero and heroine are more attractive (though hardly less cynical); MIRABELL is a mercenary rake, but genuinely in love with MILLAMANT; she is a witty coquette, but more virtuous than she seems. In this scene, they playfully decide on each other's rights and prerogatives as husband and wife. It is agreed that they shall each decide when they want to get up in the mornings; apart from that, Millamant's demands are: no silly pet names permitted; no cuddling in public; she must be allowed to keep her friends and her privacy, and he must knock before entering her rooms. Mirabell in his turn demands that no intimate friend should be allowed to come between them; that she use no make-up for as long as he thinks her beautiful without it; that she will not lace her corset while she is pregnant, so as not to hurt the child; and finally that strong drinks are banished from her tea-table...

MILLA. /---/ Ah, I'll never marry, unless I am
first made sure of my will and pleasure.

MIRA. Would you have 'em both before marriage? Or will you be
contented with the first now, and stay for the other till after grace?

MILLA. Ah, don't be impertinent. My dear liberty, shall I leave
thee? My faithful solitude, my darling contemplation, must I bid
you then adieu? /---/ I can't do't, 'tis more than impossible--positively,
Mirabell, I'll lie a-bed in a morning as long as I please.

MIRA. Then I'll get up in a morning as early as I please.

MILLA. Ah! Idle creature, get up when you will. And d'ye hear, I
won't be called names after I'm married; positively I won't be
called names.

MIRA. Names?

MILLA. Ay, as wife, spouse, my dear, joy, jewel, love, sweet-heart,
and the rest of that nauseous cant, in which men and their wives are
so fulsomely familiar--I shall never bear that. Good Mirabell,
don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiss before folks, like my
Lady Fadler and Sir Francis; nor go to Hyde Park together the first
Sunday in a new chariot, to provoke eyes and whispers, and then
never be seen there together again, as if we were proud of one
another the first week, and ashamed of one another ever after. Let
us never visit together, nor go to a play together, but let us be
very strange and well-bred. Let us be as strange as if we had been
married a great while, and as well-bred as if we were not married at all.

John Gay (1685-1732), from *The Beggar's Opera* (1728)

The Beggar's Opera is a satire on various types of corruption, as well as on Italian opera; instead of virtuoso arias its songs are set to popular tunes of folk songs and ballads.

The hero of *The Beggar's Opera* is the womaniser and highway robber Macheath, who somehow contrives to be a likeable character in spite of all his vices; he also proves that vice is the same in high places as in low. Eventually he is scaught and sentenced to hang, but is reprieved at the last minute.

Below are four of the many songs (airs):

Air.—Green Sleeves

Since laws were made for every degree,
To curb vice in others, as well as in me,
I wonder we ha'n't better company
 Upon Tyburn tree!
But gold from law can take out the sting,
And if rich men like us were to swing,
'Twould thin the land such numbers to string
 Upon Tyburn tree!

Air.—An old woman clothed in grey

Through all the employments of life,
Each neighbour abuses his brother,
Whore and rogue they call husband and wife;
All professions berogue one another:
The priest calls the lawyer a cheat,
The lawyer beknives the divine,
And the statesman, because he's so great,
Thinks his trade as honest as mine.

Air.—March in Rinaldo, with drums and trumpets

Let us take the road.
Hark! I hear the sound of coaches,
The hour of attack approaches,
To your arms, brave boys, and load!
See the ball I hold!
Let the chemists toil like asses,
Our fire their fire surpasses,
And turns all our lead to gold.

Air.—Would you have a young virgin, etc.

If the heart of a man is depressed with cares,
The mist is dispelled, when a woman appears;
Like the notes of a fiddle she sweetly, sweetly
Raises the spirits and charms our ears.
Roses and lilies her cheeks disclose,
But her ripe lips are more sweet than those;
Press her,
Caress her;
With blisses
Her kisses
Dissolve us in pleasure and soft repose.

Keywords for Seventeenth-Century Poetry

Metaphysical Poetry Metaphysical Conceit Puritanism

Keywords for Eighteenth-Century Literature

Didacticism Rationalism Satire Heroic Couplet Decorum Personification

STUDY QUESTIONS for SEVENTEENTH- and EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE

Donne: 'The Flea' (extract)

1. Who is speaking? Who is he speaking to?
2. Would you say that this poem contains a metaphysical conceit?

Donne: 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning'

1. The subject matter of this poem is very clearly signalled in the title. So what is it about? (And who is speaking to whom?)
2. Check that you know the meaning of 'virtuous', 'soul', 'profanation' and 'laity' in the first two stanzas. What field does this terminology belong to?
3. What is meant by the 'Moving of th'earth' that is said to bring danger and fear in stanza three? Why did people 'reckon what it did, and meant' in those days?
4. (This is a really difficult question, so don't feel bad if you cannot answer it.) Have you any idea what is meant by 'trepidation of the spheres' and why this 'Though greater far, is innocent'?
5. What is meant by 'sublunary'? How are the speaker and his love different from the 'dull, sublunary' lovers?
6. The poet uses not just one but two metaphysical conceits (fresh, surprising, 'unpoetic' images) to illustrate his main argument, one in stanza six and the other in stanzas seven to nine. What are they? Relate them in your own words!
7. Compare this poem to 'The Flea'. What similarities do they have? How are they different in tone and attitude?

Marvell: 'To his Coy Mistress'

With this poem it is extremely important to know the meaning of a/ 'coy' and 'coyness'. Please notice that today these words are often used in a more or less negative sense. How? What do they mean today? In the 17th century they had no such negative connotations. What did they mean then? b/ 'mistress'. This word too has really changed its meaning since Marvell's time. What does it mean today? What did it mean then? Why would you go completely wrong with the poem if you assumed that 'mistress' meant then what it means today?

1. The poem is divided into three parts. The first one starts with the words 'Had we...' Today we would be more likely to say 'If we had...' An 'if...' must always be followed by a real or implied '...then', such as: 'If I had all the money in the world, *then* I would buy myself a Ferrari'. Rephrase the first sentence in the poem in the same way! This is the argument of the first stanza. How is it illustrated in the rest of this stanza?
2. What is the argument of the second stanza? Pay specific attention to the following metaphors. What do they denote?
'Time's winged chariot'
'Deserts of vast eternity'
'thy marble vault'
3. Sum up the argument of the third stanza. Does it remind you of any other poems you have read so far? In what way(s) is Marvell's poem different from the preceding ones?

Milton: 'When I consider...'

1. This is a sonnet. How do we know? What kind of a sonnet is it? Where does the twist occur? It occurs in an unusual place. With what word is it signalled?
2. Sort out the first sentence. It is very long... How long is it?
3. The sentence starts with the words 'When I consider...' What is the situation that the poet considers? What is meant by the words 'my light is spent'? What, in other words, has happened to him?
4. A 'when' (like an 'if') must always be followed by a real or implied 'then'. Where does the implied 'then' occur here? In other words, what does the poet do when he considers his situation?
5. What personification can you find in this poem?
6. What is the conclusion of the poem? How is the question in the first part answered?
7. Milton was a Puritan. What does that mean? How can this knowledge of the poet help you understand the poem?

Pope: Extract from 'An Essay on Man'

1. The message of the poem is very clearly signalled in the first two lines of the poem. So what is it? How is it typical of the period? What period are we talking about?
2. In lines 3-18 'man', in the sense of mankind or humankind, is described. What is he/are we like, according to the poet? Pope works with a number of paradoxical statements here. (A paradox, according to Longman, is 'a statement that seems impossible because it contains two opposing ideas that are both true'.) Give examples of this. Why does he do this, would you say? What is the effect?

Swift: 'A Modest Proposal'

1. The main difficulty about this text is to differ between the surface and what is under it, between what Swift seems to be saying and his actual message. It starts off seriously enough. When is it possible to start suspecting that this is actually a satire rather than a serious proposal? When would you say that this is quite obvious? Collect examples of statements which are so outrageous as to be obviously satirical. (It might be a good idea to number the paragraphs for easy reference.)
2. What do we learn about the actual conditions in Ireland at the time? Collect examples.
3. What impression do you form of the person who could write this? Do you like him or does he disgust you? What would you imagine he was like?

Gray: 'Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard' (extracts)

(This is a difficult poem with many difficult words. Be extremely careful about looking them up in the dictionary !)

1. Stanzas 1-4: When and where is the poem set, what does it look like, what is the general atmosphere? Who is the 'me' in stanza 1? Any indication of what this person might be like?

SEVENTEENTH- and EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE

JOHN DONNE (1572-1631)

The Flea

Marke but this flea, and marke in this,
How little that which thou deny'st me is;
Me it suck'd first, and now sucks thee,
And in this flea our two bloods mingled bee;
Confesse it, this cannot be said
A sinne, or shame, or losse of maidenhead,
Yet this enjoys before it wooe,
And pamper'd swells with one blood made of two,
And this, alas, is more than wee would doe. /-----/

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 melt, and make no noise,
No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;
'Twere profanation of our joys
To tell the laity our love.

Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears;
Men reckon what it did, and meant;
But trepidation of the spheres,
Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love
(Whose soul is sense) cannot admit
Absence, because it doth remove
Those things which elemented it.

But we by a love so much refin'd,
That ourselves know not what it is,
Inter-assured of the mind,
Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss.

Our two souls therefore, which are one,
 Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
 Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so
 As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul, the fix'd foot, makes no show
 To move, but doth, if the' other do.

And though it in the centre sit,
 Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans, and hearkens after it,
 And grows erect, as that comes home.

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.

ANDREW MARVELL (1621-1678)

To his Coy Mistress

Had we but world enough, and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day;
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the Flood;
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires, and more slow.
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found,
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long preserv'd virginity,
And your quaint honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust.
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none I think do there embrace.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may;
And now, like am'rous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour,
Than languish in his slow-chapp'd power.
Let us roll all our strength, and all
Our sweetness, up into one ball;
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Thorough the iron gates of life.
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

JOHN MILTON (1608-1674)

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodg'd with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies: "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts: who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and wait."

ALEXANDER POPE (1688-1744)

An Essay on Man in Four Epistles: Epistle 2 (Extract)

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'd, 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!

JONATHAN SWIFT (1667-1745)

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 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 Pretender in Spain, or sell themselves to the Barbadoes.

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 the 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 2s., which the mother may certainly get, or 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 kingdom 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 remains one 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 towardly parts, although I confess they learn the rudiments much earlier, during which time, they can however be properly 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 age 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 salable 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 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 the 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 12 pounds, and in a solar year, if tolerably nursed, increaseth to 28 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.

Infant's 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, 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 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, laborers, 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 his tenants; the mother will have eight shillings net profit, and be fit for 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 artificially dressed will make admirable gloves for ladies, and summer boots for fine gentlemen.

As to our city of Dublin, shambles 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 country 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, however so well intended.

But in order to justify my friend, he confessed that this expedient was put into his head by the famous Psalmanazar, 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 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 young laborers, they are now in 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.

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 with a design 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.

Secondly, The poorer tenants will have something valuable of their own, which by law may be made liable to distress 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 upward, 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, beside 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, beside 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 receipts 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 skilful 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, their 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 barreled 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.

* * * * *

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 whole 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 laborers, with their wives and children who are beggars in effect: I desire those politicians who dislike my overture, and may perhaps be so bold as 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 scene 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 for ever.

I profess, in the sincerity of my heart, that I have not the least personal interest in endeavoring 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 child-bearing.

THOMAS GRAY (1716-1771)

Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

1 The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
2 The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
3 The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
4 And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

5 Now fades the glimm'ring landscape on the sight,
6 And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
7 Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
8 And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

9 Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r
10 The moping owl does to the moon complain
11 Of such, as wand'ring near her secret bow'r,
12 Molest her ancient solitary reign.

13 Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
14 Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
15 Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
16 The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

/-----/

73 Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
74 Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
75 Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
76 They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

/-----/

THE EPITAPH

117 *Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth*
118 *A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown.*
119 *Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,*
120 *And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.*

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR *Pride and Prejudice*

First half: Chapters 1-38

1. Consider the first sentence of the first chapter. (It is a famous 'first sentence'.) Is it true now? Was it true then? What does it signal to the reader about a/ the theme(s) of the novel b/ the tone of the novel?
2. Study the way in which the main characters are introduced in the first short chapter. What do we learn about them? How do we learn this?
3. Look for information about economic matters (incomes, fortunes, property) as you read. What do you learn about the economic status of the characters?
4. In Chapter 4 we are told that the Bingley sisters would like to forget that their fortune 'had been acquired by trade'. Later Mr Bingley defends the Bennet girls by saying: 'If they had uncles enough to fill *all* Cheapside it would not make them one jot less agreeable'. (Look for this conversation and its implications.) What is wrong with trade and Cheapside?
5. Whereas you (probably) will not have time to work in such detail with the vocabulary of a fairly long novel as you have to do with short poems, you still need to check up on important words. One such word is 'entail' which turns up for the first time in Chapter 7. Check carefully that you understand exactly what it means, since it is a key word in the novel. Then try to answer the question: How is it a key word?
6. Education was a very important concept in the 18th century, and many novels dealt with matters of education in various ways. Pay attention to references to education as you read. How have the Bingley sisters been educated? What about the Bennet sisters? In Chapter 8 there is a conversation about being 'accomplished'. What does the word mean? What do the different characters put into it? How does this tell us something about them? What do you learn about the education of women at the time from this conversation?
7. In Chapter 19 there is a proposal scene. The girl refuses. Why does she do that? I.e. why does this particular young woman not want to marry this particular young man? Why does he, on the other hand, seem very sure that she will? (In fact, you might count the number of times she actually says no and consider how it is possible for any man not to get her meaning.)
8. However, there is another young woman who is very happy to have this young man. Make careful notes of her reasons. What do you think of this? Is she doing the right thing? Pay attention later on to how her marriage seems to function. What does she get out of it? How does she manage it?
9. In chapter 34 there is another proposal scene. Compare this to the first one. What obvious differences are there? Are there any similarities? What about the young woman's reaction?
10. Make a list of the young woman's accusations against the man in Chapter 34 and note how he answers them in his letter? In your opinion, is his defence adequate? In other words, are you as a reader prepared to reconsider your opinions about him? Is the young woman?

ROMANTICISM

(Penguin Guide 103-123)



THE PERIOD OF REVOLUTIONS

The Industrial Revolution
The American War of Independence
The French Revolution

ROMANTICISM

France: Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Germany: Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottfried Herder, Johann Gottlieb Fichte

England: Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man*; William Godwin, *Political Justice*; Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*; Edmund Burke, *A Treatise on the Sublime and the Beautiful*

Key Concepts

Individualism/Subjectivity
Political Radicalism/Emancipation
Nature
The Sublime and the Beautiful

Themes in Romantic Poetry

Subjective vision: emotion, intuition, imagination
Nature: innocence and virtue; the child, the people, the primitive
Political radicalism: equality, revolution, individual freedom

Romantic Texts and Statements

But oh ! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover !
A savage place ! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover !

(Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Kubla Khan")

"Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings"
(William Wordsworth)

"If poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree it had better not
come at all"

(John Keats)

"Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world"
(Percy Bysshe Shelley)

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR *Pride and Prejudice*

Second half: Chapters 39-61

Warning: These questions are intended for reflection after you have finished the novel and can look back on it as a whole. You may very well use them as a guide while you are reading if you prefer that, but if you do so you should be aware that they might to some extent spoil your pleasure in reading by giving away the plot.

1. 'I have been a selfish being all my life, in practice, though not in principle. As a child I was taught what was *right*, but I was not taught to correct my temper. I was given good principles but left to follow them in pride and conceit. Unfortunately an only son, (for many years an only *child*) I was spoilt by my parents, who though good themselves (my father particularly, all that was benevolent and amiable,) allowed, encouraged, almost taught me to be selfish and overbearing, to care for none beyond my own family circle, to think meanly of all the rest of the world, to *wish* at least to think meanly of their sense and worth compared with my own. Such I was from eight to eight and twenty, and such I might still have been but for you - - You taught me a lesson, hard indeed at first, but most advantageous.'

This long speech from Chapter 58 (spoken by whom?) introduces the idea of education in the moral sense, i.e. that it is more important to learn to be a good person than to follow intellectual pursuits or to acquire elegant accomplishments; and that parents have a responsibility here. What about the Bennet girls from this point of view? Have Mr and Mrs Bennet been responsible parents?

2. 'Will you tell me how long you have loved him?' Jane asks Elizabeth in Chapter 59; to which question Elizabeth answers '...I believe I must date it from my first seeing his beautiful grounds at Pemberley.' How should we interpret this answer? Does it mean that Elizabeth is after all guided by money and status in her choice of a husband? Or is she merely joking? Or is there some other truth in the answer? Go back to Chapter 43 and study the description of Pemberley and the impression it makes on Elizabeth.

3. Consider the married couples we see in the book: the Bennets, the Gardiners, the Hursts, the Collinses, and in the end the Wickhams. Are they happy? On what basis are they founded, i.e. what do we learn about why these people married? What does it indicate about the author's view of marriage? What about Jane and Elizabeth? Do you think their marriages will be happy? Give reasons for your answer.

4. Comment on the title of the book. Whose pride? Whose prejudice? When and how are they done away with?

5. Jane Austen originally called the novel *First Impressions* but later renamed it for publication. What about this title? Why do you think she renamed it? Which one do you prefer? Why?

6. *Pride and Prejudice* is a novel about A/ Romantic love; B/ Economic realities; C/ Equality and compatibility; D/ Moral education; E/ The situation of women. Choose one statement and motivate your choice.

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR ROMANTIC POETRY

1. Romantic poets could be radical critics of their contemporary society. What aspects and institutions of early nineteenth-century British society seem to be attacked in William Blake's "London"? In order to handle this question you need to look up and study the meaning of the word "charter" and to consider the figurative dimensions of words and expressions like "mind-forg'd manacles", "Church", "Palace", and "marriage hearse".

2. Blake's "London" and Wordsworth's "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" offer contrasting views of the English capital. What essential differences and similarities can be found between the two poems?

3. What poetic form in terms of metre and rhyme scheme is used by Wordsworth in "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" and by Keats in "When I have fears that I may cease to be"?

4. Keats's "When I have fears that I may cease to be" and Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" partly deal with nature and partly with the character of poetic creation. Try to summarize the ideas presented on these topics in the two poems and consider if nature and poetic creation can be seen to be interrelated.

5. Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" is an intricately structured poem both in terms of poetic form and in terms of subject matter. Try to identify 1) the rhyme scheme of the poem and 2) elements of subject matter that give each separate section a thematic unity.

6. Like Blake, Shelley was inclined to use poetry for offering social criticism and making political statements. Can "Ode to the West Wind", in your view, be argued to have a political message?

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757-1827)

London



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

- 5 In every cry of every Man,
- 6 In every Infant's cry of fear,
- 7 In every voice, in every ban,
- 8 The mind-forg'd manacles I hear.

- 9 How the Chimney-sweeper's cry
- 10 Every black'ning Church appalls;
- 11 And the hapless Soldier's sigh
- 12 Runs in blood down Palace walls.

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

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850)

Composed Upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802

- 1 Earth has not anything to show more fair:
- 2 Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
- 3 A sight so touching in its majesty:
- 4 This City now doth, like a garment, wear
- 5 The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
- 6 Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
- 7 Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
- 8 All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
- 9 Never did sun more beautifully steep
- 10 In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
- 11 Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
- 12 The river glideth at his own sweet will:
- 13 Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
- 14 And all that mighty heart is lying still!

JOHN KEATS (1795-1821)

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
Before high-piled books, in character,
Hold like rich garners the full ripen'd grain;
When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love;--then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792-1822)

Ode to the West Wind

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

0 Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
1 (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
2 With living hues and odours plain and hill:

3 Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
4 Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh hear!

5 Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
6 Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
7 Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

8 Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
9 On the blue surface of thine aëry surge,
0 Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

1 Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
2 Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
3 The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

4 Of the dying year, to which this closing night
5 Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
6 Vaulted with all thy congregated might

7 Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
8 Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh hear!

II

9 Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
0 The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
1 Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams,

32 Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
33 And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
34 Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

35 All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
36 So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
37 For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

38 Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
39 The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
40 The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

41 Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
42 And tremble and despoil themselves: oh hear!

IV

43 If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
44 If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
45 A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

46 The impulse of thy strength, only less free
47 Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
48 I were as in my boyhood, and could be

49 The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
50 As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
51 Scarce seem'd a vision; I would ne'er have striven

52 As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
53 Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
54 I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

55 A heavy weight of hours has chain'd and bow'd
56 One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

57 Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
58 What if my leaves are falling like its own!
59 The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

60 Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
61 Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
62 My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

63 Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
64 Like wither'd leaves to quicken a new birth!
65 And, by the incantation of this verse,

66 Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth

- 67 Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
68 Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth
69 The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
70 If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Composition Date: autumn 1819

Keywords for Romantic Poetry

Idealism Subjectivity Imagination Nature The Sublime

THE VICTORIAN PERIOD

The Penguin Guide: Chapter 6, “The Victorian Period”

Re-read McDowall, *An Illustrated History of Britain*: Chapters 19-21

THE PERIOD OF INDUSTRIALISM, IMPERIALISM AND REFORMS

Queen Victoria 1837-1901
The British Empire
Industrialisation
The rise of the middle classes
Urbanisation, slums and suburbs
Criticism of society
The move towards democracy
The Reform Acts of 1832 and 1867
Loss of religious faith

IMPORTANT WORKS

Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (1837-8)
Charles Darwin, *On the Origins of Species* (1859)
Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone* (1860)
Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)
Karl Marx, *Das Kapital* (1867-95)

NOVELS

Social realism and social criticism (Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot,
Thomas Hardy)
The Brontë sisters (Anne, Charlotte and Emily)
Sensational novels
Detective stories (Wilkie Collins)
Nonsense poetry and children's stories (Edward Lear, Lewis Carroll, Robert Louis Stevenson)

POETRY

Alfred, Lord Tennyson
Robert Browning and Elisabeth Barrett Browning
Matthew Arnold

DRAMA

Oscar Wilde
George Bernard Shaw

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Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) Poet Laureate

The Lady of Shalott *Idylls of the King*

The Charge of the Light Brigade The Crimean War Florence Nightingale

Arthur Henry Hallam (died 1833) *In Memoriam A.H.H.*

Robert Browning (1812-1889) Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Dramatic monologue *My Last Duchess* *The Ring and the Book*

Caliban upon Setebos *The Tempest* (Shakespeare) Prospero, Miranda

Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) inspector of schools *Dover Beach*

The Pre-Raphaelites Rossetti

Lewis Carroll (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson) (1832-1898)

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland *Through the Looking Glass*

Nonsense verse Cheshire cat portmanteau word

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) "the voice of England's conscience" serial publication

The Pickwick Papers *Oliver Twist* *Little Dorrit* debtor's prison

Nicholas Nickleby *Bleak House* *Great Expectations* *David Copperfield*

Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855) **Emily Brontë** (1818-1848) (+Anne, Branwell)

"Currer, Ellis & Acton Bell" parsonage, Haworth, Yorkshire

Wuthering Heights (Emily) *Jane Eyre* (Charlotte) Mr Rochester

George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans) (1819-1880) **Elizabeth Gaskell** (1810-1865)

Middlemarch *The Mill on the Floss*

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) (architect) The Wessex Novels

Tess of the d'Urbervilles *Jude the Obscure* **Charlotte Mew** (1869-1928)

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889) "sprung rhythm" assonance

Fin-de-siècle

Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

The Importance of Being Ernest *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* *De Profundis*

George Bernhard Shaw (1856-1950) *Saint Joan* *Pygmalion*

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The Victorian Period

Alfred, Lord Tennyson:

1. Lines from *The Lady of Shalott*

Over a period of 50 years, Tennyson worked on his own version of the legends about King Arthur, *Idylls of the King*. *The Lady of Shalott* is a separate poem but belongs to the same legendary world. The lady sits weaving in her tower on an island in the river floating down to Camelot, Arthur's palace; she gets her inspiration from what she sees in a mirror, reflecting shadows of the outside world; a curse will fall on her if she looks down to Camelot. In this extract, Sir Lancelot rides by, and at the sight of him, her world goes to pieces:

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
'Tirra lirra,' by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
'The curse is come upon me,' cried
The Lady of Shalott.

2. From 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'

During the Crimean War, owing to confusion of orders, a brigade of British cavalry charged some entrenched batteries of Russian artillery at Balaclava. This blunder cost the lives of three fourths of the 600 horsemen. Tennyson read a report in *The Times* and rapidly wrote this ballad-like poem.

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!' he said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

'Forward, the Light Brigade!'
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd:
Their's not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

3. From *In Memoriam A.H.H.*

In 1833, Tennyson's best friend (and the fiancé of his sister), Arthur Hallam, died suddenly at the age of twenty-two. His death left Tennyson with doubts about the meaning of life and man's role in the universe; over a period of seventeen years, he wrote a kind of 'poetic diary' recording his feelings of loss and sorrow, and his efforts to come to terms with them. Towards the end of this time, he comes to accept his loss and to assert his belief in life and in an afterlife. The sequence is written in a very rigid form, usually called the "*In Memoriam stanza*"; the 131 short poems, plus a Prologue and an Epilogue, were published in 1850.

(from N:o 5)

I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel;
For words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
A use in measured language lies;
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

(from N:o 27)

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
*'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.*

(from N:o 106)

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.
(-----)

Ring, klocka ring i bistra nyårsnatten
mot rymdens norrskenssky och markens snö;
det gamla året lägger sig att dö...
Ring själaringning över land och vatten!

Ring in det nya och ring ut det gamla
i årets första, skälvande minut.
Ring lögnens makt från världens gränser ut,
och ring in sanningens till oss som famla.

Ring våra tankar ut ur sorgens häkten,
och ring hugsvalelse till sargad barm.
Ring hatet ut emellan rik och arm
och ring försoning in till jordens släkten.
(-----)

(Sv. översättning: Edvard Fredin)

4. Crossing the Bar

Tennyson was eighty when he wrote this poem; at his request, it appears as the final poem in all collections of his work.

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne* of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot* face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

*boundary

*Sw. 'lots', i.e. the person who conducts ships into and out of harbour

Robert Browning:

Caliban upon Setebos*

*i.e. Caliban's thoughts about Setebos (his god)

Or Natural Theology in the Island

Caliban's idea of God is fairly simple; he is just like Caliban, only more powerful, and he must be placated and (if possible) cheated all the time, as must Caliban's master, Prospero. The poem was written in 1860; in 1859, Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* had been published.

Caliban will lie down in the mud, hidden from Prospero and Miranda who think that he is working, and think aloud about Setebos, his deity, who lives in the moon and has created all:

['Will sprawl, now that the heat of day is best,
Flat on his belly in the pit's much mire,
With elbows wide, fists clenched to prop his chin.
And, while he kicks both feet in the cool slush,
And feels about his spine small eft-things* course,
Run in and out each arm, and make him laugh: /---/
And talks to his own self, howe'er he please,
Touching that other, whom his dam* called God.
Because to talk about Him, vexes--ha,
Could He but know! and time to vex is now,
When talk is safer than in winter-time.
Moreover Prosper and Miranda sleep...

5

*water lizards

15

*his mother, Sycorax

20

cf *The Tempest*

According to Caliban, Setebos made us both weaker and stronger than himself; he sometimes admires and helps us, but sometimes he mocks us and torments us, dealing with us just as he pleases, because he is the Lord. So does Caliban himself to creatures weaker than him: He can let twenty crabs live, yet kill the twenty-first at a whim:

Nor kind, nor cruel: He is strong and Lord.
'Am strong myself compared to yonder crabs
That march now from the mountain to the sea;
'Let twenty pass, and stone the twenty-first,
Loving not, hating not, just choosing so. /---/
As it likes me each time, I do: so He.
/---/

100

Gerard Manley Hopkins: Pied Beauty*

Glory be to God for dappled things—
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled* cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls*; finches wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced – fold*, fallow*, and plough;
And áll trádes— their gear and tackle and trim*.

All things counter*, original, spare*, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers forth whose beauty is past change;
Praise him.

*of two or more colours in blotches; 'brokig'

*brownish orange with streaks of grey

*freshly fallen chestnuts, bright as coals

*pasture; *'i tráda'

*equipment

*contrary; *rare

Lewis Carroll: JABBERWOCKY (from *Through the Looking-Glass*)

`Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought --
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

"And, has thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.

`Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

[pp. 126-29] "You seem very clever at explaining words, Sir," said Alice. "Would you kindly tell me the meaning of the poem called 'Jabberwocky'?"

"Let's hear it," said Humpty Dumpty. "I can explain all the poems that ever were invented -- and a good many that haven't been invented just yet."

This sounded very hopeful, so Alice repeated the first verse/---/.

"That's enough to begin with," Humpty Dumpty interrupted; "there are plenty of hard words there. 'Brillig' means four o'clock in the afternoon -- the time when you begin broiling things for dinner."

"That'll do very well," said Alice; "and 'slithy'?"

"Well, 'slithy' means 'lithe and slimy.' 'Lithe' is the same as 'active.' You see it's like a portmanteau -- there are two meanings packed up into one word."

"I see it now," Alice remarked thoughtfully: "and what are 'toves'?"

"Well, 'toves' are something like badgers -- they're something like lizards -- and they're something like corkscrews."

"They must be very curious-looking creatures."

"They are that," said Humpty Dumpty: "also they make their nests under sun-dials -- also they live on cheese."

"And what's to 'gyre' and to 'gimble'?"

"To 'gyre' is to go round and round like a gyroscope. To 'gimble' is to make holes like a gimlet."

"And 'the wabe' is the grass-plot round a sundial, I suppose?" said Alice, surprised at her own ingenuity.

"Of course it is. It's called 'wabe,' you know, because it goes a long way before it, and a long way behind it -- --"

"And a long way beyond it on each side," added Alice.

"Exactly so. Well, then, 'mimsy' is 'flimsy and miserable' (there's another portmanteau for you). And a borogove is a thin, shabby-looking bird with its feathers sticking out all round -- something like a live mop."

"And then 'mome raths'?" said Alice. "I'm afraid I'm giving you a great deal of trouble."

"Well, a 'rath' is a sort of green pig: but 'mome' I'm not certain about. I think it's short for 'from home' -- meaning that they'd lost their way, you know."

"And what does 'outgrabe' mean?"

"Well, 'outgribing' is something between bellowing and whistling, with a kind of sneeze in the middle: however, you'll hear it done maybe -- down in the wood yonder -- and you've once heard it you'll be quite content. Who's been repeating all that hard stuff to you?"

"I read it in a book," said Alice.

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR VICTORIAN POETRY

Hunt: 'Rondeau'

There is just one thing to say about this poem: Enjoy!

Barrett Browning: 'Sonnets from the Portuguese 43'

This is obviously a sonnet and like many sonnets it is a love poem. What makes it different from the other poems you have read so far is the fact that it was written by a woman. Do you think it is in any way different from the male love poems you have read?

Browning: 'My Last Duchess'

This is certainly a poem that requires close reading and detective skills. More is packed into its 56 lines than in some two-hour films. It is a masterpiece of economy in which almost every word contributes to the functioning of the whole. Here is a little bit of information to get you started: The poem is set in Renaissance Italy when aristocrats were extraordinary powerful. Ferrara is a duchy (*Look up* this word if you don't know it, as well as the words 'duke' and 'duchess'.)

1. What two meanings can the word 'last' have? Which one is present here? (Or are both?)
2. Who is speaking?
3. To whom is he speaking? What business or negotiation are they meeting to transact? This is a difficult but important question – it explains a lot about what is going on. You need to read the poem carefully and concentrate on the last part in order to answer this.
4. What was the Duchess like? How do you know? Do you agree with the Duke's view of her?
5. What happened to her? Why? How do you know?
6. Where does the action of the poem take place? Where are they going? What are they looking at during most of the poem?
7. What is the Duke's motive for telling his listener this?
8. Practice reading the poem aloud. What would this speaker sound like, do you think? Think particularly about how the following lines should be spoken: 'E'en then would be some stooping; and I chuse / Never to stoop.' (42-43) 'This grew; I gave commands; / Then all smiles stopped together.' (45-46)
9. What sort of person is the speaker?
10. What is the function of the last sentence in the poem?

Rossetti: 'Uphill'

This poem is extremely simple on the surface level: the vocabulary is simple, the sentence structure is simple, the situation described (the road, the journey, the inn) is simple. So – what is the deeper meaning of it? Who is speaking? Who is answering? What journey is this?

Arnold: 'Dover Beach'

1. Who is the speaker? What is the scene/situation? Who is being addressed?
2. Look at how the idea of the sea progresses in the first three stanzas. What sea is there in the first stanza, in the second and in the third?
3. What is the message/conclusion of the poem in stanza four? Would you say that the feeling of the poem has changed from stanza one to four that it ends in a way you would not have expected?

VICTORIAN POETRY

LEIGH HUNT (1784-1859)

Rondeau

Jenny kissed me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief, who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in:
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
Say that health and wealth have missed me,
Say I'm growing old, but add,
Jenny kissed me.

(1838)

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING (1806-1861)

Sonnets from the Portuguese 43

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,--I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!--and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889)

My Last Duchess

FERRARA

1 That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
2 Looking as if she were alive. I call
3 That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
4 Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
5 Will 't please you sit and look at her? I said
6 "Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
7 Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
8 The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
9 But to myself they turned (since none puts by
10 The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
11 And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
12 How such a glance came there; so, not the first
13 Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
14 Her husband's presence only, called that spot
15 Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
16 Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
17 Over my Lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
18 Must never hope to reproduce the faint
19 Half-flush that dies along her throat"; such stuff
20 Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
21 For calling up that spot of joy. She had
22 A heart . . . how shall I say? . . . too soon made glad,
23 Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
24 She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
25 Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
26 The dropping of the daylight in the West,
27 The bough of cherries some officious fool
28 Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
29 She rode with round the terrace--all and each
30 Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
31 Or blush, at least. She thanked men,--good; but thanked
32 Somehow . . . I know not how . . . as if she ranked
33 My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
34 With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
35 This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
36 In speech--(which I have not)--to make your will
37 Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
38 Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
39 Or there exceed the mark"--and if she let
40 Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
41 Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
42 --E'en then would be some stooping; and I chuse
43 Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
44 Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
45 Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
46 Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
47 As if alive. Will 't please you rise? We'll meet
48 The company below, then. I repeat,
49 The Count your Master's known munificence
50 Is ample warrant that no just pretence
51 Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
52 Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed