

ENGLISH 1114 (Sections 001 and 002): Reading Poetry

From Bard to Rock Star



Course Description

We'll explore poetry about love, social conscience, meaning, and belief. We'll start each theme with Shakespeare, touch on some Romantic and Modern poetry, and then spend most of our time on contemporary poetry. We'll look at traditional forms such as sonnets and odes, as well as poetry that's integrated with music, drama, and film. We'll also look at several texts in translation from French, Italian, and Spanish.

Course Texts

You don't need to buy a text or course pack. You'll use the readings in this file, and you'll download lyrics from the Net. I've not assigned a poetry text and won't test you on poetic terms, such as those in the "Six Categories" section of the course file. The sixth category, "Style," lists the most common terms, such as *image* and *metaphor*.

You don't need to print out this entire file, although you'll need to print out the Readings section.






I don't allow the use of electronic devices in class, so make sure to bring hard copies of all assigned reading (you'll need these hard copies for the exams anyway). Be advised that because the exams are open book, there's a strict limit on the number of notes you can make on the text pages. See the mid-term instructions for more specific information.

CONTENTS

| | | | |
|-------------------------|---|-----|----------------|
| Schedule | | | 3 |
| Course Information | | | 9 |
| Six Categories | | | 14 |
| Commentaries and Essays | | | 21 |
| The Academic Essay | | | 27 |
| Readings | | | |
| Week 1 | | | 31 |
| Week 2 | | | 31 |
| Week 3 | | | 32 |
| Week 4 | Essay # 1 (plus outline) | 20% | 38 |
| Week 5 | | | 47 |
| Week 6 | | | 54 |
| Week 7 | Midterm commentaries | 20% | (See Schedule) |
| Week 8 | | | 55 |
| Week 9 | | | 57 |
| Week 10 | | | 61 |
| Week 11 | | | 64 |
| Week 12 | | | 67 |
| Week 13 | | | 71 |
| Week 14 | Essay # 2 (plus outline) | 25% | (See Schedule) |
| | Final exam commentaries | 25% | |
| | Participation | 10% | |
| Appendices | | | |
| | 1. Three Sonnets (1130, 116, and 18) | | 78 |
| | 2. On “I Will Follow You into the Dark” | | 86 |

SCHEDULE

Key

| | |
|---|---|
| CF | Course file |
|  | Texts and information in CF “Readings” |
|  | Lyric: if not preceded by  , download from Net |
|  + Blue title in bold | = Required reading |
|  | Clip shown in class |
| M / W | Monday or Wednesday (Tuesday class: disregard) |

WEEK 1: STRUCTURE

W. (No Monday class). CF “Six Categories,” “Commentaries and Essays,” “The Academic Essay”

WEEK 2: COMMENTARIES AND ESSAYS

M. “Sonnet 116” (Shakespeare, in Appendix 1)

 **“Black Star”** (Radiohead)

 **“Black Hole Sun”** (Soundgarden)

 **“Bright Star”** (John Keats)

W.  **“Pilgrim”** (Sarah Slean)

  **“Swimming Pools (Drank)”** (Kendrick Lamar)

WEEK 3: LOVE & MADNESS



M. “Sonnet 130” and “Sonnet 18” (Shakespeare, in Appendix 1)

 **“I Wrote Her Name Upon the Strand”** (“Strand,” Edmund Spenser)

   **“Eres”** (Cafe Tacuba)

   **“Elephant Love Medley”** (“ELM,” from *Moulin Rouge!*)

M.   **“Love & Madness”** (Excerpts from *Hamlet*)

  **“Ophelia”** (Natalie Merchant)

WEEK 4: ESSAY # 1 (PLUS OUTLINE) DUE

M.  **“The Girl from Ermita”** (Goh Poh Seng)


 **“The Passionate Shepherd to his Love”** (Christopher Marlowe)

 **“The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd”** (Sir Walter Raleigh)

 **“The Bait”** (John Donne)

W.  **“To His Coy Mistress”** (John Donne)

 **“No I in Threesome”** (Interpol)

Essay # 1 (20%) due at the start of class. Write a scratch outline and an essay on  **“The Girl from Ermita.”** You can choose your own topic, although it may help focus your argument if you use one of the six categories.

- Late papers will be docked 5% per day. Absolute maximum: 600 words.

- Don't use a cover page, paper clips, or folders; just staple the pages together.

- Double space and use 12-14 point font.

- **The first page must contain your scratch outline**, with your name in the upper right hand corner. This course file contains three sample scratch outlines, on the following texts:

1. “I Will Follow You into the Dark” (on the following page). Look carefully at this sample, since it also contains information and instructions.
2. “Station” and “Tales” (at the end of the CF section on essays)
3. “Sonnet 116” (in Appendix 1)

- **The next pages must contain your essay.** Put a word count for the essay next to your title—like this:

Cinderella, the Morning After (523 words)

- In your scratch outline don't use bold, but in your essay put your thesis statement and your topic sentences in bold.

- The essay is short, so I suggest writing a very short introduction and don't repeat yourself in your conclusion. If you end the body of your essay on a final or concluding note—i.e. one that compares the poems and makes your main point—you don't need a conclusion. Examples of this can be found in the sample essays on “I Will Follow You into the Dark” and on “Station”/“Tales.”

- There's no ‘right answer’ or single way to interpret poetry, which tends toward ambiguity. However, be sure to 1) make an insightful, rigorous argument, and 2) support your argument with analysis and with specific references to the primary text.

- Your audience is me. Don't supply general background information about the author or text. Instead, get immediately to your argument.

- You aren't required to use outside sources. If you do, however, make sure to document them according to MLA or APA format. See Purdue University's OWL site for excellent interactive explanations and style guides. Be sure to look at the section “Using Research.”

THE OUTLINE

A good outline can be very helpful. It allows you to see at a glance how the different parts of your argument fit together. A **scratch outline** contains 1) a thesis statement and 2) topic sentences. A **full outline** contains 1) a thesis statement, 2) topic sentences, and 3) point form lists beneath each topic sentence (these lists contain—in abbreviated form—the specific proof you will use to support your arguments).

Your first page must follow the format below (although it will probably have two to four topic sentences, rather than seven). Put the name you use in class in the top right hand corner, and put your full official name in parentheses. The following is a scratch outline for the sample essay on “I Will Follow You into the Dark” (see Appendix 2).

| Paint It Black | Hrothgar (Roger Clark) |
|--|------------------------|
| <p>Despite the song’s apparent simplicity, it’s complex mix -- of perspectives, narratives, metaphors, and images -- deepen our understanding of the poet’s resolve to follow his lover into the dark, uncharted territory of death.</p> | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. While the vocabulary and the spatial details in the first stanza are relatively simple, they hint at the puzzle of death’s obscurity. 2. The first stanza also offers an alternative perspective by rejecting traditional ways people describe death. 3. The first chorus shifts our attention from two rejected clichés to two mini-narratives which introduce more complex situations. 4. The next three lines of the chorus suggest a different narrative involving a nautical metaphor for death. 5. The final two stanzas supply a sustained narrative that explains the singer’s reasons for rejecting traditional beliefs. 6. This reference to travel and places leads to the image of worn shoes, which is at once realistic and metaphoric. 7. At the end of the song, he uses the colour black to reassure her that he will be with her till the end, and beyond. | |

WEEK 5: PLATO’S BEDROOM

M. 🎵 “Lola” (The Kinks)

📖 🚩 “’Tis Not So Above” (excerpts from *Hamlet*)

W. 📖 “Petrarch” and “**Donna Julia**” (Byron, from *Don Juan*)

🚩 *Don Juan de Marcos*

WEEK 6: LOVE AND THE ABATTOIR BLUES

W. (No Monday class). 📖 “Dover Beach” (Arnold)

🎵 “Abattoir Blues” and “Nature Boy” (Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds)

WEEK 7: MID-TERM EXAM: two commentaries (20%), 120 minutes.

- 1) 1. “Black Star” and/or “Black Hole Sun” 2. “Pilgrim” 3. “Swimming Pools”
- 2) 1. “Sonnet 18” and/or “Strand” 2. “Eres” (video and lyrics) 3. “ELM” (script and clip)
- 3) 1. “Sonnet 130” and/or “Bright Star” 2. “Love and Madness” 3. “Ophelia” (lyrics and/or video)
- 4) 1. “Shepherd,” “Nymph” and/or “Bait” 2. “Mistress” 3. “Threesome”
- 5) 1. “’Tis Not So Above” 2. “Donna Julia” (you can also refer to *Don Juan de Marcos*)
- 6) 1. “Dover Beach” 2. “Abattoir Blues” 3. “Nature Boy”

At the start of the exam, I’ll roll a dice to determine 1) which two lists (from the six above) you’ll write on, and 2) which poems you can choose from within the two lists.

For instance, if I roll 6, then 3 and 1, you’ll write your first commentary on list number 6. Within that list, you’ll write on **either** 3. “Nature Boy” **or** 1. “Dover Beach.”

If I then roll 1, then 1 and 2, you’ll write your second commentary on the first list. Within that list, you’ll write on **either** 1. “Black Star” and/or “Black Hole Sun” **or** 2. “Pilgrim.”

In this way, I test you for coverage, yet you also have some choice.

The exam is open book, which means that you can consult hard copies (paper copies) of the texts in the Readings and Appendices, and the texts of lyrics you downloaded from the Net. You may **not** consult the other parts of the course file, any notes, electronic devices, or any other material. You may write brief notes in the margins of your texts—**no more than 20 words per page**—yet you may not write sentences or any type of sustained commentary or argument. Blank sides of paper cannot contain notes, and lyric pages must be maximum 14-point font and single spaced (in other words, you can’t increase your margin notes by using more pages than necessary). Students who break any of these rules will be penalized: they will not be allowed to consult anything at all—including the texts of the poems themselves.

You’ll have two hours to write the exam. Since the exam’s meant to test coverage, write about the same amount on each of the two commentaries.

You must bring in the theme discussed in class or other poems discussed in class. For example, in writing on the lyric “Ophelia” you could refer to “Love and Madness.” The focus of the commentary isn’t comparative, yet you want to show you understand the context in which we have been looking at the poem.

WEEK 8: TAKE PHYSIC, POMP

M. 📖 **“Take Physic, Pomp”** (Excerpts from *Hamlet* and *King Lear*)

📖 **“Ozymandias”** (Percy Shelley)

W. 🎵 **“Long Road Out of Eden”** (The Eagles)

WEEK 9: THOUSANDS ARE SAILING

M. 🎵 **“Thousands Are Sailing”** (The Pogues)

📖 **“The Negro Speaks of Rivers”** (“Rivers,” Langston Hughes)

📖 **“Caliban”** (Edward Brathwaite)

W. 📖 **“A Dream Deferred”** (Langston Hughes)

🎵 **“Strange Fruit”** (lyric Abel Meeropol, song Billie Holiday)

🎵 🗳️ **“Everything is Everything”** (Lauryn Hill)

WEEK 10: REVOLT

M. 📖 **“And I Will War”** (Lord Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto 9)

🎵 🗳️ **“The Fight Song”** (Marilyn Manson)

🎵 **“I’ve Got Life”** (Lauryn Hill)

W. 🎵 🗳️ **“Formation (Explicit)”** (Beyoncé,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrCHz1gwzTo&index=2&list=PL-E79MQ72MqVQWkmv0BEYOwXMc-hCTqHg>)

🎵 🗳️ **“Hurricane Katrina – YOU MUST WATCH THIS”** (The Ticket,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IbL_rXpdu8).

📖 🎵 **“El Puro No Hay Futuro / “There’s No Future in Purity”** (“Futuro” Jarabe de Palo)

WEEK 11: WAR AND PEACE

M. 📖 **“Whose Powers Are These?”** (*Hamlet* 4.4)

📖 **“Unto the Breach”** (*Henry V* 3.1)

📖 **“Dulce et Decorum Est”** and **“Anthem for Doomed Youth”** (Wilfred Owen)

W. 🎵 **“Us and Them”** (Pink Floyd)

🎵 **“Roads to Moscow”** (Al Stewart)

WEEK 12: WHAT’S IT REALLY MATTER?

M. 📖 **“This Quintessence of Dust”** (*Hamlet* 2.2)

📖 **“Cloud the Heavens”** (Five short texts)

📖 🎵 **“Comme Un Lego / Like Lego”** (“Lego,” Alain Bashung)

W. 🎵 **“Brain Damage / Eclipse”** (Pink Floyd)

🎵 **“Bohemian Rhapsody”** (Queen)

WEEK 13: DEATH BE NOT PROUD

M. 📖 **“Perchance to Dream”** (*Hamlet* 3.1)

- 📖 “**Death, Be Not Proud**” (John Donne)
- 📖 “**Ode to a Nightingale**” (John Keats)
- W. 📖 “**When I Have Fears**” (John Keats)
- 📖 *Adonais*, stanzas 1, 52-55 (Percy Shelley)
- 📖 🎵 “**Una Breve Vacanza / A Short Vacation**” (“**Vacanza**,” Nina Zilli)

WEEK 14: I’ll be in my office (2806E) Monday December 5 from 2:30-4:20 and from 6:30-8:00. Please feel free to come in and talk to me about your paper or exam. I suggest coming to see me in the afternoon, since there will be many English 1130 students coming in the evening.

ESSAY # 2 PLUS OUTLINE (25%):

On a topic of your choosing, write a maximum of 700 words on one of the following:

- 🎵 “**Everything is Everything**” (Lauryn Hill)
- 🎵 “**I’ve Got Life**” (Lauryn Hill)
- 🎵 ▲ “**Formation (Explicit)**” (Beyoncé,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrCHz1gwzTo&index=2&list=PLE79MQ72MqVQWkmv0BEYOwXMc-hCTqHg>)
- 🎵 ▲ “**Hurricane Katrina – YOU MUST WATCH THIS**” (The Ticket,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IbLL_rXpdu8).
- 🎵 “**Comme Un Lego / Like Lego**” (Alain Bashung)
- 🎵 “**Higgs Boson Blues**” (Nick Cave)
- 🎵 “**Vacanza**” (Nina Zilli)

Follow the same instructions as for the Week 4 essay—except that **the limit for this essay is 700 words and you must submit your essay by the final exam.**

You may hand in your final essay

- 1) during the final class
- 2) during my Week 14 office hours (Monday 2:30-4:30 and 6:30-8:00)
- 3) anytime before my Week 14 office hours in the LLPA Assignment Drop-Box (in the hall, outside 2600)
- 4) at the final exam.**

I cannot accept essays after the final exam.

EXAM WEEK

Final Exam (25%)

The time-limit (120 minutes) and dice-rolling format are the same as for the mid-term exam.

1. 1. “**Take Phisic**” 2. “**Ozymandias**” 3. “**Long Road**”
2. 1. “**Thousands**” 2. “**Rivers**” and/or “**Caliban**” 3. “**Dream**” and/or “**Strange Fruit**”
3. 1. “**And I Will War**” 2. “**Fight Song**” 3. “**Futuro**”
4. 1. “**Powers**” and/or “**Breach**” 2. “**Dulce**” and/or “**Anthem**” 3. “**Us and Them**” and/or “**Roads**”
5. 1. “**Dust**” and/or “**Heavens**” 2. “**Damage**” and/or “**Eclipse**” 3. “**Rhapsody**”
6. 1. “**Perchance**” and/or “**Death**” 2. “**Nightingale**” 3. “**Fears**” and/or *Adonais*

COURSE INFORMATION

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Section 002 (33643) | Mon/Wed 2:30-4:20 pm | Room S 2680 |
| Section 001 (32499) | Tuesday 12:30-3:20 pm | Room N 4303 |

Instructor: Dr. Roger Clark

Email: clarkr@douglascollege.ca or ryoclark@gmail.com (**I check this one more often**). Please make sure to identify yourself by your complete name, course number, and class time—i.e. "Robin Smith, English 1130, Monday night." I teach about 120 students per term and don't always have my class lists with me.

***** Please don't email me for information that's already in the course file. *****

Office Hours in Room 2806E

Tuesday: 5:30-6:20 drop in

Monday and Wednesday: 5:30-6:20 by appointment

I may also be able to meet at other times during those days.

MARKS

20 %: Essay # 1

20 %: Mid-term exam (2 commentaries)

25 %: Essay # 2

25 %: Final exam (2 commentaries)

10 %: Participation

A+ = 95-100% = flawless or nearly flawless

A = 90-94% = exceptional

A- = 85-99% = excellent

B+ = 80-84% = extremely good

B = 75-79% = very good

B- = 70-74% = good

C+ = 65-69% = competent

C = 60-65% = barely competent

C- = 55-59% = flawed

P = 50-54% = seriously flawed

F = 0-49% = unacceptable, fail

If you don't attend at least 70% of the class, you can't pass the course. You'll be given an unofficial withdrawal ("UN"). If you've a job that conflicts with the class, get time-release commitments from your employer or drop the class. Also, don't expect to come late or leave early without being marked absent. Exceptions will be made in rare and documented circumstances.

If you miss an exam, you'll receive 0% for the exam, except in rare and documented cases. For late take-home paper policies, please see Weeks 4 and 14 in the schedule.

Attendance is marked in a negative fashion, that is, you don't get marks for just showing up, yet you lose marks for repeat absences. For a three-hour class, **I'll dock 5% of your final course mark for the second and for subsequent undocumented absences.** If you miss class, please get notes from a fellow student.

Participation is based on the following:

- How well prepared you're for class. Read all required texts once several days before class, and then skim over them the night before—or, better yet, the same day as class. This way you'll be able to recall details and make arguments that are supported with specific references to the texts.
- How well you co-operate with others and how well you contribute to class discussion and group work. Remember that if you're disagreeing with someone, do so with some degree of tact.
- Please eat before you come to class. I understand that sometimes you need to eat something, yet don't make a practice of eating in class, be as quiet as possible (avoid crinkling wrappers, etc.), and don't bring in food that's greasy or otherwise strong-smelling, such as French fries.
- Please put up your hand if you have a question or comment.
- Try to be diplomatic when responding to the ideas of other students.

Electronic Devices

Don't use cellphones, tablets, or computers during class (except when we're looking at a text that's in CF). Take notes by hand. Please make phone calls in the hallway.

If you're expecting an important call or message, or if you're an emergency contact, please tell me about it before class. Students who need to use laptops to take notes must have a letter from the Centre for Students with Disabilities.

Side conversations

Please give your undivided attention while someone's talking. Side conversations can be distracting to other students and are especially distracting to teachers. The occasional very brief comment to your neighbour's fine, but any sort of sustained conversation will lower your participation mark.

**TEXTING AND TALKING DURING LECTURES ARE
SURE WAYS TO LOWER YOUR PARTICIPATION MARK.**

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Whenever you use a specific source for a marked assignment, you must document it. You don't need to document what's common knowledge (for example, that AIDS stands for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome), but you must document any wording or information that has a specific source (for example, a specific statement made about AIDS, a statistic on infection rates, etc.). Using the work of another student, or collaborating on the major components of a final draft with a student or tutor, is considered plagiarism. Plagiarism will result in a 0% for the paper, and may also result in additional measures decided by the College according to its policy at www.douglascollege.ca/~media/1B20B25_4925B41DD9F93C5B7CAF16700.ashx.

MARKING NOTES AND SYMBOLS

Most Common Errors:

pmc proofread more carefully

pmc throughout (plus downward arrow) proofread more carefully for the remainder of the essay (grammar errors will not all be marked from here on in)

th st arg thesis statement is not an argument, but is an observation or statement

ts arg topic sentence is not an argument, but is an observation or statement

th st → ts topic sentence is not clearly linked to thesis statement

Format: Italics or Quotes?

Academic writing differs from everyday writing in that titles are given a particular format. Since students are often confused about when to use italics and when to use quotes (and since it is quite easy to fix these errors) I will supply a brief run-down.

Put in single quotes: quotes-within-quotes, an uncommon use of a word or phrase, ironic or doubtful statements, inexact quotations, approximations, and idioms which might otherwise cause confusion. The following are correct: She told him, "You mispronounced 'to be or not to be,' but you acted very well." She wasn't exactly what communists call a 'fellow traveller.' I suspect he is 'around the bend.'

Put in double quotes: direct quotations, short texts, articles, chapters, short poems, lyrics, short stories, and TV episodes. The following are correct: He said, "the poor need to pay more tax because they are all lazy." The short story "Under the Volcano" was expanded into the novel *Under the Volcano*, which was made into the 1984 film *Under the Volcano*. The song "Paranoid Android" is from the 1997 Radiohead album *OK Computer*.

Put in italics (or underline if writing): long texts, movies, documentaries, journals, books, novels, TV shows or series, TV seasons, long poems, and novellas. The following are correct: Bowling for Columbine is a film about gun violence (handwritten); *Bowling for Columbine* is a film about gun violence (typed). The episode "My Maserati Does 185" from

Entourage is very funny. Also use italics to highlight a word or oppose it to another—as in the following: *assertiveness* is different from *aggression*.


Marking Symbols

// or //ism parallelism: Error: She came, she saw, and she is eating doughnuts. Correction: She came, she saw, and she ate the doughnuts.

¶ paragraph.

^ insert.

() omit, usually to avoid awkward or redundant wording, as in “the (big) huge cat.”

 circling means that there is something wrong; try to fix it.

agr agreement, usually subject-verb or singular-plural: Error: They loves TV dinners. Correction: They love TV dinners.

art article: Errors: the Canada. They love Great Lakes. Corrections: Canada. They love the Great Lakes.

awk awkward: Error: Then she saw that when he was very happy she thought she'd leave. Correction: When she saw that he was very happy, she decided to leave.

cap capitalization: Error: the Myth of white picket fences. Correction: the myth of ‘white picket fences.’ Note: Use capital letters for ultimate or unique versions of Heaven, Hell, God or Devil, but small letters for metaphorical usage or for cases in which there are more than one heaven, hell, god or devil.

coh coherence; confused syntax or ideas: Error: It begins once not every single time in separate ways. Correction: Sometimes the show begins in a different way.

conj conjunction: Errors: She hated him, while she never told him this. It was a nice day, although the sun was shining. Corrections: She hated him, but she never told him this. It was a nice day, and the sun was shining.

cs comma splice; two independent clauses with only a comma between them: Error: They like it, they want to buy it. Correction: “They like it, and they want to buy it.” You need to show the relation between the two clauses. Often, you need to use a conjunction, a semi-colon, a full colon, or a new sentence.

diction too elevated or not elevated enough; improper, slang, colloquial: Errors: She wanted to eat the burger, but she was afraid that she couldn't masticate it very well. She was pissed off when she fell ass over heels. Corrections: She wanted to eat the hamburger, but she was afraid that she wouldn't be able to chew it very well. She was angry when she fell head over heels. Note: It is OK to use swear words when these are part of a quotation.

eg example required

fc full colon should be used before a list or an idea which follows or completes what comes before. The pattern is A: B, as in "He wants the following: cash, car, and endless credit."

format usually this is incorrect use of italics or quotes; see the section above, “Italics or Quotes?”

frag sentence fragment; a sentence missing a subject or predicate: Errors: What he liked about it. Moved like a rat into his apartment. Corrections: What he liked about it was its colour. He moved like a rat into his apartment.

- fs** fused sentence: two independent clauses lacking conjunction: Error: He drew she wrote. Correction: "He drew while she wrote" or "He drew and she wrote."
- id** idiom or expression; this is a specific type of expression error, one which isn't necessarily illogical, but isn't common or acceptable. Error: He'll make it to the top dog. I couldn't fuse into the next lane. She'll reach it to the top one day. I can't stand on this weather! Correction: He'll be top dog one day. I couldn't change into the next lane. She'll make it to the top one day. I can't stand this weather!
- integ** integration of quotation into your text or syntax: Error: "I love you!" This showed his passion. Correction: When he said, "I love you," this showed his passion.
- md** mixed discourse; confusion of direct and indirect discourse: Error: I said Hi, how are you? Correction: I said "Hi, how are you?" *or* I asked how you were.
- mc** mixed construction; clashing syntax: Error: Although he saw it, then he knew. Correction: When he saw it, he knew. Note: mc often leads to errors in coherence or logic.
- mm** misplaced modifier: Error: Grabbing the gun, it went off. Correction: When Jerry grabbed the gun, it went off.
- mod** modifier: either dangling, misplaced, or otherwise faulty. Dangling modifier errors: The best actor in the movie was John, lasting at least three hours. She said that she liked him, purring along the highway. Correction: The best actor in the movie was John, who acted brilliantly throughout the three-hour film. She said that she liked him, as the car purred along the highway.
- passive** passive voice; unnecessary use of *to be* infinitive + past participle: it was believed. Note: sometimes you want to use pass, as when you want to indicate that something happened, but you don't want to be specific about who did it. In most cases, however, you want to be specific. Ask yourself if you want your reader to know who the subject is. Remember that if you are avoiding naming a subject, I will probably wonder why. When you write, "It is believed that three out of four men don't understand women," I will want to know who believes this.
- poss** possessive: Error: She likes it's texture. Correction: She likes its texture.
- rep** repetitive
- ref** reference: Error: The place was smoky and full. This seemed odd! To fix this, clarify what "this" refers to. "The place was smoky and full. It was odd that the room was full."
- sc** semi colon should be used for listing long items in a sequence (category A: item 1 in A; item 2 in A; item 3 in A, etc.) or for reworking (A; A): Error: He couldn't stand it any longer; his brain exploding. Correct: He couldn't stand it any longer; he felt like his brain was going to explode. Both sides of the sc must be complete sentences—that is, they must contain a subject and a predicate; otherwise, what you have is a fragment.
- sp** spelling error
- trans** transition, usually between paragraphs, but also between sentences
- vts** verb tense shift: Error: They see the target but didn't like to shoot at it. Correction: They saw the target but didn't want to shoot at it.
- wch** word choice error
- ww** wrong word

Avoid Summary and Observation

The biggest problem students encounter is that they summarize or make observations when they should be making arguments and supporting interpretations.

If you're repeating content, or if you're explaining something that's obvious to an educated reader, then you're not making an argument or supporting an interpretation.

SIX CATEGORIES

Most literature is set in a particular **space (1)** and **time (2)**, explores the psychological state of a **character (3)** who has a **conflict (4)**, and develops a **theme (5)** using a particular **form or style (6)**. These are not discreet categories; they overlap. For example, just as you cannot have time without space, so you cannot have the chronology of a plot without a setting. Most importantly, characters do not develop all by themselves: they are influenced by their settings and by time. They are also influenced by other characters and by the conflicts and bonds others create.

Literature can often be analyzed by looking at these six basic categories. Short poems do not always contain all six categories, although even in a poem as short as Ezra Pound's "In a Station of the Metro" (1913) we can see all six:

In a Station of the Metro

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

Here we have

1. Location—a station
2. Evidence of a technological age—a metro
3. The psychological state of the poet (inferred)
4. A relationship between the poet and the people in the crowd (inferred)
5. Several possible themes—technology vs. nature, alienation vs. togetherness
6. The use of a particular style—imagistic, ambiguous, similar to Japanese haiku

One way to help visualize or understand the six categories—and to understand literature in general—is to think in terms of movies. To take an example which is easy to see (yet not so easy to analyze), the animated film *Pocahontas* is set (1) both on the ships of the English and in the woods of New England (the Europeans make the transition onto Native land using guns, a Native woman, and pick axes to dig up the soil...) during a time (2) of first contact between Native and English (how Disney arranges our perception of this has little to do with history...), and involves Pocahontas' psychological struggle (3) between her own culture (focused on nature) and that of the arriving Europeans (focused on ownership and precious metals). The two cultures are in constant and often violent conflict (4) throughout the film, one side often as violent as the other. The film explores two related themes (5)—the Romeo and Juliet division of the lovers Pocahontas and John Smith, and the politics of historical encounter and cultural allegiance—which are conveyed in a Disney form, structure, and style (6) where the woman is feisty and beautiful, the lovers are star-crossed, the songs are catchy and melodic, and the historical sources are altered perhaps not beyond—but rather into—recognition.

Think about other movie settings, chronologies, characters, conflicts, themes, and styles you are already familiar with, and try to come up with arguments about the way they work. Some people find this much easier than dealing with texts, although the same analytical skills apply. You might also try sitting around with a few friends after a movie and debate aspects of the film. Your friends will have different views, which can help you in that you can use these views to make better arguments, or you can use them to clarify your own arguments. Remember that there is no one way of seeing a text or film, and that consideration of different perspectives or counter-arguments will usually strengthen your own argument.

1. Space or setting. Space can range from arm's reach to a room, building, neighbourhood, city, country, continent, world, the stars, and even the spaces of Heaven and Hell. These last two often have more to do with time (2) in the future, the belief system of a character (3), or the theme (5) of religion, unless of course the actual spatial description of Heaven or Hell is central (as it is in Dante's *Divine Comedy*). In analyzing literature, ask: why does the writer give the story a particular setting? How is the setting described so that we feel or think in a certain way? Does the setting reverberate with our feelings or with the feelings of the protagonist. Does the setting reflect or help to create a conflict?

Note that when people say, “the text is set in Victorian England,” they may be referring to setting (1) or time-period (2), or both. In developing your arguments, ask yourself what you are trying to focus on. In this case, is it what Victorian England looks like in terms of such things as décor and architecture (1) or is it the qualities of the historical moment, such as the rise of technology and voting (2)?

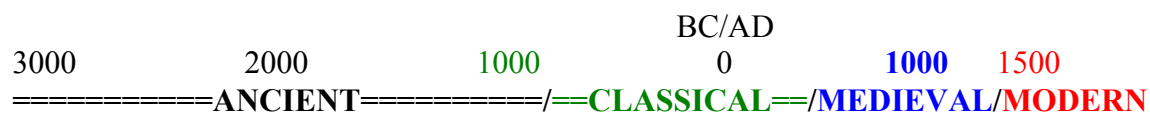
2. Time or chronology. This includes any type of time frame, from a momentary encounter to an hour, a day, a year, or any amount of time in the past or the future—from the Big Bang (or Creation) till the end of the universe (or Day of Judgment). Why does a writer set up a particular time frame, and how does it work? Remember not to simply give a summary, but rather to explore such things as how time affects mood or development of ideas or character. Let's say a story or film starts with a Wall Street executive about to put a bullet through her

head, and then goes back to one beautiful summer day when she was younger, happier, and lying on the university lawn with her boyfriend. The writer or director is urging you throughout the film to find reasons for her suicide—for example, in her character (3) or in her relations with others (4). In this way you are encouraged to engage in the mind and conflicts of the protagonist, and to feel what it might be like to be caught in her predicament. Other uses of time include flash-backs, historical references and settings, intense moments where time seems to expand or contract, biography which charts the course of a person's life, etc. Time can be played with in order to comment on the present day—either by jumping back and forth from the present to the past to set up a parallel between the two, or by comparing aspects of the present to a future time which is perfect (a utopia) or imperfect (a dystopia).

Age and Period

Age is often used synonymously with *Period*, yet not always. In the simplest terms, there are four Ages:

| | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Ancient | 3000 BC – 1000 BC |
| Classical | 1000 BC – 500 AD |
| Medieval | 500 AD – 1500 AD |
| Modern | 500 AD – present |



In terms of English history and literature, Classical and Medieval often come up, and the Modern Age is often differentiated from The Modern Period. Here are some time categories relevant to Europe and England:

Renaissance: c. 16th C. Characterized as breaking from the religious and feudal systems of the Middle Ages; rise of humanism, science, and global empires

Age of Enlightenment and **Age of Reason:** roughly the mid 17th C. to the late 18th C. Characterized by the exploration of science and rational thinking.

Romantic: late 18th and early 19th C. Characterized by a re-integration of emotion into the rational frameworks explored in the Age of Reason.

Victorian: 1832 (passage of the Great Reform Act) to 1901 (death of Queen Victoria)

Modern Period: 1900-1950 or 1900 to the present.

Post-modern Period: 1950 to the present.

3. Characterization or psychology. Try to determine if a character is **flat** (one dimensional, one-sided, like a caricature) or **deep** (three dimensional, with different sides or aspects, like a usual person), **static** (the same throughout the story) or **dynamic** (changes as a result of various forces—that you should then analyze). Character is usually the most important category because as human beings we need to see whatever the author is exploring from a human and personal point of view. How does the author make a fictional person, narrator, or persona come alive to us? What do we find intriguing in the character? What is the character's problem, and how does the character confront it? The close study of character is

strongly linked to the modern novel and short story, which emphasize reality-based psychological depiction. In analyzing character, feel free to bring to your arguments any psychological approach or any insights you have about what makes people tick. Think for example about yourself and your identity, how it is affected by romance, gender, sexuality, peers, family, money, class, religion, ethnicity, etc.

Note that this category includes *internal conflict*, that is, any tension within a character—between desire and loyalty, greed and morality, logic and emotion, etc.

4. Conflict, Bond or Relationship (between characters or groups). While conflict is crucial to literature, the forces that bond people also play a large role. Texts are often written around the dynamic between betrayal and trust, or between hatred and love. Note that # 4 is usually defined exclusively in terms of *conflict*. That term, however, only gets at part of the relationship dynamic. For example, the attraction or bond between Romeo and Juliet is as important—perhaps more important—than the forces which pull them apart. There are basically two types of conflict or bond:

A. between characters: character to character; often this takes the form of protagonist versus antagonist, yet there are usually a host of interpersonal conflicts and bonds (just as there are in any family or group of friends). One common complication is when the bond between two characters is disturbed by a third person, resulting in jealousies, love triangles, etc.

B. involving groups: individual to group or group to group; this can range from family or friend groups to regional or ethnic groups, and often includes the powerful forces of culture, language and religion. Culture is an amalgam of codes and practices that are instilled in us at a very young age. In general, it is very difficult for us to react in a way that goes against the paradigms of our own upbringing. Hence, when people of different cultures clash the result can be irresolvable. Language and religion also operate on very basic, deep levels, although it is sometimes easier to learn a new language than it is to adopt a new culture or religion (although in places like Canada and India we can see the power of language as both a unifying and dividing force). There are of course many other types of groups that can conflict: much of the 20th century was influenced by the split between working and privileged classes (hence the term *class struggle*); age or generation groups can create gaps between parents and their own children or between older and younger people in general; etc.

Note that when a conflict of ideas, ideology, emotions, etc. occurs chiefly in an individual, that is, when it is chiefly an internal conflict, it pertains to character or psychology (3); when it is treated in larger, speculative, or philosophical terms, it usually pertains to theme (5). Again, ask yourself what you are trying to focus on—the effect of conflict in and on the individual (3), the conflict as it is seen or dramatized in the interaction between characters (4), or the larger meaning of the conflict (5). Once you have your focus, don't worry too much about the overlap in categories.

5. Theme. Your job is not to make an argument that the theme of a text is such and such, but that the writer develops the theme in this or that way. Try to start with a statement that doesn't simply state the general subject of the text—love in *Romeo and Juliet*—but rather examines

an interesting aspect of the subject—star-crossed love in *Romeo and Juliet*. “Star-crossed” brings up the possibility of personal anguish in a character (3), struggle between greater forces in society (4), or the nature of free will and determinism, which is a more specific thematic topic (5). By making your statement specific you can see your focus more clearly. Another way to do this is to ask what point the author is making. In *Romeo and Juliet* Shakespeare isn’t just observing that love exists, but rather that a certain type of love exists. This love has certain causes and effects, is expressed in certain metaphors and tropes, which you of course can make arguments about.

6. Style, Form, Genre, Structure, Tropes, Devices, Structure, etc. This category includes a wide range of literary styles and forms, such as imagery, sound, symbolism, irony, metaphor, conceit, tragedy, comedy, poetry, prose, epic, sonnet, ode, novel, novella, short story, play, screenplay, quest, journey, dialogue, tone, internal monologue, dramatic monologue, parody, flashbacks, catalogues, and motifs.

This category is wide-ranging, but can be thought of as the form the text takes rather than the content it conveys. For example, a character may be noble, and you may examine her character development (3) from power to ruin, but if you were to see this same development in terms of form, you could see it in terms of tragedy, which is a pre-determined or conventional form. You may analyze her relation with her opponent in terms of conflict (4), but you can also focus on the way the author uses dialogue to get this conflict across. There is often overlap with setting (1) when a story is structured along the lines of a journey, or when a particular setting recurs. There is often overlap with time (2) when analyzing plot or when looking at such things as flashbacks or foreshadowings. Again, decide what your focus is and don’t worry if on occasion you overlap with another category.

Note that **mood** is difficult to tie down to only one of the six categories. For instance, if it is created by setting (let’s say a graveyard at midnight), it is a function of space (1) and time (2). If it is a function of the types of words and images used (gloom—gloooooom—crepuscule, cadaver, a tooth dripping with blood...) then it is a function of writing style (6)—in this case sound and imagery.

The following list starts with an image and proceeds to the various meanings an image can take (symbol and metaphor) and how it can be extended (in a conceit).

From Image to Conceit

Image and imagery. An image is a visual impression—as in E.J. Pratt’s seagull “etched upon the horizon” (from his poem, “Seagulls”). Here we see the seagull against the sky in our mind. The image is one of a bird in flight, a small and sharp living thing against a wide open space.

Symbol and symbolism. An image can remain a simple description, or it can be developed into a symbol. For example, a dove could simply be a bird a character sees on a path, next to a blue jay, and this may interest the character because he is an ornithologist. Or, the dove could be seen next to a hawk, and come to represent peace (as opposed to aggression), as in ‘hawks and doves.’ Generally, symbols have either a personal meaning (the seagull may symbolize

freedom and beauty to E.J. Pratt) or a public meaning (the dove symbolizes peace to most people). In general, a symbol is an object, not a person. Avoid treating characters as symbols; rather, treat them as embodiments or representatives of certain types, classes, or ideas.

Metaphor. While a simile compares two things explicitly (“She is like a cat”), a metaphor compares them implicitly (“She is a fox”). Here's another way to think about the difference: similes are honest because they admit that a comparison's occurring, while a metaphor's a type of lie because it doesn't admit to a being a comparison; rather, it equates two things that aren't the same.

Conceit. A conceit extends or continues a metaphor, taking elements of it and exploring them in new ways. A **metaphysical conceit** links two vastly different things in extended and unexpected ways. The term often refers to the poetry of early 17th C. poets such as John Donne.

In the following scene from *Friends*, the metaphor of the opening act is extended far beyond its original comparison.

Monica: What you guys don't understand is, for us, kissing is as important as any part of it.

Joey: Yeah, right!.....Y'serious?

Phoebe: Oh, yeah!

Rachel: Everything you need to know is in that first kiss.

Monica: Absolutely.

Chandler: Yeah, I think for us, kissing is pretty much like an opening act, y'know? I mean it's like the stand-up comedian you have to sit through before Pink Floyd comes out.

Ross: Yeah, and-and it's not that we don't like the comedian, it's that-that... that's not why we bought the ticket.

Chandler: The problem is, though, after the concert's over, no matter how great the show was, you girls are always looking for the comedian again, y'know? I mean, we're in the car, we're fighting traffic... basically just trying to stay awake.

Rachel: Yeah, well, word of advice: Bring back the comedian. Otherwise next time you're gonna find yourself sitting at home, listening to that album alone.

Joey: (pause)....Are we still talking about sex?

Other Literary Terms

Alliteration refers to repetition of consonants, as in *pretty pennies*.

Allusion is a reference or quote that a writer assumes a reader will recognize.

Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds, as in *eels leaping eagerly*.

Enjambment refers to a line that has no end punctuation but instead flows into the next line.

Hyperbole is exaggeration or overstatement.

Genre refers to the type of work—such as play, film, novel, poem, short story, epic, lyric, sonnet, ode, elegy, satire, narrative, comedy, tragedy, farce, etc.

Irony occurs when words and meaning are at odds, or when expectations are contradicted. For instance, if we expect the psychopathic serial killer to be punished, yet she is rewarded, then the situation is ironic. **Dramatic irony** occurs when the expectation or understanding of a character (or group of characters) is contradicted by the expectation or understanding of the reader or audience.

Metonymy and synecdoche are words you don't need to know, yet they can be helpful. In metonymy, one thing stands for something else that is closely related—as in *the pulpit* standing for *sermons* or *preachers*. In synecdoche, a part stands for the whole. For instance, *lending a hand* stands for *making your body and mind available in order to help someone*.

Ode: a poem that praises a particular thing or person.

Onomatopoeia is when the name of a thing or action resembles that thing or action—as in the words *erie*, *buzzing*, or *mooing*.

Paradox is an idea that is true but seems to contain a contradiction.

Personification occurs when you give human characteristics to non-human things or ideas.

Refrain: repeated word or group of words; similar to a chorus in a song.

Sonnet: a fourteen-line poem. Two famous English forms are the Spenserian (abab, bcbc, cdcd, ee) and the **Shakespearean** (abab cdcd efef gg). The **Spenserian** form is very integrated, while Shakespeare's groups ideas into three quatrains, followed by a twist or emphasis in the final couplet. The **Italian or Petrarchan** sonnet has an octave (8 interconnected lines) followed by a sextet (six interconnected lines), as in abba abba cde cde (or cdc dcd).

Stanza form is determined by the number of lines that are grouped together within a larger poem.

- A **couplet** has two lines grouped together, a **tercet** has three, a **quatrain** has four.
- **Ottava rima**, used by Byron in *Don Juan*, is a stanza with eight lines following the rhyme scheme abababcc, and is often used for long narratives, epics and mock epics.
- The **Spenserian stanza** is nine lines, following the ab ab bc bc c pattern.

COMMENTARIES AND ESSAYS

Your commentaries and essays will be marked for 1) content and 2) expression.

1) You must make interpretations or arguments—not just summaries or observations. You must give specific support for your interpretations and arguments. If you say that something occurs in a text, you must show where, how, and why. You must back up your points with specific references to the text.

2) You must express yourself grammatically and in the proper format—coherent paragraphs for the commentaries, and the traditional academic structure for the essays.

Saying what happens in the text doesn't get you many marks; it merely shows that you've read the text and understand the basic points about it. This may be the biggest single difference between high school and post-secondary expectations: here you need to think about complex matters, and then articulate your ideas clearly, logically, grammatically, and within an efficient, recognized academic structure. For commentaries, this structure requires coherent paragraphs with topic sentences. For essays, this structure requires a title, an introduction, a thesis statement, topic sentences, and a conclusion.

COMMENTARIES

In a commentary you must explain where or how the given topic occurs in the text, what it means, and how it relates to other crucial elements—for example, how it relates to the development of the protagonist or theme. You should also explain how the text relates to the theme and other poems discussed in class.

Try not to list points, but rather to analyze them in an integrated fashion. The more coherent your commentary is, the better. In this sense **a commentary is an essay without the detailed structure an essay requires**. A commentary doesn't require an introduction or conclusion, or a clear and integrated relation between a main argument (in the thesis statement) and subsidiary arguments (in topic sentences). A good writer will use more of the unifying features of an essay than will an average writer. In the case of an extremely good writer, there will be very little difference between an essay and a commentary, except that the introduction in a commentary will probably be shorter than in an essay.

"In a Station of the Metro" (Ezra Pound)

In a Station of the Metro

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

Sample commentary:

Stopping to Smell the Roses

The meaning of Pound's poem must take into account the title, since the human and natural images in the two lines are in obvious contrast to the industrial setting mentioned in the title. Where Pound's metro station is located isn't clear, yet a quick glance at Wikipedia shows that the poem was written in 1912, and was based on an experience he had in the Concorde metro station in Paris. The generic nature of the location in his title—"a station in the Metro"—doesn't make the reader think about a particular location—the Louvre or the Eiffel Tower—but about characteristics shared by all metros: technology, noise, crowds, people waiting, cars roaring in and out of the station, sudden gusts of air, etc.

Pound creates a contrast by suggesting that the station is a mechanical thing while the faces and petals are natural things. The difference between the station and the people is highlighted by the word "apparition." This is not a word used for the perception of ordinary things, whether they are static (like a sign reading "Concorde") or dynamic (such as a car rolling into a station). Rather, "apparition" is a term used for the sighting of a spirit, ghost, or supernatural being. Pound thus suggests that he sees the petal-like faces as entities on a different, perhaps higher, plane. Whether this higher plane is emotional, spiritual, or aesthetic is not specified.

Another possibility is that Pound suggests a comparison or similarity between the station and the people. Just as the station is one entity composed of many elements, so the people in the crowd are one entity. The mechanical world of the station might even be seen as a living, breathing entity—a bough of people with petal faces. In this case, the 'lower' physical and the 'higher' emotional levels become blended on the aesthetic level, that is, in the perception of beauty. The petals are neither mechanical nor human, and can therefore serve as an aesthetic medium connecting the inert to the living. Perhaps Pound is suggesting that if we can transform anonymous faces into petals, we may be able to transform a subway station into a place of beauty.

Pound leaves us the choice—to be apart from, or to be a part of, the industrial world around us. The ambiguity of his imagistic, concrete poetry allows for either interpretation. Yet one thing is sure: in order to appreciate his poem, we must take an active role in discovering its meanings. Unlike many of the ads we might see on a subway platform, these twenty words do not urge us to buy something, but to think about the possibility of beauty in the world around us.

Hamlet Plot Summary

[Since we will be using *Hamlet* throughout the term, here is a plot summary, from No Sweat Shakespeare, at <http://www.nosweatshakespeare.com/play-summary/hamlet/> .]

Prince Hamlet's student friend, Horatio, goes to the battlements of Denmark's Elsinore castle late at night to meet the guards. They tell him about a ghost they have seen that resembles the late king, Hamlet. It reappears and they decide to tell the prince. Hamlet's uncle, Claudius, having become king, has now married Hamlet's widowed mother, Gertrude.

In the court, after envoys are sent to Norway, the prince is dissuaded from returning to university. Hamlet still mourns his father's death and hearing of the ghost from Horatio he determines to see it for himself. Laertes, son of the courtier, Polonius, departs for France, warning his sister, Ophelia, against thinking too much of Hamlet's attentions.

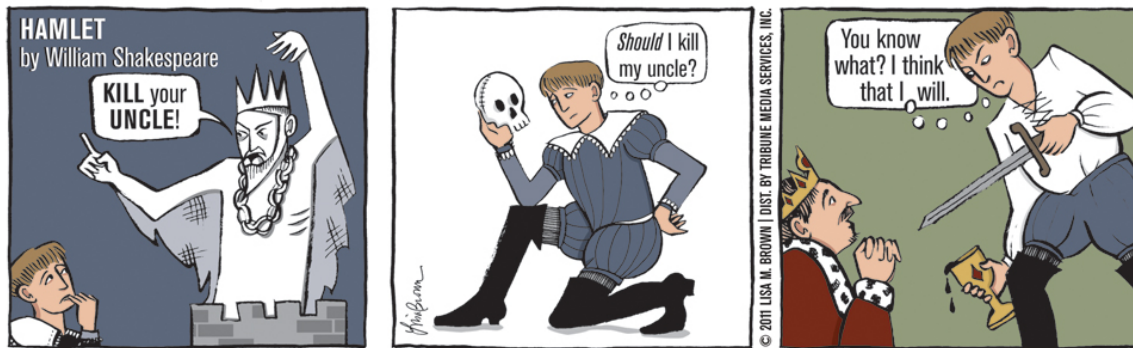
The ghost appears to Hamlet and tells him that he was murdered by Claudius. The prince swears vengeance and his friends are sworn to secrecy as Hamlet decides to feign madness while he tests the truth of the ghost's allegations. He rejects Ophelia, as Claudius and Polonius spy on him seeking to find a reason for his sudden strange behaviour. Guildenstern and Rosencrantz, former student friends of Hamlet, are summoned by Claudius and their arrival coincides with that of a group of travelling actors. The prince knows these players well and they rehearse together before arranging to present Hamlet's choice of play before the king and queen, which will include scenes close to the circumstances of the old king's death. At the performance Hamlet watches closely as Claudius is provoked into interrupting the play and storming out, resolving to send the prince away to England. Hamlet is summoned by his distressed mother and, on the way he spares Claudius whom he sees kneeling, attempting to pray. To kill him while he is praying would send his soul to heaven rather than to the hell he deserves.

Polonius hides in Gertrude's room to listen to the conversation, but Hamlet detects movement as he upbraids his mother. He stabs the concealing tapestry and so kills the old man. The ghost reappears, warning his son not to delay revenge, nor to upset his mother.

As the army of Norway's King Fortinbras crosses Denmark to attack Poland, Hamlet is sent to England, ostensibly as an ambassador, but he discovers Claudius's plan to have him killed. Outwitting this plot Hamlet returns alone, sending Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to their deaths in his stead. During Hamlet's absence Ophelia goes mad as a result of her father's death and she is drowned.

Hamlet returns and meets Horatio in the graveyard. With the arrival of Ophelia's funeral Hamlet confronts Laertes who, after attempting a revolt against Claudius, has taken his father's place at the court. A duel is arranged between Hamlet and Laertes at which Claudius has plotted for Hamlet to die either on a poisoned rapier, or from poisoned wine. The plans go wrong and both Laertes and Hamlet are wounded, while Gertrude unwittingly drinks from the poisoned cup. Hamlet, in his death throes, kills Claudius, and Horatio is left to explain the truth to the new king, Fortinbras, who returns, victorious, from the Polish wars.

“Three Panel Review” (Lisa Brown)



“Three Panel Review” is a comic version of *Hamlet* by Lisa Brown. The main characters in the comic strip are 1. Hamlet’s father, who appears to Hamlet as a ghost and tells him that his brother Claudius has killed him, 2. Hamlet, who questions whether or not he should kill his uncle Claudius (he fears that his father’s ghost may be a demon), and 3. Claudius, who Hamlet finally realizes is guilty of killing his father.

Sample Commentary on "Three Panel Review"

Comic Genius

Brown takes Shakespeare’s long, complex play and condenses it into three succinct cartoon frames. The absurdity of this reduction is enhanced by the simplicity of the language. Brown takes the most subtle and complex wording in the English language—such as “in that sleep of death, what dreams may come / When we have shuffled off this mortal coil, / Must give us pause”—and turns it into the simple question, “*Should I kill my uncle?*”

Moving from the first to the second panel, we go from night to day (as in the play), and yet the white of the ghost in the first panel is echoed in the second panel by the white skull (of Hamlet’s childhood friend, the jester Yorick). Both the ghost and the skull are reminders from the world of the dead. Brown thus manages to supply details that hint at complexity while at the same time she reduces that complexity in an absurd and humorous manner.

The white middle panel stands out among the three, as if we are to rest our gaze there, while Hamlet ponders the great mysteries of life and death, as well as the moral dilemma of revenging his father’s murder. Brown plays humorously on this possible depth by following it immediately with a third panel in which Hamlet discards this depth: Hamlet says simply, “You know what? I think that I will.” One of the deepest and most imaginative thinkers in all literature has decided, ‘What the heck, I’ll just stab the guy.’

The complexity of Brown’s final panel is also at comic odds with Shakespeare’s play.

In the original, Hamlet’s friend Horatio warns him to pay attention to his misgivings about revenging his father’s murder. Hamlet responds, “We defy augury. There’s a special providence in the fall of a sparrow”—a reference that goes back to Matthew 10:31 in the Bible. When Hamlet finally does act, it’s the culmination of a long and intricate process of

rejecting alternative courses of action. The more one knows about the complexity of the original play, the more humorous Brown's reduction becomes.

Other details hint at complexity. The wine cup in Hamlet's hand is a direct reference to the complicated scheming of the king, who tries to poison Hamlet, but poisons his wife instead, and then is forced to drink the poison himself. The king's kneeling stance represents his desperate present situation, yet could also refer to his earlier attempt to pray at an altar for his sins—at which point Hamlet decides to spare his life. At the end of the play, however, Hamlet has no such second thoughts: he will instantly send his uncle to the fires of hell. Brown's final triumph, her final incongruity or reversal of expectations, is that while the play ends on a deeply tragic note—meaningless slaughter, bodies piled on top of each other on the stage—the comic strip leaves us laughing.

ESSAYS

Essays are similar to commentaries in that they make an argument about the text, they analyze (rather than observe or summarize), and they provide proof from the text. Essays, however, are longer and more detailed. They are also more elaborately structured: they have an introduction, a thesis statement, and a conclusion. For a more complete explanation of essay structure, see “The Academic Essay” below.

Here is a sample essay comparing Pound's short poem, “In a Station of the Metro,” to Cream's lyric, “Tales of Brave Ulysses.” I have put in bold the parts of the essay which connect to each other.

The Doors of Perception

(599 words)

“Station” is like a snapshot stopping the moving world to focus on beauty, while “Tales” is like a video taking us from this earth to far-off realms of sky, sea, and myth. **Both poems use abrupt, puzzling shifts in setting and psychological states, yet “Station” encourages a grounded, positive shift in perception while “Tales” hints at the dangers of not keeping one's feet on the ground.**

The shifts in both texts are abrupt and illogical, yet they make sense on visual and emotional levels. In “Station” the poet shifts quickly from faces to petals, which are both oval and both stand out from their backgrounds. The mechanical world of the station might be seen as a living, breathing entity—a bough of people with petal faces. The word “apparition” is usually reserved for ghost sightings, yet here it urges us to see the ordinary world with a heightened sense of mystery. “Tales” also contains a sudden shift—from a “leaden winter” to a world where nature is alive with colour and light: the singer takes a steamer “to the violence of the sun” and to “the colours of the sea.” On the surface this is illogical, yet it makes sense that he would yearn for sun if he's stuck in a grey, “leaden” winter. To escape his boredom or depression, he needs a radical departure, something that will rip him—almost violently—from the ordinary. The agent of this ripping may be drugs, yet it may also be the fantasy of living the type of dangerous, sensual life led by Ulysses. The Greek hero is perhaps the epitome of adventure: he won the Trojan War, made love to

goddesses, battled monsters, endured the excruciating song of the sirens, and became Western culture's most famous traveller.

The imaginative leap in “Tales” is mythic and dangerous, whereas the leap in “Station” is aesthetic and life-affirming. Although the singer wants to take Aphrodite (the goddess of love) back with him to “the hard land of the winter,” she is at best an impossible fantasy, and at worst, a mortal danger. When she drowns him “in her body” this may indicate either good sex or depression and death -- perhaps the type of gruesome death promised by the mythical “sirens sweetly singing.” Or, if the poem's about drugs, this could indicate overdose. When she carves “deep blue ripples in the tissues” of his mind this may mean he's enjoying deep pleasure or that she's slicing him up, driving him crazy. Either way, the promise of a colourful escape into the world of sensuality and myth turns negative.

By contrast, Pound keeps his readers in the real world so that they can find beauty in the here and now. Neither mechanical nor human, the petals become an aesthetic medium connecting the inert station to the sentient commuters. While Pound writes his poem in 1920 Paris, he avoids any overt reference to love the City of Love. And while Pound was in fact a Classical Greek scholar, he avoids Greek myth completely. His aim is aesthetic, the love of beauty, not the exploration of myth or romance. He blends the physical and the emotional in the aesthetic, suggesting that if we can transform anonymous faces into petals, we may be able to transform a subway station into a place of beauty. His poem stops us in our tracks, and gets us to smell the roses. “Tales” on the other hand offers a larger canvas containing love and myth, yet also a subtle warning about the danger of shifting too precipitously into a world of fantasy.

Scratch outline for “The Doors of Perception”

Both poems use abrupt, puzzling shifts in setting and psychological states, yet “Station” encourages a grounded, positive shift in perception while “Tales” hints at the dangers of not keeping one's feet on the ground.

1. The shifts in both texts are abrupt and illogical, yet they make sense on visual and emotional levels.
2. The imaginative leap in “Tales” is mythic and dangerous, whereas the leap in “Station” is aesthetic and life-affirming.
3. By contrast, Pound keeps his readers in the real world so that they can find beauty in the here and now.

THE ACADEMIC ESSAY

An academic literature essay must contain a rigorous argument or interpretation. Try to develop a unique insight or take a stand on a debatable point. For example, you might analyze the way a complex symbol is developed or debate whether or not the protagonist is selfish or selfless.

You must write all essays using the following traditional academic essay structure:

- The **title** gives your reader a clear idea or a hint about the topic and your approach to it. The title can be straightforward or it can intrigue, provoke, or perplex the reader. While a title can be ambiguous or vague, the rest of the essay should be clear and specific.
- The **introduction** takes your reader from a general state of awareness to your particular subject and your particular argument about it. Your argument, or thesis statement, usually comes at the end of the introduction.
- The **thesis statement** tells the reader exactly what you will be saying about your subject; it presents your overall argument in a condensed form.
- The **topic sentences** show your reader how each subsidiary point you are making advances your overall argument.

There should be a clear relation between the thesis statement and the topic sentences. One way to do this is to use a word or phrase in the thesis statement and then use it again in the corresponding topic sentence.

Remember that a topic sentence doesn't just introduce the ideas in the paragraph. It makes a transition from the previous paragraph, and it covers the main argument and the main examples in the paragraph. Here's an example: "Now that the poet has explored the history of the break-up, he then gives us a series of images suggesting that he hopes to get back with his girlfriend." There are countless ways to make transitions, using words such as "also," "despite," "along with," "in contrast to," etc.

Remember that an essay is a unified structure. You don't want to treat different aspects of a topic without highlighting the relationship between these aspects.

The parts of an essay can be seen as parallel (//) to the parts of a Reese's peanut butter cup:

- Outside wrapper // Title
- Tray // Thesis statement: gives overall shape or structure to the contents
- Paper wrappers // Topic sentences: define the shape or structure of each part
- Chocolate pieces // Paragraph content: what you bite into and digest

Remember that while Reese's peanut butter cups come in threes, you can also buy the large size, which has four cups. Topics can be divided in two, three, four, or any number of parts. The 'three-paragraph essay' is an easy way to talk about essay structure, yet there's nothing magical about this structure, and you shouldn't bend your ideas to fit into it.

The Title

Generally, the very last thing you'll decide on is your title, as it often comes out of the best or most insightful angle you eventually come up with. Try to supply a title that's creative, thought-provoking, or humorous, that sums up your argument, or that points your readers in the direction you want them to think.

The Introduction

In your introduction, you want to do the following:

- Introduce the main elements of your subject.
- Grab the reader's attention; find a challenging, provocative, informative, imaginative or intriguing way of moving into your topic (you should also think about how you will return to your opening in your conclusion).
- Make sure your argument is clearly stated in your thesis statement, which should be placed at the end of your introductory paragraph.
- Put your thesis statement in the second paragraph only if your first paragraph develops a context or analogy which is more effective without a thesis statement tacked on at the end.

The Body

Start each paragraph with a topic sentence connected to your thesis statement; the reader shouldn't have to guess the relation of thesis statement to topic sentence.

Read and re-read the following guidelines for essay body content:

- Do not link paragraphs using the last sentence of the paragraph; use the topic sentence to make that link, as in "Another example of _____," or "Such _____ [use a word or phrase which sums up the last paragraph] stands in opposition to _____."
- Give the details of your argument in each paragraph.
- Your argument must contain proof in the form of logical argument and textual references.
- Your argument must be rigorous; it must be a product of analytical thought, that is, of a process which has taken the components of the subject apart, analyzed them, and then configured them into a new, distanced, critical understanding.
- **Underline or italicize** books, magazines, journals, movies plays, TV shows, albums, and CDs.
- **Use quotation marks** for essays, articles, short stories, chapters, TV episodes, and songs
- **Avoid long quotes**, but if you use one, make sure to explain the key elements in it.
- Offset quotes of more than three lines: indent, single space, put source at bottom right, and omit quotation marks.
- **Integrate shorter quotes into your sentence structure**; the use of short quotes (as opposed to long quotes) is the most efficient and readable way to prove your point; short quotations by nature integrate tightly into the contours of your argument and thinking; the reader does not have to go from your point, to a long quote where they have to make the

link to your point, and then back to your point; using short quotes you make your point and prove it side by side, thus allowing your reader to get connections more quickly and move on to your next point.

- Use / to show the end of a poetry line, as in “across the water / With his galleons and guns.”
- Do not directly address your audience, and avoid commenting on your own writing.
- You may use contractions, but not slang; avoid big words when small words will do.
- Do not worry about repeating a term or word; often it just confuses your reader if you switch terms; in academic writing (as opposed to literary writing) content is more important than style.
- Write in a direct and formal manner; this does not mean, however, that you have to be dry or boring; spice up your writing with well-chosen words and phrases; for take-home papers, add photos, pictures, or coloured graphs and charts to liven up the presentation of your ideas.
- If you are a *very* good writer you can write in a slightly more creative manner, but if the instructor cannot understand your creative moments then you are probably not communicating in an academically effective manner; consult the instructor before trying a style that is unconventional.
- Avoid choppy sentences; link complete thoughts with conjunctions and subordination do not use point form. All writing must be in sentences and paragraphs—unless you are labeling a chart, photo, etc.
- Vary your sentence length.
- It is often easier to use *they* than *he* or *she*; avoid *he/she* or *s/he*.
- Use italics and exclamations marks for emphasis, but not too often.
- Try to write simply and directly; avoid jargon.

The Conclusion

The conclusion quickly highlights your overall point, and either completes any scenario you developed in your introduction or suggests further avenues of enquiry. Signal your conclusion by repeating the author(s) or title(s) you are dealing with, or by restating the overall argument you are making. Do not write “In conclusion,” and do not repeat your introduction.

- End by suggesting a further direction or asking a provocative question; make your reader think about what you have argued; don’t simply restate your ideas.
- In order to lend unity to your essay, you can also return to your opening by advancing or commenting on your initial position.
- Signal your conclusion by repeating the author(s) or title(s) you are dealing with, or by restating the overall argument you are making. Do not write “In conclusion,” and do not repeat your introduction.

Block and Splice Structures

There are two main methods of approaching a text in terms of its arrangement on the page. The first is the *block method*, where you deal sequentially with the text—block by block, or section by section

(making sure to highlight the relation between the blocks). The other is the *slice method*, where you analyze one aspect (or slice) as it appears throughout the text, and then compare it to another aspect (or slice) as it appears throughout the text. These two methods can be used to analyze many things—texts, films, parties, etc. In audio-visual media, *blocks* are usually *blocks of time*.

In examining a hockey game, for instance, you would start off with the overall structure or facts of the case: three periods of twenty minutes, plus goals scored. So far this is an observation. To analyze a game rigorously, you need to go into how the teams played, how the coaching strategies worked, etc.

In a **block analysis** you examine how the teams played in each period, how the play changed from one period to the next, and what was the overall pattern of play:

| Essay Paragraph | Period | Analysis |
|-----------------|--------|--|
| 1 | 1 | Goals, strengths, weaknesses, offense and defense, strategy, etc. |
| 2 | 2 | Goals, etc., plus how play compared to 1 st period |
| 3 | 3 | Goals, etc., plus how play compared to 1 st and 2 nd periods |

In a **splice analysis**, you compare different aspects—such as goalie and defense performance—throughout the game:

| Essay Paragraph | Period | Analysis |
|-----------------|--------|---|
| 1 | 1-3 | Goalie performance throughout game |
| 2 | 1-3 | Defense performance throughout game |
| 3 | 1-3 | Relation of goalie performance to defense performance |

READINGS

Key

- CF Course file
 📖 Texts and information in CF “Readings”
 🎵 Lyric: if not preceded by 📖, download from Net
 📖 + **Blue title in bold** = Required reading
 ▲ Clip shown in class
 Q. Questions to think about before class
 M / W Monday or Wednesday (Tuesday class: disregard)

WEEK 1: STRUCTURE

W. CF **“Six Categories,” “Commentaries and Essays,” “The Academic Essay”**

WEEK 2: COMMENTARIES AND ESSAYS

M. **“Sonnet 116”** (Shakespeare, in Appendix 1)

🎵 **“Black Star”** (Radiohead)

🎵 **“Black Hole Sun”** (Soundgarden)

📖 **“Bright Star”** (John Keats)

W. 🎵 **“Pilgrim”** (Sarah Slean)

🎵 ▲ **“Swimming Pools (Drank)”** (Kendrick Lamar)

Bright star

(1819, John Keats)

Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art--
 Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night
 And watching, with eternal lids apart,
 Like nature’s patient, sleepless Eremite,
 The moving waters at their priestlike task
 Of pure ablution round earth’s human shores,
 Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
 Of snow upon the mountains and the moors--
 No--yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
 Pillowed upon my fair love’s ripening breast,
 To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
 Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
 Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
 And so live ever--or else swoon to death.

WEEK 3: LOVE & MADNESS

M. 📖 ▲ “Love & Madness” (Excerpts from *Hamlet*)

🎵 ▲ “Ophelia” (Natalie Merchant)

W. “Sonnet 130” and “Sonnet 18” (Shakespeare, in Appendix 1)

📖 ▲ “I Wrote Her Name Upon the Strand” (“Strand,” Edmund Spenser)

📖 ▲ 🎵 “Eres” (Café Tacuba)

📖 ▲ 🎵 “Elephant Love Medley” (“ELM,” from *Moulin Rouge!*)

Q. How does the communication (between lover and beloved) work in “Strand,” “Eres,” and “ELM”? How do Spenser and Café Tacuba explore the immortalization of love in terms of physical drawing and writing—that is, in terms of space? How do these spatial representations relate to their temporal ideas—that is, their use of time? How does “ELM” explore the changing and momentary nature of love? How does the “Eres” video change the meaning of the lyric or words?

Love & Madness (from *Hamlet* 3.1, 4.5, and 4.7)

From *Hamlet* 3.1

Ophelia: My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
That I have longed long to re-deliver;
I pray you, now receive them.

Hamlet: No, not I;
I never gave you aught.

Ophelia: My honoured lord, you know right well you did;
And, with them, words of so sweet breath composed
As made the things more rich: their perfume lost,
Take these again; for to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.

Hamlet: Ha, ha! are you honest?

Ophelia: My lord?

Hamlet: Are you fair?

Ophelia: What means your lordship?

Hamlet: That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should
admit no discourse to your beauty.

Ophelia: Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than
with honesty?

Hamlet: Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner
transform honesty from what it is to a bawd* than the

* Madame of a brothel

force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness: this was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof.* I did love you once.

* once puzzling, but now proven here

Ophelia: Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Hamlet: You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it: I loved you not.

Ophelia: I was the more deceived.

Hamlet: Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

Ophelia: At home, my lord.

Hamlet: Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.

Ophelia: O, help him, you sweet heavens!

Hamlet: If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go: farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go, and quickly too. Farewell.

Ophelia: O heavenly powers, restore him!

Hamlet: I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God has given you one face, and you make yourselves another: you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't; it hath

[Sings]

For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.

Laertes: Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favour and to prettiness. [...]

From Hamlet 4.7

Gertrude: There is a willow grows aslant a brook
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream.
There with fantastic garlands did she come
Of crowflowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold* maids do “dead men’s fingers” call them.
There, on the pendant boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke,
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,
And mermaid-like a while they bore her up,
Which time she chanted snatches of old lauds
As one incapable* of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element. But long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

* chaste

* insensible, unaware

One Day I Wrote Her Name Upon the Strand

(sonnet LXXV, from the collection
Amoretti, 1595, by Edmund Spenser)

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
But came the waves and washéd 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 wipéd out likewise.”
“Not so,” (quod I) “let baser things devise
To die in dust, but you shall live by fame:
My verse your virtues rare shall eterníze,
And in the heavens write your glorious name:
Where whenas death shall all the world subdue,
Our love shall live, and later life renew.”

| Eres (Café Tacuba) | You Are (free translation—RC) |
|--|--|
| Eres, lo que mas quiero en este mundo eso eres mi pensamiento mas profundo también eres, tan solo dime lo que es que aquí me tienes. | You are what I love most in this world; my deepest thought is also of you, if only you tell me what it is that keeps me here. |
| Eres, cuando despierto lo primero eso eres, lo que a mi día le hace falta si no vienes, lo único preciosa que en mi mente habita hoy. | You are what I think of when I wake up, what I miss in my day if you don't come, the only precious thing in my mind now. |
| Que mas puedo decirte, tal vez puedo mentirte sin razón, pero lo que hoy siento, es que sin ti estoy muerto pues eres.... ...lo que mas quiero en este mundo eso eres. | What more can I say to you; perhaps I can lie to you for no reason, but what I feel now is that without you I'm dead, so you are... ... what I love most in this world you are. |
| Eres, el tiempo que comparto eso eres, lo que la gente promete cuando se quiere, mi salvación, mi esperanza y mi fe. | You are the time I share, it's you, what people promise when they love, my salvation, my hope, and my faith. |
| Soy, el que quererte quiere como novia soy, el que te llevaría el sustento día a día día, día, el que por ti daría la vida ese soy. | I want to care for you and love you as my girlfriend, I am he who would support you day after day, he who would give his life for you. |
| Aquí estoy a tu lado, y espero aquí sentado hasta el final, no te has imaginado, lo que por ti he esperado pues eres...lo que yo amo en este mundo eso eres... Cada minuto en lo que pienso eso eres... Lo que mas cuido en este mundo eso eres.... | Here I am at your side, and I wait, sitting here, till the end; you haven't imagined what I've hoped for you, so you are what I love in this world ... Each minute I think of you ... / What I care about most in this world is you... |

“Elephant Love Medley” (“ELM”), from *Moulin Rouge!* (Luhrmann, 2001)

SATINE: I'm a courtesan. I'm paid to make men believe what they want to believe.

CHRISTIAN: Silly of me, to think you could fall in love with someone like me.

SATINE: I can't fall in love with anyone.

CHRISTIAN: Can't fall in love? A life without love? That's terrible!

SATINE: Being on the street is terrible.

CHRISTIAN: Love is like oxygen.

(Sweet)

Love is a many-splendored thing.

(The Four Aces)

Love...lifts us up where we belong.

(Joe Cocker / Jennifer Warnes)

SATINE: Don't start that again.

CHRISTIAN: All you need is love

(The Beatles)

SATINE: A girl has to eat

CHRISTIAN: All you need is love

SATINE: Or she'll end up on the streets
CHRISTIAN: All you need is love
SATINE: Love is just a game
CHRISTIAN: I was made for loving you, baby (Kiss)
You were made for loving me
SATINE: The only way of loving me, baby / Is to pay a lovely fee
CHRISTIAN: Just one night (Phil Collins?)
Give me just one night
SATINE: There's no way / 'Cause you can't pay
CHRISTIAN: In the name of love (U2)
One night in the name of love
SATINE: You crazy fool / I won't give in to you
CHRISTIAN: Don't leave me this way (Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes)
I can't survive / Without your sweet love
Oh, baby / Don't leave me this way
SATINE: You'd think that people (Paul McCartney)
Would have had enough / Of silly love songs
CHRISTIAN: I look around me and I see / It isn't so. Oh, no
SATINE: Some people want to fill the world / With silly love songs
CHRISTIAN: Well, what's wrong with that? / I'd like to know
'Cause here I go again
Love lifts us up where we belong (Joe Cocker / Jennifer Warnes)
SATINE: Get down! Get down!
CHRISTIAN: Where eagles fly / On a mountain high
SATINE: Love makes us act like we are fools / Throw our lives away / For one happy day
CHRISTIAN: We could be heroes (David Bowie, "Heroes")
Just for one day
SATINE: You, you will be mean
CHRISTIAN: No, I won't.
SATINE: And I... I'll drink all the time
CHRISTIAN: We should be lovers
SATINE: We can't do that
CHRISTIAN: We should be lovers / And that's a fact
SATINE: Though nothing...will keep us together
CHRISTIAN: We could steal time
TOGETHER: Just for one day / We could be heroes / For ever and ever
We could be heroes / For ever and ever / We can be heroes
CHRISTIAN: Just because I / Will always love you (Dolly Parton; later, W. Houston)
TOGETHER: I can't help loving... you
SATINE: How wonderful life is (Elton John, "Your Song")
TOGETHER: Now you're in...the world
SATINE: You're going to be bad for business, I can tell.

WEEK 4: ESSAY # 1 (PLUS OUTLINE) DUE

See the Instructions in the schedule.

M. 📖 **“The Girl from Ermita”** (Goh Poh Seng)

📖 **“The Passionate Shepherd to his Love”** (Christopher Marlowe)

📖 **“The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd”** (Sir Walter Raleigh)

📖 **“The Bait”** (John Donne)

W. 📖 **“To His Coy Mistress”** (John Donne)

🎵 **“No I in Threesome”** (Interpol)

THE GIRL FROM ERMITA

(Goh Poh Seng)

If you ever come to Manila,
come down to red-light Ermita
Where nightly I ply my trade.

They call me Fely,
I was born in Samar,
I’m the girl with the bird in her head.

Yes, a bird in my head!
If you look deep into my eyes
you can see it flying about.

You ask what kind of bird it is?
Why, a white gull of course!
For I was born in Samar by the sea.

And how did it get there;
this white gull in my head?
Well, it flew in when I was fourteen.

But you don’t really want
to hear the same old hard-luck story!
There are no new legends anymore.

Better take me away somewhere,
take me in your sweaty arms,
and your eyes, cold as death,

You can feed on the peach of my skin,
let your savage heart
release its black secrets.

You can do what
you like with me,
I know all the positions.

Come, lie with me
and I will be your love.
Don't you believe me?

Yes, come lie down with me,
it will only cost a hundred pesos,
and it's good therapy.

I'll give good value for your money,
I have the techniques
learned through ten thousand nights.

I will embrace you
and the stars outside
will mind their own bloody business.

The wind will not complain,
the trees not grumble,
and all the cops have been bribed.

Or perhaps you think yourself too grand,
too good and holy
to pay to lie with me?

Perhaps you're afraid
the universe will roar in disgust
if you pay for my body?

Don't you know by now
life's a market-place where
you can buy cow meat, goat meat and my meat?

I was born in Samar in Visayas
where the sea ran silver when I was a child
and clouds and trees were my friends.

Of my own father,
I only know
he was a carabao of a man.

And like the carabao,
he was patient and ignorant,
his feet stubborn in the loam.

But his eyes.
I remember his eyes:
they held such innocence!

When I was twelve, he died,
and my mother and I
lived on, any old how.

Come to think of it,
I don't know how we did it!
Then my mother remarried.

We shifted to an old lean-to
with my step-father.
I had turned fourteen.

For a time I was content enough.
I was only a child then and you know
how children can grow smiles even out of a dungheap!

Then one night my step-father
lay his hands on my green breasts,
and I was too petrified to move.

I endured for many months
my step-father's hands
till one night I could not suppress my cry.

My mother came to intervene:
it drove my step-father wild
as a mad, rampaging bull.

He punched me in the face,
kicked my mother in the ribs,
left us black and blue.

The next day I drew
a real deep breath
and ran away from home.

The ferry boat crossing the sea
delivered me from my past:
my childhood lay like broken glass.

An hour after
we reached Cebu city,
I got myself picked up

By a dirty old man
who fed me, gave me shelter and clothes,
and treated me like a household pet.

I was suprised how soon
I got used to his caresses,
no longer reacting with nausea and tears.

So five years passed.
Five Christmases and five Easters
I stayed with my dirty old man.

In our second year
I bore him a bastard girl:
a child, when I was myself a child

Of sixteen.
But already the months
began to wall me in.

When I was eighteen
I went with a handsome man
who took me away to Batangas.

For a brief few months
I blossomed like the sampaguita
with this first young man in my life.

A tangerine time it was,
with ice-cream on Sundays,
dances and kisses under the moon.

And then it was over.
His wife came screaming for our blood
and he returned to her like a pup.

Well, life's like that.
I came to Manila
in search of fame and gold,

But found only dust
in the crowded streets
of the capital.

I became a salesgirl
and had to sleep with my boss.
I became a go-go dancer,

Ground my bum in the faces of fools
who drooled like rotten fruit,
while klieg lights tore at my skin.

Now I'm landed here
where life has got me in its jaws
and I no longer wait for miracles.

I no longer care
to look into the eyes of my johns,
for they hold no more secrets.

Now I simply lie flat on my back,
my face upturned to the sugary sky
which the stars eat like white ants.

Now I fuck for a refrigerator,
or for my daughter's school fees:
my girl's just turned eight this May.

Yes, I will turn a trick for a meal,
and men can take me
in any position they wish.

The white scream never flies
out of my black mouth,
the radios will remain silent,

The newspapers advertise soap,
the priests launder
the limp souls of their sinners.

Yes, at night I can be your sweet mango,
but comes the dawn,
I'll be as sour as a calamansi.

There's still some acid in me,
you know that?
You, who sit there listening so dumbly!

So I've unloaded my story
and my head's just an empty hole
with nameless echoes in it.

Are you quite sure
you don't want
to take me to bed?

Come, lie down with me,
I will be your true love,
for only a hundred pesos.

But you only laugh
green and gold and purple
and fly free into the night.

For you are the white gull
who left secret spaces again
inside my head!

But if you ever come back to Manila,
come down to red-light Ermita,
where nightly I ply my trade.

They call me Fely,
I was born in Samar by the sea,
I'm the girl with a hole in her head.

(Batangas-Manila, November 1979,
from <https://gohpohseng.wordpress.com/poems/the-girl-from-ermita/>)

The Passionate Shepherd to his Love

(Christopher Marlowe, 1590s)

Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dale and field,
And all the craggy mountains yield.

There will we sit upon the rocks,
 And see the shepherds feed their flocks,
 By shallow rivers to whose falls
 Melodious birds sing madrigals.

There I will make thee beds of roses
 And a thousand fragrant posies,
 A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
 Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool
 Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
 Fair lined slippers for the cold,
 With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
 With coral clasps and amber studs;
 And if these pleasures may thee move,
 Come live with me, and be my love.

Thy silver dishes for thy meat
 As precious as the gods do eat,
 Shall on an ivory table be
 Prepared each day for thee and me.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
 For thy delight each May-morning:
 If these delights thy mind may move,
 Then live with me and be my love.

[Poems and following from Wikipedia: “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love” is a poem written by the English poet Christopher Marlowe in the 1590s. In addition to being one of the most well-known love poems in the English language, it is considered one of the earliest examples of the pastoral style of British poetry in the late Renaissance period. The poem was the subject of a well-known “reply” by Walter Raleigh, called “The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd.”]

The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd

(Sir Walter Raleigh)

If all the world and love were young,
 And truth in every shepherd’s tongue,
 These pretty pleasures might me move
 To live with thee and be thy love.

Time drives the flocks from field to fold
 When rivers rage and rocks grow cold,

And Philomel* becometh dumb;
The rest complains of cares to come.

* See next page for Philomel
and the nightingale

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
To wayward winter reckoning yields;
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancy's spring but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies

From Wikipedia: **Philomela** or **Philomel** is a minor figure in Greek mythology and is frequently invoked as a direct and figurative symbol in literary, artistic, and musical works in the Western canon. She is identified as being the "princess of Athens" and the younger of two daughters of Pandion I, King of Athens, and Zeuxippe. Her sister, Procne, was the wife of King Tereus of Thrace. While the myth has several variations, the general depiction is that Philomela, after being raped and mutilated by her sister's husband, Tereus, obtains her revenge and is transformed into a nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*), a migratory passerine bird native to Europe and southwest Asia and noted for its song. Because of the violence associated with the myth, the song of the nightingale is often depicted or interpreted as a sorrowful lament. Coincidentally, in nature, the female nightingale is mute and only the male of the species sings. [Below:] *The Rape of Philomela* by Tereus, engraved by Virgil Solis for a 1562 edition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Book VI, 519–562):



Poets in the Romantic Era recast the myth and adapted the image of the nightingale with its song to be a poet and “master of a superior art that could inspire the human poet”. For some romantic poets, the nightingale even began to take on qualities of the muse. John Keats (1795–1821), in "Ode to a Nightingale" (1819) idealizes the nightingale as a poet who has achieved the poetry that Keats himself longs to write. Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822) [...writes in] *A Defence of Poetry* that "a poet is a nightingale who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds; his auditors are as men entranced by the melody of an unseen musician, who feel that they are moved and softened, yet know not whence or why."

Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten, -
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,

Thy coral clasps and amber studs,
 All these in me no means can move
 To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last and love still breed,
 Had joys no date nor age no need,
 Then these delights my mind might move
 To live with thee and be thy love.

The Bait

(John Donne)

Come live with me, and be my love,
 And we will some new pleasures prove
 Of golden sands, and crystal brooks,
 With silken lines and silver hooks.

There will the river whisp'ring run
 Warmed by thy eyes, more than the sun;
 And there th'enamoured fish will stay,
 Begging themselves they may betray.

When thou wilt swim in that live bath,
 Each fish, which every channel hath,
 Will amorously to thee swim,
 Gladder to catch thee, than thou him.

If thou, to be so seen, be'st loath,
 By sun or moon, thou dark'nest both,
 And if myself have leave to see,
 I need not their light, having thee.

Let others freeze with angling reeds,
 And cut their legs with shells and weeds,
 Or treacherously poor fish beset,
 With strangling snare, or windowy net.

Let coarse bold hands from slimy nest
 The bedded fish in banks out-wrest;
 Or curious traitors, sleeve-silk flies,
 Bewitch poor fishes' wand'ring eyes.

For thee, thou need'st no such deceit,
 For thou thyself art thine own bait:
 That fish, that is not caught thereby,
 Alas! is wiser far than I.

If with too credent* ear you list* his songs,
 Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
 To his unmastered importunity.*
 Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
 And keep you in the rear of your affection,
 Out of the shot and danger of desire.
 The chariest* maid is prodigal enough,
 If she unmask her beauty to the moon:
 Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious* strokes:
 The canker* galls** the infants of the spring,
 Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,
 And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
 Contagious blastments are most imminent.
 Be wary then; best safety lies in fear:
 Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

* believing * listen to

* persistence

* cautious, reluctant

* slanderous

* fungal disease (plants), ulceration

** makes sore

Ophelia: I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,
 As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
 Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
 Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;
 Whiles, like a puffed and reckless libertine,
 Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
 And recks not his own rede.*
 [...]

* takes not his own advice

Polonius: What is't, Ophelia, he [Laertes] hath said to you?

Ophelia: So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.
 [...]

He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders
 Of his affection to me.

Polonius: Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl,
 Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.
 Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

Ophelia: I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

Polonius: Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby;
 That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
 Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly;
 Or--not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
 Running it thus—you'll tender me a fool.

Ophelia: My lord, he hath importuned me with love
In honourable fashion.

Polonius: Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.

Ophelia: And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

Polonius: Ay, springes* to catch woodcocks. I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,
Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,
Even in their promise, as it is a-making,
You must not take for fire. From this time
Be somewhat scanted of your maiden presence [...]

* noose or snare

Ophelia: I shall obey, my lord.

From *Hamlet* 3.3

[Having murdered his brother (“the primal eldest curse”) and married Gertrude, Claudius tries to repent. This is going to be difficult, however, because it means giving up 1) the kingship, and 2) Gertrude. Later, in *Hamlet* 4.7, Claudius says about Gertrude: “She’s so conjunctive to my life and soul, / That, as the star moves not but in his sphere, / I could not but by her.”]

Claudius: O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon’t,
A brother’s murder. Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will:
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother’s blood,
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy
But to confront the visage of offence?
And what’s in prayer but this two-fold force,
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,
Or pardoned being down? Then I’ll look up;
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? ‘Forgive me my foul murder’?
That cannot be; since I am still possessed
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition and my queen.
May one be pardoned and retain the offence?

In the corrupted currents of this world
 Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,
 And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
 Buys out the law: but 'tis not so above;
 There is no shuffling, there the action lies
 In his true nature; and we ourselves compelled,
 Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
 To give in evidence. What then? what rests?
 Try what repentance can: what can it not?
 Yet what can it when one can not repent?
 O wretched state! O bosom black as death!
 O liméd* soul, that, struggling to be free, *stuck, as if in plaster
 Art more engaged! Help, angels! Make assay!* * Try!
 Bow, stubborn knees; and, heart with strings of steel,
 Be soft as sinews of the newborn babe!
 All may be well.

[Hamlet sees Claudius praying and spares his life because he doesn't want him to go to heaven. He says, that would be "hire and salary, not revenge." Ironically, as soon as Hamlet spares Claudius, the king gives up trying to pray.]

Claudius: My words fly up, my thoughts remain below;
 Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

From *Hamlet* 3.4

[In his mother's bedroom, Hamlet tries to convince his mother not to sleep with Claudius.]

Gertrude: O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.
Hamlet: O, throw away the worsser part of it,
 And live the purer with the other half.
 Good night: but go not to mine uncle's bed;
 Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
 That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,
 Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,
 That to the use of actions fair and good
 He likewise gives a frock or livery,
 That aptly is put on. Refrain to-night,
 And that shall lend a kind of easiness
 To the next abstinence: the next more easy;
 For use almost can change the stamp of nature [...]

From *Don Juan*

While the original Don Juan seduces women without caring about them, Byron's Don Juan is a decent, innocent young man who tends to be seduced by women.

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-------|----------------------|
| Tirso de Molina | | | | |
| <i>El burlador de Sevilla</i> | | Mozart | Byron | <i>Don Juan de</i> |
| Don Juan story (play) | <i>Don Giovanni</i> (opera) | <i>Don Juan</i> (poem) | | <i>Marcos</i> (film) |
| -----1630 | -----1787 | ----1819-24 | ----- | -----1995 |

Petrarch(Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto 5, Stanza 1)

WHEN amatory poets sing their loves
 In liquid lines mellifluously bland,
 And pair their rhymes as Venus yokes her doves,
 They little think what mischief is in hand;
 The greater their success the worse it proves,
 As Ovid's verse* may give to understand;
 Even Petrarch's self,* if judged with due severity,
 Is the Platonic pimp of all posterity.

* Ovid: Classical Roman poet known for racy poetry about the gods

* Petrarch: 14th C. Italian poet known for sensuous, abstruse love poetry about the unattainable Laura

In the following excerpt (from *Don Juan*, Canto One), we find the beautiful twenty-three year-old Donna Julia married to Don Alfonso, a man of fifty. She is in love with Juan, who is sixteen years old. Julia and Juan are sitting together under the moonlight, trying to be platonic and chaste.

Donna Julia(Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto 1)

CV.

She sate, but not alone; I know not well
 How this same interview had taken place,
 And even if I knew, I should not tell--
 People should hold their tongues in any case;
 No matter how or why the thing befell,
 But there were she and Juan, face to face--
 When two such faces are so, 'twould be wise,
 But very difficult, to shut their eyes.

CVI.

How beautiful she looked! her conscious heart
 Glowed in her cheek, and yet she felt no wrong:
 Oh Love! how perfect is thy mystic art,
 Strengthening the weak, and trampling on the strong!
 How self-deceitful is the sagest part
 Of mortals whom thy lure hath led along!--
 The precipice she stood on was immense,
 So was her creed in her own innocence.

CVII.

She thought of her own strength, and Juan's youth,
 And of the folly of all prudish fears,
 Victorious Virtue, and domestic Truth,
 And then of Don Alfonso's fifty years:
 I wish these last had not occurred, in sooth,
 Because that number rarely much endears,
 And through all climes, the snowy and the sunny,
 Sounds ill in love, whate'er it may in money.

CVIII.

When people say, "I've told you fifty times,"
 They mean to scold, and very often do;
 When poets say, "I've written fifty rhymes,"
 They make you dread that they'll recite them too;
 In gangs of fifty, thieves commit their crimes;
 At fifty love for love is rare, 'tis true,
 But then, no doubt, it equally as true is,
 A good deal may be bought for fifty Louis.

CIX.

Julia had honour, virtue, truth, and love
 For Don Alfonso; and she inly swore,
 By all the vows below to Powers above,
 She never would disgrace the ring she wore,
 Nor leave a wish which wisdom might reprove;
 And while she pondered this, besides much more,
 One hand on Juan's carelessly was thrown,
 Quite by mistake--she thought it was her own;

CX

Unconsciously she leaned upon the other,
 Which played within the tangles of her hair:
 And to contend with thoughts she could not smother
 She seemed by the distraction of her air.
 'T was surely very wrong in Juan's mother
 To leave together this imprudent pair,
 She who for many years had watched her son so—
 I'm very certain mine would not have done so.

CXI

The hand which still held Juan's, by degrees
 Gently, but palpably confirm'd its grasp,
 As if it said, "Detain me, if you please;"
 Yet there's no doubt she only meant to clasp
 His fingers with a pure Platonic squeeze:
 She would have shrunk as from a toad, or asp,
 Had she imagined such a thing could rouse
 A feeling dangerous to a prudent spouse.

CXII

I cannot know what Juan thought of this,
 But what he did, is much what you would do;
 His young lip thanked it with a grateful kiss,
 And then, abashed at its own joy, withdrew
 In deep despair, lest he had done amiss—
 Love is so very timid when 'tis new:
 She blushed, and frowned not, but she strove to speak,
 And held her tongue, her voice was grown so weak.

CXIII

The sun set, and up rose the yellow moon:
 The devil's in the moon for mischief; they
 Who called her CHASTE, methinks, began too soon
 Their nomenclature; there is not a day,
 The longest, not the twenty-first of June,
 Sees half the business in a wicked way
 On which three single hours of moonshine smile—
 And then she looks so modest all the while.

CXIV

There is a dangerous silence in that hour,
 A stillness, which leaves room for the full soul
 To open all itself, without the power
 Of calling wholly back its self-control;
 The silver light which, hallowing tree and tower,
 Sheds beauty and deep softness o'er the whole,
 Breathes also to the heart, and o'er it throws
 A loving languor, which is not repose.

CXV

And Julia sate with Juan, half embraced
 And half retiring from the glowing arm,
 Which trembled like the bosom where 'twas placed;
 Yet still she must have thought there was no harm,
 Or else 'twere easy to withdraw her waist;
 But then the situation had its charm,
 And then—God knows what next—I can't go on;
 I'm almost sorry that I e'er begun.

CXVI

Oh Plato! Plato! you have paved the way,
 With your confounded fantasies, to more
 Immoral conduct by the fancied sway
 Your system feigns o'er the controulless core
 Of human hearts, than all the long array
 Of poets and romancers:--You're a bore,
 A charlatan, a coxcomb—and have been,
 At best, no better than a go-between.

CXVII

And Julia's voice was lost, except in sighs,
 Until too late for useful conversation;
 The tears were gushing from her gentle eyes,
 I wish indeed they had not had occasion,
 But who, alas! can love, and then be wise?
 Not that remorse did not oppose temptation;
 A little still she strove, and much repented
 And whispering "I will ne'er consent"—consented.

WEEK 6: LOVE AND THE ABATTOIR BLUES

📖 *Don Juan* Continued; "Dover Beach" (Arnold)
 🎵 "Abattoir Blues" and "Nature Boy" (Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds)

Q. Do "Dover Beach" and "Abattoir Blues" make the same point but in different ways? How does the woman in "Nature Boy" take on the qualities of Nature and Redeemer?

Dover Beach

(1867, Matthew Arnold)

The sea is calm tonight.
 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.
 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,
 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
 Heard it on the Ægean, 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.

The Sea of Faith
 Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
 Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
 But now I only hear

Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
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
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
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

WEEK 8: TAKE PHYSIC, POMP

📖 **“Take Physic, Pomp”** (Excerpts from *Hamlet* and *King Lear*)

📖 **“Ozymandias”** (Percy Shelley)

🎵 **“Long Road out of Eden”** (The Eagles)

Q. How does Shelley use space and time to make his point?

How do The Eagle’s use space (astronomy and geography) and time (both mythic and historical) to make their point? How do the allusions to Eden and the apple work in “Long Road”?

Take Physic, Pomp

1. From *Hamlet* 2.2 and 3.2

Hamlet (to Polonius): Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used, for they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time. After your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.

Polonius: My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

Hamlet: God’s bodykins, man, much better. Use every man after his desert, and who should ’scape whipping? Use them after your own honor and dignity. The less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

Hamlet [giving advice to an actor]: Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o’erstep not the modesty of nature. For anything so o’erdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold, as ’twere, the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.

2. From *King Lear* 3.4

[Like *Hamlet*, *King Lear* is one of Shakespeare's best plays. After a senile Lear gives away his kingdom, he begins to see what an idiot he was. He shifts from being arrogant and proud to being compassionate and humble. During a storm, he rages on a heath, mixing humanity with insanity.]

Lear: Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;* * Take medicine, vain people
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou mayst shake the superflux* to them * superfluity, excess
And show the heavens more just.

3. From *King Lear* 4.6

Lear: O, ho, are you there with me? No eyes in your head, nor no
money in your purse? Your eyes are in a heavy case, your
purse in a light. Yet you see how this world goes.

Gloucester: I see it feelingly.

Lear: What, art mad? A man may see how the world goes with no eyes.
Look with thine ears. See how yond justice rails upon yond
simple thief. Hark in thine ear. Change places and, handy-dandy,
which is the justice, which is the thief? Thou hast seen a
farmer's dog bark at a beggar?

Gloucester: Ay, sir.

Lear: And the creature run from the cur? There thou mightst behold
the great image of authority: a dog's obeyed in office.
Thou rascal beadle,* hold thy bloody hand! * church officer
Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own back.
Thou hotly lusts to use her in that kind
For which thou whip'st her. The usurer hangs the cozener.* * The high-rate lender
Through tattered clothes small vices do appear; hangs the cheating middleman
Robes and furred gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pygmy's straw does pierce it.
None does offend, none- I say none! I'll able 'em.* * vouch for them
Take that of me, my friend, who have the power
To seal th' accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes
And, like a scurvy politician, seem
To see the things thou dost not.

Ozymandias

(1818, Percy Shelly)

I met a traveller from an antique land
 Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
 Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
 Half sunk, a shatter'd visage* lies, whose frown * face
 And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
 Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
 The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed.
 And on the pedestal these words appear:
 "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
 Nothing beside remains: round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.

WEEK 9: THOUSANDS ARE SAILING

- ♪ "Thousands Are Sailing" (The Pogues)
- 📖 "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" ("Rivers," Langston Hughes)
- 📖 "Caliban" (Edward Brathwaite)
- 📖 "A Dream Deferred" (Langston Hughes)
- ♪ "Strange Fruit" (lyric Abel Meeropol, song Billie Holiday)

Q. How does Brathwaite (in "Caliban") make a parallel between the limbo dance and the survival of Africans in their forced transatlantic journey?
 How do Hughes and Meeropol/Holiday compare in the way they use fruit imagery?

The Negro Speaks of Rivers

(1919, Langston Hughes)

I've known rivers:
 I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the
 flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
 I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
 I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
 I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln
 went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy
 bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers:
 Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

Caliban(from *The Arrivants*, 1973)

Ninety-five per cent of my people poor
 ninety-five per cent of my people black
 ninety-five per cent of my people dead
 you have heard it all before O Leviticus O Jeremiah O Jean-Paul Sartre

and now I see that these modern palaces have grown
 out of the soil, out of the bad habits of their crippled owners
 the Chrysler stirs but does not produce cotton
 the Jupiter purrs but does not produce bread

out of the living stone, out of the living bone
 of coral, these dead
 towers; out of the coney
 islands of our mind-

less architects, this death
 of sons, of songs, of sunshine;
 out of this dearth of coo ru coos, home-
 less pigeons, this perturbation that does not signal health.

In Havana that morning, as every morning,
 the police toured the gambling houses
 wearing their dark glasses
 and collected tribute;

salute blackjack, salute backgammon, salute the one-armed bandit
 Vieux Fort and Andros Island, the Isle of Pines;
 the morals squadron fleeced the whores
 Mary and Mary Magdalene;

newspapers spoke of Wall Street and the social set
 who was with who, what medals did the Consulate's
 Assistant wear. The sky was cloudy, a strong breeze;
 maximum temperature eighty-two degrees.

It was December second, nineteen fifty-six.
 It was the first of August eighteen thirty-eight.
 It was the twelfth October fourteen ninety-two.

How many bangs how many revolutions?

And
 Ban
 Ban

Cal-
 iban
 like to play
 pan
 at the Car-
 nival;
 pran-
 cing up to the lim-
 bo silence
 down
 down
 down
 so the god won't drown
 him
 down
 down
 down
 to the is-
 land town
 down
 down
 down
 and the dark-
 ness fall-
 ing; eyes
 shut tight
 and the whip light
 crawl-
 ing round the ship
 where his free-
 dom drown
 down
 down
 down
 to the is-
 land town.

Ban
 Ban
 Cal-
 iban
 like to play
 pan
 at the Car-
 nival;
 dip-
 ping down

and the black
 gods call-
 ing, back
 he falls
 through the water's
 cries
 down
 down
 down
 where the music hides
 him
 down
 down
 down
 where the si-
 lence lies.

And limbo stick is the silence in front of me
 limbo
 limbo
 limbo like me
 limbo
 limbo like me
 long dark night is the silence in front of me
 limbo
 limbo like me
 stick hit sound
 and the ship like it ready
 stick hit sound
 and the dark still steady
 limbo
 limbo like me
 long dark deck and the water surrounding me
 long dark deck and the silence is over me
 limbo
 limbo like me
 stick is the whip
 and the dark deck is slavery
 stick is the whip
 and the dark deck is slavery
 limbo
 limbo like me
 drum stick knock
 and the darkness is over me
 knees spread wide
 and the water is hiding me
 limbo

limbo like me
 knees spread wide
 and the dark ground is under me
 down
 down
 down
 and the drummer is calling me
 limbo
 limbo like me
 sun coming up
 and the drummers are praising me
 out of the dark
 and the dumb gods are raising me
 up
 up
 up
 and the music is saving me
 hot
 slow
 step
 on the burning ground.

What happens to a dream deferred?

(1951, Langston Hughes)

Does it dry up
 like a raisin in the sun?
 Or fester like a sore--
 And then run?
 Does it stink like rotten meat?
 Or crust and sugar over--
 like a syrupy sweet?

 Maybe it just sags
 like a heavy load.

 Or does it explode?

WEEK 10: REVOLT

📖 **“And I Will War”** (Lord Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto 9)

🎵 **“The Fight Song”** (Marilyn Manson)

🎵 **“I’ve Got Life”** (Lauryn Hill)

📖 🎵 **“El Puro No Hay Futuro / “There’s No Future in Purity”** (“Futuro” Jarabe de Palo)

- The oldest American *fight song* is “For Boston” (T. J. Hurley, 1885). It’s the sports team song for the prestigious Jesuit college and goes like this: “We sing our proud refrain / For

Boston, for Boston / 'Tis wisdom's earthly fame / For here are all one / And our hearts are true / And the towers on the heights / Reach the heavens' own blue / For Boston, for Boston / Till the echoes ring again / For Boston, for Boston / Thy glory is our own / For Boston, for Boston / 'Tis here that truth is known / And ever with a right / Shall our heirs be found / Till time shall be no more / And thy work is crowned / For Boston, for Boston / Thy glory is our own."

- How does Manson's fight song differ?
- How is the spirit of revolution reflected in these poems?
- How does Hill mix history and politics?
- What strategy does Jarabe de Palo use to explore history and race?
- You may want to look up the Slave Trade Act of 1807 and the Reform Act of 1832 to understand some of the historical and political context.
- Byron lived during the Romantic Age, but also in what some refer to as The Age of Revolution (American 1776, French 1789, Haiti 1791, Hidalgo, Bolívar, Martín, Latin America c. 1810-1830, etc.).

And I Will War

(Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto 9)

XXIV

And I will war, at least in words (and -- should
My chance so happen -- deeds), with all who war
With Thought; -- and of Thought's foes by far most rude,
Tyrants and sycophants have been and are.
I know not who may conquer: if I could
Have such a prescience, it should be no bar
To this my plain, sworn, downright detestation
Of every despotism in every nation.

XXV

It is not that I adulate the people:
Without me, there are demagogues enough,
And infidels, to pull down every steeple,
And set up in their stead some proper stuff.
Whether they may sow scepticism to reap hell,
As is the Christian dogma rather rough,
I do not know; -- I wish men to be free
As much from mobs as kings -- from you as me.

XXVI

The consequence is, being of no party,
I shall offend all parties: never mind!
My words, at least, are more sincere and hearty
Than if I sought to sail before the wind.
He who has nought to gain can have small art: he
Who neither wishes to be bound nor bind,
May still expatiate freely, as will I,
Nor give my voice to slavery's jackal cry.

En Lo Puro No Hay Futuro
(2003, Jarabe de Palo)

En lo puro no hay futuro
la pureza está en la mezcla
en la mezcla de lo puro
que antes que puro fue mezcla.

Mi tío era mi primo
de un amigo de mi abuelo
que era indio americano
que se había enamorado
de una tico* patuá*
que nació en una goleta
abarrotada de esclavos
que se Jamaica robaron.

La madre de mi tío
se casó con un gitano
que tocaba la guitarra
con seis dedos en la mano
y acompañaba a un payo
que cantaba bulerías*
con un negro de Chicago
que decía ser su hermano

Dicen que mi abuelo
era un rubio bananero
que a Cuba llegó de España
pa quedarse en La Habana
y que yendo pa Santiago
conoció a una mulata
mezcla de tabaco y caña
que en francés a él le hablaba.

Je voulais parler français
asi le decía mi abuelo
mulatta color café
le hablaba frances (?)
en la mezcla este lo puro
vous parlez français ne ne ne (?)
mi abuelo le contestó
tacó tacó tacó

There is No Future in Purity
(free trans. Roger Clark)

In the pure there is no future
purity is in mixture
in the mix of the pure
which before purity was mixture

My uncle was my cousin
from a friend of my grandfather
who was American Indian
who had fallen in love
with a tico patuá* Costa Rican / creole
who was born in a schooner
crammed with slaves
that they stole from Jamaica

The mother of my uncle
married a gypsy
who played guitar
with six fingers on his hand
accompanied by a farmer
who sang bulerías* flamenco
with a Black from Chicago
who said he was his brother

They say that my grandfather
was a blond banana-seller
who came to Cuba from Spain
to stay in Havana
and passing by Santiago
met a mulatta
mix of tobacco and sugarcane
who spoke to him in French

I wanted to speak French
that's what my grandfather said
coffee-coloured mulatto
he spoke to her in French
in mixture is purity
you speak French
my grandfather answered her
?

His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
 If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
 Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
 Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
 Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—
 My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
 To children ardent for some desperate glory,
 The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
 Pro patria mori.*

* From the Roman poet Horace: "It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country."

Anthem for Doomed Youth

(Wilfred Owen, 1917)

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
 Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
 Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
 Can patter out their hasty orisons.
 No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;
 Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, -
 The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
 And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
 Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
 Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes.
 The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
 Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
 And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

WEEK 12: WHAT'S IT REALLY MATTER?

📖 **"This Quintessence of Dust"** (*Hamlet* 2.2)

📖 **"Cloud the Heavens"** (Five short texts)

📖 🎵 **"Comme Un Lego / Like Lego"** ("Lego," Alain Bashung)

🎵 **"Brain Damage / Eclipse"** (Pink Floyd)

🎵 **"Bohemian Rhapsody"** (Queen)

"This Quintessence of Dust" (*Hamlet* 2.2)

[...] it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust?

Cloud the Heavens

From *The Kokinshu* (Ariwara Narihira, 10th C.)

Scatter at random,
O blossoms of the cherry,
and cloud the heavens,
so that you conceal the path
old age is said to follow.



Sudden Shower at the Atake Bridge, Hiroshige, 1856

From *King Lear* 4.1

As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods;
They kill us for their sport.

From *In Memoriam*, 55 (Alfred Lord Tennyson, 1849)

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's alter-stairs
That slope through darkness up to God.

On Visiting a Taoist Master

Where the dogs bark
by the roaring waters,
and the spray darkens
the colours of the petals,
deep in the forest
deer can sometimes be seen.

Noon in the valley:
you can't even hear a bell,
although the wild bamboo shoots
cut across bright clouds,
and the flying cascades of water
vault from jasper peaks.

No one around here knows
which way you have gone.
This is the second, now the
third pine tree
I have leant against!

(Li Po)

Under a Pine

Under a pine
I asked the pupil
who said, "The Master
is gone to gather balm
somewhere in the mountains,
but the cloud is so thick
that I cannot say where."

(Chia Tao)



Ma Lin (c. 1180–1256)

| Comme un Lego (Alain Bashung) | Like Lego (R. Clark, free translation) |
|---|--|
| <p>C'est un grand terrain de nulle part Avec de belles poignées d'argent La lunette d'un microscope Et tous ces petits êtres qui courent Car chacun vaque à son destin Petits ou grands Comme durant des siècles égyptiens Péniblement</p> | <p>It's a great stretch of nowhere With great fists full of money The lens of a microscope And all these little beings that run Because each one follows his destiny Little or big Like during the Egyptian centuries Painfully</p> |
| <p>A porter mille fois son poids sur lui Sous la chaleur et dans le vent Dans le soleil ou dans la nuit Voyez-vous ces êtres vivants ? X 3</p> | <p>Carrying a thousand times his own weight Under the heat or in the wind In the sunlight or in the night Do you see these living things?</p> |
| <p>Quelqu'un a inventé ce jeu Terrible, cruel, captivant Les maisons, les lacs, les continents Comme un lego avec du vent</p> | <p>Someone invented this game Terrible, cruel, captivating The houses, the lakes, the continents Like lego with wind</p> |
| <p>La faiblesse des tout-puissants Comme un lego avec du sang La force décuplée des perdants Comme un lego avec des dents Comme un lego avec des mains Comme un lego</p> | <p>The weakness of the all-powerful Like lego with blood With tenfold the strength of the losers Like lego with teeth Like lego with hands Like lego</p> |
| <p>Voyez-vous tous ces humains ? Danser ensemble à se donner la main S'embrasser dans le noir à cheveux blonds A ne pas voir demain comme ils seront</p> | <p>Do you see all these humans? Dancing together, hand in hand Kissing each other in the dark with their blond hair So as not to see what they will be tomorrow</p> |
| <p>Car si la terre est ronde Et qu'ils s'y agrippent Au delà c'est le vide Assis devant le restant d'une portion de frites Noir sidéral et quelques plats d'amibes</p> | <p>Because if the earth is round And they're clinging to it Beyond it is the void Sitting before the last of a side of fries Sidereal black and plates of amoebas</p> |
| <p>Les capitales sont toutes les mêmes devenues Aux facettes d'un même miroir Vêtues d'acier, vêtues de noir Comme un lego mais sans mémoire X 3</p> | <p>The capitals have all become the same On the side of the same mirror Dressed in steel, dressed in black Like lego but without memory</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| Pourquoi ne me réponds-tu jamais ? Sous ce manguier de plus de dix mille pages A te balancer dans cette cage | Why do you never answer me? Under this mango tree of more than ten thousand pages Rocking yourself in this cage |
| A voir le monde de si haut Comme un damier, comme un lego Comme un imputrescible radeau Comme un insecte mais sur le dos X 3 | To see the world from this height Like a checkerboard, like lego Like an raft that won't rot Like an insect but on its back |
| C'est un grand terrain de nulle part Avec de belles poignées d'argent La lunette d'un microscope On regarde, on regarde, on regarde dedans | It's a great stretch of nowhere With great fists full of money The lens of a microscope Looking, looking, looking within |
| On voit de toutes petites choses qui luisent Ce sont des gens dans des chemises Comme durant ces siècles de la longue nuit Dans le silence ou dans le bruit X 3 | One sees tiny little things that glow Those are people in their shirts Just like during those centuries of the long night In silence or in noise |

WEEK 13: DEATH BE NOT PROUD

- 📖 **“Perchance to Dream”** (*Hamlet* 3.1)
- 📖 **“Death, Be Not Proud”** (John Donne)
- 📖 **“Ode to a Nightingale”** (John Keats)
- 📖 **“When I Have Fears”** (John Keats)
- 📖 ***Adonais*, stanzas 1, 52-55** (Percy Shelley)
- 📖 🎵 **“Una Breve Vacanza / A Short Vacation”** (“Vacanza,” Nina Zilli)

Q. How does Shakespeare use dreaming as a metaphor for the afterlife? Does Hamlet express a traditional Christian view of death and the afterlife?

How does Keats make connections between suffering, escape, alcohol, and nature? Can Nature been seen in capitals, i.e. as a sort of replacement for religion?

How does Donne's certainty compare with Shelley's? How do their certainties contrast with the perspectives of the other writers?

How is Zilli paralleling cycles of love to cycles of the afterlife?

Perchance to Dream

(*Hamlet* 3.1)

To be, or not to be: that is the question:
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,

And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
 No more; and by a sleep to say we end
 The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep;
 To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
 Must give us pause: there's the respect
 That makes calamity of so long life;
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
 The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
 The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
 The insolence of office and the spurns
 That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
 When he himself might his quietus make
 With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
 But that the dread of something after death,
 The undiscovered country from whose bourn
 No traveller returns, puzzles the will
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have
 Than fly to others that we know not of?
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
 And thus the native hue of resolution
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
 And enterprises of great pith and moment
 With this regard their currents turn awry,
 And lose the name of action.

Death, Be Not Proud

(John Donne)

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
 Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
 For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
 Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
 From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
 Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,
 And soonest our best men with thee do go,
 Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
 Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
 And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
 And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
 And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
 One short sleep past, we wake eternally
 And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

Ode to a Nightingale

(1819, John Keats)

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
 My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
 Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
 One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
 But being too happy in thy happiness,---
 That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
 In some melodious plot
 Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
 Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O for a draught of vintage, that hath been
 Cooled a long age in the deep-delved earth,
 Tasting of Flora and the country green,
 Dance, and Provencal song, and sun-burnt mirth!
 O for a beaker full of the warm South,
 Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
 With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
 And purple-stainéd mouth;
 That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
 And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
 What thou among the leaves hast never known,
 The weariness, the fever, and the fret
 Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
 Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
 Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
 And leaden-eyed despairs;
 Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
 Or new love pine at them beyond tomorrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
 Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
 But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
 Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
 Already with thee! tender is the night,
 And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
 Clustered around by all her starry fays;
 But here there is no light,

Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast-fading violets covered up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Called him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain---
To thy high requiem become a sod

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:--do I wake or sleep?

When I have fears

(1818, John Keats)

When I have fears that I may cease to be
 Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain,
 Before high-piléd books, in charactery,
 Hold like rich garnerers the full ripened grain;
 When I behold, upon the night's starred 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.

From *Adonais: An Elegy on the Death of John Keats*

(1821, Percy Shelley)

I

I weep for Adonais—he is dead!
 Oh, weep for Adonais! though our tears
 Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!
 And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years
 To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,
 And teach them thine own sorrow, say: “With me
 Died Adonais; till the Future dares
 Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
 An echo and a light unto eternity!”

[...]

LII

The One remains, the many change and pass;
 Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
 Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
 Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
 Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die,
 If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!
 Follow where all is fled!—Rome's azure sky,
 Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak
 The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

LIII

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart?
 Thy hopes are gone before: from all things here
 They have departed; thou shouldst now depart!
 A light is passed from the revolving year,
 And man, and woman; and what still is dear
 Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.
 The soft sky smiles, the low wind whispers near:
 'Tis Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,
 No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

LIV

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
 That Beauty in which all things work and move,
 That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
 Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
 Which through the web of being blindly wove
 By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
 Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
 The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me,
 Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

LV

The breath whose might I have invok'd in song
 Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,
 Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
 Whose sails were never to the tempest given;
 The massy earth and sphered skies are riven!
 I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
 Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
 The soul of Adonais, like a star,
 Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

Una Breve Vacanza (Nina Zilli)

Meglio così
 Camminare sospesa
 A passo lento
 Tra finito e infinito
 Nel breve spazio
 Che contiene un minuto
 Quella vita che morde
 La sua coda di serpente

A Short Vacation (free trans. R.C.)

Better this way
 To walk suspended
 At a slow pace
 Between the finite and infinity
 In the brief space
 A minute holds
 This life that eats
 It's own serpent's tail

Appendix 1: Three Sonnets (130, 116, 18)

- 130 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 damasked, 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.
- * as any woman lied about
 in a false comparison
- 116 Let me not to the marriage of true minds
 Admit impediments. Love is not love
 Which alters when it alteration finds,
 Or bends with the remover to remove.
 O no! it is an ever-fixed mark
 That looks on tempests* and is never shaken;
 It is the star to every wandering bark,*
 Whose worth's unknown, although his* height be taken.
 Love's not Time's* fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
 Within his bending sickle's compass come;
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
 But bears it out even to the edge of doom.*
 If this be error and upon me proved,
 I never writ, nor no man ever loved.
- * storms
 * ship
 * its
 * Father Time
 * Day of Judgment
- 18 Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
 Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
 And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
 Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
 And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
 And every fair from fair sometime declines,
 By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimmed;
 But thy eternal summer shall not fade
 Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
 Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
 When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;
 So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Sample Commentary on “Sonnet 116”

In “Sonnet 116,” Shakespeare divides his poem into four parts. In the first three parts (all of which are quatrains with the same rhyme scheme) he offers various serious definitions of love—at first using negative definition and then using two extended metaphors (or conceits). In the last part (a couplet) he steps away from the seriousness and plays what seems to be a tricky verbal game that is not easy to understand.

The first four lines use repetition to give us a negative definition of love. He repeats words in various ways for different reasons: “love is not love which” redefines love; “alters when it alteration finds” uses “alters” as a possible alteration in sentiment and “alteration” as a possible alteration in circumstances. Because his point is vague, it can be applied to all sorts of situations—from still loving another when they get older and less attractive, to still loving another when they are in altered circumstances, such as economic straightjackets. Still using repetition—“the remover to remove”—he argues that nothing can remove the love between true lovers—whether this “remover” is a circumstance or a rival.

In the next two quatrains Shakespeare uses two analogies, one spatial and one temporal. In the spatial one, he compares love to a fixed star—like the Pole Star—which can help boats in a tempest find their way to port. The analogy here is to a person who is lost in some way (depressed, upset, confused, a failure in some enterprise, etc.) and who is brought back to a normal state because of the unconditional love someone supplies.

In the second analogy, Shakespeare compares love to the soul, which outlasts the physical body: even after Time has destroyed youthful beauty (indicated by “rosy lips and cheeks”), one still loves the person; and even after time passes and one dies (indicated by “the edge of Doom”), one still loves the person. In this second analogy he is saying that love transcends time, just as in the first analogy he is saying that love transcends space.

Shakespeare’s poem is, for a love poem, rather logical and abstract. In some ways it is very close to John Donne’s “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”: Donne idealizes love by drawing analogies between love and objects (compasses) and cosmic spaces (the “trepidation of the spheres”), just as Shakespeare brings in the sickle’s compass and the space between the pole star and a ship on the ocean. This is very different in style and focus from another of Shakespeare’s sonnets, where he says, “My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun.” In that sonnet he rejects cosmic comparisons and other abstractions and idealizations, in favour of a more realistic appreciation of love. The final couplet of “Sonnet 116” may be applicable here, as it may be a sly indication that everything he says is a bit overblown. He states that if all these wonderful things he says about love are not true then he never wrote (which he obviously did), and adds, “nor no man ever loved,” which suggests that this definition of constant love may especially apply while one is in love, i.e. while one is in a sort of madness in which love seems both infinite and eternal.

From Observation to Argument

In writing an argument, you may need to start with an observation, yet make sure to go beyond that. You need to see more deeply into the text, showing how the writer arrives at the meaning.

The following table provides examples of thesis statements that

1. merely observe what is in the text,
2. explain how the text works, and
3. explains how the text works and advances an insightful angle of interpretation.

| |
|---|
| 1. The great English Renaissance playwright William Shakespeare writes about love. |
| 1. Shakespeare defines constant love. |
| 1. Shakespeare gives a definition of love and then gives some analogies. |
| 2. Shakespeare uses definition and analogy to illustrate the nature of true love. |
| 2. Shakespeare uses definition and analogy to argue that true love transcends space and time. |
| 3. Shakespeare's sonnet is about true love, yet instead of using emotional love-scenarios to make his point, he uses abstract definitions and analogies. |
| 3. Shakespeare's use of abstraction (rather than emotional scenarios) may suggest that constant love is beyond this human world and that it may be a type of divine madness, fueled by infatuation. |

Scratch Outline on "Sonnet 116"

Sweet Words of Logic

Shakespeare's sonnet is about true love, yet instead of using emotion or pathos to make his point, he uses logic and analogy.

1. The first stanza is like an argument a philosopher or lawyer might make, with its abstract and logical definitions of love.
2. The poet uses analogies which are powerful and wide-ranging, yet do not have any personal element.
3. Shakespeare declares his love in a language that at times borders on mathematics and cosmology.

Full Outline on “Sonnet 116”

Sweet Words of Logic

Shakespeare’s sonnet is about true love, yet instead of using emotion or pathos to make his point, he uses logic and analogy.

The first stanza is like an argument a philosopher or lawyer might make, with its abstract and logical definitions of love.

--use of abstract words in definitions

--use of logical argument structure:

definitions → analogies → final proof or conclusion

The poet uses analogies which are powerful and wide-ranging, yet do not have any personal element.

--spatial and temporal analogies:

--star

--eternity

--links between temporal analogy and opening definition

Shakespeare declares his love in a language that at times borders on mathematics and cosmology.

--examples: fixed marks which can be measured by sextants; edges of Doom (a temporal complement to the star whose “height be taken”), removers, etc.

--a general abstract argument; far from real-life context of *Romeo and Juliet*, etc. (155 words)

Sample essay

| Essay | Explanatory notes |
|---|---|
| Sweet Words of Logic | The title should suggest the subject matter (romance and logic) and can present the reader with a popular allusion, intriguing image, pun, or puzzle to figure out (here, a contradiction between <i>sweet words</i> , which are usually soft or poetic, and <i>logic</i> , which is usually hard or prosaic) |
| It’s one a.m. and you finally slip your arm around her, pretty sure she just needs to hear a few poetic words. You are, after all, the world’s greatest lover. So you put on your huskiest bedroom voice (you are after all in her bedroom), and tell her that her big dark beautiful eyes are concentric within a convex aperture, her silky hair is like a graph with parallel black lines, and her love is not true if she denies compliance with your argument. | The reader is given a scenario they can relate to (who hasn’t dated, or seen dating in films?), and approaches the serious poem in a way that isn’t too serious. The introductory scenario reworks the title’s contradiction between the topic (love) and the language (abstract and logical). |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Next morning you curse Shakespeare, because you modeled your seduction on one of his sonnets—number 116 to be exact. So, you take another look at the sonnet, just to make sure you got it right. To your horror, you find that this isn't the type of poem you should have used to seduce anyone, because while Shakespeare's sonnet is about love, he uses logic and analogy rather than emotion to make his point.</p> | <p>This paragraph shifts from the opening scenario (humorous) to the thesis (serious). It also introduces the text and the author. Note that the word <i>logic</i> occurs in the thesis statement and thus links to the word <i>logical</i> in the topic sentence which follows it.</p> |
| <p>The first stanza is like an argument a philosopher or lawyer might make, with its abstract and logical definition of what love is and is not. The poet uses abstract notions like “the remover,” which makes the poem different from the usual love poem, which would use words like “sweet lips,” “soft tongue,” or “bright eyes.” (Those would have been the right words to use last night!). If there is a woman being written to here, the poet doesn't give her a name. He seems more interested in advancing a philosophical argument, which goes from defining love (lines 1-4), to giving analogies (lines 5-12), to concluding that his argument is not “false” (line 13).</p> | <p>The scenario of the introduction is not left behind. (to give your essay unity, refer at times to your opening idea or situation. Avoid long quotes; it's better to integrate words or phrases (“the remover”) into your ideas and syntax. Bring out the meaning of the words through comparison with related words (“sweet lips”). Show how your argument fits into the overall structure of the text (line numbers).</p> |
| <p>After defining love, the poet uses analogies which are powerful and wide-ranging, yet do not have any personal element. In exemplifying what love is, he doesn't talk about his feelings, or his personal experience. Instead, he gives us rather cosmic spatial and temporal analogies: love is like a star—probably the pole star—that guides people (who are like ships or “barks”) through the ‘hazardous seas of life’; love is not subject to Father Time or Death, but lasts to the “edge of Doom” (eternity in the Christian scheme of things). He avoids clichés (‘I will love you till the end of time,’ etc.) and links the figure of Father Time to the negative definition of love he started the poem with: old age and death may be ‘alterations’ or ‘removers’ (which cut down the “rosy lips and cheeks” of youth), yet he assures us that they have no effect on true or spiritual love.</p> | <p>One way of making a transition from the previous paragraph (love's definition) to the next (analogies) is by subordinating the former (“After defining love” is a subordinate or dependent clause—it can't stand independently). Explain complicated or obscure parts, glossing where necessary (“barks” is glossed as “ships”) and fitting clarified meanings into an evolving argument about the way the text works (through analogy) and how its different parts connect (the analogies illustrate the opening definitions).</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Shakespeare’s sonnet is a strange one, for in it the poet declares his deep love in a language that at times borders on mathematics and cosmology. He refers to alterations, removers, proofs, fixed marks (which can be measured by sextants), and edges of Doom (a temporal complement to the star whose “height be taken”). Shakespeare is of course making a general argument here, one that is far from the real-life context of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>, <i>The Merchant of Venice</i>, or <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>, where characters have names and passions, families and frustrations.</p> | <p>You might order your ideas cumulatively, putting what might seem extreme (the poem is like math) <i>after</i> what is less extreme (the poem uses logic and analogy). Also, it helps to move toward larger contexts as you near your conclusion: here the larger context of Shakespeare’s other plays shows that you know Shakespeare is not a mathematician, but rather a dramatist whose plays contain a great deal of emotion.</p> |
| <p>In “Sonnet 116” Shakespeare gives a deep yet abstract definition of love. His message (true love overcomes all) and some of his phrases (such as “rosy lips and cheeks”) might be used by a lover, yet the language of the poem is most often logical, analogical, even mathematical. Indeed, Shakespeare’s rhetorical aim seems more argumentative than expressive or personal. It is certainly not the type of language you should use on a date! Imagine substituting <i>You have such soft lips</i> with <i>I admire your pneumatic apertures</i>. Or <i>I will never stop loving you</i> with <i>Interest will accrue on our mutual satisfaction</i>. If you make this sort of verbal miscalculation, you might then be left—alone—to calculate the water pressure of a cold shower.</p> | <p>Restatement of the author and the title signals the conclusion (this is better than using, <i>In conclusion</i>). The thesis should come in naturally or contextually, rather than as an obvious restatement. Finally, give your essay unity by extending, reversing or otherwise revisiting your introductory scenario. Here we return to it by showing that the result of misused language is not just anger the next morning, but a punishment (calculation) that fits the crime (mathematical language).</p> |

“Sky Love”

(a disastrous essay on “Sonnet 116,” together with explanatory notes and exercises)

| Essay | Explanatory notes and exercises |
|----------|---|
| Sky Love | The relation of <i>sky</i> to <i>love</i> is unclear, although the phrase does connect somewhat to the idea of love being like a constant star. |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>It's one a.m. and you finally see her walking down Columbia Avenue. She is wearing Gucci shoes which you don't like. She clearly doesn't fit your idea of the bohemian chick you've been looking for but then you say out loud, what the hell? and talk to her anyway. Maybe she's the one.</p> | <p>The reader might be puzzled by the location, and the scenario doesn't connect to the title.</p> <p>Identify</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the misplaced modifier, 2) the diction error, and 3) the mixed discourse error. |
| <p>Next morning you curse that bastard Shakespeare, because your morning is wrecked reading sonnets and then worse from there. It's like he's trying to torture you with ships and stars and other stuff. You say to yourself why are you reading this? But you have an argument: he does it to make you more logical and allegorical, as if he were a lawyer or something.</p> | <p>This paragraph doesn't clearly connect to the first one, it leaves out the author's name, and the thesis statement needs re-phrasing.</p> <p>Identify errors in</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) diction, 2) mixed construction, 3) logic, 4) reference, and 5) mixed discourse. |
| <p>How you missed the logical nature of the poem becomes something of a mystery to you. The first stanza is like an argument a philosopher or lawyer might make. He thusly defines love: Let me not to the marriage of true minds Admit empediments. Love isn't love Which altars when it altaration finds, Or bends with the remover to remove: How can love be logical although we know it is an affair of blood and guts, no guts no glory as they say. Shakespeare is therefore not making any sense.</p> | <p>There is a good link between thesis statement and topic sentence, yet the scenario of the introduction is completely left behind and the quote is too long and unexplained. In place of rhetorical analysis, we have a hasty and unsupported evaluation.</p> <p>Identify errors in</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) diction, 2) spelling, 3) quotation format, 4) mixed construction and 5) mixed discourse. |
| <p>After travelling to Columbia one knows that analogy is a way of defining love, which leads us to analogy, which is when one compares one thing to another, according to the Webster dictionary. Perhaps Shakespear had been dropping acid, who knows?, but he sure seems to be spaced out: "barks" "edge of Doom" "Father Time." This type of words is very</p> | <p>An attempt is made to return to the introductory scenario and to bring in the previous paragraph (on definition), but the links aren't clear, and don't help us understand the point about analogy.</p> <p>How many ways is explanation avoided here in favour of padding?</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>effective rhetorical because it shows how the author (a.k.a. Shakespeare) is trying to get his messages across, not just what he is saying but how he is saying. All proving he is the greatest poet in the world bar none.</p> | <p>Identify the other errors.</p> |
| <p>Shakespeare's sonnet is a stranger one, for in it the poet declares a deeper love in a world which is too large to define and therefore makes his definitions even more poignant. The word is indeed a very large place, and when one talks about love one can see that "stars" are part of the picture, "ships" are part of the picture, and death will eventually overtake us all in the form of "Father Time." This penultimate picture is therefore crucial to a detailed understanding of the poet and his crucial meanings. Even in his other tragedies about love, Shakespeare explains about love that never dies, although people do get poisoned or stabbed quite often, which shows just how dangerous love can beget.</p> | <p>An attempt is made to connect the poem to the larger world and to Shakespeare's plays, yet there is no specific or clear link to the main argument.</p> <p>Identify the errors in</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) logic, 2) wording, 3) coherence, 4) idiom, and 5) context. |
| <p>The message (true love imitates all) and some of his phrases (a star to every wandering <u>bark</u> or "rosy lips and cheeks) might have been used by a lover to express a deep attraction, yet it is not the type of language you are using to attract bohemian chicks. Not the chicks on Columbia Avenue in any case!</p> | <p>Here there is no signal that we have arrived at the conclusion, and there is no restatement of the main point. Instead we get some details and a clumsy return to the opening scenario.</p> <p>Identify the errors in expression.</p> |

Appendix 2: On “I Will Follow You Into the Dark”

Lyrics by Ben Gibbard; song by Death Cab for Cutie.

| A+ Essay (an organized argument) | F Essay (a disorganized series of observations) |
|---|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Paint It Black</p> <p>“I Will Follow You Into The Dark” is simply written yet gets at deep emotions. In the chorus and the three main stanzas, the singer addresses a loved one who’s about to die. He promises to follow this person into the afterlife. The song’s not accompanied by any complex background music, and the singer’s voice is serious and sincere. Despite the song’s apparent simplicity, it’s complex mix -- of perspective, narrative, metaphor, and image -- deepen our understanding of the poet’s resolve to follow his lover into the dark, uncharted territory of death.</p> | <p>The song is written by Ben Gibbard and has the title I Will Follow You Into the Dark. It is a song about someone who told a loved one that he will follow her forever into the dark, which stands for death. It contains references to many outside things, such as catholic school, a lady in black, Bangkok, Calgary, black rooms.</p> <p>Q. What are the errors above? Remember to supply a title, to underline or italicize long works, and to use quotations for shorter works.</p> |
| <p>While the vocabulary and the spatial details in the first stanza are relatively simple, they hint at the puzzle of death’s obscurity. Most of the words are monosyllabic (and thus create the illusion of simplicity), yet the stanza leaves us with mysteries, intriguing us and making us feel the challenge and adventure in what he’s proposing. The spatial details are clear and simple: he will be “close behind” her after she dies and he will “follow” her “into the dark” (I am assuming it is a female, although it could be a male). Yet where is this “dark”? He gives different ideas about where it might be, yet he eliminates these possibilities, and ends up with the same simple notion he started with. This may be appropriate, for who really knows what (if anything) comes after life?</p> | <p>In the first stanza the poem is addressing his love, for he calls her Love of mine. He tells us that one day “she will die” but whereas he will follow her into the darkness of death. We can see that his love for her is so great that he is willing to follow her into the dark, which represents death. His feelings for her are of great consequences, and are like the love that one would have for a person who is very dear to one.</p> <p>Q. Where are the two instances of mixed discourse (md)? What is the logical problem in the first sentence? Where is the mixed construction in the second sentence (mc)? What is the error in the final sentence?</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>The first stanza also offers an alternative perspective by rejecting traditional ways people describe death. The first word is “No” and the two settings he describes are typical, if not stereotypical: “blinding light” and “tunnels to gates of white.” The singer replaces these with the image of them holding hands—desperately, as if they were making a lover’s leap into the darkness. Yet he isn’t suggesting suicide, for they’re waiting for “the hint of a spark”—which isn’t a very clear reference, although it does rhyme with “dark” in the earlier and later stanzas. The rhyme works, for it juxtaposes the two words and the two ideas: the light that a spark gives is a small yet optimistic alternative to the dark. It also might hint at more light to come, for a spark can also light a fire. At least it’s better than a black nothing.</p> | <p>In the second stanza the poet was telling us that there will be no “blinding light” or “tunnels to gates of white.” When someone dies, there will be no tunnels or gates, no places that they go into. He adds that there will only be their hands clasping each other tighter. They were deeply in love, and he does not want to leave her. They were not travelling into tunnels but however they will be waiting for the hint of a spark, which may mean a number of things.</p> <p>Q. What is the tense problem in the first sentence? What is the comparative error in the third sentence? How many errors are in the final sentence? Remember that in writing about literature, use the present tense.</p> |
| <p>The first chorus shifts our attention from two rejected clichés to two mini-narratives which introduce more complex situations. In the first three lines of the chorus he combines the cosmic settings of Heaven and Hell with the ordinary setting of a hotel or motel. He suggests that the big capitalized Systems don’t care about her. There may even be an indirect reference to Jesus and the manger, for when Joseph and Mary couldn’t find a place to stay, they were allowed to stay in a barn. Yet here Heaven, or the Christian system in which Jesus supplies the Grace that opens the door to Heaven, doesn’t let them in. Heaven and Hell “decide” to close their doors to the woman, just as a motel manager might put on the “NO” before the “VACANCY” sign. Perhaps this is because the woman doesn’t believe in religious doctrine, or perhaps the doctrine</p> | <p>The third stanza is in fact the chorus, which is a stanza which repeats itself several times throughout the work by “Death Cab for Cutie.” The repetition means that there is something significant about it and you should pay close attention to what it is trying to tell you. If it discusses Heaven and Hell then that also means that there will be a deep meaning in the reference, for seldom are we confronted with such strange places, at least not while we are living. Consequently, if there is a reference to vacancy signs and illuminated Nos, then there will be a link between the Heaven and hell scenario and the lack of vacancy in the hotel, also illumination. We are also told that they are both satisfied. But why are Heaven and Hell satisfied? They are places, not people, and therefore there is something quite fishy about the scenario. It even makes one wonder that perhaps Death Cab isn’t just talking about finding a hotel, or just about going to Heaven or Hell. They</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>isn't open enough to accept those who have different points of view. In any case, we once again come back to "No," to a negation of the traditional afterlife scenarios.</p> | <p>present us with Mysteries that we, as readers, are urged to solve, to find an answer to, or at least suggesting a hypothesis.</p> |
| <p>The next three lines of the chorus suggest a different narrative involving a nautical metaphor for death. After the woman dies, her soul will "embark." This leads us to rethink what seems like a rejection of spirituality in the previous lines, for at least he believes she has a spirit or soul (we are never told what her beliefs are). This makes sense of the previous idea—that even though he doesn't expect she will encounter a bright light or a tunnel, he thinks that there will be a "spark" of life that remains after the body dies.</p> | <p>Then the souls start to embark at the end of the chorus, which is significant because previously the poet talks about Heaven and hell, so we can surmise that they are embarking somewhere. Perhaps they are even embarking to Heaven or Hell. This is the great mystery of this wonderful lyric by "Death Cab for Cutie." Or perhaps they are sitting at the station of the metro like Ezra Pound, waiting for someone to embark from the arriving trains. Who are these people and where are they going?</p> |
| <p>The final two stanzas supply a sustained narrative that explains the singer's reasons for rejecting traditional beliefs. We see why he chooses mystery and ambiguity over religious doctrine: his Catholic schooling was as strict as "Roman rule" and it emphasized fear rather than love. The strict 'lady in black' is a betrayal of Mary, Mother of Grace, so it's no wonder he rejects this betrayal and focuses on love instead. All of this explains why he earlier rejected the traditional Heaven and Hell scenario. He 'never goes back' to a traditional way of thinking, and chooses instead to broaden his vision by travelling with his beloved all over the world, from "Bangkok to Calgary," that is, from a country that is completely foreign, to another North American city closer to Gibbard's home state of Washington.</p> | <p>In the next stanzas we find that the poet has been to Catholic school, probably somewhere in the United States as the band is from the United States (State of Washington) and has participated in Roman rule. It seems that in this situation he got his knuckles bruised, perhaps even by the Roman rules or even the Lady in Black, who is an ominous figure and may be linked to the rules that one finds in Catholic School. The Lady tells the poet that fear is the heart of love, which is the reason the poet never goes back to the Catholic school. As a result the poet takes off, and goes all over the world, in fact "from Bangkok to Calgary" which is a long way from the original location, which is unspecified but occurring near a blinding tunnel. They appear to have been travelling by foot for the soles of her shoes are worn down and she is very tired. He responds that he will nevertheless hold her in the room, which is now "In the blackest of rooms, signifying that other rooms may have blinding lights or tunnels but their room is completely without colour, black to be precise, which is a simile for death.</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>This reference to travel and places leads to the image of worn shoes, which is at once realistic and metaphoric. That the soles of her shoes are worn down suggests that her body is worn down, to the point where death is about to overcome her—which is emphasized by the word “now.” The “sleep” he refers to is the sleep of death, as in Hamlet’s famous “To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there’s the rub, / For in that sleep of death what dreams may come / When we have shuffled off this mortal coil, / Must give us pause...”. This ‘rub’ is not some vague possibility, for she is at the moment of death, of ‘shuffling off her mortal coil.’ Yet she does not have to face this alone, which is the point of the poem: death may be terrifying, yet she is not alone. Love doesn’t depend on time, place, or school of belief. As the pagan Latin poet Virgil wrote two thousand years ago, <i>love conquers all</i>.</p> | <p>The world which the traveller is travelling in is one in which real world references make reference to shoes. We can see that travelling can be done with shoes, and people go from place to place, and therefore the shoes may be linked to the places, such as Bangkok and Calgary, or the State of Washington for that matter, which is after all not that far from Calgary, although it is a considerable distance from Bangkok, which is in Thailand and would mean that the two of them had to travel a great distance to get there from Calgary, or Washington, which would go a long way in proving that in fact her shoes are worn down because she has made a long journey from Washington or Calgary to Bangkok and back again, getting very tired in the process, in fact so tired that she appears to be dead tired, to use a common phrase.</p> |
| <p>At the end of the song, he uses the colour black to reassure her that he will be with her till the end, and beyond. He says that he will stay with her in “the blackest of rooms,” just as he says earlier that he will hold her hand and wait with her for a “spark,” that together they will pass by the “NO VACANCY” sign, and that together they will look out from the dock onto the dark waters. The song ends with a return to the idea of darkness, in this case the “blackest of rooms.” Black conjures the dark mystery of death, and also perhaps the sadder, darker, deeper feelings he will soon experience in the room as her body goes cold. As her soul vanishes into the obscure darkness, he will wait in a similar darkness, lost in mourning, waiting for a spark.</p> | <p>The song ends by bringing all the elements of the poem together into one harmonious unified whole which contains more than the sum of its parts. The two have made a great journey together, from Calgary or Washington to the faraway countries of East Asia and therefore they are extremely tired and need to rest. The souls of her feet are tired and she needs to lay down and he needs to hold her so that they will be together at the moment of her death—which is what the dark and the tunnels and the black rooms are all about! Now, you may not have realized that her journey is leading toward death but this is the shocking conclusion one can draw if one carefully pieces together the subtle references throughout this great poem, which is also a lyric, meaning that it is sung and that melody and emotion combine to play a role.</p> |