Course Description:
Ten of Shakespeare's thirty-seven plays will be read during this sixteen-week semester. We will study Shakespeare as both Poet and Dramatist. The task will be to develop a solid critical appreciation of each text (or "script") by employing a variety of critical approaches to the form and content with an eye towards understanding how these approaches might engage the problems and choices involved in making the text ("script") viable, comprehensible, relevant, and entertaining to an audience in performance.

GER Student Learning Outcomes Correlated with GER Objectives and Means of Assessment:

Objective 1: Understand and engage in the human experience through the interpretation of literature (this objective must be the central focus of each literature course).

- **Outcome**: Students will be able to identify important critical issues at the center of each play we study. The plays reveal why Shakespeare is "not of an age, but for all time" through his understanding of the human condition in all areas of experience - e.g. love, hate, joy, sadness, family, justice, politics, heroism, cowardice, philosophy, morality.
  - **Assessment**: Two essay examinations will require students to identify important forms and themes that explore the issues covered in the plays and class discussions.

- **Outcome**: Students will understand how the form and content of Shakespeare's plays in production is often shaped by prevailing cultural and political considerations.
  - **Assessment**: Reading about landmark theatrical productions and viewing films of Shakespeare's plays over a 60-year period will demonstrate how different thematic concepts and stylistic approaches reflect cultural values of an historical epoch.

- **Outcome**: Students will understand why psychologically rich and complex characters from Shakespeare's plays (e.g. Hamlet, Lear, Shylock, Othello, Rosalind, Cleopatra, and others) have assumed an enduring life of their own.
  - **Assessment**: Class discussion, journal entries, and essay questions will deliberate on the manner in which these characters face conflicts and articulate their world views.

Objective 2: Become aware of the act of interpretation itself as a critical form of knowing in the study of literature.

- **Outcome**: Students will recognize that theatrical and film performances, like armchair academic reading, require critical choices about the themes and characters in Shakespeare's plays. And, as with all critical analyses, some readings are good and some are not.
  - **Assessment**: Class discussion and journal entries will analyze the important critical issues and interpretive choices of each play.
  - **Assessment**: Class discussion and journal entries will analyze how the various choices might be translated into performance.

- **Outcome**: Students will be familiar with the ways in which actors can shade or shape a text's meaning with their voices, gestures, silences, and expressions.
  - **Assessment**: In-class performance of scenes will demonstrate how ideas may be translated through speech, gesture, blocking, and movement. These performances will be videotaped and replayed for analysis and evaluation.
  - **Assessment**: Viewing different DVD or VHS versions of the same play will demonstrate how directors' and actors' choices compare or contrast with our own.

Objective 3: Make scholarly arguments about literature using reasons and ways of supporting those reasons that are appropriate to the field of study.
• **Outcome**: Students will be able to demonstrate the validity of a statement (one pertaining to the period, the author and the work under consideration) by analyzing and explicating its underlying assumptions and concepts.
  - **Assessment**: Twenty 300-word Journal entries based on questions from the course packet will assess the students' critical analysis of each play and a Final Paper, in which students explain how a successful (or failed) film production interpreted Shakespeare's text.

• **Outcome**: Students will have formulated a position on the "sanctity" of the "text" versus the need for editing for performance, and they will have developed an appreciation for the collaborative nature of production, that is, how all aspects of production give shape and meaning to a script – not just acting, but other elements as well, for example, the size and shape of the theatre itself, set design, blocking, lighting, costuming, music.
  - **Assessment**: An oral report discussing how a landmark film or theatrical production treats Shakespeare's text. This report will be the basis for the Final Paper.

• **Outcome**: Students will have a foundation for assessing the success or failure of a theatrical or film production, for deciding whether a production is "faithful" to Shakespeare, or "adapted" from Shakespeare, or merely "inspired" by Shakespeare.
  - **Assessment**: Class discussions will use DVD versions of Shakespeare's plays for scene-by-scene analysis, freeze frame analysis of interesting blocking, lighting, costume, prop, and gestural choices.

**Required Texts:**
*(All New Bantam Shakespeare editions, ed. David Bevington)*

- As You Like It
- Four Comedies
- Four Tragedies
- Measure for Measure, Troilus and Cressida, and All Well's That Ends Well
- The Late Romances

**Due Dates:**
- Taming of the Shrew (January 14)
- Midsummer Night's Dream (January 26)
- Merchant of Venice (January 28)
- As You Like It (February 4)
- EXAM # 1 (+ Journal Packet # 1, Entries 1-10) – February 11
- Measure for Measure (February 16)
- Troilus and Cressida (February 23)
- Hamlet (March 2)
- Macbeth (March 23)
- King Lear (April 6)
- The Tempest (April 20)
- FINAL PROJECT (April 27)
- FINAL EXAM (+ Journal Packet # 2, Entries 11-20) – See "My Pack Portal" for Exam Date

**Assignments:**
- Ten quizzes (on the day the play is DUE)
- Two Exams, including the Final
- **Course Journal** (Two packets Ten Due with Each Exam)
  - Journal is a *thoughtful reflection* in writing on the material we are studying in class.
  - The topics may be of your own choosing, based on your insights from your reading, or participation in class discussions.
  - You may also choose topics from a Study Guide to develop into a journal entry. (The Study Guides in your course pack are also designed for class, quiz, and test preparation).
  - A Journal Entry is a (minimum) 300-word reflection, about one typewritten page, double-spaced. Each entry should be numbered (top right corner).
  - You WILL SUBMIT 2 PACKETS OF TEN ENTRIES, ONE PACKET ON THE DAY OF EACH EXAM for a course total of 20. You will be graded for each submission.
  - Students who signed up late for the class will be expected to submit the same number of journals.
Final Project: Book Review or Scene Production: December 2

1. **Book Review:** Length = 8-10 pages.
   - **Subject:** A book ABOUT Shakespeare dealing with either:
     • His Life
     • His Times
     • His Work
   - **Structure:**
     • First Paragraph
       o Author and Title of the Work
       o When Written
       o Statement of Subject, Purpose and Theme
     • Body of Paper
       o Each Chapter of the Book should be summarized in a Paragraph.
       o Very long chapters can be broken down by section, a paragraph for each subsection.
     • Concluding Paragraph
       o A thoughtful PERSONAL analysis of the text, that is, how the book affected you – what you learned, how clearly it was written, how useful it was in augmenting the material of the course.

Work must be free of spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors. Use [MLA Format](http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/~jwalker/tutorials/mlaword.html) (For Word formatting, see http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/~jwalker/tutorials/mlaword.html).

2. **Scene Production:**
   - Choose a scene from any Shakespeare Play that takes approximately fifteen to twenty minutes to perform.
   - No more than 4 actors (doubling may occur for small roles).
   - Lines MUST be memorized.
   - Blocking, Gesture and Movement will be factored into grade.
   - Choose a "stage" that has a definable space, and specific places for entrances and exits. The "stage" may be a place carved out of the classroom.
   - Video Productions are acceptable.
   - (See this "Study Guide," pages 10 - 12 for more information.)

*Caveats:*

**Punctuality:** Proper work attitude and common courtesy require that each student be seated at the beginning of the class hour. **Lateness is unacceptable.**

**Attendance:** Students should never miss class except for sickness or some other legitimate excuse. Since each class hour involves meaningful, incremental work, a missed class is missed work and will therefore be noted. After **three** absences, the student will be contacted and advised to drop the course. Students who miss a quiz or an exam without a legitimate, verifiable excuse will receive a zero. Students who miss a quiz or an exam for a legitimate, verifiable excuse will be allowed to make up the missed work. Please see NCSU's Attendance Regulation (REG02.20.3): [http://www.ncs..edu/policies/academic_affairs/courses/REG02.20.3php](http://www.ncs..edu/policies/academic_affairs/courses/REG02.20.3php)

**Class Participation:** Participation means you come to class prepared to discuss the questions in your course pack relative to each play. If you have points to add, points of confusion, and points of interest, it is your responsibility to bring these to the class' attention. However, the classroom will be a space in which nobody's opinion, even mine, will be the only one accepted. It is essential that we deal with one another with respect and open minds in order to cultivate a positive classroom environment.
**Academic Integrity:** Students will be expected to uphold the North Carolina State University Honor Pledge at all times - "I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this test or assignment." You will be required to sign the pledge on each test or assignment turned in for evaluation. Any suspicion of plagiarism or violation of the code will be reported to the appropriate authorities. Always document your work appropriately and ask for help if you are unclear about how to avoid plagiarism. See the Code of Student Conduct Policy (POL11.35.1) for further clarification: [http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/student_services/student_discipline/POL11.35.1.php](http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/student_services/student_discipline/POL11.35.1.php)

**Students with Disabilities:** Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with Disability Service for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653. For more information of NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Regulation (REG02.20.1)

**Grading Policy:**

- An "A" grade on an essay is achieved by: (1) complete mastery of the material (2) illuminated with mature insight and with specific illustrations and/or details (3) presented in a readable style (4) with no grammar, usage, spelling, or punctuation errors.
- A "B" grade is achieved by demonstrating (1) reasonable mastery of the material (2) and adequate illustration and/or detail, (3) presented in a readable style (4) with no grammatical, usage, spelling, or punctuation errors, but (5) lacking the distinctive maturity of insight of the "A" paper.
- A "C" paper demonstrates (1) average mastery of the material, but (2) lacks maturity of insight, illustration, and specificity, (3) and shows some problems with usage, grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- A "D" paper demonstrates (1) little or no mastery of the material, (2) vague, evasive, and unsupported generalities, (3) and numerous errors in grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation.
- An "F" paper demonstrates no mastery and inadequate preparation in every particular.

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CRITICAL APPROACHES TO LITERARY WORKS

Other critics would define the following critical approaches differently, and some of them go by alternative names. Like all labels, these shift according to who is using them, in what context, and for what purpose. Anyone who relies even lightly on one of them should therefore define it carefully.

Other approaches exist, but this broad selection conveys some idea of the vast range of ways of illuminating literary works. Note that some claim to be universal while others are culturally or otherwise relative. Also note that while most of the approaches are centered in language, the text, the reader, the author, literary history, or cultural history, some combine two or more of these categories. Finally, keep in mind that any approach must be applied to particular works to be meaningful.

LANGUAGE

Editorial -- establishes a dependable text by collating textual variants, emending where necessary, and recovering lost meanings

Semiotic -- treats the text as a system of linguistic signifiers of meaning

TEXT

Textual -- concentrates on the actual words and patterns of meaning in a text; sometimes called the New Criticism, it accepts noting outside the text as valid evidence for an interpretation (Wimsatt and Beardsley, Brooks, Ransom)

Thematic -- textual, but concentrates on patterns of subject matter, such as youth and age, innocence and experience, past and present, etc., rather than language or technique

Symbolic -- textual, but concentrates on patterns of symbols

Genetic -- textual, but demonstrates the significance of the author’s revisions of early drafts and editions

Formalist -- textual, but concentrates on elements of form, such as cantos, chapters, stages of argument, sequences of narrative, etc.

Structuralist -- tries to find the deep structure of a work, the form behind the form; for instance, a poem or novel could manifest the structure of a debate while appearing to tell a story; often emphasizes binary oppositions (Levi-Strauss, Scholes)

Deconstructionist -- uses the weapons of structuralism to expose the "undecidable" multiplicity of meanings of the text (Derrida, Miller, de Man)

Rhetorical -- textual, but concentrates on either (1) structures and patterns of local language, such as diction and syntax and figures of speech, or (2) the intended effect on the audience: to inform, entertain, persuade, etc.

Stylistic -- isolates key features of style, especially those that set an author apart (Spitzer)

Touchstone -- reflects Arnold’s belief that great works share qualities which are universal, that is, independent of particular times and places; assumes human nature never changes.
TEXT/READER/PERFORMER

**Perspectivist** -- claims that the meaning of the text changes depending on who is interpreting it (Ortega y Gasset)

**Prismatic** -- claims that the text stays the same, but different people see different aspects (Leavis, Colie)

**Performance** -- uses the techniques of theatre (blocking, movement, phrasing, gesturing, emotion, costuming, editing, music, lighting, etc.) to interpret and project meanings. Suggests actors’ and directors’ choice are critical statements.

**READER**

**Reader response** -- emphasizes the responses of a reader, often an ideal reader, or a given audience, such as the author’s contemporaries or the audience the author had in mind and implied in the work

**Affective, impressionist** -- concentrates on individual readers’ responses, often emotional, to a work; labeled the affective fallacy by textual critics; sometimes assumes most people react roughly the same way (Fish)

**Freudian** -- analyzes the work’s place in the author’s or reader’s psychic economy according to Freudian ideas, such as superego, id, ego, repression, projection, sublimation, genital imagery, etc. (Freud, Bloom)

**Mythic** -- demonstrates how a text reveals archetypal patterns characteristic of (1) the collective unconscious (Jung), (2) myths which govern multiple cultures (Frazer, Eliade), or (3) universal cycles of literary stages (Frye).

**AUTHOR**

**Russian formalist** -- asks how the work fulfills an authorial purpose which shapes it

**Intentionalist** -- shows or guesses what the author’s intention is, through internal or external evidence, then judges how well he/she fulfills it; labeled the biographical or intentional fallacy by textual critics

**Biographical** -- interrelates the text and the central concerns of the author’s life

**Expressive** -- places the work within the development of the author’s creative processes

**Oeuvre** -- shows how the author’s works illuminate each other

**LITERARY HISTORY**

**Literary history** -- examines common concerns among writers at a given time and place and how those concerns change over time; also includes studies of sources and influences

**Source or influence study** -- demonstrates how earlier works or authors or schools affect later ones, how a literary work grows out of its past

**Period** -- usually defined with reference either to historical events or to groups of authors with common interests (often labeled schools); emphasizes the common characteristics of a group of works within a given period
National -- emphasizes the common characteristics of the works of a given nation, usually in a given period

Conventional -- determines conventional practices of groups of artists and examines how they are adopted or adapted or transformed by later artists

Generic -- tries to classify a work as belonging to a genre (e.g., ode, pastoral, tragedy, satire) by comparing its characteristics to generic conventions; a more sophisticated sort looks at how a work combines or transforms genres, which are seen as arbitrary

Futurist -- claims some works prophesy the problems or concerns of a later time, that they are ahead of their time, literarily or culturally

CULTURAL HISTORY

Mimetic -- judges how close a work comes to imitating or representing reality; assumes reality, which many thinkers see as relative or non-existent, absolutely exists; example: "holding a mirror up to nature"

Cultural, anthropological -- shows how a work reflects an important aspect of the culture of its time, such as its attitudes toward the roles of women, or education, or various social rituals

History of ideas -- shows how the work reflects or advances an idea held in the culture at the time the work was written; example: the Great Chain of Being (Lovejoy)

Moral -- extracts moral instruction from works; looks down on works which don't provide enough (Plato)

Sociological -- applies an interpretation of the sociological makeup of the author's or another culture to the work

Feminist -- sociological, but concentrates on assumptions about men, women, and their relationships, familial and other, held by a given author of a given sex in a given culture; sometimes compares those assumptions to a standard of political, economic, and cultural equality for men and women; sometimes ideological in resistance to what is seen as masculine hegemony

Marxist -- analyzes a work by applying Marxist theory, such as the exploitation of the lower classes, the progress of history through class struggle, materialism, false consciousness, etc.
USEFUL QUESTIONS ABOUT DRAMA

1. Who is the main character? What are his traits? His prominent virtues and weaknesses? If there is no individual protagonist, identify the prominent character group which seems to function as one.

2. Is there an antagonist? Is he a complex character, a mixture of good or bad, or a character dominated by an obsession, a compulsion, a particular set of beliefs?

3. Do the other characters have any special function? Do they provoke special response from either of the characters or groups mentioned above? Are they spokesmen for ideas which make much of the dialogue in the play?

4. Does any character individualize himself in the language the playwright has written for him? Does he speak consistently in prose, verse, or a predictable choice of either? Does the figurative language (simile and metaphor) or the pattern of allusions in the play suggest another element?

5. If the play is a comedy, is it romance or satire? Does it make fun of human folly, or treat an institution or a class ironically or satirically? Does the dramatic action of the play suggest the playwright’s attitude? Does the playwright have any sensitivity toward the gulf which separates the actual from the ideal?

6. If the play is a history, on what issue does it focus? Who develops the positions (points of view or attitudes) which constitute the issue? If there is more than one issue, is there any hierarchy to their arrangement in the play, whether causal or otherwise?

7. If the play is a tragedy, what element of conflict or thought dominates the tragic action. What is tragic about the playwright’s treatment of an idea or theme prominent in the play.

8. Does the action of the play develop along one plane or many? Can you find the main elements of the plot? If the play develops along many plot lines or planes, can you keep them straight? Can you determine when and how the playwright merges them?

9. Does the play have any moral or human significance? Does its theme, plot or characterization have any universal significance? Does the playwright draw attention to important problems, issues, or follies of existence? Are there any answers, whether implicit or explicit? Is any one of them prominent?

10. Does the play represent the dramatist’s view of the world or the universe? Is his view sentimental, romantic, humanistic, satiric, cynical, ironic, etc? Does he content himself with merely displaying evil or does he lead his audience to a conclusion? Do you approve of the conclusion?
GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR ACTING GROUPS

**ALL** the actors in the group are responsible for getting the best performance out of the group. Group creativity, No room for the prima donna or for that matter for the falsely modest.

Discover as soon as possible what your character is like and how he relates to other characters, to the scene as a whole. Time will be at a minimum; come to rehearsals **prepared** with ideas.

Unless you bring your character alive, he/she stays inert.

The director is responsible for assigning parts, and coordinating efforts, and for final artistic effect.

Groups may also need a "producer" -- someone responsible for arranging rehearsal times and places, seeing to props, etc.

Borrow players if you need them, but not for major parts. Each group is responsible for developing its own talent as fully as possible.

Scenes will be done at the start of the period. Let’s make it a practice to be ready to start **on time**.

Programs: Provide about 40 programs for the class -- date, play, scene, who acts part(s), director, etc. Dittos available from English Department.

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SOME HINTS ON PRODUCTION AND INTERPRETATION

**DON’T** play Shakespeare statuesquely or statically. The group as a whole should be intent on MOVING a scene from beginning to end. GET MEANINGFUL MOTION, psychological and physical (thus stillness too will come to have meaning).

Cut and re-shape scenes as necessary. Don’t suppose your audience will be following in books; your production is to make it all clear.

Dramatic characters don’t exist to read lines or speeches at each other. They LIVE, perform life motions meaningfully; those life motions include speech.

Although you do only one scene, be conscious of its part in the whole **play**.

When you are not speaking, **LISTEN, REACT**.
Be alert for comedy an humor, even in situations which moderns tend to treat solemnly (e.g. see R II, R & J).

Be aware of the many small rituals and use them dramatically. Do they succeed? Are they aborted? Ironic?
PLANNING A PRODUCTION

I. Classification of the Play in relation to overall controls
   A. Kind of Play
   B. Particular theatre and audience
   C. Conventions
   D. Style

II. Analysis of the Play by the 6 means that create structure and texture
   A. Structure
      1. Plot
      2. Character
      3. Theme
   B. Texture
      1. Dialogue
      2. Music (mood and rhythm)
      3. Spectacle

III. Choice of materials and techniques
   A. For the director
      1. Materials: action, space, time, lines, form, color, light
      2. Techniques: composition, picturization of relationship, movement, pantomimic dramatization, rhythm
   B. For the actor
      1. Materials: Body, voice, thought, feeling
      2. Techniques: reading lines, movement, pantomimic dramatization
   C. For the designer
      1. Materials: space, line, form, color, movement
      2. Techniques: cutting down from realism, building up from action, exploiting qualities of mood and atmosphere, treating scenery as idea or metaphor

CHARACTER HISTORY

I. Parents
   A. Their background
      1. location/ where they grew up (country, city, suburb)
      2. financial status/ occupation
      3. education
   B. Their relationships
1. With each other  
2. With you  
3. With your siblings  
4. Are they happy? If so, why?

II. General Self  
A. Your background  
1. Where you grew up  
2. Education  
3. Upbringing  
4. Hobbies

III. Character Personality  
A. Strengths  
1. What characteristic are you most proud of?  
2. What are your likes?  
3. What makes you happy?  
4. What do you find funny?  
B. Weaknesses  
1. What is your strongest character flaw?  
2. What are your dislikes  
3. What makes you sad/ angry/ frustrated?  
4. What tempts you? What are your vices?  
5. What are your troubles?

IV. Thought Questions  
A. Personal  
1. What is your goal in life? Are you getting it?  
   Does it change with the course of events?  
2. What is your most significant life experience?  
   How has it affected your life?  
3. Whom do you care about most?  

B. Interpersonal  
1. What is your relationship with the other characters?  
   Leave no one out - be specific  
2. How do you affect your environment? (Passive/ Aggressive)

V. Externals  
A. Posture  
1. How does your character stand?  
2. How does your character sit?  
3. How does your character carry himself when speaking?  

B. Movement  
1. How does your character walk?  
2. Where does your character derive his/her energy? (What part of the body)  
3. How does your character address others in gestures?
COURTLY LOVE

As an integrated body of attitudes in male-female relationships, courtly love (romantic love, *fin amour*) seems to have begun in the south of France in the eleventh century.

The fundamental experience:

1. The man deifies the woman. She is a goddess, perfect in all respects. (Later the roles interpenetrate and the lovers idealize each other.)

2. Since he beholds and loves a perfect being, he is painfully aware of his own imperfection and shabbiness. Yet, he is overjoyed simply to know she exists.

3. Therefore, the lover’s state vacillates widely between anguish and bliss, agony and beatitude. Can’t eat, can’t sleep; sighs, weeps. (Cf. Romeo, Don Quixote.)

4. As a mortal loving a goddess, he undertakes all manner of works in her honor; these could include knightly feats, poetry. He knows, however, that he can never deserve her love.

5. Any grace that the lady shows the lover—to speak his name, accept his gifts—is an act of mercy: freely bestowed, not owed, as from a god to a mortal.

6. Although the lady is beautiful, the love is not physical, primarily, but a beholding of inner perfections.

7. To experience love and to devote oneself to it is a purifying and ennobling experience. (Hence the proverb "'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all."

#   #   #   #

Later analysts (esp. Denis de Rougemont, *Love in the Western World*) have seen that an essential ingredient of courtly love is separation. Your love is for her (him) with whom you cannot be (because of feuds, distance, marriage, etc.)

The state of absent longing is itself necessary to this kind of love. One functional reason for this, of course, is that sustained contact makes deification impossible.

Courtly love is thus quite different from other kinds of love, e.g. *caritas*, which on a daily basis creates loving relationships with others who (like oneself) are recognized as imperfect. Courtly love rejects the real day-to-day world. Can’t exist in it; contradiction in terms. The great courtly loves tales (e.g. Tristan and Isolde) end in death. Later, as adapted for happy endings, the lovers marry and "live happily ever after."

A strong positive value in courtly love: creates a sense of wonder, awe about another person, ultimate value in that person. Denies merely erotic love, marriages of convenience, expletive love. This will be useful to Chaucer, Donne, Shakespeare, and others who transform the courtly love convention.

#   #   #   #
Literary consequences. Innumerable love songs and poems are written about the courtly love experience. These are imitated and translated throughout France, Italy, Germany, Spain. Writers draw on a conventional stock of metaphors and conceits (eyes like stars, teeth like pearls, etc.) The lady of courtly love was typically blond and blue-eyed.

Petrarch and Dante managed to incorporate the courtly love code into literary works that transcend the code itself.

Almost as soon as it began, courtly love was satirized. Yet it persisted, remaining both a serious set of feelings and a target for satire (see Romeo and Juliet, and Chaucer’s Troilus and Criseyde and Canterbury Tales).

Shakespeare’s Sonnet 130, about his love for the “dark lady,” mocks many of the common descriptions in courtly love poems:

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

An extremely powerful influence in the western world, courtly love attitudes still persist and permeate our culture in, e.g. love relationships, music, etc.
Shakespearean Comedy

I. The Spirit of Shakespearean Comedy

II. Subject Matter of Shakespearean Comedy

III. Variety of Attitudes towards Love in Shakespearean Comedy
   A. Social
   B. Satiric
   C. Realistic
   D. Romantic

IV. General Plot Formula in Shakespearean Comedy

V. Relevant Theories of Comedy
   A. Traditional
      1. Horatian
      2. Juvenalian
   B. Contemporary
      1. Frye
         a. Mythical vs. Primitive Basis of Comedy
         b. Urban World vs. Green World
      2. Barber = Through Release to Clarification
         a. Release - "Saturnalia"
         b. Clarification
         c. "Twelfth Night"

VI. Stock Features of Shakespearean Comedy (A-P)
   A. Chains of Lovers
   B. Multiple Plots
   C. Clown servants = usually used as commentators on the actions of the aristocrats
   D. Girl lovers disguised as boys
      (Elizabethan conversion of boy actors added to purpose and confusion)
   E. Strong willed independent females who are constant and more "realistic" than their male counterparts
   F. Urban vs. rural setting -- "values" in conflict
   G. Festive spirit of forest, or "fantasy" place (fused with pastoral ideal)
   H. The ubiquitous "spoil-sport" or "kill-joy" who becomes a comic butt
   I. Joyous, festive finales - the spirit of older medieval folk tales (Breughel painting) - which provides some Sense of Renewal
   J. Conflict between youth and age -- youth winning
   K. Carefully calculated mixture of verse and prose
   L. Conflict between friendship and love
   M. Theme of the overriding importance yet relativity of love
   N. Theme of love's power to transform
   O. Elaborate use of music
P. Widespread use of travel motifs (journeys of and for discovery)

VII. In *A Natural Perspective* (New York: Harcourt, 1965), Northrop Frye explains that "the mythical backbone of all literature is the cycle of nature, which rolls from birth to death and back again to rebirth." He adds that "comedy is based on the second half of the great cycle, moving from death to birth, decadence to renewal, winter to spring, darkness to new dawn." The movement, in short, is from "sterility to renewed life." (pp. 119-122) This new life is usually manifested in what Frye calls "the birth of a new society symbolized by a closing festive scene featuring a wedding, a banquet, or a dance." (p. 72) C. L. Barber’s *Shakespeare’s Festive Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1959) refers to *AYLI* as a dramatization of love’s intensity as the release of a festive moment...the most perfect expression Shakespeare or anyone else achieved of a poise which was possible because a traditional way of living connected different kinds of experience to each other. The play articulates fully the feeling for the rhythms of life..." (p. 238) Susanne Langer, in *Feeling and Form* (New York: Scribner’s, 1953), also refers to the principle of poise ("balance" or "equilibrium") and these "rhythms of life" which she describes as "organic processes" which point to the "essence of comedy." She observes that: "An organism tends to keep its equilibrium amid the bombardment of aimless forces that beset it, to regain its equilibrium when it has been disturbed, and to pursue a sequence of actions dictated by the need of keeping all its interdependent parts constantly renewed, their structures intact...When this rhythm is disturbed, all activities are modified by the break: the organism as a whole is out of balance. But within a wide range of conditions, it struggles to retrieve its original dynamic form by overcoming and removing the obstacle, or if this proves impossible, it develops a slight variation of its typical form and carries on life with a new balance of functions -- in other words it adapts itself to the situation...Mankind itself has its rhythm of animal existence too -- the strain of maintaining a vital balance amid the alien and impartial chances of the world, complicated and heightened by passionable desires." (pp. 328, 330) Langer further declares that what "springs from that basic rhythm" is the "pure sense of life...This human life-feeling is the essence of comedy. It is at once religious and ribald, knowing and defiant, social and freakishly individual...What ever the theme...the immediate sense of life is the underlying feeling of comedy, and dictates its rhythmically structured unity, that is to say its organic form. Comedy is an art form that arises naturally wherever people are gathered to celebrate life, in spring festivals, triumphs, birthdays, weddings, or initiations. For it expresses the elementary strains and resolutions of animate nature, the animal drives that persist even in human nature, the delight man takes in his special mental gifts that make him the lord of creation; it is an image of human vitality holding its own in the world amid surprises of unplanned coincidence." (p. 331) See also Helen Gardner’s essay "As You Like It," reprinted in *The Signet edition of AYLI*, pp. 212-230.
1. Some critics have accused TS of being a "brutal and degrading play," "a callous situation farce," with a final scene that is altogether disgusting to the modern sensibility." Do you agree with these comments? Cite instances to support or refute these views.

2. TS is often described as a "farce" or a comedy mixed liberally with farcical elements. First, distinguish between farce and comedy; then, decide whether TS is one or the other, or more one than the other. If you believe TS is a farce, or predominantly farcical, how should this affect our response to (a) character development (more mechanical?) and (b) the theme(s) (trivial and insignificant)?

3. In "The Basis of Shakespearean Comedy," Nevill Coghill distinguished between satiric and romantic modes of comedy:
   a. "The Satiric concerns a middle way of life, town dwellers, humble and principal characters with some bitterness for their vices and teaches what is useful and expedient in life and what is to be avoided."
   b. "The Romantic expresses the idea that life is to be grasped. It is the opposite of Tragedy in that the catastrophe solves all confusions and misunderstandings by some happy turn of events. It commonly includes love-making and running off with girls."
   Would you place TS in either of these categories. Explain.

4. Is Kate's shrewish behavior totally unmotivated? Is she a shrew by nature, or are there more compelling reasons (psychological, cultural, gender-related) for her behavior? Does Kate unconsciously or secretly long for a suitor?

5. Discuss the falcon conceit (IV, i, 182 ff) and its appropriateness to the psychological process by which Petruchio "tames" Kate. Is it a sound and healthy (or at least harmless) process, or is it outrageous and potentially dangerous? Is Petruchio's methodology closer to Freud's or to Pavlov's?

6. Kate, Petruchio, and Sly are generally conceded to be the play's best characterizations. Why should they be referred to as "round" characters, and others, including Lucio and Bianca, be referred to as "flat" characters?

7. Has Petruchio radically changed Kate's personality from what it was, or has he rather "harmonized and ordered the elements of a personality without doing violence to its essential selfhood? (Barton). Has Petruchio's personality changed by Act V? If so, describe the nature and extent of his change?

8. In one of Sh's sources, the Petruchio figure physically abuses (whipping, confinement) the shrew. In Sh's play, however, Petruchio never physically touches Kate in a rude or violent way. Is this a significant alteration? What does it suggest about Sh's purpose and the ultimate meaning of the play?

9. The way we interpret Kate's final speech (V, ii, 136-178) determines our interpretation of the play's tone and central theme. Should her words, here, be taken literally, or ironically? Is Kate being truly submissive, or subtly domineering? In other words, has Petruchio genuinely tamed Kate, or has she perhaps tamed him? Some other outcome? Is Sh having Kate discourse on the woman's proper role in marriage, or is he "satirizing male attitudes towards woman"? Looked at from the perspective of mode: is the play a satiric comedy with and ironic view of the male/female, husband/wife relationship, or is it a straightforward farce re-stating the traditional Elizabethan belief in male superiority?
If you believe _TS_ is a satiric comedy communicating an ironic view, can you cite specific words, verses, or incidents to support this view? If, on the other hand, you believe that _TS_ is primarily a farce, would you argue that the "contemporary" view is an improper imposition of current attitudes on a play written in and for a culture whose attitudes were very different from ours? Are such considerations relevant or irrelevant?

If Sh did intend Kate's lines to be understood in a strictly literal sense, is it therefore safe to assume that her words state his definitive view of the husband/wife relationship?

10. _TS_ is generally acclaimed for its structural unity, the skill with which the component parts (shrew taming, love intrigue, gulling of Sly) are "carefully and subtly integrated" into a "triple action play" (Hosley, Pelican).
   a. Show how the two parallel actions of the Kate-Petruchio plot and the Bianca-Lucentio plot are "welded" in this play.
   b. Show how the Sly plot, though not explicitly related to the action of the main plot, is implicitly related to the theme of the main plot.

11. In each of the 3 plots in this "triple action play," there are transformations of identity (temporary and permanent) and personality. Make a list of the characters experiencing these transformations, and determine what Sh is saying about the human personality and human identity? Show how the three plots consist of a complex of compared and contrasted poses and assumptions (supposes) about identity and personality. Are personalities truly capable of such transformations? Will the human mind yield so easily to training, suggestion, or programming? If so, what necessary preconditions must be satisfied?

12. Although Christopher Sly appears in the Induction, there is no Epilogue to balance and complete the action begun in the Induction that at first seems intended to "frame" the Taming plot. Doesn't proper symmetry demand an Epilogue? Is the play complete without one? Explore some possible reasons for the absence of an Epilogue.

13. What do the Lord's experiment, in the Induction, and Petruchio's experiment, in the main plot, suggest about the human imagination? Could such a suggestion be extended to include the relationship between the spectator of a play and the play itself? What happens in a live performance of drama that might be akin to the situation Sh depicts in _TS_ (Greenfield)?

14. The love theme in _TS_:
   a. Pettet: "Love in this play is an intrigue, a business, or even an education, but never a romance."
   c. Sen Gupta: "Intrigue never overwhelms romance in this play and nothing is added to human understanding."

Which comment is closer to the mark? Why?

15. Compare and contrast the love relationships of the Lucentio-Bianca plot and the Petruchio-Kate plot. Are the relationships generally similar, or are there qualitative, substantive differences between them? Explain.

16. Van Doren: "The language of the play, or at any rate of the play as it concerns Katherine and Petruchio, is everywhere vigorous and vernacular, and healthily grown over with tough local terms. Read some passages (especially IV, i, 132: 160; IV, iii, 64-67: 81-82; 88-91: 107-112), and discuss the contribution such language makes to the general mood and meaning of the play.
Midsummer Night's Dream

1. In his famous Diary, Samuel Pepys refers to MND as "the most insipid ridiculous play that I ever saw in my life." What bias, or "premise of taste," informs his perspective?

2. How would you stage and direct this play in order to evoke the tone, mood, and meaning Shakespeare intended? What kinds of props, lighting effects, acting techniques would be appropriate?

3. Does MND have a protagonist? Who is it? Defend your answer.

4. Lysander states, in Act I, that "the course of true love never did run smooth." Explore the validity of this statement with regard to all the love relationships in MND: Theseus-Hippolyta, the four young lovers, Oberon-Titania, and Pyramus-Thisbe.

5. W. Clemen has stated that the main theme of the drama is the "transitoriness and inconstancy of love." Discuss the manner in which the imagery throughout MND supports this theme, and cite specific instances. Consider how this theme, with a slight shift in emphasis might easily lend itself to tragedy.

6. Sort out the four plots in MND; then, show how their intersecting and inter-relating, their contrasts and juxtapositions help to disclose the meaning of the drama.

7. In MND, other worlds impinge on the mortal world of ordinary human beings. What effects are achieved by these intrusions of the extra-natural? Are the fairies’ intrusions motivated by any plan or purpose? Are they in control? If so, how far does this control extend? If not, who is in control?

8. The play seems to end after four acts. Is this a structural weakness in the plot? Is Act V a theatrical expedient, or is it a purposeful extension? In other words, is there any special significance, structurally and thematically, in the play-within-the-play?

9. Describe the several uses of verse and prose in MND. How does the story of the craftsmen form a satirical counter-balance to the plot of the lovers? Note the difference between comedy and farce.

10. Comment on the significance of the play’s title. How does Shakespeare create the illusion of a dream sequence. Give some specific instances from the test.

11. Read I,ii and III, i where Bottom and his friends prepare a play for Theseus’ wedding. What is their underlying conception about the nature of theatrical experience? Discuss these scenes in light of what goes on in their performance in V,i. Describe their acting styles and treatment of certain theatrical conventions. Also, discuss the way(s) in which their confusion about theatre mirrors the confusion in the main plot about love, about the nature of reality vis-a-vis fantasy.

12. Study Theseus’ speech about "lunatics, lovers, and poets" (V, i, 2-22). To what extent, and in what ways, is MND a practical illustration of his remarks? How do these remarks define the imaginative, poetic process? (See also V, i, 210-214; and Bottom’s Dream: IV, i, 201ff).

13. Is the distinction between reality and fantasy, rationality and irrationality (Theseus vs. Hippolyta) made clear in this play? Where do Shakespeare’s sympathies lie? Does he seem to place more confidence in a rational skepticism? Or does he prefer the unbridled power of the imagination? Or does he perhaps
imply that such distinctions, themselves, are illusory— that substance and shadow are not distinct but rather inseparable?

14. Which of these views do you prefer?

A. Barber: In promoting the mastery of passion by expression, dramatic art can provide a civilized equivalent for exorcism...it keeps moving through release to clarification...And skepticism is the solution (or clarification) throughout the play (see "lunatic" speech)...The value of humor, and the finest pleasure in it depends on the seriousness of what it makes into fun. It is easy to be gay by taking a trivial theme or by trivializing an important theme. After examining the structure and artifice of MND, we can now ask how much reality it masters by its mirth...The confident assumption dominant in MND, that substance and shadow can be kept separate, determines the peculiarly unshadowed gaiety of the fun it makes with fancy. Its organization by polarities -- everyday-holiday, town-grove, day-night, waking-dreaming -- provides a remarkable resource for mastering passionate experience...Did it happen or didn’t it? Doubt is justified.

B. Hunter: The problem posed between moonlight or "dream" on the one hand, and daylight or "reality" on the other, is one whose usefulness is disrupted by too vigorous an attempt to judge the different levels. Was the adventure of the lovers true or false, real or imaginary? The play would seem to answer 'both true and false.' For Theseus it is false, for Theseus lives in a rational daylight world...But the lovers can live in the result of their "dream" without worrying about the status of its truth. For them, as for most men, unconscious adjustments are acceptable if they work, and are not made more acceptable by being understood.
1. Is *MV* fantasy or reality? a tragedy? tragicomedy? or comedy? What did Shakespeare intend? Is the play consistent with his intention, or did he "lose control" at some point?

2. Plots are generally broken down according to exposition, rising action, climax and denouement. Which episodes comprise the exposition, rising action, climax, and denouement of *MV*?

3. The setting in *MV* is divided between Venice and Belmont. Show how the contrasts in values between these two places highlight the major conflicts of the play and point to its central themes.

4. How is the Lorenzo-Jessica sub-plot a conventional romantic comedy in miniature? Does the wedding of Lorenzo and Jessica have any symbolic implications? Why the lengthy dialogue on "night" in Act V?

5. "The play does not end with Shylock’s exit because, small as it is, the business of the rings is analogous to the caskets and the bond in working the theme(s) of the play to its (their) conclusion(s)." Explain.

6. Is the trial scene (IV, i) a comic scene? Consider the role of Gratiano and the treatment of Shylock. How does this scene affect an audience? Might an Elizabethan audience have been affected differently than a modern audience is? Explain.

7. How necessary are the interchange of rings and the bawdy talk in Act V? Are they at all relevant to theme?

8. What is the dramatic function of the characters Solario and Solanio? Is it significant that their names are so similar?


10. Who is the central character of *MV*? Defend your choice.

11. The trial scene (IV, i), in general outline, resembles the structure of a morality play, in which competing forces of good and evil struggle for possession of Everyman. Discuss this idea with reference to the appropriate allegorical characters.

12. Isn’t Shylock the victim (in IV, i) of a verbal quibble? Isn’t it taken for granted that blood is necessarily spilt when flesh is cut, and that Portia’s distinction is valid only if the contract had specifically stipulated that blood should not be spilt?

13. Is the characterization of Shylock anti-Semitic? What are Shylock’s reasons for hating Antonio?

14. Is Shylock a tragic or comic character? Both? Is he a victim or agent? Does his suffering cause villainy, or does his villainy cause his suffering? What was Shakespeare’s intention?

15. Shylock is a complex and dominating character (though he appears in only five scenes). He appears in three roles: an old miserly father; a Jew; and a usurer. Describe him in each of these roles. Wherein lies the complexity?
16. Antonio, Bassanio, Gratiano, and Jessica are very often judged in their relationships to Shylock. How do they appear in this light? Is it fair to judge them this way?

17. Is the judgment that Shylock accept Christianity a fair one? Is it a punishment or a reward? Consider this from the point of view of Shylock, the Duke, Antonio, and Shakespeare.

18. In one of Shakespeare’s sources (II Pecorone), Antonio (Ansaldo) is the god-father of Bassanio (Gianetto). Why does Shakespeare change the relationship?

19. In another of Shakespeare’s sources (Gesta Romanorum), the choice of caskets is presented as a moral exemplum. Does Shakespeare convey a moral in his casket scene? If so, what is it?

20. Consider Bassanio’s speech before choosing the true casket (III, ii, 73-106). What does he say about appearances and reality? Where else in the play are his ideas played out? How many characters have difficulty separating appearance from reality?

21. "Shakespeare echoes Elizabethan distaste for usury and usurers, but he creates a paradox wherein usury can also denote love. Shakespeare uses the concept of usury in the sense of love and hate in Belmont, as well as in Venice. This illustrates many details in the play." Explain.

22. During the trial scene, Bassanio urges the disguised Portia "To do a great right, do a little wrong, -- / And curb this cruel devil of his will." Why does Portia immediately reject this suggestion?

23. Relate the "3 trials" in the play (the caskets, the bond, the rings) in terms of the characters involved, the conditions laid down, related ideas and their outcome.

24. Commenting on Shakespeare’s artistic use of poetry within the medium of drama, a critic has noted that "a unifying element of verse is phrasal repetition in varying forms and for varying purposes." Consider the following excerpts, explain the varying forms, purposes, and effects: (a) III,i; (b) III,ii, 150-157; (c) III,ii, 252-263; (d) V,i, 1-24; (e) V,i, 192-208.

25. Music provides an important motif in MV (as in other Shakespeare comedies and romances), especially in Act V (Contrast with II, v, 29). What is the purpose of the music. Relate your answer to character and theme. (See Northrop Frye’s A Natural Perspective, pp. 119 and 136.

26. "One quality of MV is...(that) its characters are capable of many different interpretations. Their apparent reality encourages this, and so does the tendency to view them outside their dramatic context, in the light of partisan predispositions. They are complex creations and all critics have not see the same aspects." (a) Do you agree? (b) How might partisan predispositions be served in interpretations of MV?
Twelfth Night

1. The events of Twelfth Night are highly fantastical. Does the improbability of the circumstance weaken the reader's (or the audience's) response? How would you cast the twins? What is required of the reader/audience in order to respond to this play?

2. What actions constitute the main plot? the sub-plot? Are the plots clearly differentiated? Or do the actions intertwine? What themes are counterpointed in the two plots?

3. Shakespeare again uses the disguise motif. How is it similar to or different from his usage in Much Ado? Show in what way Viola's disguise is absolutely essential to the action of the play. Consider what would happen without it.

4. Would Elizabethan audiences respond differently to this disguising from the modern audience? Why? Why not?

5. Sir Toby claims that the gulling of Malvolio is done "For our pleasure and his penance." How accurate is this statement? Are the elements of pleasure and penance balanced, or does one of them predominate? Does the gulling of Malvolio, in any way, parody the action of the main plot?

6. Why does Shakespeare draw out the recognition scene between Sebastian and Viola (V, i)? Shouldn't Sebastian and Viola have recognized one another sooner? or do they? Overall, if they do recognize one another, how do they express it? If you were a director, how would you block this final scene?

7. Is Feste's final song relevant to the plot? Is it in keeping with his role? Does it suggest a theme?

8. How would the roles of Orsino and Olivia be acted in order to fully realize the characters Shakespeare created? Is Orsino not a figure of fun? Orsino states that "such as I am, all true lovers are." Is this true?

9. Describe the following characters, and explain their function in the plot (i.e., their dramatic function): a) Maria; b) Sir Toby Belch; c) Sir Andrew Aguecheek; d) Malvolio; e) Sebastian; f) Antonio; g) Feste.

10. Does the placing of Malvolio in a dark room seem appropriate? Are there any symbolic implications in the action?

11. Malvolio has been called a "semi-tragic figure" and a "truly righteous man." (See Lamb criticism.) Do you agree?

12. Both Orsino and Malvolio have very distinctive speech habits. Analyze or describe these habits by comparing and contrasting the style of a passage like, I, 1-15, with that of a passage like II, v, 139-175 or III, iv, 67-88.

   Compare what Feste says about the nature of speech, and the way Viola actually handles, words, e.g. in I, v, 166 ff.

13. Is there any significance to the play's title? sub-title?
14. Consider the names "Viola," "Olivia," and "Malvolio." Is Shakespeare using anagrams to make a point, or is this just a playful curiosity?

15. Discuss the themes of dissimulation and deception in TN. How often are they manifest? What is Shakespeare's intended meaning?

16. Consider the varieties of love and human folly in TN. Wherein does "true love" and human wisdom reside? Does Shakespeare imply his meaning through character contrasts?

17. Does Shakespeare believe that love is an affair of the imagination, or of the heart? Develop your answer with reference to specific characters and situations. Compare his attitude, here, with his attitude in other romantic comedies.

18. Many of the characters in TN besides Malvolio are called "mad" on occasion. (I, v. 136-37, p. 885; II, iii, 87, p. 889; III, iv, 13-14, p. 898; IV, i, 27, p. 902; IV, i, 61, p. 901; IV, iii, 1-21, p. 904). Discuss the different uses of the term in two or three passages. To what extent is it possible to say that the play is about madness?

19. Discuss the different kinds of humor in TN (e.g. visual, verbal, satiric, non-satiric). Try to characterize the type of laughter provoked by each.

20. TN is one of Shakespeare's most musical plays. Discuss the various kinds of music in the play and uses to which Shakespeare puts them. Consider also the different attitudes towards music expressed in the dialogue.

CRITICAL COMMENTS

William Hazlitt. (TN) is perhaps too good natured for comedy. It has little satire, and no spleen. It aims at the ludicrous rather than the ridiculous. It makes us laugh at the follies of mankind, not despise them, and still less bear any ill will towards them.

Charles Lamb. (Malvolio's) rebuke to the knight, and his sottish revellers, is sensible and spirited; and when we take into consideration the unprotected condition of his mistress and the strict regard with which her state of real or dissembled mourning would draw the eyes of the world upon her house affairs, Malvolio might feel the honour of the family in some sort in his keeping...Even in his abused state of chains, a sort of greatness seems never to desert him.

John Hollander. The action of TN is indeed that of a Revels, a suspension of mundane affairs during a brief epoch in a temporary world of indulgence, a land full of food, drink, love, play, disguise and music. But music and parties end, and the reveller eventually becomes satiated and drops heavily into his worldly self again. The fact that the plays were categorized as "revells" for institutional purposes may have appealed to Shakespeare; he seems at any rate to have analyzed the dramatic and moral nature of feasting, and to have made it the subject of his play. His analysis is schematized in Orsino's opening speech.

Joseph Summers. (In TN) every character has his mask, for the assumption of the play is that no one is without a mask in the serio-comic business of he pursuit of happiness. The character without disguises who is not ridiculous is outside the realm of comedy. Within comedy, the character who thinks it possible to live without assuming a mask is merely too naive to recognize the mask he has already assumed. He is the chief object of
laughter. As a general rule, we laugh with the characters who know the role they are playing and we laugh at those who do not; we can crudely divide the cast of TN into those two categories.

C. L. Barber. The festive comedies achieve clarification through release. Release is expressed by making the whole experience of the play like that of a revel... The clarification achieved by the festive comedies is concomitant to the release they dramatize: a heightened awareness of the relation between man and "nature" -- the nature celebrated on holiday. The process of translating festive experience into drama involved extending the sort of awareness traditionally associated with holiday, and also becoming conscious of holiday itself in a new way. The plays present a mockery of what is unnatural which gives scope and point to the sort of scoffs and jests shouted by dancers in the churchyard or in "quaint mazes in the wanton green." And they include another, complementary mockery of what is merely natural, a humor which puts holiday in perspective with life as a whole. The butts in the festive plays consistently exhibit their unnaturalness by being kill-joys. On an occasion full of warm blood, of mirth, they are too preoccupied with perverse satisfactions like pride or greed to let the world "slip" and join the dance.

C. L. Barber. Each of the festive comedies tends to focus on a particular kind of folly that is released along with love--witty masquerade in LL, delusive fantasy in MND, romance in AYLT, and in MV, prodigality balanced against usury. TN deals with the sort of folly which the title points to, the folly of misrule. But the holiday reference limits its subject too narrowly: the play exhibits the liberties which gentlemen take with decorum in the pursuit of pleasure and love, including the liberty of holiday, but not only that. Such liberty is balanced against time-serving... As in MV the story of a prodigal is the occasion for an exploration of the use and abuse of wealth, so here we get an exhibition of the use and abuse of social liberty.

Joseph Summers. TN is the climax of Shakespeare’s early achievement in comedy. The effects and values of the earlier comedies are here subtly embodied in the most complex structure which Shakespeare had yet created. But the play also looks forward: the pressure to dissolve the comedy, to realize and finally abandon the burden of laughter, is an intrinsic part of its “perfection.” Viola’s clear-eyed and affirmative vision of her own and the world’s irrationality is a triumph and we desire it; yet we realize its vulnerability, and we come to realize that virtue in disguise is only totally triumphant when evil is not in disguise--is not truly present at all. Having solved magnificently the problems of this particular form of comedy, Shakespeare was evidently not tempted to repeat his triumph. After TN the so-called comedies require for their happy resolutions more radical characters and devices--omniscient and omnipresent Dukes, magic, and resurrection. More obvious miracles are needed for comedy to exist in a world in which evil also exists, not merely incipiently but with power.
As You Like It

1. In many of Shakespeare's comedies (e.g. *CE, MV, TN, AYLI*) Important characters express emptiness and melancholy when they first appear. What might be Shakespeare's reason for beginning his plays this way?

2. Analyze Act I of *AYLI*, and comment on the nature of the action, the tempo, the emerging conflicts, and the foreshadowing of themes.

3. What kind of place is the forest of Arden? Is it an earthly paradise, a utopia? Something more: less? Explain. Is it, as one critic has suggested "a paradigm of civilized society? Does the forest have any symbolic importance? Why do all the characters (except one) decide to leave the forest to return to the court?

4. In *AYLI* (as in other plays), Shakespeare uses a dual setting to underscore ideas, attitudes and values. Outline the specific contrasts set out between the court and the forest. How does Shakespeare use this dual setting to support his thematic purposes?

5. How would you stage this play? What kind of props, lighting effects, acting techniques, costumes, and theater would you use to communicate the spirit and meaning of this play?

6. *AYLI* is chiefly concerned with "two enduring illusions: the pastoral ideal and the ideal of romantic love." Explain what is meant by the two ideals. Show how conflicting opinions evolve from these illusions and center on (1) the effect of natural and social surroundings, and (2) the nature and role of love and marriage. What are the conflicting opinions? Who are the leading proponents of these opinions? Are the conflicts finally resolved in this play? If so, what is the ultimate (Shakespearean) perspective regarding each illusion?

7. "Shakespeare builds up his ideal world and lets his idealists scorn the real one. But into their midst he introduces people who mock their ideals and others who mock them." (Jenkins) In other words, *AYLI* uses a number of seemingly casual comic juxtapositions of scenes, characters, ideas and attitudes in order to render a larger view of life within and without Arden. For example, Shakespeare presents three sets of lovers (beginning and ending with Orlando and Rosalind, with Touchstone and Audrey and Silvius and Phebe in between) in rapid succession (II, ii, III, iii, III, v, IV, i). Discuss the action of these scenes in light of Jenkins' idea. Provide another illustration.

8. "Character motivation is not carefully detailed in this play. Evil characters seem to act that way because of natural wickedness; the good characters, naturally good. Unlike his other plays, Shakespeare suspends the mixture of evil with goodness and vice versa." Give supporting examples of this idea. Explain why Shakespeare does this, and how it suited his thematic purposes.

9. Describe the three shepherds in this play (Corin, Silvius, and William), and comment on their dramatic function. Take special note of Corin's "natural philosophy," and explain how his ideas fit into the intellectual "scheme" of the play.

10. Comment on Rosalind's role as a love "counselor." Whom does she counsel? And what is the counsel she gives?
11. Compare Rosalind to other Shakespearean heroines: How is she similar or dissimilar? Describe Rosalind’s role in this play, and her importance to the plot. Does she have any special, individuating qualities?

12. Analyze the character of Jaques. What is the source of his melancholy? How do other characters react to him? What dramatic function does he serve? What bearing does his "seven ages of man" speech have on the mood and meaning of the play? Do the action (Orlando carrying Adam) and song immediately following the speech give a different, or other, perspective on Jaques’ words? Why does Jaques refuse to join the marriage festivities and the joyful return to the court? How do Jaques’ refusals, considering their designation in the plot, affect the mood and meaning of the play’s finale?

13. Describe Touchstone, and measure his importance in the plot. Does his name give any indication of his dramatic function? Explain. Summarize Touchstone’s views on love, nature, and human nature. Cite relevant passages for support.

14. Jaques is fascinated with Touchstone. Why? Are they, in any way, similar? Jaques eagerly quotes Touchstone on the subject of "ripening and rotting" (II, vii, 22-28) in the human condition. Do they both react the same way to this phenomenon of ripening and rotting?

15. Rosalind and Celia playfully discuss the tension between Fortune and Nature (I, ii, 3-53). Discuss what an Elizabethan audience would have understood by these terms. Does the play support the theory that the universe is governed by chance and random choice? Or, does the play support the theory that the universe is governed by design and rational judgment? Develop your answer with reference to specific characters and situations.

16. Throughout _AYLI_ , the constant human drive to dominate another is the underlying theme of much of the dialogue." This "usurpation theme" may be figured in the wrestling match. Indeed, beyond Rosalind and Orlando, the keynote of the relationships is a subdued or overt irritation caused by "an underlying recognition that other people’s qualities parallel and subtly menace one’s own: an open clash of temperament and of values; and a simple will to dominate." (Berry) Consider the various relationships in _AYLI_ in light of these categories.

17. "Fathers" figure prominently in this play and are frequently mentioned (Orlando twice refers to his father’s spirit within him). Describe the father/son, father/daughter relationships that exist in the play and what they suggest to the play’s larger themes.

18. _AYLI_ ends with an elaborate and formal wedding masque. Is the ceremony "overdone"? Or, does it serve the author’s thematic and theatrical intentions? Why does Shakespeare give the ceremony a "pagan" rather than Christian emphasis? Explain the appropriateness of Hymen’s words to the preceding action as well as the occasion.

19. _AYLI_ begins in disorder and ends in order: social order and love’s order (J.R. Brown, _Shakespeare and His Comedies_ ). How has social order been restored? How is this symbolized? What is "love’s order"? How is it symbolized in Act V?

20. Does _AYLI_ provide any final "answers"?
   a) _AYLI_ "proclaims no final truth."
   b) The polarities in _AYLI_ which are "the subject of ceaseless debate and meditation, tend to be identified with particular characters, but the comedy as a whole is far more interested in doing justice to the complexity of the argument than in prescribing correct choices."
27

OR

c) "The relativism of the play’s discourse is bounded by a set of moral absolutes that cannot be taken as you like it."

If you choose (c), explain what "moral absolutes" bind "the relativism of the play's discourse".

21. Discuss the following statement and explain why you agree or disagree with the author.

a) "The idea of the simple life has been smiled off the earth and yet here it still is, smiling back at us from every bough of Arden. The Forest of Arden has been demonstrated not to exist, yet none of its trees has fallen; rather the entire plantation waves forever, and the sun upon it will not cease. The doctrine of the golden age has been as much created as destroyed. We know there is nothing in it, and we know everything is in it. We perceive how silly it is and why we shall never be able to do without it. We comprehend the long failure of cynicism to undo the sentiment. Here there is neither sentiment nor cynicism; there is understanding." (Van Doren)

b) "In dramatizing love’s intensity as the release of a festive moment, Shakespeare keeps that part of the romantic tradition which makes love an experience of the whole personality, even though he ridicules the wishful absolutes of doctrinaire romantic love. He does not found his comedy on the sort of saturnalian simplification which equates love with sensual gratification. He includes spokesmen for this sort of release in reduction; but they are never given an unqualified predominance, though they contribute to the atmosphere of liberty within which the aristocratic lovers find love. It is the latter who hold the balance near the center. And what gives the predominance to figures like Berowne, Benedict, and Beatrice, or Rosalind, is that they enter nature’s whirl consciously, with humor that recognizes it as only part of life and places their own extravagance by moving back and forth between holiday and everyday perspectives."
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Serious questions being entertained by thinking men who took all knowledge for their province and who actively challenged the assumptions and received truths of their ancestors:

1. What do I know?

2. Is the edifice of knowledge built by ancient genius the modern man’s permanent home or is it his prison?

3. In his view of the universe and God and man, shall he hold by the Bible, Aristotle, and Ptolemy, or by one of the confusing new theories?

4. Or, since very few men were troubled by science, what is the final authority in religious doctrine and discipline, the Church of Rome, the Church of England, the Bible, individual reason, or the supra-rational inner light?

5. In the tremendous matter of the salvation or damnation of souls, can those who possess the truth tolerate the propagation of error?

6. Should Protestants worship God according to a prescribed ritual borrowed from the Scarlet Woman (Roman Catholic Church) or with austere and spontaneous simplicity?

7. What is the divinely appointed form of church government: episcopal, synodical, or congregational?

8. Are Church and State united or separate, and which is superior?

9. Where does supreme political and constitutional authority reside, in the king, the judges of common law, or Parliament?

10. Does the tyranny of the sovereign justify armed resistance?

11. Does the tyranny of Parliament justify forcible purging and military rule?

12. Is society an organism actuated by religious motives or an aggregate of individuals actuated by economic self-interest?

13. Is morality founded on right reason or divine precept, or on the current law of the land?

Shakespeare and the Renaissance World View

I. Troilus and Cressida, I, iii, 85-124 -- "Order and Degree"

The heavens themselves the planets, and this center
Observe degree, priority, and place,
Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,
Office, and custom, in all line of order.
And therefore is the glorious planet Sol
In noble eminence enthroned and sphered
Amidst the other; whose med’cinable eye
Corrects the influence of evil planets,
And posts, like the commandment of a king,
Sans check, to good and bad.
But when the planets
In evil mixture to disorder wander,
What plagues, and what portents, what mutiny,
What raging of the sea, shaking of the earth,
Commotion in the winds, frights, changes, horrors,
Divert and crack, rend and deracinate
The unity and married calm of states
Quite from their fixure? O, when degree is shaked,
Which is the ladder of all high designs,
The enterprise is sick. How could communities,
Degrees in schools, and brotherhoods in cities,
Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,
The primogenity and due of birth
Preogative of age, crowns, scepters, laurels,
But by degree, stand in authentic place?
Take but degree away, untune that string,
And hark what discord follows. Each thing meets
In mere oppugancy. The bounded waters
Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores
And make a sop of all this solid globe:
Strength should be lord of imbecility,
And the rude son should strike his father dead:
Force should be right, or rather right and wrong--
Between whose endless jars justice resides--
Should lose their names, and so should justice too.
Then everything include itself in power,
Power into will, will into appetite,
And appetite, an universal wolf,
So doubly seconded with will and power,
Must make perforce an universal prey
And last eat up himself.
II. Hamlet, III, iii, 15-23 -- "King as Symbol of Order"

The Cess of Majesty
Dies not alone, but like a gulf doth draw
What’s near it with it; or it is a massy wheel
Fixed on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortised and adjoined, which when it falls,
Each small annexment, petty consequence,
Attends the boist’rous ruin. Never alone
Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

III. Richard II, IV, i, 121-149 -- "King as Symbol of Divine Order"

IV. Richard II, III, iv, 28-66 -- "Necessity for Order in Government"

V. Richard II, II, i, 195-208 -- "Primogeniture as Principle of Order"

VI. King Lear, III, i, 10-11 -- "Microcosm-Macrocosm"

(The King)
Strives in his little world of man to outscorn
The to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.

VII. Anthony and Cleopatra, V, iii, 286-290 -- "The Elements"

Husband I come:
Now to that name my courage prove my title!
I am fire, and air; my other elements
I give to baser life.

VIII. Julius Caesar, V, v, 73-75

His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, "This was a Man!"

IX. Hamlet, II, ii, 311-318 -- "The Chain of Being"

What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, 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..."
X.  

_The UnIVERSE according to Ptolemy_

Ptolemy was a Roman astronomer of Greek descent, born in Egypt during the 2nd century A.D.; after his death, for nearly 1500 years his account of the design of the universe was accepted as standard. During that long period, the basic pattern underwent many detailed modifications and was fitted out with many astrological and pseudo-scientific trappings. But in essence Ptolemy's followers agreed in portraying the earth as the center of the universe, with the sun, planets, and fixed stars set in transparent spheres orbiting around it. In this scheme of things, as modified for Christian usage, Hell was usually placed under the earth's surface at the center of the cosmic globe, while Heaven, the abode of the blessed spirits, was in the outermost, uppermost circle, the empyrean. But in 1543 the Polish astronomer Copernicus proposed an alternative hypothesis -- that the earth rotates around the sun, not vice versa; and despite theological opposition, observations with the new telescope and careful mathematical calculations insured ultimate acceptance of the new view.

The map of the Ptolemaic universe represented here is a simplified version of a diagram in Peter Apian's _Cosmography_ (1584). In such a diagram, the Firmament is the sphere which contained the fixed stars; the Crystalline Sphere, which contained no heavenly bodies, is a late innovation included to explain certain anomalies in the observed movement of the heavenly bodies, and the Prime Mover is the sphere which itself put into motion by God, imparts rotation around the earth to all the other spheres.

Milton writing in mid-17th-century made use of two universes. The Copernican universe though he alludes to it, was too large, formless and unfamiliar to serve as the setting for the war between Heaven and Hell in _Paradise Lost_. He therefore adopted as his setting a simplified Ptolemaic cosmos, but placed Heaven well outside this smaller earth-centered universe, Hell far beneath it, and assigned the vast middle space to Chaos.
Measure for Measure

1. Which is a greater threat to society: is it rigid authoritarianism or unlicensed permissiveness? Why? Explore the effects of each on society and on the individual. What does MM suggest?

2. In V, i, 412-414, the Duke proclaims:

   'Angelo for Claudio, death for death!
   Haste still pays haste, and leisure answers leisure;
   Like doth quit like, and Measure still for Measure.

Discuss the importance of these words to a basic understanding of the play. Consider these words, also, in light of Matthew VII, 1-2, the Sermon on the Mount.


4. MM has been described as a "hateful work" in which the comic elements are "disgusting" and the serious ones "horrible." Do you agree with this assessment, or with the one which describes the play as a heart-warming demonstration of traditional ethics with an "inexhaustible stream of joy in its Christian message"?

5. In MM there are three traditional plot components that Shakespeare drew from: (a) The Corrupt Magistrate; (b) The disguised Ruler; (c) The Substituted Bedmate (a ruse to save one woman’s honor at the expense of another’s). Show how each of these components functions in the plot. Then show how they fuse in Act V. Discuss the ethical and/or political significance in this play of each component.

6. In III, i, 153 (roughly the play’s mid-point), the plot makes a noticeable change in its structure. Comment on the nature of the change. And, comment on the difference (if any) between the theatrical and artistic effectiveness of the first and second halves of MM. Which seems more interesting to you? Why?

7. Describe the details of the comic sub-plot. Show how the "low-life characters, in addition to providing comic relief, counterpoint characters and point to important themes of the main plot.

8. Discuss Lucio’s bawdy dialogue with his companions (I, ii) as a parody of the Duke’s doctrine of natural virtue (I, i, 34-39).

9. In II, iv, Angelo tries to seduce Isabella. Read this scene carefully and discuss it as a microcosm of the play’s conflicts.

10. Show how, in terms of dramatic construction, Angelo’s relationship with Mariana provides an enlightening comparison/contrast to Claudio and Juliet.

11. In IV, iii, 116-17 and V, i 390ff, the Duke falsely tells Isabella that Claudio has been executed. What reason might he possibly have for such a deception?
12. Swinburne said of the ending of *MM*: "Justice is buffeted, outraged, insulted, struck in the face." Do you agree? What is Shakespeare's purpose in this? Read Portia's "Quality of Mercy" speech in IV.i, 183ff of *MV* (*Merchant of Venice*) to see if it provides any helpful insights.

13. Comment on the wedding of the Duke and Isabella: (a) bathos? (b) incredible that Isabella would give up her principles and intentions to marry? (c) serious issues of the play sacrificed for a conventional (or unconventional) ending? (d) inadequately prepared for in plot and character development? Or, does the marriage serve some compelling thematic design?

14. Design a proper set, and block the action of the play's final scene in order to provide a dynamic theatrical communication of the play's action and meaning.

15. Shakespeare is fascinated with the relationship between public morality and private morality (Cf. *IC* and *Hamlet*). What does Shakespeare seem to say about this relationship? Should virtue and morality be legislated? What is the responsibility of the state in governing the moral affairs of men? Should brothels, massage parlors, porn movies, pre-marital and extra-marital sex be outlawed? Why? Why not?

16. Since "mortality and mercy live in the tongue and heart" of the duke or his surrogate, what does *MM* suggest should be the guiding principles of good government? good leadership? and good citizenship?

17. Milton, *Areopagitica*: "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather: That which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary." (See also *MM*, I.i, 29-34

Discuss *MM* in light of this passage. Do you agree with the main idea set out here? Can virtue be virtue if it is cloistered? Consider Act V as a scene of multiple "de-cloisterings." What of Isabella and her virtue?

18. In *MM*, characters and values are clearly polarized. Indicate which characters and which values are polarized. Then, indicate which character(s) and which guiding principles point to the "golden mean" between extremes.

19. Read the Duke's speech on Death (III.i). Why is this speech important to the theme of morality? In other words, what is the relationship between mortality and morality in this play? Consider also the attitudes towards death expressed by Angelo, Barnadine, and Angelo (V.i, 370-378).

20. In Shakespeare's sources the recurring moral was plain: he who refused mercy must receive inexorable justice. How does Shakespeare alter this idea? Why does he? Is this theme prominent in any of his other plays?

21. **Duke:**

Is the Duke a static or dynamic character? Does he develop in awareness as the play progresses, or is he, rather, the instrument through which others become more aware?

How would you describe the Duke's personality: is he self-righteous and smug, or is he sensitive, compassionate, and self-aware? Is he a noble person in an otherwise arid human landscape, or is he a weak person and ineffectual ruler plotting to salvage some credibility out of a very difficult situation? How will our perceptions of the Duke as either noble or weak affect our response to the play's denouement in Act
5. Is it better to view the Duke in these human terms? Or, should he be viewed more abstractly, as (a) a prop to move the plot forward, or as (b) a fixed principle by which to judge the social and moral flux about him?

22. **Isabella:**

Is Isabella more notable for her saintliness or for her rigid inhumanity? Does she have "moral grandeur"? Is she "stainless" and "incorruptible"? Or, is she "a mere vixen in her virtue" with "the manners of an affected prude"? Is thee "something rancid in her virtue"? Or, is it genuine? Do you agree with those who believe that in III, i, Isabella is subordinating charity to chastity? Is it significant that Shakespeare alters his sources to make Isabella a nun?

23. Why does Angelo so suddenly experience sexual passion upon the sight of Isabella? Is it psychologically probable that such a stern and rigidly self-disciplined person should suddenly give in to sexual impulses?

24. Consider the second encounter (II, iv) between Angelo and Isabella. What character qualities are revealed in this scene? What prominent themes emerge?

25. Read "Sonnet 94" as a gloss on the characters of the Duke and Angelo.

26. Compare Claudio’s terror in the face of death to Barnadine’s nonchalance. What are the reasons behind both reactions?

27. Fast upon Angelo’s death sentence of Claudio for fornication, Escalus frees a hardened pimp. What is Shakespeare’s reason for the rapid juxtaposition of these two sentences by the Duke’s surrogates?

28. **Lucio:**

Develop your response to the characterization of Lucio. Do you find him a cad? a worthless lecher? a Satan figure? a moral pygmy? Or something nicer than all these?

Is he a simple, homogeneous, and straightforward character? Or, is he complex, heterogeneous, and composite? Consider him in his relationship to Isabella, the Duke, Pompey, Claudio, and Ms. Overdone.

29. Comment on the dramatic function of MM’s minor characters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claudio</td>
<td>Provost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pompey</td>
<td>Barnadine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mistress Overdone</td>
<td>Mariana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30. A. P. Rossiter feels ("The Problem Plays," *Angels With Horns*) that the problem plays communicate a tragi-comic view of man characterized by any combination of these distinguishable attitudes.

(1) "A refusal or failure wholly to credit the dignity of man and the significance that gives the individual in tragedy."

(2) "An emphasis (comic, derisive, satiric) on human shortcomings, even when man is engaged in great affairs."
(3) "Any trend towards suggesting that there is usually another side to all human affairs, and that the 'other side' to the serious, dignified, noble, famous, etc., is comic. This implies a skepticism of man's worth, importance and value; and may range from the quizzical through the ironical to the cynical."

(4) "Any trend in the direction of expressing unhappiness, disappointment, resentfulness or bitterness about human life, by inverting these feelings and presenting the causes of them as matter for laughter or jest: i.e. offering the comic, but giving it a grating quality which excludes geniality and ensures disturbing after-thoughts."

(5) "A corresponding attitude towards traditionally funny subjects which insinuates that in some way they are serious, or that the stock response to them by-passes pain at human shortcomings or wickedness; or that stock response depends on a lack of sympathy or insight which an author can make us aware of without abolishing the comic situation." "Tragi-comedy is an art of inversion, deflation and paradox...genuine tragi-comedy is marked by telling generalizations about the subject, man, of a seriousness which is unexpected in comedy and may seem incongruous with it."

31. Important terms or themes the Problem Plays have in common.
   (a) Pointed absence of normal sexual love.
   (b) A low or common evaluation of conventionally accepted "nobilities."
   (c) "Ideal" figures who represent counter-statements of "what man might be" counterpoised with what he is, like the tragic and comic tones of the play.
   (d) Reality beneath appearance(s).
   (e) Seeming vs. Being or "maskedness."
   (f) Pervasive fear of the incalculable nature of man: or of the infinite incalculability of the answers to the question: "What is man, really?"
   (g) Shiftingness: all the firm points of view fail or are fallible."
Troilus and Cressida

1. **T&C** seems almost an "anti-play", that is, a play without a protagonist or logically structured plot (there seems to be a beginning and middle, but no end). Are these assumptions correct? If so, is this the result of faulty craftsmanship or the result of deliberate design? If by design, how might it relate to a theme(s) or mood that Shakespeare is developing?

2. Compare and contrast the conference in the Greek camp (I, iii) with the Trojan conference in Priam's palace (II, ii).
   a. What are the major issues debated at each conference?
   b. Do the two conferences present similar or different ways of looking at things?
   c. Do the conflicts within the Trojan party reflect those within the Greek party? What seems to be Shakespeare's prescriptions for the social, political, and personal problems presented in the play? Does he seem optimistic or pessimistic about the possibilities of resolving such problems?

3. Trace the major examples of interactive imagery throughout the play (images of taste and disease). How do these images relate to theme?

4. Compare Shakespeare's treatment of the love theme in this play with the treatment in the earlier romantic comedies we have studied. How similar? How different? Does it seem incongruous that the man who wrote the romantic comedies could also write **T&C**?

5. Discuss some problems in the characterization of Cressida, Troilus, Hector and Ulysses. Any others?

6. Consider Thersites. Describe his character; his use of language, his function in the plot. Does he resemble, in any way, earlier Shakespearean characters we have seen?

7. What kinds of difficulties would a director have in staging **T&C**? How might they be resolved? How, especially, would you stage the fifth act?

8. Daniel Seltzer (Signet Classic, "Introduction") states that in **T&C**, Shakespeare made his first real study of the relationship between the pressure of the public world and the survival of love. Do you think, from your own experiences and observations, that public pressures can affect an individual's or a group's ability to love? What conclusion does Shakespeare seem to reach?

9. Virgil Whitaker (Pelican Shakespeare, "Introduction") states: "**T&C** is certainly not (Shakespeare's) greatest play, but it is in some respects his most modern play. Shakespeare often tells us that we can or should be. Here he tells us what, unfortunately, we all too often are." Do you agree with this? If so, in what respects might it be considered modern? Do you agree that in **T&C**, Shakespeare is telling us what we are?

10. G. Wilson Knight (The Wheel of Fire): "The Trojan party stands for human beauty and worth, the Greek party for the bestial and stupid elements of man, the barren stagnancy of intellect divorced from action, and the criticism which exposes these things with jeers. The atmospheres of the two opposing camps are thus strongly contrasted, and the handing over of Cressida to the Greeks, which is the pivotal incident of the play, has thus a symbolic suggestion."
   a. Do you agree with Knight that the Trojan and Greek parties are so divided that the Trojans represent beauty and worth, and the Greeks represent the stupid and bestial in man?
b. Do you think the handing over of Cressida is the pivotal incident in the play? If not, what is?
c. In what sense might the handing over of Cressida have a symbolic suggestion?

11. S. L. Bethell (Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition): "T&C is a consciously philosophical play. Normally Shakespeare's philosophical notions are incarnated in character and action; and his poetic thought, always concrete and image-filled, relates to character and action directly, and only indirectly to whatever general truths may be implied... In T&C, on the other hand, the thought only partially embodied in character and action, flows over into the dialogue, which, though usually concrete enough and full of imagery, is frequently developed almost independently of the situation to which it refers... In T&C the story is an excuse for thought rather than the embodiment of thought." Comment.

12. S. L. Bethell feels that there is a notable lack of unity of form and content in T&C. Una Ellis-Fermor feels that T&C is one of the few living and unified expressions of the vision of the dark night of the soul that "comes down upon the unilluminated wreckage of the universe of vision," order and degree. "We do not willingly imagine this overthrow; some at least never to the end comprehend it, for it is like a note too deep for our hearing, or a landscape too vast for our experiencing... If we turn from this attempt to understand the underlying ideas in T&C and consider the form through which these ideas are revealed, we see the idea of chaos, of disjunction, of ultimate formlessness and negation, has by a supreme act of artistic mastery been given ultimate form. It has not been described in more or less abstract terms; it has been imagined."
   a. Are these two comments (11 and 12) absolutely contradictory?
   b. Which comment do you think more accurately describes the play and is closer to its essential meaning?

13. We have commented on the difficulty in defining the mode of T&C, that is, whether it is comedy, tragedy, or tragi-comedy. Can you think of any compelling reasons why T&C should not be referred to as a comedy? Mark Sacharoff, in an essay on Hector's conduct in II, ii, argues that Hector's concession to the will of the majority is not self-contradictory, but an example of "wrong choice" or harmatia, which causes him to suffer grave and fatal consequences and lead to the fall of Troy. Sacharoff further argues that since the style of the scene is elevated and Hector is dignified, like the tragic figure, his death and downfall constitute a tragic conclusion. T&C should, therefore be regarded as a tragedy (with comic and satiric elements).
   a. Do you agree that the conclusion of T&C is a "tragic" one?
   b. Do you think Hector is a tragic hero?
   c. If you disagree with Sacharoff, what is the prevailing mode? Is it tragi-comic?

14. A. P. Rossiter feels ("The Problem Plays," Angels With Horns) that the problem plays communicate a tragi-comic view of a man characterized by any combination of these distinguishable attitudes:
   (1) "A refusal or failure wholly to credit the dignity of man and the significance that that gives the individual in tragedy."
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Discuss each of these points with specific reference to T&C.

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   a. Pointed absence of normal sexual love.
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   f. Pervasive fear of the incalculable nature of man: or of the infinite incalculability of the answers to the question: "What is man, really?"
   g. Shiftingness: all the firm points of view fail or are fallible."

Discuss each of these points with reference to T&C.
THE HISTORY BEHIND THE HISTORY PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE

Except for KING JOHN and KING HENRY VIII, Shakespeare’s ten history plays are concerned with the rise and fall of the House of Lancaster. They cover a period of nearly a century of complex events.

Edward II reigned fifty years (1327-77). He had seven sons, the eldest being Edward, the Black Prince). Richard, became King in 1377 under the regency of his uncle, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, the eldest surviving son of Edward III. In time, control of the kingdom passed from John of Gaunt to Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, sixth son of Edward III.

In 1389, Richard suddenly declared that he was now of age, and Gloucester was obliged to resign his regency. Thereafter Richard for some years reigned competently; but when Gloucester began intrigues against him he was arrested, sent to Calais (then an English possession), and there murdered.

Richard meanwhile became restless and extravagant, and his Court was filled with favorites and parasites. As a result he was in constant need of money, which he raised by forced loans, benevolences ("voluntary" gifts from wealthy men), and by farming out the taxes; that is, in return for cash down he granted some financier the right to collect the taxes -- a system of raising money which lead to great abuses.

In 1398, Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford, (son of John of Gaunt) and Thomas Mowbray (Duke of Norfolk) quarreled. At this point, Shakespeare’s RICHARD II begins. Richard banished both noblemen -- Norfolk for life and Bolingbroke for seven years -- but with the promise that the great estates which should come to Bolingbroke on the death of his father (John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster), would not be violated. Nevertheless, when Gaunt died a few months later, Richard broke his promise and seized the Lancaster estates to pay for his expedition to subdue a rebellion in Ireland. While Richard was away, Bolingbroke landed in Yorkshire, declaring that he had come to recover his rights as Duke of Lancaster. The Percies of Northumberland -- the greatest and most powerful family in the Northern parts -- joined him, together with all Richard’s enemies. When Richard returned to England, he found himself deserted. Bolingbroke now claimed the throne, and Richard was obliged to abdicate in favor of Bolingbroke, who became king as Henry IV. Here the play of RICHARD II ends.

The FIRST PART OF HENRY IV covers the period of the next two and a half years, 1400-1403. Richard II left no children. The line of the Black Prince being thus extinct, the next heir to the throne by right of birth was therefore the senior descendent of Lionel, Duke of Clarence (second son of Edward III). Lionel’s daughter Phillipa had married Edmund Mortimer, third Earl of March. She had three children: Roger (who became fourth Earl of March), Elizabeth (who married Henry Percy, called "Hotspur," son of the Earl of Northumberland, and who is Lady Percy in the play), and Edmund. Roger had died in Ireland in 1398 and his son Edmund, fifth Earl of March, was thus the legal heir to the throne.

The reign of Henry IV was full of troubles. The first serious rebellion occurred in 1403 when Owen Glendower, a Welsh chieftain, led a national rising against the English. King Henry went against him without success. He therefore left the command to Hotspur and Edmund Mortimer (uncle of Edmund, Earl of March. Shakespeare, it may be noted, confused the two Edmunds, uncle and nephew. The Edmund who married the Welsh lady was not heir to the throne.) Mortimer was captured by Glendower, but the two men became friends, and Mortimer married Glendower’s daughter. Hotspur went back to the North, where at Holmedon Hill he defeated a
large army of invading Scots under Douglas. The first part of HENRY IV begins here, with announcement of Percy’s victory. Soon afterward the Percies quarreled with the King. The chief members of the family were Henry, Earl of Northumberland; Henry (Hotspur), his son; and Thomas Percy, Earl of Worcester, his brother. When the King demanded that the Percies hand over the valuable ransom exacted from the prisoners taken at Holm, the Percies refused and rebelled. They planned to gather a combined force to meet the Scots. Hotspur and Douglas marched South to join with Glendower. The issue was decided at the battle of Shrewsbury (1403). Hotspur was killed, Worcester captured and beheaded, and Douglas captured and ransomed; Northumberland, not present at the battle, submitted.

THE FIRST PART OF HENRY IV comes to an end with the battle of Shrewsbury.

THE SECOND PART OF HENRY IV covers a period of about nine years. In 1403, Scroop, Archbishop of York, with Northumberland and Mowbray (son of the Duke of Norfolk of Richard II), rebelled in the North, and they were defeated. Henry IV died in 1413. THE SECOND PART OF HENRY IV ends with the accession of his son, Prince Hal, who then became Henry V.

Henry V, like his great-grandfather, Edward III, was ambitious for military glory. At this time, France was in great confusion, with civil war raging between Orleanists and the Burgundians. Henry therefore claimed the throne of France, as the great-grandson of Edward III, for reasons detailed by Shakespeare (II Henry IV, v. 213-16, Henry V I, ii), and prepared an expeditionary force. He was about to embark at Southampton when a plot against his life was discovered. The chief plotters were Richard, Earl of Cambridge (son of Edmund, Duke of York), Scroop (a kinsman of the late Archbishop of York) and Lord Thomas Grey; all three were executed. Henry landed opposite Le Havre, at the mouth of the Seine, at Harfleur, which he captured after a five weeks’ siege. He then went on with an army greatly reduced by sickness, intending to embark at Calais; but he was intercepted by the French army. On October 25, 1415, Henry defeated the French against great odds at the Battle of Agincourt; but his army was too weak for further action, and he returned to England by way of Calais.

THESE EVENTS ARE DRAMATIZED IN ACTS I, II, AND III, OF HENRY V. Henry again invaded France and captured Caen. In January 1419, he captured Rouen, thereby establishing control of Normandy. In May, 1420, he made peace with the Burgundians in France. By the treaty it was agreed that Henry should become Regent of France as long as the imbecile French King lived, and thereafter should succeed as King of France, excluding the Dauphin (the French King’s eldest son) from the throne. As part of the bargain, Henry married Catherine, the French King’s daughter. Henry returned to England with his Queen in 1421, leaving his eldest brother, Thomas, Duke of Clarence, in command in France. Clarence was killed in action by the Dauphin. Henry was therefore forced to invade France for the third time, but on August 31, 1422, he died of dysentery. Shakespeare’s HENRY V COVERS THE PERIOD FROM HENRY’ S DEMAND FOR THE FRENCH CROWN TO HIS MARRIAGE WITH CATHERINE; THAT IS, FROM 1413-1420.

RICHARD III

English history from the death of Henry V (1422) to the accession of Henry VII (1485) was the theme of four of Shakespeare’s earliest plays -- the three parts of HENRY VI and RICHARD III. It was a period of constant strife, treachery, murder and civil war between the various great noblemen who were descended from, or closely related to, the family of Edward III. When Henry V died in 1422, he left the throne to his son Henry VI, then only nine months old. England was therefore ruled by Regents and Protectors, each in turn striving to oust the other. Between them, they lost all France except Calais, and then fell to squabbling and civil war at home.

Just before Henry V had set out for France, he discovered a conspiracy against himself (see above). Among the leaders was Richard, Earl of Cambridge, who was the son of Edmund, Duke of York (fourth son of
Edward III). Cambridge had married Anne, daughter of Roger Mortimer, the grandson of Lionel, Duke of Clarence (second son of Edward III; see Genealogical table). The children of Richard Earl of Cambridge, were thus in more direct line of descent than was Henry V.

THE FIRST PART OF HENRY VI opens with the funeral of Henry V. The boy king, Henry VI, was first ruled by his uncles, especially by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, son of Henry IV, and by the Beauforts -- John, Earl of Somerset, and Henry, Cardinal Beaufort, sons of John of Gaunt by his third wife (Catherine Swinford). In 1445, Henry married Margaret of Anjou. In 1447, Gloucester was accused by his enemies and murdered in prison. Failing an heir, the next in succession to Henry VI was Richard, Duke of York (son of Richard, Earl of Cambridge). The Beauforts grew jealous of him, and an open quarrel broke out between them. York took as his symbol a white rose; Somerset chose a red rose. The King favored the Beaufort party (see Henry VI, II, IV). FROM THIS POINT BEGAN THE WARS OF ROSES.

In 1453, Queen Margaret gave birth to a son, Prince Edward, who thus became heir to the throne; but in the next year Henry VI (who was always a saintly innocent and a mere puppet of the part in power) for a while became insane, and York was made Regent. When the King recovered the Somerset party returned to power. York in self-protection raised an army and rebelled. At the Battle of St. Albans (1455) York defeated and killed Somerset and captured Henry VI. York thus became Regent. Nevertheless, though the Lancastrians -- that is, the Somerset Party, called Lancastrians because of their descent from John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster -- were defeated, Margaret of Anjou, a ferocious and ambitious woman, did not give up, even when her new forces were defeated in the first engagements. York then made formal claim to the throne for himself; but a few weeks later in an unlucky battle, at Wakefield in Yorkshire (1460), he was defeated and killed by Margaret's forces. Margaret sent his head, crowned with a paper crown, to be set up in York.

York's son was Edward, Earl of March. He carried on the fight, and in 1461 at the Battle of Towton he wiped out the Lancastrian army; but he failed to capture Margaret, who fled to France. Edward, Earl of March, now became King with the title of Edward IV. His chief supporter hitherto had been Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, known as "Warwick the Kingmaker." Edward did not wish to be dependent on the Nevilles; and while Warwick was negotiating a French marriage for him, he secretly married a lady of no rank, Elizabeth Woodville, the widow of a Lancastrian knight. (SHE IS THE QUEEN ELIZABETH IN THE PLAY RICHARD III.) Warwick retaliated for this snub by arranging the marriage of his own daughter to George, Duke of Clarence (Edward IV's brother) who thus showed open hostility to the King.

In 1469 the Lancastrians were again gathering. Warwick deserted the Yorkists, and by persuasion by the French King, Louis XI, he was reconciled with Margaret, who was still in exile in France. Edward IV fled from England. Warwick then declared for Henry IV, and the new alliance between Warwick and Margaret was cemented by the marriage of Anne, Warwick's daughter, to Edward, the son of Margaret and Henry VI. (THIS IS THE ANNE WHO APPEARS IN THE PLAY RICHARD III).

After the capture of London by Warwick, Henry was once more set on the throne.

Henry VI's second period as puppet King did not last long. Edward, aided by his brother, Duke of Gloucester, landed at Ravenspur in Yorkshire with a small force. Clarence deserted Warwick and became reconciled to his brother Edward IV. At the decisive battle at Barnet (1471) Edward was victorious and Warwick was killed. The final defeat of the Lancastrians came a few weeks later at Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire, where Margaret's last army was utterly defeated. Among those captured after the battle was Edward, Margaret's son; he was murdered after the battle by Richard, Duke of Gloucester, and surviving Lancastrian noblemen were executed. The only relic of the Lancastrian line now left was Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond.
So Edward IV once more returned to London as King; on the same day Henry VI was murdered in the Tower of London by Gloucester. AT THIS POINT THE THIRD PART OF SHAKESPEARE’S HENRY VI ENDS.

THE PLAY OF RICHARD III BEGINS SHORTLY BEFORE THE DEATH OF EDWARD IV IN 1483 AND COVERS A PERIOD OF ABOUT TWO YEARS. Edward was pleasure-loving and voluptuous; his love affair with Jane Shore, the wife of a London citizen, was particularly notorious. The King’s brother Richard, the Duke of Gloucester, who married the widow of Prince Edward (whom he murdered) was regarded as the strong man behind the throne. (This widow of Prince Edward is the Anne who is wooed by Richard in the first act of the play.) Gloucester persuaded Edward IV that Clarence was again becoming dangerous. So Clarence was sent to the Tower and there murdered. But Gloucester had many enemies; the Queen’s family and relations -- the Woodvilles and the Greys -- hated him. (This is the Queen Elizabeth of the play.) The King was ailing, and Gloucester knew that if they should retain their power after the King’s death, his own chances of survival were small.

As soon as Edward IV was dead, Gloucester acted quickly. With the aid of the Duke of Buckingham, he captured the young king, Edward V, from his uncles, the Earl Rivers and Sir Richard Grey, whom he imprisoned and later caused to be beheaded. Then he was made Protector of the boy King. Gloucester was now aiming at the Crown directly for himself, and when he found that the Lord Chamberlain, Lord Hastings, was not with him, he quarreled with Hastings at a meeting of the Council and ordered him to be beheaded.

Meanwhile the younger son of Edward IV, Richard, Duke of York (the younger of the two Princes in the play), had been taken into sanctuary at Westminster by his mother. Gloucester persuaded her to release him to be a companion to his brother in the Tower. Gloucester was now ready for the next open step. Backed by Buckingham and his own retainers, he “accepted” the throne of England as Richard III when it was offered him by a deputation of London citizens; and to make his position more secure, he had the two Princes murdered in the Tower. However, Richard’s ruthlessness caused general disgust, and his many enemies began plotting to bring in Henry of Richmond as King. Even Buckingham turned against him, but by bad luck was captured and executed.

Richard’s next plan was to get rid of his wife and marry his niece, Elizabeth of York, daughter of Edward IV; but before this scheme could be carried out Henry of Richmond landed in Wales. The last battle of the Wars of the Roses was fought at Bosworth near Leicester in 1485. Henry’s chances seemed poor, for Richard’s army was far larger; but in the battle many of Richard’s supporters deserted to the other side, and Richard himself was killed fighting desperately. So Henry of Richmond became King as Henry VII, and by marrying Elizabeth of York (daughter of Edward IV and his queen, Elizabeth) united the White Rose and the Red.

The son of Henry VII was Henry VIII; Queen Elizabeth was his granddaughter. The last battles of the Wars of the roses were almost as close to Shakespeare and his audience as the American Civil War to modern times. Much of the fighting had occurred in places familiar to Shakespeare; Tewkesbury, where the most ghastly slaughter was made, is less than thirty miles from Stratford-on-Avon. Moreover, to Englishmen in those times, it seemed only too likely that chaos would come again at the death of Queen Elizabeth. There was thus an immediate and keen interest in any play which told of events and personalities of those brutal and not far distant days.
### Kings Involved in Shakespeare's History Plays

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>King</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1199-1216</td>
<td>John</td>
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#### Plantagenets

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<tr>
<td>1327-1377</td>
<td>Edward III</td>
<td>Son of Edward the Black Prince, eldest son of Edward III</td>
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<td>1377-1399</td>
<td>Richard II</td>
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#### Lancastrians

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<tr>
<td>1399-1413</td>
<td>Henry IV</td>
<td>Son of 4th (3rd surviving) son of Edward III</td>
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<tr>
<td>1413-1422</td>
<td>Henry V</td>
<td>Son of Henry IV</td>
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<tr>
<td>1422-1461</td>
<td>Henry VI</td>
<td>Son of Henry IV</td>
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#### Yorkists

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<tr>
<td>1461-1483</td>
<td>Edward IV</td>
<td>Son of Edward III through his 3rd and 4th sons</td>
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<tr>
<td>1483</td>
<td>Edward V</td>
<td>Son of Edward IV</td>
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<tr>
<td>1483-1485</td>
<td>Richard III</td>
<td>Younger brother of Edward IV</td>
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#### Tudors

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<tr>
<td>1485-1509</td>
<td>Henry VII</td>
<td>From 4th son of Edward III through Beaufort line</td>
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<tr>
<td>1509-1547</td>
<td>Henry VIII</td>
<td>Son of Edward VII</td>
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<td>1547-1553</td>
<td>Edward VI</td>
<td>Son of Henry VIII</td>
<td>Elder daughter of Henry VIII</td>
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<td>1553-1558</td>
<td>Mary Tudor</td>
<td>Younger daughter of Henry VIII</td>
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<td>1558-1603</td>
<td>Elizabeth I</td>
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#### Stuart

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<tr>
<td>1603-1625</td>
<td>James I</td>
<td>From the daughter of Henry VII through the Scottish line</td>
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### Probable Chronological Order in Which the Plays Were Written

- *Henry VI*, Part 1
- *Henry VI*, Part 2
- *Henry VI*, Part 3 "the first tetralogy"
- *Richard III*
- *King John*
- *Richard II*
- *Henry IV*, Part 1
- *Henry IV*, Part 2 "the second tetralogy"
- *Henry V*
1. Who is the hero of Richard II? Explain.


3. Describe the kind of special qualities required for the role of Richard. How would the actor’s approach to Bolingbroke differ from his approach to Richard?

4. Consider the major speeches of the minor characters: Gaunt, York and Carlisle. Discuss their significance in terms of plot and theme. (I, ii, 37-42; II, i, 163-210; and IV, i, 114-149)

5. There are several types of interactive or thematic imagery in Richard II: Sun, Garden, images of rising and falling, blood, illness and disease. Identify at least one example of each, and show how they function in the play.

6. Discuss the symbolism in the mirror scene (IV, i) and explore the theme of appearance versus reality developed here and elsewhere in the play. Discuss also the theme of Honor in relation to different characters: Mowbray (I, i, 177-184), Bolingbroke, Richard II, Gaunt, York, Aumerle, and Carlisle.

7. Comment on the frightening natural phenomena that occur in II, iv, 7-17. What do they symbolize?

8. The major theme develops over the controversy between R’s claim of Divine Right Kingship and Bolingbroke’s claim to fair sequence and succession. How do the important characters line up here? Where are Shakespeare’s sympathies?

9. The garden scene in Act III is both allegorical and symbolic. How does the conversation between the gardener and the man help to point to the real meaning of the play?

10. Much of the action in Richard II involves intrigue and conflict between male characters. What dramatic necessity is answered by the Queen? The Duchess of Gloucester? The Duchess of York?

11. In the abdication scene Bolingbroke asks Richard II if he is willing to surrender his crown. What is the significance of R’s reply: “Ay, no; ay: for I must nothing be?” Produce this scene in class to explore the theatrical as well as thematic, importance of the action. How might an Elizabethan audience have responded to the on-stage deposition of a ruler?


13. Compare the following quotations; explain your reasons for preferring one or the other.
   a. “The decline in R’s fortunes is in inverse proportion to his growth as a human being, and the last act amounts to a regeneration of Richard the man, even as it chronicles the defeat of Richard the King.”
   b. Richard II has “the utmost consistency of character: what he was at first he is at last, excepting as far as he yields to circumstances; what he showed himself at the commencement of the play, he shows himself at the end of it.”
Henry IV, Part One

1. What dramatic purpose is served by alternating court with tavern with conspirator scenes? What are the values of each of the three worlds—court, tavern, conspiracy?

2. I, ii is full of Elizabethan slang and wordplay of all kinds including puns. Scene i has little or none of that sort of thing. What is Shakespeare’s purpose in making this sharp contrast? What other differences do you notice between scenes i and ii in the way language is arranged or in the kind of language that is used? What sudden and obvious change of manner occurs at line 192? To what change of content and attitude does it correspond?

3. Describe the two plots of IHIV. Are they antithetical? Unified? Both?

4. Discuss the morality play structure of the plot.

5. Discuss the characteristics of Hotspur, Hal, and Falstaff individually; then, discuss their interaction in literal and symbolic terms.

6. Discuss the interrelationships between the play's major figures: how are they similar? Dissimilar?
   a. King and Hotspur    d. Hotspur and Falstaff
   b. King and Falstaff    e. Hotspur and Hal
   c. King and Hal        f. Falstaff and Hal

7. The "throne" scene in the tavern is dramatically pivotal in the play. Explain its importance.

8. Cowardice and Honor are issues throughout the play and are dramatically meaningful.
   A. Is Falstaff a coward? Critics have discussed this for a long time. But note than an answer will require a definition of "coward"; and that Falstaff must be compared in this respect with others—Hal, Hotspur, King, Bardolph, Douglas, etc.
   B. What does "honor" mean to each of the following, using the evidence provided by the play and indicating the strengths and weaknesses of each position?: (1) Henry, (2) Falstaff, (3) Hotspur, (4) Hal.

9. Discuss genuineness vs. spuriousness in the play ("counterfeiting")—Henry’s title to his throne (and by implication Hal’s), the rebels’ ground for rebellion, Falstaff’s claim to knighthood, the variety of lies, etc. What is genuineness or how can it be won?

10. Discuss IHIV as a satire on statecraft and warfare.

11. How are the questions that have been raised by the play summed up and dramatized in the following episodes:
   a. the confrontation between Sir Walter Blunt dead and Falstaff living.
   b. the confrontation between Falstaff with a bottle of sack and Hal in search of a weapon.
   c. Hal standing over Hotspur dead and Falstaff playing dead.
   d. Hal finding Falstaff lugging the dead Hotspur on his back.
12. Develop a position vis-a-vis the following quotations. Develop the idea, qualify it, refute it, or do a combination of these things.

a. "Falstaff was no coward, but pretended to be one merely for the sake of trying experiments on the credulity of mankind: he was a liar with the same object, and not because he loved falsehood for itself. He was a man of such preeminent abilities, as to give him a profound contempt for all those by whom he was usually surrounded, and to lead to a determination on his part, in spite of their fancied superiority, to make them his tools and dupes."

b. "...the equivocal Falstaff is the essential Falstaff. He is never twice quite the same; he is a series of impersonations. He is an inveterate comic actor and every man is a stooge who must play up to him."

c. "...no man is more dangerous than he that, with a will to corrupt, hath power to please; and...neither wit nor honesty ought to think themselves safe with such a companion when they see Henry seduced by Falstaff."

d. "Falstaff feels no mission to stand up against footpads or to defend his country; he does not recognize the obligation. His seems to be the larger guilt of having no principles; yet none of us are quite sure. To Falstaff a reputation for valor, if not worth fighting for, is at least worth lying for; and he sometimes expresses shame, sometimes good intentions, even when alone. Thus Falstaff’s outer vices divert our attention from his inner vice, his lack of principles, at the same time that this inner vice nullifies the outer vices. We call him a coward--but without conviction. So we also call him bully, toady, grafter, etc.--but without conviction. He renders the terms irrelevant... What ever else he is, Falstaff is a moral paradox."

e. "The advantage to the actor who plays Hotspur, and the disadvantage to the actor who plays the prince, is enormous. Hotspur is the best acting part in the historical action of the play; he dazzles us to thoroughly as to disarm criticism. Since this is so, Shakespeare cannot escape responsibility, but in his defense it may be said that he has put up plenty of signposts to show which way our sympathies should take."

f. "...by the play’s end, Hal casts an inclusive shadow. He has met the claims of Hotspur’s world, of Falstaff’s, and of Henry’s, without narrowing himself to any one. He has practiced mercy as well as justice, politics as well as friendship, shown himself capable of mockery as well as reverence, detachment as well as commitment, and brought into a practicable balance court, field, and tavern."

g. "Falstaff is shamming vices and enacting parodies; his inner intent is a charitable almsgiving of brotherly self-humiliation and fatherly truth-telling."
1. *HV* has been referred to as a "dramatic epic." What reasons might be offered in defense of this position?

2. If war may be conceived in two ways: (1) as man's greatest vocation, the pursuit of Glory, at the risk of one's own life or those of others, and through the ruthless exercise of power; or, (2) as one of the greatest of human evils, with its miserable train of blood and anguish, horror and tears -- which attitude is reflected in *HV*? Is war Shakespeare's main preoccupation? If not, what is? (cf. H. V's reasons for going to war -- are they valid?) Consider the notion that the nature of greatness is Shakespeare's purpose, especially as it operates in a military, political, and moral environment.

4. Shakespeare makes certain changes from his sources (Hall and Holinshed), among them:
   a. He does not include either the madness of Charles VI or the political divisions among the French nobility.
   b. He suppresses the fact that Harfleur was indeed sacked and not treated with clemency after his initial violent threats.
   c. He does not mention that Henry is trapped in Agincourt by a strategic error.
   d. He transforms the French queen, Isabel, from a corrupt, devious, and treacherous figure into the "moderate, gracious, and dignified queen of 5.2" (Taylor, *Oxford*, p. 32).
   e. He invents the scene of Henry visiting his troops in disguise the night before the battle;
   f. He invents the wooing scene with Princess Catherine;
   g. He invents the comic scenes including Fluellen, Jamy, MacMorris, and Gower: and the scenes including Pistol, Bardolph, Mistress Quickly, Nym and the Boy. How do these changes illuminate Shakespeare's intentions?

5. *Henry V* exists in two versions, the 1600 Quarto text, which was apparently the text performed at the time, and the 1623 Folio which is considered authoritative (believed produced from the author's own manuscript -- "foul papers") and is the basis of subsequent published editions of the play. There are striking absences in the Quarto text, among them:
   a. All five Choruses and the final Epilogue (with its allusion to Essex's anticipated return from Ireland).
   b. The Bishop's cynical discussion of their motivation for war and how they plan to distract the House of Commons from their plan to redeem ecclesiastical property.
   c. The Hostess' claim in 2:1 that Falstaff is dying because "the King has killed his heart".
   d. Almost all of the Harfleur episode, including the threats upon the besieged citizens.
   e. Much of the material in the scene before the battle of Agincourt, including Henry's soliloquy on the hardships of Kingship.
   f. All of Burgundy's speech on the damages suffered by the French in the war; and
   g. Much of the wooing scene between Kate and Henry.

6. There is a "practical joke" motif that recurs through *HV* (tennis balls, HV and traitors, Fluellen-Pistol and the leek, the king in disguise, joke on French army with 5-1 odds). Is this at all significant, that is, is Shakespeare doing this for some specific reason, or is this the petty observation of some pedantic, nit-picking, tittering, vacillating English teacher?
7. When HV, in disguise, visits his troops (Bates, Court and Williams) the night before the battle, some important questions are asked: What are we doing? Why are we here? What does the king care? Does Shakespeare provide any answers? What does he imply should be the relationship between a king and his subjects? Who is responsible for whom? for what?

8. "Henry V is a study in order and harmony; it does not record, but rather it celebrates the victory of form over disorder and chaos. As form governs every attribute of the king, so does it every aspect of the play that celebrates him -- structure, characterization, style. Finally, it reaches beyond the limits of the play to invest the tetralogy with new meaning and to draw the circle closed." Rose A. Zimbardo. Shakespeare Encomium, 1964.

9. K. Muir: [on production in general and HV in particular]
"I think that whatever interpretation the director chooses, the audience should still be made aware -- directly, indirectly, unconsciously, or subliminally -- of the rejected interpretations. Henry V may well be made a clamorous hero and celebrate patriotism, but we must also be made aware of the Machiavellian bishops, the dubious justification of the war, the sheer nastiness of the threat to Harfleur, the serious and unanswered doubts of Bates and Williams, and the moving speech by Burgundy in the devastation wrought by the war. A good production ought not to simplify Shakespeare's complexities, nor eliminate his fruitful ambiguities." (Was Shakespeare Really Incompetent?" (Sh N XXIX, 4 Sept. 79)

10. Compare the two film versions of HV, Olivier's and Brannagh's, and discuss the differences in tone, nuance, and meaning. Possible sources of differences (e.g. cultural, historical, artistic)? Olivier's version of HV premiered in 1944, in the context of the Normandy invasion, and was dedicated to the "Commandos and Airborne Troops of Great Britain." He excised 1700 lines from the Folio version of the play. Among his deletions were:
   a. Henry's death judgment against the traitors Cambridge, Scroop, and Grey.
   b. The hanging of Bardolph for looting churches.
   c. The order to execute the French prisoners.
   d. The violent, bloodthirsty threats against Harfleur.
   e. Confrontation with the soldier, William, at the battle's end.
   f. The last six lines of the Chorus' Epilogue indicating that France was lost and that England "bled" under his son, H VI, and the "many" who "had the managing of the state" during his reign.
What do Olivier's cuts tell us about his purposes and achievement?

11. Discuss the "masks" of Henry.

12. Comment: "The grandiose rhetoric of war is consistently undercut by matter-of-fact revelations of men's self-interested motives. This contrast between rhetorical illusion and political reality extends from the justification of Henry's French campaign to his state marriage with Katherine of France. The irony never amounts to open disillusionment in this play; it is instead the acknowledgment of a special kind of morality pertaining to kingship." (David Bevington, The Bantam Shakespeare: Henry V, p. xx.)
SOME COMMON FEATURES OF TRAGEDY

I. **THE DARK PROBLEM OF EVIL.** Innocent suffering or undeserved suffering. The suffering is more than any action merits. Descent to lowest pitch of experience.

II. **AMBIGUITY.** The course isn’t clear; the bases for choice are clouded.

III. **QUESTIONS OF IDENTITY.** How much is one the maker of himself?

IV. **FREE WILL.** Tragedy posits freedom. The evil is one that one has somehow brought on himself.

V. **FATE.** The press of outer forces, divinity, chance. FATE and FREE WILL are often in intricate interplay in tragedy.

VI. **ALONENESS.**

VII. **BEAUTY.** How get pleasure, delight out of materials of unhappiness?
Shakespearean Tragedy

Purpose: to show Shakespeare's tragic conception or conception of tragedy; to show how Shakespeare represents a certain aspect of life a certain way.

I. Facts that give foundation to Shakespearean Tragedy
   A. Story of 1 person: the hero
   B. Leads up to and includes the death of the hero
   C. Depicts the exceptional suffering and calamity of the hero
   D. Shows a total reverse of fortune
   E. Arouses feelings of pity and fear
   F. He is usually a person of high position and his fall affects an empire or nation and points to the powerlessness of man and the omnipotence - or caprice - of Fortune or Fate, which no tale of private life can rival.
   G. The hero contributes in some measure to his own downfall; the center of tragedy = action issuing from character or character issuing in action: "character IS destiny".
   H. Occasionally represents abnormal conditions of mind.
   I. Supernatural is introduced into many of the tragedies.
   J. Most tragedies allow to chance or accident.

II. The Conflict
   A. Between persons and groups (JC; R&J) OUTWARD
   B. Struggle within the soul of the hero; spiritual forces in conflict. INWARD
   C. Both inward and outward.

III. Central Figure
   A. Exceptional beings: depicted on grand scale, some with genius, usually with a marked one-sidedness of predisposition in some particular direction.
   B. He errs: by action or omission; and his error, joining with other causes brings ruin on him.
   C. Hero need not be good but he generally is.
IV. The Ultimate Power that decides men's actions

A. Not religious = although ghosts and gods or God may be mentioned they do not materially influence Shakespeare's representation of life nor do they throw light on the mystery of its tragedy. Elizabethan drama = secular.

B. Not law and order = justice and benevolence would lessen the fear and mystery from viewing the spectacle of suffering and waste.

C. Not Fate = in its crude or primitive forms. The "Divinities that shape our ends" do so by giving us the characteristics and natures that will cause us or determine to act a certain way. Fate here, is "a mythological expression for the whole system of order, of which man is an inconsiderable part; which seems to determine more than they, their native dispositions and their circumstances, and, through these, their actions."

D. But a MORAL ORDER = which deals with good and evil; it is moral because it is not indifferent to good an devil or equally favorable to both but shows itself for good and against evil. The main source of the convulsion or eruption that produces suffering and death is in every case evil (in its fullest sense). Evil is everywhere something negative, barren, weakening, destructive, a principle of death which isolates and annihilates not only the opposite but itself.

E. Tragedy, here, is the exhibition of this convulsion and produces a sense of sharing in the catastrophe (pity, fear, sense of waste): the struggle, the suffering and the fall. There is no tragedy in the expulsion of evil: the tragedy is that this involves the WASTE of GOOD (Hamlet and his vast powers).

V. Construction of Shakespearean Tragedy

A. Exposition = to introduce us into a little world of persons; to show us their positions in life, their circumstances, their relations to one another, and perhaps something of their characters.

* BUT the process of merely acquiring information is unpleasant and the direct imparting of it is undramatic. Unless the dramatist uses a Prologue, he must conceal from the audience the fact that they are being informed, and he must tell them what he wants them to know by means which are interesting on their own account. He is explaining, here, what the situation is.

B. The Conflict: Its Rise and Development:

1. Play is meant for theater thus the internal soul struggle of the protagonist must be reconciled with the outward conflict.

2. Method(s) by which Shakespeare represents the rise and development of the conflict:
   a. Variance of emotional pitch
   b. Oscillating sequence of events within the conflict: a regular alteration of smaller advances and retrials; first A (Hamlet) seeming to win some
ground, and then the counter-action of B (Claudius) being shown; a constant alteration of hope and fear, or rather of a mixed state predominantly hopeful and a mixed state predominantly apprehensive. This occurs until the play reaches a...

C. **Crisis (or Climax)** = the ascending force reaches its zenith and is quickly followed, or even without the slightest pause, by a REVERSE or counter-blow, not less emphatic, and in some cases even more exciting. The **EFFECT**: is to make us feel a sudden and tragic change in the **DIRECTION OF THE MOVEMENT**, which after ascending more or less gradually, now turns sharply downward. ("In Hamlet the thrilling success of the play scene is met and undone at once by the counter-stroke of Hamlet’s failure to take vengeance and his misfortune in killing Polonius." A. C. Bradley)

D. **Catastrophe**
1. Shakespeare rarely makes the least attempt to surprise by his catastrophes. They are felt to be inevitable, though the precise way in which they will be brought about is, of course, unforeseen.
2. This catastrophe, then, is foreseen, and is followed with a psychological and moral necessity on the action exhibited in the first part of the tragedy. (Mass killings in Hamlet). This is the **denouement**, the point at which good triumphs over evil and men make recompense for their breach of the moral order.
Maynard Mack, "The Jacobean Shakespeare."

I. Bradley = The outward structure of Shn tragedy.

II. Mack = Inward structure of Shn tragedy.

A. Character
   1. Hero = Overstater. There is always a residue of hyperbole in the hero’s individual accent.
   2. The Opposing Voice (Paired voices in opposition)
      a. structural utility
      b. antiphonal effect
   c. Duality between individual and community = a confrontation between 2 basic, cherished instincts: the instinct to be resolute, autonomous, free and the instinct to be "realistic," adaptable, and secure.
   d. Short scene or episode depicting the hero at spiritual cross purposes.

B. Action -- What happens in Shn tragedy? Bradley examines external action. But internally, Shn tragedy hints, evokes, and implies through:
   1. Indirection or "mirroring" -- one character reflecting the consciousness of another (e.g. the Fool is a screen on which the psychic experience of Lear is projected).
   2. Emblematic entrances and exits. These assume a variety of forms ranging from those whose significance is obvious to those where it is uncertain, controversial, and perhaps simply a mirage.
   3. Recapitulation of a motif (e.g. multiple poisonings in Hamlet = spiritual poisoning).
   4. Mirror scenes (analogical probability). For example, the watchmen on the platform in Hamlet feel out a mystery, an image that will re-form in our minds again and again.

C. Pattern to the action:
   1. First Phase: Hero is delineated.
   2. Second Phase: The hero tends to become his own antithesis (usually through madness which ultimately and paradoxically yields insight). The character’s madness gives Sh license.
   3. Third Phase: Recovery of sorts, perhaps even a synthesis occurs here. The hero does not necessarily undergo an "illumination" or perception, but he does finally exhibit one or more aspects of his original or, at least, better self. The meaning of tragic madness in Sh contains both punishment and insight.
Hamlet

1. Laurence Olivier once said that Hamlet was about a man "who couldn’t make up his mind." C. S. Lewis felt that the subject of the play was not Hamlet but "death." What do you think the play is "about"?

2. Hamlet: Discuss the Hamlet perceived by the other characters.

3. Consider Hamlet’s dramatic relationship to the other young men in the plot, especially Fortinbras, Laertes, and Horatio. Additionally, consider Horatio as a mean between the extremes of Fortinbras-Laertes and Hamlet (see III, ii, 67-74). Describe the dramatic function of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. What are they in themselves, and how do they highlight Hamlet’s character? (Read Tom Stoppard’s Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead as a special project.)

4. Discuss Hamlet as revealed in his Soliloquies (see I, ii, 129-159; I, v, 91-110; II, ii, 533-591; III, i, 55-88; III, iii, 73-98; IV, iv, 32-66). Imagine how you might interpret these lines if you were an actor. Comment on the quality of an interpretation you have experienced in the theatre, on film, television, or record.

   (1) What do his soliloquies tell us about Hamlet?
   (2) Are Hamlet’s words consistent with his actions?

5. Discuss Hamlet’s madness. Is it real, or feigned?

6. Discuss Hamlet’s “delay.” Is it actual, or imagined? If “actual,” explain the reasons he delays.

7. Hamlet refers to himself as heaven’s “scourge and minister.” Define these terms, and discuss their relevance to Hamlet.

8. Do you believe Hamlet is a hypersensitive intellectual? The quintessential Romantic poet?

9. To what extent, if any, is Hamlet a scapegoat?

10. Is there a change in Hamlet’s philosophical outlook when he returns from his trip (V, i)?

11. Consider the final words of the play (V, ii, 400f). Would Hamlet have made a good king if he had lived?

12. Comment on Hamlet’s use of language: irony, puns, bawdy, repetition, imagery, metaphor, etc. Is Hamlet lacking an "objective correlative"? (Eliot)

13. How important is the condition of the State of Denmark (social, moral and political condition) to the overall meaning of the play?

14. Two important motifs -- "seems" and "who’s there?" -- underscore important themes in the play.
   a. How many things "seem" in the State of Denmark?
   b. How do the first two words of the play ("Who’s there?") create a mood and a meaning that is developed throughout the play?
15. Analyze Hamlet’s attitude and behavior toward Ophelia? Does it change? Why? Why not? How does she treat him? Were they lovers? Why does he imply she is a whore and Polonius a "bawd”? Why does she go insane when her father is killed? How does her insanity compare to Hamlet’s? What is behind her bawdy comments in her delirious state? What do they tell us about her?

16. Hamlet also has strong feeling regarding his mother’s "o’erhasty" marriage to Claudius. Discuss his attitude towards her before, during, and after the scene in her bedroom. Why doesn’t Gertrude see the ghost Hamlet sees? Is Hamlet suffering from an Oedipus Complex? Does Gertrude become more supportive of Hamlet and "take his side" after the bedroom scene?

17. Some editions of Hamlet (The Family Shakespeare and others) have "Bowdlerized" the play on the theory that Shakespeare’s bawdy lines (e.g. III, ii, 111-125) have nothing to do with the development of the play and should be left out. Discuss. In this connection, explain the bawdy tone of the distracted Ophelia’s song in IV, v, 24-66.

18. What are the key moments of ritual in the play? Which rituals succeed in their purpose? Which fail?

19. Hamlet calls himself and the king "mighty opposites." Discuss the ways in which they are opposites. Regarding the king, what kind of person do his first words reveal him to be (cf. I, ii, 1-40)? Discuss the irony in the king’s words to Laertes in IV, vii, 110-125.

20. Discuss the character of Polonius. Polonius advises Laertes, Ophelia, Reynaldo, and the king and queen. Review these advice-giving sessions and comment on what they reveal about Polonius, his attitude toward others, and his attitude towards human nature in general. Why is Polonius almost invariably wrong about Hamlet? And why does Hamlet, from the beginning, so intensely dislike Polonius?

21. Discuss the structure of the play: the exposition, the rise and development of the conflict, the crisis (when does it occur?), and the catastrophe. How does the structure of this play differ from a Greek tragedy, say Oedipus Rex?

22. The ghost of Hamlet’s father appears several times. Discuss his function(s) in the play. What does he contribute to the mood, meaning and characterization in the play? How should he be presented on stage? Seen? Unseen? Special effects?

23. Discuss the play-within-a-play. Structurally, its plot parallels the preceding action of the main plot, and it serves to catch the conscience of the king. Does it reflect any of the themes of the main plot? What significance might the words of the player king have for Hamlet?

24. Consider the graveyard scene (V, i). Shakespeare introduces comic characters in this scene (a practice Renaissance scholars found objectionable in tragic drama). What is Shakespeare’s purpose, here? How does he use this change in mood to reinforce major themes he considers throughout?

25. Cf. Hamlet’s direction to the actors. What do they tell us about Hamlet himself? Is there any irony in his remarks? What do these words tell us about Shakespeare’s conception of acting and elizabethan stage practice?
26. In *Hamlet*, there are a great number of images of sickness, disease (ulcers, tumors), and decay. How do these images relate to any of the important themes in the play?

27. *Hamlet* is first, and foremost, drama. But it is a drama which deals with serious philosophical questions. What does the play seem to say about:

   a. the role of fate in the affairs of men?
   b. the purpose of life?
   c. Man's posture in the face of danger and/or death?
   d. about life after death?
   e. about the capacity of human reason to govern passion?
   f. about the influence of the supernatural in the lives of men?

28. Is *Hamlet*, as T. S. Eliot once said, "obviously an artistic failure"?

29. The complete text of *Hamlet* would run for 4-4 1/2 hours on stage. Most modern producers do extensive editing to bring a play within the limits a modern audience will accept (2-2 1/2 hours). Which scenes would you, as a modern producer, edit?
1. *Macbeth* is often referred to as Shakespeare's most "demonic" play. Considering the mood, meaning, characters, individual scenes, symbolism and imagery, discuss the variety of ways in which the term "demonic" seems appropriate.

2. The main source for Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is Holinshed’s *Chronicles of Scotland*, but Shakespeare's play differs from its source in a number of significant ways:
   a. Holinshed’s Duncan is younger, and he is depicted as a weak ruler;
   b. Holinshed’s Macbeth has a genuine grievance vs. Duncan;
   c. Banquo et al were accomplices in the murder of Duncan which was carried out as a political assassination;
   d. Shakespeare omits the ten years of good rule by Macbeth between the murder of Duncan and the murder of Banquo;
   e. Shakespeare invents the banquet scene and the ghost of Banquo;
   f. Shakespeare also invents the sleepwalking scene and the presumed suicide of Lady Macbeth.

What do you think are the reasons behind Shakespeare's changes? What is the effect of these changes?

3. Supernatural phenomena (witches, ghosts, air-drawn daggers) inhabit the world of *Macbeth*. What is their general effect on the play? How should these phenomena be produced on stage?
   a. Produce one or more of the witch scenes (I, i; I, iii; IV, i). What kind of costumes, make-up, lighting and stage effects, and props would you use?
   b. Should the air-drawn dagger be visible to the audience, or should Macbeth's words and gestures about a dagger suggest that it exists only in his mind? Explain your choice and its implications.
   c. After considering potential staging difficulties, block and perform the banquet scene (III, iv). Are there any clues to Banquo's appearance to aid make-up and costuming?

4. Discuss the dramatic function of the witches. Do they have any symbolic value? In line 10 of the opening scene the witches murmur: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair. . ." This phrase is repeated by Macbeth in his opening words "So foul and fair a day I have not seen." Is this just a coincidence, or does the cryptic phrase and its repetition signal a theme that is developed in the play's action?

5. *Macbeth*, unlike Shakespeare's other major tragic heroes, is a villain-hero. Is it fair to say, however, that he is a thoroughly villainous character? Does he have any redeeming personal qualities?
a. What impression of Macbeth is given before he appears on stage (cf. I, ii, 7-58)? Is his initial appearance compatible with the first impression? Explain.

b. Describe Macbeth’s reaction to the witches’ prognostication. Why is his reaction different from Banquo’s? How compelling are the witches words, that is, is Macbeth’s fate determined by their words; have they effectively cast a spell upon him and gained control of his mind and spirit, or is he still free to make moral choices?

c. Re-read I, iv, and compare Macbeth to King Duncan. Comment on the imagery, the irony, and the values developed in this scene in order to understand this scene’s importance to the plot development.

d. Are there any clearly defined stages to Macbeth’s moral decline? When, for example, does his self-image change?

e. Describe the evolving relationship between Lady Macbeth and Macbeth? How is it different at the end from what it was in the beginning, and how did it happen? (Cf. I, v & vii; II, ii; III, ii and iv; V, i; V, iii, 40-44; V, v, 17-28)

f. Read Macbeth’s famous “Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow” speech (V, v, 19-28), and explain its meaning within the play’s context. Should we assume, as some have, that this speech is a reflection of Shakespeare’s philosophy? Why or why not?

6. There are two prominent interactive images in the play: (a) ill-fitting garments, which depict a pictorial antithesis between the man and his clothes (e.g. "...now does he feel his title/Hang loose about him, like a gian’s robe/Upon a dwarfish thief"), and (b) a contrast between the picture and the thing depicted (e.g. "The sleeping, and the dead./Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood/That fears a painted devil.
And: "This is the very painting of your fear." And: "Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,/And look on death itself!). Discuss the important themes that emerge from the repetition of such images.

7. Lady Macbeth:

a. Our first impressions of Lady Macbeth are formed out of her first soliloquy (I, v) and her early debates with Macbeth regarding the murder of Duncan (I, vii and II, ii). Describe her personality. Is it fair to say that Shakespeare intended her to be “literally possessed”? Examine this possibility in light of the unnatural darkness and portents on the night of the murder and her later somnambulism.

b. When Lady Macbeth urges her husband to murder Duncan she admonishes him to act like a "man" -- a line of argument later used by Macbeth to persuade his henchmen to murder Banquo. Since this is an important theme in the play, it is important to determine what "being a man" means to Lady Macbeth and her husband. Are alternative notions presented in the play, perhaps embodied in other characteristics?

c. Is Lady Macbeth’s fainting spell in II, iii, genuine or faked? Discuss the implications of either choice.
. Discuss the role of Lady Macbeth during the banquet scene the source of each polarity while working towards a general statement of what you believe is Shakespeare's perspective.

8. Discuss briefly the dramatic functions of the following characters:  a) Malcolm; b) Ross; c) Macduff

9. In Act IV, ii, Macbeth's soldiers murder Lady Macduff and her children. Describe the effect of the scene. Is it thematically important, or is it gratuitously violent and sensational?

10. Act IV, iii (The Testing of Macduff's Loyalty and The Revelation of His Family's Slaughter) is the longest and wordiest scene of an otherwise fastpaced play. Is this scene overdone and unimportant? Would there be any problems in making this scene theatrically effective?

11. Discuss the nature of the action in Act V. How would you stage the action in order to effectively counterpoint the characterization of Macbeth here with the events swirling about him.

12. Which episode marks the the climax of the play? The killing of Duncan? The killing of Banquo and failure to kill Fleance? The banquet scene? The slaughter of Macduff's family? Some other?

13. David Garrick, a famous 18th-century actor and playwright, inserted the following speech of his own composition to the end of Macbeth:

Tis done! the scene of life will quickly close.
Ambition's vain delusive dreams are fled,
And now I make to darkness, guilt and horror
I cannot bear it! let me shake it off --
It will notice; my soul is clog'd with blood --
I cannot rise! I dare not ask for mercy--
It is too late; hell drags me down! -- Oh! -- Oh!

Is this the kind of speech Shakespeare's Macbeth would have spoke? Explain. Is the tone of the speech appropriate to the rest of the play? Does the speech touch on the important themes of Shakespeare's play?

14. In Roman Polanski's film Macbeth, the action does not end with the final words celebrating the death of Macbeth and the cheers for the new King of Scotland. The final scene rather depicts Donalbain entering the witches' dwelling, presumably to discover his political fortunes. How does this scene alter Shakespeare's meaning? Does the director have any basis for including such a scene? Re-read the final twenty or so lines of the play before making your judgment.

15. Why, at the end of the sleepwalking scene, does the Doctor say: "God, God forgive us all"?
**Equivocation Theme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Witches:</th>
<th>Macbeth:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Fair is foul and foul is fair.&quot; (I,i,11)</td>
<td>&quot;so foul and fair a day I have not seen.&quot; (I,iii,38)</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Not so happy, yet happier still&quot; (I,iii,64)</td>
<td>&quot;This supernatural soliciting cannot be ill, cannot be good&quot; (I,iii,131 ff.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Lesser than Macbeth, and greater&quot; (I,iii,66)</td>
<td>&quot;Nothing is, but what is not&quot; (I,iii,141-142)</td>
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<td>Lady Macbeth: &quot;Look like th’ innocent flower,/but be a serpent under’t.&quot; (I,v,65-66)</td>
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<td>&quot;The time has been/That when the brains were out, the man would die&quot; (III,iv,80-81)</td>
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<td>&quot;...none of woman born shall harm Macbeth.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Then live Macduff what need I fear thee?&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Macbeth shall never vanquish’d be until Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane Hill/Shall come against him.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;That will never be.&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;I pull in resolution, and begin to doubt th’equivocation of the fiend/That lies like Truth.&quot; (V,v,42-44)</td>
<td>&quot;...be these juggling fiends no more believ’d, that palter with us in a double sense, that keep the word of promise to our ear/And break it to our hope.&quot; (V,viii,19f)</td>
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**Old Man to Ross:**
"God’s benison go with you, and with those That would make good of bad, and friends of foe." (II,iv,41-42)

**Macduff to Malcolm:**
CONSIDER PORTER’S SCENE, II, iii.

**IN LIGHT OF ALL THIS.**
"Such welcome and unwelcome things at once /'Tis hard to reconcile."
King Lear

1. In I, i King Lear is in the process of partitioning his kingdom. What are the social and political dangers in such behavior? How does this shape our initial response to the old king?

2. Comment on the structural and thematic relationship between the plot and the sub-plot. Compare and contrast the major and minor characters of the main plot with those of the sub-plot.

3. Compare the climax of King Lear with the climax of Hamlet. Distinguish between structural and emotional climaxes in developing your answer.

4. Do the sisters, Goneril and Regan, seem distinguishable? What personality traits separate them and Edmund from the other characters in the play? A. C. Bradley has said: "In no other of [Shakespeare's] tragedies does humanity appear more pitifully infirm or more hopelessly bad." Do such people exist, or is Shakespeare simply drawing personality extremes to dramatize the play's central conflicts? Would you agree with Samuel Johnson's view that this is "a play in which the wicked prosper"?

5. Discuss the dramatic function of the Fool. Is he a comic figure? Consider his role vis-a-vis Cordelia.

6. Would a happy ending (e.g. letting Lear live, Cordelia perhaps marry Edgar) improve the play? Why or why not? Relate your answer to the main action and themes of the play.

7. Do the fate and struggle of Edgar in any way mirror the fate and struggle of Lear?

8. Note the ironic uses of madness and blindness developed through the characters of Lear and Gloucester. How does this irony relate to a theme?

9. Is Lear's change of attitude toward Cordelia sudden or gradual? Explain.

10. When does Lear -- like certain other of Shakespeare's characters (e.g. Richard II, Richard III, Hamlet) -- play a role? What role or roles does he play, and why? Is he conscious of doing so? When do others play roles, and why?

11. Edmund's rationality and Gloucester's irrationality are contrasted in I, ii. In what other characters are these qualities contrasted? How does the contrast give meaning to the play? Comment on Edmund's view on the influences of the stars on men's lives (I, ii, 128-144). Others, like Kent, also blame the stars, the heavens, fortune or fate, for man's bitter condition. Is this where the blame should be placed? Support your view by referring to the play.
12. Comment on these four major scenes, and imagine how they would be performed on stage, with proper attention to blocking, delivery of lines, costume, lighting, etc.
   a. stripping of Lear’s attendants (II, iv, 215-280)
   b. Lear on the Health (III, ii, 1-75; iii, iv, 6-21 & 100-108)
   c. the blinding of Gloucester (III, vii, 70-108)
   d. Lear bearing Cordelia’s dead body (V, iii, 259-315)

13. Discuss the various meanings of "nature" in the play. How do different characters use the term in different senses? (cf. I, iv, 282cf; II, i, 86; II, iv, 146 & 178; II, iv, 277; III, iii, 1 & 6, 26; III, vii, 88; IV, ii, 32; IV, vi, 86).

14. Consider the use of the word "nothing" in King Lear. Relate this to one of the play’s important themes (cf. I, i 87ff; I, iv, 189-200; II, ii, 33; II, iii, 21; IV, vi, 136-37).

15. What does the play say about the nature of "authority". (cf. I, i, 133-136; I, iii, 17-21, and es. IV, vi, 152-165)

16. Explore the numerous instances of divestiture in King Lear, and comment on the thematic importance of divestiture in this play.

17. "...yet he hath every but slenderly known himself," says Regan. "Who is it that can tell me who I am?" asks Lear. Discuss the theme of identity in King Lear.

18. The imagery in King Lear features clusters of animal images, notably beasts of prey: tiger, vulture, boar, wolf. How do these interactive images underscore the action and themes of the play?

19. Passages (such as Edgar’s: "...the worst is not/So long as we can say ‘This is the worst.’" and Gloucester’s: "As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods,/They kill us for their sport.") have suggested to some critics that the themes of this play are non-Christian, in fact closer to what we might expect from Greek tragedy.

2. To answer this question we must analyze the play’s ending. Does Lear achieve any measure of redemption? If so, how is it achieved? If not, does the play end on a note of despair and emptiness? Is there any concern with the life hereafter, or is the concern primarily with life here? Does the play, in short, end in victory, or defeat? Or, may it be, as Maynard Mack says, that “the victory and defeat are simultaneous and inseparable.” Does it make any difference whether Albany or Edgar speaks in the final lines (cf. Quarto vs. Folio)?
1. Samuel Taylor Coleridge has stated that: "In this play Shakespeare has especially appealed to the imagination, and he has constructed a plot well adapted to the purpose." Point out a number of ways in which Shakespeare appeals to the imagination in this play. Then, decide how the plot is "well adapted to the purpose." If you were a modern director how would you use the resources of the theatre (stage, scenery, lighting, costumes, actors, music, etc.) to effectively suit the mood and meaning of the play?

2. Comment on the action of the storm scene in I, i. What does the storm, here, symbolize? And, what is its significance to the rest of the play?

3. The shipwrecked nobles are separated into 3 groups (if Ferdinand might be called a "group"). Describe the separate activities of each group. Show how each group is controlled and manipulated by Prospero. And describe how and when the separate activities of these groups converge. How do these multiple levels of action suit Shakespeare’s structural and thematic purposes?

4. Discuss the dramatic function of Antonio and Sebastian? How does their malignity differ from Stephano’s and Trinculo’s? from Caliban’s? What dramatic function does Gonzalo serve?

5. Describe the inhabitants of the enchanted isle (Prospero, Miranda, Ariel, and Caliban). Discuss Ariel as a commentary on the spirit and Caliban as a commentary on the flesh. Discuss the theme of nature vs. art that Robert Langbaum discusses in his "Introduction" to the Signet Tempest. Decide for yourself wherein human dignity and nobility exist. Is Nature a corrupter or purifier of humanity?

6. There is music playing throughout the play. What might this signify? What did music signify to the audience of Shakespeare? Discuss a selection of the songs in the play. What are their dramatic functions? What are their atmospheric functions? How do the words deepen, or render more precise, our perception of the action?

7. Rousseau, a Romantic-Primitivist, believed that a natural society without the civilized accretions of law, custom, organized religion, urbanization, etc., is not only desirable, but the only true path to happiness. Does this notion have current relevance? After considering Gonzalo’s "Utopia" (II, i, 152-172), and balancing this with the play’s portrayal of Caliban and the conspirators, decide what Shakespeare thinks?

8. The Tempest exhibits some of the characteristics of the Jacobean masque that was popular at the time Shakespeare wrote his play. Describe some of the characteristics of the masque, and determine its dramatic function in the larger scheme of the play (see IV, i, 60-140). As a director, describe and block the action of this scene, and explain what kind of costumes, lights, props, music, and choreography would create the proper mood for this scene.

9. The Tempest also has some of the conventional features of tragi-comedy and pastoral drama. Describe what some of these features are, and explain how they are integrated into the whole?

10. As in R&J, young people fall in love at first sight. How is the falling-in-love here different from that in R&J? Compare R&J I, v, 42-145 with Tempest, I, 425-504; III, i; perhaps stage both scenes in class (using the same actors?) before discussing.
11. To what extent is the marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda symbolic of more than the "Fair encounter/Of two most rare affections"?

12. Critics often speculate that Shakespeare, in IV, i, 148-158 ("Our revels now are ended..."), is speaking autobiographically through Prospero. Consider this possibility. More likely, by once again merging orders of reality, Shakespeare is saying something about the nature of drama vis-a-vis the nature of human life. In your own words, describe the Shakespearean view of the relationship between drama and life.

13. Prospero's speech in V, i 33-47 ("Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves...") has also been interpreted autobiographically. Consider this; but then consider the more important meaning of this passage to the play itself. Why is the "breaking of the staff" an important symbolic function at this point?

14. The final scene suggests forgiveness and reconciliation. Yet the silence of Antonio is palpable. Why does he refuse to reconcile? Do you think this jarring note is deliberate? If so, why?

15. In his A Natural Perspective, Northrop Frye states: "The mythical or primitive basis of comedy is a movement toward the rebirth and the renewal of the powers of nature, this aspect of literary comedy being expressed in the imagery more directly than in the structure. The mythical backbone of all literature is the cycle of nature, which rolls from birth to death and back again to rebirth. The first half of this cycle, the movement from birth to death, spring to winter, dawn to dark, is the basis of the great alliance of nature and reason, the sense of nature as a rational order in which all movement is toward the increasingly predictable... Comedy, however, is based on the second half of the great cycle, moving from death to rebirth, decadence to renewal, winter to spring, darkness to new dawn."

3. Interpret The Tempest in light of Frye's comments. Would you make any qualifications?