Elizabethan to Restoration Literature

Course Code	: *ENG 0232-3119*
Course Title	: *Elizabethan to Restoration Literature*
Course Type	: Core Course
Course Teacher	: Shaon Gharami
Credit Value	: 03
Total Marks	: 150
Contact Hours	: 51

Course Objectives

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By the End of this Course, Students will be Able to:

- Analyze the social, political, and cultural contexts that shaped Elizabethan, Jacobean, Caroline, and Restoration literature.
- Identify and differentiate key literary forms, including Elizabethan drama, sonnets, metaphysical poetry, cavalier poetry, and Restoration comedy.
- Examine the works of major authors such as William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson, John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, John Milton, John Dryden, and Aphra Behn.
- Apply close reading strategies to analyze language, structure, form, and stylistic devices in the literature of the period.

Course Learning Outcomes: For a course on the *Elizabethan to Restoration Literature*, learning outcomes should reflect different levels of cognitive skills as per Bloom's Taxonomy. At the end of this course, students will be able to –

CLO 1	Identify key authors, texts, and historical periods of *Elizabethan to Restoration Literature*.	Remember
CLO 2	Explain the central themes, motifs, and narrative techniques in selected works of *Elizabethan to Restoration Literature.*	Understand
CLO 3	Apply literary theories and critical frameworks to the analysis of *Elizabethan to Restoration Literature's* texts.	Apply
CLO 4	Examine the relationships between form, content, and meaning in *Elizabethan to Restoration* literary texts.	Analyze
CLO 5	Critique the representation of race, gender, class, and postcolonial identity in *Elizabethan to Restoration Literature.*	Evaluate
CLO 6	Create comparative analyses that explore intersections between *Elizabethan to Restoration Literature.* and the literature of other periods.	Create

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Specific Contents, Teaching-Learning Activities, and Assessment Strategy Mapping with Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs):

Week	Topic	Teaching-Learning Strategy	Assessment Strategy	Corresponding CLOs
1	✓ Overall discussion on *Elizabethan to Restoration Literature* ✓ Introduction to Poetry & John Donne ✓ "The Good-Morrow"	✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided.	✓ Class Attendance ✓ Class performance	CLO 1 CLO 2
2	✓ "The Canonization" ✓ "The Sun Rising"	✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided.	✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test	CLO2
3	✓ "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" ✓ Death, be not proud	✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided	✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test ✓ **Quiz 1 (Written Test)**	CLO 2
4	✓ Introduction Christopher Marlowe ✓ *Doctor Faustus*	✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided	✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test	CLO 2
5	✓ Doctor Faustus	✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided	✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral test ✓ **Quiz 2 (Assignment)**	CLO 2 CLO 3

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6	Introduction Edmund Spenser *The Faerie Queene, BOOK I, Canto I*	✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided	✓Class Attendance ✓ Class performance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test	CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5
7	*The Faerie Queene, BOOK I, Canto I*	✓ Class lecture using digital equipment & illustration on board ✓ Interactive discussion ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided	✓ Class performance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test	CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5
8	✓ Introduction to Ben Jonson ✓ *Volpone*: An Overview	✓ Class lecture using digital equipment & illustration on board ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided	Feedback and Oral Test	CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5
9	✓ *Volpone*	✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided	✓ Class Attendance ✓ Class performance	CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5
10	✓ *Volpone*	✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided	✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test	CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5

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11	*Volpone*	✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided	✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test	CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5
12	✓ Introduction to John Webster ✓ *The Duchess of Malfi*: An Overview	✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided ✓ Discussion	✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test ✓ **Quiz 3 (Presentation)**	CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5
13	*The Duchess of Malfi*	✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided	✓ Class Attendance ✓ Class Performance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test	CLO 5
14	*The Duchess of Malfi*	✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided	✓ Class Attendance ✓ Class performance	CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5

15	✓ Introduction to John Milton ✓ *Paradise Lost, Book I*	✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided ✓ Discussion	✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test	CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5
16	*Paradise Lost, Book I*	✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided	✓ Class Attendance ✓ Class Performance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test	CLO 5
17	*Paradise Lost, Book I*	✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided	✓ Class Attendance ✓ Class performance ✓ **Quiz 4 (Viva)**	CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5

ASSESSMENT PATTERN

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Assignment & Presentation:

Students will be assigned topics or case studies to work on at home and submit by the specified due date, with no late submissions accepted. Alternatively, students may be required to deliver a PowerPoint presentation in class. Presentations should be clear, well-organized, visually engaging, and effectively communicate research findings. Students should be prepared to answer questions and engage in discussions, enhancing their understanding of the material and developing public speaking skills.

Quizzes:

Three Quiz Tests will be taken during the semester. No makeup quiz test will be taken. Students are strongly recommended not to miss that test.

Viva-Voce:

At the end of the semester, the students must appear before a board of faculty from their course, who will assess them on topics they have covered. The department may invite external faculty to evaluate the students.

ASSESSMENT PATTERN

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Total Marks **Per Credit 50 Marks**	
3 Credits Course	150 Marks
2 Credits Course	100 Marks
CIE	60%
SEE	40%

CIE- Continuous Internal Evaluation (90 Marks-60%)

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Bloom's Category Marks (out of 45)	Tests (45)	Assignments (15)	Quizzes (15)	External Participation in Curricular/Co-Curricular Activities (30)
Remember	10		05	Attendance: 15 Viva-Voce: 15
Understand	10	05		
Apply	05	10		
Analyze	10			
Evaluate	05			
Create	05		10	

SEE- Semester End Examination (60 Marks-40%)

Bloom's Category	Tests
Remember	15
Understand	15
Apply	10
Analyze	10
Evaluate	5
Create	5

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Recommended Books

- Marlowe, Christopher. *Doctor Faustus*. Broadview Press, 2007.
- Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene: Book I*. Vol. 1. Macmillan, 1893.
- Jonson, Ben. *Volpone, or the Fox*. Manchester University Press, 1999.
- Webster, John. *The duchess of Malfi*. Macmillan Education UK, 1997.
- Milton, John. *Paradise lost*. Scolar Press, 1968.

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Week 1 (P. 13-20)

John Donne (1572–1631)

John Donne (1572–1631)

- John Donne (1572–1631) was an English poet, cleric, and one of the most prominent figures of the **Metaphysical poetry** movement.
- His work is known for its wit, intellectual depth, and use of striking metaphors known as **“conceits.”**
- Donne’s poetry explores themes of **love, religion, death, and human relationships** with a distinctive blend of emotional intensity and complex reasoning.

Main Features of Donne's Poetry

Metaphysical Conceits: Unusual and imaginative comparisons, such as comparing lovers to a pair of compasses in *"A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning."*

Paradoxes and Irony: His poems often present paradoxical ideas and challenge conventional thinking.

Religious Themes: Later in life, Donne focused on spiritual matters, seen in his **Holy Sonnets**, like *"Death Be Not Proud."*

Philosophical Inquiry: Donne questions human existence, mortality, and the afterlife.

Eroticism and Sensuality: Some of his early poems, like *"The Flea,"* explore love and physical intimacy through clever and humorous analogies.

Major Works of John Donne

The Flea – A witty seduction poem where a flea becomes a metaphor for physical union.

A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning – A profound meditation on love that transcends physical separation.

Holy Sonnets – A collection of 19 sonnets that explore themes of death, divine judgment, and salvation, including the famous "Death Be Not Proud."

Meditation XVII – Known for the phrase "No man is an island, entire of itself", reflecting on human interconnectedness.

The Canonization – An argument for the sanctity of love, portraying lovers as saints.

The Good-Morrow
John Donne

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I wonder, by my troth, what thou and I

Did, till we loved? Were we not weaned till then?

But sucked on country pleasures, childishly?

Or snorted we in the Seven Sleepers' den?

'Twas so; but this, all pleasures fancies be.

If ever any beauty I did see,

Which I desired, and got, 'twas but a dream of thee.

And now good-morrow to our waking souls,

Which watch not one another out of fear;

For love, all love of other sights controls,

And makes one little room an everywhere.

Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone,

Let maps to other, worlds on worlds have shown,

Let us possess one world, each hath one, and is one.

My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears,
And true plain hearts do in the faces rest;
Where can we find two better hemispheres,
Without sharp north, without declining west?
Whatever dies, was not mixed equally;
If our two loves be one, or, thou and I
Love so alike, that none do slacken, none can die.

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Week 2 (P. 21-29)

The Canonization
John Donne

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For God’s sake hold your tongue, and let me love,

Or chide my palsy, or my gout,

My five gray hairs, or ruined fortune flout,

With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve,

Take you a course, get you a place,

Observe his honor, or his grace,

Or the king's real, or his stampèd face

Contemplate; what you will, approve,

So you will let me love.

Alas, alas, who’s injured by my love?

What merchant’s ships have my sighs drowned?

Who says my tears have overflowed his ground?

When did my colds a forward spring remove?

When did the heats which my veins fill

Add one more to the plaguy bill?

Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find out still

Litigious men, which quarrels move,

Though she and I do love.

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Call us what you will, we are made such by love;

Call her one, me another fly,

We're tapers too, and at our own cost die,

And we in us find the eagle and the dove.

The phoenix riddle hath more wit

By us; we two being one, are it.

So, to one neutral thing both sexes fit.

We die and rise the same, and prove

Mysterious by this love.

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We can die by it, if not live by love,

And if unfit for tombs and hearse

Our legend be, it will be fit for verse;

And if no piece of chronicle we prove,

We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms;

As well a well-wrought urn becomes

The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,

And by these hymns, all shall approve

Us canonized for Love.

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And thus invoke us: “You, whom reverend love

Made one another’s hermitage;

You, to whom love was peace, that now is rage;

Who did the whole world's soul contract, and drove

Into the glasses of your eyes

(So made such mirrors, and such spies,

That they did all to you epitomize)

Countries, towns, courts: beg from above

A pattern of your love!”

The Sun Rising
John Donne

Busy old fool, unruly sun,
Why dost thou thus,
Through windows, and through curtains call on us?
Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run?
Saucy pedantic wretch, go chide
Late school boys and sour prentices,
Go tell court huntsmen that the king will ride,
Call country ants to harvest offices,
Love, all alike, no season knows nor clime,
Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.

Thy beams, so reverend and strong
Why shouldst thou think?
I could eclipse and cloud them with a wink,
But that I would not lose her sight so long;
If her eyes have not blinded thine,
Look, and tomorrow late, tell me,
Whether both th' Indias of spice and mine
Be where thou leftst them, or lie here with me.
Ask for those kings whom thou saw'st yesterday,
And thou shalt hear, All here in one bed lay.

She’s all states, and all princes, I,

Nothing else is.

Princes do but play us; compared to this,

All honor's mimic, all wealth alchemy.

Thou, sun, art half as happy as we,

In that the world's contracted thus.

Thine age asks ease, and since thy duties be

To warm the world, that's done in warming us.

Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere;

This bed thy center is, these walls, thy sphere.

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Week 3 (P. 30-38)

A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning
John Donne

As virtuous men pass mildly away,
And whisper to their souls to go,
Whilst some of their sad friends do say
The breath goes now, and some say, No:

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

Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears,

Men reckon what it did, and meant;

But trepidation of the spheres,

Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love

(Whose soul is sense) cannot admit

Absence, because it doth remove

Those things which elemented it.

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

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

If they be two, they are two so

As stiff twin compasses are two;

Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show

To move, but doth, if the other do.

And though it in the center sit,

Yet when the other far doth roam,

It leans and hearkens after it,

And grows erect, as that comes home.

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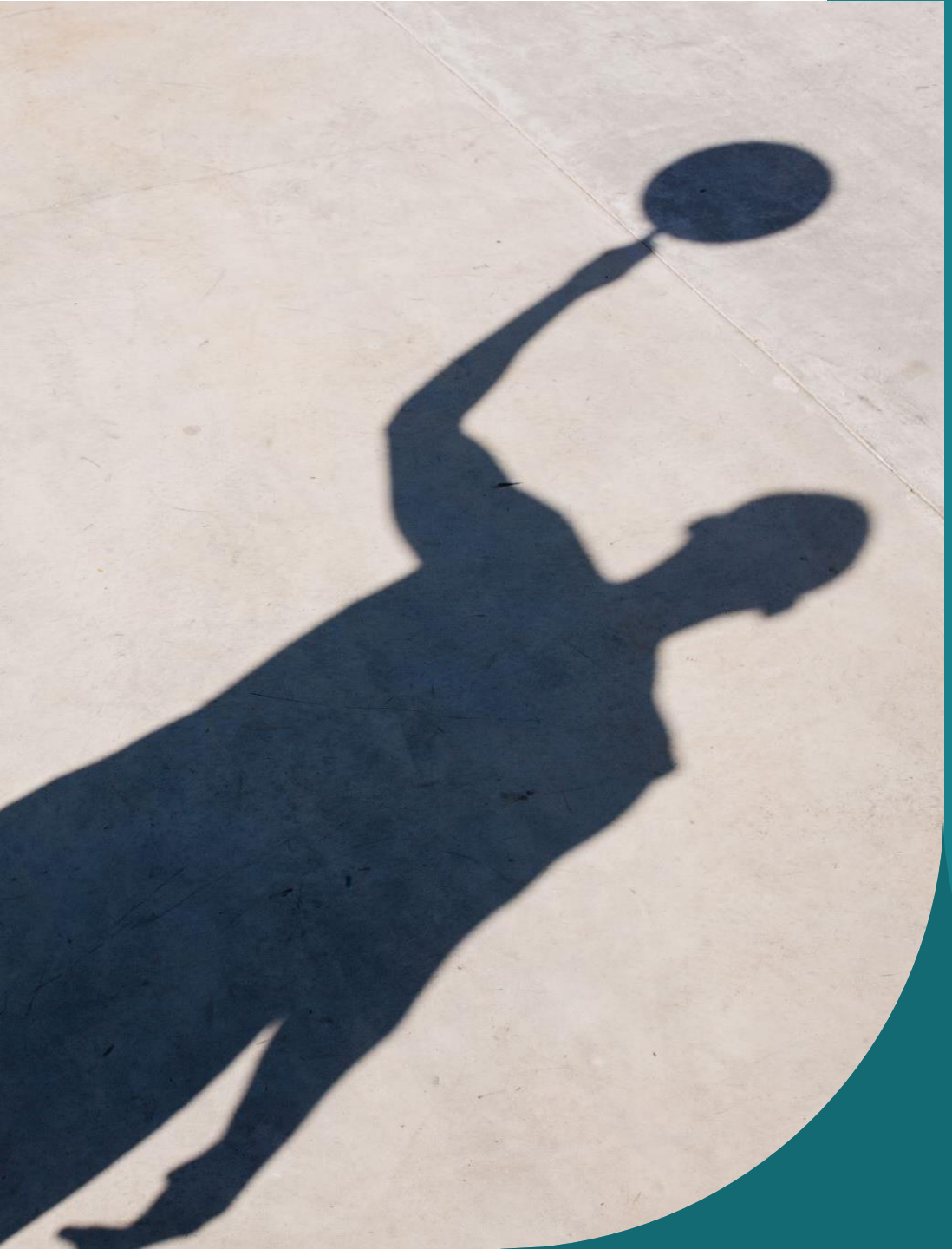

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,

Like th' other foot, obliquely run;

Thy firmness makes my circle just,

And makes me end where I begun.

Death, be not proud
John Donne

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee

Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;

For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow

Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.

From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,

Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,

And soonest our best men with thee do go,

Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.

Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,

And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,

And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well

And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?

One short sleep past, we wake eternally

And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

Quiz 1

Quiz 1 (Written Test)

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Weeks 4 & 5 (P. 39-56)

Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593)

Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593)

Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593) was an English playwright, poet, and translator of the Elizabethan era.

He is often regarded as one of the most significant figures in early English drama, second only to William Shakespeare.

Marlowe's works are known for their blank verse, bold characters, and exploration of complex philosophical and political themes.

Major Works of Christopher Marlowe

Doctor Faustus – Marlowe's most famous play, based on the legend of a man who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for knowledge and power.

Tamburlaine the Great – A two-part play about the rise and reign of a Scythian shepherd-turned-conqueror, notable for its grand, epic style.

The Jew of Malta – A dark comedy and tragedy focusing on themes of religious hypocrisy, greed, and revenge.

Edward II – A historical play about the reign and downfall of King Edward II, notable for its exploration of power, desire, and betrayal.

The Massacre at Paris – A dramatization of the events surrounding the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of French Protestants (Huguenots) in 1572.

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Literary Style and Contributions of Christopher Marlowe

Blank Verse Mastery: Marlowe is credited with popularizing the use of blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter) in English drama.

Complex Protagonists: His protagonists are often larger-than-life figures, driven by ambition, desire, and moral ambiguity.

Themes: His plays explore themes of ambition, religion, fate, and the human struggle with mortality.

Legacy of Christopher Marlowe

His works continue to be studied for their exploration of power, human ambition, and the tragic consequences of overreaching desire.

Marlowe’s influence on William Shakespeare is widely acknowledged, with some critics suggesting that Shakespeare borrowed stylistic and thematic elements from Marlowe.

Doctor Faustus in Brief

- Doctor Faustus, a respected German scholar, grows discontented with the confines of conventional knowledge in fields such as logic, medicine, law, and religion. Seeking greater power, he turns to the practice of magic.
- Encouraged by his friends Valdes and Cornelius, Faustus embarks on his new path, summoning Mephastophilis, a devil. Despite warnings from Mephastophilis about the torments of hell, Faustus offers his soul to Lucifer in exchange for twenty-four years of service from the devil.
- Meanwhile, Faustus's servant, Wagner, learns some magic himself and uses it to coerce a clown named Robin into his service.

Doctor Faustus in Brief

Mephastophilis returns with news that Lucifer has accepted Faustus's offer. Though Faustus briefly considers repentance, he ultimately seals the deal by signing a contract with his blood. As he does, the phrase "Homo fuge" ("O man, flee") appears on his arm. Despite a moment of doubt, Faustus is swayed when Mephastophilis bestows lavish gifts and gives him a book of spells. The devil answers Faustus's questions about the universe but refuses to reveal who created it, a refusal that reignites Faustus's misgivings. To calm him, Mephastophilis and Lucifer summon personifications of the Seven Deadly Sins, whose display amazes Faustus and quells his doubts.

Doctor Faustus in Brief

With his newfound powers, Faustus embarks on a series of travels, accompanied by Mephastophilis. In Rome, he disrupts the pope's banquet, making himself invisible, stealing food, and boxing the pope's ears. His fame grows, and he is invited to the court of the German emperor, Charles V. There, Faustus conjures an image of Alexander the Great, impressing Charles. When a skeptical knight mocks Faustus's powers, Faustus humiliates him by causing antlers to sprout from his head, prompting the knight to vow revenge.

Doctor Faustus in Brief

Meanwhile, Robin, now equipped with some magical knowledge, teams up with a stablehand named Rafe for a series of comic misadventures. At one point, they accidentally summon Mephastophilis, who threatens to transform them into animals as punishment for their folly.

Faustus continues his exploits, at one point tricking a horse-courser by selling him a horse that turns into a pile of straw when ridden into a river. He is later invited to the court of the Duke of Vanholt, where he performs various magical feats. The horse-courser, along with Robin, a man named Dick (also called Rafe in some versions), and other victims of Faustus's tricks, confront him at the duke's court. Faustus, however, casts spells on them, amusing the duke and duchess.

Doctor Faustus in Brief

As the end of his twenty-four-year pact approaches, Faustus becomes increasingly anxious about his fate. Seeking distraction, he summons Helen of Troy, using her beauty to dazzle a group of scholars. An old man urges him to repent, but Faustus dismisses him. Calling upon Helen again, he marvels at her beauty. With time running out, Faustus finally confesses his pact to the scholars, who are horrified and promise to pray for him. On the last night of his contract, Faustus is overcome with fear and despair, begging for mercy. At midnight, a host of devils appears and drags his soul to hell. The following morning, the scholars discover Faustus's dismembered body and decide to hold a funeral for him.

Character Analysis of *Doctor Faustus*

Faustus:

- The protagonist. Faustus is a brilliant sixteenth-century scholar from Wittenberg, Germany, whose ambition for knowledge, wealth, and worldly might makes him willing to pay the ultimate price—his soul—to Lucifer in exchange for supernatural powers.
- Faustus's initial tragic grandeur is diminished by the fact that he never seems completely sure of the decision to forfeit his soul and constantly wavers about whether or not to repent.
- His ambition is admirable and initially awesome, yet he ultimately lacks a certain inner strength. He is unable to embrace his dark path wholeheartedly but is also unwilling to admit his mistake.

Mephistopheles

- A devil whom Faustus summons with his initial magical experiments. motivations are Mephistopheles' ambiguous: on the one hand, his oft-expressed goal is to catch Faustus's soul and carry it off to hell; on the other hand, he actively attempts to dissuade Faustus from making a deal with Lucifer by warning him about the horrors of hell.
- Mephistopheles is ultimately as tragic a figure as Faustus, with his moving, regretful accounts of what the devils have lost in their eternal separation from God and his repeated reflections on the pain that comes with damnation.

The Chorus

Borrowing from the tradition of ancient Greek plays, Doctor Faustus employs the use of a Chorus meant to provide background information and additional details related to the play's events and characters. The Chorus does this from a distance, allowing them to comment on the action and convey meaning to the audience. The incorporation of a Chorus is particularly helpful for such a morally driven play, as they essentially serve as a mouthpiece of the play's author.

In Doctor Faustus, the Chorus is played by a single actor, and their opening exposition eases the audience into the world of the play, emphasizing the connection to Greek mythology by likening Faustus to Icarus. When they explain that this is to be the story of a common-born scholar, it distinguishes Doctor Faustus from other plays, rendering it a character study and a departure from tradition, as most other plays are concerned with grand themes like love and war. In doing so, Marlowe uses the Chorus to explain the universality of the story he's telling—that is, if it can happen to Faustus, it can happen to anyone.

The Good Angel and Bad Angel

The two angels appear together and offer dual moral paths for Faustus to contemplate. As the Good Angel will always champion repentance and the Bad Angel will always support the bargain with Lucifer, neither adds any further nuance to the dilemma at hand even as they argue their points to Faustus, offering counterarguments and refutations. Rather, they represent Faustus's divided conscience.

In addition to the divided nature of man, the Good and Bad Angels also speak to the ongoing conflict throughout the play between medieval versus Renaissance perspectives, with the Good Angel supporting the godly nature of the former and the Bad Angel supporting the more artistic and secular ways embraced by the latter. The play's end could suggest the Bad Angel's views ultimately won Faustus over, but it could also be that Faustus was always going to succumb to the temptation of Lucifer's promise and the Bad Angel knew. Either way, in the end both angels agree as they question how the riches, fame, and power Faustus has accrued will help him now, serving for Faustus the same role the Chorus does for the audience—a means of imparting the play's lesson.

Lucifer

The Lucifer of Doctor Faustus conveys evil in an initially less obvious way, which is crucial to the play's plot. In order to fully seduce and ensnare Faustus, Lucifer cannot present as someone with an obviously duplicative nature, or even as a foe at all. That he keeps his distance is indicative of his cleverness, as is his use of an emissary in the form of Mephastophilis. This distance renders Lucifer a shadowy transactional figure, allowing Faustus to focus on his best qualities—his supreme wealth of knowledge, for instance—and ignore the rest. This distance also prevents Faustus from witnessing and understanding the true horror and scale of what such a powerful figure is capable of, which might have given him pause about so confidently offering up his soul for a paltry quarter century of support.

Lucifer

Lucifer mirrors Faustus in his own blind pursuits of knowledge. Mephastophilis shares Lucifer's origins with Faustus, explaining how Lucifer had been forcibly removed from heaven because of his pride and insolence. These shared traits may be something that Faustus sees and respects in Lucifer, consciously or not, but either way, Faustus is incapable of seeing Lucifer's tale as a cautionary one. It's possible he even views it as the opposite, as Lucifer's intelligence and desires led to him becoming the ruler of hell and prince of the devils. Only at the play's end is his true evil revealed to Faustus; now similarly doomed, Faustus can see with horror that Lucifer's ravenous appetite for claiming souls is both unrelenting in its cruelty and something of a gleeful sport.

Quiz 2 (Assignment)

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Weeks 6 & 7 (P. 57-126)

Edmund Spenser (1552–1599)

- Edmund Spenser (c. 1552–1599) was an English poet best known for his epic poem *The Faerie Queene*, one of the most important works of the English Renaissance.
- Spenser is considered one of the greatest poets of the Elizabethan era, and his work had a profound influence on later English literature.

Spenserian Stanza

This stanza form was widely adopted by later poets, including Lord Byron and John Keats.

The rhyme scheme is ABABBCBCC.

Notable Works of Edmund Spenser

Amoretti (1595): A sonnet cycle reflecting his courtship of his second wife, Elizabeth Boyle.

Epithalamion (1595): A marriage ode celebrating his own wedding.

The Shepheardes Calender (1579): A series of pastoral eclogues (dialogues between shepherds) that established Spenser as a major poet.

Style and Themes of Edmund Spenser’s Works

- Use of archaic language to evoke a medieval atmosphere.
- Exploration of moral, religious, and political allegory.
- Celebration of chivalric ideals and national pride.

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Legacy of Edmund Spenser

Known as the “Poet of the Poets” due to his influence on later poets.

He was buried near Geoffrey Chaucer in Westminster Abbey’s Poets’ Corner.

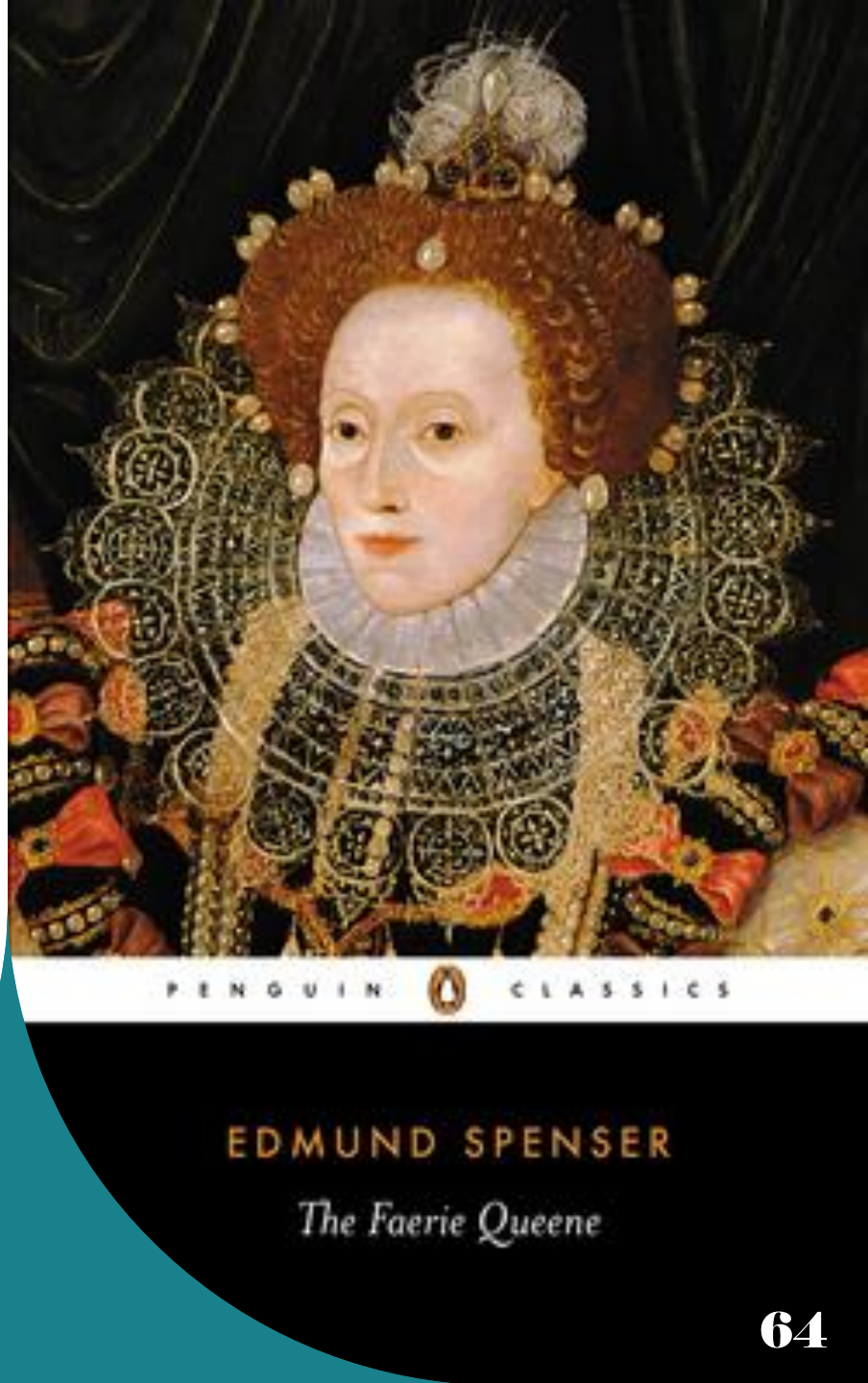
Characters of *The Faerie Queene*

Arthur:

Arthur is the central hero of the poem, although he does not play the most pivotal role in its action. He is on a quest to find the Faerie Queene, whom he glimpsed in a vision. Historically, Arthur was a king of the Britons in the 5th or 6th century A.D., but his legacy is steeped more in legend than in fact.

Faerie Queene (Gloriana)

The Faerie Queene, also known as Gloriana, never directly appears in the poem, yet she is its central focus. Many characters strive to reach her castle. She symbolizes Queen Elizabeth and embodies other allegorical meanings explored in the Commentary.

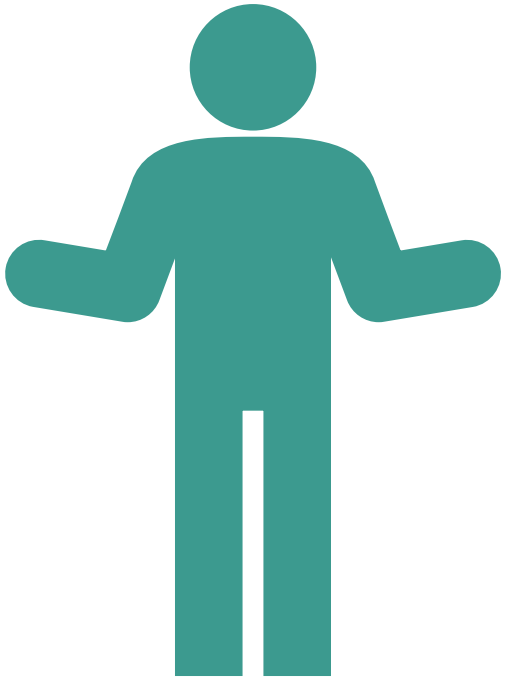


Redcrosse

The Redcrosse Knight is the hero of Book I and symbolizes the virtue of Holiness. His true name is revealed to be George, and he ultimately becomes St. George, England's patron saint. On another level, he represents the individual Christian battling evil or the Protestant confronting the Catholic Church.

Una

Una, Redcrosse's future wife and co-protagonist of Book I, is a figure of meekness, humility, and beauty, yet she displays strength when required. She symbolizes Truth, a virtue Redcrosse must embrace to become a true Christian.



Duessa

In contrast to Una, Duessa represents deceit and falsehood. She nearly persuades Redcrosse to abandon Una permanently. Though outwardly beautiful, her allure is superficial and deceptive.

Archimago

Next to Duessa, a major antagonist in Book I. Archimago is a sorcerer capable of changing his own appearance or that of others; in the end, his magic is proven weak and ineffective.

Britomart

The hero of Book III, the female warrior virgin, who represents Chastity. She is a skilled fighter and strong of heart, with an amazing capacity for calm thought in troublesome circumstances. Of course, she is chaste, but she also desires true Christian love. She searches for her future husband, Arthegall, whom she saw in a vision through a magic mirror.

The Faerie Queene: Book I: Canto i

The epic opens with the Redcrosse Knight, a young warrior bearing a shield with a crimson cross, representing Holiness. He has been sent on a noble quest by Gloriana, the Faerie Queene, to slay a fearsome dragon. Accompanying him are Una, a virtuous and beautiful lady symbolizing Truth, and a dwarf servant.As they travel, a sudden storm forces them to seek refuge in a dense forest. When the storm subsides, they realize they are lost and unknowingly wander into the Wandering Wood. Within this perilous forest lies the lair of Error, a monstrous creature with the body of a serpent and the face of a woman.

The Faerie Queene: Book I: Canto i

Una warns Redcrosse of the danger, but he presses on and enters the cave to confront Error. In a fierce struggle, Error coils her massive tail around him, nearly overpowering the knight. Summoning his faith and strength, Redcrosse manages to break free, strangle the beast, and sever her head. After her death, Error's grotesque offspring feed on her blood and die.Triumphant, the knight and his companions leave the forest to continue their journey. However, their trials are far from over, as danger and deception await them further along the path.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

A Gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine,

Ycladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,

Wherein old dints of deepe woundes did remaine,

The cruell markes of many a bloody fielde;

Yet armes till that time did he never wield:

His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,

As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:

Full jolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,

As one for knightly giusts and fierce encounters fitt

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

And on his brest a bloodie Crosse he bore,

The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,

For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore,

And dead as living ever him ador’d:

Upon his shield the like was also scor’d,

For soveraine hope, which in his helpe he had:

Right faithfull true he was in deede and word,

But of his cheere did seeme too solemne sad;

Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

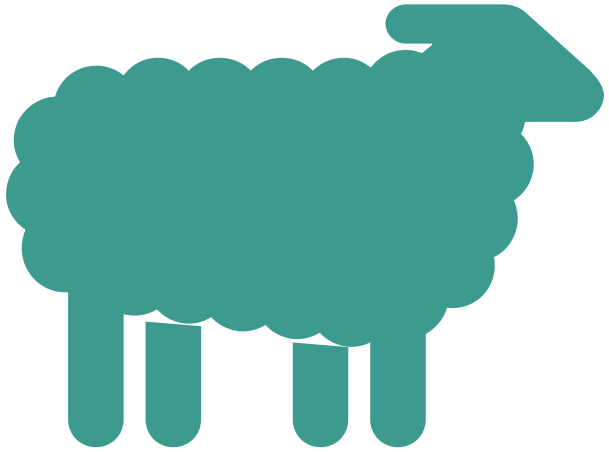
Upon a great adventure he was bond,
That greatest Gloriana to him gave,
That greatest Glorious Queene of Faery lond,
To winne him worshippe, and her grace to have,
Which of all earthly thinges he most did crave;
And ever as he rode his hart did earne,
To prove his puissance in battell brave
Upon his foe, and his new force to learne;
Upon his foe, a Dragon horrible and stearne.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

A lovely Ladie rode him faire beside,
Upon a lowly Asse more white then snow,
Yet she much whiter, but the same did hide
Under a vele, that wimpled was full low,
And over all a blacke stole shee did throw,
As one that inly mournd: so was she sad,
And heavie sate upon her palfrey slow:
Seemed in heart some hidden care she had,
And by her in a line a milkewhite lambe she lad

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

So pure and innocent, as that same lambe,
She was in life and every vertuous lore,
And by descent from Royall lynage came
Of ancient Kinges and Queenes, that had of yore
Their scepters stretcht from East to Westerne shore,
And all the world in their subjection held,
Till that infernall feend with foule uprore
Forwasted all their land, and them expeld:
Whom to avenge, she had this knight from far compeld.



The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Behind her farre away a Dwarfe did lag,
That lasie seemd in being ever last,
Or wearied with bearing of her bag
Of needments at his backe. Thus as they past,
The day with cloudes was suddeine overcast,
And angry Jove an hideous storme of raine
Did poure into his Lemans1 lap so fast,
That everie wight to shrowd it did constrain,
And this faire couple eke to shroud themselves were fain.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Enforst to seeke some covert nigh at hand,
A shadie grove not farr away they spide,
That promist ayde the tempest to withstand:
Whose loftie trees yclad with sommers pride,
Did spred so broad, that heavens light did hide,
Not perceable with power of any starr:
And all within were pathes and alleies wide,
With footing worne, and leading inward farr:
Fair harbour that them seemes, so in they entred ar.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

And foorth they passe, with pleasure forward led,
Joying to heare the birdes sweete harmony,
Which therein shrouded from the tempest dred,
Seemd in their song to scorne the cruell sky.
Much can they praise the trees so straight and hy,
The sayling Pine, the Cedar proud and tall,
The vine-propp Elme, the Poplar never dry,
The builder Oake, sole king of forrests all,
The Aspine good for staves, the Cypress funerall.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

The Laurell, meed of mightie Conquerours

And Poets sage, the Firre that weepeth still,

The Willow worne of forlorne Paramours,

The Eugh obedient to the benders will

The Birch for shaftes, the Sallow for the mill,

The Mirrhe sweete bleeding in the bitter wound,

The warlike Beech, the Ash for nothing ill,

The fruitfull Olive, and the Platane round,

The carver Holme, the Maple seeldom inward sound.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Led with delight, they thus beguile the way,

Untill the blustring storme is overblowne;

When weening to returne,1 whence they did stray,

They cannot finde that path, which first was showne,

But wander too and fro in waies unknowne,

Furthest from end then, when they neerest weene,

That makes them doubt, their wits be not their owne:

So many pathes, so many turnings seene,

That which of them to take, in diverse doubt they been.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

At last resolving forward still to fare,

Till that some end they finde or in or out,

That path they take, that beaten seemd most bare,

And like to lead the labyrinth about;

Which when by tract they hunted had throughout,

At length it brought them to a hollowe cave,

Amid the thickest woods. The Champion stout

Eftsoones4 dismounted from his courser brave,

And to the Dwarfe a while his needlesse spere he gave.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

“Be well aware,” quoth then that Ladie milde,

“Least suddaine mischiefe ye too rash provoke:

The danger hid, the place unknowne and wilde,

Breedes dreadfull doubts: Oft fire is without smoke,

And perill without show: therefore your hardy stroke

Sir knight with-hold, till further tryall made.”

“Ah Ladie” (sayd he) “shame were to revoke,

The forward footing for an hidden shade:

Vertue gives her selfe light, through darkenesse for to wade.”

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

“Yea but” (quoth she) “the perill of this place
I better wot then you, though nowe too late,
To wish you backe returne with foule disgrace,
Yet wisedome warnes, whilest foot is in the gate,
To stay the steppe, ere forced to retrate.
This is the wandring wood, this Errours den,
A monster vile, whom God and man does hate:
Therefore I read beware.” “Fly fly” (quoth then
The fearefull Dwarfe:) “this is no place for living men.”

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

But full of fire and greedy hardiment,
The youthfull knight could not for ought be staide,
But forth unto the darksom hole he went,
And looked in: his glistring armor made
A litle glooming light, much like a shade,
By which he saw the ugly monster plaine,
Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide,
But th’other halfe did womans shape retaine,
Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile disdaine.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

And as she lay upon the durtie ground,

Her huge long taile her den all overspred,

Yet was in knots and many boughtes upwound,

Pointed with mortall sting. Of her there bred,

A thousand yong ones, which she dayly fed,

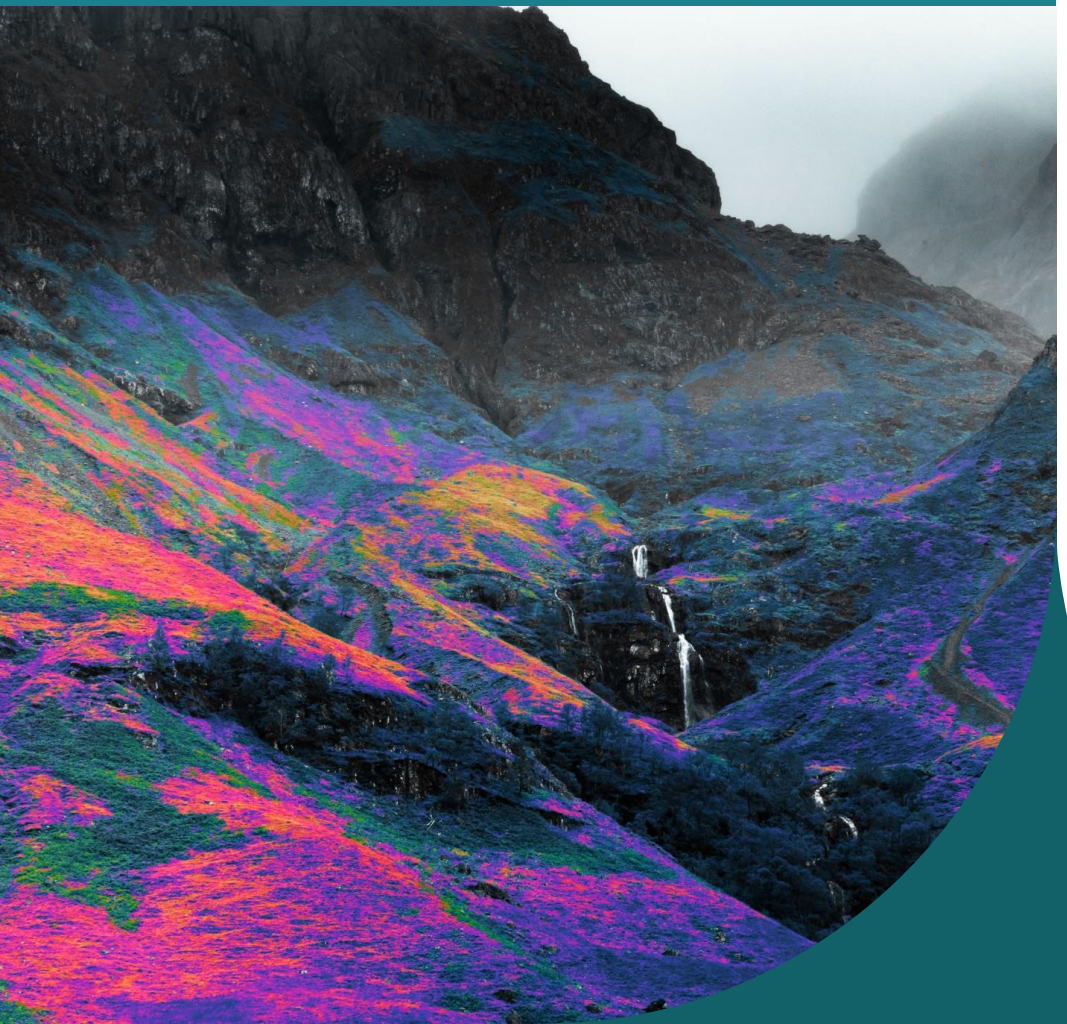
Sucking upon her poisnous dugs, eachone

Of sundrie shapes, yet all ill favored:

Soone as that uncouth light upon them shone,

Into her mouth they crept, and suddain all were gone

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I



Their dam upstart, out of her den effraide,

And rushed forth, hurling her hideous taile

About her cursed head, whose folds displaid

Were stretcht now forth at length without entraile.

She lookt about, and seeing one in mayle

Armed to point, sought backe to turne againe;

For light she hated as the deadly bale,

Ay wont in desert darknes to remaine,

Where plain none might her see, nor she see any plaine.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Which when the valiant Elfe1 perceiv’d, he lept

As Lyon fierce upon the flying pray,

And with his trenchand blade her boldly kept

From turning backe, and forced her to stay:

Therewith enrag’d, she loudly gan to bray,

And turning fierce, her speckled taile advaunst,

Threatning her angrie sting, him to dismay:

Who nought aghast, his mightie hand enhaunst:

The stroke down from her head unto her shoulder glaunst.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Much daunted with that dint, her sence was dazd,

Yet kindling rage her selfe she gathered round,

And all attonce her beastly bodie raizd

With doubled forces high above the ground:

Tho4 wrapping up her wrethed sterne arownd,

Lept fierce upon his shield, and her huge traine

All suddenly about his body wound,

That hand or foot to stirr he strove in vaine:

God helpe the man so wrapt in Errours endlesse traine.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

His Lady sad to see his sore constraint,

Cride out, “Now now Sir knight, shew what ye bee

Add faith unto your force, and be not faint:

Strangle her, els she sure will strangle thee.”

That when he heard, in great perplexitie,

His gall did grate for griefe and high disdaine,

And knitting all his force got one hand free,

Wherewith he grypt her gorge with so great paine,

That soone to loose her wicked bands did her constraine.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Therewith she spewd out of her filthie maw

A floud of poyson horrible and blacke,

Full of great lumps of flesh and gobbets raw,

Which stunck so vildly, that it forst him slacke,

His grasping hold, and from her turne him backe:

Her vomit full of bookes and papers was,

With loathly frogs and toades, which eyes did lacke,

And creeping sought way in the weedy gras:

Her filthie parbreake all the place defiled has.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

As when old father Nilus gins to swell

With timely pride above the Aegyptian vale,

His fattie waves doe fertile slime outwell,

And overflow each plaine and lowly dale:

But when his later ebbe gins t’avale,

Huge heapes of mudd he leaves, wherein there breed

Ten thousand kindes of creatures partly male

And partly femall of his fruitful seed;

Such ugly monstrous shapes elswher may no man reed.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

The same so sore annoyed has the knight,
That welnigh choked with the deadly stinke,
His forces faile, ne can no longer fight.
Whose corage when the feend perceivd to shrinke,
She poured forth out of her hellish sinke
Her fruitfull cursed spawne of serpents small,
Deformed monsters, fowle, and blacke as inke,
Which swarming all about his legs did crall,
And him encombred sore, but could not hurt at all.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

As gentle Shepheard in sweete eventide,

When ruddy Phebus gins to welke in west,

High on an hill, his flocke to vewen wide,

Markes which doe byte their hasty supper best,

A cloud of cumbrous gnattes doe him molest,

All striving to infixe their feeble stinges,

That from their noyance he no where can rest,

But with his clownish hands their tender wings,

He brusheth oft, and oft doth mar their murmurings.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Thus ill bestedd, and fearefull more of shame,

Then of the certeine perill he stood in,

Halfe furious unto his foe he came,

Resolvd in minde all suddenly to win,

Or soone to lose, before he once would lin;

And stroke at her with more then manly force,

That from her body full of filthie sin

He raft her hatefull heade without remorse;

A streame of cole black blood forth gushed from her corse.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Her scattred brood, soone as their Parent deare

They saw so rudely falling to the ground,

Groning full deadly, all with troublous feare,

Gathred themselves about her body round,

Weening their wonted entrance to have found

At her wide mouth: but being there withstood

They flocked all about her bleeding wound,

And sucked up their dying mothers bloud,

Making her death their life, and eke her hurt their good

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

That detestable sight him much amazde,
To see th’unkindly Impes of heaven accurst,
Devoure their dam; on whom while so he gazd,
Having all satisfide their bloudy thurst,
Their bellies swolne he saw with fulnesse burst,
And bowels gushing forth: well worthy end
Of such as drunke her life, the which them nurst;
Now needeth him no lenger labour spend,
His foes have slaine themselves, with whom he should contend.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

His Lady seeing all, that chaunst, from farre

Approcht in hast to greet his victorie,

And saide, “Faire knight, borne under happie starre,

Who see your vanquisht foes before you lye:

Well worthie be you of that Armory,

Wherein ye have great glory wonne this day,

And proov’d your strength on a strong enimie,

Your first adventure: many such I pray,

And henceforth ever wish, that like succeed it may.”

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Then mounted he upon his Steede againe,

And with the Lady backward sought to wend;

That path he kept, which beaten was most plaine,

Ne ever would to any byway bend,

But still did follow one unto the end,

The which at last out of the wood them brought.

So forward on his way (with God to frend)

He passed forth, and new adventure sought,

Long way he traveiled, before he heard of ought.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

At length they chaunst to meet upon the way
An aged Sire, in long blacke weedes yclad,
His feete all bare, his beard all hoarie gray,
And by his belt his booke he hanging had;
Sober he seemde, and very sagely sad,
And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent,
Simple in shew, and voide of malice bad,
And all the way he prayed as he went,
And often knockt his brest, as one that did repent.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

He faire the knight saluted, louting low,

Who faire him quited, as that courteous was:

And after asked him, if he did know

Of straunge adventures, which abroad did pas.

“Ah my deare Sonne” (quoth he) “how should, alas,

Silly1 old man, that lives in hidden cell,

Bidding his beades all day for his trespas,

Tydings of warre and worldly trouble tell?

With holy father sits not with such thinges to mell.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

But if of daunger which hereby doth dwell,

And homebredd evil ye desire to heare,

Of a straunge man I can you tidings tell,

That wasteth all this countrie farre and neare."

"Of such" (saide he) "I chiefly doe inquere,

And shall thee well rewarde to shew the place,

In which that wicked wight4 his dayes doth weare:

For to all knighthood it is foule disgrace,

That such a cursed creature lives so long a space."

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

“Far hence” (quoth he) “in wastfull5 wildernesse
His dwelling is, by which no living wight6
May ever passe, but thorough great distresse.”
“Now” (saide the Ladie) “draweth toward night,
And well I wote, that of your later fight
Ye all forwearied be: for what so strong,
But wanting rest will also want of might?
The Sunne that measures heaven all day long,
At night doth baite his steedes the Ocean waves emong.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

“Then with the Sunne take Sir, your timely rest,

And with new day new worke at once begin:

Untroubled night they say gives counsell best.”

“Right well Sir knight ye have advised bin,”

Quoth then that aged man; “the way to win

Is wisely to advise: now day is spent;

Therefore with me ye may take up your In

For this same night.” The knight was well content:

So with that godly father to his home they went.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

A litle lowly Hermitage it was,

Downe in a dale, hard by a forests side,

Far from resort of people, that did pas

In traveill to and froe: a litle wyde

There was an holy chappell edifyde,

Wherein the Hermite dewly wont to say

His holy thinges each morne and eventyde:

Thereby a christall streame did gently play,

Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth alway.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Arrived there the litle house they fill,
Ne looke for entertainement, where none was:
Rest is their feast, and all thinges at their will;
The noblest mind the best contentment has.
With faire discourse the evening so they pas:
For that olde man of pleasing wordes had store,
And well could file his tongue as smooth as glas,
He told of Saintes and Popes, and evermore
He strowd an Ave-Mary after and before.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

The drouping Night thus creepeth on them fast,

And the sad humor loading their eye liddes,

As messenger of Morpheus on them cast

Sweet slombring deaw, the which to sleep them biddes:

Unto their lodgings then his guestes he riddes:

Where when all drownd in deadly sleepe he findes,

He to his studie goes, and there amiddes

His magick bookes and artes of sundrie kindes,

He seekes out mighty charmes, to trouble sleepy minds.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Then choosing out few words most horrible,

(Let none them read) thereof did verses frame,

With which and other spelles like terrible,

He bad awake blacke Plutoes griesly Dame,

And cursed heven, and spake reprochful shame

Of highest God, the Lord of life and light,

A bold bad man, that dar’d to call by name

Great Gorgon, prince of darknes and dead night,

At which Cocytus quakes and Styx is put to flight.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

And forth he cald out of deepe darknes dredd
Legions of Sprights, the which like litle flyes
Fluttring about his everdamned hedd,
A waite whereto their service he applyes,
To aide his friendes, or fray his enemies:
Of those he chose out two, the falsest twoo,
And fittest for to forge true-seeming lyes;
The one of them he gave a message too,
The other by him self staide other worke to doo.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

He making speedy way through spersed ayre,

And through the world of waters wide and deepe,

To Morpheus house doth hastily repaire.

Amid the bowels of the earth full steepe,

And low, where dawning day doth never peepe,

His dwelling is; there Tethys his wet bed

Doth ever wash, and Cynthia still doth steepe

In silver deaw his ever-drouping hed,

Whiles sad Night over him her mantle black doth spred.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Whose double gates he findeth locked fast,

The one faire fram’d of burnisht Yvory,

The other all with silver overcast;

And wakeful dogges before them farre doe lye,

Watching to banish Care their enimy,

Who oft is wont to trouble gentle Sleepe.

By them the Sprite doth passe in quietly,

And unto Morpheus comes, whom drowned deepe

In drowsie fit he findes: of nothing he takes keepe.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

And more, to lulle him in his slumber soft,

A trickling streame from high rock tumbling downe

And ever drizling raine upon the loft,

Mixt with a murmuring winde, much like the sowne

Of swarming Bees, did cast him in a swowne:

No other noyse, nor peoples troublous cryes,

As still are wont t’annoy the walled towne,

Might there be heard: but carelesse Quiet lyes,

Wrapt in eternall silence farre from enimyes.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

The Messenger approching to him spake,

But his waste wordes retournd to him in vaine:

So sound he slept, that nought mought him awake.

Then rudely he him thrust, and pusht with paine,

Whereat he gan to stretch: but he againe

Shooke him so hard, that forced him to speake.

As one then in a dreame, whose dryer braine

Is tost with troubled sights and fancies weake,

He mumbled soft, but would not all his silence breake.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

The Sprite then gan more boldly him to wake,

And threatned unto him the dreaded name

Of Hecate: whereat he gan to quake,

And lifting up his lompish head, with blame

Halfe angrie asked him, for what he came.

“Hether” (quoth he) “me Archimago sent,

He that the stubborne Sprites can wisely tame,

He bids thee to him send for his intent

A fit false dreame, that can delude the sleepers sent.”

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

The God obayde, and calling forth straight way

A diverse dreame out of his prison darke,

Delivered it to him, and downe did lay

His heavie head, devoide of careful carke,

Whose sences all were straight benumbd and starke.

He backe returning by the Yvorie dore,

Remounted up as light as chearefull Larke,

And on his litle winges the dreame he bore,

In hast unto his Lord, where he him left afore.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Who all this while with charmes and hidden artes,

Had made a Lady of that other Spright,

And fram’d of liquid ayre her tender partes

So lively and so like in all mens sight,

That weaker sence it could have ravisht quight:

The maker selfe for all his wondrous witt,

Was nigh beguiled with so goodly sight:

Her all in white he clad, and over it

Cast a black stole, most like to seeme for Una fit.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Now when that ydle dreame was to him brought,
Unto that Elfin knight he bad him fly,
Where he slept soundly void of evil thought,
And with false shewes abuse his fantasy,
In sort as he him schooled privily:
And that new creature borne without her dew,
Full of the makers guyle with usage sly
He taught to imitate that Lady trew,
Whose semblance she did carrie under feigned hew.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Thus well instructed, to their worke they haste,
And comming where the knight in slomber lay,
The one upon his hardie head him plaste,
And made him dreame of loves and lustfull play,
That nigh his manly hart did melt away,
Bathed in wanton blis and wicked joy:
Then seemed him his Lady by him lay,
And to him playnd, how that false winged boy,
Her chaste hart had subdewd, to learn Dame pleasures toy.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

And she her selfe of beautie soveraigne Queene,

Fayre Venus seemde unto his bed to bring

Her, whom he waking evermore did weene,

To bee the chastest flowre, that aye did spring

On earthly braunch, the daughter of a king,

Now a loose Leman to vile service bound:

And eke the Graces seemed all to sing,

Hymen iõ Hymen, dauncing all around,

Whylst freshest Flora her with Yvie girlond crownd.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

In this great passion of unwonted lust,
Or wonted feare of doing ought amis,
He starteth up, as seeming to mistrust,
Some secret ill, or hidden foe of his:
Lo there before his face his Ladie is,
Under blacke stole hyding her bayted hooke,
And as halfe blushing offred him to kis,
With gentle blandishment and lovely looke,
Most like that virgin true, which for her knight him took.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

All cleane dismayd to see so uncouth sight,

And halfe enraged at her shamelesse guise,

He thought have slaine her in his fierce despight,

But hastie heat tempring with sufferance wise,

He stayde his hand, and gan himselfe advise

To prove his sense, and tempt her faigned truth.

Wringing her hands in wemens piteous wise,

Tho can she weepe, to stirre up gentle ruth,

Both for her noble blood, and for her tender youth.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

And sayd, “Ah Sir, my liege Lord and my love,

Shall I accuse the hidden cruell fate,

And mightie causes wrought in heaven above,

Or the blind God, that doth me thus amate,

For hoped love to winne me certaine hate?

Yet thus perforce he bids me do, or die.

Die is my dew: yet rew my wretched state

You, whom my hard avenging destinie

Hath made judge of my life or death indifferently.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

“Your owne dear sake forst me at first to leave

My Fathers kingdom,” There she stopt with teares;

Her swollen hart her speech seemd to bereave,

And then againe begonne, “My weaker yeares

Captiv’d to fortune and frayle worldly feares

Fly to your fayth for succour and sure ayde:

Let me not die in languor and long teares.”

“Why Dame” (quoth he) “what hath ye thus dismayd?

What frayes ye, that were wont to comfort me affrayd?”

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

“Love of your selfe,” she saide, “and deare constraint

Lets me not sleepe, but waste the wearie night

In secret anguish and unpittied plaint,

Whiles you in carelesse sleepe are drowned quight.”

Her doubtfull words made that redoubted knight

Suspect her truth: yet since no’untruth he knew,

Her fawning love with foule disdainefull spight

He would not shend, but said, “Dear dame I rew,

That for my sake unknowne such griefe unto you grew.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

“Assure your selfe, it fell not all to ground;

For all so deare as life is to my hart,

I deeme your love, and hold me to you bound;

Ne let vaine feares procure your needlesse smart,

Where cause is none, but to your rest depart.”

Not all content, yet seemd she to appease

Her mournefull plaintes, beguiled of her art,

And fed with words, that could not chose but please,

So sliding softly forth, she turnd as to her ease.

The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I

Long after lay he musing at her mood,

Much griev’d to thinke that gentle Dame so light,

For whose defence he was to shed his blood.

At last dull wearines of former fight

Having yrockt a sleepe his irkesome spright,

That troublous dreame gan freshly tosse his braine,

With bowres, and beds, and ladies deare delight:

But when he saw his labour all was vaine,

With that misformed spright he backe returnd againe.

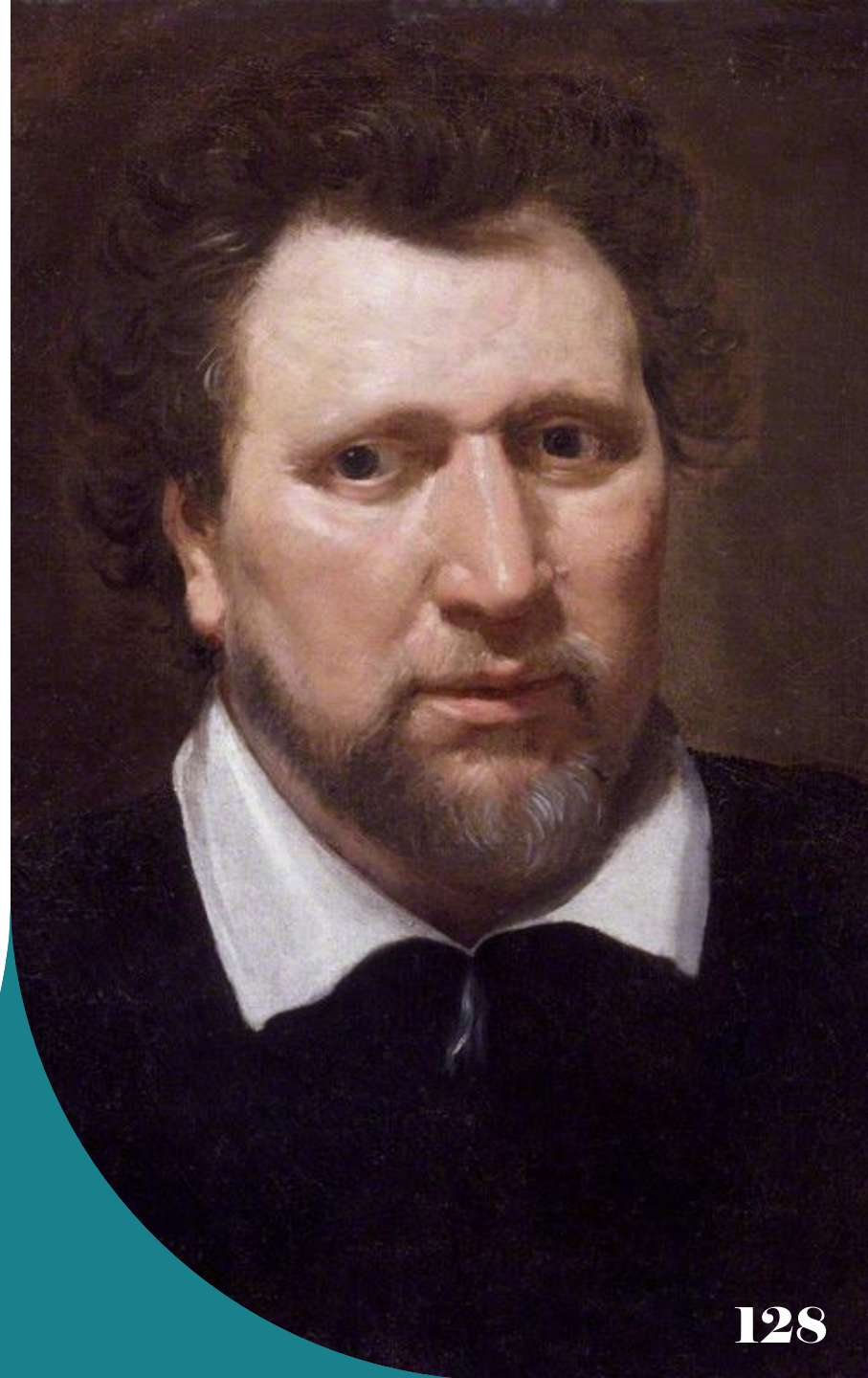
Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Weeks 8, 9, 10, & 11 (P. 127-151)

Ben Jonson (1572–1637)

- Ben Jonson (1572–1637) was an English playwright, poet, and actor, known as one of the major figures of English Renaissance drama.
- A contemporary of William Shakespeare, Jonson distinguished himself with his sharp wit, satirical style, and mastery of classical forms.
- He is often celebrated for his contributions to drama and poetry, as well as for his larger-than-life personality.



Ben Jonson (1572–1637)

- Jonson is best known for his comedies, which often satirized societal norms and human follies:
  - ✓ ***Volpone* (1606):** A biting satire about greed and corruption.
  - ✓ ***The Alchemist* (1610):** A comedic critique of gullibility and deception.
  - ✓ ***Bartholomew Fair* (1614):** A depiction of London life and its chaotic vibrancy.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Characters in *Volpone*

Volpone

Volpone, whose name means "The Fox" in Italian, is the play's protagonist. He is a lustful, lecherous, and pleasure-driven character who revels in self-gratification. Gifted with a talent for rhetoric, Volpone blends the sacred and profane in his persuasive speeches. He worships his wealth, all of which he has amassed through cunning schemes, including the con he currently plays on Voltore, Corbaccio, and Corvino. Although he has no biological children, Volpone surrounds himself with a kind of makeshift family: his parasite Mosca, his dwarf Nano, his eunuch Castrone, and his hermaphrodite Androgyno. Among them, Mosca is his closest confidant. Volpone becomes obsessed with Celia upon first seeing her.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Mosca

Mosca, Volpone’s parasite, serves as a blend of servant, slave, lackey, and surrogate child. While he initially plays a subservient role, his resourcefulness in orchestrating Volpone's schemes grants him increasing confidence and independence. Mosca eventually realizes that others in the play, too, are metaphorical parasites—seeking wealth without honest work. This growing awareness pits him against Volpone, ultimately leading to their mutual downfall.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Celia

Celia is the embodiment of virtue and religiosity in the play. As Corvino's wife, she is strikingly beautiful, a trait that fuels both Volpone’s and Corvino’s obsessive behavior. Despite her husband’s abusive treatment, Celia remains devoted to him and guided by her faith in God and her strong sense of honor. Her self-restraint and self-denial contrast sharply with Volpone’s unchecked indulgence.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Voltore

Voltore, one of the legacy hunters circling Volpone, is a lawyer skilled in manipulation and deceit. He uses his eloquence to further his social ambitions and secure Volpone's favor as an heir. His relentless pursuit of wealth underscores his opportunistic nature.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Corvino

Corvino, Celia’s jealous and abusive husband, is a character marked by dishonor and cruelty. He frequently threatens Celia with violence to exert control over her. Obsessed with financial gain, Corvino treats Celia as property rather than a partner. Like Voltore, he is one of the legacy hunters seeking Volpone’s wealth.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Corbaccio

Corbaccio is another of the “carrion birds” preying on Volpone’s fortune. An elderly and infirm man, he is ironically more likely to die before inheriting anything. Hard of hearing and utterly self-centered, Corbaccio takes delight in false reports of Volpone’s deteriorating health.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Bonario

Bonario, Corbaccio’s son, is a symbol of integrity and honor in the play. Loyal to his father even when betrayed in court, Bonario acts heroically to rescue Celia from Volpone’s advances, embodying the bravery and morality absent in most other characters

Sir Politic Would-be

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

An English knight residing in Venice, Sir Politic represents the moral dangers faced by English travelers on the continent. Gullible and eccentric, he is a central figure in the subplot involving his interactions with Peregrine, a more discerning fellow traveler. Sir Politic devises absurd schemes, such as using onions to detect the plague, and meticulously documents even trivial actions in his diary.

Lady Politic Would-be

Lady Politic, Sir Politic's wife, aspires to emulate Venetian sophistication. Vain and ostentatious, she frequently flaunts her knowledge and accomplishments. She is portrayed as a would-be courtesan, highlighting her desire for refinement and admiration.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Peregrine

Peregrine, a young English traveler, befriends Sir Politic upon arriving in Venice. Although amused by Sir Politic’s naivety, Peregrine is easily offended, as shown by his reaction to Lady Politic’s suggestive remarks.

Nano

Nano, whose name means "dwarf" in Italian, is Volpone’s jester. He entertains Volpone with songs and jokes written by Mosca.

Castrone

Castrone, meaning "eunuch" in Italian, is one of Volpone's attendants. He does not have any speaking lines and plays a minimal role in the story.

Androgyno

Androgyno, whose name translates to "hermaphrodite," is another of Volpone’s attendants. According to Nano, Androgyno houses the declining soul of Pythagoras, the ancient mathematician.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Volpone

The play Volpone by Ben Jonson is set in 17th-century Venice and takes place over a single day. It opens in the house of Volpone, a wealthy but dishonest nobleman, and his servant Mosca, who assists in his schemes. Volpone has amassed his fortune through con artistry and enjoys spending extravagantly.

Volpone's latest scam involves deceiving three legacy hunters: Voltore, a lawyer; Corbaccio, an elderly gentleman; and Corvino, a merchant. These men hope to inherit Volpone's estate, believing him to be childless, gravely ill, and without heirs. Each showers Volpone with gifts to secure his favor, unaware that he is in perfect health and faking his illness to exploit them.

Volpone

In Act I, the legacy hunters visit Volpone to present gifts. Corbaccio brings only a vial of dubious medicine but agrees to make Volpone his heir, hoping for a reciprocal gesture. Volpone and Mosca mock their gullibility. After the hunters leave, Volpone becomes intrigued by Corvino’s wife, Celia, reputed to be stunningly beautiful and closely guarded by her husband. Volpone plans to see her in disguise.

Volpone

Act II introduces Sir Politic Would-be, an English knight living in Venice, who befriends Peregrine, a young English traveler. Volpone, disguised as a mountebank named Scoto Mantua, delivers a theatrical sales pitch for a miracle oil. Celia tosses her handkerchief to him, prompting Corvino's furious reaction. Volpone, consumed with desire for Celia, schemes with Mosca to get her into his grasp. Meanwhile, Corvino, initially enraged by Celia’s perceived infidelity, agrees to Mosca's suggestion to offer her to Volpone as a "restorative" to secure his inheritance.

Volpone in a Nutshell

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

In Act III, Mosca reflects on his growing power and independence. He tells Bonario, Corbaccio's son, about his father's plan to disinherit him and lures him to Volpone's house to witness the betrayal. Lady Politic visits Volpone but is dismissed after a misunderstanding orchestrated by Mosca. Celia and Corvino arrive, and Volpone attempts to seduce Celia when they are alone. Celia resists, remaining steadfast in her virtue. When Volpone threatens to assault her, Bonario intervenes and rescues her. Chaos ensues as Corbaccio and Voltore arrive, and Mosca begins devising a defense.

Volpone in a Nutshell

By early afternoon, Peregrine plans to prank Sir Politic, who has been tricked into believing he is accused of selling Venice to the Turks. Disguised merchants join Peregrine in humiliating Sir Politic, who hides in a tortoise-shell wine case, only to be exposed and ridiculed. Meanwhile, Celia and Bonario report Volpone's crimes to the Venetian Senate. However, Voltore, defending Volpone, portrays Celia and Bonario as immoral conspirators. The Senate is swayed, and Celia and Bonario are arrested.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Volpone in a Nutshell

In the final act, Volpone, growing paranoid and weary, fakes his death to play one last trick on the legacy hunters. Mosca poses as his heir, infuriating Voltore, Corbaccio, and Corvino, who realize their schemes have failed. Disguised, Volpone mocks the hunters but unwittingly drives Voltore to confess everything to the Senate. Volpone nearly escapes exposure until Mosca, now in control of Volpone's estate, refuses to relinquish it. Betrayed, Volpone reveals the truth to prevent Mosca from inheriting his fortune.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Volpone in a Nutshell

The play ends with justice served: Volpone is imprisoned, Mosca is condemned to a slave galley, Voltore is disbarred, Corbaccio loses his property to Bonario, and Corvino is publicly humiliated. The audience is invited to applaud if they enjoyed the performance.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

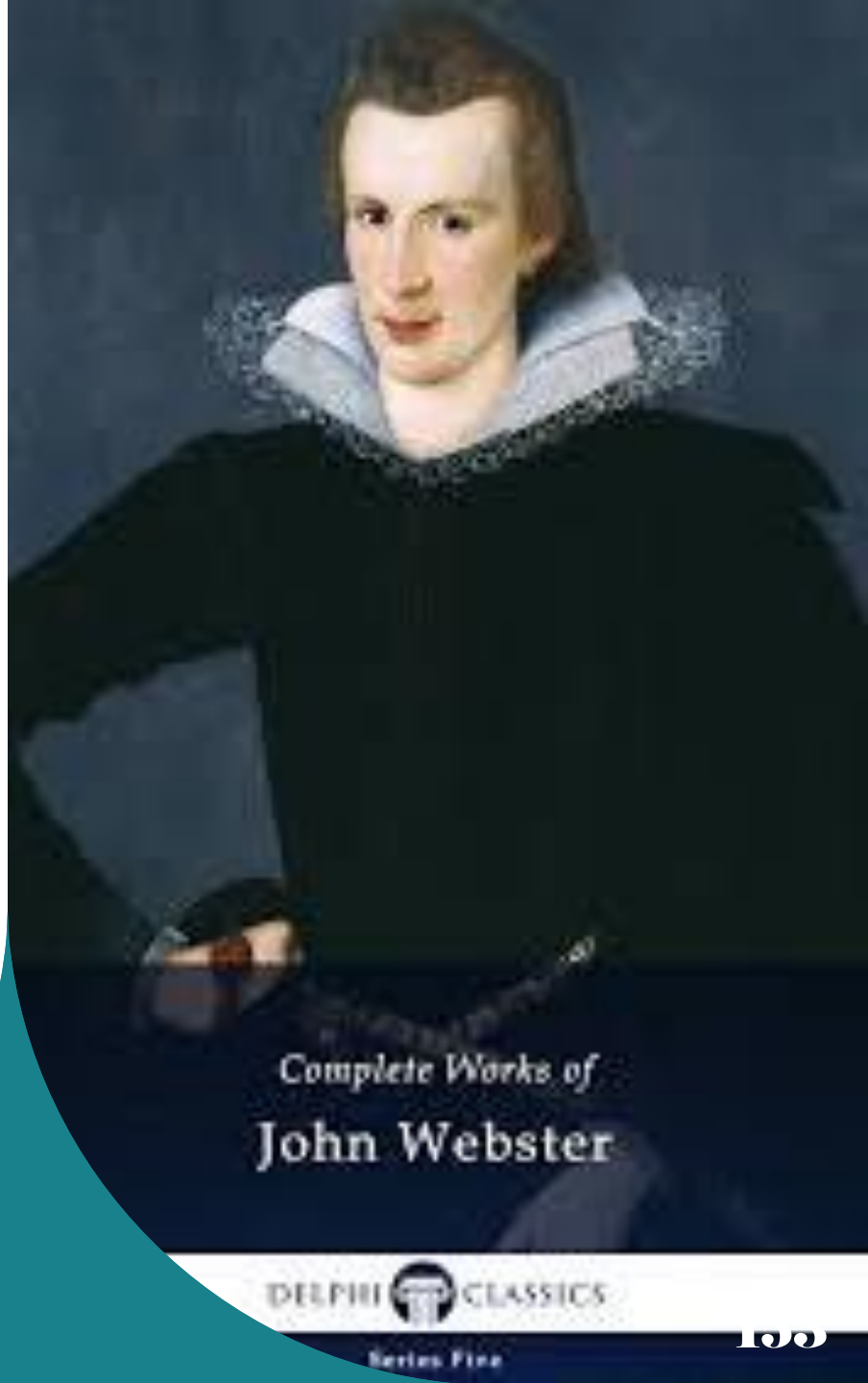
Quiz 3 (Presentation)

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Weeks 12, 13, & 14 (P. 152-175)

John Webster (c. 1580–c. 1634)

John Webster (c. 1580–c. 1634) was an English playwright and dramatist, best known for his tragedies *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The White Devil*. His work is often associated with the Jacobean era and is characterized by its dark, intricate plots, psychological complexity, and vivid imagery.



Some Important Issues about John Webster

Themes: Webster's plays often explore themes of power, corruption, revenge, and human frailty. His works delve into the darker aspects of human nature and society.

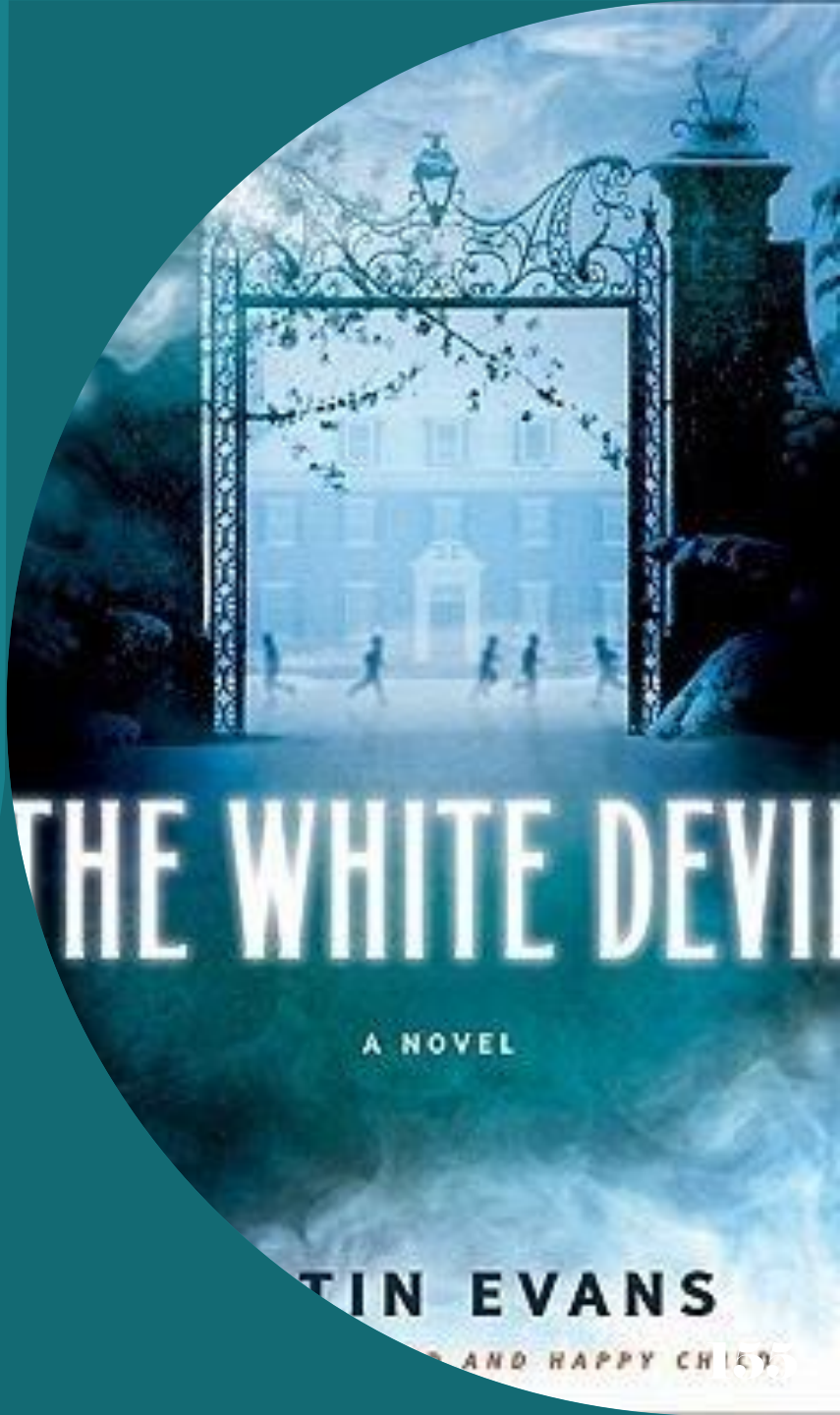
Style: Known for his dense and poetic language, Webster's plays are filled with memorable, haunting lines and striking metaphors. His use of violence and moral ambiguity distinguishes his writing from his contemporaries.

Influences: Webster's writing shows the influence of earlier dramatists like William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe, but his perspective tends to be more cynical and tragic.

Famous Works of John Webster

***The White Devil* (1612):** A tragedy about lust, ambition, and betrayal, centering on the character Vittoria Corombona.

***The Duchess of Malfi* (1614):** A masterpiece of the English Renaissance, this play tells the story of a young widowed duchess who defies her brothers' wishes by remarrying and suffers tragic consequences.



Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Characters in *The Duchess of Malfi*

The Duchess

The Duchess, a young widow and ruler of Amalfi, is the virtuous and intelligent sister of the Cardinal and twin to Duke Ferdinand. Despite her brothers' prohibition against her remarrying, ostensibly to protect her honor and the family's reputation, the Duchess understands their true motives may include greed for her fortune. Defying their wishes, she secretly marries her steward, Antonio, for love, and they have three children together. She keeps the marriage and children hidden, aware of the danger her brothers pose. When her brothers discover her secret, they swiftly dismantle her life, banishing her family, and ultimately imprisoning, torturing, and murdering her and her children. Throughout her trials, the Duchess remains steadfast, virtuous, and courageous, meeting her fate with dignity.

Duke Ferdinand of Calabria

Duke Ferdinand, the Duchess's twin brother, is driven by pride, greed, and a disturbing incestuous obsession with his sister. He vehemently opposes her remarriage and places Bosola in her service to spy on her. Upon learning she has married Antonio and borne children; Ferdinand's rage leads to extreme cruelty. He imprisons, tortures, and ultimately orchestrates her murder, deriving a perverse satisfaction from her suffering. However, after her death, Ferdinand is overcome with guilt, which drives him into madness. In his insanity, he stabs the Cardinal, his brother, and is ultimately killed by Bosola.

The Cardinal

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

The Cardinal, brother to Ferdinand and the Duchess, is a corrupt and hypocritical religious figure. Though outwardly restrained compared to Ferdinand, he is equally immoral, engaging in bribery, ordering assassinations, and maintaining an affair with Julia, the wife of another man. Like Ferdinand, he opposes the Duchess's remarriage to preserve the family's honor and access to her wealth. His cold calculation contrasts with Ferdinand's volatility, and he distances himself from overt violence, though he has no qualms about murder, as demonstrated when he poisons Julia to keep his secrets. The Cardinal ultimately meets his end at the hands of Bosola and the deranged Ferdinand.

Antonio Bologna

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Antonio, the Duchess’s steward, is loyal, capable, and deeply in love with her. Despite his lower social status, the Duchess values him as a "complete" man, and they marry in secret. While Antonio is perceptive about the dangers posed by Ferdinand and the Cardinal, he is powerless to protect his family from their schemes. His final attempt to negotiate with the Cardinal is tragically naïve, and he is accidentally killed by Bosola, who mistakes him for someone else. Antonio’s love and goodness remain central to his character.

Daniel de Bosola

Bosola, employed by Ferdinand as a spy in the Duchess's household, is a complex figure who oscillates between guilt and corruption. A former murderer for the Cardinal, Bosola feels conflicted about his role but accepts it out of duty and need. Though initially complicit in the Duchess's torture and murder, his remorse grows, and Ferdinand's refusal to reward him for his services pushes him to turn against his employers. Bosola seeks to avenge the Duchess and support Antonio, but his efforts are marred by mistakes, including accidentally killing Antonio. He sacrifices himself in his quest for redemption, fatally wounding the Cardinal and killing Ferdinand.

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Delio

Delio, a loyal friend to Antonio, supports him and helps protect Antonio's surviving son after the tragic events. A man of the same social class as Antonio, Delio is trusted with knowledge of the secret marriage. Breaking from tradition, Delio delivers the closing lines of the play, signifying hope for the future.

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Julia

Julia, the wife of Castruccio and mistress of the Cardinal, embodies the trope of the fickle, unfaithful woman. Her shifting affections lead her to Bosola, who uses her to extract a confession from the Cardinal about his involvement in the Duchess's murder. When the Cardinal discovers Julia's betrayal, he kills her by making her kiss a poisoned book. Before dying, she reveals her treachery to the Cardinal.

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The Duchess of Malfi in a Nutshell

The Duchess of Malfi is set in Roman Catholic Italy, which English audiences of the time often associated with corruption. The play opens in the palace of the Duchess, a young widow who rules over Amalfi. Antonio, her steward, has just returned from the French court, and Bosola, a murderer and former servant of the Duchess's brother, the Cardinal, has come back after serving a punishment. Soon, Duke Ferdinand, the Duchess's other brother, arrives with his retinue. Antonio confides to his friend Delio that although the Cardinal and Ferdinand appear virtuous, they are actually deceitful and malicious. In contrast, he describes the Duchess as noble, intelligent, temperate, and beautiful.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

The Duchess of Malfi in a Nutshell

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Despite the Duchess's youth and beauty, her brothers forbid her from remarrying. They want to preserve their honor by ensuring her sexual purity and secure their claim to her wealth by keeping her single. To enforce this, Ferdinand assigns Bosola a position in the Duchess's household, hiring him as a spy. Although reluctant, Bosola obeys, despite the moral compromise. Ferdinand and the Cardinal warn the Duchess against remarrying, and while she pretends to agree, she privately tells her maid, Cariola, of her intent to marry in secret. Breaking traditional gender roles, the Duchess proposes to and marries Antonio in secret.

The Duchess of Malfi

Nine months later, the Duchess is pregnant with Antonio's child. Bosola, still spying for Ferdinand, suspects her condition and tests his theory by offering her apricots, which are believed to induce labor. The Duchess eats the apricots and goes into labor, causing a commotion in the palace. To protect their secret, Antonio and the Duchess claim she is ill. However, Antonio accidentally drops a horoscope for their newborn, which Bosola finds. This evidence prompts Bosola to inform the Duchess's brothers. Enraged by her disobedience and believing their noble blood has been tainted, Ferdinand and the Cardinal plan their revenge but decide to first uncover the identity of the father.

The Duchess of Malfi in a Nutshell

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Over the next few years, the Duchess has two more children with Antonio. Learning of this, Ferdinand confronts her in her bedchamber, terrifying her by suggesting she kill herself. She admits to being married, provoking his wrath. Declaring that her reputation is ruined, he vows never to see her again. To protect Antonio, the Duchess publicly accuses him of theft to explain his departure from Amalfi. Bosola, defending Antonio's character, earns the Duchess's trust, and she confides her marriage and plans to flee to him.

The Duchess of Malfi in a Nutshell

In Rome, the Cardinal and Ferdinand learn of the Duchess's plan and formally banish her, Antonio, and their children. Antonio flees to Milan with their eldest son, avoiding a supposed reconciliation invitation from Ferdinand, suspecting it to be a trap. Meanwhile, Bosola, disguised, captures the Duchess and her younger children under the brothers' orders.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

The Duchess of Malfi in a Nutshell

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Imprisoned in her palace, the Duchess endures psychological torment orchestrated by Ferdinand, who confronts her in the dark and tricks her into believing Antonio and her children are dead. Broken but dignified, the Duchess desires death. Ferdinand arranges for madmen to torment her, and though Bosola begins to feel remorse, he continues to follow orders. Eventually, the Duchess, her children, and Cariola are strangled by executioners. Seeing her body, Ferdinand is struck by guilt and descends into madness. Bosola, too, feels remorse and begins to resent Ferdinand for his corruption.

The Duchess of Malfi in a Nutshell

In Milan, unaware of his family's fate, Antonio decides to confront the Cardinal in an effort to reconcile. Meanwhile, Ferdinand, consumed by guilt, succumbs to lycanthropy (a madness where he believes himself a wolf). The Cardinal, intent on concealing his crimes, orders Bosola to kill Antonio. Julia, the Cardinal's mistress, learns of his guilt and is murdered by him with a poisoned book when she confronts him. Bosola, now determined to avenge the Duchess, pretends to comply with the Cardinal's orders but plans to betray him.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

The Duchess of Malfi in a Nutshell

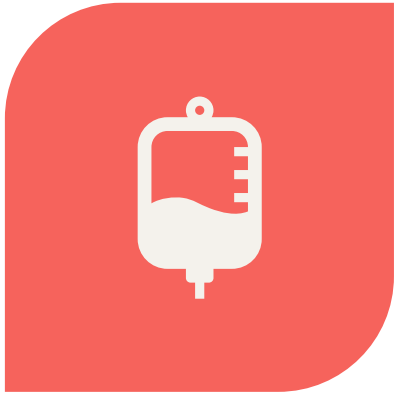
Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

In the Cardinal's palace, Bosola overhears the Cardinal plotting his murder. Antonio sneaks into the palace, but in the darkness, Bosola accidentally kills him. Antonio dies after learning of his family's fate and resigning to his own death. Bosola then kills the Cardinal, but chaos ensues when Ferdinand, mistaking his brother for a demon, stabs both the Cardinal and Bosola. Bosola retaliates, killing Ferdinand, and succumbs to his wounds after a final speech. Delio enters with Antonio's surviving son, pledging to ensure the boy's rightful inheritance, and the play concludes.

Symbols in *The Duchess of Malfi*

POISON

DISEASE



BLOOD

Poison

Antonio introduces the theme of poison in the play’s opening, using it as a political metaphor for an ideal government. He describes how governance should resemble a fountain, with goodness flowing freely across the land. However, if the source is tainted, poison will spread, bringing death and disease. From this moment on, poison symbolizes corruption, concealed dangers, and secrecy within the corrupt government. For instance, the Cardinal compares his secrets to a lingering poison that could seep into Julia's veins, ultimately killing her. Later, after Julia extracts his secrets, the Cardinal murders her by having her kiss a poisoned book.

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Disease

The play frequently references disease, both metaphorical and literal. Early on, Bosola suggests that disease and disfigurement signify a distortion of humanity, reducing it to something animalistic. Two notable examples are the Duchess's pregnancy and Ferdinand's lycanthropy. Bosola discovers the Duchess's pregnancy due to her morning sickness. Similarly, Ferdinand's guilt drives him to madness, manifesting as lycanthropy, or werewolf syndrome, diagnosed by the Doctor. In both cases, disease serves as an outward reflection of inner guilt, sin, or hidden truths.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Blood

Blood in *The Duchess of Malfi* functions as a complex and layered symbol. At its simplest, it represents violence, with particularly brutal acts described as bloody. Blood also signifies lineage and family ties, as it embodies status and heritage. When Ferdinand and the Cardinal kill the Duchess, they spill the noble blood of their own kin. Additionally, Ferdinand uses blood to convey passion, as in his line: “Whether we fall by ambition, blood, or lust, / Like diamonds we are cut with our own dust.” In Renaissance thought, blood was one of the four bodily humors believed to influence behavior and emotion. Ferdinand’s dying words evoke multiple meanings of blood—family, violence, passion, and the humors.

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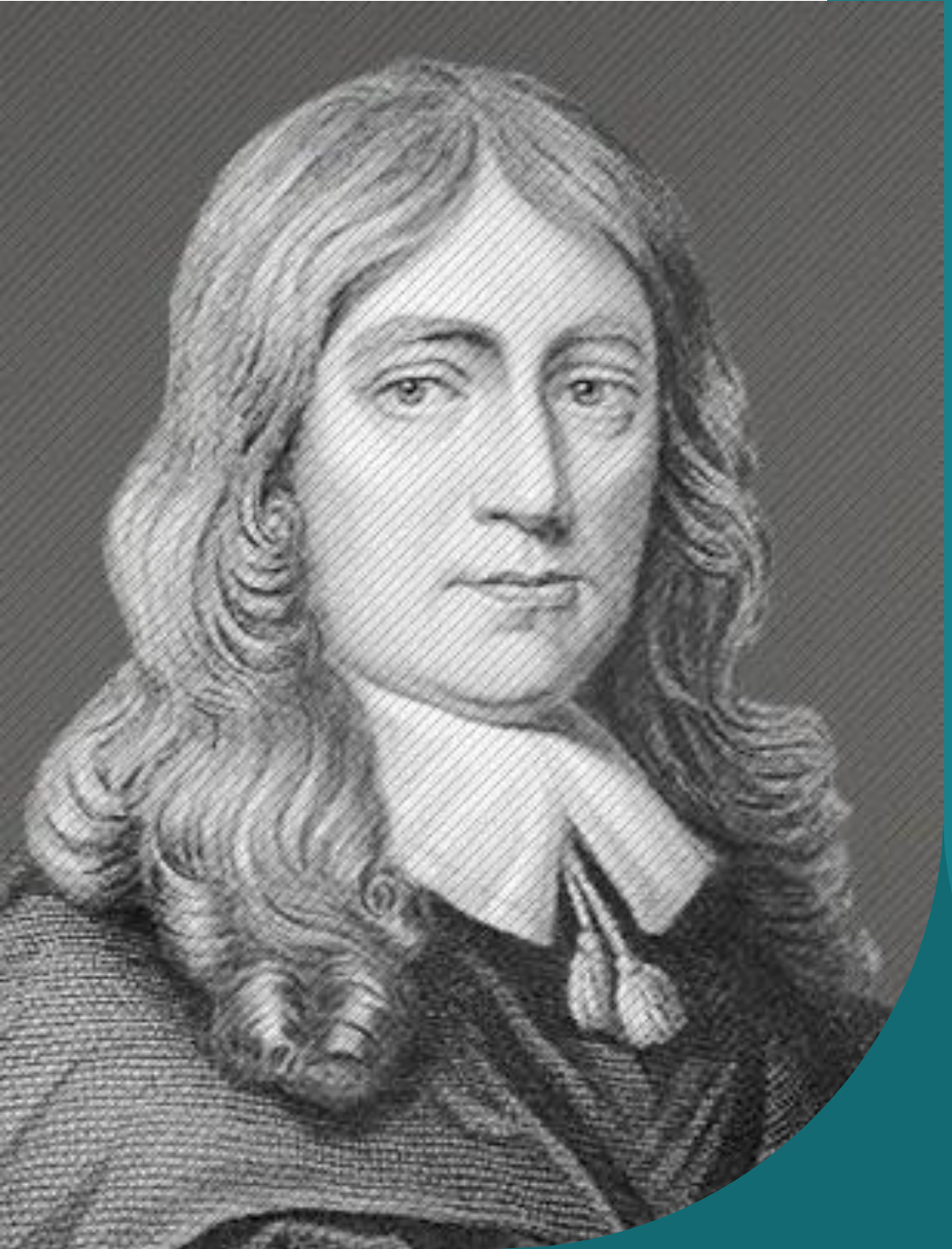
Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Weeks 15, 16, & 17 (P. 176-206)



John Milton (1608–1674)

- John Milton (1608–1674) was a seminal English poet, polemicist, and intellectual, best known for his epic poem *Paradise Lost*.
- He was a key figure in 17th-century literature and an advocate for freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and republican principles during England's tumultuous Civil War and Interregnum periods.

Famous Works of John Milton

***Paradise Lost* (1667):** Milton's magnum opus, this blank-verse epic explores the biblical story of Adam and Eve's fall from grace, delving into themes of free will, temptation, and redemption. Its grand style and profound philosophical insights cemented Milton's reputation as one of the greatest poets in the English language.

***Paradise Regained* (1671):** A sequel to Paradise Lost, this shorter work focuses on Christ's temptation in the wilderness, presenting a more restrained but equally profound exploration of human salvation.

***Samson Agonistes* (1671):** A tragic closet drama written in the form of a Greek tragedy, it reflects Milton’s preoccupation with themes of faith, suffering, and divine justice.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Major Themes of Milton’s Writings

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

- ✓**Theological and Philosophical Questions:** Milton often wrestled with issues of predestination, free will, and divine justice.
- ✓**Politics and Liberty:** A staunch republican, Milton's writings frequently reflect his political beliefs, including his opposition to monarchy and support for individual rights.
- ✓**Human Condition:** He explored human suffering, resilience, and redemption, often through the lens of Christian doctrine.

Shaon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Characters in *Paradise Lost*

Satan

As the leader of the fallen angels, Satan emerges as the antagonist of the poem. He initiates sin and rebels against God, driven by ingratitude for divine blessings. On a mission to Earth, he orchestrates humanity’s fall by tempting Adam and Eve, thereby intensifying his eternal punishment. Satan’s character evolves throughout the poem, revealing his initial rationality and persuasiveness, which later deteriorate into inconsistency and irrationality. He is a shape-shifter, adopting both grand and humble forms.

Adam

The first human, Adam is humanity's patriarch and the caretaker of Eden alongside Eve. He demonstrates gratitude and obedience to God but succumbs to sin after being persuaded by Eve to eat from the Tree of Knowledge.

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Eve

Created from Adam's rib, Eve is the first woman and humanity's matriarch. Subservient to Adam and portrayed as weaker, she becomes Satan's primary target. She yields to temptation and eats the forbidden fruit, leading Adam to follow her in disobedience to God.

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God the Father

A member of the Christian Trinity, God the Father creates the universe through His Son, with Adam and Eve as the culmination of His work. Foreseeing their fall, He allows it to preserve free will while ensuring redemption through His Son’s atonement.

God the Son

Jesus Christ, the second part of the Trinity, defeats Satan and his followers, casting them into Hell before Earth’s creation. When humanity’s fall is foreseen, He offers Himself as a sacrifice to redeem mankind, balancing justice and mercy.

Beelzebub

Satan’s lieutenant, Beelzebub suggests exploring the newly created Earth after their expulsion from Heaven. Like Satan, he embodies perverted reason, eloquently using logic for corrupt purposes.

Belial

A prominent devil, Belial argues against warring with Heaven, not out of virtue but due to sloth and complacency. Despite his flawed reasoning, his eloquence sways many devils.

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Mammon

The personification of greed, Mammon constantly searches for wealth. He opposes war, advocating instead for exploiting Hell’s resources to improve their circumstances.

Mulciber

A skilled architect among the devils, Mulciber constructs Pandemonium, Satan’s palace in Hell. His character draws from Greek mythology, though Milton portrays him as exceptionally productive in his infernal role.

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Moloch

Impetuous and bloodthirsty, Moloch advocates for all-out war against God and Heaven, embodying reckless irrationality.

Sin

Satan’s daughter, Sin emerges fully formed from his head. She has a woman’s upper body, a serpent’s lower half, and is surrounded by Hell Hounds that torment her. She serves as the gatekeeper of Hell.

Death

Sin’s son and Satan’s offspring, Death embodies corruption and violence. His relationship with Sin mirrors a grotesque parody of the Holy Trinity.

Gabriel

An archangel and guardian of Eden, Gabriel confronts Satan when his presence in the Garden of Eden is discovered.

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Raphael

Another archangel, Raphael serves as God's messenger. He warns Adam of Satan's schemes and recounts the story of the fallen angels and Satan's rebellion.

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Uriel

The angel responsible for guarding Earth, Uriel is deceived by Satan, who disguises himself as a cherub. Upon realizing his mistake, Uriel alerts other angels

Abdiel

Initially tempted by Satan’s rebellion, Abdiel repents and returns to God. His actions highlight the power of repentance and loyalty.

Michael

As the leader of Heaven’s forces, Michael defeats Satan’s army before God the Son intervenes decisively. He also guards Heaven’s gates and reveals humanity’s future to Adam in the poem’s final books.

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The Prologue and Invocation in Brief (Lines 1–26)

Milton begins *Paradise Lost* by declaring the central subject of his poem: humanity's first act of disobedience against God and its far-reaching consequences. This act, as recounted in Genesis, is Adam and Eve's consumption of the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. In the opening line, Milton cleverly refers to the results of their sin as the "fruit" of the forbidden tree, playing on both the literal apple and the figurative outcomes of their actions. He explains that this original sin introduced death to humanity, leading to the loss of paradise, a state that can only be restored through Jesus, who redeems humanity and returns it to its original purity.

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The Prologue and Invocation in Brief (Lines 1–26)

Milton's speaker calls upon a muse for poetic inspiration, but he specifies that his muse is not one of the traditional nine muses of classical mythology, who dwell on Mount Helicon (referred to as the "Aonian mount" in line 15). Instead, he invokes a divine muse—the Holy Spirit—that inspired Moses to receive the Ten Commandments and write Genesis. Milton asserts that this spiritual source of inspiration surpasses that of the classical poets, enabling his work to rise above their accomplishments and tackle themes they never dared to attempt. He calls upon the Holy Spirit to fill him with the sacred knowledge of the world's beginnings, as it was the active force in creation.

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The Prologue and Invocation in Brief(Lines 1–26)

Finally, Milton’s speaker explains his purpose: to share with humanity the understanding that the fall into sin and death was part of God’s greater plan. Through this revelation, he seeks to demonstrate the justice of God’s ways.

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BOOK 1 (Lines 27–722) in a Nutshell

After the prologue, Milton explores how Adam and Eve's disobedience came to pass, attributing it in part to the serpent's deception. This serpent is revealed to be Satan. The poem shifts to Hell, where Satan and his followers have been cast after their defeat by God. Lying stunned in a lake of fire that emits darkness instead of light, Satan, alongside his second-in-command, Beelzebub, laments their dire situation but remains unrepentant. He suggests they might regroup and strike again, though Beelzebub doubts they can overcome God's supreme power. While Satan doesn't fully dismiss this, he proposes a new goal: corrupting God's creations to serve evil purposes.

BOOK I (Lines 27–722) in a Nutshell

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They rise from the fiery lake and fly to dry land, a feat made possible only because God permits it, intending to turn their wickedness to serve his ultimate good. On solid ground, Satan becomes more hopeful and summons the other fallen angels to join him. Despite their pain and injuries, they immediately respond, flying to his side. Milton names several of these devils, noting that many, like Moloch and Belial, are later worshipped by humans as gods.

BOOK I (Lines 27–722) in a Nutshell

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These fallen angels, still armed for battle, form an imposing and grand army even in defeat. Satan, resolute in his rebellion, declares to his followers that their purpose will be to do evil rather than good, aiming to pervert God's intentions at every turn. His determination is not without difficulty—he acknowledges the immense power of God, demonstrated in their recent defeat. They could only rise from the lake because God allowed it. Yet Satan, driven by envy of the Son's chosen status and his pride, insists that he would rather reign in Hell than serve in Heaven. He believes his intellect rivals God's will and asserts that the mind can transform its surroundings, making a Hell of Heaven or, in his case, a Heaven of Hell.

BOOK I (Lines 27–722) in a Nutshell

Addressing his comrades, Satan acknowledges their shame but encourages them to regroup and consider whether another war is possible. The devils begin excavating the ground, uncovering gold and other minerals. Using their supernatural abilities, they swiftly construct a grand temple called Pandemonium, meaning “all the demons” in Greek. Gathering within this immense structure, the demonic legions shrink themselves to fit inside, ready to debate their next move.

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Quiz 4 (ViVa)

Thank you

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