

Question Sheet for Class #2

Linda's questions about Sir Philip Sidney's sonnets from *Astrophel and Stella*:

Sonnet #1 on pg. 20; #41 on pg. 23; #54 on pg. 24; #71 on pg. 25

1. In what ways do these 4 poems conform to the conventions of courtly love and in what ways do these sonnets push against these conventions?
 - Is it possible to appreciate these 4 poems without knowing the conventions of courtly love?
2. In what ways do these sonnets conform to the features of the English (or Shakespearean) sonnet and in what ways do these sonnets push against those conventions?
3. What is the persona of the speaker of these poems? In which details does he come to life? How does the tone or moods of these sonnets contribute to that persona?
4. Sidney wrote these poems for friends and family. They were not published in his lifetime. How might these circumstances have shaped the nature of these poems or Sidney's motives as a poet?

Note:

- In the courtly love sonnet tradition, the speaker of the poem (male) expresses his feelings about the woman he loves so deeply that he is heartsick. The beloved is unresponsive and unattainable, but exquisitely beautiful and absolutely virtuous. As a result of this situation, the poet is almost paralyzed with despair. (Wyatt's "I find no peace . . ." pg. 5 expresses the lover's condition.)
- In the Elizabethan sonnet we typically find: 14 lines of 3 quatrains and a couplet; a set rhyme scheme for each couplet; the turn or volta in the final couplet; iambic pentameter; a range of poetic devices, especially puns, paradox, personification, similes, metaphors.

Karen's questions about Shakespeare's sonnet # 18 (p. 40)

1. Please listen to [Patrick Stewart's reading of this poem](#). Note the modulations of rhythm and the sound patterns in the poem. How do they contribute to the poem's tone and meaning?
2. Why does the speaker claim that summer is an inadequate metaphor for the youth?
3. What problem does the poet raise in lines 7-8?
4. How does the poet intend to solve the problem (lines 9-14)?
5. What are the meanings of "ow'st" in line 10?
6. What are the "eternal lines to time" in line 12?
7. How can we interpret the couplet?
8. Gerald Hammond writes about this poem: "The text immortalizes but the subtext embalms." Do you agree?

Chris's questions about Shakespeare's sonnet # 128 (p. 49)

1. How would you feel if it were addressed to you? Flattered? Insulted? Seduced? Repelled?
2. Would it be called harassment these days?
3. What is your favorite line?
 - Who listened to Patrick Stewart reading it? Did it take on a different connotation when he read it? ([Sir Patrick Stewart reading Shakespeare's sonnet #128](#))

4.