






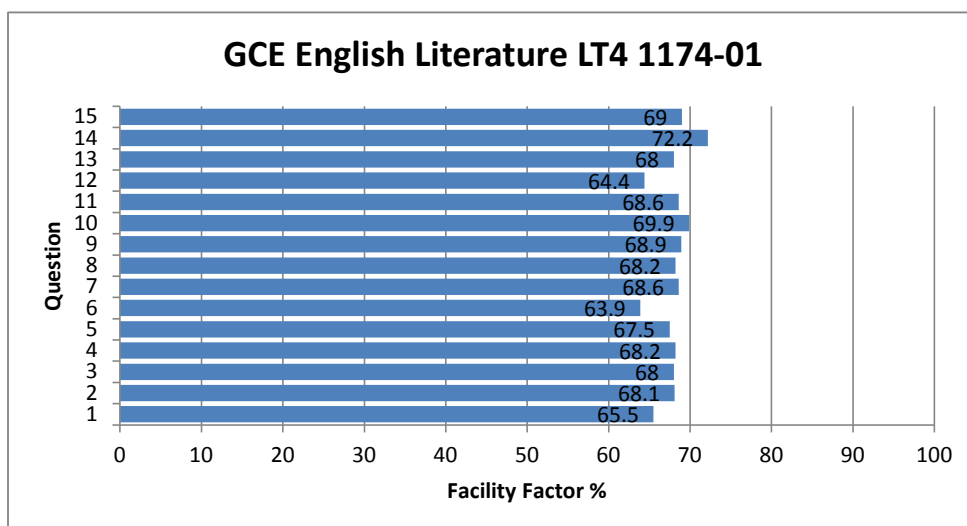


## GCE English Literature LT4 1174-01

All Candidates' performance across questions

						
Question Title	N	Mean	S D	Max Mark	FF	Attempt %
1	2263	26.2	8.1	40	65.5	30.2
2	235	27.3	7.9	40	68.1	3.1
3	838	27.2	8.1	40	68	11.2
4	2773	27.3	7.9	40	68.2	37
5	1383	27	7.9	40	67.5	18.4
6	952	25.5	8.6	40	63.9	12.7
7	1401	27.4	8.3	40	68.6	18.7
8	1389	27.3	7.9	40	68.2	18.5
9	868	27.5	8.5	40	68.9	11.6
10	333	28	8.4	40	69.9	4.4
11	572	27.4	8.3	40	68.6	7.6
12	1218	25.8	8.2	40	64.4	16.2
13	678	27.2	8.2	40	68	9
14	10	28.9	8.1	40	72.2	0.1
15	73	27.6	6.7	40	69	1



**Section A****Critical Reading of Poetry**

*Answer **one** question from this section.*

*Your response must include:*

- *detailed analysis of your poetry set text, including a consideration of relevant contexts and critical readings;*
- *close reference to any **one** of the unseen extracts of poetry which appear on the following pages.*

1. Examine some of the ways poets have presented the strengths and/or weakness of human nature.

## Section A

1. John Donne's poetry is primarily involved with relationships, some between human and human, and some between human and God. While those that involve human relationships discuss both human strengths and weaknesses, his later, religious poems, such as the Holy Sonnets, focus mainly on human weakness in comparison to that of God and religion. As Dennis O'Driscoll meditates somberly on the frailty of human life, Donne focuses much on his own weakness and helplessness as a mortal struggling with his faith or confronting mortality.

Donne's earlier poems deal with human weakness on a more mundane scale than his later works, such as the focus on women's changeability in the ironically named 'Woman's Constancy'. In this poem, it is suggested that the couple are about to spend their first night together, as the narrator says, 'Now thou hast loved me one whole day', with a bitter, sarcastic emphasis on the short duration of this love through the pleonasm of 'one whole day', which immediately suggests that the narrator is surprised that a woman is able to love a man for a single day, considering the weakness of her inconstancy. The poem seems to be a stream of consciousness, as the narrator is clearly not speaking to the woman, shown in the last lines when he says that he will not 'dispute and conquer' her claims, implying that he has not told her that he has already predicted the claims, as well as the fluctuating line structure and irregular rhyme scheme, such as the sudden rhyme and short line, 'or say that now' as another possible excuse occurs to the speaker. The fast, spontaneous tone of this stream of consciousness suggests an unhealthy relationship between the new lovers, as the man believes that the woman will reject him after one night, and although he knows this, he will not mention to her because 'by tomorrow, [he] may think so too' (which is the last line and the revelation of the speaker's hypocrisy), and so there is a distinct lack of communication and trust between the lovers in a poem that implies a disillusioned, unromantic view of human relationships as a result of both male and female inconstancy. Donne even uses his legal training to add another layer of cynicism to his criticisms of this woman, as he uses legal terminology to describe her wish to 'antedate some new-made vow' (the word 'antedate', for example, being commonly used about vows in a courtroom scene), and make it clear that he is accusing her of her weakness and adopting an intellectual high-ground, which makes his confession of his own inconstancy in the last line all the more surprising and hypocritical. However, the spontaneity of this poem, with its irregular rhyme scheme, line length and rhythm, contrasts sharply with the regular three-line stanzas and lack of rhyme scheme of 'Nocturne', which give a visual sign that, while Donne is writing with bitterness and anger about a relatively petty complaint, Dennis O'Driscoll is writing about a far graver aspect of human weakness, namely mortality and an instinctive longing for the past, as shown in the remembrance of 'Sunday a lifetime ago' and the 'now-demolished house', which bring to mind mortality through images of lives passing and buildings being destroyed.

Another of Donne's poems that deals with human mortality, though this time in a manner much more similar to O'Driscoll's, is 'A Nocturnal upon St. Lucy's Day' (henceforth 'Nocturnal'), which many critics have attributed to the death of Donne's wife Anne, a theory that is borne out by the heavy solemnity of the poem that indicates the death of a long-lasting relationship with one who the speaker truly loved, including its length and the omnipresent theme of nothingness and emptiness, showing how the speaker feels that his life is gone with the death of this loved one. C.S. Lewis has called Donne's poetry 'too simple to satisfy', a phrase that could be applied to the simplicity of 'Nocturnal' in which repetition is put to strong use both in terms of words and themes. On the other hand, the idea that it does not 'satisfy' because of its simplicity does not apply easily to this poem, in which Donne (unlike in many of his other poems) does not intend for the reader to be satisfied with an argument

and a conclusion, but shows a desire to express his despair, a concept that arguably does not require complexity to satisfy the reader. The first line, 'Tis the year's midnight, and the day's' (referring to St. Lucy's Day and the Winter solstice, the longest night of the year) is repeated in different words in the last line, 'This the year's, and the day's, deep midnight is', showing how the speaker's mind is so fixated on the death of the woman that he can think of nothing else, and his thoughts continually circle back to it. This is a heavy reminder of the weakness of humans when facing the mortality of a loved one, a quality that is also shown by the speaker's insistence that he is less than nothing, as he longs to be 'an ordinary nothing' but finds himself 'from the first nothing, the elixir grown', thus referring to the void before the world was created, which existed as even less than the 'ordinary nothing' of absence. These images of human weakness in relation to loss could be seen as even more intense than those in 'Nocturne', as, while both poems (shown blatantly by the similarity of their titles) refer to the night and the grief and hopelessness often felt when night falls, O'Driscoll suggests that this episode of regret is only brief and can be healed by sleep, as the first line with its simple three words, 'Time for sleep', indicates. The speaker here intends to go to sleep and shows a steadfast determination to do so, after he has mourned briefly over his past losses. In contrast, the speaker in 'Nocturnal' promises that this night shall be 'her vigil', meaning a night spent awake to watch over a recently deceased person, and so he has not even sleep to comfort him.

Holy Sonnet XIV also refers to human weakness, although this time in relation to God and the weakness of the human soul, which can be 'usurped', 'imprisoned' or 'enthral[ed]' (the last of which can either mean to be captivated by awe or, in a more archaic sense, to be physically imprisoned) by either God or Satan. Though Satan is never mentioned, this poem shows a desperation of emotion throughout, which suggests that the speaker feels he is in danger and so is begging God to save him, even in ways that, though imagery and metaphors, Donne implies must be forceful and even violent. Samuel Johnson asserted that, in Donne's poetry, 'the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked together by violence', and the images in Holy Sonnet XIV are no exception. In this case, the 'violence' that Johnson refers to is even more prominent as, unlike in other poems, Donne does not use a single image or several images carefully brought together to further one argument, but seems to use images rapidly and with little introduction or link between the two. Donne uses the images of his soul as a damaged vessel, a usurped town and a woman forced to marry against her will, all of which require an act of forcefulness to free the victim. For example, the alliteration of 'break, blow, burn, and make me new' adds to the violent effect of the sentence, as Donne asks God (placed in the traditional role of a creator, but here in the more violent aspect of this job) to destroy and recreate him as a blacksmith does a vessel in a forge, an image that would have held particular force in an age when a blacksmith's forge would have been present on each street corner, and the heat, fire and noise of the forge would have been an image of violence rather than spirituality. After a plethora of imperatives, such as 'batter my heart', 'imprison me' and 'make me new' (which have more of a begging than an ordering quality to them, showing the speaker's desperation and helplessness as he can rely only on God to change him rather than himself), Donne uses a final chiasmus to bring together two paradoxical images, of God making him 'free' by 'enthral[ing]' him and making him 'chaste' by ravish[ing] him (maintaining the image of the engaged woman), which show how the moral soul is so weak that it can only be saved by God.

However, several of Donne's poems also deal with the strengths of humanity. One example is his famous take on the traditional aubade, 'The Sun Rising', which two lovers wake up, having spent their first night together, and the male speaker discusses the new world that they have made. The speaker gives a list of activities occurring outside, such as 'country ants' going to 'harvest offices' and 'sour prentices' trooping to their work, which are images that intensify the lovers' apparent invulnerability to the demands that the outside world gives to others. This was a common theme in Donne's poetry (two lovers making up one world), and another was the theme of two lovers surviving in and defying a world dominated by change, a trope that resounded especially strongly at a time of sudden and radical religious change, as the Sixteenth Century had seen four English rulers and four different national religions. Therefore, Donne's claim that the lovers are immune to change and 'lovers' seasons' do not need to comply with the motions of the sun and the laws of time is particularly defiant, and shows particular confidence in his relationship with his lover. Even more confident is the speaker's manner of speaking to the sun, which begins as something resembling an address to a tiresome servant, as he tells him to 'go chide late schoolboys' rather than disturb them, and to wake the lovers 'tomorrow late' as opposed to the early hour at which he has woken them this morning, thus displeasing them. Later in the poem, the manner changes to one of condescension, as the speaker tells the sun that his 'age asks ease' (note the long vowel sounds, giving these words a slow, calm feeling as the speaker addresses the sun calmly and carelessly), and that he should 'shine here to [them]', a request that shows how the speaker feels that he and his lover are as important as the



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**5.** Examine some of the ways poets present conflict.

5) Donne uses poetry as a way of rationalising and articulating his relationship with God and the paradoxes inherent to the Christian faith. Donne's use of conceit and rich cosmological imagery allows him to express the spiritual in terms of the tangible, as is particularly illustrated in "Good Friday Riding Westward". Furthermore, Donne uses religious verse as a method of communicating with God and begging for forgiveness. It is in this way that Donne's religious poetry is not only characterised by certainty and the resolution of doubt, as it also explores much of the difficulty associated with faith. The same can be said of Sassoon's "All-Souls Day", where the speaker moves from consideration of the contradictions in faith to a resolute ending. A similar sense of resolution can be found in Donne's "Hymn to God, My God, in my Sickness".

The Christian faith, about which Donne writes, is one founded on a paradox. God is both three separate figures and a single benevolent entity. ~~and furthermore~~, Donne's poetry struggles with the various facets of the Christian faith and ultimately seeks to rationalise them. This is demonstrated particularly in his holy sonnets where he refers to a "three-personned God" and "contraries met in one". In "Hymn to God, my God, in my Sickness", Donne uses ~~cartographic~~ cartographic imagery in an attempt to <sup>explain</sup> ~~make~~ aspects of the resurrection. Donne claims that on a globe, East and West meet in one, and it is in this way that "dead <sup>th</sup> doth touch the resurrection". Donne's use of the language of discovery and map making would have been particularly appealing to a contemporary audience, for whom the realities of the European Age of Discovery would have still been very real. In addition to appealing in that way, the use of a rhyming couplet ~~adds~~ and regular metre adds to the sense of clarity offered by the image. In much the same way, Donne's "Holy Sonnets" utilise the regular metre and strict rhyme scheme to create the impression of restraint and control in Donne's



relationship with God. Sassoon explores the struggle of "contraries met in one" through his expression, "where death and daybreak divide the land", ~~where~~ The use of alliteration and the repetition of "death and daybreak" in the next line act to emphasise the coexistence of such differing concepts. Sassoon explores the contradiction between the "body" which is only "shrivelling grass" and the soul "a starlit sentry". In the same way, Donne explores the ~~as~~ concept of life and death in the Christian faith, claiming "that he may raise / The lord throws down." Donne creates an oppositional structure through the ~~the contradiction between the ideas of raising and~~ use of the seemingly gentle "may raise" and the contrastingly violent verb "throw down". Curry claims that Donne is "always wrestling with contradictions" and Donne's presentation of his religious faith seems to illustrate this claim, with the poem and use of imagery and form acting as a method of ~~contradiction~~ reconciling opposites and exploring doubts.

In addition to exploring the nature of <sup>the Christian</sup> religion in general, Donne also explores the nature of his own relationship with God. In "Good Friday Rising Westward", Donne again uses scientific imagery as a way of exploring faith. The poem opens with the suggestion "let man's soul be a sphere, relying on the Cosmological model of the universe whereby the Earth was at the centre and ~~everything~~ angels controlled the movements of the spheres. Donne further suggests that "the intelligence that moves, devotion is", claiming that man's relationship with God reflected the orderly movements of the cosmos. A very similar image can be found in Sassoon's poem, of the soul as a "starlit sentry", where imagery of space and the universe is used to describe the soul and the self. Both poets' use of conceit in exploring their faith is reflective of Donne's approach to poetry as a way of seeking to communicate with God. In "Hymn to God, my God, in my

Sickness", Donne refers to being "made Thy music" and claims to "tune" his "instrument at the door", suggesting that his poetry acts as a way of creating music for God in his praise. Furthermore, Donne refers to his poem as a "Sermon to mine own", claiming that poetry itself acts as a way of communicating with God and proving his faith. Where Donne uses verse and poetry as his method of explaining his relationship with God, Sisson claims that the soul itself "sings out into the morning", again using images of music and harmony, but unlike Donne, less reliant on the poetic form and use of language.

Despite the apparent certainty in much of Donne's religious verse, Donne's presentation of his own faith is often plagued by expressions of doubt and feelings of unworthiness. In "Good Friday, Riding Westward", Donne isolates himself from God, claiming "O, think me worth thine anger, punish me". The clause in the line emphasises Donne's request to be punished and makes clear his own personal fears. Similarly, in ~~this~~ Holy Sonnet III, Donne ~~is~~ refers to his past sins claiming, "and since I suffered, I must suffer pain", repeating "suffer" to emphasise the sense of punishment and guilt associated with Donne's image of God. The images of guilt and the desire to suffer punishment can be seen to be more reflective of the ~~Calvinist~~ <sup>Calvinist</sup> ~~Protestant~~ <sup>Calvinist</sup> movement's radical approach to Protestantism. While Donne himself converted to Anglicanism from Catholicism, Calvinist ideas would have been familiar to both him and his readers, following the Reformation. In addition to Donne's obvious claims of fear and unworthiness, some of Donne's religious verse reveals uncertainty, particularly in his expression of death. In "Death be not proud" Donne claims his faith means that death ~~the~~ nor canst thou kill me", confidently referring to the Judgement Day. However, the poem ends with the claim "death

thou shalt die" and the ending of the poem on the word "die" allows death an emphatic position, rather than completely quelling fear. By contrast, Sassoon's exploration of faith can be seen to be much more resolute in sentiment. Sassoon refers to his faith "absolved from fear" and his poem ends with the address to the "ultimate power, who art / Our victory and our vision". The sense of unity created by the repetition of "our" and the use of the long open vowel sounds creates a sense of certainty and clarity in the ending that differs from Donne's modest tentativeness of conclusion. Furthermore, where Sassoon claims to be "absolved from fear", Donne can be seen to claim to "have a sin of fear" in Hymn to God the Father. Donne's sin of fear is that ~~he~~ he shall "perish on the shore" and in a seemingly contradictory way, Donne asks God to "swear by Thyself" that his sea will "shore as it did before". Donne's sense of doubt and uncertainty expressed in religious verse is most apparent in his approach to the self and with regard to death. ~~Carly~~ Carly claimed that for Donne, "death was an insult to his ego", suggesting that ~~Donne's sense of self~~ could not face death as a result of arrogance. However, Donne's fear of death appears to arise more from an inability to curb all doubts through verse.

Donne's ~~religious poetry~~ <sup>presentation</sup> of religion in poetry is one that ~~it~~ seeks to clarify and rationalise the Christian faith and his own relationship with God. Donne uses metre and scientific language and metaphor to explore faith and religion. For both Donne and Sassoon, faith presents ~~shape~~ and certainty in the face of death. However, for Donne, religious poetry acts also as a way of communicating with God and expressing doubt and insecurity. In this way, the presentation of religion in poetry is not

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Donne uses poetry as a way of rationalising and articulating his relationship with God and the paradoxes inherent to the Christian faith. Donne's use of conceit and rich cosmological imagery allows him to express the spiritual in terms of the tangible, as is particularly illustrated in "Good Friday Riding Westward". Furthermore, Donne uses religious verse as a method of communicating with God and begging for forgiveness. It is in this way that Donne's religious poetry is not only characterised by certainty and the resolution of doubt, as it also explores much of the difficulty associated with faith. The same can be said of Sassoon's "All-Souls Day", where the speaker moves from consideration of the contradictions in faith to a resolute ending. A similar sense of resolution can be found in Donne's "Hymn to God, My God, in my Sickness".

The Christian faith, about which Donne writes, is one founded on a paradox. God is both three separate figures and a single benevolent entity. ~~and furthermore~~, Donne's poetry struggles with the various facets of the Christian faith and ultimately seeks to rationalise them. This is demonstrated particularly in his holy sonnets where he refers to a "three-personed God" and "contraries met in one". In "Hymn to God, my God, in my Sickness", Donne uses ~~cartographic~~ cartographic imagery in an attempt to <sup>explain</sup> ~~make~~ aspects of the resurrection. Donne claims that on a globe, East and West meet in one, and it is in this way that "dead <sup>th</sup> doth touch the resurrection". Donne's use of the language of discovery and map making would have been particularly appealing to a contemporary audience, for whom the realities of the European Age of Discovery would have still been very real. In addition to appealing in that way, the use of a rhyming ~~sonnet~~ ~~and~~ and regular metre adds to the sense of clarity offered by the image. In much the same way, Donne's "Holy Sonnets" utilise the regular metre and strict rhyme scheme to create the impression of restraint and control in Donne's

relationship with God. Sassoon explores the struggle of "contraries met in one" through his expression, "where death and daybreak divide the land", ~~where~~ The use of alliteration and the repetition of "death and daybreak" in the next line act to emphasise the coexistence of such differing concepts. Sassoon explores the contradiction between the "body" which is only "shrivelling grass" and the soul "a starlit sentry". In the same way, Donne explores the ~~as~~ concept of life and death in the Christian faith, claiming "that he may raise / The lord throws down". ~~Donne creates an oppositional structure through the use of the seemingly gentle "may raise" and the contrastingly violent verb "throw down".~~ ~~the contradiction between the ideas of raising and~~ ~~the use~~ ~~of the seemingly gentle "may raise" and the contrastingly violent verb "throw down".~~ ~~Cumy claims~~ that Donne is "always wrestling with contradictions" and Donne's presentation of his religious faith seems to illustrate this claim, with the poem and use of imagery and form acting as a method of ~~contrasting~~ reconciling opposites and exploring doubts.

In addition to exploring the nature of <sup>the Christian</sup> religion in general, Donne also explores the nature of his own relationship with God. In "Good Friday, Rising Westward", Donne again uses scientific imagery as a way of exploring faith. The poem opens with the suggestion "let man's soul be a sphere, relying on the Cosmological model of the universe whereby the Earth was at the centre and ~~everything~~ angels controlled the movements of the spheres. Donne further suggests that "the intelligence that moves, devotion is", claiming that man's relationship with God reflected the orderly movements of the cosmos. A very similar image can be found in Sassoon's poem, of the soul as a "starlit sentry", where imagery of space and the universe is used to describe the soul and the self. Both poets' use of conceit in exploring their faith is reflective of Donne's approach to poetry as a way of seeking to communicate with God. In "Hymn to God, my God, in my



Sickness", Donne refers to being "made Thy music" and claims to "tune" his "instrument at the door", suggesting that his poetry acts as a way of creating music for God in his praise. Furthermore, Donne refers to his poem as a "Sermon to mine own", claiming that poetry itself acts as a way of communicating with God and proving his faith. Where Donne uses verse and poetry as his method of explaining his relationship with God, Sisson claims that the soul itself "sings out into the morning", again using images of music and harmony, but unlike Donne, less reliant on the poetic form and use of language.

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**Section B****Shakespeare and Related Drama**

Answer **one** question from this section.

*Each question in this section tests your knowledge and understanding of both your **core** Shakespeare text (which you have studied in detail) and your **partner** drama text (studied for wider reading). In your discussion of **both** texts, your response must include a consideration of relevant contexts and critical readings.*

***Hamlet and The Revenger's Tragedy***

**Either,**

8. "Conflict exists in every scene and at every level: it is the single driving force of the play." In the light of this remark, explore some of the ways Shakespeare presents conflict in *Hamlet*. In the course of your writing show how your appreciation of Middleton's presentation of conflict in *The Revenger's Tragedy* has helped to shape your ideas.

## Section B

8. 'Hamlet' is a play full of both external and internal conflicts, both conflicts that occur between characters as they try to persuade, defeat or outwit each other, and conflicts that occur within a single character as they struggle between their allegiances or between their duty and their desires. In an environment as closely controlled as Elsinore and the Royal Court depicted in the play, it is inevitable that characters should struggle to reach their own goals while battling each other, although the conflicts are much more understated than, for example, the bloody conflicts of 'The Revenger's Tragedy'. While Vindice, the Duke and the royal warring sons slaughter their way to their goals, the characters in 'Hamlet' make more use of psychological warfare than the spilling of blood, and, with Hamlet as the primary example of internal conflict, we are shown a group of characters who struggle with their own emotions and the influences of others.

One of the most obvious conflicts between characters in 'Hamlet' is between Hamlet and Claudius, between revenger and potential victim. Some critics have compared them to 'two murderous clowns' trying to outwit each other at every turn. This image shows the comic element of Hamlet's feigned insanity in comparison with Claudius' solemnity and attempts to control his son-in-law, as well as the image of these two rather awkward characters (the unwilling revenger and the murderer king who tries to cover up his crime) interact with each other under the public eye while maintaining their images of the madman and the innocent ruler. The conflict is clear from the second scene, even before Hamlet's 'antic disposition' is added to the plot. Hamlet's first line gives evidence of his contempt and distrust of Claudius, as he calls him 'a little more than kin, and less than kind', using a pun on the length of the words in comparison to their meanings as he suggests that Claudius, having married his mother when already his uncle, is more closely related to Hamlet than a simple family member, and therefore too close for comfort, as well as the fact that he is apparently unkind. During this scene, Hamlet speaks as little as possible to Claudius, although Claudius speaks at length to Hamlet. Hamlet, instead, speaks to his mother, such as the start of his monologue, 'Seems, madam; nay, I know not "seems"', when he only addresses his mother about the strength of his grief. Amidst Claudius' lengthy speeches, trying to persuade Hamlet to give up his mourning for his dead

father, Gertrude speaks to him very briefly, asking him to stay in Elsinore, and Hamlet finally replies, 'shall... obey you, madam', with the final emphasis on 'madam' to show that he only intends to obey his mother, and not Claudius. When Hamlet feigns madness, even in the direst situations, such as when he has murdered Polonius and is confronted by Claudius about the location of the body, Hamlet uses his 'madness' to give infuriatingly unhelpful but also witty answers to Claudius' questions, such as 'at supper' (meaning that worms are eating him) or 'in Heaven'. In such scenes as this, which are mirrored in earlier scenes such as his conversation with Polonius about the book he is reading or his monologue to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern calling them a 'sponge', we are amused by Hamlet's skill in outwitting those to whom he speaks. The conflict arises from his unexpected and often poorly understood replies to simple questions, which disturb the other characters, who take them as evidence of madness.

Hamlet's conflict with Claudius reaches a peak in the performance of 'The Mousetrap', during which Hamlet indirectly confronts Claudius about the murder of his father by presenting him with a fictionalised version of the murder and watching his reaction. During this scene, the suspense is drawn out at length as the audience watches Claudius intently, as Hamlet does, while the actors' speeches (which are often cut down in performance because of their great length) drag on. The tension feels about to erupt at any moment as Claudius' discomfort builds, and it does eventually, when Claudius rises and shouts simply, 'Stop the play'. Often in performances (for example, in the recent Royal Shakespeare Company performance, starring David Tennant and Patrick Stewart), Claudius, after taking the lamp to go to bed, holds Hamlet's gaze for a long moment to build the tension between the two, before leaving the room. We are thus shown a moment in which the tension that has built between the two characters over the course of the play so far seems about to turn into open aggression, but then disperses, leaving Gertrude to send messengers to ask Hamlet to speak with her, rather than any attempt on Claudius' part to speak with Hamlet himself. It is, at this point, becoming clear that Hamlet's behaviour is provoking Claudius and the conflict between them, demonstrating the extreme psychological warfare that occurs in the Court, though often wordlessly, as with the wordless exchange between Hamlet and Claudius at this point in some productions.

Another form of external conflict comes in the form of Hamlet's fragile relationship with his old friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who have been, to some extent, turned against him by the King and Queen, who use them as spies to find out about Hamlet's 'madness'. The relationship seems entirely jovial when the three characters are first brought together, with Hamlet calling them 'good friends' and, in performance, often embracing them or shaking hands with them to show the lack of conflict at this point. However, a very different piece of business is frequently used later in the play, after the performance of 'The Mousetrap', when Hamlet makes the comparison between himself and a recorder on which Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are trying to 'play' (in Hamlet's case, to trick and use to their own advantage). At this sudden moment of conflict, Hamlet, on his unexpected cry of 'Sblood!' (a mild contemporary curse), will sometimes break the recorder in fury, thus physically signalling the breaking of the delicate relationship between him and his old friends and the open acknowledgement of the conflict between them. He then tells them that 'though [they] can fret [him], [they] cannot play upon [him]', meaning that, though they can place frets on him, as with a stringed instrument (although the word 'fret' could also mean to make him angry), and prepare to trick him, they cannot deceive him. The corruption of this relationship by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's appointment as spies and the subsequent deterioration of their almost lifelong friendship with Hamlet shows how close, supposedly sacred relationships are being destroyed by new conflicts, as friends are separated from friends and, more prominently in the play, family members are alienated from family members. In 'The Revenger's Tragedy', relations between the sons in the Duke and Duchess' family are strained, to say the least, as Spurio is looked down on because of his illegitimacy and referred to frequently as simply 'the bastard' by his half-brothers, and the other men constantly vie with each other for their right to the throne. Supervaceo and Ambrosio, arguably the closest of the brothers, reveal to the audience privately that each wants to kill the other, when they say to each other that they intend to co-operate to overthrow Lussurioso as next in line to the throne. As in 'Hamlet', the conflicts between family members are clearly present in this court, but in a more comic and open manner, as their true intentions against each other are revealed to the audience but then backfire dramatically as they are each killed in turn.

The conflict between Hamlet and Gertrude is a very different kind of conflict from that between Hamlet and Claudius. The relationship between Hamlet and Claudius is distant, as the idea of Claudius being Hamlet's new father is dispelled in the second scene by Hamlet's monologue, comparing old Hamlet and Claudius with 'Hyperion' and 'a satyr' (the god of the sun being compared with a lustful creature of the woodland who, in reality, he believes to have 'whored' his mother with his lustfulness). Gertrude, however, is Hamlet's biological mother, as he reminds the audience, himself



and Gertrude herself throughout the play, such as at the start of the dialogue in Gertrude's closet when Hamlet says that he has not 'forgot' her, but remembers vividly that she is her 'husband's brother's wife', and also his mother, thus reminding her of the baseness of her behaviour in comparison her maternal duty to her son. This familial link makes their conflict more complicated, as, rather than Hamlet simply disapproving of her behaviour or disliking her, he is emotionally bound to her, the product of which emotions gives him great mental confusion and upheaval. Sigmund Freud famously suggested an Oedipus Complex in the relationship of Hamlet to his mother, which, in some productions, is made more obvious by placing the two characters in Gertrude's bedroom or even on her bed during this dialogue in order to intensify Hamlet's possible subconscious sexual desire for his mother, although in actual fact the 'closet' that Shakespeare intended is more likely to have been merely a private room for prayer and meditation. Freud based much of his theory on Hamlet's obsession with his mother's advanced age and active sexuality, which he refers to mockingly and insultingly: 'You cannot call it love, for at your age the heyday in the blood is tame', meaning that she cannot possibly feel love at her age because she has no potential for sexual desire, a theme that could be seen as satirical in the last years of the Sixteenth Century when the aging Queen Elizabeth continued to flaunt her sexuality in front of courtiers and foreign ambassadors, trying to maintain the feminine attractiveness of her youth while the deterioration of this quality harmed her reputation. Similarly, Gertrude's sexuality is a source of disgust for Hamlet in an aging woman, and so his obsession with her sexuality could easily stem solely from his disgust, rather than from the subconscious desire suggested by Freud.


'Hamlet' is also rife with internal conflicts, most prominently in the eponymous character. Critics have argued that Hamlet's most famous soliloquy, opening with the words, 'To be or not to be, that is the question', has no place in the play, as it is simply a meditation upon whether suicide or suffering through life is nobler, and adds little to the plot or our understanding of Hamlet. However, it fortifies the theme of Hamlet as an intelligent, intellectual and philosophical character, as well as a victim of 'melancholy', a fashionable disease among young men in London at the time that could be connected to madness, as both, when experienced by men, were considered the product of a brilliant and philosophical but struggling mind. The 'To be or not to be' speech is a clear indication of such melancholy, as Hamlet ponders on his suffering and whether, after death, he will be troubled by unpleasant 'dreams' (an image calling to mind the potential suffering of the soul after death), as well as whether he will still be considered noble for having killed himself. Paul Cantor has stated that Hamlet illustrates the 'Renaissance conflict between ancient and Christian notions of heroism', a conflict that Hamlet himself is at the heart of. As the unwilling revenger who is spurred on by his duty to his father but who is not, by nature, the right man to kill Claudius, he struggles over the 'ancient heroism' that is being forced on him (the ability to take up arms and act with duty, chivalry and quick decision to seek justice) and the 'Christian... heroism' (the quiet, philosophical piety and ability to suffer) that seems to come to him more naturally. Several times, when left alone with the audience, Hamlet laments over this conflict between his quiet disposition and his duty to his father. When he watches his favourite actor recite a speech with great passion, he calls himself, in comparison, a 'rogue and peasant slave', using a pleonastic phrase to underline his disgust at his own inability to act, when the actor is able to show far greater passion than he can muster 'in a dream of passion', as opposed to the reality of Hamlet's situation and the very real motivation that he should have to kill Claudius. Vindice contrasts with Hamlet, as his character mould is clearly a man of action. Before killing the Duke he says, 'Let other times have words', dismissing words in favour of 'deeds', as he is about to avenge Gloriana, his murdered love. These 'words' are so common in our experience of Hamlet that the contrast between the two men is almost comic, as Hamlet fails to act while Vindice is self-motivated at driven to continual deeds with very little internal conflict. He comments to his brother Hippolito that they are 'made strange fellows... innocent villains', showing how there is a conflict of morality present in their actions, but this is simply a passing comment, and his morality and disposition do not bar the way to his revenge.


Finally, other characters in 'Hamlet' also show evidence of strong internal conflict. Claudius is racked by the guilt of his brother's murder, shown vividly in the scene in the chapel when he is unable to pray, demonstrating how he has been punished with the ultimate damnation, a kind of self-excommunication, for his crime. He laments that his 'offence is rank, it smells to heaven', showing how he admits that his crime is terrible and still haunts him, using the metaphor of a foul smell that hangs on him to demonstrate the haunting effect of his deed. Gertrude's involvement in the murder has been disputed and interpreted in various ways, but there is much evidence that she knows nothing of the murder. In the Old Quarto, she says to Hamlet explicitly in the closet this sequence that she knew nothing of 'this horrid murder', swearing 'to heaven' that she is innocent, the solemnity of such an oath suggesting that she is indeed innocent. However, she experience conflict in the form of

her allegiance with both Hamlet and Claudius. H.D.F. Kitto says that Gertrude's affection for her son and Ophelia show us 'the Gertrude that might have been' had she not been swept into Claudius' arms by 'a mad passion', which indicates that Gertrude could have been an entirely different character had the marriage not taken place, as her allegiances could have stayed, as they naturally should, with her son and his potential wife. As it is, Gertrude pleads with Hamlet in her closet, 'No more... these words like daggers enter mine ears', showing how she struggles with her irreversible situation in her marriage to Claudius and Hamlet's disgust and hatred of this act and, subsequently, her. Her repeated use of the words 'no more' and her violent image of words like daggers shows how painful this internal conflict is for her, and her helplessness as she cannot retort to him but only wishes that her mental suffering would end.

Therefore, while there is both internal and external conflict in 'Hamlet', much of the conflict is internal, with characters such as Hamlet, Gertrude and Claudius suffering because of their torn allegiances and guilt. In 'The Revenger's Tragedy', the conflict is chiefly external, with little evidence of internal struggles in the proactive characters and the willing revenger of Vindice, while the characters in 'Hamlet' struggle with each other psychologically, outmanoeuvring each other, and so their conflicts show greater complexity, relying not only on almost farcical outwitting of other characters but more on the continual struggle between those whose affection for each other is reluctantly tainted, or those do not possess the natural disposition for the conflict in which they are engaged.

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Another form of external conflict comes in the form of Hamlet's fragile relationship with his old friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who have been, to some extent, turned against him by the King and Queen, who use them as spies to find out about Hamlet's 'madness'. The relationship seems entirely jovial when the three characters are first brought together, with Hamlet calling them 'good friends' and, in performance, often embracing them or shaking hands with them to show the lack of conflict at this point. However, a very different piece of business is frequently used later in the play, after the performance of 'The Mousetrap', when Hamlet makes the comparison between himself and a recorder on which Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are trying to 'play' (in Hamlet's case, to trick and use to their own advantage). At this sudden moment of conflict, Hamlet, on his unexpected cry of 'Spill blood!' (a mild contemporary curse), will sometimes break the recorder in fury, thus physically signalling the breaking of the delicate relationship between him and his old friends and the open acknowledgement of the conflict between them. He then tells them that 'though [they] can fret [him], [they] cannot play upon [him]', meaning that, though they can place frets on him, as with a stringed instrument (although the word 'fret' could also mean to make him angry), and prepare to trick him, they cannot deceive him. The corruption of this relationship by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's appointment as spies and the subsequent deterioration of their almost lifelong friendship with Hamlet shows how close, supposedly sacred relationships are being destroyed by new conflicts, as friends are separated from friends and, more prominently in the play, family members are alienated from family members. In 'The Revenger's Tragedy', relations between the sons in the Duke and Duchess' family are strained, to say the least, as Spurio is looked down on because of his illegitimacy and referred to frequently as simply 'the bastard' by his half-brothers, and the other men constantly vie with each other for their right to the throne. Supervaceo and Ambrosio, arguably the closest of the brothers, reveal to the audience privately that each wants to kill the other, when they say to each other that they intend to co-operate to overthrow Lussurioso as next in line to the throne. As in 'Hamlet', the conflicts between family members are clearly present in this court, but in a more comic and open manner, as their true intentions against each other are revealed to the audience but then backfire dramatically as they are each killed in turn.

The conflict between Hamlet and Gertrude is a very different kind of conflict from that between Hamlet and Claudius. The relationship between Hamlet and Claudius is distant, as the idea of Claudius being Hamlet's new father is dispelled in the second scene by Hamlet's monologue, comparing old Hamlet and Claudius with 'Hyperion' and 'a satyr' (the god of the sun being compared with a lustful creature of the woodland who, in reality, he believes to have 'whored' his mother with his lustfulness). Gertrude, however, is Hamlet's biological mother, as he reminds the audience, himself

and Gertrude herself throughout the play, such as at the start of the dialogue in Gertrude's closet when Hamlet says that he has not 'forgot' her, but remembers vividly that she is her 'husband's brother's wife', and also his mother, thus reminding her of the baseness of her behaviour in comparison her maternal duty to her son. This familial link makes their conflict more complicated, as, rather than Hamlet simply disapproving of her behaviour or disliking her, he is emotionally bound to her, the product of which emotions gives him great mental confusion and upheaval. Sigmund Freud famously suggested an Oedipus Complex in the relationship of Hamlet to his mother, which, in some productions, is made more obvious by placing the two characters in Gertrude's bedroom or even on her bed during this dialogue in order to intensify Hamlet's possible subconscious sexual desire for his mother, although in actual fact the 'closet' that Shakespeare intended is more likely to have been merely a private room for prayer and meditation. Freud based much of his theory on Hamlet's obsession with his mother's advanced age and active sexuality, which he refers to mockingly and insultingly: 'You cannot call it love, for at your age the heyday in the blood is tame', meaning that she cannot possibly feel love at her age because she has no potential for sexual desire, a theme that could be seen as satirical in the last years of the Sixteenth Century when the aging Queen Elizabeth continued to flaunt her sexuality in front of courtiers and foreign ambassadors, trying to maintain the feminine attractiveness of her youth while the deterioration of this quality harmed her reputation. Similarly, Gertrude's sexuality is a source of disgust for Hamlet in an aging woman, and so his obsession with her sexuality could easily stem solely from his disgust, rather than from the subconscious desire suggested by Freud.

'Hamlet' is also rife with internal conflicts, most prominently in the eponymous character. Critics have argued that Hamlet's most famous soliloquy, opening with the words, 'To be or not to be, that is the question', has no place in the play, as it is simply a meditation upon whether suicide or suffering through life is nobler, and adds little to the plot or our understanding of Hamlet. However, it fortifies the theme of Hamlet as an intelligent, intellectual and philosophical character, as well as a victim of 'melancholy', a fashionable disease among young men in London at the time that could be connected to madness, as both, when experienced by men, were considered the product of a brilliant and philosophical but struggling mind. The 'To be or not to be' speech is a clear indication of such melancholy, as Hamlet ponders on his suffering and whether, after death, he will be troubled by unpleasant 'dreams' (an image calling to mind the potential suffering of the soul after death), as well as whether he will still be considered noble for having killed himself. Paul Cantor has stated that Hamlet illustrates the 'Renaissance conflict between ancient and Christian notions of heroism', a conflict that Hamlet himself is at the heart of. As the unwilling revenger who is spurred on by his duty to his father but who is not, by nature, the right man to kill Claudius, he struggles over the 'ancient heroism' that is being forced on him (the ability to take up arms and act with duty, chivalry and quick decision to seek justice) and the 'Christian... heroism' (the quiet, philosophical piety and ability to suffer) that seems to come to him more naturally. Several times, when left alone with the audience, Hamlet laments over this conflict between his quiet disposition and his duty to his father. When he watches his favourite actor recite a speech with great passion, he calls himself, in comparison, a 'rogue and peasant slave', using a pleonastic phrase to underline his disgust at his own inability to act, when the actor is able to show far greater passion than he can muster 'in a dream of passion', as opposed to the reality of Hamlet's situation and the very real motivation that he should have to kill Claudius. Vindice contrasts with Hamlet, as his character mould is clearly a man of action. Before killing the Duke he says, 'Let other times have words', dismissing words in favour of 'deeds', as he is about to avenge Gloriana, his murdered love. These 'words' are so common in our experience of Hamlet that the contrast between the two men is almost comic, as Hamlet fails to act while Vindice is self-motivated at driven to continual deeds with very little internal conflict. He comments to his brother Hippolito that they are 'made strange fellows... innocent villains', showing how there is a conflict of morality present in their actions, but this is simply a passing comment, and his morality and disposition do not bar the way to his revenge.

Finally, other characters in 'Hamlet' also show evidence of strong internal conflict. Claudius is racked by the guilt of his brother's murder, shown vividly in the scene in the chapel when he is unable to pray, demonstrating how he has been punished with the ultimate damnation, a kind of self-excommunication, for his crime. He laments that his 'offence is rank, it smells to heaven', showing how he admits that his crime is terrible and still haunts him, using the metaphor of a foul smell that hangs on him to demonstrate the haunting effect of his deed. Gertrude's involvement in the murder has been disputed and interpreted in various ways, but there is much evidence that she knows nothing of the murder. In the Old Quarto, she says to Hamlet explicitly in the closet this sequence that she knew nothing of 'this horrid murder', swearing 'to heaven' that she is innocent, the solemnity of such an oath suggesting that she is indeed innocent. However, she experiences conflict in the form of

her allegiance with both Hamlet and Claudius. H.D.F. Kitto says that Gertrude's affection for her son and Ophelia show us 'the Gertrude that might have been' had she not been swept into Claudius' arms by 'a mad passion', which indicates that Gertrude could have been an entirely different character had the marriage not taken place, as her allegiances could have stayed, as they naturally should, with her son and his potential wife. As it is, Gertrude pleads with Hamlet in her closet, 'No more... these words, like daggers enter mine ears', showing how she struggles with her irreversible situation in her marriage to Claudius and Hamlet's disgust and hatred of this act and, subsequently, her. Her repeated use of the words 'no more' and her violent image of words like daggers shows how painful this internal conflict is for her, and her helplessness as she cannot retort to him but only wishes that her mental suffering would end.

Therefore, while there is both internal and external conflict in 'Hamlet', much of the conflict is internal, with characters such as Hamlet, Gertrude and Claudius suffering because of their torn allegiances and guilt. In 'The Revenger's Tragedy', the conflict is chiefly external, with little evidence of internal struggles in the proactive characters and the willing revenger of Vindice, while the characters in 'Hamlet' struggle with each other psychologically, outmanoeuvring each other, and so their conflicts show greater complexity, relying not only on almost farcical outwitting of other characters but more on the continual struggle between those whose affection for each other is reluctantly tainted, or those do not possess the natural disposition for the conflict in which they are engaged.





***The Tempest and Doctor Faustus***

13. “Shakespeare’s primary concern in this play appears to be the delivery of a series of sharp moral lessons.” In light of this remark, examine Shakespeare’s presentation of moral issues in *The Tempest* with comparative reference to *Doctor Faustus*.

13) Shakespeare's "The Tempest" explores morality and can be seen in some ways to deliver moral lessons to the audience. The play is driven by the reconciliation of family and power and can be seen to suggest the importance of proper governance and well maintained family connections. Furthermore, the play seems to warn against allowing base desires to go ungoverned, through the use of Stephano's alcohol as an allegory for Prospero's magic. In the same way, Marlowe's Faustus is guilty of allowing his ambition and base desires to govern him and in so doing, dooms himself. However, ~~thus~~ a reading of both plays should consider their presentation of morality as more complicated. Both playwrights warn against the dangers of spectacle and theatre, and ~~furthermore~~ <sup>moreover</sup> the morality of ~~not~~ Prospero in "The Tempest" is made ambiguous. Despite the apparent clarity in the ~~more~~ <sup>moral</sup> warnings in Dr Faustus, the play can be ~~seen~~ <sup>soon</sup> as incredibly subversive.

"The Tempest" can be seen to have a central moral message regarding the importance of <sup>both</sup> rightful governance in terms of the political and the familial. Prospero is presented as the rightful Duke of Milan, overthrown by the "foul play" of his brother. However, Prospero's exposition at the beginning of the play also acts as a warning against the errors he made as Duke. The audience is told that he had been "rapt in secret studies" and "neglecting all worldly ends". The use of the word "neglect" is indicative of Prospero's failure to properly perform his role. Despite this, the plot to overthrow him is presented as cruel and unjust, reflected by Miranda's graphic

and emotive response, "O my heart bleeds". Prospero acts as a lesson against neglecting office in the same way that Antonio, Sebastian and Alonso's punishments warn against defying the Great Chain of Being and the Divine Right of Kings. Both of these ideologies are important in understanding the Renaissance mindshift with regard to royalty. In seeking to overthrow Prospero and later Alonso, Antonio and Sebastian defy God by attempting to overcome the station assigned to them by the Great Chain of Being. In providing a moral lesson, Prospero becomes a figure akin to the old Testament God. The banquet in which Ariel appears "like a happy" and refers to the "three men of sin", evokes Biblical ideas of guilt and forgiveness, particularly with Ariel's promise of "a clear life ensuing" following repentance. Prospero's allusion to God through claims of "a most auspicious star" and "providence divine" suggests that Prospero's acknowledgement of God and his rightful role allows him the power to reconcile himself. By contrast, in "Dr Faustus" it is Faustus' hubris and unwillingness to acknowledge higher powers that is his downfall. Faustus desires a kingdom that "stretches as far as doth the mind of man" and as someone born of "base of stock", this desire clearly defies God. This defiance can be seen to lead to his inevitable downfall. Furthermore, in "The Tempest" the plot of Antonio is not only in defiance of God, but also a betrayal of family. Prospero describes Antonio as "the envy" that "sucked the verdure", using the corruption of nature as a ~~way~~ <sup>metaphor</sup> to explain the corruption of Antonio. ~~There is no doubt~~ <sup>Welsford claims that</sup> in "The Tempest" that Prospero will be returned to his Dukedom as "the only potent will is the will of Prospero". In this way, Prospero's morality and position in the

play can be seen to provide a sharp moral lesson.

Both plays offer a warning against base desires and an inability to govern appetite. When Prospero claims to have been "rapt in secret studies", the word "rapt" can be associated with the idea of "capture" and the complete dedication of himself to something other than his duties as Duke. In the same way, Faustus claims "Tis magic, magic, that hath ravished me", making both guilty of indulgence. Furthermore, Faustus is damned and claims that "the god thou servest is thine own appetite", allowing base desires to govern him instead of faith. Shakespeare can be seen to use allegory in providing a moral lesson, through the use of Stephano's "comfort". Alcohol acts in the subplot as a substitution for the vices in the main plot - and through this the audience is warned against overindulgence. Stephano and Trinculo's fear of "losing the bottle in the pool" can be seen as a parallel to Prospero's claim that he shall "drown [my] book" and in this way, Prospero ascends at the end of the play also through his willingness to revoke magic. The proper governance of Sexuality is also explored in both plays, with the moral lesson appearing as a warning against base sexual desire. Caliban is accused of seeking the violate "the honour of my child" and in this way presented as a morally corrupt character. Similarly, Miranda's virginity is essential to her marriage with Ferdinand. He asks of her "If you be maid, or no" and further exclaims "O, if a virgin". The concern for female virginity and managed sexuality expressed in the play can be seen as a product of the nature of "The Tempest" as an occasional play, written for the ~~new~~ wedding of the daughter of James I. Furthermore, Ferdinand promises that nothing shall "melt mine honour into lust", promising

to ~~withhold~~ maintain chastity. Shakespeare again uses the ~~inversion~~ of nature as a way of exploring ~~mismanaged~~ sexuality, with Prospero threatening to fill the lover's bed with "weeds so loathly". The inability to govern desire is seen as an indicator of characters who are morally corrupt ~~Septimus, when~~ ~~to~~ When confronted with the banquet, Sebastian claims, "we have stomachs", drawing attention to his concern with the physical and corporeal. In the same way, in *Dr Faustus*, Faustus refers to himself as "wanton and lascivious" and is governed by <sup>sexual</sup> appetite. In this way, ~~the~~ ~~both~~ plays can be interpreted as delivering a moral message in terms of a sharp warning against mismanaged desire.

Despite the sense of <sup>clear</sup> "moral messages suggested by" these themes of the play, interpretations of morality and characters in both plays are significantly more complicated, and the plays cannot be read as only a series of sharp moral lessons. Particularly in *The Tempest*, the morality of the protagonist Prospero is drawn into question. Pearson interprets Prospero as a "type of potentially damned sorcerer" while others see him as a loving and virtuous father. This is ~~for~~ complicated by his relationships with Ariel and Caliban. Prospero refers to Ariel as both "dainty" and ~~"dainty"~~ ~~"dainty"~~ as a "malignant thing" while Caliban claims that all of the spirits on the island "hate him / As cootedly as I". In this way the audience is invited to criticize and question Prospero as a leader. Furthermore, the position of Caliban is complicated by the fact that despite admitting to attempting to "people this isle" with Calibans, he is ~~as~~ presented as speaking in verse and open to the beauty of the island. To this end, his

movement to speaking in prose amongst the ~~characters~~ too, comedic characters presents Caliban as being corrupted and suggests that, similar to the claims made in Montaigne's 'Of the Cannibals', the Italians can be seen as more savage than the native islander. In addition to the ambiguous morality of some of Shakespeare's character, both plays also serve to warn against the dangers of spectacle and theatre. Prospero refers to Antonio as "leading into truth by telling of it", in the same way that the playmaker can be seen to create truth. Additionally, both Faustus and Prospero are distracted by spectacle, with Faustus failing to repent having been distracted by the 7 deadly sins and Prospero forgetting the plot of Caliban during the masque. Finally, both playmakers use subversively alluring descriptions of magic. While the audience is warned against the eventual "overthrow" of Faustus, his desires to "ransack the Ocean for orient pearl" and wake the dead are conveyed energetically and seductively through the use of the "mighty Ur". To the same end, when Prospero offers to "draw [his] book", his description of the "cloud capped towers" and groves that "looked their ~~of~~ sleepers" suggests ~~some sort of~~ a reluctance to completely part with magic.

Shakespeare's primary concern is not the delivery of a series of sharp moral lessons, it is instead the consideration of a number of moral issues. While moral judgement is passed on a number of occasions, many issues in the play remain ambiguous and are left to the interpretation of the audience. Similarly, Marlowe's 'Dr Faustus' uses subversive methods to suggest the appeal of magic and to complicate a didactic reading of the play. Both plays can be seen to explore the morality of ambition, appetite and theatre itself.



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