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## **Implementing Renaissance Literature and Close Reading into Gifted and Talented High School Curriculums**

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# **Implementing Renaissance Literature and Close Reading into Gifted and Talented High School Curriculums**

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2014 English Honors Thesis  
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## INTRODUCTION

Gifted and Talented education (G/T) is an important, yet underrepresented niche in both private and public education systems across the nation. The tendency many school districts have is simply to lump Advanced Placement (AP) students, International Baccalaureate (IB) students, and those who should be considered G/T students together. After having been a student in all three of these categories, as well as researching respective student profiles, I have come to the conclusion that this version of ‘advanced’ or ‘gifted’ learning is inadequate for students who fall into the last category. G/T students fit a very specific profile: one that is quite different from that of AP or IB students. With that profile comes a very specific classroom atmosphere and style of teaching, both of which are needed to maximize successful learning.

What may be even more important than teaching styles and atmosphere for G/T students is the content of their curriculum. The curriculum for G/T students needs to be challenging. It is very easy to throw the word ‘challenging’ around when referring to any type of advanced coursework. What does the word actually mean in the context of developing a G/T curriculum? According to Hungarian psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s research on the concept of flow – a feeling of energized focus – we know that all people function best when they are exposed to material that is both difficult enough to stimulate them, but not so difficult so as to frustrate them. G/T students are no exception; the only difference is that their level of flow has a much higher threshold than on-level students, and it goes in a different direction than that of linear AP learners. Achieving that level of flow is a complex goal and educators must find material that helps get G/T learners to that threshold. In addition to choosing appropriate materials for these curriculums, it is essential for teachers to practice and develop specific techniques and methods for introducing more advanced topics to high school students.

The close reading of literature is one of the requirements of the United States Common Core standards for education. Theoretically, this means that all students should be introduced to it in high school. Increasingly, however, it can be seen that the humanities as a whole, like G/T programs, are becoming less represented in education. G/T programs are most commonly centralized in the humanities, which makes close reading an essential part of the curriculum. The problem faced presents itself as how to make the close reading curriculum challenging enough, and relevant enough, for G/T students. With a background in English Literature, I have found both the literature, and the close reading associated with accessing it, are appropriate for students and beneficial to their future careers. It is my belief that specific Renaissance literature works contain material that is leveled appropriately for G/T students in high school junior and senior years, it is the right material for developing the close reading and analytical skills that will be beneficial for future endeavors.

In the following study I will introduce, explain, and explore what close reading is and why it is a crucial part of education in general. Next I will discuss the best ways to implement close reading in high school curriculums, and why Renaissance literature is one of the best resources with which to achieve this. After close reading is thoroughly explained, I will then explore the definitions of Gifted and Talented students by making

distinctions between federal and state definitions, while discussing the requirements that are necessary for students to be accepted into G/T programs. Using this information, I will create a sample curriculum, with two lesson plans, derived from my research in Renaissance poetry and developed in the light of my research into G/T programs, explicitly explaining how the lesson plans fit the needs of G/T students. The lesson plans will be targeted at students in public schools in their last years of high school and the G/T program (juniors and seniors).

The topic of education in itself is one that proves to be increasingly controversial in our nation. There are frequent struggles over which learning groups deserve the most attention and reform, and also over which learning groups are receiving too much attention and reform. My aim for this study is to focus directly on Gifted and Talented students, and it is so based on my personal interest in the subject. Though it will not be discussed here, I fully acknowledge that there are many other learning groups that are underrepresented in private and public education systems as well. In addition, the focus of the lesson plans will be tethered to Renaissance literature, not only because I believe that it presents a challenge for G/T learners, but also because it is my area of interest and one in which my most in-depth research has been done.

## RENAISSANCE LITERATURE AND CLOSE READING

### WHAT IS CLOSE READING?

Close reading seems like an easily definable thing: reading a text with great attention to detail. The question though, is what exactly does it mean to read a text closely and in great detail? The first goal of close reading is to understand the meaning of the text in general. As in, what is the story or poem about? Who are the characters, what is the setting, and so forth. Understanding the text is only half the battle. What close reading challenges learners to do is essentially dissect the text – take it apart line-by-line, chapter-by-chapter – in order to understand something new about it. Once that discovery has been made, close reading invites the learner to make a claim about what the text is doing, and why that is important for understanding the text and its relationship to other works. Close reading means reading to uncover layers of meaning that lead to a deeper kind of comprehension that cannot simply be defined by understanding the surface narrative of the text. The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) defines close reading while keeping the Common Core standards in mind:

Close, analytic reading stresses engaging with a text of sufficient complexity directly and examining meaning thoroughly and methodically, encouraging students to read and reread deliberately. Directing student attention on the text itself empowers students to understand the central ideas and key supporting details. It also enables students to reflect on the meanings of individual words and sentences; the order in which sentences unfold; and the development of ideas over the course of the text, which ultimately leads students to arrive at an understanding of the text as a whole.<sup>[1]</sup>

The PARCC definition of close reading is almost exactly spot on. The one aspect it skims over is the development of skills that allow students to make connections beyond themselves. These broadening skills are those that learners cultivate once they have reached the point of deeper understanding. Finding the broader importance of a text means figuring out the implications of the deeper meaning, and why that is important.

Dr. Nancy Boyles, formerly Professor of Reading and Graduate Reading Program Coordination at Southern Connecticut State University, is now an advisor and consultant for many states and districts regarding their curriculums. Boyles's main points of focus are on the implementation and importance of close reading in primary and secondary schools' curriculums. She has written and published many works on close reading and various other topics in Language Arts education, but her article "Closing in on Close Reading," featured in *Educational Leadership*, really gets to the heart of what close reading is, how to teach it, and why it is so important.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Definition taken from Boyles's article featuring information from PARCC's 2011 work *PARCC model content frameworks: English language arts/literacy grades 3–11*, p. 7

One of Boyles's main arguments is that over the past few years, literature education has evolved out of one style of teaching and into another. In the past, it seemed that teaching readings revolved around students making personal connections to the text. As an idea, this sounds promising, but in practice, it does not accomplish all that much when trying to develop the analytical skills and deeper understandings of students. What this way of teaching misses is the wider connections, the broader implications the text proposes, and the importance of those connections and implications, not only on the learner, but on the English literature canon and the world. Boyles discusses the shift from this type of learning to the one that includes the idea of the universal connections in close reading by saying exactly that "the best thinkers do monitor and assess their thinking, but in the context of processing the thinking of others."<sup>[2]</sup>

### *WHY IS CLOSE READING IMPORTANT?*

Close reading is a type of literature analysis that allows students to develop an array of very crucial, real-world, or 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. When discussing why close reading is important with actual teachers in Gifted and Talented settings, they stress the importance of being able to teach skills that will be valuable in life after high school.<sup>[3]</sup> Currently, close reading skills are most commonly taught on a meaningful and extensive level at the college level, within literature, and sometimes other Humanities, courses. College is only a four-year (give or take a few years) experience that oftentimes is not the focal point of students' lives. It is too late to begin in college to develop close reading and related skills. It is essential that this is something that starts in high school classrooms, if not earlier.

One of the aims of incorporating close reading into high school curriculums is to prepare for college and university level expectations. As possessing a college degree is becoming highly preferred in various business circles around the world, high school students are very much pressured to be successful in obtaining one. Implementing close reading in high school is something that can help in this process, because close reading develops two key skills highly in demand in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace.

Close reading refines two skills in particular: analytical abilities and written communication. The first, analytical abilities, is a crucial part of developing skills for the contemporary workplace. As previously mentioned, part of close reading comes in the form of breaking down pieces of literature and searching for questions and answers that further a deeper understanding of meaning. This process is similar to that of solving equations in math and science in the way that it requires the same methods of deeper investigation. Close reading forces learners to scrutinize literature in a rigorous, creative, and independent way, just as solving a problem set in math does. When students are exposed to the use of these investigative techniques in English, the experience easily translates to other classes and subjects regardless of materials. The ability to analyze

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<sup>[2]</sup> Quoted from Boyles's assertions based on Paul and Elder's 2008 work *How to read a paragraph: The art of close reading*

<sup>[3]</sup> Full transcripts of teacher interviews can be found in Appendix A.

issues and situations in an innovative and methodical way is something sought and described as a high-priority need in most business places today.

The second skill that close reading plays a substantial role in developing is that of written communication. Effective communicators are essential everywhere! Developing immaculate writing abilities in high school is crucial because communication will prove necessary in almost every facet of life, starting with essays for college applications (essays that could be worth thousands of dollars in scholarships). So how does close reading help in developing writing if it focuses on reading? Once a student has completed the process of close reading – understanding meaning, looking within the meaning for deeper understandings about the text, and discovering why these things are important – the next step is to figure out how to articulate the findings. Close reading allows for the chance to practice turning research and results into a written work that incorporates a larger audience than just the student himself or herself. Some of the concepts discovered through close reading can be very challenging and complex. Learning how to write out these things in a detailed and sensible way is how effective communication skills are honed. Being able to take wildly difficult subjects and coherently express them is something that, like analytical abilities, translates over to other subjects. Even in the sciences writing is required. The communication skills developed through close reading can be essential to helping students writing legible lab reports about complex experiments and the likes. Additionally, as effective communicators are necessary for all fields, they are highly sought in all business circles.



## WHAT SHOULD GO INTO CLOSE READING CURRICULUM?

Close reading is now included as a part of the common core. The definition of close reading used earlier from PARCC's work closely identifies with the common core's idea of what close reading is. I have gone a few steps further by including the broader connections and writing components, because I find that these are essential when teaching and learning how to be an effective close reader.

Shelia Brown and Lee Kappes wrote a short guide, *Implementing the Common Core State Standards: A Primer on "Close Reading of Text"*, for how to successfully incorporate the common core requirements of close reading into curriculums around the country. In the guide, Brown and Kappes provide the six basic attributes that could be present in close reading lesson plans.

### Image 1

#### Attributes of Close Reading Lessons

Close Reading strategies will vary depending on the content under consideration, the place in the curriculum, and the goals of the particular lesson. But most Close Reading lessons will share the following attributes:

1. **Selection of a brief, high-quality, complex text.** Limiting the length of the passage allows students the opportunity to apply new skills and strategies through multiple readings of the text.
2. **Individual reading of the text.** Students unable to read the text independently might engage in a partner read or a group read in lieu of an independent attempt.
3. **Group reading aloud.** A group read aloud might be teacher- or student-led. This practice supports the engagement of all students, especially those who struggle with reading the text independently, and reinforces the primacy of the text throughout Close Reading lessons.
4. **Text-based questions and discussion that focus on discrete elements of the text.** Questions and discussion may focus on the author's word choices and repetition, specific sentences, literary devices, academic vocabulary, or particular passages containing information that is key to the curricular objective.
5. **Discussion among students.** These discussions, either in small groups or across the whole class, will ensure that the text—as opposed to personal reflections—remains the focus as the reader explores the author's choices.
6. **Writing about the text.** Students may be asked to reflect on the knowledge gained through Close Reading in short or long written passages.

Image 1 shows the list of these six attributes and their descriptions that were laid out by Brown and Kappes in their guide.<sup>[4]</sup> I can agree that these are things that should always be incorporated into close reading lessons, content permitting. In addition, and to the advantage of schools making the transition, by including these six elements, programs can fulfill the requirements of the common core in this area. After discussing the common core requirements with different Gifted and Talented high school teachers, it can be said that some will find the common core and state/collegiate test preparations to be detrimental to their lesson plan development and teaching styles, while others will find these things simple to include.

#### *TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING CLOSE READING CURRICULUM*

In addition to the six attributes of close reading listed above, Dr. Nancy Boyles has developed four ways to support them. The first is through the usage of short texts. Similarly to the first attribute of Brown and Kappes's list, "Selection of Brief, High-Quality, Complex Text," Boyles encourages the use of texts that will allow for a more specified and restrained practice of close reading. I find this to be valuable, because longer works are occasionally too complex to work on in one lesson. Only when broken up over the course of several classes can long works be valuable for close reading lessons.

The second technique Boyles recommends for close reading lessons is avoiding simple questions that only scratch the surface of poems and stories. Boyles uses the novel *Because of Winn-Dixie* as an example for developing questions that work to elicit answers that require deeper thought than others.<sup>[5]</sup> Though this novel is meant for third graders, Boyles's sample questions allow for a clear example of what she is recommending. The questions ask for how and why the characters do things, rather than *what* they are doing. This method is effective, and can easily be translated to close reading Renaissance literature. An example of a question that could be posed for a Renaissance lesson is "Why did the poet choose the title he did for this poem?"

The third technique discussed in Boyles's article is teaching students to ask the questions. This is a very important part of close reading because it forces the learner to search for deeper meaning. One of the most effective ways to read a text is to create discussion questions as you read, such as "Why did the poet or author choose this word?" or "What does the speaker mean by this use of punctuation in this instance?" These are questions that require the reader to use textual evidence to generate an answer, therefore requiring an analysis of the text itself.

The last technique Boyles recommends is to focus on the bigger picture. Some of the

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<sup>[4]</sup> Image 1 can be found on page 3 of Brown and Kappes's guide

<sup>[5]</sup> Examples of Boyles's questions can be found under the section "Go Beyond 'Ho-Hum' Questions" in her article

ways she suggests going about this is by asking questions about the intentions of the author or poet, and how specific parts of the text function to make the rest of the text whole.<sup>[6]</sup> She does not, however, include the broadening aspect of close reading in this technique. I feel like, at this point, it is important to begin providing students with questions such as “What larger issue is the author trying to speak to with this word or sentence?” By asking probing questions like this, the students are encouraged to think more about why this work matters and contributes something significant to the literary world.

Brown and Kappes and Boyles all contribute vastly important and essential attributes for teaching close reading, but there is one more form of analysis that I think should always be included in a successful close reading. That is attention to the physical form, the rhetorical devices, and the meter and rhyme (in the case of poetry) the author or poet uses in his piece. Focusing on these details may seem trivial at first, but studying these things deeply can uncover depths of information about the writer’s goals and meanings. This last technique is something I strongly feel needs to be introduced more into high school curriculums because it hits on the head the idea of analyzing and scrutinizing something as though it were an equation. There is no better way for getting inside of a text.<sup>[7]</sup>

One of the most efficient ways of finding and documenting these details is by using the method known as SWIMTAG. SWIMTAG is an acronym that is used to aid in the process of analyzing a text, usually poetry. The following is a slightly abridged version of SWIMTAG, which offers a checklist of commonly-used formal elements to consider in close reading.<sup>[8]</sup>

S W<sub>(x2)</sub> I M<sub>(x2)</sub> T<sub>(x2)</sub> A G

#### Sounds

- What do you hear?
- Alliteration
- Assonance
- repetition of words or sounds?

#### Word Order

- First and last positions in line are places of importance.
- Note series of words, phrases, sentences (build-up, let-down), juxtaposition, oxymoron, asyndeton (non-stop action), polysyndeton (heaping, piling-on), ellipsis, chiasmus (balance, completion, embracing), synchysis (often interlocks meaning also, impressionistically), framing (words actually surround central objects), anastrophe
- Note HOW these figures affect the message

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<sup>[6]</sup> Examples of Boyles’s questions can be found under the section “Focus on Observing and Analyzing” in her article

<sup>[7]</sup> Two examples of my own close reading analyses are included in the lesson plans as the materials lesson plans are derived from.

<sup>[8]</sup> The full SWIMTAG analysis can be found Jahnige’s Interpreting Poetry website

**Word Choice**

- Any unusual words, or unusual use of ordinary words; echoes of law, religion, other literary passages; exotic or foreign words?

**Images**

- What pictures form in your mind as you read? Note similes, metaphors, hyperbole, contrast, colors, concrete objects.

**Meter**

- Scan by reading aloud

**Mood**

- What feelings come through?
- Look at adjectives and verbs. Is it formal, tragic, frightening, joyous, foreboding?

**Tone**

- Can you sense or infer the author's attitude about the characters or the action (from choice of words or actual comments to reader)?

**Theme**

- How does the passage relate to the overall theme(s) of the work?
- Note philosophical beliefs and/or political program.

**Allusions**

- Note proper nouns - myths, customs, beliefs, history, geography.
- Note significance and how and what these add to the passage.

**Grammar**

- Look at pattern of verb tenses - any unexpected?
- Look at person of verb. Who speaks? - To whom?

*WHY RENAISSANCE LITERATURE?*

There are an innumerable amount of things to study within English Literature, so what is it that makes Renaissance literature one of the best to focus on for the development of my close reading curriculum? First and foremost, Renaissance literature allows students to fulfill all of the techniques discussed in the previous section in an intense manner. The poems that are included in the materials used for the creation of lesson plans all fit within Boyles's idea that using short texts is a more effective way of teaching close reading. Even if the texts I have chosen were not already manageable lengths, Renaissance literature tends to experiment with different types of writing, and a lot of these allow for stanzas, sonnets, and sections to be pulled from the larger set of work to still be successfully analyzed. A few examples of longer works that make available shorter segments for study would be Edmund Spenser's sonnet sequence *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion* and John Milton's epic *Paradise Lost*.

The second reason why I chose Renaissance literature to be the focus of my curriculum is because it presents a valuable challenge. Renaissance literature is not easy to read by any means. Without modern translations, Renaissance works are often incredibly difficult because they deploy now less-common, formal, and sometimes elliptical uses of the English language. Moreover, the Renaissance was a time period that evoked experimentation in all areas of study. Writers of the era were using an array of techniques, innovating their approaches to rhetoric, diction, and form. The writing can be

exceedingly complex, containing multiple different types of innovation and trial. The in-depth research I have done with poetry from the Renaissance period has helped to foster this belief, as well as a personal interest and love for the subcategory.

## DEFINING GIFTED AND TALENTED

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE GIFTED AND TALENTED?

Finding a cohesive definition for what Gifted and Talented means is a difficult task that state education boards and school districts struggle with. Some states and districts have definitions that are meticulously laid out in very detailed formats, targeting the exact characteristics of G/T learners, and the differences and similarities between on-level, AP/IB, and G/T learners. On the other hand, there are also states that barely go into classifying G/T learners as something separate from the other categories.

In this section, I will first introduce the federal definitions of G/T students, as mandated by several acts put in place that were specifically targeted for G/T education. Then, based on rankings and scores gathered from the US News research on the best charter, magnet, and public high schools in the nation for the year 2013, I will discuss a compiled list of five states to closely examine. This list is composed of the top two, California and Maryland, and bottom two ranking states, North Dakota and Hawaii, on the cumulative list of best places for public high school education systems<sup>[9]</sup>.

That last state I am incorporating into this study is Texas. I am including Texas for several reasons. The first reason is that Texas is one of the largest producers of education materials in the country, and therefore has a substantial amount of influence over national curriculums. The second reason I am choosing to include Texas stems entirely from personal interest and investment. I participated in a G/T program in Texas with very clear cut and idealistic requirements for G/T learners.

Overall, I feel that this group of five states provides insights into G/T education by the ways they each choose to go about mandating and executing it. Comparing the top scoring states with the bottom scoring states sheds light on the gaps that exists between effective program implementation and ineffective program implementation. After exploring the three levels of power (federal, state, and district) and their respective definitions of G/T, I will construct one of my own that the rest of the study will be based upon.

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<sup>[9]</sup> The process for ranking states is defined in greater detail on pages 1-3 of Morse's article

*FEDERAL AND NATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF GIFTED AND TALENTED*

**Federal:**

*Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act of 1994*<sup>[10]</sup>

The term gifted and talented student means children and youths who give evidence of higher performance capability in such areas as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools in order to develop such capabilities fully.

*No Child Left Behind*<sup>[11]</sup>

The term “gifted and talented,” when used with respect to students, children or youth, means students, children or youth who give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specified academic fields, and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities.

**National:**

*National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)*<sup>[12]</sup>

Gifted individuals are those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (defined as an exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement in top 10% or rarer) in one or more domains. Domains include any structured area of activity with its own symbol system (e.g., mathematics, music, language) and/or set of sensorimotor skills (e.g., painting, dance, sports).

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<sup>[10]</sup> Title 10, Part B of Jacob K. Javits Act

<sup>[11]</sup> Title IX, Part A, Section 9101(22), p. 544 of No Child Left Behind Act

<sup>[12]</sup> NAGC.org Gifted and Talented definitions

*STATE DEFINITIONS OF GIFTED AND TALENTED*

**California**<sup>[13]</sup>

Students who are enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school and are identified as possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of high performance capability, are enrolled in Gifted and Talented Education (GATE). High performance capability is defined by each school district governing board. Each district shall use one or more of the following categories in defining the capability: intellectual, creative, specific academic, leadership, high achievement, performing and visual arts talent, or any other criterion proposed by the district and approved by the State Board of Education in the district's GATE application.

**Maryland**<sup>[14]</sup>

In this subtitle, "gifted and talented student" means an elementary or secondary student who is identified by professionally qualified individuals as:

- (1) Having outstanding talent and performing, or showing the potential for performing, at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with other students of a similar age, experience, or environment;
- (2) Exhibiting high performance capability in intellectual, creative, or artistic areas;
- (3) Possessing an unusual leadership capacity; or
- (4) Excelling in specific academic fields.

**Texas**<sup>[15]</sup>

"Gifted and talented student" means a child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment and who:

- (1) exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area;
- (2) possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or
- (3) excels in a specific academic field.

**Hawaii**<sup>[16]</sup>

Gifted and talented are children and youth whose superior performance or potential indicates possible giftedness in intellectual, creative, or specific academic abilities, leadership capability, psychomotor ability, or talent in the performing and visual arts. Giftedness consists of an interaction of three basic clusters of human traits: (1) above average ability, (2) high creativity ability, and (3) high task commitment. Gifted and

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<sup>[13]</sup> California Basic Educational Data System, GATE Program Information

<sup>[14]</sup> Annotated Code of the Public General Laws of Maryland [An. Code 1957, art. 77, §106F; 1978, ch. 22, §2; 1997, ch. 109; 2003, ch. 418.]

<sup>[15]</sup> Texas Education Code 29.121

<sup>[16]</sup> Hawaii State Definition Of Gifted And Talented - Chapter 51 and Three-Ring Concept of Giftedness by Joseph S. Renzulli



talented children are those possessing or capable of developing this composite set of traits and applying them to any potentially valuable area of human performance. Children who manifest or are capable of developing an interaction among the three clusters require a wide variety of educational opportunities and services that are not ordinarily provided through regular instructional programs.

#### **North Dakota<sup>[17]</sup>**

“Student who is gifted” means an individual who is identified by qualified professionals as being capable of high performance and who needs educational programs and services beyond those normally provided in a regular education program.

#### *ANALYSIS OF STATE AND FEDERAL DEFINITIONS*

The Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Act was the first codified recognition of Gifted and Talented students. It was originally passed in 1988 to support the development of talent in public schools in the United States. Because of it, programs were created and implemented throughout the country with the goal of carrying out “a coordinated program of scientifically based research, demonstration projects, innovative strategies, and similar activities designed to build and enhance the ability of elementary and secondary schools to meet the special education needs of gifted and talented students.”<sup>[18]</sup>

The No Child Left Behind Act followed along with the precedent set by the Javits Act and now includes its own definition of G/T as well. Because of the special interest that started to develop with G/T students, the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) was created in order to provide a resource for educators, administrations, parents, and students that would help them understand and formulate the definitions of what being G/T means.

When comparing the three definitions, it is easy to see that the No Child Left Behind Act’s language about G/T students follows that of the Javits almost word for word, stressing the importance of “intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity.” Based on these two definitions, it can be assumed that G/T students are most frequently thought of as high level thinkers with an emphasis in the creative and artistic (Liberal Arts and Humanities) fields of study.

The third definition, which was created by NAGC, agrees with the notion of a G/T student being one who functions on a higher level of thinking than averages students. But, the NAGC also takes the Liberal Arts aspect of the previous definitions and expands it to a broader range by including “any structured area of activity with its own symbol system (e.g., mathematics, music, language) and/or set of sensorimotor skills (e.g., painting, dance, sports).” As NAGC is a national organization, rather than federal, this aspect of its definition is not included at the federal level.

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<sup>[17]</sup> North Dakota Cent. Code § 15.1-32-01

<sup>[18]</sup> Definition taken from US Department of Education, Jacob K. Javits Act section, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The next five state definitions, which come directly from the respective state's education codes, have several aspects in common. The first of these features is that, when discussing how to identify Gifted and Talented students, state codes often refer to them as students who have already demonstrated the capacity to perform on higher levels, but also the *potential* to do so. Phrases like "potential abilities that give evidence," "showing the potential for," "potential [that] indicates," and so forth, indicate that most often, G/T is not solely defined based on what abilities the student already has. A substantial amount of categorization depends on what educators believe the student in question is capable of doing. This is a very important assessment point, because it demonstrates how the education boards are recognizing that on-level courses may not be providing a challenging enough environment for potential G/T students to flourish. Therefore, they are not silencing the fact that these students exist within the system that is already in place, even though it might not be benefiting them as much as it could be.

The next thing four out of five of the state code definitions do is list qualities and aspects that G/T students tend to have or perform highly at. These are as follows: great intellectual ability, creative abilities, capacity for leadership, and a high aptitude for high performance in the arts. The terms themselves are defined rather loosely, leaving the real meaning of the qualities up to the discretion of the districts.

The last quality, an aptitude for the arts, is one that stems from federal definitions of G/T that typically foster the ideas that G/T learners use their high levels of creativity to achieve a more advanced level of capability in the arts and humanities (i.e. creative writing, dance, drawing, philosophy, etc.). This is a theme that is perpetuated within the definition of G/T.

The definitions that are mandated by California, Maryland, Texas, and Hawaii are all fairly extensive, going in to detail about what 'high performance' actually means. North Dakota's state code does not. Though Hawaii was ranked alongside it at the bottom of the list for best state for secondary education, North Dakota does not achieve the same amount of attention to G/T education as a state. This could potentially account for its low ranking, though no correlation can be concretely confirmed due to the nature of Hawaii's definitions.

From all of the definitions included here, I have created my own definition of what Gifted and Talented means. This will be the understood definition for the duration of the report:

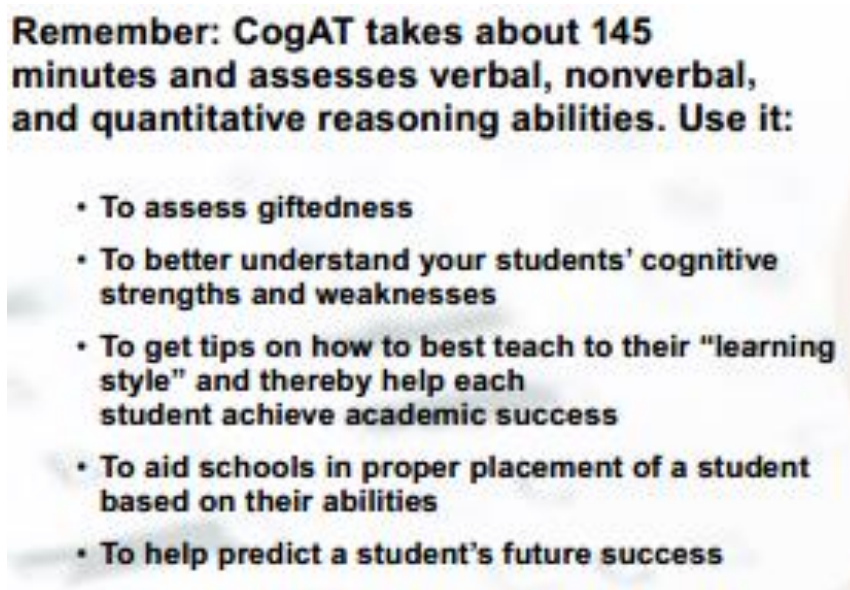
A Gifted and Talent student is a student who already has, or has the potential to demonstrate, skills that, when compared to the other students around him or her, far exceed current developmental expectations for students in Liberal Arts or Humanities programs. These skills include: leadership abilities, creative abilities, an accelerated ability in any of the arts, and an interest or mastery in any one specific area.

## IDENTIFYING GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

Identifying students to put on a Gifted and Talented track begins as early as kindergarten. Often, G/T programs evolve as the student gets older, changing the goals and ideals each year or group of years to accommodate intellectual growth. It is very important, however, that the students selected for the program actually belong there. The G/T learning environment could be detrimental for a student who does not function well there. This is why the processes for admission to the G/T programs are so rigorous.

One of the most common ways school districts go about identifying G/T students is through the Cognitive Ability Test, or CogAT. CogAT is used to measure reasoning and problem solving through verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal symbols. Image 2 lists some of the most common uses of the test.

Image 2<sup>[19]</sup>

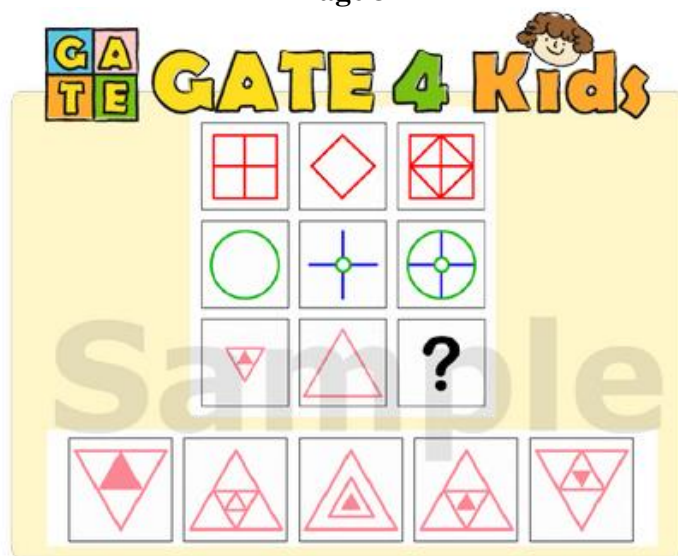


This test is effective in identifying G/T students because it asks questions that are not found in normal standardized testing. Though there is test prep available, the CogAT is not a test students can necessarily train for. It is meant to assess the abilities that exist naturally. Image 3 shows a sample question that could appear on a CogAT test.

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<sup>[19]</sup> Image 2 comes from Debbie Thompson's article "What is the CogAT and Why Use It?"

Image 3<sup>[20]</sup>



The sample question is one that tests for the skill of pattern recognition. Pattern recognition is a common way to assess cognitive and reasoning abilities of students in a less traditional way than they might encounter on a state mandated test. Performing successfully on questions like the one in Image 3 suggest that a student is capable of higher levels of cognitive processing, and therefore could be suitable for entrance into a G/T program where these skills will be used.

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<sup>[20]</sup> Image 3 comes from Gate4Kids test prep website

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GIFTED AND TALENTED AND HIGH ACHIEVING LEARNERS?

High achieving students are typically immediately qualified to enroll in, as well as succeed in, Pre-AP, AP, and IB courses. G/T students can also perform very well and succeed in these classes, but they require more than general high achieving students. This comes from the personality traits that most G/T students share in common, which push them to want more out of a learning experience than normal AP and IB classes allow for.

Image 4<sup>[21]</sup>

HIGH ACHIEVER VS. GIFTED	
<b>The high achieving child...</b>	<b>The gifted child...</b>
Knows the answers.	Asks the questions.
Is interested.	Is extremely curious.
Pays attention.	Gets involved mentally and physically.
Works hard.	Plays around, still gets good scores.
Answers questions.	Questions the answers.
Enjoys same-age peers.	Prefers adults or older children.
Is good at memorizing.	Is good at guessing.
Learns easily.	Is bored. Already knew answers.
Listens well.	Shows strong feelings and opinions.
Is self-satisfied.	Is highly critical of self (perfectionist).

Image 4 lists out the qualities generally found in each respective group of students. The overall consensus of “the high achieving child” is that this child will be a well-rounded and successful student who answers the questions s/he is asked and learns things at a rate that is higher than that of on-level students. The qualities of “the gifted child” are different because they present a student that will engage more actively in the material, asking questions, play around, and make frequent assumptions and educated guesses about the material in order to figure it out.

This image displays the reason why teaching G/T students is a challenge. It requires a separate mindset that is geared towards this type of student. I conducted brief interviews with Heidi Hughes and Jayne Creelman, who are both AP/GT Language and Literature Arts teachers at Allen High School in the Allen Independent School District in Texas.<sup>[22]</sup> One of the main questions I asked was about the differences in learners from their personal experiences. Along with some of the qualities listed in Image 4, they both stressed that gifted students, more so than on-level or high achieving students, expect their instructor to be prepared and knowledgeable when the students’ inquisitive nature is abound. Preparation for lesson execution is extra essential in a G/T classroom, as stated by these two teachers, and is something I have emulated in the following detailed curriculum plan.

<sup>[21]</sup> Image 4 comes from an information pamphlet created by the Allen Independent School District Gifted and Talented program in order to help identify the difference between high achieving students and gifted students.  
<sup>[22]</sup> Full transcripts of the interviews can be found in Appendix A. (H. Hughes and J. Creelman, personal communication, February 12, 2014)

## CURRICULUM

### CURRICULUM INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION

The goal of this curriculum is to create a hypothetical course on the close reading of Renaissance literature that would be appropriate for high school juniors and seniors enrolled in Gifted and Talented programs. The curriculum is not specific to one state or another, but it complements the idea of G/T that I have constructed based upon my research. In addition, the curriculum incorporates techniques for teaching close reading, plus my personal experience with teaching and learning about literature.

The first item of the curriculum is a brief syllabus for this hypothetical high school course. The part of the syllabus that is used here would be but a section of the whole Gifted and Talented literature class syllabus.

The materials that the lesson plans will be built on my own research into and formal analysis of Renaissance literature. My analyses in full can be found with their MLA works cited page in appendix B. The first material I am using to create a lesson plan is titled “The Collar and the Confines and Contrasting Clarity of Religion.” In this paper, a close reading analysis of George Herbert’s poem “The Collar” is provided in order to explore the struggle between poetic order and control. My goal with this text is to demonstrate how close reading can lead to a deeper understanding about assertions writers make through their works. Specifically with the first lesson, I want to focus on reading a poem in order to analyze things like word choice, rhyme scheme, and form through the SWIMTAG technique. This lesson will act as a precursor to the second.

The second, titled “Love, Eroticism, and Sin in the Works of John Donne,” explores the connections that exist between the romantic and physical relationships of humans and religion. The poems used, “The Canonization,” “The Extasie,” and sonnet 14, all explore sexually suggestive themes. My goal in using these poems in lessons is to first, make Donne and his works appropriate for high school audiences so they can be introduced earlier, and second, to start teaching students how to discuss these controversial and provocative topics in scholarly ways. As previously discussed, G/T students have an inherent desire to question the material in front of them. This lesson plan will challenge students to do just that, and look past the provocative surface meaning of the text to find true meaning. G/T students, by the time they are in the last years of their program, are sophisticated enough to handle such material on an analytical level. This lesson will focus on taking the close reading skills learned in lesson one, and applying them to multiple poems in order to find common and overarching themes.

The lesson plans each include five specific points: the common core learning standards addressed, learning objectives, assumed previous knowledge, assessment of success, and a detailed account of activities and tasks. At the end of the lesson plan, there is a short set of reflection questions that confirm the point and success of the plan itself in order to provide an explanation and justification.

## BRIEF SYLLABUS<sup>[23]</sup>

### G/T Literature – Year 4 (Close Reading Section)

#### Course Description

The Close Reading section of this course is designed to allow G/T students to develop and sharpen their analytic skills by dissecting and understanding difficult techniques, themes, and devices deployed in Renaissance literature. We will use poetry by several distinguished and celebrated writers from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as materials to explore the methods of close reading.

#### Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- (1) Have general knowledge of and familiarity with writers of the Renaissance period
- (2) Have an understanding of rhetorical devices and how to use them
- (3) Use their newly developed analytic skills to solve problems
- (4) Clearly and efficiently explain a unique argument about texts
- (5) Articulate themselves effectively through written communication

#### Assignments

In class work:

- Two thesis statements developed from short analyses of poems during each lesson
  - One will be about an overarching theme
  - One will be about rhetorical strategies used in the poem

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<sup>[23]</sup> Syllabus template taken from Greg Reighman at Lehigh University

## LESSON PLAN 1

Lesson Plan 1, derived from “The Collar and the Confines and Contrasting Clarity of Religion,” provides many opportunities for close reading because it contains several different and effective usages of diction, rhyme, and form. The goal of the formal analysis was to expose how “The Collar” uses its physical appearance, sonic effects, and often contorted syntax to present a struggle between poetic order and control. In attempting to guide students to achieve an understanding similar to this, there are several things that can be assessed during a lesson. The lesson plan below outlines the appropriate time to use this content. The most teachable and relevant aspects are listed here:

- How the word “suit” in line six leads to the assumption that the speaker is a priest
  - Priests’ clerical attires can be referred to as a suit
- How the title of the poem relates to the idea of the speaker wearing a suit
  - Clerical collar
- The connotation and various definitions of the word “collar”
  - Used as a safety device for animals, but also can be annoying and restraining pieces of clothing
- How the combination of these words with their respective connotations allows the reader to understand the speaker’s emotions
- The shape and spaces the white/empty parts of lines creates in order to isolate certain parts of text
  - Mirrors the confinement of the concept of “collar”
- The poem is shaped chaotically to mirror the frantic tone of the speaker in confinement
- How the italics used for the dialogue visually hold a certain degree of fluidity
  - Corrects the haphazard shape of the poem
- Traditional rhyme scheme is lacking
  - Only corrected with “word” and “lord” (lines 34 and 36) once the speaker hears God’s voice and is consoled



POEM:

“The Collar” by George Herbert

I Struck the board, and cry'd, No more.  
I will abroad.  
What? shall I ever sigh and pine?  
My lines and life are free; free as the rode,  
Loose as the winde, as large as store.  
Shall I be still in suit?  
Have I no harvest but a thorn  
To let me bloud, and not restore  
What I have lost with cordiall fruit?  
Sure there was wine  
Before my sighs did drie it: there was corn  
Before my tears did drown it.  
Is the yeare onely lost to me?  
Have I no bayes to crown it?  
No flowers, no garlands gay? all blasted?  
All wasted?  
Not so, my heart: but there is fruit,  
And thou hast hands.  
Recover all thy sigh-blown age  
On double pleasures: leave thy cold dispute  
Of what is fit, and not. Forsake thy cage,  
Thy rope of sands,<sup>1</sup>  
Which pettie thoughts have made, and made to thee  
Good cable, to enforce and draw,  
And be thy law,  
While thou didst wink and wouldst not see.  
Away; take heed:  
I will abroad.  
Call in thy deaths head there: tie up thy fears.  
He that forbears  
To suit and serve his need,  
Deserves his load.  
But as I rav'd and grew more fierce and wilde  
At every word,  
Me thoughts I heard one calling, *Childe*:  
And I reply'd, *My Lord*.

## **1. Common Core Learning Standard(s) Addressed:<sup>[24]</sup>**

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

## **2. Learning Target/Objectives:**

- Introduce new annotation skills
- Introduce rhyme, and form
- Allow students the chance to interpret meaning through devices and form rather than content

## **3. Assumed Previous Knowledge:**

Students will be in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and be assumed to have working knowledge on how to annotate texts, including poems and novels. They will also be assumed to have knowledge of basic rhetorical and literary devices such as similes, alliteration, and metaphors. A requirement before this class would take place would be for each student to print out and bring in the lyrics to one of their favorite songs.

## **4. Formative Assessment Criteria for Success:**

The assessment will be a graded submission of an annotated copy of Herbert's poem with a one sentence thesis statement attached that makes an argument about why one instance of form, meter, rhyme, or device usage is important to the poem.

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<sup>[24]</sup> More information about the Common Core standards can be found under the "Reading Literature" section of the Common Core website

## 5. Activities/Tasks:

1. Students will cut out each individual line of the copy of the song lyrics they brought to class and place them in an order or shape that they think best conveys the message of the song they chose.
  - a. They will then write one or two sentences about why they chose the shape they did.
  - b. They will do a SWIMTAG analysis of the song they brought in after we go over how to use the technique.
2. I will pass out a copy of “The Collar” for each student so he/she will have one to make annotations on, and we will read it as a class.
3. First we will look at the form of “The Collar,” and discuss as a class what the pattern or shape of the poem could represent. The class will brainstorm a list of ideas about why the poem might be shaped in the way that it is.
4. Next, we will, as a class, perform a SWIMTAG analysis of “The Collar.”
  - a. There are a few points that I will bring up to get the analysis started (which are detailed in the materials for Lesson 1), but the majority of this will be student-led, group discussion.
    - i. The usage of the word “suit” in line six
    - ii. The usage of the word “cage” in lines 20 and 21
    - iii. The meaning of the italicized words
    - iv. The rhyme scheme at the end
  - b. The students will be making annotations on their copy of the poem throughout.
5. The last thing the students will do is generate a thesis statement that makes an argument using one of the things they discovered during the SWIMTAG analysis to make a claim about the meaning of the poem.

## REFLECTION

### How did this lesson support 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills?

This lesson focuses on the 21<sup>st</sup> century skill of analysis. Close reading while focusing on the visual aspects of the poem allows the students to read poetry in a way that is far different than they have before, and interpret those findings in a way that is similar to analyzing data. By using their song as a warm-up activity, the students see how this process is not only for Renaissance poetry. Moving on to looking into Renaissance poetry in this lesson is essential, however, in order to foster the ability to sift through content that invokes more complex ideas and devices.

### How did this lesson reflect G/T academic rigor?

This lesson reflects G/T academic rigor because it asks the students to assess visual factors in a deeper way that works to connect form to meaning. This is something that is not usually done in on-level classes, as they mostly focus on meaning and understanding of the text alone.

**How did this lesson actively engage students in a collaborative and active learning experience?**

Having the class work together as a large group allows students access to each other's ideas. This is helpful in the learning process because the collaboration aspect opens their eyes to things they might not have thought of on their own. In addition, by first performing the activity with their favorite song, the students are able to get interested in the activity before the harder and less familiar material is presented.

## LESSON PLAN 2

Lesson Plan 2, which is derived from “Love, Eroticism, and Sin in the Works of John Donne,” provides an in-depth analysis of three of John Donne’s poems rather than one, as seen in the previous lesson. The goal of the formal analysis was to find a common factor between all three of the poems and prove that it existed by way of rhetorical analysis. This lesson will be less focused on achieving the same outcome as in my analysis, and more on the students coming up with their own. They will work to find themes, defend them with evidence, and relate them to one another. The following is a list of things that should be addressed about these poems in order to facilitate the activity’s success:

### “The Extasie”

- The repetition of “our eye” and “our eyes,” in lines six and seven is placed so that the phrases are aligned vertically within the poem.
  - Places speaker’s and the beloved’s eyes closer in the text while providing a visual connection between the “eyes” for the reader to observe.
  - Mirrors the metaphysical one that is being formed between the speaker’s soul and his beloved’s.
- Lines 15 and 45 experience an article change from “our” to “new” that signifies the creation of one shared soul for the lovers.
  - Souls are associated with the afterlife, spiritual ascension, and closeness to God.

### Sonnet 14

- Opens with an abrupt line that juxtaposes “God” with violence that is contradicted by the gentle second line
  - Signifies a struggle between redemption and punishment for the speaker (intimacy versus banishment)
- Caesuras in lines 11 through 14 are choppy for reading and allow for the recurrent image of a man’s sin being chipped away at
- Sexual images occur with the last line “ravish me”
  - Once this intimate relationship with God is achieved, the poem has come to a close

### “The Canonization”

- “Love” is repeated at the end of the first and last lines of all five stanzas
  - Literally encases the poem in love, which becomes a type of security
  - Provides it with an everlasting meaning

### Theme Relations

- The theme of love, closeness, and intimacy as a way of achieving a more valuable and close relationship with God is recurrent throughout the three poems

POEMS:

“The Extasie” by John Donne

WHERE, like a pillow on a bed,  
 A Pregnant banke swel'd up, to rest  
 The violets reclining head,  
 Sat we two, one anothers best.  
 Our hands were firmly cimented 5  
 With a fast balme, which thence did spring,  
 Our eye-beames twisted, and did thred  
 Our eyes, upon one double string;  
 So to'entergraft our hands, as yet  
 Was all the meanes to make us one, 10  
 And pictures in our eyes to get  
 Was all our propagation.  
 As 'twixt two equall Armies, Fate  
 Suspends uncertaine victorie,  
 Our soules, (which to advance their state, 15  
 Were gone out,) hung 'twixt her, and mee.  
 And whil'st our soules negotiate there,  
 Wee like sepulchrall statues lay;  
 All day, the same our postures were,  
 And wee said nothing, all the day. 20  
 If any, so by love refin'd,  
 That he soules language understood,  
 And by good love were growen all minde,  
 Within convenient distance stood,  
 He (though he knew not which soule spake, 25  
 Because both meant, both spake the same)  
 Might thence a new concoction take,  
 And part farre purer then he came.  
 This Extasie doth unperplex  
 (We said) and tell us what we love, 30  
 Wee see by this, it was not sexe,  
 Wee see, we saw not what did move:  
 But as all severall soules containe  
 Mixture of things, they know not what,  
 Love, these mixt soules, doth mixe againe, 35  
 And makes both one, each this and that.  
 A single violet transplant,  
 The strength, the colour, and the size,  
 (All which before was poore, and scant,)  
 Redoubles still, and multiplies. 40  
 When love, with one another so  
 Interinanimates two soules,

That abler soule, which thence doth flow,  
 Defects of lonelinesse controules.  
 Wee then, who are this new soule, know, 45  
 Of what we are compos'd, and made,  
 For, th'Atomies of which we grow,  
 Are soules, whom no change can invade.  
 But O alas, so long, so farre  
 Our bodies why doe wee forbear? 50  
 They are ours, though they are not wee, Wee are  
 The intelligences, they the spheare.  
 We owe them thanks, because they thus,  
 Did us, to us, at first conuay,  
 Yeelded their forces, sense, to us, 55  
 Nor are drosse to us, but allay.  
 On man heavens influence workes not so,  
 But that it first imprints the ayre,  
 Soe soule into the soule may flow,  
 Though it to body first repaire. 60  
 As our blood labours to beget  
 Spirits, as like soules as it can,  
 Because such fingers need to knit  
 That subtile knot, which makes us man:  
 So must pure lovers soules descend 65  
 T'affections, and to faculties,  
 Which sense may reach and apprehend,  
 Else a great Prince in prison lies.  
 To'our bodies turne wee then, that so  
 Weake men on love reveal'd may looke; 70  
 Loves mysteries in soules doe grow,  
 But yet the body is his booke.  
 And if some lover, such as wee,  
 Have heard this dialogue of one,  
 Let him still marke us, he shall see 75  
 Small change, when we're to bodies gone.

Sonnet 14 by John Donne

XIV.

Batter my hear, three-person'd God; for you  
As yet but knock; breathe, shine, and seek to mend;  
That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend  
Your force, to break, blow, burn, and make me new.  
I, like an usurp'd town, to another due,  
Labour to admit you, but O, to no end.  
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,  
But is captived, and proves weak or untrue.  
Yet dearly I love you, and would be loved fain,  
But am betroth'd unto your enemy;  
Divorce me, untie, or break that knot again,  
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,  
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,  
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

"The Canonization" by John Donne

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.

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.

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.

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!"

## **1. Common Core Learning Standard(s) Addressed:<sup>[25]</sup>**

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6

Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

## **2. Learning Target/Objectives:**

- Use textual evidence to uncover the theme of the poems
- Discuss controversial and provocative topics in scholarly ways
- Practice annotation skills
- Make connections between multiple texts
- Develop collaboration skills to create thesis statements

## **3. Assumed Previous Knowledge:**

Students will be in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and be assumed to have working knowledge on how to annotate texts, including poems and novels. Since this is Lesson 2, students will be

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<sup>[25]</sup> More information about the Common Core standards can be found under the “Reading Literature” section of the Common Core website

assumed to have retained the annotation skills learned in Lesson 1, and be able to apply them to this lesson. They will also be assumed to have knowledge of basic rhetorical devices such as similes, alliteration, and metaphors.

#### **4. Formative Assessment Criteria for Success:**

The assessment will be a graded submission of a group developed introduction paragraph that could serve as one for an analysis essay on one of Donne's poems.

#### **5. Activities/Tasks:**

1. Group class into small groups, giving each a copy of the three poems included in the Lesson Plan 2 materials: "The Canonization," "The Extasie," and or sonnet 14.
2. The group will read all of the poems, but chose only one to do a close reading of.
3. Once the poem is picked, I will (with no further information or discussion) ask the groups to work together to annotate their selected poem and come up with one idea for a theme.
4. Each group will present their theme – writing it in one short sentence on the board – to the rest of the class, including information on how they used their annotations to arrive at their assertion.
5. We will, as a class, go through the poems (as laid out in Lesson Plan 2 materials) "The Extasie," then sonnet 14, and finally "The Canonization."
6. For these conversations, I will start by moving to one specific part of the text in order to begin discussion on the rhetorical devices used there. I will use open ended questions to help the students come up with assertions without actually revealing answers. The questions will both require the students to think about the physical text, as well as the meanings of it.
  - a. "The Extasie"
    - i. Discussion Questions
      1. What do the repetition and placement of the words "eyes" do for reader and the speaker?
      2. What does the change of the word "our" in line 15 to "new" in line 45 signify?
  - b. Sonnet 14
    - i. Discussion Questions
      1. What does the abruptness of the violence of the first line do for the tone of the poem? Why is that important?
      2. Why is it significant that "God" and the violence described in the first line are so close to each other in the text?
  - c. "The Canonization"
    - i. Discussion Questions
      1. What is the importance of the repetition and placement of the word "love" in the poem?
      2. Identify the end rhyme in lines 29 and 30. How does it signify the resolve and commitment of lovers?

7. The students will then come up with one discussion question on their own, picking out a piece of evidence from the poems to support it.
8. After we have a class discussion about all of the questions, I will refer back to the themes each group came up with, and ask the students to get back into their groups and discuss how these themes are related.
9. The assignment will then be to, as a group, develop a thesis sentence that makes an assertion about how the three poems are related.

## REFLECTION

### **How did this lesson support 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills?**

This lesson supports 21<sup>st</sup> century skills because it encourages attention to detail and the generation of overarching ideas. The two of these are real-world skills because the ability to create one concise statement that encompasses a large idea is essential to effective communication. In addition, working in groups requires cooperation and teamwork.

### **How did this lesson reflect G/T academic rigor?**

This lesson reflects G/T academic rigor because the task of discussing provocative materials is one that requires mature minds that can process the information in a way that looks to grasp the underlying, larger concepts.

### **How did this lesson actively engage students in a collaborative and active learning experience?**

The implementation of group work encourages collaborative thinking and cooperation to generate ideas. The students' presentations give them the chance to express their ideas in a non-traditional, non-formal way, which encourages further comfort and creativity. The open-ended group discussion provides practice for verbal articulation, and the chance to generate discussion questions allows the students the chance to engage other students in the class in their own personal questions and ideas about the texts.

## CONCLUSION

The study as a whole serves the purpose of proposing a solution for how to increase the presence of close reading in Gifted and Talented classrooms. The content of the lesson plans includes calculated and specific ways about how to do this but successfully with the adequate amount of rigor required at the junior and senior high school level.

The study could be expanded by providing a broader focus on more topics in literature and more diverse Gifted and Talented programs. More topics in literature could be explored to create lesson plans similar to the ones I have included, such as the Modernist writings of the 1920's in American Literature or ancient Greek poetry. I am also particularly interested in expanding this study to include G/T programs that have a specific focus on the inclusion of minority groups of children, whom by far suffer the most in our current education system.

With further consideration and input from a wide variety of G/T programs across the United States, I believe that my proposal and sample curriculum could make a significant impact in the nature of G/T learning in our country.

## APPENDIX A

1. I know that there are requirements for being qualified to teach G/T courses. Other than a certificate, what are these requirements? Does going to conferences count as a requirement? What do you learn at conferences?

**HH:** Initially you have to have at least 30 hours of G/T specific training. Once you have the 30 hours, you must have at least 6 hours of professional development each year to maintain your certificate. The Texas Association of Gifted and Talented Conference, or TAGT does fulfill the update requirement if one attends enough sessions during the conference. The TAGT conference usually has a keynote speaker who is an expert in gifted and talented education and then it also features talented professionals who serve the gifted and offer breakout conference sessions to attendees to further their learning. A conference attendee can usually earn her 6 hour update over two days. The district I work in also offers online 6 hour updates.

**JC:** Generally, yes. What do you learn at conferences? It depends greatly on the focus of the conference. The best, by far, is the TAGT annual convention which provides many (100+) mini-sessions for participants to choose from based upon interest, grade level, and relationship to GT people.

Requirements:

- certificate as awarded by the State of Texas based on EXCET exam results
- 30 hour initial GT training; obtained through region or school district or other
- 6 hour annual update; obtained in a myriad of ways through regional, district, TAGT, etc. (TAGT = Texas Association for Gifted and Talented)

2. Is there a big difference between teaching freshman/sophomore G/T students and junior/senior G/T students? What are the differences and similarities? Why do you teach the higher level classes?

**HH:** I have taught on-level freshman, on-level juniors, and G/T juniors, so my perspective must be viewed from my experience. I have a close relationship with the teachers in my district who teach freshman and sophomore G/T students. My observation is that the freshman teachers work to help students read deeply and question their texts. They also nurture the inquisitive nature of the G/T learner and help them to develop questions about what they read and learn how to discuss a novel. In short, freshmen learn how to read deeply. Then at the sophomore level, teachers build on the skill of reading and teach students how to evaluate and comment on texts. Sophomore teachers work to help the gifted students to become deeper and more comprehensive readers who question and explore text and then they work to enable them to put their thoughts together into more sophisticated writing. Freshman and sophomore teaching is about reading comprehension, insightful commentary and being inquisitive. When the freshman and sophomore teachers send the G/T students to the junior and senior teachers, it is up to the upper level teachers to help the G/T students to determine how the reading and writing skills they have learned thus far

can be instrumental in each student's view and contribution to the world. So... a junior or senior can read and write well. Now, what kind of an impact are those skills going to have on society? Teaching juniors and seniors means moving the skills of reading and writing into practical application at a personal level. As much as I admire the freshman and sophomore teachers for teaching the skills of close reading and strong writing, I teach the upper level classes because I love seeing young women and men struggle through discovering who they are. It is wonderful to see a student realize a truth that she or he can support and then fervently work to support in front of a whole class of her or his peers.

**JC:** I have taught all four grade levels and they all have varying needs. Freshmen are typically hyper, self-involved, and like to think of how they fit into the world; most of the literature and themes discussed in *Phoenix 1* revolve around this notion. Juniors tend to be the most focused/serious/stressed of the bunch as they work to build and maintain solid GPAs and relationships. Seniors are global thinkers who long to get their hands dirty in the world. They struggle to balance staying focused on all high school has to offer with their intense desire to leave and experience life on their own. It is a definite push/pull: I can't wait to leave, but I'm afraid too. I moved from teaching freshmen to teaching seniors because I wanted to stretch myself. Seniors are very discriminating – they demand quality, preparedness, and work that is worth their time. Teaching 17-18 year olds has made me a better teacher and person, and I am truly grateful.

3. What are the student-to-teacher dynamics like in a G/T classroom from your perspective? Is it different than on-level classes? Why or why not, in your opinion?

**HH:** G/T students are individuals. Each G/T student is a different dynamic, but one aspect I can say that I have observed as a general trend of the G/T learner is that the G/T student demands that the teacher be prepared and that the teacher earns the respect of the learner. In on-level classes there tends to be an assumption that everyone has to serve an educational "sentence" so to speak. There is a curriculum that everyone must "get through," and as long as the student makes an effort, he or she will pass. In the gifted classroom, because the students are homogeneously grouped, there is a completely different standard in place. There is a natural sense of intrinsic competition between the learners, and if the teacher has nothing of value to entice the learners in the room, the gifted will take it upon themselves to determine what valuable curriculum is. G/T students demand more from their teachers and will reprimand the teacher if she is unprepared or wrong.

**JC:** Definitely different! A GT classroom is generally interactive with tremendous back and forth taking place between teacher and student. Grade level classes have moments like that, but generally they follow a teacher-directive/student-delivery pattern. The GT classroom, run right, is fluid and full of surprises. That said, I also know that a GT classroom requires a great deal of structure; it may not be obvious,

things may appear chaotic to the untrained eye, but the organic nature of a GT environment relies on a definite framework and purpose.

4. Is there a difference between what the state tells you to teach and what you want to teach? If yes, please explain.

**HH:** Yes! It is quite complicated, but all districts demand that the G/T students receive special services. Most ISDs claim that G/T students are served in AP or IB classes and that's that. In reality, AP and IB classes do not focus on the social and emotional needs of the gifted learner. Fortunately, in the district where I work, there is a strand in the English curriculum that is specifically designed to serve the needs of the gifted learner; however, in order to justify its existence, it is also classified as an AP level course. So, if I was left to design an English curriculum that was solely based on the needs of the gifted learner, I would not be preparing students for the AP Language and Composition Exam; I would be preparing them to be global communicators and creative problem solvers. That being said, preparing them to be global communicators and creative problem solvers is still my primary goal, it is just that the state demand that I also prepare them for the AP exam.

**JC:** Not really. I know the TEKS but do not feel bound by them because they are naturally embedded in the higher level work students do.

5. How do you structure your lesson plans around the state mandated requirements? What is your personal methodology for teaching G/T students?

**HH:** There are certain criteria that the AP Language and Composition exam requires, but first and foremost, I am in the classroom to challenge and nurture the gifted learner. As far as my methodology is concerned, I put the nature and needs of the gifted learner first. When I design lessons, I ask myself questions like: Where is the choice? Is it possible for a student to extend this assignment in a fulfilling way? Have I constricted the possibility for extended learning, and if I have, can I remove the constriction?

**JC:** Within a very structured format, I work hard to give them opportunities to think, read, and write about "big ideas" that matter to them as human beings walking around on the planet. I try to respect their time and give them meaningful work. I wish I could tell you more than that, but that is really it.

6. From your experience, and in your opinion, what defines a G/T student? What are the qualities that make him/her 'gifted and talented' in comparison to on-level and traditional AP/IB students?

**HH:** There is a difference between gifted and high achieving. People who work hard can be high achieving, but the gifted inherently approach problems, challenges, and the world in a distinct and multilevel way that is fascinating and difficult to explain in a short answer.



**JC:** Of course all students, regardless of grade level, are gloriously individual, so what I'm about to say is based on my experience: GT people think rapidly. They make connections readily. They see patterns and possibilities and implications. They are moral thinkers and can be extremely empathetic. Their heightened awareness of the flaws and foibles of humankind often leads to personal distress as they have high expectations of themselves and others. They can be easily frustrated or bored, and can be dismissive of others who are not as quick as they. They are funny and love to be mentally challenged by humor. They are complex and delightful in more ways than I can count. Unlike many other advanced academic students, GT students are not always concerned about "the grade." Many of them see beyond the number and focus on other payoffs such as intellectual stimulation and relevance of the work.

## APPENDIX B

### *The Collar* and the Confines and Contrasting Clarity of Religion

There are many visual and auditory aspects of George Herbert's *The Collar* that work to fluidly express the literal and metaphysical meaning of the poem. Perhaps the most noticeable of these is the general shape the poem physically takes on paper. The lengths of the lines do not conform to any particular pattern, yet they manage to call attention to specific phrases through the rolling shape they take. The empty spaces that lack text work to create visual, structural pauses. Beyond the physical aspects of *The Collar* are the auditory qualities that the almost entirely absent rhyme scheme expose. Because of the seemingly nonexistent rhyme scheme, the rare occasions where there are rhymes signify a noteworthy shift in action. The sentence structure and imagery function to display the agitated, restrained, and sometimes dismissive, tone of the speaker. Visual aspects, rhyme scheme (or lack thereof), tone, and syntactical structure help guide the reader through *The Collar*. It is through these things that the speaker and reader are connected to the journey for God and order. The chaotic, fragmented rant of the speaker is insufficient in communicating with Christ until the last four lines of the poem in which order and rhyme are restored, mirroring the resolution of the Lord's single word. Words, language, and the lines that define them mean nothing without the organization that rhyme lends them; in conjunction, the speaker's life is nothing but bedlam without the direction and regulation of the word of God. *The Collar* uses its physical appearance, sonic effects, and often contorted syntax to present a struggle between poetic order and control.

In order to delve deeper into how imagery works to create the speaker's tone, it is essential to understand whence the images are derived. Reoccurring throughout the poem are images of restraint that draw on two of the many meanings of the title itself: collar. In the simplest form of the word, a collar usually connotes a piece of clothing that goes around the wearer's neck, or a piece of material typically put around a domesticated animal's neck for restriction and control. Collars on clothing tend to annoy the wearer: they can be confining and irritating as they fold and contort in many unintended ways. The speaker from *The Collar* can be assumed to be a priest as he, in line six, uses the word "suit" to describe what he is "in." "Suit" can be interpreted in many different ways, but when examining it in combination with the title, "suit" aligns with the image of a clerical collar that the priest is wearing. In priesthood, the word collar is often used in a restraining sense to impose conscience on subjects of the church (Randall 474). Conscience is something that can become overwhelming in people, causing them to question all of their actions and motives. The entirety of line six ("Shall I be still in suit?") involves the use of a rhetorical question, as well as the word "still." "Still," being a word to describe non-moving, non-fussing people or things, is in direct conflict with the restraining image and agitated tone the title and rhetorical question set up. As the poem progresses, the collar of priesthood becomes more of an annoyance to the speaker, rather than the comforting article of clothing that it should be.

The second interpretation of the word collar provides the image of a restricted, domesticated animal. Collars are indeed put on animals for control, but are not meant to cause any harm. In fact, collars are usually meant to be worn for safety purposes. In lines

20 and 21 (“Forsake thy cage, thy rope of sands”), the speaker uses the word “cage” to express where he sees himself in his current state. Not only does the word “cage” carry a negative connotation, the use of “forsake” clearly demonstrates the distressed tone of the speaker. Moreover, the “rope of sands,” to which he refers is symbolic of the uncomfortable collar he wears. The confines of the speaker’s religion – trust in faith and a Lord whom he cannot seem to make contact with – are seemingly driving him insane, as the rant alludes to. Similar to the image of a panicked animal, it is not until line 35, at the word of his master – or “Lord” – that the speaker feels the sense of safety and calm that a collar is supposed to emulate for its wearer. There is no order without the voice of God, just as there is no calming tone within the confines of the speaker’s unresponsive and irritating collar.

Images within *The Collar* are not all that create a sense of confinement and befuddlement. Because of the way the poem is structured, appearing to have been pieced haphazardly together, there are many places where nothing but the white of the page is left. The white spaces themselves create a confining shape for the words. When the reader reaches a large blank space, his instinct is to pause. The chopiness this creates while reading the poem alludes to the confusion of the speaker, allowing the reader to experience similar emotions. The white spaces are generated by the different line lengths used within the poem. The shortest line of the poem, line 16 (“All wasted?”), ironically poses a very heavy question. The speaker is asking himself if his time spent in confinement of religion has indeed all been wasted because he cannot seem to elicit a response from God. This line, being as short as it is, is off-set by two very large empty spaces. Visually, this mirrors the word “wasted,” as if the empty spaces were once filled with words but are now wasting away. Additionally, these spaces draw attention and focus to the line, forcing the reader to ask the question on its own. As previously mentioned, this seemingly haphazard way of structuring *The Collar*, causes confusion for the reader that symbolizes the crazed confusion of the speaker. When reading the poem, it is a natural instinct to search for a pattern or solid structure. There are many lines that start from the same point, but are all out of succession. As a reader, it is difficult not to follow the straight, vertical lines created by these start points because of the innate search for order people possess. The majority of the poem is the speaker’s puzzling dialogue with himself, jumping back and forth as he searches for answers to his questions – as he searches for his God and order. Finally, at the close of the poem, the speaker gets his response from God in one simple word (“*Child*”). The italics used for the dialogue visually hold fluidity. The form the word takes brings more shape to the already wave-structured poem, making words that could be construed as thoughts stand out to the reader. Rather than just remaining as a voice in the speaker’s head, the italics used make the word “child” appear concrete and real. When the speaker reaches this conversation and responds, his dialogue and the poem both end, as though he has “discover[ed] that everything he has said is inappropriate or wrong” (Harman 866). Furthermore, the tranquility that the words provide is structurally represented by the last line being perfectly centered under the preceding one. The lines fit and flow together with a beautiful clarity that the rest of the poem had been entirely lacking. The visual succession and physical form of the words start bringing together the organization and control the speaker lacks from the beginning lines.

The missing aspects of clarity that exist until the final lines of the poem can be observed not only in form, but in rhythmic styling. Though there are several rhymes used throughout *The Collar*, they are all very disorganized and separated. There is no apparent structure to where the rhyming lines are placed. Any typical ABBA, or ABAB, pattern is completely missing. Such can be observed in lines 17 and 20 with the words “fruit” and “dispute.” Though these words do rhyme, they are separated, not only by two other non-rhyming lines, but large blank spaces. This separation is symbolic of the struggle to try and create a working rhyme scheme and getting so very close to doing so, but failing to achieve any true order. Again, this mirrors the speaker’s tireless search for such consistencies throughout his journey in the poem. It is not until the last four lines (beginning with line 33, “But as I raved”) that this rhyme scheme – in the form of ABAB – can be found. More the just the implementation of a rhyme scheme at this line is also the ending of the speaker’s dialogue. He has finally paused from his rant and given God the chance to reply. The shift from dialogue to narration is blatant: the words change into more simply understood phrases and the tone becomes less annoyed and agitated as the speaker transitions from “wonderfully drawn-out raving to the sudden awe” (Gordon and Harman 325). The initial rhyme in these lines starts with “wild” and coincides with “child.” Essentially the phrase “wild child” is formed. The image of a “wild child” directly relates back to the uses and images procured by the title and “collar” from earlier instances in the poem. The speaker uses this as an opportunity to recognize the hostility and anxiety within himself, just as God does when He makes contact with the speaker. “*Child*” is accompanied by an exclamation mark, which brings attention to the more severe tone the Lord uses towards the speaker.

The second half of the rhyme can be observed in the words “word” and “Lord” in lines 34 and 36. This rhyme truly is at the crux of the poem where the speaker connects the words of the Lord to calm and clarity. The rhyme also suggests the comforting bondage and obligation between the speaker and the Lord. The pairing of “word” and “Lord” in these lines showcases this realization. The entire rant had been building up to this last moment in which God makes contact with the speaker. In one word, the “Lord” resolves all of the speaker’s anxieties and feelings of overwhelming and constraining confinement. His rant is over and his faith is restored. All of the previous failed attempts at creating a real rhyme scheme in *The Collar* are no longer important or a burden on the speaker. The word of the Lord acts as the organization being sought, just as the words of poetry, when paired with proper rhyming and structure, are collectively resolving in a controlled, yet pleasing way.

Throughout *The Collar*, the speaker upholds the theme of ranting and raving, asking a slew of rhetorical questions, and emulating negative and distraught tones. It is only when he stops and allows the silence to come over him that the speaker finds the order and responses he has been seeking. God’s assertion of control over the speaker’s life in *The Collar* echoes the control of writing in the realm of poetry. Life cannot exist with chaos when these techniques are implemented. Similarly to the speaker, readers and writers of poetry will search through rigid lines and confusion to find the organization and order that brings peace to them. Herbert’s poem, *The Collar*, truly is an extension of the metaphysical meaning of man and his relationship to the heavens and the comfort and order which they provide. But the poem is also about something much simpler: poetry itself, and how it works to erase the bewilderment of minds. It is within poetry that we

find solace amidst a language that tries to pull us towards disorder. Poetry is the “Lord” that keeps writers from living in linguistic sin.

### Love, Eroticism, and Sin in the Works of John Donne

John Donne is a Renaissance poet who is most often known for the sexually suggestive content of his works, although much more lies behind his words. While a large number of his poems make an attempt to be sexually persuasive, they are also rooted in more pious themes, despite the necessary contradiction. It is through his use of erotic and romantic images that Donne creates speakers and texts which actually emulate the relationships between religious themes and erotic ones. In his poem “The Canonization,” the importance of love and intimacy between two people is showcased, and although it is not explicitly stated, a sexual relationship between lovers can be assumed. Furthermore, in his poems “The Extasie” and sonnet 14, Donne creates poetic personas that embody his assertion that religiosity cannot exist, especially not in a textual form, without the sin of carnality as a juxtaposition. Using the reoccurring image of the well-known Phoenix rising from the ashes, Donne’s speakers, and their love, become eternalized in words and in heaven.

In situations of love, romance, and sexuality in the English speaking world, the phrase “the eyes are the windows to the soul,” is one that has been tossed around for centuries, most notably occurring in Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. But Shakespeare was not the only Renaissance poet to apply the concept of eyes having connections to souls to textual content. Poets throughout history, from Arabic poets to those in the Renaissance, have used the common belief of the ‘eye-beams’ of lovers making a physical, yet unseen, connection to discuss love (Gross 63). In “The Extasie,” Donne writes about this unusual belief to explain the connection that is forged between both his speaker and the beloved’s souls (“our eye-beames twisted, and did thred / our eyes, upon one double string”). The repetition of “our eye” and “our eyes,” here in lines six and seven, is strategically placed so that the phrases are aligned vertically within the poem. This not only places the speaker’s and the beloved’s eyes closer in the text, but provides a visual connection between the “eyes” for the reader to observe. The relationship between the “eyes” which exists on the page mirrors the metaphysical one that is being formed between the speaker’s soul and his beloved’s. As the speaker continues on throughout “The Extasie,” he repeatedly discusses ways in which he and the beloved are becoming one soul. Repetition frequently denotes persuasion, and in “The Extasie,” there is no exception. In line 15, the speaker first mentions his and the beloved’s souls, but refers to them as “our soules;” by the time the speaker has reached line 45, he speaks of them as one “new soule” as though they are mixed (Matsuura 50). This progression reinforces the connection between the speaker and the beloved until it acts as this subtle vessel of persuasion aimed at convincing the beloved that, because their ‘eye-beams’ have connected in a love-at-first-sight fashion, their souls have already been connected.

The linking of the lover and the beloved’s souls, however, is not just a love connection, but the self’s connection to God (Selleck 60). The link to God arises in “The Extasie” in the form of the sin the two will commit by engaging in a sexual relationship. Though it seems quite the contrary, the “nakedness, promiscuity, and all manner of

interpersonal exchanges produce interpenetrated... selves," or as the speaker calls it in line 42: "interinanimat[ed]" (Selleck 60). This 'interinanimated' self that is created from the lovers works to create a barrier of sin around them, one that can be broken down in order to seek the salvation that follows the inevitable acts. Therefore, the speaker is essentially laying out a request, rationalized with religion, for consummation of the relationship. The connection of the souls in "The Extasie" will "by a flaming love emerge their purified souls to be eternally united and glorified in heaven" (Matsuura 66). The image of 'flaming love' emerging mirrors that of the motif of the Phoenix rising from the ashes, as if to say that love will conquer when the souls of lovers have become one unified body of transgression. The sin that occurs when sexual acts are committed is necessary for a pure rebirth and ascension into heaven.

The brazen juxtaposition of religious themes and romance/eroticism is slightly underscored in "The Extasie," leaving room for interpretation on the reader's part. Donne's sonnet 14, however, does no such thing. Sonnet 14 includes a speaker that yearns deeply for a connection with God, quite like the speaker from "The Extasie," though in sonnet 14 he is speaking directly rather than through a beloved. The very first phrase in the first line of sonnet 14 is an incredibly abrupt demand that immediately elicits a violent tone in the sonnet ("Batter my heart"), and is quickly followed by the unexpected addressee: "three-person'd God." The proximity of violence and God in this line is so shocking that the next immediately goes into listing out action words that connote positive, even gentle, acts ("breathe, shine, and seek to mend") as though they are meant to offset the ferocity that comes along with "batter." The succession only briefly holds into line three before the speaker is again cut down violently and abruptly pushed to the fourth line by the words "o'erthrow" and "bend." This trend continues until the end of the sonnet – a struggle, apparent both on paper and in content, between redemption and punishment.

This struggle that arises for the speaker in sonnet 14 begins and ends in a very specific kind of violence. As seen in "The Extasie," Donne's speakers tend to place a vast amount of importance on sexuality as a way of freeing the self from sin. In line 10 of sonnet 14, the speaker admits his transgressions to God ("But am betroth'd unto your enemy"), and begs of him to "break that knot" that binds him to evil. The amount of caesuras that occur in lines 11 through 14 make them rather choppy to read, as though the speaker is in such a hurry to reach the end of the poem that he cannot slow down enough to finish a complete thought. The recurrent image of man's sin being chipped away at appears here, and so does the eroticism shortly after, in the final couplet: "except you enthrall me... except you ravish me." The request of the speaker is to engage in intimate and erotic acts with God, because "penetration" by Him is "sacred eroticism," thereby becoming essential and desired (Selleck 84). The sexual penetration that both of the speakers are begging for in these two texts is indeed shocking, but also the only way the speakers feel they can achieve the intimacy with God that they desire. Alas, as seen in "The Extasie," this is what is necessary for ascension into heaven. "The heart gallants around in sin," therefore it is necessary for sin to occur and have to be broken down by God to procure a pure soul (Sullivan 189). The motif of the Phoenix can be applied here again, though there is not passionate love between people. This vastly intimate relationship the speaker seeks with God will ultimately result in the same fate, though. The speaker's sins that have been broken away by the eroticism with God will provide a

foundation for the redeemed soul to emerge from. The connections (forged physically through intercourse, and metaphysically through souls) that make man eligible for entry into heaven are grounds for consummation.

While sexuality is of dire importance for salvation in both “The Extasie” and sonnet 14, it is not as prevalent in Donne’s work “The Canonization,” as is the overarching concept of love. “Love” is a word that is truly hard to ignore in this poem because it is positioned at the end of the first and last lines of all five stanzas. Repetition is used here to reinforce the significance of, not only the word itself, but the everlasting meaning behind it. Each stanza is encased in love, causing the entire poem to be as well. In the second stanza, the speaker asks a series of rhetorical questions that work to defend the love he shares with his beloved, placing love’s importance well above all other worldly affairs (Matsuura 65). This love that the speaker talks of is so important that it, in line 23, provides the “phoenix riddle [with] more wit.” Because the couple has loved one another so well, and presumably consummated their relationship, they have become one, un-gendered soul like the Phoenix, and will rise again out of the ashes of their sacred love into heaven (Matsuura 66). Beginning at line 28, the speaker continues on to say that even if he and the beloved cannot live in love, they will die in love. In lines 29 and 30, the words “hearse” and “verse” are paired as an end-rhyme, signaling that the “hearse” the speaker and his lover will travel to death in will be in the form of words (or the “verse”) of poetry, thereby making their love fit to be eternalized.

Donne, as a religious man, was undoubtedly interested in the connection between the body and the soul. He equated them on a level that asserted that the “separation of the body and soul was an unnatural division of the self” (Targoff 1493). Therefore, in all of his writings, Donne’s speakers encompass both their bodies and their souls. This is why the physical connections (the consummation of a romantic relationship in “The Extasie” and the rape by God in sonnet 14) that lead Donne’s speakers to redemption are so vividly elaborated on. Moreover, the metaphysical and spiritual connections (the meeting of ‘eye-beams’ in “The Extasie” and the encasing love in “The Canonization”) are also perceived as essential to the speaker’s salvation. When it comes to the body and the soul, one cannot exist without the other. Although men are capable and able of defacing their bodies and souls, they can also work to regain purity in the ways mentioned previously (Matsuura 47). Because souls are often mixed (in the case of lovers), redemption is not so hard to achieve through physical and metaphysical relationships and connections. The preservation of these ideals is strengthened as they are put into words on a page. Donne’s poetry becomes a sacred representation that works to encompass the equal significances of the speakers and their souls.

Using images of eroticism, romance, and even the immortalization of the Phoenix, Donne creates speakers that embody the ideas of body and soul, both of which carry equal importance. Donne connects these images to themes of religion in seemingly unorthodox ways, but succeeds in creating poetic personas that fit them entirely. The textual representations and verses used to encase these ideas would not exist if ideas of sin had not created them, just as salvation and entry to a glorious afterlife would not exist for man.

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