

Poem Assignment: Analyzing Conceit and Allusion

1.

Read and annotate the following poem, and answer the questions that follow.

“From Amoretti—Sonnet 15”

By Edmund Spenser

Ye tradefull Merchants, that with weary toyle,
Do seeke most precious things to make your gain,
And both the Indias of their treasure spoile,
What needeth you to seeke so farre in vaine?
For loe, my love doth in her selfe containe,
All this world's riches that may farre be found:
If saphyres, loe her eies be saphyres plaine;
If rubies, loe her lips be rubies sound;
If pearles hit teeth be pearles both pre and round;
If yvorie, her forehead ivory weene;
If gold, her locks are finest gold on ground;
If silver, her faire hands are silver sheene:
But that which fairest is but few behold:--
Her mind, adorn's with vertues manifold.

Questions:

1. To whom is the poet addressing his remarks? Hint: Focus on the first four lines.
2. Why should the poet select this particular audience?
3. What do the phrases “weary toyle” and “in vaine” suggest about the poet’s audience or their activities?
4. How are the metaphors in lines 7-12 connected?
5. How does the conclusion continue the theme of treasure? How does it change the theme?
6. What new questions does the conclusion raise about the merchants’ quest for precious things?

2.

Read and annotate the following poem, and answer the questions that go with it.

“Sonnet 18”

By William Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And every fair from fair sometimes declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,

Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines no time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Questions:

1. By means of what comparisons does Shakespeare achieve this movement from tangible to intangible?
2. Trace the poet's logic to show how he arrived at the moment in question 1.
3. Compare and contrast this poem to *Sonnet 15* by Spenser. How are they the same? How are they different?

3.

Read and annotate the following poem, and answer the question that accompanies it.

**"The Sun Rising"
By John Donne**

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

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

She is all states, and all princes, I,
Nothing else is.
Princes do but play us; compared to this,
All honor's mimic, all wealth alchemy.
Thou, sun, art half as happy as we,
In that the world's contracted thus;
Thine age asks ease, and since thy duties be
To warm the world, that's done in warming us.

Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere;
This bed thy center is, these walls thy sphere.

Question:

Here again earthly riches are equated with the beauty of a woman and then devalued by it, as time gives way to timelessness. How does Donne's treatment of these conceits differ from those of Shakespeare and Spenser? How is it the same?