

Question One

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

In the following poem a lover invites his beloved Chlora—and the reader—on a figurative “tour” of a gallery devoted to artistic renderings of her image. Read the following poem carefully. Then, in a well-organized essay, discuss what the sequence of images and the manner in which they are described reveal about the complexity of the speaker’s relationship with Chlora. In your essay you may wish to consider such things as imagery, choice of detail and figurative language.

The Gallery

- CHLORA, come view my soul, and tell
Whether I have contrived it well:
Now all its several lodgings lie,
Composed into one gallery.
(5) And the great arras-hangings,¹ made
Of various facings, by are laid,
That, for all furniture, you’ll find
Only your picture in my mind.
- (10) Here art thou painted in the dress
Of an inhuman murderess;
Examining upon our hearts,
(Thy fertile shop of cruel arts,)
Engines more keen than ever yet
Adorned tyrant’s cabinet,
(15) Of which the most tormenting are,
Black eyes, red lips, and curled hair.
- But, on the other side, thou’rt drawn,
Like to Aurora² in the dawn;
When in the east she slumbering lies,
(20) And stretches out her milky thighs,
While all the morning quire does sing,
And manna falls and roses spring,
And, at thy feet, the wooing doves
Sit perfecting their harmless loves.
- (25) Like an enchantress here thou show’st,
Vexing thy restless lover’s ghost;
And, by a light obscure, dost rave
Over his entrails, in the cave,
Divining thence, with horrid care,
(30) How long thou shalt continue fair;
And (when informed) them throw’st away
To be the greedy vulture’s prey.
- But against that, thou sitt’st afloat,
Like VENUS³ in her pearly boat;
(35) The halcyons, calming all that’s nigh,
Betwixt the air and water fly;
Or, if some rolling wave appears,
A mass of ambergris⁴ it bears,
Nor blows more wind than what may well
(40) Convoy the perfume to the smell.
- These pictures, and a thousand more,
Of thee, my gallery doth store,
In all the forms thou canst invent,
Either to please me, or torment;
(45) For thou alone, to people me,
Art grown a numerous colony,
And a collection choicer far
Than or Whitehall’s, or Mantua’s⁵ were.
- But of these pictures, and the rest,
(50) That at the entrance likes me best,
Where the same posture and the look
Remains with which I first was took;
A tender shepherdess, whose hair
Hangs loosely playing in the air,
(55) Transplanting flowers from the green hill,
To crown her head and bosom fill.
- Andrew Marvell

¹ draperies

² Roman goddess of the dawn

³ Roman goddess traditionally associated with love, beauty and fertility

⁴ a waxy substance of pleasant fragrance

⁵ highly decorative palatial residences

Précis and Explication of Free-Response Question One: Andrew Marvell's "The Gallery"

The work of the 17th century metaphysical poet Andrew Marvell, "The Gallery" features the use of an elaborate conceit such as characterized the poetry of the time. Though the title calls to mind the traditional gallery of a museum, the gallery in the poem is an internal one, a series of chambers in the speaker's soul that have been devoted to various depictions of his beloved, Chlora, whom he invites to tour the gallery in the poem's opening line. As he proceeds to guide his beloved on this gallery tour, he draws back the "great arras-hangings" (line 5) that hide each masterpiece, pointing out to her that "for all furniture, [she'll] find / Only [her] picture in [his] mind" (lines 7-8). Thus, the gallery becomes a symbol of his perpetual and singular devotion to Chlora and his guided tour an attempt to impress her.

In the second through fifth stanzas the speaker begins to reveal the various portraits in the gallery. In the first his beloved Chlora is adorned in the guise of an "inhuman murderess" (line 10) whose "Engines" (the weapons of physical—and sensual—beauty: eyes, lips, hair) are "more keen than ever" (line 13) and employed in torturing her admirers' hearts. Directly across from this representation, however, she appears as Aurora, goddess of the dawn, sprawling innocently among symbols of love ("wooing doves") and spring ("roses") that are set about her "milky thighs" (line 20) while the "morning quire" (line 21) of songbirds serenades her beauteous presence. The diction in this stanza—"quire" (line 21), "manna" (line 22), and "doves" (line 23)—connotes spirituality, suggesting an Edenic heavenly bliss despite its classical allusion. The emphasis on whiteness, evident in "milky thighs," "manna" and "doves," also connotes virginity. In yet another representation Chlora is depicted as an "enchantress... / Vexing [her] lover's restless ghost" (lines 25-26) through some secret ritual over his entrails in a Sibyl-like cave. Said to be "Divining thence, with horrid care, / How long [she will] continue fair" (lines 29-30), she comes across as a mad prophetess who peers into his entrails like the wicked step-mother in *Snow White* peering into her mirror. This and the fact that she tosses his entrails away to the "greedy vulture" (line 32) depicts her as self-centered and callous, the least appealing image yet. Yet, contrary to this, she is depicted across the gallery as Venus, the goddess of love, afloat in a "pearly boat" (line 34) and bringing a fragrant tranquility to all creatures in the sea or in the air. These portraits number four, yet the speaker claims in lines 41-48 of the sixth stanza that he has

These pictures, and a thousand more,
In all the forms thou canst invent,
Either to please me or torment;
For thou alone, to people me,
Art grown a numerous colony,
And a collection choicer far
Than or Whitehall's, or Mantua's were.

This seems intended to suggest that he has been smitten so powerfully by Chlora that he has created a "colony" of her impressions whose excellence supersedes the fabled art collections in palaces in London and in Mantua, a city in Northern Italy.

In the seventh and final stanza the speaker reveals that of all the portraits in the gallery, he fancies the one at the entrance best because "...the same posture and the look / Remains with which [he] first was took" (lines 51-52). Seen in this depiction as "A tender shepherdess, whose hair / Hangs loosely playing in the air, / Transplanting flowers from the green hill, / To crown her head and bosom fill" (lines 53-56), Chlora is endowed with the simplicity and innocence of nature. This natural association seems to imply that the Chlora the speaker prefers is "natural," neither adorned by lipstick and other embellishments, nor

assuming the role of the harsh or indifferent mistress. This image, naturally adorned with grass and flowers, is the one which captured the speaker's heart and the one which his "soul" treasures the most.

Though the soul can undoubtedly have spiritual connotations (see Marvell's own "A Dialogue between the Soul and Body"), it can have more common meanings as well. For example, in Emily Dickinson's "The Soul Selects Her Own Society," it can mean the individual (pun on "sole") as well as the spiritual essence of a person. In "The Gallery," the soul seems to stand for the speaker's being, the interior self he has so devoted to her worship. His request to Chlora to "come view [his] soul" is, on the metaphorical level, a tour of the gallery, but on a literal one, a request for her to appreciate the extent to which he adores her being. And though she at times seems part-*femme fatale*, part-virgin, part-sorceress and part-unapproachable goddess, the image of her that is most true to his core is the least adorned and most natural one.

Scoring Guide for Free-Response Question One: Andrew Marvell’s “The Gallery”

- 8-9 Well-conceived, well-developed, and well-organized, these papers are marked by frequent and accurate references to the text, by an admirable ability to synthesize thought, and by a mature control over the elements of composition. Though not perfect, they clearly indicate the students’ ability to discuss what the sequence of images and the manner in which he describes them reveal about the complexity of the speaker’s relationship with Chlora, as well as how such things as imagery, choice of detail and figurative language help convey that complexity.
- 6-7 These essays exhibit a solid understanding of what the sequence of images and the manner in which they are described reveal about the speaker’s relationship with Chlora, but are less adept at articulating the complexity of the relationship. This may be due to inconsistencies in textual understanding, or to a lesser facility with identifying and discussing imagery, choice of detail and figurative language. Though these essays reflect their writers’ abilities to convey their points clearly, they feature less fluency, less development and less cogency than 8-9 papers.
- 5 These papers respond to the question about the complexity of the speaker’s relationship with Chlora and how the aforementioned literary elements help convey that complexity in superficial, formulaic, inconsistent, or insufficiently supported ways. They may rely primarily on paraphrase, but may still convey an implicit understanding of the passage and the task. The papers are generally written in a satisfactory manner, with occasional errors in composition or mechanics that do not impede the reader’s understanding. Nevertheless, these essays lack the organization, persuasiveness and development of upper-half papers.
- 3-4 These lower-half essays generally suggest an incomplete or overly simplistic understanding of the passage or of the task, an inability to recognize the complexity of the speaker’s relationship to his beloved Chlora, or an inability to recognize or comment upon the literary elements in the passage. Their arguments are often characterized by a misreading of the text, a failure to provide adequate support, or insufficient control over the elements of composition. In some instances they may consist entirely of paraphrase and/or feature acute problems in organization, clarity, fluency or development.
- 1-2 These essays compound the shortcomings of 3-4 papers. They often contain many serious and distracting errors in grammar or mechanics that preclude any successful response to the prompt. Though these essays may attempt to say something about the speaker’s relationship to Chlora, they are severely limited by deficiencies in organization, clarity, fluency or development.
- 0 Papers scored a zero make no more than a passing reference to the task.
- Papers given this score offer a blank or totally off-topic response.