

RSE #2: Close Reading

English 200: Science/Fiction, Spring 2020

In this assignment, we will cooperatively close read one of Hester Pulter's poems and produce a series of glosses (annotations or explanations) that clarify various aspects of the poem. The goal of this assignment is to develop your basic tools for research in literary studies, while also introducing you to the process of scholarly editing.

Instructions:

Step One: Navigate to the Pulter Project website (<https://pulterproject.northwestern.edu>). Click on "Poems," then open the edition for Poem 1: "The Eclipse." Use the buttons at the top of the page to switch to the **Amplified** view.

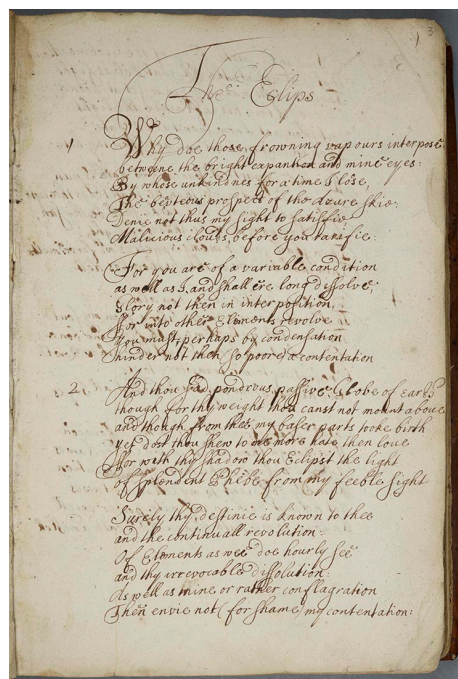
Review "The Eclipse" carefully. As you read, try clicking on the words in boxes and scanning the textual notes. You will notice two types of notes: "**gloss notes**," which clarify difficult words, and "**critical notes**," which are generally longer explanations of complex concepts. Make sure to read the notes for "rarefy," "dissolve," and "revolve" (all in section 1), as these will give you a sense of how these glosses function.

Ask yourself: how do the notes contribute to your understanding of the poem? What types of glosses do you find the most helpful? Do these notes give you enough information to draw your own conclusions about the poem? Please be prepared to explain your answers to these questions in class.

Step Two: We will be working with a poem that has not yet been edited on the Pulter Project website, "Heliotropians." I have uploaded a copy of this poem at the following link: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BKAI7znYu_RPMISag-8chNX25LbWVqV_WmlgEKvJkA4/edit?usp=sharing. You will need to be signed into your Penn account to access this.

You will each be responsible for **3 notes** on the poem, although you are free to supply more:

1. One of your notes should be a "gloss note," or a brief clarification of a term that you find difficult or surprising. Please use the Oxford English Dictionary to find (a) common definition(s) at the time when Pulter was writing.
2. Two of your notes must be more substantive "critical notes," such as: explanations of key metaphors, details about the historical context, elaborations on how a particular term is being used in the poem, or references to parallel uses of a word/phrase elsewhere in the poem (or in other poems by Pulter).



Manuscript copy of "The Eclipse[e]".

Add your glosses by highlighting the text that you wish to annotate and clicking the “Add Comment” icon (a plus sign in a speech bubble, accessible from the top menu bar or the Insert menu). Make sure that you are signed into your account when you do this, so that I can evaluate your contributions. Please pay attention to your peers’ comments and avoid repeating glosses added by other students.

Deadline and Evaluation:

Please complete your initial annotations before our class on **February 3rd**, when we will be discussing your experiences with this assignment. I will evaluate your annotations will based on their accuracy, clarity, and strategic use of the OED.