**Close reading grid for the *Prologue***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Quotation** | **Context within the poem** | **Significance and stylistic analysis** |
| 1 | “Now wherewith shold he make his paiement,  If he ne used his sely instrument?” | Lines 131-132.  The wife is arguing for the logic of sex as a biological necessity, given that humans have been given the tools to reproduce. | The force of the wife’s argument and her bold nature with its desire to challenge and debate can be seen in the way she frames her argument using rhetorical questions. It’s also interesting that she uses a language of finance to talk about the sexual act, with the husband making a sexual “paiement” in order to discharge his marital “dette” – again showing that the wife can have a very materialistic and hard-headed view of marriage as a financial contract. She also speaks euphemistically of the male sexual organ by calling it an “instrument” and rather demeans male sexuality by calling it “sely” (‘silly’). |
| 2 | “And if that she be foul, thou seist that she  Coveiteth every man that she may se,  For as a spaniel she wol on him lepe,…” |  |  |
| 3 | “For certes, I am al Venerien  In feeling, and myn herte is Marcien.” |  |  |
| 4 | “This joly clerk, Jankin, that was so hende,  Hath weded wededme with greet solempnitee” |  |  |
| 5 | “Who wolde wene, or who wolde suppose,  The wo that in my herte was, and pine?” |  |  |
| 6 | “Ande neer he cam, and kneled faire adoun…” |  |  |
| 7 | “Lo, here, the wise king, daun Salomon;  I trowe he hadde wives mo than oon.” |  |  |
| 8 | “For hadde Godde commanded maidenhead,  Than hadde he dampned wedding with the dede.” |  |  |
| 9 | “I swoor that al my walking out by nighte  Was for t’espie wenches that he dighte” |  |  |
| 10 | “How koude I daunce to an harpe smale,  And singe, ywis, as any nightingale” |  |  |
| 11 | “They wolde han writen of men moore wikkednesse  Than al the mark of Adam may redresse.” |  |  |
| 12 | “Tho redde he me how Sampson loste his heres;  Slepinge, his lemman kitte it with hir sheres” |  |  |
| 13 | “He knew of hem mo legends and lives  Than been of goode wives in the Bible” |  |  |
| 14 | “He yaf me al the bridel in myn hond,  To han the governance of hous and lond” |  |  |
| 15 | “God helpe me so, I was to him as kinde  As any wyf from Denmark unto Inde,” |  |  |
| 16 | “Thou comest hoom as drunken as a mous,  And prechest on thy bench, with ivel preef!” |  |  |
| 17 | “Sire olde kaynard, is this thyn array?  Why is my neighebores wyf so gay? |  |  |
| 18 | “Thow seist that dropping houses, and eek smoke,  And chiding wives maken men to flee” |  |  |
| 19 | “And everich hath of God a proper yifte,  Som this, som that, as him liketh shifte.” |  |  |
| 20 | “But sith I hadde hem hooly in myn hond,  And sith they had me yeven al hir lond.” |  |  |
| 21 | “Lo, here expres of woman may ye find,  That woman was the los of al makind”. |  |  |
| 22 | “Why that I rente out of his book a leef,  For which he smoot me so that I was deef.” |  |  |
| 23 | “But evere folwede myn appetite,  Al were he short, or long, or blak, or whit” |  |  |
| 24 | Yet have I Martes mark upon my face,  And also in another privee place.” |  |  |