

ADVANCED READING

PASSAGE 1

The labour force is often organized as if workers had no family responsibilities. Preschool-age children need full-time care; children in primary school need care after school and during school vacations. Although day-care services can resolve some scheduling conflicts between home and office, workers cannot always find or afford suitable care. Even when they obtain such care, parents must still cope with emergencies, such as illnesses, that keep children at home. Moreover, children need more than tending; they also need meaningful time with their parents. Conventional full-time workdays, especially when combined with unavoidable household duties, are too inflexible for parents with primary child-care responsibilities. Although a small but increasing number of working men are single parents, those barriers against successful participation in the labour market that are related to primary child-care responsibilities mainly disadvantage women. Even in families where both parents work, cultural pressures are traditionally much greater on mothers than on fathers to bear the primary child-rearing responsibilities. In reconciling child-rearing responsibilities with participation in the labour market, many working mothers are forced to make compromises. For example, approximately one-third of all working mothers are employed only part-time, even though part-time jobs are dramatically underpaid and often less desirable in comparison to full-time employment. Even though part-time work is usually available only in occupations offering minimal employee responsibility and little opportunity for advancement or self-enrichment, such employment does allow many women the time and flexibility to fulfil their family duties, but only at the expense of the advantages associated with full-time employment. Moreover, even mothers with full-time employment must compromise opportunities in order to adjust to barriers against parents in the labour market. Many choose jobs entailing little challenge or responsibility or those offering flexible scheduling, often available only in poorly paid positions, while other working mothers, although willing and able to assume as much responsibility as people without children, find that their need to spend regular and predictable time with their children inevitably causes them to lose career opportunities to those without such demands. Thus, women in education are more likely to become teachers than school administrators, whose more conventional full-time work schedules do not correspond to the schedules of school-age children, while female lawyers are more likely to practice law in trusts and estates, where they can control their work schedules, than in litigation, where they cannot. Nonprofessional women are concentrated in secretarial work and department store sales, where their absences can be covered easily by substitutes and where they can enter and leave the workforce with little loss since the jobs offer so little personal gain. Indeed, as long as the labour market remains hostile to parents, and family roles continue to be allocated on the basis of gender, women will be seriously disadvantaged in that labour market.

PASSAGE 2

Critics have long been puzzled by the inner contradictions of major characters in John Webster's tragedies. In his *The Duchess of Malfi*, for instance, the Duchess is "good" in demonstrating the obvious tenderness and sincerity of her love for Antonio, but "bad" in ignoring the wishes and welfare of her family and in making religion a "cloak" hiding worldly self-indulgence. Bosola is "bad" in serving Ferdinand, "good" in turning the Duchess' thoughts toward heaven and in planning to avenge her murder. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle implied that such contradictions are virtually essential to the tragic personality, and yet critics keep coming back to this element of inconsistency as though it were an eccentric feature of Webster's own tragic vision. The problem is that, as an Elizabethan playwright, Webster has become a prisoner of our critical presuppositions. We have, in recent years, been dazzled by the way the earlier Renaissance and medieval theater, particularly the morality play, illuminates Elizabethan drama. We now understand how the habit of mind that saw the world as a battleground between good and evil produced the morality play. Morality plays allegorized that conflict by presenting characters whose actions were defined as the embodiment of good or evil. This model of reality lived on, overlaid by different conventions, in the most sophisticated Elizabethan works of the following age. Yet Webster seems not to have been as heavily influenced by the morality play's model of reality as were his Elizabethan contemporaries; he was apparently more sensitive to the more morally complicated Italian drama than to these English sources. Consequently, his characters cannot be evaluated according to reductive formulas of good and evil, which is precisely what modern critics have tried to do. They choose what seem to be the most promising of the contradictor values that are dramatized in the play, and treat those values as if they were the only basis for analyzing the moral development of the play's major characters, attributing the inconsistencies in a character's behavior to artistic incompetence on Webster's part. The lack of consistency in Webster's characters can be better understood if we recognize that the ambiguity at the heart of his tragic vision lies not in the external world but in the duality of human nature. Webster establishes tension in his plays by setting up conflicting systems of value that appear immoral only when one value system is viewed exclusively from the perspective of the other. He presents us not only with characters that we condemn intellectually or ethically and at the same time impulsively approve of, but also with judgments we must accept as logically sound and yet find emotionally repulsive. The dilemma is not only dramatic: it is tragic, because the conflict is irreconcilable, and because it is ours as much as that of the characters.

PASSAGE 3

Cultivation of a single crop on a given tract of land leads eventually to decreased yields. One reason for this is that harmful bacterial phytopathogens, organisms parasitic on plant hosts, increase in the soil surrounding plant roots. The problem can be cured by crop rotation, denying the pathogens a suitable host for a period of time. However, even if crops are not rotated, the severity of diseases brought on by such phytopathogens often decreases after a number of years as the microbial population of the soil changes and the soil becomes “suppressive” to those diseases. While there may be many reasons for this phenomenon, it is clear that levels of certain bacteria, such as *Pseudomonas fluorescens*, a bacterium antagonistic to a number of harmful phytopathogens, are greater in suppressive than in non-suppressive soil. This suggests that the presence of such bacteria suppresses phytopathogens. There is now considerable experimental support for this view. Wheat yield increases of 27 percent have been obtained in field trials by treatment of wheat seeds with fluorescent pseudomonads. Similar treatment of sugar beets, cotton, and potatoes has had similar results. These improvements in crop yields through the application of *Pseudomonas fluorescens* suggest that agriculture could benefit from the use of bacteria genetically altered for specific purposes. For example, a form of phytopathogen altered to remove its harmful properties could be released into the environment in quantities favourable to its competing with and eventually excluding the harmful normal strain. Some experiments suggest that deliberately releasing altered nonpathogenic *Pseudomonas syringae* could crowd out the nonaltered variety that causes frost damage. Opponents of such research have objected that the deliberate and large-scale release of genetically altered bacteria might have deleterious results. Proponents, on the other hand, argue that this particular strain is altered only by the removal of the gene responsible for the strain’s propensity to cause frost damage, thereby rendering it safer than the phytopathogen from which it was derived. Some proponents have gone further and suggest that genetic alteration techniques could create organisms with totally new combinations of desirable traits not found in nature. For example, genes responsible for the production of insecticidal compounds have been transposed from other bacteria into pseudomonads that colonize corn roots. Experiments of this kind are difficult and require great care: such bacteria are developed in highly artificial environments and may not compete well with natural soil bacteria. Nevertheless, proponents contend that the prospects for improved agriculture through such methods seem excellent. These prospects lead many to hope that current efforts to assess the risks of the deliberate release of altered microorganisms will successfully answer the concerns of opponents and create a climate in which such research can go forward without undue impediment.

PASSAGE 4

In 1887 the Dawes Act legislated wide-scale private ownership of reservation lands in the United States for Native Americans. The act allotted plots of 80 acres to each Native American adult. However, the Native Americans were not granted outright title to their lands. The act defined each grant as a “trust patent,” meaning that the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the governmental agency in charge of administering policy regarding Native Americans, would hold the allotted land in trust for 25 years, during which time the Native American owners could use, but not alienate (sell) the land. After the 25-year period, the Native American allottee would receive a “fee patent” awarding full legal ownership of the land. Two main reasons were advanced for the restriction on the Native Americans’ ability to sell their lands. First, it was claimed that free alienability would lead to the immediate transfer of large amounts of former reservation land to non-Native Americans, consequently threatening the traditional way of life on those reservations. A second objection to free alienation was that Native Americans were unaccustomed to, and did not desire, a system of private land ownership. Their custom, it was said, favoured communal use of land. However, both of these arguments bear only on the transfer of Native American lands to non-Native Americans: neither offers a reason for prohibiting Native Americans from transferring land among themselves. Selling land to each other would not threaten the Native American culture. Additionally, if communal land use remained preferable to Native Americans after allotment, free alienability would have allowed allottees to sell their lands back to the tribe. When stated rationales for government policies prove empty, using an interest-group model often provides an explanation. While neither Native Americans nor the potential non-Native American purchasers benefited from the restraint on alienation contained in the Dawes Act, one clearly defined group did benefit: the BIA bureaucrats. It has been convincingly demonstrated that bureaucrats seek to maximize the size of their staff and their budgets in order to compensate for the lack of other sources of fulfilment, such as power and prestige. Additionally, politicians tend to favour the growth of governmental bureaucracy because such growth provides increased opportunities for the exercise of political patronage. The restraint on alienation vastly increased the amount of work, and hence the budgets, necessary to implement the statute. Until allotment was ended in 1934, granting fee patents and leasing Native American lands were among the principal activities of the United States government. One hypothesis, then, for the temporary restriction on alienation in the Dawes Act is that it reflected a compromise between non-Native Americans favouring immediate alienability so they could purchase land and the BIA bureaucrats who administered the privatization system.