

# British Literature : Poetry and Play PYQ 2022

## SET A

**Q1. Explain and comment on the following lines with reference to the context:**

**Not so," (quod I) "let baser things devise**

**To die in dust, but you shall live by fame:**

**My verse your vertues rare shall eternize,**

**And in the heavens write your glorious name.**

Ans1 These lines are from the poem "Sonnet 81" by Edmund Spenser, which is part of his larger work, "Amoretti." In this sonnet, the speaker is addressing his beloved and expressing the idea that they will not be forgotten after they die, unlike other things that decay and turn to dust.

The speaker first says "Not so," which suggests that there is a commonly held belief that everything eventually dies and turns to dust. However, he disagrees with this idea and goes on to say, "let baser things devise / To die in dust." Here, he is saying that ordinary and insignificant things may accept their fate of being forgotten and decaying into dust, but not his beloved.

Instead, the speaker asserts that his verse, or his poetry, will immortalize his beloved's "vertues rare" and write her "glorious name" in the heavens. In other words, his poetry will preserve her memory and ensure that she is remembered long after her physical body has passed away.

Overall, these lines express the idea that love can transcend time and death, and that the speaker's poetry will ensure that his beloved's memory lives on forever.

**Q2. Discuss Milton's use of the Parable of the Talents in the sonnet 'On his Blindness'**

Ans2 In his sonnet 'On His Blindness,' John Milton alludes to the biblical Parable of the Talents from the Gospel of Matthew. The parable tells the story of a master who distributes his wealth among his servants and goes away on a journey. To one servant, he gives five talents, to another two, and to another one. Upon his return, he asks each servant what they have done with the talents they were given. The servant who was given five talents had doubled them, as had the servant who was given two. But the servant who was given one talent had buried it in the ground, and the master rebukes him for not using what he was given.

Milton's use of the Parable of the Talents in 'On His Blindness' serves as a metaphor for his own blindness and his struggle with his faith. In the poem, Milton questions whether God expects him to use his talents and abilities even though he has lost his sight. He wonders if his blindness prevents him from serving God and fulfilling his purpose in life.

The opening lines of the sonnet, "When I consider how my light is spent / Ere half my days in this dark world and wide," reflect Milton's frustration and despair over his blindness. He feels that his talents and abilities are being wasted and that he cannot serve God as he once did. The lines, "Doth

God exact day-labour, light denied?" suggest that Milton feels he is being asked to work without the necessary tools, and that his blindness makes it impossible for him to fulfill his duties.

However, as the sonnet progresses, Milton comes to the realization that God does not require him to use his physical sight in order to serve him. He realizes that his spiritual vision can be just as powerful and effective as his physical sight. The lines, "They also serve who only stand and wait," suggest that Milton has come to terms with his blindness and has accepted that he can still serve God through his writing and poetry.

Overall, Milton's use of the Parable of the Talents in 'On His Blindness' reflects his struggle with his faith and his acceptance of his blindness as part of God's plan. The poem serves as a powerful reflection on the nature of disability and the role of faith in times of struggle and adversity.

**Q3. Explain and comment on the following lines with reference to the context:**

**Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?**

**Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,-**

**While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,**

**And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;**

Ans3 These lines are from John Keats' poem "To Autumn." The speaker is reflecting on the changing of seasons from summer to autumn and questioning the absence of the songs that typically accompany springtime. However, the speaker quickly reassures himself or perhaps someone else not to dwell on the missing spring songs because there is still music to be found in the present moment.

The following lines, "While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day, And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue," depict the natural beauty of autumn. "Barred clouds" are clouds that have a pattern resembling bars or stripes, and the phrase "bloom the soft-dying day" suggests that even as the day comes to a close, it still possesses a gentle beauty. The "rosy hue" refers to the pinkish-orange glow that spreads across the fields after the sun has set, creating a serene atmosphere.

Overall, these lines serve to remind us to appreciate the present moment and find beauty in the changing of seasons, even if it means letting go of the past.

**Q4. Explain and comment on the following lines' with reference to the context:**

**Them seated on a three-legg'd chair,**

**Takes o f f her artificial hair:**

**Now, picking out a crystal eye,**

**She wipes it clean and lays it by.**

Ans4 These lines are a part of a satirical poem that pokes fun at the vanity and superficiality of certain women of the time. The lines describe a woman who is sitting on a three-legged chair, which is likely a reference to a makeup stool or vanity. The woman is taking off her artificial hair, indicating that she is wearing a wig, which was a common accessory for women of the time.

The next line, "Now, picking out a crystal eye," suggests that the woman is also wearing an artificial eye, likely a glass eye. The fact that it is described as a "crystal eye" adds to the satirical tone of the poem, as it suggests that the woman is trying to create an illusion of beauty and perfection that is not natural.

The final line, "She wipes it clean and lays it by," indicates that the woman is taking care of her artificial eye, which reinforces the idea that she values her appearance above all else. Overall, these lines highlight the idea that some women of the time were more concerned with their appearance and the image they presented to others than with their inner qualities or character.

**Q5. Write a short note on the following topic:**

**The relationship between Desdemona and her father in Othello**

Ans5 In Shakespeare's play Othello, the relationship between Desdemona and her father, Brabantio, is initially shown to be one of love and respect. Desdemona is depicted as a dutiful daughter who is concerned about her father's welfare and seeks his approval. However, their relationship becomes strained after Desdemona marries Othello, a man of a different race and social status, without her father's consent.

Brabantio feels betrayed by his daughter's decision and accuses Othello of using magic to seduce her. He also implies that Desdemona has been disloyal to him by marrying someone without his approval. This shows a patriarchal attitude towards women and their agency in choosing their own partners.

Despite this initial conflict, Desdemona continues to show love and respect towards her father, even though he disowns her. She asks for his blessing before her death, but he refuses to give it, further emphasizing his disapproval of her choices.

Overall, the relationship between Desdemona and her father highlights the conflict between traditional values and the desire for individual freedom and choice. It also shows the impact of societal norms and expectations on personal relationships and how they can cause rifts between family members.

**Q6. Discuss the use of hyperbole and poetic conceit in the prescribed poem by Donne.**

Ans6 John Donne was a master of using hyperbole and poetic conceit in his poetry. In the prescribed poem "The Flea," Donne employs both of these literary devices to create a witty and unconventional poem about love.

Hyperbole is the use of exaggeration to emphasize a point or to create a vivid image. In "The Flea," Donne uses hyperbole to describe the significance of a flea that has bitten both him and his lover. He compares the flea to a temple, a marriage bed, and a beast that has mingled their blood. These comparisons are exaggerated to the point of absurdity, but they serve to underline the intensity of the lovers' feelings for each other.

Poetic conceit, also known as a conceit, is an extended metaphor or analogy that draws a striking comparison between two seemingly dissimilar things. In "The Flea," Donne uses the image of a flea as a conceit for the relationship between him and his lover. He argues that since the flea has bitten both of them, their blood is now mingled in the flea's body, and therefore they are already joined in a kind of union. This comparison is both clever and humorous, and it creates a playful tone that undercuts the seriousness of the poem's subject matter.

Furthermore, Donne uses poetic conceit to describe the act of killing the flea. He compares the act of killing the flea to a murder, but he also suggests that the act of killing the flea is like a sacrilege, as it would destroy the union between the lovers that the flea represents. This comparison is not only creative but also subverts the traditional conventions of love poetry.

In conclusion, Donne's use of hyperbole and poetic conceit in "The Flea" not only creates a playful and witty tone but also challenges the conventions of love poetry. It showcases Donne's innovative and unconventional approach to poetry, making the poem a masterpiece of metaphysical poetry.

**Q7. Elaborate on the ways Wyatt's sonnet is based on and yet departs from the Petrarchan original.**

Ans7 Thomas Wyatt's sonnet "Whoso list to hunt" is based on the Petrarchan sonnet form, but it also departs from the typical themes and structure of the Petrarchan sonnet.

The Petrarchan sonnet is a 14-line poem with a strict rhyme scheme (abbaabba cdecde or cdcdcd) and a volta, or turn, that occurs between the octave (first 8 lines) and sestet (last 6 lines). The typical Petrarchan sonnet explores the theme of unrequited love, with the speaker expressing their feelings for an unattainable or distant lover.

Wyatt's sonnet maintains the basic structure of the Petrarchan sonnet but departs from its themes. Instead of focusing on unrequited love, the poem explores the theme of the chase, using the metaphor of hunting to express the speaker's pursuit of a woman who is unattainable. The poem suggests that the speaker is aware that he cannot win the woman's love, yet he continues to pursue her. This theme of the chase and the hunt is in stark contrast to the typical Petrarchan sonnet, which emphasizes the pain and suffering of unrequited love.

In addition, Wyatt's sonnet also departs from the strict rhyme scheme of the Petrarchan sonnet. The poem has an unusual rhyme scheme (abbaabba cddcee), which creates a sense of irregularity and instability that mirrors the speaker's own sense of unease and uncertainty. This departure from the strict rhyme scheme of the Petrarchan sonnet reflects Wyatt's interest in experimentation and innovation in poetic form.

Overall, while Wyatt's sonnet is based on the Petrarchan sonnet form, it departs from its typical themes and structure, creating a unique and innovative poem that explores the theme of the chase and showcases Wyatt's interest in experimenting with poetic form.

**Q8. Compare the depiction of London in Blake's 'London' with that in Wordsworth's 'Composed Upon Westminster Bridge'.**

Ans8 Blake's "London" and Wordsworth's "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge" are two poems that offer contrasting depictions of London. While both poets describe the city, they do so in very different ways.

In Blake's "London," the city is portrayed as a dark and oppressive place, filled with poverty and despair. Blake's use of repetition in the first stanza of the poem - "I wander through each chartered street, / Near where the chartered Thames does flow" - emphasizes the way in which the city has become regimented and controlled. The poem goes on to describe the "marks of weakness, marks of woe" that can be seen on the faces of the city's inhabitants, as well as the "mind-forged manacles" that prevent them from escaping their plight. Blake's London is a city of oppression, where the poor are trapped and the powerful are complicit in their suffering.

In contrast, Wordsworth's "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge" presents a very different view of London. The poem was written from the perspective of someone who is standing on Westminster Bridge at dawn and is struck by the beauty of the city. Wordsworth describes the "silent, bare" city as "glittering" and "bright," with the sunlight "never did I see / So calm, so deep, so clear!" The poem presents a vision of London that is peaceful, harmonious, and even sublime.

Overall, while both Blake and Wordsworth describe London, they do so in very different ways. Blake's "London" portrays the city as a place of oppression and suffering, while Wordsworth's "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge" presents a vision of the city as a peaceful and harmonious place of beauty.

**Q9. Discuss the nature of Iago's villainy in Othello.**

Ans9 Iago's villainy in Othello is complex and multifaceted, and his actions throughout the play are motivated by a deep-seated desire for revenge and a thirst for power and control.

One of Iago's most notable traits is his manipulative nature. He is able to control the thoughts and actions of those around him through a series of calculated lies and half-truths. He is a master of psychological manipulation, using his skills to exploit the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of others for his own gain. For example, he convinces Othello that his wife, Desdemona, is unfaithful, by planting false evidence and manipulating Othello's jealousy and insecurities.

Iago is also driven by a deep-seated hatred for those he perceives as having wronged him. He is resentful of Cassio, who he believes was promoted above him, and he is jealous of Othello, who he believes is having an affair with his wife. His desire for revenge against these individuals drives much of his villainy throughout the play.

Moreover, Iago's villainy is characterized by his utter lack of empathy for others. He takes pleasure in causing pain and suffering, and he seems to revel in the destruction of others' lives. He manipulates and deceives those closest to him, including his own wife, Emilia, without any regard for their feelings or well-being.

In conclusion, Iago's villainy in Othello is a combination of his manipulative nature, his desire for revenge, and his utter lack of empathy. He is a master of psychological manipulation, exploiting the weaknesses of those around him to achieve his own goals, and he takes pleasure in causing pain and suffering. His actions throughout the play demonstrate a profound moral corruption and an almost total absence of conscience or remorse.

**Q 10. Elaborate on the theme of race in Othello.**

Ans10 The theme of race is central to Shakespeare's play Othello, and it is explored through the character of Othello, a black general in the Venetian army who marries a white woman, Desdemona. Throughout the play, Othello's race is used by other characters to undermine his authority and question his worthiness as a husband and a leader.

One of the ways in which race is used to marginalize Othello is through the derogatory language and slurs used to describe him. Characters such as Iago and Roderigo refer to Othello using terms such as "the Moor," "the thick lips," and "the black ram." These terms not only serve to dehumanize Othello but also reinforce negative stereotypes and prejudices against people of color.

Another way in which race is used to undermine Othello is through the accusations of witchcraft and sorcery that are leveled against him. These accusations are rooted in the idea that Othello's race and cultural background make him inherently prone to evil and immorality. The suggestion that Othello has used black magic to seduce Desdemona reinforces the stereotype of the hypersexual and deviant black man.

Moreover, the theme of race is also seen in the power dynamics between Othello and the white characters in the play. Despite being a respected general, Othello is constantly made to feel inferior to the white characters around him, and his authority is often undermined or questioned. The fact that Othello's marriage to Desdemona is seen as a transgression of societal norms also reflects the deep-seated racial prejudices that existed during the time in which the play was written.

Overall, the theme of race in Othello highlights the ways in which racism and prejudice can be used to marginalize and oppress people of color. The play exposes the deep-seated racial biases and stereotypes that existed in Shakespeare's time and that continue to persist in modern society.