

British Literature : Poetry and Play PYQ 2022

SET B

Q1. Identify and comment on the metaphors in Wyatt's sonnet 'Whoso List to Hunt'.

Ans1 "Whoso List to Hunt" is a sonnet written by Sir Thomas Wyatt, a 16th-century English poet. The poem is believed to be about Wyatt's unrequited love for Anne Boleyn, who was at the time the object of King Henry VIII's affections. The poem employs several metaphors to convey the speaker's emotions and ideas.

1. The Hunt - The title of the poem itself is a metaphor. The "hunt" is a metaphor for the pursuit of love or the desire to win someone's affection. The speaker compares himself to a hunter who is pursuing a deer that is already owned by someone else, presumably the king. This metaphor emphasizes the speaker's sense of futility and frustration in his pursuit of the woman he desires.

2. The "wilderness" - In the second quatrain, the speaker describes the woman he is pursuing as "wild." This metaphor suggests that the woman is untamed and untouchable, like a wild animal. The use of this metaphor also underscores the idea that the woman is not interested in the speaker and is not easily won.

3. The "crown" - In the third quatrain, the speaker refers to the woman's "crown" of hair. This metaphor emphasizes the woman's beauty and royal status, as well as her inaccessibility. The use of the word "crown" also suggests that the woman is a queen, adding to her unattainability.

4. The "pavèd with pearl" - In the final couplet, the speaker refers to the woman's neck as being "pavèd with pearl." This metaphor suggests that the woman is richly adorned, like a precious jewel. The use of the word "pavèd" also suggests that the woman is unapproachable, as if she were surrounded by a court of admirers and attendants.

Overall, these metaphors convey the idea that the woman the speaker desires is unattainable and out of reach, like a wild animal or a queen surrounded by courtiers. The use of these metaphors emphasizes the speaker's frustration and sense of futility in his pursuit of the woman he desires.

Q2. Explain the following lines with reference to the context: O fearful meditation! where, alack, Shall time's best jewel from time's chest lie hid? Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back? Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?

Ans2 These lines are from Shakespeare's Sonnet 65, in which the speaker meditates on the passing of time and its effect on beauty and youth. In the first line, the speaker describes his meditation on this topic as "fearful." This suggests that he is deeply troubled by the idea of beauty and youth being lost to the ravages of time.

In the second line, the speaker refers to "time's best jewel," which is likely a reference to youth and beauty. The question he poses is how can something so valuable and precious be hidden away from the effects of time, which is unstoppable and relentless in its passage.

The third line asks who or what is strong enough to stop time or slow it down. The "swift foot" of time is a metaphor for its relentless progress, and the question suggests that there is no force powerful enough to halt it or turn it back.

In the final line, the speaker asks who can prevent time from robbing us of beauty. The use of the word "spoil" suggests that time is like a thief who steals beauty away from us. The question is rhetorical, as the speaker suggests that there is no one who can prevent time from taking its toll.

Overall, these lines reflect the speaker's anxiety about the passing of time and the loss of beauty and youth. The questions he poses are intended to emphasize the inevitability of aging and the futility of trying to resist it.

Q3. Explain and comment on the following lines with reference to the context: But most thro' midnight streets I hear How the youthful Harlot's curse Blasts the new-born Infant's tear And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.

Ans3. These lines are from William Blake's poem "London," which is a commentary on the social and political conditions of the city during the late 18th century. The poem presents a bleak and desolate picture of London, where poverty, injustice, and moral decay are rampant.

In these lines, the speaker describes the sounds he hears while walking through the streets of London at night. He says that he hears the "youthful harlot's curse," which suggests that prostitution was a common and accepted practice in the city. The use of the word "youthful" emphasizes the idea that many young women were forced into prostitution due to poverty and lack of opportunities.

The speaker then goes on to describe how the harlot's curse "blasts the new-born Infant's tear," which suggests that prostitution leads to the birth of illegitimate children who are often abandoned and left to suffer. The use of the word "blasts" suggests that the impact of this situation is sudden and devastating.

The final line of the stanza, "And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse," suggests that the social problems in London extend beyond prostitution and illegitimate children. The "marriage hearse" is a metaphor for the decline of the institution of marriage, which was seen as a foundation of society. The use of the word "blights" suggests that this decline is due to a moral decay that is spreading throughout society.

Overall, these lines reflect the speaker's disillusionment with the social and moral conditions of London. The use of vivid imagery and metaphor highlights the extent of the problem, which the speaker sees as a threat to the very foundations of society.

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

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?

Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find

**Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers**

Ans4. These lines are from John Keats' poem "Ode to Autumn," which celebrates the season of autumn and its bounty. In these lines, the speaker addresses the personification of autumn, describing the various ways in which it can be observed and experienced.

The first line, "Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?" suggests that autumn is a familiar and ubiquitous presence, with its abundant harvests and rich colors. The word "store" refers to the various fruits and crops that are harvested in the autumn, such as apples, grapes, and grains.

The following lines describe different scenes that the speaker associates with autumn. In the second line, the speaker suggests that autumn can be found by anyone who seeks it, perhaps by venturing out into the countryside. The third and fourth lines describe an image of autumn sitting "careless on a granary floor," with its hair lifted by the wind. This image suggests a relaxed and carefree attitude, as well as the abundance of the harvest.

The fifth and sixth lines describe another scene, where autumn is "sound asleep" on a half-reaped furrow, surrounded by the fumes of poppies. This image suggests a more dreamy and peaceful side to autumn, where the harvest has been partially completed and the land is beginning to rest.

Overall, these lines convey a sense of the richness and abundance of autumn, as well as its various moods and aspects. The use of vivid imagery and personification helps to bring autumn to life and to convey the speaker's appreciation for this season.

Q5. Write a short note on the following topic:

Cassio and Bianca

Ans5. Cassio and Bianca are two characters from William Shakespeare's play, Othello. Cassio is a lieutenant in the Venetian army and a close friend of the play's protagonist, Othello. Bianca, on the other hand, is a courtesan who is in love with Cassio.

Throughout the play, Cassio and Bianca's relationship is portrayed as a comedic subplot, offering a stark contrast to the tragic events that unfold between Othello, Desdemona, and Iago. Bianca is portrayed as a jealous and possessive lover, often accusing Cassio of being unfaithful and demanding his attention. Cassio, however, seems to view their relationship more casually and often dismisses her accusations.

Despite the humor that their relationship brings to the play, their story also serves as a commentary on the gender and social norms of the time. As a courtesan, Bianca is seen as a lowly figure in society, and her relationship with Cassio is not taken seriously by him or anyone else. However, Bianca's assertiveness and jealousy challenge the notion that women in the play are passive and submissive.

Overall, the relationship between Cassio and Bianca provides a lighthearted counterpoint to the darker themes of the play, while also offering insight into the societal norms of the time.

Q6. Examine Shakespeare's innovations on the traditional sonnet with examples from the two prescribed poems in your course.

Ans6. Shakespeare's sonnets are known for their deviation from the traditional sonnet form, particularly the Petrarchan and the Spenserian sonnets. Let's examine some of Shakespeare's innovations on the traditional sonnet form with examples

Sonnet 18: "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"

One of the key innovations of Shakespeare's sonnets is his use of a new rhyme scheme. In traditional sonnets, the rhyme scheme is usually ABAB CDCD EFEF GG (Petrarchan) or ABAB BCBC CDCD EE (Spenserian). Shakespeare, however, often used a rhyme scheme of ABAB CDCD EFEF GG but he frequently altered the rhyme scheme in his sonnets.

In Sonnet 18, the rhyme scheme is ABAB CDCD EFEF GG. However, in the final couplet, Shakespeare deviates from the traditional form by using a rhyming couplet (GG) to provide a conclusive and memorable ending:

"So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,

So long lives this, and this gives life to thee."

Sonnet 130: "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun"

Another innovation of Shakespeare's sonnets is his subversion of conventional love poetry. Traditionally, love poetry idealizes the beloved by comparing them to natural and divine beauty. Shakespeare, however, subverts these conventions in Sonnet 130, where he describes his mistress in a realistic, unidealized manner:

"My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;

Coral is far more red than her lips' red."

Shakespeare's subversion of traditional love poetry can be seen as a response to the idealized and exaggerated representations of love that were popular in his time.

In conclusion, Shakespeare's sonnets are innovative in their use of rhyme scheme and their subversion of traditional love poetry. His innovations have had a significant impact on the development of sonnet form and have made his sonnets some of the most influential works of poetry in the English language.

Q7. Discuss the main characteristics of Romantic poetry in England through a critical analysis of any two prescribed poems.

Ans7. Romantic poetry in England is characterized by a focus on emotion, individualism, and a reverence for nature. In this response, I will analyze two prescribed poems from the BA Program of Delhi University, William Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," to illustrate these key characteristics of Romantic poetry.

Emotion:

One of the main characteristics of Romantic poetry is the emphasis on emotion and personal experience. In "Tintern Abbey," Wordsworth describes his emotional connection to the natural world and how it has sustained him throughout his life. He writes:

"These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration"

Wordsworth's use of vivid language and imagery creates a sense of emotional intimacy between the reader and the poet, as he shares his personal experiences and feelings.

Individualism:

Another key characteristic of Romantic poetry is individualism, which emphasizes the uniqueness and importance of the individual. In "Kubla Khan," Coleridge's speaker describes his imaginative creation of a fantastical palace, where he is the sole ruler:

"And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise."

The speaker's imaginative creation is a reflection of his own individual desires and power, and emphasizes the importance of the individual imagination.

Reverence for nature:

A third key characteristic of Romantic poetry is a reverence for nature. In "Tintern Abbey," Wordsworth reflects on the spiritual and restorative power of nature, writing:

"And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,"

Wordsworth's use of natural imagery and his exploration of the spiritual and restorative power of nature reflect the Romantic idealization of the natural world.

In conclusion, Romantic poetry in England is characterized by a focus on emotion, individualism, and a reverence for nature. The poems "Tintern Abbey" and "Kubla Khan" both exemplify these key characteristics through their use of vivid language and imagery to express personal experience and emotion, their emphasis on individual imagination and power, and their exploration of the spiritual and restorative power of nature.

Q8. Comment on the depiction of social issues by any two poets from the Eighteenth Century and the Romantic Age in your course.

Ans8. The Eighteenth Century and the Romantic Age were marked by great social upheaval and change, which inspired many poets to address contemporary social issues in their works. In this response, I will comment on the depiction of social issues by two poets from the Eighteenth Century and the Romantic Age in the BA Program of Delhi University: Alexander Pope and William Blake.

Alexander Pope, an Eighteenth Century poet, was known for his satirical works that often critiqued contemporary social issues. In his poem "The Rape of the Lock," Pope satirizes the frivolity and superficiality of the aristocracy by describing a young woman's outrage when a suitor cuts a lock of her hair. Pope uses exaggerated language and imagery to highlight the absurdity of the situation, while also criticizing the social norms and values of the aristocracy. For example, he writes:

"For this, ere Phoebus rose, he had implor'd
Propitious Heav'n, and ev'ry Pow'r ador'd,
But chiefly Love — to Love an Altar built,
Of twelve vast French Romances, neatly gilt."

Pope's use of humor and satire allowed him to critique social issues in a way that was both accessible and entertaining for his readers.

William Blake, a Romantic poet, was also deeply concerned with social issues, particularly those related to the industrial revolution and its impact on society. In his poem "London," Blake describes the poverty, oppression, and despair of the urban poor, who are trapped in a cycle of suffering and misery. He writes:

"But most, thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlot's curse
Blasts the new-born Infant's tear,
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse."

Blake's use of vivid imagery and powerful language highlights the suffering of those living in poverty, while also critiquing the social and economic systems that perpetuate their oppression. Blake's emphasis on the emotional and psychological impact of poverty and oppression reflects the Romantic focus on individual experience and emotion.

In conclusion, both Alexander Pope and William Blake were concerned with social issues in their works, using satire and vivid imagery to critique contemporary social norms and values. Pope's satirical works critiqued the superficiality and frivolity of the aristocracy, while Blake's poems highlighted the suffering and oppression of the urban poor. While their styles and techniques differed, both poets used their works to comment on the social issues of their time and to call for change.

Q9. In Othello we have an intersection of race and politics in its dramatic action. Elaborate.

Ans9. Othello is a play by William Shakespeare that explores the intersection of race and politics in its dramatic action. The play tells the story of Othello, a black Moorish general in the Venetian army, who is manipulated by his jealous and scheming ensign, Iago, into believing that his wife, Desdemona, has been unfaithful. Ultimately, Othello murders Desdemona before realizing the truth and killing himself. The play raises important questions about the role of race and politics in society and the impact of prejudice and discrimination on individuals and communities.

The play is set in Venice, a city known for its political and cultural diversity during the Renaissance era. Despite its reputation as a cosmopolitan city, Venice was also deeply divided along racial and ethnic lines, with the black population, including Othello, facing discrimination and prejudice from white Venetians. Othello's race is a central factor in the play, with many of the characters, including Iago, expressing racist attitudes towards him. Iago describes Othello as "an old black ram" and a "Barbary horse," using derogatory language to dehumanize and stereotype him.

In addition to its exploration of race, the play also delves into the political dynamics of Venice. Othello's success as a general in the Venetian army is a source of tension for some of the white characters in the play, who resent his rise to power and influence. The political maneuvering and manipulation of the characters, particularly Iago, highlight the corrupt and ruthless nature of politics in Venice.

The intersection of race and politics in the play is further complicated by the character of Desdemona, Othello's wife, who is a white Venetian woman. Her marriage to Othello is met with disapproval and disdain from many of the characters, including her father, who views the union as a violation of social norms and conventions. Desdemona's loyalty to Othello, despite the racism and prejudice he faces, is a powerful statement about the transformative power of love and the potential for cross-cultural and cross-racial relationships.

In conclusion, Othello explores the complex intersection of race and politics in its dramatic action, shedding light on the discrimination and prejudice faced by people of color in a society that is deeply divided along racial and ethnic lines. The play highlights the corrupt and ruthless nature of politics in Venice, as well as the transformative power of love and loyalty. Through its exploration of these themes, Othello remains a powerful and relevant work of literature that continues to resonate with contemporary audiences.

Q10. Critically evaluate the portrayal of women characters in Othello.

Ans10. The portrayal of women characters in Othello is a complex and contested issue that has been the subject of much debate among scholars and critics. On the one hand, the play presents strong, intelligent, and independent women who challenge traditional gender roles and expectations. On the other hand, it also portrays women as objects of male desire and manipulation, whose lives are controlled and destroyed by the men around them.

The three main women characters in the play, Desdemona, Emilia, and Bianca, are all subjected to varying degrees of male domination and control. Desdemona, as the virtuous and faithful wife of Othello, is initially presented as a strong and independent woman who is willing to defy her father and society to be with the man she loves. However, as the play progresses, she is increasingly portrayed as a helpless victim of Othello's jealousy and rage, and ultimately dies at the hands of her husband.

Emilia, the wife of Iago, is another complex and multifaceted character who defies traditional gender roles in her willingness to speak her mind and challenge her husband's authority. However, she is also subject to his emotional and physical abuse, and is ultimately killed for her loyalty to Desdemona.

Bianca, a courtesan and the only woman character who is not tied to a male character, is also subjected to male domination and control. She is often dismissed as a mere object of male desire, and is viewed with suspicion and contempt by the male characters in the play.

Overall, the portrayal of women characters in Othello is a mixed bag, with moments of empowerment and moments of oppression. On the one hand, the play presents women who challenge traditional gender roles and expectations, and who assert their own agency and independence. On the other hand, it also reinforces patriarchal norms and values, and portrays women as helpless victims of male domination and control.

In conclusion, while the portrayal of women characters in Othello is not unproblematic, it nevertheless provides a rich and nuanced exploration of the complexities of gender and power in early modern society. The play challenges traditional gender roles and expectations, and presents

women who are capable of asserting their own agency and independence, even in the face of male domination and control. At the same time, it also exposes the destructive impact of patriarchy on women's lives, and highlights the need for social and political change to ensure gender equality and justice.

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