

Literary Cross Currents, Selections from Living Literature PYQ 2022

PART-A

Q1. Nay, we'll go

Together down, sir. Notice Neptune though,

Taming a sea horse, thought a rarity,

Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me

a) What role do different objects of art perform in the poem?

Ans1. The poem is "My Last Duchess" by Robert Browning.

(a) In the poem, the Duke shows the emissary a portrait of his former wife, the Duchess, which is a work of art. The Duke uses this artwork as a way to convey his feelings about the Duchess and their relationship. Additionally, the Duke mentions a bronze statue of Neptune taming a seahorse that was made for him by Claus of Innsbruck. This artwork seems to represent the Duke's power and control over the sea, much like how he wishes to have power and control over his wives.

b) What impression of the Duke do we get from the poem?

(b) The impression of the Duke that we get from the poem is that he is a controlling and possessive person. He speaks of his former wife, the Duchess, in a dismissive and derogatory way, implying that she was unfaithful to him. He also hints that he was responsible for her death. The Duke seems to value his own status and power above all else, and he expects his wives to be subservient to him. Overall, the Duke comes across as a selfish and arrogant character.

Q2. The winter evening settles down

With smell of steaks in passageways.

Six o'clock.

The burnt-out ends of smoky days.

And now a gusty shower wraps The grimy scraps

Of withered leaves about your feet

a) What are the images used to describe an evening in the city ?

Ans2. The poem is "Preludes" by T.S. Eliot.

(a) The images used to describe an evening in the city include the smell of steaks in passageways, the burnt-out ends of smoky days, and gusty showers that wrap the withered leaves about your feet. These images suggest a city that is dirty, grimy, and worn out. The smell of steaks in passageways implies a sense of urban decay, while the gusty showers suggest a sense of discomfort and vulnerability.

b) What is the significance of 'burnt out ends of smoky days'?

(b) The phrase "burnt-out ends of smoky days" suggests a sense of exhaustion and weariness that is prevalent in the city. The city is a place where people work hard and long hours, often in jobs that are dirty and dangerous. The phrase also implies a sense of decay and decline, as if the city is slowly falling apart. The use of this phrase creates a sense of melancholy and sadness, as if the poet is mourning the loss of something that was once beautiful but has now been lost.

Q3. Elaborate on why the Lady of Shalott was "half sick of shadows" in Tennyson's poem in your course.

Ans3. The Lady of Shalott is a poem by Alfred Lord Tennyson, which tells the story of a young woman who is cursed to weave in a tower and forbidden to look directly out of her window, only able to view the outside world through a mirror. However, she eventually sees Sir Lancelot in the reflection and looks directly out the window, which causes the curse to befall her and leads to her tragic demise.

The phrase "half sick of shadows" appears in the second stanza of the poem, and it suggests that the Lady is becoming weary and discontented with her life of isolation and confinement. The shadows in this context represent the Lady's restricted view of the world and the limitations that her curse has placed upon her. The Lady is only able to view the world indirectly, through the mirror and her weaving, which can be seen as a metaphor for her lack of direct experience and knowledge of the world.

The phrase "half sick" suggests that the Lady is not completely sick of the shadows, but she is starting to feel the effects of her confinement. She is tired of living in isolation and wants to experience the world directly, but she is also afraid of the consequences that may come with breaking her curse. The phrase also suggests that the Lady is not physically ill, but rather, she is mentally and emotionally exhausted from her restricted life.

In conclusion, the Lady of Shalott's "half sick of shadows" refers to her growing weariness and discontent with her life of isolation and confinement. She is starting to long for direct experience of the world, but she is also afraid of the consequences that may come with breaking her curse.

Q4. Discuss the confrontation of the two lovers in Thomas Hardy's Neutral Tones.

Abs4. "Neutral Tones" is a poem by Thomas Hardy that explores the end of a romantic relationship. The poem describes a meeting between two former lovers, who are now estranged and bitter towards each other.

The confrontation between the two lovers is depicted as a cold and emotionless encounter. The speaker describes the winter landscape, which is bleak and lifeless, mirroring the emotional state of the two characters. The poem's opening line, "We stood by a pond that winter day," suggests a sense of stasis and stagnation, as if the relationship has come to a standstill.

The speaker describes the interaction between the two characters in a detached and analytical way, as if he is observing them from a distance. The woman's "wan smile" and the man's "grin of bitterness" suggest a sense of resentment and hostility between the two characters. They exchange a few words, but these are empty and meaningless, lacking any sense of connection or intimacy.

The poem's title, "Neutral Tones," suggests a sense of emotional numbness and detachment. The speaker describes the landscape as "gray" and "ashen," suggesting a lack of color and vitality. This sense of neutrality and detachment is reflected in the relationship between the two characters, who seem unable to connect on a deeper level.

Overall, the confrontation between the two lovers in "Neutral Tones" is a stark and melancholy depiction of a failed relationship. The poem's tone is resigned and mournful, suggesting that the two characters have accepted the end of their relationship, but are unable to move on from the pain and bitterness that it has caused them.

Q5. Describe how Jane had a tough time in Aunt Reed's house during her childhood.

Ans5. Jane Eyre, the novel by Charlotte Bronte, begins with Jane's childhood experiences in the home of her cruel and oppressive aunt, Mrs. Reed. Jane's early life was marked by mistreatment and neglect, and she suffered greatly as a result of her situation.

At the Reed household, Jane was treated as an outsider and made to feel unwelcome. Her cousin John bullied and tormented her, while Mrs. Reed showed her no affection and made it clear that she was not wanted in the house. This lack of love and acceptance left Jane feeling isolated and alone, with no one to turn to for support.

Jane's physical and emotional needs were also neglected in Aunt Reed's household. She was frequently deprived of food and proper clothing, and was often made to sleep in a cold and damp room. The harsh treatment she received at the hands of her aunt and cousin left her feeling powerless and vulnerable, with no control over her own life.

Despite her difficult circumstances, Jane remained resilient and determined to improve her situation. She found solace in books and used education as a way to escape the harsh realities of her life. However, she still longed for love and acceptance, and her experiences in Aunt Reed's household left a lasting impact on her character and worldview.

Overall, Jane's childhood experiences in Aunt Reed's house were marked by mistreatment, neglect, and a sense of isolation. Her resilience and determination in the face of such adversity are a testament to her strength of character and her unwavering spirit.

PART-B

Q6. Discuss the religious images in Sylvia Plath's "The Moon and the Yew tree."

Ans6. In Sylvia Plath's poem "The Moon and the Yew Tree," religious imagery is a prominent element that conveys the speaker's feelings of abandonment, loss, and despair.

The poem begins with a description of a moonlit night and a yew tree, which is traditionally associated with death and mourning. The speaker describes the yew tree as "black", "cold", and "a forceps" that holds onto memories and secrets. This image suggests a sense of pain and anguish that the speaker is experiencing, as if she is holding onto memories that she cannot let go of.

Throughout the poem, the speaker uses religious imagery to describe her feelings of isolation and abandonment. For example, she compares herself to the "ghostly bride" and "the pale Virgin", both of which are traditional Christian symbols of purity, innocence, and martyrdom. These images suggest a sense of vulnerability and fragility, as if the speaker is longing for someone to rescue her from her isolation and despair.

The poem also contains references to the Christian concept of redemption and salvation. The speaker mentions "the Lord's wounds" and "Christ's blood", suggesting a sense of guilt and sin that she is seeking to atone for. These religious references add to the overall sense of despair and hopelessness that the speaker is experiencing, as if she is unable to find solace or redemption in her religious beliefs.

Overall, the religious imagery in "The Moon and the Yew Tree" conveys the speaker's sense of isolation and despair, as well as her longing for connection and redemption. The poem's tone is mournful and haunting, suggesting a sense of emotional pain and suffering that the speaker cannot escape.

Q7. The Lady of Shalott describes two contrasting worlds. Elaborate.

Ans7. The Lady of Shalott by Alfred Lord Tennyson is a poem that describes two contrasting worlds - the world of the Lady of Shalott and the world outside of her tower.

The Lady of Shalott is depicted as living in a tower that is cut off from the outside world. She spends her days weaving a magic web, which she believes will bring her happiness and fulfillment. However, she is not allowed to look directly at the outside world. Instead, she sees it through a mirror, which distorts and alters her view of reality.

In contrast, the outside world is depicted as vibrant, colorful, and full of life. The poem describes the landscape and the people passing by, such as the knights and the farmers, in vivid detail. The world outside of the Lady's tower is full of movement and energy, whereas her world is static and unchanging.

The contrast between the two worlds reflects the Lady's sense of isolation and disconnection from the outside world. Her world is one of fantasy and illusion, whereas the outside world is one of

reality and truth. The Lady's decision to leave her tower and venture into the outside world is a symbol of her desire to break free from the constraints of her isolated existence and experience life in its fullness.

However, her decision ultimately leads to her tragic death, as she cannot reconcile the two worlds and is unable to find a place in either one. The Lady of Shalott's story, therefore, is a cautionary tale about the dangers of living in a world of illusion and the importance of embracing reality and facing the challenges and joys that life has to offer.

Q8. How does Emily Dickinson describe a formal feeling' after great pain? Analyse her poem After Great Pain.

Ans8. In her poem "After great pain," Emily Dickinson describes a sense of numbness and emptiness that follows a traumatic experience, specifically the feeling of "a formal feeling" that settles in after great pain.

The poem begins by describing the intense physical and emotional experience of pain, using vivid images such as "Nerves sit ceremonious, like tombs" and "The feet, mechanical, go round." The language in the first stanza suggests a sense of chaos and disorientation, as if the speaker is struggling to make sense of what has happened.

The second stanza then shifts to describe the aftermath of the pain, using the phrase "the hour of lead" to convey a sense of heaviness and weightiness. The speaker describes how the "formal feeling" sets in, as if there is a sense of order and structure that emerges out of the chaos of the pain. This formal feeling is described as "a Quartz contentment, like a stone," suggesting a sense of coldness and detachment from emotion.

The third stanza then describes how the world seems to be moving on around the speaker, even though she is unable to fully participate in it. The image of the funeral is used to convey a sense of finality and closure, as if the pain has brought about a kind of death or loss.

Overall, Dickinson's poem captures the sense of numbness and detachment that often follows a traumatic experience. The use of vivid and concrete images, such as "Nerves sit ceremonious, like tombs," conveys the intense physical and emotional experience of pain, while the image of "a formal feeling" captures the sense of order and structure that emerges out of the chaos. The poem suggests that, even in the midst of great pain and suffering, there is a sense of resilience and strength that allows us to carry on.

Q9. What is the representation of Mary in The Hunt by Mahasweta Devi?

Ans9. In Mahasweta Devi's short story "The Hunt," Mary is represented as a young Adivasi girl who is forced to flee her village due to a military operation. Mary is portrayed as a symbol of the Adivasi community's resilience and resistance against oppression.

Throughout the story, Mary is hunted by a group of soldiers who are trying to capture her. Despite being in constant danger, Mary refuses to give up and continues to fight for her survival. She uses her knowledge of the forest and its resources to evade the soldiers and stay alive.

Mary's character is significant because she represents the strength and resilience of the Adivasi community in the face of oppression. She is a symbol of their ability to survive and resist even in the most challenging of circumstances. Her story highlights the injustices and atrocities faced by the Adivasi community in India, and the need for them to fight for their rights and dignity.

Overall, Mary's representation in "The Hunt" serves as a reminder of the importance of preserving the cultural identity and heritage of marginalized communities, and the need to support their struggle against oppression and injustice.

Q10. Discuss the images associated with Bertha Mason in Jane Eyre.

Ans10. Bertha Mason is a complex character in Charlotte Bronte's novel Jane Eyre, and she is associated with a range of vivid and powerful images that highlight her mysterious and dangerous nature.

One of the most striking images associated with Bertha is that of fire. Bertha is introduced to the reader as a violent and unpredictable character, and she is often associated with flames and infernos. In her first appearance, she sets fire to Rochester's bed and nearly burns down the entire house. This image of fire represents Bertha's destructive and uncontrollable nature, and also serves as a metaphor for the intense passion and sexuality that she represents.

Another image associated with Bertha is that of the wild animal. Throughout the novel, she is described as being feral and savage, with animalistic features and behaviors. She is often associated with the sounds and movements of wild animals, such as the howling of wolves or the pacing of a caged lion. This image reinforces Bertha's dangerous and unpredictable nature, and also serves to emphasize the social and cultural boundaries that she is perceived to have crossed.

Finally, Bertha is also associated with darkness and shadow. She is often described as lurking in the shadows or hiding in the darkness, and her presence is often felt more than it is seen. This image represents Bertha's mysterious and enigmatic nature, and also serves to heighten the sense of danger and foreboding that surrounds her.

Overall, the images associated with Bertha Mason in Jane Eyre are powerful and evocative, highlighting her complex and multi-faceted character. Through these images, Bronte emphasizes Bertha's danger and unpredictability, while also suggesting the intense passion and sexuality that she represents.