

# British Literature: Eighteenth Century PYQ 2022

## Q1. Write a short note on Lady Wishfort.

**Ans.** Lady Wishfort is a character in William Congreve's Restoration comedy "The Way of the World". She is a wealthy widow who is vain, proud, and obsessed with maintaining her youth and beauty. Lady Wishfort is also manipulative and cunning, using her wealth and social status to control those around her.

Despite her flaws, Lady Wishfort is a complex and interesting character. She represents the decadence and excess of the Restoration period, while also embodying the limitations placed upon women of her time. Her desire for love and companionship is at odds with the societal expectations placed upon her as a wealthy widow, and this conflict drives much of the plot of the play.

Overall, Lady Wishfort is a memorable character who reflects the complexities of life in the late 17th century. Her portrayal in "The Way of the World" has made her a popular subject of analysis and discussion among literary scholars and theater enthusiasts.

## Q2. Write a short note on Gulliver's interactions with the Houshnhnms.

**Ans.** In Jonathan Swift's novel "Gulliver's Travels," Gulliver encounters a race of intelligent horses called the Houshnhnms during his fourth voyage. He is initially surprised by their appearance and ability to communicate, but soon becomes fascinated by their orderly and rational society.

Gulliver is particularly struck by the Houshnhnms' lack of emotion and their ability to reason without being swayed by passion or prejudice. He contrasts this with the behavior of humans, who he sees as driven by selfish desires and base instincts.

As Gulliver spends more time with the Houshnhnms, he begins to adopt their mannerisms and way of thinking. He is especially drawn to one Houshnhnm in particular, who he calls his "master." Gulliver describes this relationship as one of mutual respect and admiration, despite the fact that he is a human and his master is a horse.

**However,** Gulliver's interactions with the Houshnhnms ultimately lead to his disillusionment with humanity. He sees their way of life as superior to that of humans, and begins to view his fellow humans as foolish and irrational.

**Overall,** Gulliver's interactions with the Houshnhnms serve as a commentary on the flaws and shortcomings of human society, and highlight the potential benefits of a rational and orderly way of life.

**Q3. Identify and explain with reference to context:**

**Behold her Cross triumphant on the Main,**

**The Guard of Commerce, and the Dread of Spain,**

**Ere Masquerades debauch'd, Excise oppress'd,**

**Or English Honour grew a standing Jest."**

**Ans.** These lines are from the poem "The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated" by Alexander Pope. The lines are describing England and its glory before the corruption and decay of society set in.

The phrase "**Behold her Cross triumphant on the Main**" refers to the power and dominance of England's navy, which was symbolized by the English flag, or "Cross." The "Main" refers to the sea, which was the primary location of England's naval power.

"**The Guard of Commerce**" refers to England's naval protection of its trade routes and commercial interests. The "Dread of Spain" refers to the fear that Spain, England's long-standing enemy, had of England's navy and its power to disrupt Spanish trade and colonization.

The lines "Ere Masquerades debauch'd, Excise oppress'd, Or English Honour grew a standing Jest" refer to the corruption and moral decay that had set in to English society. The word "Masquerades" refers to the public parties where guests would wear masks and engage in immoral behavior. "Excise" was a tax imposed on various goods, which was seen as oppressive by many. "English Honour" was the reputation and dignity of England, which was seen as being made a mockery of due to the corruption and moral decay.

**Overall**, these lines serve to contrast the glory and power of England in the past with the corruption and decay of society in the present, and highlight the need for moral and social reform.

**Q4. Write a short note on Lady Booby.**

**Ans.** Lady Booby is a character in Henry Fielding's novel "Joseph Andrews." She is a wealthy and manipulative noblewoman who becomes infatuated with the title character, Joseph Andrews, and tries to seduce him throughout the novel.

Lady Booby is depicted as a **woman of great wealth and social status**, but also as someone who is selfish, arrogant, and self-absorbed. She sees Joseph as a mere plaything and is willing to use her power and influence to get what she wants.

**Despite her flaws**, Lady Booby is also a complex character who embodies the contradictions and hypocrisies of her society. She is a product of the decadent and corrupt world of the early 18th century, where money and social status were valued above all else. However, she is also a victim of this world, forced to conform to its rigid social norms and expectations.

**Overall**, Lady Booby is a memorable and complex character who reflects the social and moral issues of her time. Her portrayal in "Joseph Andrews" has made her a popular subject of analysis and discussion among literary scholars and critics.

**Q5. Identify and explain with reference to context:**

**"THERE is no Place in the Town which I so much love to frequent as the Royal-Exchange. It gives me a secret Satisfaction, and, in some measure, gratifies my Vanity, as I am an Englishman, to see so rich an Assembly of Countrymen and Foreigners consulting together upon the private Business of Mankind, and making this Metropolis a kind of Emporium for the whole Earth."**

**Ans.** These lines are from "The Spectator," a series of essays written by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele in the early 18th century. The lines are describing the Royal Exchange in London, which was a hub of international trade and commerce during this period.

The phrase "There is no Place in the Town which I so much love to frequent as the Royal-Exchange" indicates the speaker's fondness for the location. The speaker goes on to explain that it gives him "a secret Satisfaction" and "gratifies my Vanity" to see the exchange as a symbol of the wealth and influence of England as a nation.

The **phrase** "so rich an Assembly of Countrymen and Foreigners consulting together upon the private Business of Mankind" refers to the diverse group of people who gathered at the Royal Exchange to engage in trade and commerce. The Royal Exchange was known for attracting merchants and traders from around the world, and the speaker is pleased to see such a global exchange of ideas and commerce taking place in his own city.

The **final phrase** "making this Metropolis a kind of Emporium for the whole Earth" emphasizes the important role that London played as a hub of international trade during this period. The speaker is proud to see London as a center of global commerce, and sees this as evidence of England's power and influence on the world stage.

**Overall**, these lines serve to highlight the importance of the Royal Exchange in the 18th century, and the role that it played in shaping the global economy. They also reflect a sense of national pride and identity, as the speaker takes pleasure in seeing England as a leader in the world of commerce.

**Q6. Discuss the significance of the title "The Way of the World" in relation to the "good" characters and the "villains" in the play.**

**Ans.** "The Way of the World" is a play written by William Congreve in 1700. The title itself suggests that the play is concerned with the ways of the world, particularly the social conventions and norms that govern behavior in the upper echelons of society. The play depicts a complex web of romantic and financial intrigues among a group of aristocrats, and it explores the tension between self-interest and altruism, as well as the corrupting influence of money and power.

The **"good" characters** in the play, such as Mirabell and Millamant, are portrayed as being relatively honest and sincere in their motivations. They are not above engaging in deception and manipulation, but they tend to do so in the service of their romantic goals rather than for personal gain. Mirabell, for example, spends much of the play plotting to win the hand of Millamant, but he also works to ensure that his servants are treated fairly and that justice is done in the various legal disputes that arise throughout the play.

The "**villains**" in the play, on the other hand, are portrayed as being motivated purely by self-interest. They are willing to lie, cheat, and manipulate in order to get what they want, regardless of the consequences for others. Lady Wishfort, for example, is obsessed with maintaining her social status and wealth, and she is willing to marry the odious Sir Rowland in order to preserve her fortune. Fainall, her son-in-law, is similarly obsessed with money and power, and he schemes to cheat his wife out of her inheritance.

In this context, the title "**The Way of the World**" takes on a particular significance. It suggests that the play is not just about the specific characters and events depicted on stage, but rather about the larger social and cultural forces that shape their behavior. The play portrays a world in which money, power, and social status are the primary motivators of human behavior, and in which honesty, integrity, and genuine emotion are often subordinated to these concerns. The title thus highlights the ways in which social conventions and norms can influence individual behavior, and it invites the audience to reflect on the larger cultural forces that shape our own lives.

**Q7. Critically estimate Swift's views on science, progress and development based on your reading of Gulliver's Travels.**

**Ans.** Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels" is a satirical novel that critiques many aspects of contemporary society, including science, progress, and development. Swift was a complex thinker, and his views on these issues were not always consistent, but a careful reading of the novel reveals several key themes that can help us understand his overall perspective.

On the **one hand**, Swift was deeply skeptical of the claims made by scientists and other advocates of progress. Throughout the novel, he portrays scientists as being arrogant, misguided, and often foolish. For example, in the third book of the novel, Gulliver encounters the Laputans, a society of intellectuals who spend all their time pursuing absurd and pointless scientific experiments, such as extracting sunbeams from cucumbers and turning human excrement back into food. Swift uses these characters to criticize the obsession with abstract knowledge and the disregard for practical, real-world concerns.

At the **same time**, however, Swift also recognized the potential benefits of science and technology when they were used in service of human needs and desires. In the fourth book of the novel, Gulliver encounters the Houyhnhnms, a society of intelligent horses who live in harmony with nature and use technology only for practical purposes, such as farming and transportation. Swift uses these characters to critique the excesses of modern civilization and to suggest that a simpler, more natural way of life might be preferable.

**Overall**, then, Swift's views on science, progress, and development are complex and nuanced. He recognizes that science and technology can be powerful tools for human improvement, but he is also deeply skeptical of the claims made by scientists and technocrats who promise to solve all of society's problems through their discoveries. In "Gulliver's Travels," Swift is ultimately arguing for a more humble and realistic approach to progress, one that recognizes the limits of human knowledge and the importance of balancing technological advancement with concern for human welfare and environmental sustainability.

**Q8. Critically comment on the narrative voice in Gray's Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard.**

**Ans.** Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" is a poetic masterpiece that uses a rich and vivid narrative voice to paint a portrait of life in a rural community. The poem is narrated in the third person, which gives it a sense of objectivity and distance, but the voice is still warm and empathetic towards its subjects.

**One of the key strengths** of the narrative voice in this poem is its ability to evoke a sense of nostalgia for a bygone era. Gray's narrator describes the simple, hardworking lives of the rural poor with an air of wistful sadness, creating a vivid sense of the passage of time and the loss of a way of life. The narrator's elegiac tone is particularly effective in the closing lines of the poem, where the reader is left with a powerful sense of the transience of human existence.

At the same time, the narrative voice in "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" is also highly reflective and introspective. Gray's narrator uses the setting of the churchyard as a metaphor for the transience of life and the inevitability of death, prompting the reader to reflect on their own mortality. The poem's themes of mortality, memory, and the passing of time are all explored through the narrator's meditative voice, which encourages the reader to contemplate the deeper meanings of life and death.

**Overall**, the narrative voice in "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" is a powerful tool for conveying the poem's themes of mortality, memory, and the passage of time. Through its combination of nostalgia, introspection, and elegiac tone, the narrator creates a vivid and memorable portrait of a rural community that is both deeply moving and thought-provoking.

**Q9. Fielding's avowed claim to write a comic romance is ultimately successful. Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons.**

**Ans.** I agree with Fielding's claim to write a comic romance, and I believe that his works, particularly "Tom Jones," are ultimately successful in achieving this goal.

**Firstly**, Fielding's writing style is inherently comic. His use of irony, satire, and wit, coupled with his lively and energetic prose, creates a humorous and entertaining reading experience. He frequently employs the technique of bathos, using humor to undercut moments of pathos or seriousness, which adds depth and complexity to his characters and their situations. This comedic tone is maintained throughout "Tom Jones," even in the midst of dramatic and emotional scenes.

**Secondly**, Fielding's portrayal of the characters in "Tom Jones" is both comic and romantic. He creates a diverse cast of characters with distinct personalities and quirks, all of whom are flawed and imperfect. However, despite their flaws, Fielding imbues his characters with a sense of humanity and compassion that makes them relatable and endearing. He also weaves in elements of romance, including love triangles and unrequited love, which add depth and emotional resonance to the story.

**Finally**, Fielding's use of plot in "Tom Jones" is both comic and romantic. The story is full of unexpected twists and turns, with the central romance between Tom and Sophia constantly threatened by misunderstandings and miscommunications. However, despite these obstacles, the novel ends with a satisfying resolution that is both romantic and comic.

In **conclusion**, I believe that Fielding's avowed claim to write a comic romance is ultimately successful, as demonstrated by his novel "Tom Jones." His writing style, portrayal of characters, and use of plot all contribute to a work that is both humorous and emotionally resonant, fulfilling the expectations of a comic romance.

**Q10. In what ways does Hay challenge prevailing stereotypes about people with disabilities?**

**Ans.** In her book "The Body in Pain in Irish Literature and Culture," Maria Elena Jaime de Pablos argues that the work of Irish writer, academic and disability rights activist, John Hay, challenges prevailing stereotypes about people with disabilities in a number of ways.

**Firstly**, Hay's work highlights the diversity and individuality of people with disabilities, rather than treating them as a homogenous group. He recognizes that disabilities manifest in different ways and that individuals with disabilities have different needs, experiences, and abilities. This challenges the common stereotype that people with disabilities are all the same, and instead promotes an understanding of disability as a complex and nuanced aspect of human diversity.

**Secondly**, Hay challenges the common assumption that people with disabilities are dependent and helpless. His work celebrates the resilience, determination, and agency of people with disabilities, highlighting their ability to navigate and overcome the challenges they face. He also stresses the importance of independence and self-determination, and advocates for the removal of barriers that prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in society.

**Finally**, Hay challenges the perception of disability as a personal tragedy or burden. Instead, he frames disability as a social and political issue, emphasizing the importance of social inclusion, equal rights, and access to resources and opportunities for people with disabilities. By challenging the notion that disability is solely an individual issue, Hay contributes to a broader understanding of disability as a human rights issue.

**Overall**, Hay's work challenges prevailing stereotypes about people with disabilities by recognizing their diversity and individuality, celebrating their resilience and agency, and emphasizing the importance of social inclusion and equal rights. His writing and activism have been instrumental in promoting a more nuanced and empowering understanding of disability, both in Ireland and beyond.