

# British Poetry and Drama: 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries PYQ 2018

Q1. Identify the passage given below and explain with reference to the context:

He putte it in oure owene jugement.  
For hadde God commanded maydenhede,  
Thane hadde he damped wedding with the dede  
And certes, if ther were no sees y-sowe,  
Vigninitee, thane where of sholde it growe?

**Ans. The passage given is from Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Canterbury Tales," specifically from "The Wife of Bath's Tale."** It is part of a speech delivered by the character of the Wife of Bath, who is a bold and outspoken woman with extensive experience in marriage.

**In this particular passage, the Wife of Bath is expressing her view on virginity and marriage.** She criticizes the idea that God has commanded virginity, suggesting that if God had indeed commanded it, then the institution of marriage would be condemned. She argues that if there were no sexual relationships and procreation, then there would be no way for society to continue and flourish ("Vigninitee" refers to procreation and growth).

**The Wife of Bath's argument challenges the prevailing societal norms and religious beliefs of her time, which placed a high value on virginity and chastity.** She asserts that marriage and sexuality are natural and necessary aspects of human existence, emphasizing the importance of procreation for the continuity of society.

The passage reflects the Wife of Bath's **rebellious and outspoken character**, as she challenges traditional ideas about gender roles, marriage, and sexuality.

OR

Q1. Identify the passage given below and explain with reference to the context:

So let us melt, and make no noise.  
No tear - floods, nor sigh - tempests move;  
Twere profanation of our joys  
To tell the laity our love.

**Ans. The passage given is from John Donne's poem "The Canonization."**

**In this passage, the speaker is addressing their lover and proposing that they should keep their love a secret and not make any outward display of their emotions.** The speaker suggests that openly expressing their love through tears, sighs, or public declarations would only prolong their

suffering and bring unnecessary attention to their relationship. They use the term "prostration" to describe this elongation of their suffering.

**The speaker argues that their love is sacred and should be kept private, free from the judgment or interference of others ("the laity").** By using the metaphor of melting without making any noise, the speaker implies a quiet and hidden love, intimate and intense but not exhibited for the world to see.

**This passage reflects the theme of secrecy and the unconventional nature of the speaker's love.** It explores the idea that love can be elevated to a higher plane, almost like a religious devotion, but it also acknowledges the challenges and sacrifices that come with such a love.

**Q2. Identify the passage given below and explain with reference to the context:**

**O, what a world of profit and delight,**

**Of power, of honor, of omnipotence**

**Is promised to the studious artisan!**

**All things that move between the quiet poles**

**Shall be at my command**

**Ans.** The passage given is from Christopher Marlowe's play "Doctor Faustus."

**In this passage, the character of Doctor Faustus, a scholar who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for knowledge and power, is reflecting on the immense benefits and pleasures that await him through his newfound supernatural abilities.** Faustus marvels at the vast opportunities and control that will be bestowed upon him as a result of his pact with the devil.

**The phrase "O, what a world of profit and delight" expresses Faustus' excitement and anticipation for the boundless advantages he expects to gain.** He mentions "power, of honor, of omnipotence," indicating his desire for dominion and authority over all things. Faustus believes that by harnessing dark forces, he will be able to command and control everything that exists in the world ("All things that move between the quiet poles").

**The passage encapsulates the central theme of the play, which explores the consequences of ambition, the pursuit of forbidden knowledge, and the human desire for limitless power.** It highlights Faustus' reckless and hubristic aspirations, foreshadowing the moral downfall and tragic consequences that await him as he delves further into his pact with evil.

**OR**

**Q2. Identify the passage given below and explain with reference to the context:**

**My God, my God I Look not so fierce on me.**

**Adders and serpents, let me breathe awhile.**

**Ugly hell, gape not ! Come not Lucifer!**

**I'll burn my books. Ah Mephostophills !**

**Ans.** The passage given is from William Shakespeare's play "Doctor Faustus," written by Christopher Marlowe.

**I must note that there seems to be a confusion in the attribution of the passage.** The lines you provided are not from William Shakespeare's works but are indeed from Christopher Marlowe's play "Doctor Faustus." Shakespeare did not write a play called "Doctor Faustus"; it is a separate work by Marlowe.

**In the given passage, the character of Doctor Faustus is addressing various entities and expressing his distress.** He pleads with God, asking for mercy and not to look at him with anger. He also addresses adders and serpents, metaphorically referring to the threats and dangers that surround him, and asks for a moment to breathe and recover. Faustus then implores Hell and Lucifer, the devil, not to come near him, possibly out of fear or regret for his actions.

The final line, "**Ah Mephostophills!**" is a reference to Mephistopheles, a demon who serves as Faustus' companion and intermediary in his pact with the devil.

**The passage showcases Faustus' state of distress, regret, and his desire to escape the consequences of his choices.** It highlights his realization of the dangers and consequences of his pursuit of forbidden knowledge and the pact he made with evil forces. These lines reflect Faustus' growing sense of despair and the internal conflict he experiences throughout the play.

**Q3. Identify the passage given below and explain with reference to the context:**

**"Come to my woman's breasts,**

**And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers:**

**Ans.** The passage given is from William Shakespeare's play "Macbeth."

**In this passage, Lady Macbeth is speaking, addressing the supernatural forces she believes are present.** She calls upon these forces to take away her feminine qualities, symbolized by her breasts and milk. She wants her natural nurturing and compassionate instincts to be replaced by cruelty and bitterness ("take my milk for gall"). Lady Macbeth is urging the dark forces to remove her kindness and sensitivity, as she is preparing herself to commit a heinous act: the murder of King Duncan.

**The phrase "you murdering ministers" refers to the spirits or supernatural beings she believes will assist in the act of murder.** Lady Macbeth is calling upon these malevolent forces to aid her in carrying out the plan she and her husband have devised.

**The passage reflects Lady Macbeth's ambitious and ruthless nature, as she willingly embraces darkness and cruelty to achieve her goals.** It showcases her desire for power and her readiness to manipulate and eliminate any obstacles in her path.

**OR**

**Q3. Identify the passage given below and explain with reference to the context:**

**"No, indeed, sir, the Lady Olivia has no folly.**

**She will keep no fool, sir, till she be married;\***

**Ans.** The passage given is from William Shakespeare's play "Twelfth Night."

**In this passage, the character of Maria is speaking to Sir Toby Belch about Lady Olivia.** Maria refutes Sir Toby's assumption that Lady Olivia has a fondness for fools. She states that Lady Olivia is not foolish herself and that she will not entertain or keep a fool in her household until she gets married.

**The context of this passage revolves around the character of Malvolio, Olivia's steward, who has been the target of a prank orchestrated by Maria, Sir Toby, and other members of Olivia's household.** Sir Toby suggests that Olivia enjoys the presence of a fool, implying that Malvolio's behavior entertains her. However, Maria contradicts this notion and emphasizes that Olivia has no foolishness herself and has no intention of keeping a fool around her until she is married.

**The passage sheds light on Olivia's character and her desire for seriousness and order in her household.** It also highlights the mischievous nature of Maria and her involvement in the prank played on Malvolio. The exchange between Maria and Sir Toby sets the stage for further comedic moments and misunderstandings in the play.

**Q4. In Macbeth, Shakespeare critiques the values that define the idea of masculinity. Do you agree? Give a reasoned answer.**

**Ans. Yes, in Shakespeare's play "Macbeth," there is a critique of the values associated with masculinity.** Throughout the play, Shakespeare explores the destructive consequences of unchecked ambition, violence, and a distorted understanding of masculinity.

**One of the central themes in Macbeth is the idea of unchecked ambition and the lengths to which individuals will go to gain power and maintain their position.** Macbeth's own ambition drives him to commit heinous acts, including the murder of King Duncan and others, in his relentless pursuit of power. This ambition is fueled by his desire to embody what he perceives as traditionally masculine qualities such as strength, assertiveness, and dominance.

**However, as the play progresses, it becomes clear that Macbeth's actions are driven by an extreme and toxic interpretation of masculinity.** His single-minded pursuit of power leads to a disregard for morality, loss of humanity, and a descent into madness. Ultimately, Macbeth's actions and their consequences highlight the destructive nature of a hypermasculine ideal that values power and dominance above all else.

**Moreover, Shakespeare presents contrasting examples of masculinity throughout the play.**

Macduff, for instance, represents a different kind of masculinity. He is portrayed as loyal, brave, and committed to justice. Macduff's actions are driven by his love for his country and his family rather than personal ambition. Shakespeare suggests that this version of masculinity, one rooted in honor,

compassion, and a sense of responsibility, is far more admirable and righteous than the distorted version embodied by Macbeth.

**In conclusion, Shakespeare's "Macbeth" does critique the values associated with masculinity by showcasing the destructive consequences of unchecked ambition, violence, and a distorted understanding of power.** Through the characters of Macbeth and Macduff, the play challenges the traditional notion of masculinity and highlights the importance of balance, morality, and genuine strength in one's character.

OR

**Q4. \*Macbeth is a morality play written in terms of Jacobean tragedy." Discuss.**

**Ans. While "Macbeth" incorporates elements of morality and tragedy, it is not typically categorized as a morality play or strictly adherent to the conventions of Jacobean tragedy.** However, it does contain themes and elements that align with both genres.

**A morality play typically presents a moral lesson through allegorical characters and situations, with a clear dichotomy between good and evil.** While "Macbeth" does explore themes of morality, particularly in terms of the consequences of unchecked ambition and the corrupting nature of power, it does not employ allegorical characters or present a straightforward moral message. The characters in "Macbeth" are complex and multidimensional, exhibiting both good and evil traits, and their actions are driven by a range of motivations.

**In terms of tragedy, "Macbeth" aligns more closely with the conventions of Jacobean tragedy, a genre that emerged during the reign of King James I.** Jacobean tragedy often involves themes of ambition, fate, and the downfall of a tragic hero due to his tragic flaw. Macbeth's ambition and his willingness to sacrifice his honor and morality for power exemplify the tragic hero archetype. The play also contains supernatural elements, such as the witches and their prophecies, which are characteristic of Jacobean tragedy.

**However, "Macbeth" also diverges from some aspects of Jacobean tragedy. It lacks a sense of cosmic justice or divine retribution that is often seen in the genre.** While Macbeth meets a tragic end, it is not necessarily a direct result of divine punishment. Instead, it is the consequence of his own choices and actions. Additionally, "Macbeth" does not have a clear distinction between nobility and commoners, which is a hallmark of Jacobean tragedy.

**In summary, "Macbeth" incorporates elements of morality and tragedy, but it does not fit neatly into the genre of a morality play or strictly adhere to the conventions of Jacobean tragedy.** It combines elements of both genres while presenting complex characters and exploring moral themes in a nuanced and dramatic manner.

**Q5. "Doublings and Inversions are the main sources of humour in Twelfth Night." Explain with examples.**

**Ans. In Shakespeare's play "Twelfth Night," doublings and inversions indeed play a significant role in creating humor.** Doublings involve the pairing or mirroring of characters or situations, while inversions involve the reversal or subversion of expectations. These comedic techniques contribute to the comedic atmosphere and generate laughter through various situations and characters.

**One example of doubling in "Twelfth Night" is the pairing of the characters Viola and Sebastian.** Viola disguises herself as a young man named Cesario, while her twin brother Sebastian arrives separately. This leads to instances of mistaken identity, confusion, and comedic misunderstandings. The doubling of Viola and Sebastian allows for comedic situations where characters mistake one for the other, leading to humorous exchanges and complications.

**Another example of doubling is the pairing of the characters Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek.** Both characters are excessive in their behavior and revelry. Their interactions and attempts to court Olivia become a source of humor, as they are often portrayed as foolish and outlandish. The contrast between their exaggerated behavior and the more rational characters, such as Olivia's steward Malvolio, adds to the comedic effect.

**Inversions also contribute to the humor in "Twelfth Night." One notable inversion is the role reversal between Viola/Cesario and Olivia.** Viola, disguised as Cesario, becomes the object of Olivia's affection, while Olivia herself takes on a more active role in pursuing Cesario. This inversion of traditional gender roles and courtship conventions creates humorous situations and adds to the comedic misunderstandings in the play.

**Additionally, the character of Malvolio experiences an inversion of his usual serious and stern demeanor when he falls victim to a prank orchestrated by Maria, Sir Toby, and others.** Malvolio, typically known for his strict adherence to rules and decorum, is fooled into believing that Olivia is in love with him. This leads to his humorous display of vanity and over-the-top behavior, which contrasts with his usual seriousness.

**These examples illustrate how doublings and inversions contribute to the humor in "Twelfth Night."** By creating mistaken identities, role reversals, and subversions of expectations, these comedic techniques generate laughter and contribute to the overall comedic tone of the play.

OR

**Q5. Malvolio is a character which "invites sympathy and accommodates pathos and even tragedy...". Do you agree ?**

**Ans. Yes, I agree that Malvolio, a character in Shakespeare's play "Twelfth Night," invites sympathy and accommodates pathos and even elements of tragedy.**

**Initially, Malvolio is portrayed as a strict and self-righteous steward, often serving as the source of ridicule and amusement for other characters.** However, as the play progresses, his character undergoes a transformation that elicits sympathy from the audience.

**In Act II, Scene 5, Malvolio finds a letter supposedly written by Olivia, expressing her love for him.** Believing it to be genuine, he becomes the victim of a prank orchestrated by Maria, Sir Toby, and others. This deception leads Malvolio to exhibit exaggerated behavior, including wearing outrageous clothing and behaving pompously in front of Olivia.

**While the comedic aspects of Malvolio's situation are evident, there is an underlying pathos and tragedy to his character.** Malvolio genuinely believes that he has a chance at happiness and love, only to have his hopes and dreams shattered. His earnestness and vulnerability are exposed, inviting sympathy from the audience.

**Furthermore, Malvolio's mistreatment and humiliation by other characters can evoke empathy and compassion.** He becomes a target of mockery and scorn, facing ridicule from Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and even Feste the clown. This mistreatment can elicit a sense of pity and sympathy for Malvolio, especially as his actions were driven by his desire for happiness and acceptance.

**In the final act of the play, Malvolio confronts Olivia, expressing his anguish and the injustice he feels.** While his character's journey is primarily comedic, this moment allows for a glimpse into his wounded pride and genuine sorrow. This adds a touch of pathos and suggests that Malvolio's experiences extend beyond mere comedy.

**In conclusion, Malvolio's character in "Twelfth Night" combines elements of comedy, sympathy, and even tragedy.** Through his journey from pompous steward to a figure of ridicule, the audience is invited to empathize with his hopes, disappointments, and ultimate humiliation. This blending of comedy and pathos allows for a more complex portrayal of Malvolio's character, accommodating moments that invoke sympathy and even tragic undertones.

**Q6. Critically examine John Donne as a metaphysical poet with reference to the poem "Batter my Heart."**

**Ans. John Donne is widely regarded as one of the most prominent metaphysical poets of the 17th century.** His poem "Batter my Heart" exemplifies many characteristics associated with metaphysical poetry.

**Metaphysical poetry is known for its intellectual and philosophical exploration, unconventional use of imagery, wit, and complex metaphors.** It often combines elements of the spiritual and the sensual, fusing together contradictory ideas to provoke thought and evoke strong emotions.

**In "Batter my Heart," Donne employs striking imagery and dramatic language to express his spiritual struggle and desire for divine intervention.** The poem's central theme revolves around the conflict between human frailty and the overwhelming power of God's love and grace.

**The poem begins with a paradoxical statement, "Batter my heart, three-personed God," immediately setting the tone for the metaphysical exploration of contrasting ideas.** The use of the verb "batter" conveys a sense of forceful and violent action, suggesting Donne's plea for God to break through the speaker's resistance and transform him. This violent language continues throughout the poem, emphasizing the intensity of the speaker's desire for a profound spiritual change.

**Donne's use of conceits, elaborate and extended metaphors, is another characteristic of metaphysical poetry evident in "Batter my Heart."** For instance, the speaker compares himself to a captured town in need of liberation. He asks God to act as an aggressive conqueror, using military imagery to describe the spiritual battle taking place within him. The speaker recognizes his own limitations and weaknesses and appeals to God to overpower and reshape him, ultimately for his own salvation.

**The poem's intricate structure, with its irregular meter and rhyme scheme, reflects the complex and unconventional nature of metaphysical poetry.** Donne's use of enjambment, where sentences and thoughts continue across line breaks, creates a sense of momentum and urgency, adding to the poem's emotional impact.

**"Batter my Heart" showcases Donne's ability to blend spiritual and physical elements in a thought-provoking manner.** The poem explores the paradoxical nature of human desire for divine intervention and the struggle for personal transformation. It captures the essence of metaphysical poetry by using imaginative language, metaphysical conceits, and a philosophical exploration of the complexities of the human experience.

**In conclusion, John Donne's "Batter my Heart" exemplifies his skill as a metaphysical poet.** Through its use of vivid imagery, striking language, and intricate metaphors, the poem delves into the depths of spiritual longing, human frailty, and the transformative power of God's grace. It embodies the essence of metaphysical poetry, characterized by its intellectual exploration, unconventional imagery, and blending of the spiritual and the physical.

OR

**Q6. Discuss Dr Faustus as a text which embodies the contradictions of its age.**

**Ans. Christopher Marlowe's play "Doctor Faustus" is often seen as a text that embodies the contradictions of its age, particularly the late 16th century in England.** The play reflects the tensions and conflicts prevalent during the Renaissance period, exploring themes of ambition, knowledge, morality, and the clash between religious and secular worldviews.

**One of the key contradictions explored in "Doctor Faustus" is the conflict between Renaissance humanism and Christian morality.** Faustus, the protagonist, represents the pursuit of knowledge, power, and worldly pleasures associated with humanist ideals. He desires to transcend the limitations of human existence and seeks ultimate knowledge and mastery over the world. However, his choices and actions lead him to a tragic downfall, highlighting the moral consequences of his choices and the potential dangers of unchecked ambition.

**The play also reflects the tension between traditional religious beliefs and the emerging scientific and intellectual advancements of the Renaissance.** Faustus's quest for knowledge and power through necromancy and his pact with the devil challenge the religious doctrines of the time. The play raises questions about the boundaries of human knowledge, the nature of sin, and the consequences of defying divine authority.

**Furthermore, "Doctor Faustus" exposes the contradictions between the pursuit of earthly pleasures and the longing for spiritual redemption.** Faustus's pact with Lucifer offers him worldly delights and magical powers, but ultimately leaves him unsatisfied and tormented. His internal struggle between his desires for power and pleasure and his conscience exemplifies the conflict between earthly desires and spiritual salvation.

**The play also explores the contradictions of social hierarchies and the limitations placed on individuals by their class and societal roles.** Faustus, a scholar of humble origins, seeks to rise above his station through knowledge and power. However, his ultimate failure reflects the societal constraints and limitations imposed by the rigid social order of the time.



In summary, "Doctor Faustus" can be seen as a text that embodies the contradictions of its age. It reflects the tensions between Renaissance humanism and Christian morality, the clash between religious and secular worldviews, and the conflicting desires for knowledge, power, and spiritual redemption. Through the character of Faustus, the play explores these contradictions and raises questions about the boundaries of human ambition, the consequences of defying religious doctrine, and the conflicts between earthly desires and spiritual fulfillment.

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