

SHIVAJI UNIVERSITY KOLHAPUR

B A III Semester V (NEP 2.0)

Major Elective I

British Literature from Renaissance to the end of Romantic Age

Prepared by

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**B A III Semester V (NEP 2.0) Major Elective I –
British Literature from Renaissance to the end of Romantic Age**

Syllabus

Module No.	Subtitles of the Module
I	General Topics a. Elizabethan Drama b. Metaphysical Poetry c. Development of Periodical Essays in the 18th Century d. Romantic Poetry
II	Drama <i>Doctor Faustus</i> - Christopher Marlowe
III	Essays 1. Sir Roger at the Church (from The Spectator)- Joseph Addison 2. The Club (from The Spectator)- Sir Richard Steele 3. On Idleness (Essay no.31)(from The Idler)- Samuel Johnson 4. On the Use of Language – Oliver Goldsmith
IV	Poems 1. Death Be Not Proud- John Donne 2. The Definition of Love - Andrew Marvell 3. The Pulley – George Herbert 4. Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey – William Wordsworth 5. Ode to the West Wind- P.B. Shelley 6. La Belle Dame Sans Merci- John Keats

Nature of Question Paper (80 Marks)

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|-------|--|------------|
| Q.1 | A) Multiple choice questions (On Module 1,2,3 & 4) (10 MCQ) | (10 marks) |
| | B) Answer the following questions as directed: (On Module 1,2,3 & 4) | |
| | (10 Objective questions) | (10 Marks) |
| Q. 2. | Answer the following questions in about 200 words (2/3) | |
| | (To be set on Module 1) | (15Marks) |
| Q.3. | Answer the following questions in about 200 words (2/3) | |
| | (To be set on Module 2, 3 & 4) | (15 Marks) |
| Q.4. | Answer the following questions in about 200 words (2/3) | |
| | (To be set on Module 2,3 & 4) | (15 Marks) |
| Q. 5. | Write short notes in about 150 words (3 out of 5) | |
| | (on Module 1,2,3& 4) | (15 Marks) |

Internal Assessment: Home Assignment – 20 Marks

Marks: Semester End: 60 Internal Assessment: 40 Total Marks: 100

(Implemented from June 2027)

Question Paper Pattern

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| Q.1. | Multiple choice questions (On Module 2,3 & 4) (10 MCQ) | (10 marks) |
| Q.2. | Answer the following questions in about 200 words (2/3)
(To be set on Module 2, 3 & 4) | (20 Marks) |
| Q.3. | Answer the following questions in about 200 words (2/3)
(To be set on Module 2,3 & 4) | (20 Marks) |
| Q. 4. | Write short notes in about 150 words (2 out of 4)
(on Module 1) | (10 Marks) |

- A. Elizabethan Drama
 - B. Metaphysical Poetry
 - C. Development of Periodical Essays in the 18th Century
 - D. Romantic Poetry
- A. Elizabethan Drama**

Elizabethan Drama refers to the drama written and performed in England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, from 1558 to 1603. It is one of the most important and brilliant periods in the history of English drama. During this age, English drama developed rapidly and became a popular form of entertainment. The period produced some of the greatest dramatists in English literature, especially William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson, Thomas Kyd, and John Webster. Elizabethan drama combined entertainment, poetry, action, humour, tragedy, romance, and human emotions.

The growth of Elizabethan drama was closely connected with the social and cultural development of England. The Renaissance had brought a new interest in human life, knowledge, classical literature, science, art, and individual freedom. People became interested in the study of Greek and Roman literature. English writers began to use classical ideas and dramatic forms, but they also developed their own styles. The English language became richer and more expressive. The invention and growth of printing also helped literature reach a larger number of readers.

One of the most important reasons for the development of drama was the popularity of public theatres. Before the rise of permanent theatres, plays were often performed in courtyards, inns, churches, royal palaces, and other temporary places. Later, special theatres were constructed in and around London. The famous Theatre was built in 1576 by James Burbage. Other important theatres included the Curtain, Rose, Swan, and Globe. The Globe Theatre became especially famous because many of Shakespeare's plays were performed there. These theatres attracted people from different social classes.

Elizabethan theatres were quite different from modern theatres. The stage was generally open and surrounded by the audience on three sides. There was no modern lighting system, so performances were usually held during the afternoon. The scenery was simple, and the playwright depended more on words and imagination than on elaborate stage decoration. Music, costumes, gestures, and speeches

helped create the atmosphere of the play. Women were generally not allowed to act on the public stage, so female roles were performed by young male actors.

Elizabethan drama included different types of plays. Tragedy dealt with serious subjects such as ambition, revenge, jealousy, love, political conflict, and death. Christopher Marlowe was an important early writer of Elizabethan tragedy. His famous plays include *Doctor Faustus*, *Tamburlaine the Great*, and *Edward II*. Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* was also an important revenge tragedy. These plays often contained violence, dramatic action, powerful speeches, and tragic endings.

Comedy was another important type of Elizabethan drama. Comedies generally presented love, marriage, misunderstandings, mistaken identities, clever servants, and humorous situations. They usually ended happily. Shakespeare developed English comedy to a very high level in plays such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, and *The Merchant of Venice*. Ben Jonson also became famous for his realistic and satirical comedies, especially *Every Man in His Humour* and *Volpone*.

History plays were also popular during this period. They presented important events and rulers from English history. These plays helped develop national pride and interest in England's past. Shakespeare wrote several important history plays, including *Richard II*, *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Richard III*, and *King John*. His history plays combine political events with personal conflicts and human emotions.

The greatest achievement of Elizabethan drama is the dramatic work of William Shakespeare. Shakespeare transformed English drama through his understanding of human nature, powerful characters, beautiful poetry, humour, and dramatic situations. His tragedies include *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. His comedies include *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He also wrote historical plays and romantic plays. His characters are memorable because they represent different aspects of human life. Hamlet represents doubt and hesitation, Macbeth represents ambition, Othello represents jealousy, and King Lear represents suffering and human weakness.

Elizabethan drama is also famous for its poetic language. Many dramatists used blank verse, which is unrhymed iambic pentameter. Marlowe made blank verse powerful and musical, and Shakespeare developed it with great skill. Along with blank verse, prose was also used, especially in comic and informal scenes. Elizabethan dramatists used metaphors, images, wordplay, dramatic irony, soliloquies, and powerful speeches to express the thoughts and emotions of their characters.

Another important feature of Elizabethan drama is its variety. A single play could contain serious and comic scenes, romance and violence, poetry and prose. Elizabethan dramatists did not always follow the strict classical rules of unity of time, place, and action. They freely moved from one place to another and sometimes covered many years. This freedom allowed them to present large and complicated stories.

Elizabethan drama also presented a wide picture of human life. It dealt with love, friendship, ambition, revenge, power, politics, family relationships, war, morality, betrayal, and death. The characters were not simply good or bad. They often had both strengths and weaknesses. This realistic treatment of human nature made Elizabethan drama universal and timeless.

Elizabethan Drama represents the golden age of English drama. It developed because of the Renaissance spirit, the growth of public theatres, the popularity of acting, and the talents of great dramatists. Marlowe gave strength and energy to English tragedy, Kyd developed the revenge tradition, Jonson enriched comedy and satire, and Shakespeare brought English drama to its highest artistic level. Elizabethan drama continues to be studied and performed throughout the world because it combines powerful stories, beautiful language, memorable characters, and deep understanding of human life.

B. Metaphysical Poetry

Metaphysical Poetry is a special kind of poetry that became popular in seventeenth-century England, especially during the period from the late sixteenth century to the early eighteenth century. The term Metaphysical means something related to deep thoughts about life, human existence, God, the soul, love, death, and the nature of reality. Metaphysical poets were different from many earlier poets because they combined thought and emotion, intelligence and imagination, philosophy and poetry. Their poems often require careful reading because they contain unusual ideas, clever arguments, surprising comparisons, and intellectual discussions.

The most important Metaphysical poet was John Donne. Other important poets associated with this school include George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, Henry Vaughan, Richard Crashaw, and Abraham Cowley. These poets did not form a formal literary group, but they shared certain features in their poetry. Their poems are known for their intellectual quality, unusual imagery, wit, dramatic openings, argumentative style, and exploration of both physical and spiritual experiences.

One of the most important characteristics of Metaphysical Poetry is the use of wit. Wit means the ability to express an intelligent or clever idea in an interesting and surprising way. Metaphysical poets often present a difficult thought in a clever manner. They enjoy making unexpected connections

between different things. Their poetry therefore appeals not only to the emotions but also to the mind. A reader has to think about the meaning of the poem instead of simply enjoying its musical language.

Another important feature is the use of the metaphysical conceit. A conceit is an unusual and extended comparison between two very different things. Metaphysical poets used such comparisons to express complex ideas. For example, in John Donne's poem *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*, two lovers are compared to the two legs of a mathematical compass. One leg remains fixed while the other moves around it, but both remain connected. Donne uses this unusual comparison to show that true love can remain strong even when the lovers are physically separated. Such surprising comparisons are one of the most distinctive features of Metaphysical Poetry.

Metaphysical poets also used argument and logical reasoning in their poems. Many of their poems are written like conversations or arguments. The poet may present a problem, give reasons, answer objections, and finally reach a conclusion. John Donne's love poems often have this argumentative quality. In *The Flea*, for example, the speaker tries to persuade his beloved to accept his argument by using the image of a flea. The flea has bitten both of them, and the speaker cleverly argues that their blood is already mixed. The comparison is unusual and humorous, but it demonstrates the poet's intellectual approach.

Metaphysical Poetry often combines love and religion. John Donne wrote both secular love poetry and religious poetry. His poems explore physical love, spiritual love, sin, repentance, faith, and the relationship between human beings and God. George Herbert is especially known for religious poetry. His poems such as *The Altar* and *Easter Wings* express Christian faith through carefully designed forms and meaningful images. Thus, Metaphysical Poetry can deal with both the physical world and the spiritual world.

Another major feature is the use of everyday language. Metaphysical poets did not always use the highly decorative and artificial language that was common in some earlier poetry. Their poetry often sounds like natural speech or conversation. They used words and images from ordinary life as well as from science, mathematics, medicine, geography, astronomy, law, and philosophy. This made their poetry unusual and intellectually rich.

Metaphysical poets also used many scientific and philosophical ideas. The seventeenth century was a period of scientific discovery and intellectual change. New ideas about the universe, astronomy, medicine, and human knowledge influenced literature. Donne, for example, referred to astronomical and scientific ideas in his poetry. The poets used these ideas not merely for decoration but to explain

emotions and relationships. In this way, they connected the world of science with the world of human feelings.

Paradox is another important characteristic of Metaphysical Poetry. A paradox is a statement that appears contradictory but contains a deeper truth. Metaphysical poets often used paradox to express complicated human experiences. They might present love as both pleasure and pain, or death as something that can lead to eternal life. Such statements make the reader think deeply about the meaning behind them.

Metaphysical Poetry is also characterized by dramatic situations and direct conversation. Many poems begin suddenly, as if the reader has entered an ongoing conversation. The speaker may address a lover, a friend, death, God, or even an object. This creates a dramatic and personal effect. The poet's voice often appears confident, argumentative, emotional, and intelligent.

The style of Metaphysical Poetry is sometimes difficult because of its complex ideas, unusual comparisons, difficult references, and sudden changes in thought. However, this difficulty is also one of its attractions. The poems become more meaningful when the reader studies their images and arguments carefully. The poets wanted their readers to participate intellectually in the poem rather than simply enjoy its sound.

John Donne is considered the greatest representative of Metaphysical Poetry. His famous poems include *The Flea*, *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*, *The Canonization*, *Death Be Not Proud*, and *The Sun Rising*. George Herbert is another major poet, especially known for his religious poetry. Andrew Marvell is famous for *To His Coy Mistress*, which combines love, time, and mortality. Henry Vaughan is known for his spiritual and mystical poetry.

The Metaphysical poets were not always appreciated by later generations. During the eighteenth century, some critics considered their poetry strange, difficult, and unnatural. Samuel Johnson, in his famous discussion of the Metaphysical poets in *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*, criticized their unusual comparisons and intellectual style. However, in the twentieth century, writers and critics began to appreciate them again. T. S. Eliot played an important role in bringing renewed attention to Metaphysical Poetry. He praised the poets for their ability to combine thought and feeling.

Metaphysical Poetry is an important movement in English literature. It is known for wit, metaphysical conceits, paradox, argument, intellectual ideas, dramatic speech, religious thought, unusual imagery, and the combination of thought and emotion. John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, Henry Vaughan, and other poets made important contributions to this tradition. Although their poetry can sometimes be difficult, it provides a rich understanding of love, religion, death, time, human

nature, and the relationship between the body and the soul. Metaphysical Poetry remains important because it shows that poetry can be both deeply emotional and highly intellectual.

C. Development of Periodical Essays in the 18th Century

The 18th century is an important period in the history of English literature. It is often called the Age of Reason, Age of Enlightenment, or Augustan Age. During this period, people developed a strong interest in reason, science, education, politics, society, and morality. One of the most important literary developments of the age was the growth of the periodical essay. A periodical essay is a short essay published regularly in a newspaper, magazine, or periodical publication. It usually discusses everyday life, social behaviour, manners, morals, literature, politics, and other subjects in a simple and entertaining manner. The periodical essay became a popular way of educating and entertaining the growing middle-class reading public.

The development of the periodical essay was closely connected with the growth of newspapers, magazines, printing, education, and coffee-house culture. During the 18th century, printing became more common and books and newspapers became easier to obtain. The number of educated readers increased, especially among the middle class. People wanted to read about current events, social problems, literature, fashion, manners, and politics. Coffee houses in London became important centres of social and intellectual life. People gathered there to discuss politics, literature, business, and current affairs. Newspapers and periodicals were often read and discussed in these places. This environment created a strong demand for short and interesting essays.

The periodical essay developed from earlier forms of journalism and essay writing. Richard Steele played an important role in its development. In 1709, he started *The Tatler*. It was published three times a week and discussed politics, society, literature, theatre, fashion, and everyday behaviour. Steele wrote under the name Isaac Bickerstaff. He presented social observations in a humorous and friendly manner. *The Tatler* became successful because it was easy to read and dealt with subjects that ordinary people could understand and enjoy.

In 1711, Richard Steele and Joseph Addison started *The Spectator*. It became the most famous and influential periodical of the 18th century. It was published daily and reached a large number of readers. Addison and Steele used the periodical essay to educate society while also entertaining it. *The Spectator* discussed topics such as manners, morality, marriage, family life, education, literature, fashion, religion, and social behaviour. The essays were written in clear and elegant English. They tried to improve the moral and intellectual standards of the readers.

The central character of *The Spectator* was Mr. Spectator, whose name was later associated with Addison's persona as a quiet observer of society. Addison also created several memorable fictional characters, such as Sir Roger de Coverley, Sir Andrew Freeport, Captain Sentry, and Will Honeycomb. Sir Roger is particularly important. He is a kind, honest, traditional English country gentleman with some amusing weaknesses. Through these characters, Addison and Steele presented different types of people and gently criticized their weaknesses.

One of the most important features of the periodical essay was its social purpose. Addison and Steele wanted to reform society without using harsh criticism. They attacked social evils such as vanity, hypocrisy, excessive drinking, gambling, cruelty, bad manners, and foolish fashion. They also encouraged politeness, honesty, moderation, good behaviour, and moral responsibility. Their aim was to polish society and make people better citizens. They believed that literature could be used as a means of moral and social improvement.

The periodical essay also played an important role in the development of English prose style. Addison's prose is famous for its simplicity, clarity, balance, elegance, and natural flow. He avoided unnecessarily difficult words and complicated expressions. His style was suitable for the ordinary educated reader. Samuel Johnson later praised Addison's prose for its clarity and purity. Addison and Steele helped establish a style of English prose that was both literary and easily understandable.

Another important contribution of periodical essays was the development of literary criticism. Addison wrote several essays on poetry, drama, imagination, and literary taste. His famous series on the Pleasures of the Imagination appeared in *The Spectator*. These essays helped ordinary readers understand literature and develop better literary taste. Periodicals therefore became not only sources of entertainment but also important instruments of education.

The periodical essay also reflected the changing position of women in 18th-century society. Addison and Steele frequently discussed women's education, manners, marriage, fashion, and social position. *The Spectator* was designed to attract both male and female readers. The periodicals encouraged polite conversation and civilized social behaviour. They helped create a shared culture among educated people.

The success of *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* encouraged the publication of many other periodicals. Important examples include *The Guardian*, also associated with Steele and Addison, and later publications influenced by the periodical essay tradition. The form also influenced later essayists and journalists. Writers such as Samuel Johnson continued the tradition through *The Rambler* and *The Idler*. These publications discussed morality, literature, human behaviour, and everyday life.

The periodical essay was different from the formal scholarly essay because it was written for a general reading public. It was usually short, interesting, conversational, and connected with everyday life. It combined information with entertainment and moral instruction. Humour, satire, anecdotes, fictional characters, dialogues, and observations were commonly used to make the essays attractive.

The development of the periodical essay was one of the most important achievements of 18th century English literature. The rise of printing, newspapers, coffee houses, education, and the middle-class reading public created favourable conditions for its growth. Richard Steele and Joseph Addison were the chief pioneers of the form through *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. The periodical essay entertained readers, educated them, improved their manners, encouraged moral values, and developed their literary taste. It also helped establish clear and elegant English prose. For these reasons, the periodical essay became an important bridge between literature, journalism, education, and social reform, and its influence can still be seen in modern newspapers, magazines, and online opinion writing.

D. Romantic Poetry

Romantic Poetry is one of the most important movements in the history of English literature. It developed in England during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, mainly from about 1798 to 1832. The publication of William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 is generally considered the beginning of the Romantic Movement in English poetry. Romantic poetry developed as a reaction against the rules, reason, artificiality, and classical traditions of the earlier Neoclassical or Augustan Age. Romantic poets gave greater importance to imagination, emotion, nature, individual freedom, and ordinary human life.

The Romantic Age was influenced by important historical and political events. The French Revolution of 1789 had a powerful influence on many Romantic poets. Its ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity inspired them to think about freedom and social justice. The Industrial Revolution also changed English society. Cities grew rapidly, factories developed, and many people suffered from poverty and difficult working conditions. Romantic poets often reacted against excessive industrialization and the loss of close contact with nature. They looked towards nature, simple rural life, and the individual as sources of beauty and truth.

One of the most important characteristics of Romantic Poetry is the importance given to nature. Romantic poets considered nature more than just a beautiful background. They saw nature as a living power that could teach, inspire, comfort, and spiritually influence human beings. William Wordsworth is especially famous for his poetry about nature. In poems such as *Tintern Abbey*, *I Wandered Lonely as*

a Cloud, and *The Solitary Reaper*, he presents nature as a source of peace and spiritual growth. For Wordsworth, nature has a close relationship with the human mind and emotions.

Another important feature is the importance of imagination. Romantic poets believed that imagination was one of the greatest powers of the human mind. It could transform ordinary experiences into beautiful poetry. Samuel Taylor Coleridge gave special importance to imagination. In his poems *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *Kubla Khan*, and *Christabel*, he combines imagination, mystery, supernatural elements, and psychological experience. His poetry shows how imagination can create a world that is different from ordinary reality.

Romantic Poetry also gives great importance to emotion and personal feelings. Romantic poets believed that poetry should express genuine human emotions. Wordsworth famously described poetry as the expression of powerful feelings remembered and reflected upon. His poems often begin with a simple personal experience and develop into deeper thoughts about life and nature. Romantic poetry therefore became more personal and subjective than much of the poetry of the earlier age.

The Romantic poets also showed great interest in ordinary people and simple rural life. Wordsworth believed that the lives of common people contained important human emotions and experiences. He often wrote about shepherds, farmers, children, travellers, and poor villagers. He used relatively simple language because he wanted poetry to be accessible to ordinary readers. His *Lyrical Ballads* helped bring common life and common speech into English poetry.

Another important characteristic is the love of freedom and individualism. Romantic poets valued the individual personality and freedom of thought. They opposed unnecessary social and literary restrictions. They wanted to express their own ideas and emotions freely. Percy Bysshe Shelley was strongly influenced by ideas of political and social freedom. His poems such as *Ode to the West Wind*, *To a Skylark*, and *The Masque of Anarchy* express his desire for freedom, change, and a better society.

Romantic poets were also attracted to the supernatural, mysterious, and unusual. Coleridge used supernatural elements very effectively in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. The poem includes mysterious events, strange creatures, spirits, curses, and supernatural experiences. However, Coleridge presents these elements in such a convincing way that the reader can imagine them as real. This interest in mystery and the supernatural helped make Romantic poetry different from earlier poetry.

Romantic Poetry is also known for its interest in childhood and innocence. Romantic poets believed that children have a special connection with nature and possess imagination and innocence that adults often lose. Wordsworth's poems such as *Ode: Intimations of Immortality* and *We Are Seven* explore childhood, memory, innocence, and the development of the human mind. Childhood became an

important subject because Romantic poets were interested in the natural development of human personality.

The Romantic poets also explored beauty, love, loneliness, imagination, memory, dreams, and death. John Keats is especially famous for his poetry of beauty. His poems *Ode to a Nightingale*, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, *To Autumn*, and *Ode on Melancholy* show his deep appreciation of beauty, art, nature, and human mortality. Keats believed that beauty has a powerful relationship with truth and human experience.

Lord Byron represents another important side of Romantic Poetry. His poetry often presents freedom, individualism, rebellion, adventure, and the passionate personality. His famous works include *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, *Don Juan*, and *She Walks in Beauty*. Byron's heroes are often independent, proud, mysterious, and rebellious. He himself became an important symbol of the Romantic spirit.

Percy Bysshe Shelley was another major Romantic poet. He believed strongly in freedom, imagination, love, and social reform. His famous poems include *Ode to the West Wind*, *To a Skylark*, *Adonais*, and *Prometheus Unbound*. His poetry is musical, idealistic, and full of hope for social and political change.

The major Romantic poets are generally divided into two generations. The first generation includes William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and William Blake. The second generation includes Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and John Keats. Each poet had a different style, but they shared many Romantic qualities such as imagination, emotion, freedom, and love of nature.

Romantic Poetry brought a major change to English literature. It moved poetry away from excessive rules and artificial language and gave importance to nature, imagination, emotion, individual freedom, ordinary life, childhood, beauty, mystery, and personal experience. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Byron, Shelley, and Keats made significant contributions to the movement. Romantic poetry remains popular because it speaks directly to human feelings and presents nature, imagination, freedom, and beauty in a powerful and inspiring way. It opened a new direction in English poetry and influenced many later poets and literary movements.

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Module II - Drama

Doctor Faustus - Christopher Marlowe

Drama is an important form of literature that is written to be performed on a stage. It presents stories through dialogue, action, characters, and conflict. Drama may deal with different subjects such as love, family, society, politics, history, and human emotions. The major types of drama are tragedy, comedy, and tragicomedy. Unlike poetry or prose, drama depends mainly on performance, acting, dialogue, and stage presentation.

Elizabethan Drama developed in England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603). It is considered a golden period of English drama. The growth of public theatres encouraged many talented dramatists. Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and Thomas Kyd made important contributions. Elizabethan drama is known for powerful characters, poetic language, blank verse, supernatural elements, humour, violence, and strong human emotions. Shakespeare brought Elizabethan drama to its highest level.

Life and Works of Christopher Marlow

Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593) was one of the greatest dramatists and poets of the Elizabethan Age. He was born in Canterbury, England, in 1564. His father, John Marlowe, was a shoemaker. Marlowe received a good education at the King's School, Canterbury, and later studied at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. He completed his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1584 and his Master of Arts degree in 1587. He became interested in literature, drama, classical learning, and the theatre.

Marlowe had a short but remarkable literary career. He is especially famous for developing blank verse in English drama. His powerful and musical use of blank verse influenced later dramatists, especially William Shakespeare. Because of his strong language and ambitious heroes, he is sometimes called the father of English tragedy. His plays often deal with ambition, power, knowledge, love, religion, and the desire to achieve greatness.

Marlowe's most famous play is *Doctor Faustus*. It tells the story of Dr. Faustus, a learned man who becomes dissatisfied with ordinary knowledge. He makes a deal with the devil, Mephistopheles, and receives magical powers in exchange for his soul. The play explores ambition, temptation, knowledge, sin, and punishment. Another important play is *Tamburlaine the Great*, which presents

Tamburlaine, a powerful conqueror who dreams of unlimited power and greatness. The play is famous for its heroic language and ambitious central character.

Marlowe also wrote *The Jew of Malta*, which deals with wealth, revenge, religious conflict, and political power. *Edward II* is an important historical tragedy that presents the life and fall of the English king Edward II. His other work, *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, is based on the classical story of Dido and Aeneas. Marlowe also wrote poetry, including the famous poem *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love*.

Marlowe's life ended very suddenly in 1593, when he was only twenty-nine years old. Despite his short life, he made a major contribution to English drama. His powerful blank verse, dramatic imagination, strong characters, and treatment of human ambition prepared the way for the great achievements of Shakespeare and other Elizabethan dramatists. Thus, Christopher Marlowe occupies an important place in the history of English literature.

Introduction of the Play

The play *Doctor Faustus* is one of the most famous plays written by Christopher Marlowe, an important dramatist of the Elizabethan Age. The full title of the play is *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*. It was probably written around 1592 and is based mainly on the old German legend of Faust, a learned man who sells his soul to the Devil in exchange for knowledge, power, and pleasure. The play is a famous example of Elizabethan tragedy and is considered one of Marlowe's greatest works.

The central character of the play is Dr. Faustus, a highly educated scholar. He has studied subjects such as philosophy, medicine, law, and theology, but he is not satisfied with ordinary human knowledge. He wants unlimited knowledge and supernatural power. He therefore decides to practise magic and makes a dangerous agreement with Lucifer, the Devil. According to the agreement, Faustus will enjoy the services of the devil Mephistopheles for twenty-four years. After that period, Faustus must give his soul to Lucifer.

The main theme of *Doctor Faustus* is the conflict between human ambition and moral responsibility. Faustus represents a person who wants to go beyond the limits of ordinary human life. His desire for knowledge and power is impressive, but his pride and wrong choices finally lead to his destruction. The play also deals with important themes such as temptation, sin, repentance, free will, religion, knowledge, ambition, and the conflict between good and evil.

One of the most important features of the play is Marlowe's powerful use of blank verse. His language is poetic, dramatic, and full of strong images. The famous opening and closing scenes show

the rise and fall of Faustus in a powerful manner. The play also contains comic scenes, supernatural events, angels, devils, magic, and moral lessons.

Doctor Faustus is much more than a story about a man who makes a deal with the Devil. It is a deep study of human ambition, temptation, choice, and the consequences of one's actions. Through the tragic life and death of Faustus, Marlowe presents an important warning about the dangers of excessive pride and uncontrolled desire for power and knowledge.

Characters in the play

1. Doctor Faustus- Doctor Faustus is the central character and tragic hero of the play. He is a highly educated scholar who has studied philosophy, medicine, law, and theology. However, he is not satisfied with ordinary human knowledge and wants unlimited power, wealth, and supernatural knowledge. He makes a contract with Lucifer and receives the services of Mephistopheles for twenty-four years. Faustus is intelligent and ambitious, but his excessive pride and desire for power lead to his tragic destruction. His character represents the conflict between human ambition and moral responsibility.

2. Mephistopheles- Mephistopheles is a devil and the servant of Lucifer. He appears when Faustus begins practising magic. He agrees to serve Faustus for twenty-four years according to the contract. Although he is a devil, Mephistopheles sometimes warns Faustus about the suffering and punishment of Hell. He understands the pain of separation from God. His character shows the danger of temptation and the terrible consequences of turning away from God.

3. Lucifer - Lucifer is the chief Devil and ruler of Hell. He is responsible for Faustus's agreement with the supernatural world. He wants Faustus's soul and uses temptation to keep him away from repentance. Lucifer represents evil, temptation, and opposition to God. His presence makes the religious conflict of the play clear.

4. The Good Angel - The Good Angel represents the voice of goodness, morality, and repentance in Faustus's mind. He repeatedly advises Faustus to give up magic and return to God. The Good Angel encourages him to repent and seek forgiveness. He represents the good side of Faustus's conscience and the possibility of salvation.

5. The Evil Angel - The Evil Angel represents temptation, sin, pride, and evil thoughts. He encourages Faustus to continue practising magic and to enjoy worldly pleasures instead of thinking about repentance. The Good Angel and the Evil Angel together represent the inner conflict between good and evil within Faustus.

6. The Old Man -The Old Man appears near the end of the play and is a symbol of faith, goodness, and spiritual wisdom. He advises Faustus to repent and trust in God's mercy. Unlike Faustus, he does not

desire worldly power or knowledge. His character shows that repentance and faith can lead a person toward salvation.

7. Wagner - Wagner is Faustus's servant. He learns some of his master's magical practices and uses magic to control the clown Robin. He is sometimes presented as a comic character. Wagner's character also reflects Faustus's influence on other people and provides a contrast to the serious events of the main plot.

8. Robin - Robin is a servant and clown who becomes interested in magic. He steals one of Faustus's magical books and tries to use magic for his own entertainment. His scenes are mainly comic and provide relief from the serious and tragic story of Faustus. His misuse of magic also reflects the foolishness of using supernatural power without understanding its consequences.

9. Rafe - Rafe is Robin's companion and is involved in the comic subplot of the play. He becomes part of Robin's foolish magical activities. Like Robin, he helps provide humour and entertainment. His character also shows the contrast between the serious tragedy of Faustus and the comic world of ordinary people.

10. The Emperor - The Emperor is the ruler of Germany and an important royal character in the play. He invites Faustus to demonstrate his magical powers. Faustus uses magic to produce the appearance of Alexander the Great and his lover. The Emperor is impressed by Faustus's abilities and becomes an example of how Faustus uses his supernatural powers for entertainment and worldly purposes.

11. The Duchess of Vanholt - The Duchess of Vanholt is a noble woman whom Faustus visits with the help of Mephistopheles. When she desires fresh grapes, Faustus magically provides them even though it is winter. Her character is mainly connected with one of Faustus's magical performances and demonstrates his ability to satisfy the desires of others.

12. The Pope - The Pope is the head of the Roman Catholic Church in the play. Faustus visits Rome invisibly and plays tricks on the Pope and his attendants. This episode is partly comic and reflects the religious and political attitudes of the Elizabethan period. It also shows Faustus using his magical powers for amusement rather than for meaningful intellectual purposes.

13. Bruno - Bruno is a supporter of the German Emperor who becomes involved in the political conflict surrounding the Pope. Faustus helps protect Bruno through his supernatural powers. His character contributes to the political and religious elements of the play.

14. The Scholars - The Scholars are Faustus's fellow academics and friends. They are concerned about him and become increasingly worried about his relationship with magic and the Devil. At the end of the

play, they discover the terrible fate of Faustus and mourn his death. They represent learning and friendship and provide an important contrast to Faustus's misuse of knowledge.

15. Valdes and Cornelius - Valdes and Cornelius are two scholars who introduce Faustus to the practice of magic. They encourage him to study necromancy and promise him great power through supernatural knowledge. Their influence is important because they help Faustus begin his dangerous journey into magic. They represent the temptation of forbidden knowledge and supernatural power.

16. The Clown - The Clown is a comic character who is connected with Wagner. Wagner uses magic to frighten and control him. The Clown later becomes involved in the world of magic. His scenes provide comic relief and contrast with the serious moral and religious issues of Faustus's story.

17. Helen of Troy- Helen of Troy is the legendary Greek woman famous for her beauty. Faustus calls upon her through magic and becomes fascinated by her beauty. His famous speech beginning “Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships” expresses his admiration for Helen. She represents physical beauty, desire, temptation, and worldly pleasure.

Summary of the play

The play *Doctor Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe is a famous Elizabethan tragedy. The play tells the story of Dr. Faustus, a highly educated scholar who becomes dissatisfied with ordinary human knowledge. He wants unlimited knowledge, power, wealth, and pleasure. He makes a contract with Lucifer and receives the service of the devil Mephistopheles for twenty-four years. At the end of this period, Faustus loses his soul. The play is divided into five acts, and each act presents an important stage in Faustus's rise and fall.

Act I – Faustus Makes the Dangerous Decision

The play begins with Faustus sitting in his study and thinking about his education. He has studied philosophy, medicine, law, and theology. He feels that these subjects have not given him the power and knowledge he desires. He believes that ordinary learning is not enough for him. He wants to become more powerful than an ordinary human being.

Faustus decides to study magic and necromancy, or the art of communicating with supernatural powers. His friends Valdes and Cornelius encourage him to practise magic. They tell him that through magic he can become extremely powerful and control supernatural forces. Faustus becomes excited by the idea.

Faustus begins to perform magical rituals. He summons Mephistopheles, a servant of Lucifer. Faustus asks Mephistopheles to serve him and carry out his wishes. Mephistopheles explains that he has

come because Faustus has rejected God and called upon the Devil. Faustus then makes a formal agreement with Lucifer.

According to the agreement, Mephistopheles will serve Faustus for twenty-four years. During this period, Faustus will receive supernatural powers, knowledge, and pleasures. After twenty-four years, however, Faustus must give his soul to Lucifer.

Faustus signs the contract with his own blood. At one point, his blood strangely stops flowing, as if warning him about the terrible decision he is making. He ignores the warning. The Good Angel advises him to repent and think about God, while the Evil Angel encourages him to continue with magic. Faustus chooses the Evil Angel's path. The act establishes the central conflict of the play: good versus evil, repentance versus sin, and human ambition versus moral limits.

Act II – Faustus Continues in Sin

In Act II, Faustus begins to enjoy the supernatural powers that he has received. However, he gradually discovers that magical power does not give him the deep knowledge and satisfaction he expected.

Faustus becomes worried about his agreement with Lucifer. He thinks about repenting and returning to God. He understands that he has made a terrible mistake. The Good Angel again encourages him to repent, while the Evil Angel tells him to continue enjoying worldly pleasures.

Faustus asks Mephistopheles questions about Hell, the universe, and God. Mephistopheles gives him information, but Faustus does not gain the complete knowledge he wanted. Mephistopheles also refuses to give clear answers about certain religious matters.

Faustus's conflict becomes stronger. He understands that he has exchanged his soul for temporary pleasures. Still, he continues to follow the Devil.

The play then moves into a series of comic and magical episodes. Faustus visits Rome, where he uses his magical powers to become invisible. He plays tricks on the Pope and his followers. He interrupts their religious ceremony and causes confusion. These scenes provide comic entertainment, but they also show that Faustus is wasting his great supernatural powers on childish activities.

Faustus later becomes involved with Bruno, an opponent of the Pope. He uses his magic to protect Bruno. These events show Faustus becoming involved in political and religious conflicts. The important point of Act II is that Faustus has enormous supernatural power, but he does not use it for meaningful purposes. His great ambition is gradually reduced to entertainment, tricks, and worldly pleasures.

Act III – Faustus Becomes Famous

In Act III, Faustus travels and demonstrates his magical powers in different places. His reputation as a powerful magician grows.

Faustus appears before the Emperor of Germany. The Emperor is impressed by Faustus and asks him to show his supernatural abilities. Faustus agrees. He creates the appearance of Alexander the Great, the famous ancient conqueror, and Alexander's lover.

The Emperor is amazed by Faustus's performance. This scene shows that Faustus has achieved some of the worldly fame and power he originally wanted. However, his achievements are not based on genuine knowledge. They are based on magical tricks.

Faustus also visits the Duke and Duchess of Vanholt. The Duchess desires grapes even though it is winter. Faustus uses his magical powers to provide fresh grapes for her. The Duke is impressed by his ability.

These scenes show that Faustus is now famous among rulers and powerful people. Yet the audience understands that his success is temporary. The twenty-four-year period is moving closer to its end.

The act also contains the comic activities of Robin and the Clown. They try to use magic for their own purposes. These scenes provide humour and show that magic can become a source of foolishness when used without wisdom.

Act III therefore presents the temporary success and worldly popularity of Faustus, but it also reminds us that his final punishment is approaching.

Act IV – Faustus's Final Years

Act IV presents several episodes in which Faustus uses his supernatural powers for entertainment and personal advantage. He visits important people and performs magical tricks.

The Duke and Duchess of Vanholt are pleased with Faustus because he can satisfy their wishes. The Duchess wants grapes, and Faustus magically brings them to her. This episode again shows the contrast between the great powers Faustus once desired and the small things for which he actually uses them.

Another important part of the act involves the horse-courser, a horse dealer. He buys a horse from Faustus after being warned not to ride it into water. However, the horse-courser ignores the warning and rides the horse into water. The horse disappears, and he becomes angry with Faustus. He later tries to take revenge.

Faustus uses his magic to deceive him. The incident is partly comic and shows that Faustus has become increasingly involved in tricks and entertainment rather than serious intellectual pursuits.

The act also contains the famous episode involving Helen of Troy. Faustus becomes fascinated by Helen's legendary beauty and calls her before him through magic. He admires her beauty and speaks about her in highly poetic language. Helen represents physical beauty, desire, and worldly pleasure.

The Old Man appears and tries to persuade Faustus to repent. He tells Faustus that he can still turn away from evil and seek God's forgiveness. Faustus is deeply affected by the Old Man's words. However, Mephistopheles threatens him, and Faustus again gives in to fear and temptation.

At this point, Faustus's tragedy becomes clearer. He has opportunities to repent, but he repeatedly chooses to remain with the Devil.

Act V – The Tragic End of Faustus

Act V is the most serious and tragic part of the play. The twenty-four years are almost over, and Faustus realizes that his time is coming to an end.

Faustus invites his fellow scholars to his room. He tells them about the terrible agreement he made with Lucifer. He confesses that he has only a short time left before the Devil comes to take his soul.

The scholars are shocked and frightened. They advise Faustus to seek help and repent. They leave him alone so that he can pray.

Faustus begins to understand the full meaning of his situation. He wishes that he could escape the contract. He thinks about time, death, Heaven, Hell, and God's mercy. He desperately wants more time.

The Good Angel and the Evil Angel appear again. The Good Angel represents the possibility of salvation, while the Evil Angel represents despair and damnation. Faustus realizes that he has wasted his life and his extraordinary abilities.

As the final hour approaches, Faustus desperately cries for more time. He wishes that time could stop or move backwards. He thinks about the possibility of escaping Hell, but he feels trapped by his own agreement.

At midnight, Mephistopheles and the devils come to take Faustus's soul. Faustus begs for mercy, but it is too late. He is finally taken away by the devils.

The scholars return the next morning and find the terrible remains of Faustus. They understand that he has suffered a tragic death because of his pride, ambition, and rejection of God.

The play ends with a moral lesson. The Chorus explains that Faustus was a highly talented and educated man, but his excessive ambition led to his destruction. His story warns human beings not to go beyond moral and spiritual limits in the pursuit of power and knowledge.

The five acts of *Doctor Faustus* present the gradual rise and fall of a great but misguided scholar. In Act I, Faustus becomes dissatisfied with ordinary knowledge and makes his contract with Lucifer. In Act II, he begins to enjoy magical powers but struggles with guilt and the desire to repent. In Act III, he becomes famous and uses magic to impress rulers. In Act IV, he wastes his powers on entertainment, tricks, and worldly pleasures. In Act V, he realizes the terrible consequences of his actions and faces eternal damnation. The tragedy of Faustus lies not simply in the fact that he makes a contract with the Devil, but in the fact that he repeatedly receives opportunities to repent but fails to make the right choice. Through Faustus's story, Marlowe explores important themes such as ambition, knowledge, temptation, free will, sin, repentance, good and evil, time, and death.

Important Questions

1. Discuss *Doctor Faustus* as a tragedy of ambition and excessive desire for knowledge.
2. Give a detailed character sketch of Doctor Faustus.
3. Discuss the character of Mephistopheles and his role in the tragedy of Faustus.
4. Explain the conflict between the Good Angel and the Evil Angel in *Doctor Faustus*.
5. Discuss the major themes of *Doctor Faustus*, especially ambition, temptation, sin, repentance, and damnation.
6. How does Christopher Marlowe present the conflict between good and evil in *Doctor Faustus*?
7. Discuss the significance of the contract between Faustus and Lucifer.
8. Explain the importance of Helen of Troy in *Doctor Faustus*. What does she represent?
9. Discuss *Doctor Faustus* as an example of an Elizabethan tragedy.
10. "Faustus is responsible for his own tragic end." Discuss this statement with reference to the play.

Answers -

- 1) **Discuss *Doctor Faustus* as an example of an Elizabethan tragedy.**

Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* is one of the finest examples of an Elizabethan tragedy. Elizabethan tragedy generally presents the rise and fall of a great or important person because of a serious weakness in his character. The hero usually makes a wrong choice, suffers because of it, and finally meets a tragic death. *Doctor Faustus* follows many of these important features.

The central character, Doctor Faustus, is a highly educated and respected scholar. He has studied medicine, law, philosophy, and theology. However, he is not satisfied with ordinary knowledge. He has a strong desire for unlimited knowledge, power, and pleasure. His greatest weakness is his excessive ambition and pride. He decides to practise magic and makes a contract with Lucifer. In return for twenty-four years of supernatural power, he promises to give his soul to the Devil.

The conflict between good and evil is an important feature of the play. The Good Angel advises Faustus to repent and return to God, while the Evil Angel encourages him to continue his sinful activities. Faustus repeatedly thinks about repentance, but he fails to make the right decision. His inner conflict makes the play tragic.

The play also contains supernatural elements, which are common in Elizabethan tragedy. Devils, angels, magic, spirits, and supernatural events play important roles. Mephistopheles serves Faustus, while Lucifer finally claims his soul. These supernatural elements increase the dramatic and frightening effect of the play.

Another important feature is the use of blank verse. Marlowe uses powerful and musical blank verse to express Faustus's thoughts and emotions. His language gives greatness and seriousness to the tragic story.

Faustus suffers a terrible fate because of his own choices. At the end of the twenty-four years, the devils come to take his soul. His tragic death creates fear and pity in the audience. Thus, *Doctor Faustus* is an excellent Elizabethan tragedy because it contains a tragic hero, a fatal weakness, supernatural elements, moral conflict, powerful blank verse, and a tragic ending. Through Faustus's fall, Marlowe warns us about the dangers of excessive ambition, pride, temptation, and the misuse of knowledge.

2) Give a detailed character sketch of Doctor Faustus.

Doctor Faustus is the central character and tragic hero of Christopher Marlowe's play *Doctor Faustus*. He is a highly educated scholar who has studied philosophy, medicine, law, and theology. He is intelligent, talented, and ambitious. However, he is not satisfied with ordinary human knowledge. He wants unlimited knowledge, supernatural power, wealth, and pleasure. His excessive ambition becomes the main reason for his tragic downfall.

At the beginning of the play, Faustus is proud of his learning. He believes that ordinary subjects cannot give him the power he desires. Therefore, he decides to practise magic and necromancy. His friends Valdes and Cornelius encourage him in this decision. He summons Mephistopheles and makes a

contract with Lucifer. According to the contract, Mephistopheles will serve him for twenty-four years, and afterwards Faustus must give his soul to Lucifer.

Faustus is a character full of inner conflict. He often understands that he has made a terrible mistake. The Good Angel repeatedly asks him to repent, while the Evil Angel encourages him to continue his sinful activities. Faustus thinks about God's forgiveness several times, but his pride, fear, and attachment to worldly pleasures prevent him from making a firm decision to repent.

Faustus is also curious and imaginative. He wants to discover the secrets of the universe and understand things beyond ordinary human knowledge. However, he wastes his supernatural powers on magic tricks, entertainment, and worldly pleasures. His great potential is therefore not used for any meaningful purpose.

Faustus is also attracted to beauty and pleasure, especially when he calls Helen of Troy. His famous admiration of Helen shows his desire for physical beauty and worldly enjoyment.

At the end of the play, Faustus realizes the terrible consequences of his actions. He desperately wishes to escape his agreement with Lucifer, but it is too late. The devils take him away, and he suffers a tragic end.

Thus, Doctor Faustus is an ambitious, intelligent, proud, curious, and tragic character. His greatest weakness is his excessive ambition and failure to repent. Through his character, Marlowe shows the dangers of pride, temptation, uncontrolled ambition, and the misuse of knowledge.

3) Discuss the character of Mephistopheles and his role in the tragedy of Faustus.

Mephistopheles is one of the most important characters in Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. He is a devil and a servant of Lucifer. He appears when Faustus uses magic to summon supernatural powers. He becomes Faustus's companion and servant for twenty-four years. His character plays an important role in bringing about the tragic end of Faustus.

Mephistopheles is presented as a powerful and intelligent supernatural being. He understands the nature of Hell and knows the consequences of turning away from God. Interestingly, he does not always encourage Faustus blindly. When Faustus asks him about Hell, Mephistopheles explains that Hell is not simply a physical place but a condition of being separated from God. This shows that Mephistopheles understands spiritual suffering.

Mephistopheles also acts as a tempter. He helps Faustus enjoy magical powers and worldly pleasures. He provides supernatural assistance whenever Faustus makes a request. Through his services, Faustus becomes increasingly dependent on magic and moves farther away from repentance and God.

One important aspect of Mephistopheles's character is that he sometimes warns Faustus about the dangers of his decision. He knows that Faustus has chosen a dangerous path, but he continues to serve Lucifer. His words about Hell create a sense of fear and remind Faustus of the serious consequences of his agreement.

Mephistopheles also helps Marlowe develop the conflict between good and evil. The Good Angel encourages Faustus to repent, while Mephistopheles and the Evil Angel encourage him to continue in sin. Thus, Mephistopheles represents temptation and evil forces working against Faustus's spiritual salvation.

Throughout the play, Mephistopheles helps Faustus perform magical tricks and satisfy his desires. However, these pleasures are temporary. As the twenty-four years come to an end, Mephistopheles becomes an instrument of Faustus's final punishment. At the end of the play, he and the other devils come to take Faustus's soul.

Thus, Mephistopheles is not merely a villain. He is a tempter, servant, warning figure, and agent of punishment. His relationship with Faustus highlights the dangers of temptation and uncontrolled ambition. Through Mephistopheles, Marlowe shows that the pursuit of worldly power at the cost of one's moral and spiritual values can lead to complete destruction.

4) Discuss the significance of the contract between Faustus and Lucifer

The contract between Doctor Faustus and Lucifer is one of the most important parts of Christopher Marlowe's play *Doctor Faustus*. It is the turning point of the whole story and is mainly responsible for Faustus's tragic end. The contract represents Faustus's decision to reject God and choose supernatural power, knowledge, and worldly pleasure.

Faustus is a highly educated scholar, but he is not satisfied with ordinary human knowledge. He wants unlimited knowledge and power. He decides to practise magic and calls upon supernatural forces. Through Mephistopheles, he makes an agreement with Lucifer, the ruler of Hell. According to the agreement, Mephistopheles will serve Faustus for twenty-four years. In return, Faustus promises to give his soul to Lucifer at the end of this period.

The contract shows Faustus's excessive ambition and pride. He wants to become more powerful than an ordinary human being. Instead of accepting the natural limits of human life, he chooses magic and makes a dangerous agreement with the Devil. His desire for knowledge and power becomes greater than his sense of morality.

The contract also represents the conflict between good and evil. Before and after signing it, Faustus receives warnings from the Good Angel and other characters. He is repeatedly given opportunities to

repent and return to God. However, he continues to follow the path of evil. Therefore, the contract also shows the importance of human choice and free will.

The contract is significant because Faustus does not receive the kind of knowledge and happiness he expects. He performs magical tricks, enjoys temporary pleasures, and gains fame, but he does not achieve true wisdom or spiritual satisfaction. His twenty-four years pass quickly, and he becomes increasingly frightened about losing his soul.

Finally, the contract becomes the direct cause of Faustus's tragic end. When the twenty-four years are over, the devils come to claim his soul. Faustus desperately wishes to repent, but he has wasted his opportunities.

Thus, the contract symbolizes temptation, pride, ambition, free will, sin, and the consequences of wrong choices. Through it, Marlowe gives a powerful warning about the dangers of sacrificing one's moral and spiritual values for temporary worldly power and pleasure.

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Who wrote *Doctor Faustus*?

A. William Shakespeare **B. Christopher Marlowe** C. Ben Jonson D. John Webster

2. What is the full title of *Doctor Faustus*?

A. The Life of Doctor Faustus B. The Tragedy of Faustus

C. The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus

D. The Life and Adventures of Faustus

3. *Doctor Faustus* is mainly a:

A. Comedy B. Romance **C. Tragedy** D. History play

4. Who is the central character of the play?

A. Mephistopheles B. Lucifer **C. Doctor Faustus** D. Wagner

5. What is Faustus's profession?

A. Soldier **B. Scholar** C. Merchant D. King

6. Which subjects has Faustus studied?

A. Medicine, law, philosophy, and theology B. Music, painting, and architecture

C. Geography and history only D. Agriculture and science only

7. Why does Faustus become dissatisfied with traditional learning?

A. He wants to become a king **B. He wants unlimited knowledge and supernatural power**

C. He wants to leave Germany D. He wants to become a soldier

B. Valdes and Cornelius

D. The Old Man and the Scholars

9. Whom does Faustus summon through magic?

D. The Pope

10. Who serves Faustus for twenty-four years?

D. The Old Man

11. What does Faustus promise to give Lucifer at the end of twenty-four years?

D. His soul

12. How does Faustus sign his agreement with Lucifer?

D. With a golden seal

13. How long does Mephistopheles agree to serve Faustus?

D. Twenty-four years

14. Who represents goodness and repentance in the play?

D. Wagner

15. Who encourages Faustus to continue his sinful activities?

D. The Emperor

16. What does the Good Angel advise Faustus to do?

D. Learn more magic

17. Who is the ruler of Hell?

D. Faustus

18. Which city does Faustus visit and play tricks on the Pope?

D. Venice

19. Before whom does Faustus demonstrate his magical powers?

B. The King of England

D. The Duke of Vanholt

20. Which historical figure does Faustus magically produce for the Emperor?

D. Charlemagne

21. What does the Duchess of Vanholt desire?

D. Jewels

22. Who tries to use Faustus's magical books for his own purposes?

D. The Pope

23. Who is the comic servant associated with Faustus?
A. Wagner B. Valdes C. Cornelius D. Bruno
24. Who tries to persuade Faustus to repent near the end of the play?
A. Lucifer **B. The Old Man** C. The Emperor D. The Pope
25. Who is Helen of Troy in the play?
A. Faustus's sister B. A historical queen
C. A legendary woman whose beauty fascinates Faustus D. The wife of the Emperor
26. What does Helen of Troy mainly represent?
A. Political power **B. Physical beauty and worldly desire**
C. Religious faith D. Knowledge and education
27. Which literary technique is especially associated with Marlowe's dramatic style?
A. Blank verse B. Free verse C. Haiku D. Ballad metre
28. What is one of the major themes of *Doctor Faustus*?
A. Childhood education **B. Ambition and the misuse of knowledge**
C. Rural life D. Nationalism
29. What happens to Faustus at the end of the play?
A. He becomes a king B. He escapes from the Devil
C. He is taken away by the devils D. He becomes a successful scholar
30. What is the main moral lesson of *Doctor Faustus*?
A. Wealth is the greatest achievement B. Magic can solve every problem
C. Excessive ambition and rejection of moral limits can lead to destruction D. Education is useless
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Module III – Essays

1. Sir Roger at the Church (from *The Spectator*)- Joseph Addison
2. The Club (from *The Spectator*)- Sir Richard Steele
3. On Idleness (Essay no.31)(from *The Idler*)- Samuel Johnson
4. On the Use of Language – Oliver Goldsmith

Introduction

An essay is a short piece of prose writing that discusses a particular subject, idea, person, event, or problem. The word “essay” comes from the French word “essai,” which means an attempt or a trial. An essay gives the writer an opportunity to express ideas, opinions, feelings, observations, and arguments in a clear and organized way. The essay became an important literary form in the sixteenth century. The French writer Michel de Montaigne is generally regarded as the father of the modern essay. His *Essais* presented his personal thoughts and observations on different subjects. In English literature, Francis Bacon is considered one of the earliest important essayists. His essays are short, serious, practical, and full of wisdom.

During the eighteenth century, the essay became very popular through periodicals such as *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. Joseph Addison and Richard Steele used essays to discuss everyday life, manners, morality, politics, literature, and social problems. Their essays were simple, humorous, and entertaining. An essay can be personal, descriptive, narrative, argumentative, critical, or reflective. A good essay usually has a clear beginning, a well-developed middle, and a suitable conclusion. It may inform, educate, entertain, persuade, or express personal feelings. The essay is important because it connects literature with everyday life. It allows writers to discuss important ideas in a simple and flexible form. From Bacon and Addison to modern essayists, the essay has remained an important and popular form of English prose literature.

Sir Roger at the Church (from *The Spectator*)

- Joseph Addison

Life and Works of Joseph Addison

Joseph Addison (1672–1719) was an important English essayist, poet, politician, and literary critic of the 18th century. He is especially famous for developing the periodical essay along with his close friend Richard Steele. Addison was born on 1 May 1672 at Milston in Wiltshire, England. His father, Lancelot Addison, was a respected clergyman. Addison received his early education at Charterhouse School and later studied at Queen's College, Oxford, and Magdalen College. He was a brilliant student and developed a deep interest in classical literature.

Addison began his literary career by writing poetry and critical works. One of his important early works was *An Account of the Greatest English Poets*, published in 1694. He also wrote *The Campaign* in 1704, a poem celebrating the military victory of the Duke of Marlborough. His most famous dramatic work is *Cato*, a tragedy based on the Roman statesman Cato. It was successfully performed in 1713 and became one of the most respected plays of the period. Addison's greatest contribution to English literature was his work in periodical essays. He joined Richard Steele in publishing *The Tatler* and later became the chief contributor to *The Spectator*, which began in 1711. Through these essays, Addison discussed everyday life, manners, morality, literature, fashion, education, and social behaviour. He used a clear, simple, polite, and elegant style. His purpose was not only to entertain readers but also to improve their manners and moral values.

Addison created several memorable characters in *The Spectator*, especially Sir Roger de Coverley, a kind and amusing country gentleman. Through such characters, he presented English society and gently criticized its weaknesses. Addison also had a successful political career and served in important government positions. He died on 17 June 1719 in London. Joseph Addison is remembered mainly for his clear prose style, periodical essays, literary criticism, and contribution to English journalism. His essays helped make literature accessible to ordinary educated readers and established the periodical essay as an important literary form.

Introduction of the Essay

The essay *Sir Roger at the Church* is a well-known essay by Joseph Addison, published in *The Spectator*. It is one of the essays in which Addison presents the character of Sir Roger de Coverley, a kind, honest, and traditional English country gentleman. Through Sir Roger, Addison gives an interesting picture of English rural society, religion, manners, and human behaviour in the 18th century.

In this essay, the Spectator visits Sir Roger's country home and observes him at church. Sir Roger is shown as a sincere and devoted Christian. He regularly attends church and takes great interest in the religious life of his village. He cares about the church, the minister, and the people of his parish. His behaviour is sometimes humorous because he has his own unusual ideas about religion and church discipline. Addison does not make Sir Roger a perfect character. He gently shows his weaknesses and strange habits along with his good qualities. Sir Roger is sometimes old-fashioned and over-serious, but he is also kind, generous, responsible, and loved by the people around him. Through gentle humour, Addison presents the importance of religion, good manners, social responsibility, and community life.

The essay is also an example of Addison's clear and simple prose style. He does not attack his character harshly. Instead, he uses gentle humour and mild satire to show human weaknesses. "Sir Roger at the Church" is therefore both entertaining and instructive, and it helps readers understand Addison's method of presenting 18th-century English society through memorable characters.

The Spectator, No. 112 — July 9, 1711 by Joseph Addison

First, in obedience to thy country's rites,

Worship th' immortal Gods.

— Pythagoras

I am always very well pleased with a country Sunday; and think, if keeping holy the seventh day were only a human institution, it would be the best method that could have been thought of for the polishing and civilizing of mankind. It is certain the country-people would soon degenerate into a kind of savages and barbarians, were there not such frequent returns of a stated time, in which the whole village meet together with their best faces, and in their cleanliest habits, to converse with one another upon indifferent subjects, hear their duties explained to them, and join together in adoration of the Supreme Being. Sunday clears away the rust of the whole week, not only as it refreshes in their minds the notions of religion, but as it puts both the sexes upon appearing in their most agreeable forms, and exerting all such qualities as are apt to give them a figure in the eye of the village. A country-fellow distinguishes himself as much in the churchyard as a citizen does upon the Change, the whole parish politics being generally discussed in that place either after sermon or before the bell rings.

My friend Sir Roger, being a good church-man, has beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing: he has likewise given a handsome pulpit-cloth, and railed in the communion-table at his own expense.

He has often told me, that at his coming to his estate he found his parishioners very irregular; and that in order to make them kneel and join in the responses, he gave every one of them a hassock and a Common Prayer Book; and at the same time employed an itinerant singing-master, who goes about the country for that purpose, to instruct them rightly in the tunes of the psalms; upon which they now very much value themselves, and indeed out-do most of the country churches that I have ever heard.

As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order, and will suffer nobody to sleep in it besides himself; for if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees anybody else nodding, either wakes them himself, or sends his servant to them.

Several other of the old knight's particularities break out upon these occasions: sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the singing-psalms, half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it; sometimes, when he is pleased with the matter of his devotion, he pronounces Amen three or four times to the same prayer; and sometimes stands up when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing.

I was yesterday very much surprised to hear my old friend, in the midst of the service, calling out to one John Matthews to mind what he was about, and not disturb the congregation. This John Matthews, it seems, is remarkable for being an idle fellow, and at that time was kicking his heels for his diversion.

This authority of the knight, though exerted in that odd manner which accompanies him in all circumstances of life, has a very good effect upon the parish, who are not polite enough to see anything ridiculous in his behaviour; besides that the general good sense and worthiness of his character, make his friends observe these little singularities as foils that rather set off than blemish his good qualities.

As soon as the sermon is finished, nobody presumes to stir till Sir Roger is gone out of the church. The knight walks down from his seat in the chancel between a double row of his tenants, that stand bowing to him on each side; and every now and then he inquires how such an one's wife, or mother, or son, or father do, whom he does not see at church; which is understood as a secret reprimand to the person that is absent.

The chaplain has often told me, that upon a catechising-day, when Sir Roger has been pleased with a boy that answers well, he has ordered a Bible to be given him next day for his encouragement; and sometimes accompanies it with a flitch of bacon to his mother.

Sir Roger has likewise added five pounds a year to the clerk's place; and that he may encourage the young fellows to make themselves perfect in the church-service, has promised, upon the death of the present incumbent, who is very old, to bestow it according to merit.

The fair understanding between Sir Roger and his chaplain, and their mutual concurrence in doing good, is the more remarkable, because the very next village is famous for the differences and contentions that rise between the parson and the 'squire, who live in a perpetual state of war. The parson is always at the 'squire, and the 'squire, to be revenged on the parson, never comes to church.

The 'squire has made all his tenants atheists and tithe-stealers; while the parson instructs them every Sunday in the dignity of his order, and insinuates to them, almost in every sermon, that he is a better man than his patron. In short, matters are come to such an extremity, that the 'squire has not said his prayers either in public or private this half year; and that the parson threatens him, if he does not mend his manners, to pray for him in the face of the whole congregation.

Feuds of this nature, though too frequent in the country, are very fatal to the ordinary people; who are so used to be dazzled with riches, that they pay as much deference to the understanding of a man of an estate, as of a man of learning; and are very hardly brought to regard any truth, how important so ever it may be, that is preached to them, when they know there are several men of five hundred a year who do not believe it.

Summary

Sir Roger at the Church is a famous essay by Joseph Addison, published in *The Spectator*, No. 112, in 1711. The essay presents Sir Roger de Coverley, a kind, honest, and traditional country gentleman. Through his character, Addison describes the religious life, social customs, manners, and weaknesses of rural English society in the eighteenth century.

The essay begins with the narrator's description of a country Sunday. Addison considers Sunday important because it brings the villagers together. People attend church in their best clothes, listen to the sermon, meet their neighbours, and participate in religious activities. According to Addison, Sunday helps to improve both the moral and social life of the villagers.

Sir Roger is a sincere and active churchgoer. He has spent his own money to improve the church. He provides cushions, prayer books, and musical instruction for his parishioners. He also takes personal responsibility for their behaviour. He does not allow people to sleep during the sermon and sometimes wakes those who appear inattentive. These actions show his care for the community, but they also reveal his humorous and somewhat controlling nature.

Addison presents Sir Roger with gentle humour rather than harsh criticism. His unusual habits, such as saying “Amen” several times or counting the congregation, make him amusing. At the same time, his kindness, generosity, and concern for his tenants make him a lovable character. The essay also contrasts Sir Roger with a neighbouring squire and his clergyman, who are constantly fighting. Their quarrel has a harmful effect on the villagers. Through this contrast, Addison shows that cooperation between religious and social leaders is important for the welfare of society.

The essay is significant for its social criticism, humour, characterization, and moral purpose. Addison uses simple and elegant prose to teach readers the values of religion, community, good manners, and social responsibility. Thus, “Sir Roger at the Church” is both entertaining and instructive and is an excellent example of the eighteenth-century periodical essay.

Important Questions

- 1) Give a detailed character sketch of Sir Roger de Coverley as presented in “Sir Roger at the Church.”
- 2) Discuss “Sir Roger at the Church” as a social and moral essay.
- 3) How does Joseph Addison use humour and gentle satire in “Sir Roger at the Church”?
- 4) Describe Sir Roger’s relationship with his parishioners and his contribution to the church.
- 5) Discuss the theme of religion and community life in “Sir Roger at the Church.”

Multiple Choice questions

1. Who is the author of “Sir Roger at the Church”?
A. Richard Steele **B. Joseph Addison** C. Samuel Johnson D. Oliver Goldsmith
2. In which periodical was “Sir Roger at the Church” published?
A. *The Tatler* B. *The Rambler* **C. The Spectator** D. *The Idler*
3. Who is Sir Roger de Coverley?
A. A city merchant **B. A country gentleman and landowner**
C. A priest D. A soldier
4. What does Sir Roger do when he sees someone sleeping during the sermon?
A. He ignores the person B. He leaves the church
C. He wakes the person or asks his servant to wake him D. He stops the sermon
5. What is the main purpose of Addison's essay?
A. To describe a war B. To criticize religion
C. To present rural life, religious practices, and human behaviour through humour
D. To describe London politics

The Club (from The Spectator)

- Sir Richard Steele

Life and Works of Sir Richard Steel

Richard Steele (1672–1729) was an important English writer, essayist, journalist, and politician of the 18th century. He is best known for his important contribution to the development of the periodical essay. He was a close friend and literary partner of Joseph Addison. Together, Steele and Addison helped make the periodical essay one of the most popular forms of English literature.

Richard Steele was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1672. He studied at Charterhouse School in London, where he met Joseph Addison. Later, he studied at Christ Church, Oxford, but he did not complete his degree. Steele joined the army and served as a soldier for some years. His experiences in military life later influenced some of his writings. He also entered politics and became a Member of Parliament.

Steele began his literary career by writing plays. His first important play was *The Funeral* (1701). He later wrote *The Lying Lover* (1703) and *The Tender Husband* (1705). These plays contain humour and moral lessons. However, Steele became much more famous for his essays and journalism. In 1709, Steele started *The Tatler*, one of the earliest successful periodicals in English literature. He wrote under the name “Isaac Bickerstaff.” *The Tatler* discussed politics, society, literature, fashion, manners, and everyday life. Steele tried to entertain his readers while also teaching them good manners and moral values.

In 1711, Steele and Addison began *The Spectator*. Addison became its most famous contributor, but Steele also wrote many important essays for it. The two writers used the periodical to discuss social problems, human behaviour, education, marriage, literature, and morality. Their essays were written in a clear, simple, and conversational style. Steele's main contribution was his ability to present real human emotions and everyday social life in an interesting way. He was especially concerned with family life, friendship, morality, and social behaviour. Richard Steele died in 1729. He remains important in English literature because he helped establish the periodical essay and modern journalism. His partnership with Addison greatly influenced English prose and created a new form of literature that educated and entertained the growing reading public.

Introduction of the Essay

The Club is an important essay from *The Spectator*, a famous periodical founded by Joseph Addison and Sir Richard Steele in 1711. The essay introduces a group of interesting characters who meet regularly and form the central social group of *The Spectator*. It is mainly associated with Joseph

Addison, although Steele was also one of the major writers of the periodical. The essay presents the idea of a club as a small representation of English society. The members come from different backgrounds and have different personalities, interests, and opinions. Through these characters, Addison and Steele create a humorous and lively picture of eighteenth-century English society. The club provides an opportunity to discuss manners, politics, religion, business, fashion, literature, and everyday life.

One of the most memorable members is Sir Roger de Coverley, a kind, honest, and traditional country gentleman. Other important members include Sir Andrew Freeport, a successful merchant; Captain Sentry, a brave and disciplined military man; Will Honeycomb, a fashionable and pleasure-loving man; and the clergyman, who represents religion and learning. The Spectator himself is also connected with the club as a quiet observer. “The Club” is important because it introduces characters who appear in many later essays of *The Spectator*. Through them, Addison and Steele examine the strengths and weaknesses of contemporary society. The essay combines humour, characterisation, social observation, and moral instruction, making it an excellent example of the eighteenth-century periodical essay.

Text

Critical Summary

The Club is *The Spectator*, No. 2, published on 2 March 1711. It is generally attributed to Sir Richard Steele and introduces the famous group of characters connected with *The Spectator*. The essay is important because it presents different types of people from eighteenth-century English society through humour and simple character sketches.

The essay begins with a description of Sir Roger de Coverley, a wealthy country gentleman and a Baronet from Worcestershire. He is presented as an honest, kind, and respectable man. However, he also has some unusual habits and weaknesses. He is somewhat old-fashioned and has strange ideas about social life. Steele does not strongly criticize him; instead, he uses gentle humour to make him an attractive and memorable character. The essay then introduces other members of the club. Sir Andrew Freeport is a successful merchant who represents the growing commercial class. He believes in trade, hard work, and practical knowledge. Captain Sentry is a brave and disciplined military man. He is quiet, polite, and respected by others. Will Honeycomb represents fashionable London society. He is interested in fashion, women, entertainment, and social life. He is witty and experienced in matters of society.

The club also includes a clergyman, who represents religion and learning. The Spectator himself is a quiet observer who listens to the members and studies their characters. Together, these members

represent different professions, interests, and social groups. The main strength of the essay is its characterization. Steele does not simply describe people; he presents their habits, opinions, and personalities. He uses humour and mild satire to show their strengths and weaknesses. The club therefore becomes a small picture of eighteenth-century English society.

The essay also reflects the main purpose of *The Spectator*: to entertain, educate, and improve society. It encourages readers to observe human behaviour and think about social manners. In conclusion, “The Club” is an excellent example of the periodical essay. Its lively characters, gentle humour, social observation, and moral purpose make it an

Important Questions

- 1) Give a detailed character sketch of Sir Roger de Coverley as presented in “The Club.”
- 2) Discuss “The Club” as a picture of eighteenth-century English society.
- 3) Describe the important members of the Spectator Club and explain what each character represents.
- 4) How does Sir Richard Steele use humour and satire in “The Club”?
- 5) Discuss “The Club” as an example of the periodical essay, with special reference to its characterization and social criticism.

Multiple choice question

1. Who wrote *The Spectator* No. 2, “The Club”?
A. Joseph Addison **B. Sir Richard Steele** C. Samuel Johnson D. Oliver Goldsmith
 2. Who is Sir Roger de Coverley?
A. A London merchant **B. A country gentleman and Baronet**
C. A clergyman D. A military officer
 3. Which character represents the successful commercial class?
A. Captain Sentry B. Will Honeycomb **C. Sir Andrew Freeport** D. Sir Roger de Coverley
 4. Who is described as a fashionable and pleasure-loving member of the club?
A. Sir Andrew Freeport B. Captain Sentry **C. Will Honeycomb** D. The clergyman
 5. What is the main purpose of “The Club”?
A. To describe a historical war
B. To present different types of people and aspects of eighteenth-century English society
C. To criticize education D. To describe rural agriculture
-

On Idleness (Essay no.31 from *The Idler*)

- Samuel Johnson

Life and Works of Samuel Johnson

Samuel Johnson (1709–1784) was one of the greatest English writers, poets, critics, and scholars of the 18th century. He is commonly known as Dr. Johnson. He was an important literary figure of the Age of Johnson, which is often considered a later part of the Neoclassical or Augustan period. Johnson was famous for his strong personality, deep knowledge, powerful writing, and important contributions to English criticism and literature. Samuel Johnson was born on 18 September 1709 at Lichfield, Staffordshire, England. His father, Michael Johnson, was a bookseller. Johnson studied at Pembroke College, Oxford, but he had to leave the university because of financial difficulties. His early life was difficult, but he continued his studies through self-education. He later moved to London and worked as a writer and journalist.

Johnson wrote many important works in different literary forms. His famous poem *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749) is a serious poem about human desires and the disappointment that often follows them. He also wrote the powerful satirical poem *London* (1738), which describes the problems and corruption of city life. One of Johnson's greatest achievements was *A Dictionary of the English Language*, published in 1755. It was one of the most important English dictionaries of its time. Johnson spent several years preparing it and included definitions, examples, and quotations from English literature. The dictionary established his reputation as a great scholar.

Johnson was also an important literary critic. His famous work *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*, published between 1779 and 1781, contains biographies and critical discussions of important English poets. He also wrote *The Rambler* and *The Idler*, periodical essays dealing with morality, literature, and human life. Another important work is *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia* (1759), a philosophical tale that discusses happiness, ambition, knowledge, and human life. Johnson died on 13 December 1784 in London. His friend James Boswell recorded much of his life and conversation in *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, one of the most famous biographies in English literature. Johnson is remembered for his dictionary, essays, poetry, criticism, and strong influence on English literary culture.

Introduction of the Essay

On Idleness is an important essay by Samuel Johnson, published in his periodical *The Idler*. *The Idler* was a series of essays written by Johnson and published between 1758 and 1760. The essays

discuss human behaviour, habits, morality, society, and everyday life. In “On Idleness,” Johnson examines the habit of being inactive and explains its harmful effects on human life.

Johnson presents idleness as a condition in which a person avoids useful work and spends time without any meaningful purpose. He suggests that people often become idle because they do not have a clear aim in life or because they are unwilling to make an effort. Although rest is necessary, excessive idleness can become a serious weakness. It wastes valuable time and prevents a person from developing his abilities. The essay has a moral and practical purpose. Johnson encourages people to use their time wisely and to remain active. He believes that useful work gives meaning and purpose to human life. Idleness can lead to boredom, weakness, and other bad habits, while regular activity can develop discipline and self-respect.

“On Idleness” is written in Johnson's characteristic clear, serious, and thoughtful style. He uses observation, reasoning, and gentle humour to discuss an ordinary human weakness. The essay remains relevant because time management and productive use of time are important in every age. Through this essay, Johnson teaches the simple lesson that life becomes more valuable when we use our time for useful and meaningful activities.

Text

ON IDLENESS *The Idler*, No. 31, Saturday, November 18, 1758. Samuel Johnson

Many moralists have remarked, that Pride has of all human vices the widest dominion, appears in the greatest multiplicity of forms, and lies hid under the greatest variety of disguises; of disguises, which, like the moon's veil of brightness, are both its lustre and its shade, and betray it to others, tho' they hide it from ourselves.

It is not my intention to degrade Pride from this pre-eminence of mischief, yet I know not whether Idleness may not maintain a very doubtful and obstinate competition.

There are some that profess Idleness in its full dignity, who call themselves the Idle, as Busiris in the play calls himself the Proud; who boast that they do nothing, and thank their stars that they have nothing to do; who sleep every night till they can sleep no longer, and rise only that exercise may enable them to sleep again; who prolong the reign of darkness by double curtains, and never see the sun but to tell him how they hate his beams; whose whole labour is to vary the postures of indulgence, and whose day differs from their night but as a couch or chair differs from a bed.

These are the true and open votaries of Idleness, for whom she weaves the garlands of poppies, and into whose cup she pours the waters of oblivion; who exist in a state of unruffled stupidity, forgetting and

forgotten; who have long ceased to live, and at whose death the survivors can only say, that they have ceased to breathe.

But Idleness predominates in many lives where it is not suspected; for being a vice which terminates in itself, it may be enjoyed without injury to others; and is therefore not watched like Fraud, which endangers property, or like Pride, which naturally seeks its gratifications in another's inferiority. Idleness is a silent and peaceful quality, that neither raises envy by ostentation, nor hatred by opposition; and therefore no body is busy to censure or detect it.

As Pride sometimes is hid under humility, Idleness is often covered by turbulence and hurry. He that neglects his known duty and real employment, naturally endeavours to crowd his mind with something that may bar out the remembrance of his own folly, and does any thing but what he ought to do with eager diligence, that he may keep himself in his own favour.

Some are always in a state of preparation, occupied in previous measures, forming plans, accumulating materials, and providing for the main affair. These are certainly under the secret power of Idleness. Nothing is to be expected from the workman whose tools are for ever to be sought. I was once told by a great master, that no man ever excelled in painting, who was eminently curious about pencils and colours.

There are others to whom Idleness dictates another expedient, by which life may be passed unprofitably away without the tediousness of many vacant hours. The art is, to fill the day with petty business, to have always something in hand which may raise curiosity, but not solicitude, and keep the mind in a state of action, but not of labour.

This art has for many years been practised by my old friend Sober, with wonderful success. Sober is a man of strong desires and quick imagination, so exactly balanced by the love of ease, that they can seldom stimulate him to any difficult undertaking; they have, however, so much power, that they will not suffer him to lie quite at rest, and though they do not make him sufficiently useful to others, they make him at least weary of himself.

Mr. Sober's chief pleasure is conversation; there is no end of his talk or his attention; to speak or to hear is equally pleasing; for he still fancies that he is teaching or learning something, and is free for the time from his own reproaches.

But there is one time at night when he must go home, that his friends may sleep; and another time in the morning, when all the world agrees to shut out interruption. These are the moments of which poor Sober trembles at the thought. But the misery of these tiresome intervals, he has many means of alleviating. He has persuaded himself that the manual arts are undeservedly overlooked; he has

observed in many trades the effects of close thought, and just ratiocination. From speculation he proceeded to practice, and supplied himself with the tools of a carpenter, with which he mended his coal-box very successfully, and which he still continues to employ, as he finds occasion.

He has attempted at other times the crafts of the Shoemaker, Tinman, Plumber, and Potter; in all these arts he has failed, and resolves to qualify himself for them by better information. But his daily amusement is Chemistry. He has a small furnace, which he employs in distillation, and which has long been the solace of his life. He draws oils and waters, and essences and spirits, which he knows to be of no use; sits and counts the drops as they come from his retort, and forgets that, whilst a drop is falling, a moment flies away.

Poor Sober! I have often teased him with reproof, and he has often promised reformation; for no man is so much open to conviction as the Idler, but there is none on whom it operates so little. What will be the effect of this paper I know not; perhaps he will read it and laugh, and light the fire in his furnace; but my hope is that he will quit his trifles, and betake himself to rational and useful diligence.

Summary

“On Idleness” is *The Idler*, No. 31, written by Samuel Johnson and published on 18 November 1758. In this essay, Johnson discusses the problem of idleness and explains that it does not always appear as complete inactivity. Sometimes people look busy, but their activities are actually ways of avoiding useful work. Through clear reasoning, observation, humour, and the example of a character named Sober, Johnson gives an important moral lesson about the proper use of time.

Johnson begins by comparing idleness with pride. He says that pride can appear in many forms, but idleness can also hide itself in different ways. Some people openly accept their idleness. They sleep for long hours, avoid work, and spend their days in complete comfort. Such people have no useful purpose in life. Johnson humorously describes them as people who have almost stopped living because they do nothing meaningful.

However, Johnson's main concern is with hidden or disguised idleness. He points out that some people appear extremely busy but do not accomplish anything important. They are always making plans, preparing tools, collecting materials, or discussing future work. They remain busy with preparation but never actually begin the important task. Johnson suggests that such activity is another form of idleness.

Johnson also describes people who fill their time with small and unimportant activities. They keep themselves occupied so that they do not feel bored, but their activities produce no useful result.

They may talk continuously, make unnecessary plans, or work on small projects simply to avoid serious responsibilities. This kind of activity gives the appearance of work without its real value.

The best example of disguised idleness is Mr. Sober. Sober is an intelligent man with strong desires and an active imagination, but he loves comfort too much to undertake difficult work. He spends much of his time in conversation. He enjoys both talking and listening because conversation helps him feel that he is learning or teaching something. In reality, he is mainly avoiding useful work.

Sober also tries different manual activities to keep himself busy. He experiments with carpentry, shoemaking, plumbing, pottery, and other crafts. However, he does not become successful in any of them. His favourite activity is chemistry. He uses a small furnace to make oils, waters, and other substances that have no practical value. He carefully watches the drops coming from his equipment while valuable time passes. This is Johnson's humorous way of showing how people can waste their lives while believing that they are doing something useful.

The character of Sober makes the essay humorous as well as moral. Johnson does not attack him cruelly. Instead, he presents his habits in an amusing way so that readers can recognize similar weaknesses in themselves. Sober becomes a representative of people who are busy without being productive. The central message of the essay is that time is valuable and should be used for meaningful work. Johnson does not suggest that people must work every moment. Rest is necessary, but continuous inactivity or meaningless activity is harmful. A useful life requires purpose, discipline, and responsibility. The essay is also notable for Johnson's clear, serious, and conversational prose style. He combines moral instruction with humour, examples, comparison, and character study. His discussion is based on ordinary human behaviour, making the essay easy to understand and relevant even today.

In conclusion, “On Idleness” is a thoughtful and humorous essay about the waste of time and the different forms of laziness. Johnson's important point is that idleness may be open or hidden behind constant activity. Through Mr. Sober, he shows how a person can remain busy while achieving nothing useful. The essay teaches us to distinguish between real work and meaningless activity and encourages us to use our time wisely and purposefully.

Important Questions

- 1) Discuss Samuel Johnson's views on idleness as presented in “On Idleness.”
- 2) Give a detailed character sketch of Mr. Sober in “On Idleness.”
- 3) How does Samuel Johnson show that idleness can be hidden behind constant activity?
- 4) Discuss the use of humour and satire in “On Idleness.”

5) What moral lesson does Johnson convey through the essay “On Idleness”?

Multiple Choice Questions

1. In which periodical was “On Idleness” published?

A. *The Spectator* B. *The Tatler* **C. *The Idler*** D. *The Rambler*

2. What is the main subject of the essay “On Idleness”?

A. Pride **B. Idleness and its different forms** C. Education D. Politics

3. Who is Mr. Sober in the essay?

A. A hardworking farmer B. A successful businessman

C. A man who disguises his idleness through various activities D. A military officer

4. What does Mr. Sober mainly enjoy doing?

A. Farming **B. Conversation** C. Travelling D. Reading books

5. What is the main moral lesson of the essay?

A. Wealth is the key to happiness B. People should avoid education

C. People should use their time wisely and engage in useful work

D. Conversation is always harmful

On the Use of Language

– Oliver Goldsmith

Life and Works of Oliver Goldsmith

Oliver Goldsmith (1728–1774) was an important Irish-born English writer, poet, playwright, and essayist of the 18th century. He is remembered for his simple style, gentle humour, sympathy for ordinary people, and memorable characters. He was one of the important writers of the later 18th century and was a close friend of Samuel Johnson. Oliver Goldsmith was born in 1728 in County Longford, Ireland, in a poor but respectable family. He studied at Trinity College, Dublin. Later, he travelled through Europe and studied medicine. His early life was full of financial difficulties and struggles. After coming to London, he worked as a writer and translator. His experiences of poverty and travel influenced many of his literary works.

Goldsmith wrote poetry, essays, novels, and plays. His famous poem *The Traveller* (1764) describes different countries and ways of life. It also expresses his thoughts about happiness, society, and human nature. His other important poem, *The Deserted Village* (1770), describes the beauty of rural life and the problems caused by poverty and the movement of people from villages to cities. The poem expresses Goldsmith's sympathy for ordinary people. Goldsmith also wrote essays for periodicals. His collection *The Citizen of the World* (1762) contains letters written from the imaginary viewpoint of a Chinese traveller visiting England. Through this unusual method, Goldsmith comments humorously on English society, manners, politics, and culture.

His most famous novel is *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766). It tells the story of Dr. Primrose and his family. The novel combines humour, suffering, family relationships, and moral values. It became one of the most popular novels of the 18th century. Goldsmith was also a successful playwright. His famous comedy *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) is one of the best English comedies of the 18th century. It uses misunderstanding, humour, love, and mistaken identity to create entertainment. His earlier play *The Good-Natur'd Man* (1768) also presents his gentle humour and interest in human nature.

Goldsmith died in 1774 in London at the age of forty-five. He is remembered for his poetry, essays, novel, and comedies. His simple language, warm humour, sympathy for common people, and understanding of human nature have given him an important place in English literature.

Introduction of the Essay

On the Use of Language is an important essay associated with Oliver Goldsmith, one of the well-known writers of eighteenth-century English literature. Goldsmith was famous for his simple prose, gentle humour, social observation, and criticism of the weaknesses of contemporary society. In

this essay, he discusses the way people use language and points out the problems caused by the misuse of words.

Language is an important means of communication. People use it to express their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and opinions. Goldsmith suggests that language should be clear, natural, and meaningful. However, people sometimes use difficult words, fashionable expressions, and unnecessary decoration simply to appear educated or intelligent. Such language may confuse readers instead of communicating ideas clearly.

The essay reflects Goldsmith's interest in simple and natural expression. He dislikes unnecessary complexity and artificial language. He believes that the real value of language lies in communicating ideas effectively rather than showing off one's learning. His discussion also contains humour and gentle satire, through which he exposes the weaknesses of people who misuse language. *On the Use of Language* is therefore both a literary and practical essay. It teaches readers to value clarity, simplicity, and correctness in communication. Goldsmith's simple style makes his ideas easy to understand. The essay remains relevant today because people still use complicated or fashionable language when simple words would communicate their ideas more effectively.

Text

Summary

On the Use of Language is an interesting and humorous essay by Oliver Goldsmith. It was originally published in *The Bee* in 1759. In this essay, Goldsmith discusses the purpose of language and the way people use words in everyday social life. His main argument is humorous and somewhat ironic: although language is supposed to help people express their thoughts and feelings, people often use it to hide their real thoughts and intentions.

Goldsmith begins with the common idea that the main purpose of language is communication. We use words to tell others what we want, think, or feel. However, he observes that people often do exactly the opposite. Instead of expressing their true meaning directly, they use polite expressions, fashionable words, indirect statements, and complicated language. As a result, language sometimes becomes a means of concealing rather than revealing truth.

Goldsmith uses humour and satire to expose this weakness in human behaviour. He observes the language used in ordinary social situations and shows how people often say one thing while meaning another. For example, people may use polite words to hide dislike, praise someone without truly admiring them, or use indirect expressions to avoid saying what they really think. In this way, social language becomes a kind of disguise.

One of the important ideas in the essay is the difference between literal meaning and actual meaning. Words may appear friendly and respectful, but the speaker's real intention may be completely different. Goldsmith shows that people learn these indirect forms of communication as part of social behaviour. They know how to say what society expects them to say, even when they do not actually believe it.

Goldsmith also criticizes artificial and complicated language. Some people use difficult words and unnecessary expressions because they want to appear educated or important. Such language does not always make ideas clearer. Instead, it may confuse the listener or reader. Goldsmith prefers simple, natural, and direct expression because communication should be easy to understand.

The essay also provides an interesting picture of eighteenth-century social manners. Goldsmith shows how politeness and social customs influence people's speech. In polite society, people often cannot express their feelings directly because direct speech may appear rude. Therefore, they develop indirect ways of communicating. Goldsmith finds this situation both amusing and revealing.

The essay is especially effective because of Goldsmith's simple prose, wit, irony, and gentle satire. He does not make his criticism harsh or angry. Instead, he makes readers laugh while encouraging them to think about their own use of language. His humour makes the serious subject enjoyable and accessible. The title "On the Use of Language" is itself somewhat ironic. Language is traditionally understood as a tool for communication, but Goldsmith suggests that in social life it often becomes a tool for concealment. This contrast forms the central idea of the essay.

The essay remains relevant even today. People still use indirect expressions, polite language, fashionable words, and professional jargon to hide their real feelings or make themselves appear more important. Goldsmith's observations therefore continue to apply to modern communication.

In conclusion, *On the Use of Language* is a witty and thoughtful essay about the relationship between language and human behaviour. Goldsmith shows that language can be used not only to express truth but also to hide it. Through humour, irony, satire, and social observation, he exposes the artificiality of social communication. The essay teaches us to value clarity, simplicity, honesty, and meaningful communication and remains an excellent example of Goldsmith's talent as an eighteenth-century essayist.

Important Questions

- 1) Discuss Oliver Goldsmith's views on the use and misuse of language in the essay "On the Use of Language."

- 2) How does Goldsmith show that people often use language to hide their real thoughts and feelings?
- 3) Discuss the use of humour, irony, and satire in “On the Use of Language.”
- 4) What does Goldsmith say about artificial, complicated, and indirect language? Explain with reference to the essay.
- 5) “Language is often used to conceal rather than reveal the truth.” Discuss this statement with reference to Goldsmith’s essay “On the Use of Language.”

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Who is the author of the essay “On the Use of Language”?
A. Samuel Johnson B. Joseph Addison **C. Oliver Goldsmith** D. Richard Steele
 2. In which publication was “On the Use of Language” originally published?
A. *The Spectator* **B. The Bee** C. *The Tatler* D. *The Rambler*
 3. What is the main subject of the essay?
A. The history of English literature **B. The use and misuse of language**
C. The importance of education D. The development of poetry
 4. According to Goldsmith, what is the ordinary purpose of language?
A. To entertain people B. To make people famous
C. To express thoughts and wants D. To create confusion
 5. What does Goldsmith humorously suggest that people often use language for?
A. To reveal everything clearly **B. To hide their real thoughts and intentions**
C. To write poetry D. To teach grammar
- =====

Module IV - Poems

1. Death Be Not Proud- John Donne
2. The Definition of Love - Andrew Marvell
3. The Pulley – George Herbert
4. Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey – William Wordsworth
5. Ode to the West Wind- P.B. Shelley
6. La Belle Dame Sans Merci- John Keats

Introduction

The poem prescribed in the syllabus belongs to Metaphysical and Romantic poetry. Metaphysical Poetry is an important type of poetry that developed in seventeenth-century England. The most famous Metaphysical poet is John Donne, while other important poets include George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, Henry Vaughan, and Richard Crashaw. These poets are known for combining thought and emotion, philosophy and poetry, and intelligence and imagination. Their poems often deal with love, religion, death, God, the soul, and human life. A special feature of Metaphysical Poetry is the use of wit and metaphysical conceits, which are unusual and surprising comparisons between very different things. The poets also use paradox, argument, logical reasoning, and everyday language. Their poetry may appear difficult because of its complex ideas and unusual images, but it becomes meaningful when studied carefully. Metaphysical poets believed that poetry should appeal to both the heart and the mind. Their poems show that deep emotions can be expressed through intelligent and imaginative ideas.

Romantic Poetry is one of the most important movements in English literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It is generally associated with the period beginning with the publication of Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. Major Romantic poets include William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and John Keats. Romantic poets reacted against the strict rules and artificial style of earlier poetry. They gave importance to nature, imagination, emotion, individual freedom, beauty, childhood, ordinary life, and personal experience. Nature is especially important in Romantic Poetry because poets considered it a source of beauty, inspiration, peace, and spiritual wisdom. Romantic poets also explored dreams, mystery, love, loneliness, and human feelings. Their poetry is generally personal, imaginative, emotional, and musical. Romantic Poetry brought a major change to English literature by giving greater importance to the individual mind, imagination, and emotional experience.

Death Be Not Proud

- John Donne

Life and Works of John Donne

John Donne was one of the greatest English poets of the seventeenth century. He was born in London in 1572 into a Catholic family. He studied at Oxford and Cambridge and later became a lawyer. In 1601, he secretly married Anne More. His early life was full of difficulties, but he later became a priest in the Church of England. In 1621, he was appointed Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, London. He died in 1631. Donne is considered the most important poet of the Metaphysical School of Poetry. His poetry is famous for its intelligence, wit, argument, unusual comparisons, and deep thoughts. He often connects ordinary experiences with religion, love, death, and human life. His special use of surprising comparisons is called a metaphysical conceit.

His important works include *Songs and Sonnets*, *Holy Sonnets*, *Elegies*, *Epigrams*, and *The Progress of the Soul*. His famous poems include *The Flea*, *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*, *The Sun Rising*, and *Death Be Not Proud*. His prose work *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* is also important. John Donne's poetry is remarkable for its originality, intellectual depth, dramatic style, and powerful expression of love and religious faith. He remains one of the most influential poets in English literature.

Introduction of the Poem

The poem *Death, Be Not Proud* is one of the most famous religious poems by John Donne, a major poet of the Metaphysical School of English poetry. The poem is one of his Holy Sonnets. In this poem, Donne speaks directly to Death and challenges its power over human beings. He does not fear death because he believes that death is not the end of human life. The poem begins with the speaker addressing Death as if it were a proud and powerful person. He tells Death not to be proud because it cannot truly destroy human beings. According to Donne, death is only a temporary sleep. After death, human beings will awake to eternal life. Therefore, Death has no reason to feel powerful or victorious.

The poem expresses Donne's strong Christian faith and his belief in life after death. He argues that Death is dependent on many things such as war, sickness, and fate. It does not act independently. Donne also uses a striking comparison between death and sleep. Just as sleep gives rest, death gives temporary rest before eternal life. The poem is admired for its strong argument, religious faith, personification, wit, paradox, and metaphysical conceit. It presents a powerful message that death is not the end but a passage to eternal life.

Death Be Not Proud

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

Summary

John Donne's *Death, Be Not Proud* is one of his most famous Holy Sonnets. It is a powerful religious poem in which the poet challenges the power and pride of Death. Donne presents Death as a person and speaks directly to it. The main idea of the poem is that Death is not the end of human life. Through his Christian faith, Donne argues that the soul continues to live after physical death.

At the beginning of the poem, Donne tells Death not to be proud. People may call Death "mighty and dreadful," but the poet says that Death is neither powerful nor frightening. Death cannot really destroy human beings because their souls continue to exist. The poet compares death with sleep and rest. Sleep gives people peace and pleasure, and death, according to Donne, gives even greater rest. This comparison makes death appear less frightening.

Donne then attacks the supposed power of Death. He says that Death is only a slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men. Death depends on different causes such as war, poison, and sickness. People can also sleep through medicines and other means. Therefore, Death has no reason to feel proud of itself.

The final two lines contain the strongest argument of the poem. Donne says that after a short period of death, human beings will wake eternally. Through resurrection and eternal life, Death itself will disappear. Therefore, the poet boldly declares that Death shall die.

The poem is a fine example of Metaphysical poetry. It contains wit, logic, paradox, personification, and a striking metaphysical conceit. Donne uses a logical argument rather than simply expressing fear or sorrow. The poem also shows his deep Christian belief in resurrection and eternal life.

In conclusion, *Death, Be Not Proud* is a poem of faith, courage, and victory over fear. Donne transforms the frightening idea of death into a temporary stage before eternal life. Its powerful argument and memorable ending make it one of the finest religious poems in English literature.

Important Questions

1. What is the central theme of John Donne's poem *Death, Be Not Proud*?
2. How does John Donne challenge the power and pride of Death in the poem?
3. Explain the significance of the statement, "Death, thou shalt die."
4. How does Donne use personification, paradox, and metaphysical conceit in *Death, Be Not Proud*?
5. Discuss *Death, Be Not Proud* as a religious and metaphysical poem.

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Who wrote the poem *Death, Be Not Proud*?
A) William Shakespeare **B) John Donne** C) John Milton D) Alexander Pope
2. To which group of poems does *Death, Be Not Proud* belong?
A) Love Poems B) Nature Poems **C) Holy Sonnets** D) Pastoral Poems
3. Who is directly addressed in the poem?
A) God B) Love C) Time **D) Death**
4. What does the poet say about Death?
A) Death is very powerful B) Death is beautiful
C) Death is not truly powerful D) Death is a great king
5. What does Donne compare Death with?
A) War **B) Sleep and rest** C) Darkness D) Fire
6. According to the poet, Death is a slave to:
A) God and angels B) Kings and queens only
C) Fate, chance, kings, and desperate men D) Nature and time

7. Which of the following is NOT mentioned as being associated with Death?

- A) Poison B) War C) Sickness **D) Wealth**

The Definition of Love

- Andrew Marvell

Life and Works of Andrew Marvell

Andrew Marvell (1621–1678) was an important English poet, politician, and writer of the seventeenth century. He was born on 31 March 1621 at Winestead-in-Holderness, Yorkshire, England. He studied at Trinity College, Cambridge. During his life, he worked as a tutor and later became a Member of Parliament. He was also associated with John Milton and supported the Puritan cause for some time. Marvell died in London in 1678.

Marvell is generally considered one of the important Metaphysical poets. His poetry combines deep thought, wit, imagination, and unusual comparisons. His poems often deal with love, time, nature, religion, political ideas, and death. He uses clever arguments and surprising images to express his ideas. His most famous poem is *To His Coy Mistress*. It is a persuasive love poem in which the speaker asks his beloved to enjoy love before time passes away. Other important poems include *The Garden*, *An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland*, *The Definition of Love*, *The Mower's Song*, and *The Mower Against Gardens*.

Marvell's poetry is known for its wit, irony, paradox, metaphysical conceits, and intellectual depth. He often combines serious ideas with beautiful poetic language. His poetry has a special place in English literature because it brings together emotion, reason, imagination, and philosophical thought. He remains an important representative of seventeenth-century Metaphysical poetry.

Introduction of the Poem

The poem *The Definition of Love* is a famous love poem by Andrew Marvell. He was one of the important poets of the Metaphysical School of Poetry. In this poem, Marvell presents a deep and unusual idea about love. He describes a love that is pure, sincere, and perfect, but at the same time, it is impossible to fulfil. The poem combines strong emotion with logical and philosophical thinking, which is a special feature of Metaphysical poetry.

The poet begins by saying that his love is so rare and extraordinary that it cannot be easily understood. He calls it a love that is born from despair and impossibility. The poet and his beloved truly love each other, but fate does not allow them to come together. Their love is perfect, but circumstances

keep them apart. Marvell uses several metaphysical conceits to explain his idea of love. He compares the separation of the lovers with the movement of the planets, geometry, and parallel lines. He suggests that just as parallel lines can never meet, the lovers can never be united in this world. Their love remains strong because it exists beyond ordinary physical relationships.

The poem is admired for its wit, imagination, paradox, intellectual argument, and unusual comparisons. Marvell successfully combines emotion and reason. *The Definition of Love* presents love as something beautiful and powerful, but also tragic because it can remain perfect only when it cannot be fulfilled.

The Definition of Love

My love is of a birth as rare
As 'tis for object strange and high;
It was begotten by despair
Upon Impossibility.

Magnanimous Despair alone
Could show me so divine a thing,
Where feeble hope could ne'er have flown
But vainly flapped its tinsel wing.

And yet I quickly might arrive
Where my extended soul is fixed,
But Fate does iron wedges drive,
And always crowds itself betwixt.

For Fate with jealous eye does see
Two perfect loves; nor lets them close;
Their union would her ruin be,
And her tyrannic power depose.

And therefore her decrees of steel
Us as the distant poles have placed,
(Though love's whole world on us doth wheel)
Not by themselves to be embraced.

Unless the giddy heaven fall,
And earth some new convulsion tear;
And, us to join, the world should all
Be cramped into a planisphere.

As lines, so loves oblique, may well
Themselves in every angle greet;
But ours, so truly parallel,
Though infinite, can never meet.

Therefore the love which us doth bind,
But Fate so enviously debars,
Is the conjunction of the mind,
And opposition of the stars.

Summary

Andrew Marvell's *The Definition of Love* is a famous Metaphysical love poem. It presents a unique and philosophical idea of love. The poet describes his love as pure, deep, and perfect, but unfortunately, it is impossible to fulfil. The poem combines emotion, reason, wit, paradox, and metaphysical conceits.

At the beginning of the poem, the speaker says that his love is very rare and extraordinary. It is begotten by despair because there is no hope that he and his beloved can be united. Normally, hope gives strength to love, but in this case, the impossibility of their union makes their love even more special. The poet believes that such a perfect love could not have been discovered through ordinary hope.

The main obstacle to the lovers' union is Fate. Marvell personifies Fate as a powerful and jealous force. Fate does not allow two perfect lovers to come together because their union would challenge its power. The poet therefore compares the lovers to the distant poles of the earth. Although the whole world seems to move around them, the poles can never come together.

Marvell also uses the image of parallel lines. Two parallel lines may continue forever, but they never meet. In the same way, the poet and his beloved may love each other deeply, but they can never be physically united. This is one of the poem's most important metaphysical conceits.

The poem ends with a paradoxical idea. The lovers are separated physically, but their minds are united through love. Their love is therefore described as the conjunction of the mind and the opposition of the stars. Their bodies remain apart because of Fate, but their minds remain connected.

In conclusion, *The Definition of Love* presents love as pure, spiritual, powerful, and tragic. Marvell successfully combines emotional feeling with intellectual argument. His unusual comparisons, logical reasoning, paradoxes, and philosophical ideas make the poem a fine example of Metaphysical poetry.

Important Questions

1. What is the central idea of Andrew Marvell's poem *The Definition of Love*?
2. Why does the poet describe his love as being "begotten by despair"?
3. How does Marvell use the concept of Fate as an obstacle to the lovers' union?
4. Explain the significance of the comparison between the lovers and parallel lines.

5. Discuss *The Definition of Love* as a Metaphysical poem, with special reference to its conceits, wit, paradox, and intellectual argument.

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Who wrote the poem *The Definition of Love*?
A) John Donne **B) Andrew Marvell** C) John Milton D) George Herbert
2. What is the main theme of the poem?
A) Nature B) War **C) Impossible and unfulfilled love** D) Religious faith
3. According to the poet, his love is “begotten by”:
A) Hope B) Happiness **C) Despair** D) Jealousy
4. What prevents the lovers from being united?
A) Society **B) Fate** C) Poverty D) Distance
5. How does the poet describe Fate?
A) As a kind friend **B) As a jealous and powerful force**
C) As a beautiful woman D) As a helpless person
6. The lovers are compared to which geographical objects?
A) Rivers B) Mountains **C) Distant poles** D) Islands
7. What happens to parallel lines according to the poem?
A) They always meet B) They cross each other
C) They never meet D) They become circles
8. What does the phrase “conjunction of the mind” suggest?
A) Physical separation **B) Mental and spiritual union**
C) Hatred between lovers D) Loss of memory
9. Which literary feature is strongly associated with Marvell’s poem?
A) Metaphysical conceit B) Epic simile
C) Ballad refrain D) Dramatic monologue
10. What is the basic paradox presented in the poem?
A) The lovers are physically separated but mentally united
B) The lovers hate each other but remain together
C) The lovers are poor but become rich
D) The lovers are strangers but never meet

The Pulley

– George Herbert

Life and Works of George Herbert

George Herbert (1593–1633) was a famous English poet, priest, and one of the important Metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century. He was born on 3 April 1593 at Montgomery Castle in Wales. He came from a well-known family. He studied at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he developed a strong interest in literature and religion. He later became a priest in the Church of England and spent the final years of his life serving the people of Bemerton, near Salisbury. He died in 1633 at the age of forty.

Herbert is best known for his religious poetry. His poems express his deep love for God, his spiritual struggles, humility, faith, and desire to serve humanity. His poetry is simple in feeling but often rich in religious and intellectual meaning. He uses metaphor, symbolism, wit, paradox, and unusual poetic forms. His most important collection is *The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*, published after his death in 1633. It contains many famous poems such as *The Altar*, *Easter Wings*, *The Collar*, *The Pulley*, *Love (III)*, and *Virtue*.

George Herbert's poetry is admired for its simplicity, sincerity, musical quality, and spiritual depth. He successfully combines religious devotion with artistic skill. His poems show the relationship between God and human beings and the struggle of the human soul to find peace and faith. He remains one of the finest religious poets in English literature.

Introduction of the Poem

The Pulley is a famous religious poem by George Herbert, one of the important Metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century. The poem is included in his famous collection *The Temple*. In this poem, Herbert presents a simple but deep idea about the relationship between God and human beings. He explains why human beings are never completely satisfied with worldly pleasures and why they continue to search for God.

The poem begins with an imaginary story of God creating human beings. Herbert imagines that God keeps all the gifts and qualities in a container called a "glass." These gifts include strength, beauty, wisdom, honour, pleasure, and other blessings. God gives these qualities to human beings one by one. However, God deliberately keeps one important gift Rest at the bottom of the glass.

God does not give complete rest to human beings because He wants them to turn towards Him. If people received everything, including perfect satisfaction, they might forget God and become too

attached to the world. Therefore, God leaves human beings with a feeling of restlessness. This restlessness becomes a kind of “pulley” that pulls them back towards God.

The poem is admired for its religious message, metaphysical conceit, symbolism, imagination, and simple language. Herbert suggests that worldly happiness is temporary, while true peace can be found only in God. Thus, *The Pulley* teaches the importance of spiritual life and complete dependence on God.

Text

The Pulley

When God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by;
Let us (said he) pour on him all we can:
Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,
Contract into a span.

So strength first made a way;
Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honour, pleasure:
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that, alone of all his treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay.

For if I should (said he)
Bestow this jewel also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature:
So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness;
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast.

Summary

George Herbert's *The Pulley* is a beautiful religious and metaphysical poem. It presents a simple but deep idea about the relationship between God and human beings. The poem explains why human beings are blessed with many worldly qualities but are never completely satisfied. According to Herbert, this dissatisfaction ultimately brings people closer to God.

The poem begins with an imaginative picture of God creating man. Herbert imagines God holding a glass filled with different blessings. God decides to pour these blessings upon human beings.

He gives them strength, beauty, wisdom, honour, and pleasure. However, when almost all the blessings have been given, God stops and notices that Rest is still at the bottom of the glass.

God decides not to give complete rest to human beings. He knows that if people were completely satisfied, they might become too attached to worldly pleasures and forget their Creator. Herbert writes that people might “adore my gifts instead of me.” Therefore, God keeps the gift of perfect rest away from human beings.

The title “The Pulley” is a metaphysical conceit. A pulley is a device used to pull something upward. In the poem, human restlessness and dissatisfaction act like a pulley. When worldly pleasures cannot give people complete happiness, their weariness pulls them towards God. Thus, spiritual longing becomes a force that brings the human soul closer to its Creator.

The poem contains several important metaphysical features, such as an unusual conceit, logical argument, personification, symbolism, and religious thought. Herbert uses simple language but expresses a profound spiritual idea. The poem also contains a beautiful paradox: human beings must experience restlessness in order to find true rest.

The central message of the poem is that worldly wealth, beauty, wisdom, honour, and pleasure cannot give permanent satisfaction. True peace and complete rest can be found only in God. Therefore, *The Pulley* is a fine example of Herbert’s religious poetry and his skill as a Metaphysical poet.

Important Questions

1. What is the central theme of George Herbert’s poem *The Pulley*?
2. Why does God decide not to give the gift of “Rest” to human beings?
3. Explain the significance of the title *The Pulley*.
4. How does George Herbert use the metaphysical conceit in *The Pulley*?
5. Discuss *The Pulley* as a religious and metaphysical poem.

Multiple Choice Questions

- 1) Who wrote the poem *The Pulley*?
A) John Donne B) Andrew Marvell C) George Herbert D) John Milton
- 2) What is the main theme of *The Pulley*?
A) Political freedom **B) Human beings’ search for God**
C) Nature and beauty D) War and peace
- 3) What does God have in a glass at the beginning of the poem?
A) Gold and silver B) Flowers **C) Blessings** D) Water

- 4) Which of the following is NOT one of the blessings mentioned in the poem?
A) Strength B) Beauty C) Wisdom **D) Poverty**
- 5) Which blessing does God keep at the bottom of the glass?
A) Beauty **B) Rest** C) Wisdom D) Pleasure
- 6) Why does God decide not to give complete rest to human beings?
A) He wants them to suffer B) He wants them to work forever
C) He does not want them to forget Him D) He wants them to become poor
- 7) What might human beings adore instead of God if they received complete satisfaction?
A) Nature and animals **B) God's gifts**
C) Their friends D) Their families
- 8) What does "weariness" finally do to human beings?
A) Makes them forget God B) Makes them wealthy
C) Pulls them towards God D) Makes them powerful
- 9) Which literary device is central to the title *The Pulley*?
A) Metaphysical conceit B) Simile C) Alliteration D) Onomatopoeia
- 10) What is the ultimate message of the poem?
A) Worldly pleasures provide permanent happiness
B) Human beings should avoid all worldly blessings
C) True and lasting rest can be found in God
D) Wealth is more important than spirituality
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Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey

– William Wordsworth

Life and Works of William Wordsworth

William Wordsworth (1770–1850) was one of the greatest English poets and one of the chief poets of the Romantic Age. He was born on 7 April 1770 at Cockermouth in the Lake District of England. He studied at Hawkshead Grammar School and later at St John's College, Cambridge. His close friendship with Samuel Taylor Coleridge played an important role in the development of Romantic poetry. Wordsworth believed that nature is a great teacher and guide of human life. He loved simple rural life, common people, children, and the beauty of nature. He believed that poetry should use simple language and should express genuine human feelings. He famously described poetry as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings arising from emotion recollected in tranquillity.

Wordsworth and Coleridge published *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798, a book that helped begin the Romantic Movement in English literature. His important poems include Tintern Abbey, I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud, Ode: Intimations of Immortality, The Solitary Reaper, The World Is Too Much with Us, and Lucy Poems. His autobiographical poem *The Prelude* is considered his greatest work.

Wordsworth became Poet Laureate of Britain in 1843. He died in 1850 at Rydal Mount. He is remembered as the poet of nature, and his poetry continues to inspire readers through its simplicity, beauty, imagination, and deep love for nature and humanity.

Introduction of the Poem

The poem *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey* is one of the most famous poems by William Wordsworth, the leading poet of the Romantic Age. The poem was written in 1798 and was published in *Lyrical Ballads*, the important collection that Wordsworth prepared with Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The poem is based on Wordsworth's visit to the beautiful Wye Valley near Tintern Abbey in Wales. The poem describes the poet's deep relationship with nature. Wordsworth visits the place again after five years and remembers the beautiful landscape he had seen earlier. The natural scene gives him peace, joy, and spiritual strength. He explains that the memory of nature has helped him during difficult moments when he was away from the countryside.

The poem also shows how the poet's attitude towards nature has changed with age. When he was young, he enjoyed nature mainly through his senses and physical excitement. As he grows older, he sees nature in a deeper and more spiritual way. He believes that nature has a healing and moral power and can influence the human mind and heart. Wordsworth also addresses his sister Dorothy, who is with him during the visit. He hopes that nature will continue to give her the same joy and comfort.

Thus, the poem is an important expression of Wordsworth's love of nature, memory, spirituality, human emotions, and the Romantic idea of the close relationship between nature and the human mind.

Text

Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey

Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey, on revisiting the banks of the Wye during a tour, July 13, 1798.

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
Which on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which, at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedgerows, hardly hedgerows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees,
With some uncertain notice, as might seem,
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.

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:—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence

On that best portion of a good man's life,*Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey, on revisiting the banks of the Wye during a tour, July 13, 1798.*

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
Which on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
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Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
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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:—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,

His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—

Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,

Abundant recompence. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To soften and subdue. 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,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me, here, upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou, my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold

Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—
If I should be where I no more can see
Thee, thy beloved sister, nor this lovely shape
Of rural solitude, nor hear the sound
Of waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur—once again.
But if I should be, where I no more can see
Thee, my dear Friend, nor this fair river, nor
These steep woods and lofty cliffs, and all
The green pastoral landscape; when I die,
May I remember thee, and these my words
And all this be a joy to me.

Summary

William Wordsworth's *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey* is one of the most important poems of the Romantic Age. It was written in 1798 and published in *Lyrical Ballads*. The poem describes Wordsworth's return to the banks of the River Wye after an absence of five years. More than a description of scenery, the poem is a deep reflection on nature, memory, human life, and spiritual development.

At the beginning, Wordsworth describes the beautiful natural landscape—hills, rivers, woods, farms, orchards, and the quiet countryside. The sight of this landscape gives him peace and happiness. He remembers that during his stay in noisy towns and cities, the memory of these natural scenes gave him comfort and “tranquil restoration.” Nature has therefore remained alive in his mind even when he was physically far away.

The poem then explains the development of Wordsworth's attitude towards nature. When he was young, he loved nature mainly for its physical beauty and excitement. He enjoyed the mountains, rivers, rocks, and forests through his senses. As he becomes older and more mature, his relationship with nature becomes deeper and more spiritual. He now feels a divine presence working through nature and human beings. Nature becomes the “nurse,” “guide,” and “guardian” of his heart and moral life.

Wordsworth also emphasizes the importance of memory. Memories of nature can give strength during difficult periods of life. The poem therefore suggests that nature not only gives immediate pleasure but also shapes the human mind and character.

In the final part, Wordsworth addresses his sister Dorothy with love and affection. He hopes that nature will continue to comfort and guide her throughout her life. He also hopes that she will remember their experience together when they are older.

In conclusion, the poem is a beautiful expression of Romantic love for nature. Its central message is that nature is not merely a source of beauty; it is a powerful teacher, healer, and spiritual guide. The poem beautifully presents Wordsworth's journey from the physical enjoyment of nature to a mature and spiritual understanding of it.

Important Questions

1. What is the central theme of Wordsworth's poem *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey*?
2. How does Wordsworth's attitude towards nature change from his youth to his mature age?
3. Discuss the role of memory in the poem. How do memories of nature provide peace and comfort to the poet?
4. How does Wordsworth present nature as a teacher, guide, and moral force in the poem?
5. Discuss *Tintern Abbey* as a representative poem of Romantic poetry, with special reference to Wordsworth's philosophy of nature.

Multiple Choice Questions

- 1) Who wrote *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey*?
A) S. T. Coleridge **B) William Wordsworth** C) John Keats D) P. B. Shelley
 - 2) When was the poem written?
A) 1790 B) 1795 **C) 1798** D) 1805
 - 3) The poem was published in which famous collection?
A) *The Prelude* **B) *Lyrical Ballads***
C) *Poems, in Two Volumes* D) *The Excursion*
 - 4) After how many years does Wordsworth revisit the banks of the River Wye?
A) Three years B) Four years **C) Five years** D) Ten years
 - 5) Which river is central to the poem?
A) Thames **B) Wye** C) Avon D) Severn
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Ode to the West Wind

- P.B. Shelley

Life and Works of P B Shelley

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822) was one of the greatest poets of the Romantic Age in English literature. He was born on 4 August 1792 at Field Place, near Horsham in Sussex, England. He studied at Eton College and later at Oxford University. He was expelled from Oxford in 1811 because of a pamphlet expressing his views on atheism. Shelley strongly supported freedom, equality, love, and social justice. He opposed political oppression, religious restrictions, and social injustice. Shelley married Mary Godwin, who later became famous as Mary Shelley, the author of *Frankenstein*. Shelley spent much of his later life in Italy, where he wrote many of his important poems. He died in a sailing accident in 1822, when he was only twenty-nine years old.

Shelley's poetry is known for its imagination, idealism, love of nature, revolutionary ideas, and musical language. He believed that poetry could inspire people and bring positive change to society. His important works include *Ode to the West Wind*, *To a Skylark*, *The Cloud*, *To the Moon*, *Adonais*, *Prometheus Unbound*, *The Masque of Anarchy*, and *England in 1819*. His famous poem *Ode to the West Wind* expresses his hope for change and freedom. Shelley is remembered as an idealistic and revolutionary Romantic poet. His poetry combines beauty, imagination, nature, freedom, and hope for a better world.

Introduction of the Poem

Ode to the West Wind is one of the most famous poems by P. B. Shelley, one of the leading poets of the Romantic Age. Shelley wrote the poem in 1819 and published it in 1820. The poem is an example of an ode, in which the poet addresses and praises a particular subject. Here, Shelley directly addresses the powerful West Wind. The West Wind is presented as a powerful force of nature, destruction, and renewal. Shelley observes how the wind drives away dead leaves, carries seeds, and changes the seasons. The wind destroys what is old but also helps new life to begin. Therefore, it becomes a symbol of change and regeneration.

The poet also connects the West Wind with his own life. He feels tired, troubled, and burdened by difficulties. He wishes that the wind could carry his thoughts and ideas across the world. He wants his poetry to spread his message of freedom, hope, and social change among people. The poem also expresses Shelley's strong revolutionary and idealistic spirit. He hopes that his words will bring a new awakening to humanity. The famous final question, *If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?*, expresses his belief that suffering and darkness will eventually be followed by hope and renewal.

Thus, *Ode to the West Wind* is not only a poem about nature but also a poem about change, freedom, hope, creativity, and the power of poetry. It beautifully combines natural imagery with Shelley's personal and revolutionary ideas.

Text

Ode to the West Wind

I

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and Preserver; hear, oh, hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine aëry surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height—
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: O hear!

III

Thou on whose path the reeling earth is spread,
Thou on whose path the earth's green woods are seen,
Thou on whose path the leaves of the forest are dead,

And the leaves of the forest are yellow and green,
And the leaves of the forest are red and brown,
And the leaves of the forest are flying free.

Thou on whose path the earth is shaken down,
Thou on whose path the clouds are driven fast,
Thou on whose path the leaves are scattered round,

Thou on whose path the earth is shaken and cast,
Thou on whose path the clouds are driven wide,
Thou on whose path the leaves are scattered past:

Thou on whose path the leaves are driven and die,
Thou on whose path the earth is bare and dry,
Thou on whose path the clouds are driven high.

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision—I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Summary

P. B. Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* is one of the greatest poems of the Romantic Age. Written in 1819, the poem presents the West Wind as a powerful force of nature and as a symbol of change, destruction, renewal, freedom, and hope. Shelley does not simply describe the wind; he addresses it directly and asks it to carry his thoughts and ideas across the world. The poem is divided into five sections. In the first three sections, Shelley describes the effects of the West Wind on the earth, sky, and sea. In autumn, the wind drives away dead leaves and carries seeds to the earth. These seeds remain hidden during winter and grow when spring arrives. Thus, the West Wind is both a Destroyer and Preserver. It destroys the old but also prepares the way for new life.

In the second section, Shelley describes the effect of the wind on the sky. The wind pushes dark clouds across the sky and brings rain, lightning, and storms. The storm represents the death of the old season. The wind is therefore connected with the powerful and dramatic changes in nature. In the third section, Shelley turns towards the sea. He describes how the wind moves across the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. The sea responds to the power of the wind. Through these descriptions, Shelley presents nature as dynamic, energetic, and powerful.

In the fourth section, the poem becomes more personal. Shelley wishes that he could become a leaf, cloud, or wave so that the wind could carry him. He remembers his youth when he was free and

energetic. Now he feels tired and troubled by the difficulties of life. He says, I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed! This line expresses his personal suffering and helplessness.

In the final section, Shelley asks the West Wind to make him its lyre. He wants the wind to use him as an instrument to spread his thoughts and ideas throughout the world. He wants his poetry to become a force for awakening humanity. His words should spread like ashes and sparks and inspire people to bring about change.

The poem contains several important Romantic features. Shelley gives great importance to nature, imagination, freedom, emotion, and hope. Nature is not presented as something passive; it is a living and powerful force. The West Wind becomes a symbol of the poet's revolutionary spirit and his desire for social and political change.

Shelley uses many poetic devices, including personification, metaphor, simile, imagery, symbolism, apostrophe, and alliteration. The West Wind is personified as a powerful living spirit. The comparison of the wind to a destroyer and preserver creates a powerful paradox. The poem also contains rich natural imagery, such as dead leaves, seeds, clouds, lightning, rain, forests, and waves.

The poem is written in terza rima, a three-line rhyme pattern traditionally associated with Italian poetry. Shelley adapts this difficult form successfully to the English language. The musical quality of the poem is strengthened by its powerful rhythm and vivid images.

The famous closing line, If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?, gives the poem its message of hope. Winter represents suffering, death, and darkness, while spring represents life, freedom, and renewal. Shelley suggests that difficult times cannot last forever.

In conclusion, *Ode to the West Wind* is much more than a poem about nature. It is a poem about personal suffering, revolutionary change, poetic inspiration, freedom, and hope. Shelley transforms the West Wind into a symbol of the power that destroys the old and creates the new. The poem remains one of the finest examples of Romantic poetry because of its beautiful imagery, musical language, powerful imagination, and inspiring message of renewal.

Important Questions

- 1) What is the central theme of Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*? Explain the West Wind as a symbol of destruction and regeneration.
- 2) How does Shelley describe the power of the West Wind over the earth, sky, and sea?
- 3) Explain the personal and emotional significance of the lines, "I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!"

- 4) Discuss *Ode to the West Wind* as a representative poem of Romantic poetry, with special reference to nature, imagination, freedom, and hope.
- 5) Explain the significance of the concluding line, “If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?”
What message of hope does Shelley convey through it?

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Who wrote *Ode to the West Wind*?
A) William Wordsworth B) John Keats **C) P. B. Shelley** D) Lord Byron
 2. In which year was *Ode to the West Wind* written?
A) 1798 B) 1812 **C) 1819** D) 1822
 3. What does the West Wind mainly symbolize in the poem?
A) Death only **B) Change and renewal** C) Peace and silence D) Wealth and power
 4. How does Shelley describe the West Wind?
A) Destroyer only B) Preserver only
C) Destroyer and Preserver D) A weak natural force
 5. What does the West Wind drive away from the trees?
A) Flowers B) Fruits **C) Dead leaves** D) Birds
 6. What does Shelley wish to become so that the West Wind can carry him?
A) A mountain **B) A leaf, cloud, or wave** C) A bird D) A star
 7. What does Shelley ask the West Wind to make him?
A) A king B) A warrior **C) A lyre** D) A bird
 8. What does Shelley want the West Wind to do with his thoughts?
A) Hide them from people **B) Carry them across the universe**
C) Destroy them D) Keep them in his mind
 9. Which poetic form is mainly used in *Ode to the West Wind*?
A) Sonnet B) Ballad **C) Terza rima** D) Heroic couplet
 10. What is the meaning of the final line, “If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?”
A) Winter is better than spring B) Nature never changes
C) Difficult times will eventually be followed by hope and renewal
D) Spring is longer than winter
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La Belle Dame Sans Merci

- John Keats

Life and Works of John Keats

John Keats (1795–1821) was one of the greatest poets of the Romantic Age in English literature. He was born on 31 October 1795 in London, England. His father died when Keats was a child, and he lost his mother at a young age. He studied at Clarke School in Enfield and later trained as an apothecary. However, his strong interest in poetry led him to give up medicine and become a poet. Keats was greatly influenced by John Milton, William Shakespeare, and Greek and Roman art and mythology. His poetry is famous for its beauty, imagination, love of nature, mythology, art, and the idea of beauty. Unlike some Romantic poets, Keats did not focus mainly on politics. He concentrated on beauty, human emotions, imagination, and the relationship between beauty and truth.

His important works include Ode to a Nightingale, Ode on a Grecian Urn, To Autumn, Ode on Melancholy, On First Looking into Chapman's Homer, The Eve of St. Agnes, and La Belle Dame sans Merci. His unfinished epic poem *Hyperion* is also important. Keats suffered from tuberculosis and died in Rome in 1821, at the very young age of twenty-five. Although his poetic career was short, he became one of the most admired English poets. His famous idea that Beauty is truth, truth beauty represents his deep belief in the lasting power of beauty and art.

Introduction of the Poem

La Belle Dame sans Merci is one of the most famous narrative poems by John Keats, one of the leading poets of the Romantic Age. The title is French and means The Beautiful Lady without Mercy. The poem was written in 1819 and presents a mysterious story of love, beauty, attraction, and destruction. It combines the beauty of Romantic poetry with elements of medieval romance and folklore. The poem begins with a mysterious knight who is wandering alone in a cold and deserted place. He looks pale, weak, and unhappy. When asked about his condition, the knight tells the story of a beautiful and mysterious woman whom he met in the countryside. She has beautiful eyes and wild, attractive hair. The knight is immediately attracted to her.

The lady takes the knight to her cave and gives him strange food and drink. He falls deeply in love with her and believes that she loves him. She takes him to her magical place, where he sees strange and unhappy figures. They warn him about the lady, calling her La Belle Dame sans Merci. The knight then falls into a deep sleep and dreams of these pale figures. When he wakes up, he finds himself alone on a cold hillside. The beautiful lady has disappeared. He realizes that he has been trapped by her mysterious beauty and power.

The poem explores important themes such as love, beauty, illusion, death, loneliness, and the dangerous power of attraction. Its mysterious atmosphere, simple language, vivid imagery, and supernatural elements make it one of Keats's most memorable poems.

Text

La Belle Dame Sans Merci

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has withered from the Lake,
And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever-dew,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna-dew,
And sure in language strange she said—
“I love thee true.”

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept and sighed full sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.

And there she lulled me asleep
And there I dreamed—Ah! woe betide!—
The latest dream I ever dreamt
On the cold hill side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—“La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!”

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill's side.

And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the Lake,
And no birds sing.

Summary

John Keats's *La Belle Dame sans Merci* is one of the most famous Romantic narrative poems. The title is French and means The Beautiful Lady Without Mercy. The poem was written in 1819 and tells a mysterious story of a beautiful supernatural woman and a knight who becomes completely attracted to her. The poem explores love, beauty, illusion, loneliness, suffering, and death. Its simple language and mysterious atmosphere make it one of Keats's most memorable poems.

The poem begins with a speaker asking a knight-at-arms why he is wandering alone and looking pale and unhappy. The natural world around him is also lifeless. The grass has withered, the harvest is over, and no birds are singing. These details create a cold and sad atmosphere. The knight appears weak and troubled, and his pale face shows that he has suffered deeply.

The knight then tells the story of his experience. He met a beautiful and mysterious woman in a meadow. She is described as a faery's child with long hair, light feet, and wild eyes. The knight is immediately attracted to her beauty. He makes a garland and bracelets for her and places her on his horse. She sings a strange fairy song, and the knight becomes completely fascinated by her.

The mysterious woman gives him sweet roots, wild honey, and magical food. She tells him that she loves him. She then takes him to her elfin grot, where she cries and sighs. The knight kisses her and eventually falls asleep. At this point, the poem becomes darker and more mysterious.

During his sleep, the knight has a terrible dream. He sees pale kings, princes, and warriors who are all suffering. They warn him that the beautiful lady has trapped him. Their words reveal the true nature of the woman. She is the *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, a beautiful but merciless supernatural figure.

When the knight wakes up, he finds himself alone on a cold hillside. The beautiful lady has disappeared. He realizes that he has been enchanted and trapped. He remains there, pale and lonely, waiting without hope. The poem ends exactly where it began, with the knight wandering alone and the natural world remaining cold and silent.

One of the important features of the poem is its contrast between beauty and danger. The lady is extremely beautiful, but her beauty becomes a source of destruction. Keats suggests that beauty can be attractive but also mysterious and dangerous. The knight is unable to understand the true nature of the lady because he is blinded by his attraction to her.

The poem also contains strong Romantic and medieval elements. The supernatural woman, the knight, the enchanted place, the dream, and the mysterious atmosphere remind us of medieval romance and folklore. Keats uses simple ballad-like language and repetition to create a musical and haunting effect.

Nature also plays an important role. The withered sedge, silent birds, and cold hillside reflect the knight's inner suffering. The lifeless landscape becomes a symbol of his emotional condition.

In conclusion, *La Belle Dame sans Merci* is a powerful poem about the dangerous side of beauty and love. Keats presents a world where attraction can become an illusion and where beauty may lead to suffering and loneliness. Through its supernatural atmosphere, vivid imagery, repetition, symbolism, and simple ballad form, the poem creates a mysterious and unforgettable experience for the reader.

Important Questions

- 1) What is the central theme of John Keats's poem *La Belle Dame sans Merci*?
- 2) Describe the character of the beautiful lady in the poem. Why is she called "*La Belle Dame sans Merci*"?
- 3) How does Keats use supernatural elements and mystery in *La Belle Dame sans Merci*?
- 4) Discuss the importance of nature and its connection with the knight's emotional condition in the poem.
- 5) How does Keats present the relationship between beauty, love, illusion, and suffering in *La Belle Dame sans Merci*?

Multiple Choice Questions

1) Who wrote *La Belle Dame sans Merci*?

- A) P. B. Shelley B) William Wordsworth **C) John Keats** D) Lord Byron

2) What does the French title *La Belle Dame sans Merci* mean?

- A) The Beautiful Lady of Love **B) The Beautiful Lady Without Mercy**
C) The Mysterious Lady D) The Lady of the Lake

3) Who is the main male character in the poem?

- A) A king B) A soldier **C) A knight-at-arms** D) A shepherd

4) How does the knight appear at the beginning of the poem?

- A) Happy and energetic B) Rich and powerful
C) Pale, weak, and lonely D) Angry and violent

5) Where does the knight meet the beautiful lady?

- A) In a palace **B) In the meadows** C) In a forest house D) Near a castle

6) How is the beautiful lady described?

- A) As a queen **B) As a fairy's child** C) As a village girl D) As a princess

7) What does the lady give the knight to eat?

- A) Bread and wine B) Fruits and milk
C) Roots, wild honey, and manna-dew D) Meat and water

8) What does the knight see in his dream?

- A) Beautiful flowers **B) Pale kings, princes, and warriors**
C) His family D) A golden palace

9) What do the pale figures warn the knight about?

- A) The coming winter B) The dangerous forest
C) La Belle Dame sans Merci having him in her power D) A coming war

10) What is the main theme of the poem?

- A) Political freedom **B) The beauty and danger of love and attraction**
C) The importance of education D) The glory of war

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