

UGBA
Semester IV
English
Core Course (CC) & Elective Course (EC) – 211
Title: History of English Literature: 1798-1832

Unit No.	Title/Author/Topic	Text
01	A. Literary Features of the Romantic Age B. Poetry in the Romantic Age C. Personal Essay	<i>History of English Literature</i> by Edward Albert, Oxford University Press.
02	Jane Austen	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i> Macmillan Pub.
03	Poems: 1. 'Tintern Abbey' – Wordsworth 2. 'From Adonais' – Shelley 3. 'Ode to a Nightingale' – Keats 4. 'When We Two Parted' – Byron	<i>The Winged Word</i> Ed. by David Green Macmillan Pub.
04	Acquaintances (Non-detailed) (See the Note below)	No Particular Text is Prescribed

Note:

Unit 4: Acquaintances with the works of writers of this period.

(The objective type of questions can be framed in which the students will be asked to write the name of the author, the year of publication, the form of the work and the age/period to which it belongs.)

List of Titles for Acquaintances:

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|---|--|
| 1. <i>The Prelude</i> | 9. <i>Essays of Elia</i> |
| 2. <i>The Rime of the Ancient Mariner</i> | 10. <i>Confessions of an English Opium Eater</i> |
| 3. <i>Biographia Literaria</i> | 11. <i>Table Talk</i> |
| 4. <i>Adonais</i> | 12. <i>Imaginary Conversations</i> |
| 5. <i>The Defence of Poetry</i> | 13. <i>Life of Byron</i> |
| 6. <i>Don Juan</i> | 14. <i>Emma</i> |
| 7. <i>The Eve of St. Agnes</i> | 15. <i>Northanger Abbey</i> |
| 8. <i>Waverley</i> | |

Recommended Reading:

- Birch, Dinah ed., *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, Oxford: OUP, 2009.
- Chandler, James, *The Cambridge History of English Romantic Literature*. New York : Cambridge University Press, 2012.

- Ferber, Michael, *The Cambridge Introduction to British Romantic Poetry*. New York :Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Legouis, Emile & Cazamion, *A History of English Literature*, Trans. Helen Douglas-Irvine, W. D. MacInnes, The Macmillan Company, 1927. Digitalized 24 Jul 2006.
- Trivedi, R. D., *A Compendious History of English Literature*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt Limited, 2009.

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CC/EC: 211

Examination Pattern for external exams:

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|-------|---|----------|
| Q. 1. | Long Answer based on Unit -1 (1/2) (Up to 850-900 words) | Marks 14 |
| | <u>Format 1:</u> General Question <u>OR</u> General Question <u>OR</u> | |
| | <u>Format 2:</u> General Question <u>OR</u> Short Notes – 2 out of 2 | |
| Q. 2. | Long Answer based on Unit -2 (1/2) (Up to 850-900 words) | Marks 14 |
| | <u>Format 1:</u> General Question <u>OR</u> General Question <u>OR</u> | |
| | <u>Format 2:</u> General Question <u>OR</u> Short Notes – 2 out of 2 | |
| Q. 3. | Long Answer based on Unit -3 (1/2) (Up to 850-900 words) | Marks 14 |
| | <u>Format 1:</u> General Question <u>OR</u> General Question <u>OR</u> | |
| | <u>Format 2:</u> General Question <u>OR</u> Short Notes – 2 out of 2 | |
| Q. 4. | Answers based on Unit -4 (7/9) | Marks 14 |
| Q. 5. | MCQs (1mark ×14) (From Unit 1 to 4) | Marks 14 |

Total Marks: 70

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UGBA Sem IV - Core English – 211-

History of English Literature (1798-1832)

Unit I –A- Literary Features of the Romantic Age

Answer: Romanticism: A complex phenomenon:

The term “romantic” first appeared in 18th century English and it originally meant “romance like” or resembling to Shakespearean romances. As a literary movement, romanticism began in 1798 with the publication of “Lyrical Ballads” by Wordsworth and Coleridge. However, romanticism is a loaded term, full of implications. According to Abercrombie, romanticism is “a withdrawal from outer experience to concrete upon inner”. For Victor Hugo romanticism is “a liberalism in literature”. T.W. Dunton calls it “the Renaissance of Wonder”, while Walter Pater calls it “the addition of strangeness to beauty”. In English poetry, romanticism extending from 1798 to 1830 appears to be a complex phenomenon.

Characteristics of Romanticism:

(1) **Revolt against logicism** emerges to be an outstanding quality of romantic poetry. The romantic poets differed from the neo-classical poets in (1) poetic theory, (2) poetic spirit and (3) poetic subject. For the neo-classicist like Pope, poetry was imitation, but for the romantics like Wordsworth it was “a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquility”. Against intellectualism and rationalism of the neo-classicists, the romantics emphasized mysticism and pantheism. The neo-classicists portrayed the aristocratic class in their poetry and ignored the *en-masse*, on the other hand the romantics introduced shepherds, milkmen and working women in their poetry. As M.W. Davies notes: “Romanticism thus stands as an emotional reaction against the rational classicism of 18th century Augustanism”.

(2) **Revolt against the neo-classical poetic diction** makes romantic iconoclast by nature. Especially in “The Eve of St. Ages” Keats revived the Spenserian stanza rhyming aba bbc bcc. The romantics eschewed the cacophonous phraseology of the neo-classicist and made their poetry ornate and lyrical. On the whole, the romantics revived the Elizabethan romanticism to such an extent that the whole period extending from 1798 to 1830 has been called “Romantic Revival”.

(3) **Return to nature** emerges to be an outstanding trait of romantic poetry. For the neo-classicists, nature meant human-nature, but for the romantics, nature meant God’s nature. Yet the romantics described not only the physical aspects nature, but

felt God's presence in it. Romantic poetry, then, abounds in pantheism. For example,

“In all things, in all natures, in the stars

This active principle abides”

(Wordsworth – Tintern Abbey)

(4) Romantic Imagination appears to be a central feature of romantic poetry. The neo-classical poetry was witty, satirical and didactic by nature. But Coleridge emphasized “esemplastic imagination” and hailed the world of imagination as eternal and infinite. Wordsworth employed his imagination to describe the beauty of daffodils and rainbow, while Coleridge explored mystic forces of nature. Keats exulted in Middle Ages, while Shelley celebrated the joy of togetherness.

“The Fountains mingle with the River, And the Rivers with the Ocean,

The winds of Heaven mix for ever, With sweet emotion;

Nothing in the world is single; All things by a law divine

In one another's being mingle, Why not I with thine?”

(P.B. Shelley – ‘Loves Philosophy’)

(5) Medievalism emerges especially in the long poems of Keats and Coleridge. If we apply the Freudian theory of escape, then it could be said that the romantics sought in the distant Middle Ages what they failed to seek in the real life. They described the medieval world of joy and beauty, of love, adventure and faith. Keats in “The Eve of St. Agnes” and “La Bella dame sans Mercy”, Coleridge in “Ancient Mariner” explored the medieval belief and customs of life. “The Eve of St. Agnes” dealt with the medieval belief that a maiden would dream of her future husband if she performs certain ceremonies. “La Bella dams Sans Mercy” described the eternal quest for love. “Christabel” and “The Ancient Mariner” described the remote characters of the remote places and times.

Historical Incidents:

(1)The French Revolution: (1789)

The French Revolution was based on the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. These ideals attracted the young poets of England, especially Wordsworth and Coleridge. They hailed the new era with joy. The revolution of France caught the imaginations of the young poets of England. In the beginning of

the revolution people thought that they would gain a new world. But in the next phase they feared it because they thought that they were losing. As the revolution proceeded to unexpected developments there came in turn disappointment, disillusion and despair notably in the case of Wordsworth. Shelley and Keats adhered to the revolutionary doctrines. But their early zeal had passed away. The revolutionary ideas were reflected in the poetry of Romantic poets.

(2) The War with France:

The close of 18th century saw England and France engaged in open war (1793). There were many causes that contributed to the war in motion. The hostility continued between two countries till 1815, which brought the extinction of the French Republic by the rise and fall of Napoleon. All these events had tremendous effects on young poets of romanticism. The war brought many social miseries such as low wages, unemployment, and heavy taxation. The Reform Bill was highly demanded.

Introduction to Romanticism:

Romanticism is the expression in terms of art of sharpened sensibilities and heightened imaginative feelings. Emotion and imagination are the bedrock of romanticism. Pater considered the romanticism as “the addition of strangeness to the beauty”. Thus curiosity and beauty are the important elements of romanticism. The supreme Romantic Movement in English literature was the Renaissance. It had brought about a transformation not only in English but also European life. The second Romantic Revival came in the beginning of 19th century with the publication of “Lyrical Ballads” in 1798 by Wordsworth and Coleridge. The following are the characteristics of Romantic age.

The Literary characteristics of Romantic Revival

(1) Break from set rules:

The poetry of the Romantic Revival is in direct contrast to the characteristics cultivated by the 18th century neo-classical writers. In the 18th century, poetry was governed by set rules and regulations. The first thing that we have in new poetry is the break from these rules. According to W.J. Long, “the Romantic movement was marked and is always marked by a strong reaction and protest against the bondage of rule and custom ...”. The science, theology, philosophy and literature can not develop if it is bound and fettered by rules and regulations.

(2) Interest in country life: (Return to Nature)

Poetry in the 18th century was concerned with clubs and coffee-houses, drawing rooms and social and political life of London. It was essentially the poetry of town life. Nature had practically no place in classical poetry. In the poetry of Romantic Revival the interests of the poets was transferred from town to country life and to the natural beauty and loneliness of nature. Nature began to have its own importance in the poetry of this age. Wordsworth was the great poet who revealed the physical and spiritual beauty of nature.

(3) Presentation of Common Life

Romantic poets started taking interest in the lives of common people, the shepherds and left subjects like gallant lords and fashionable people. A renewed interest in simple life marked the poetry of the age. A feeling of humanitarianism coloured the poetry of Wordsworth, Shelley and Byron. Thus romantic poetry was marked by intense human sympathy and a consequent understanding of human heart.

(4) Predominance of Emotion and Imagination

The romantic writers revolted against tyranny and brutality of previous age. The Romantics let their imagination roam freely. Due to this they could create excellent poetry which touched the heart and inspired the readers. Emotion was given importance as they were tired of the rationalism. They used their imagination and with the help of metaphors Coleridge could create his masterpiece like “Kubla Khan” with imagination. Coleridge emphasized on “esemplastic imagination” and hailed the world of imagination as eternal and infinite. Wordsworth employed his imagination to describe the beauty of daffodils and rainbow, while Coleridge explored mystic forces of nature. Keats exulted in Middle Ages, while Shelley celebrated the joy of togetherness.

(5) Political and Periodical writing:

This age did not produce a pamphleteers of the first class like Swift or Burke. The spirit of the period was clearly seen in the immense productivity of its political writers. The number of periodicals was greatly written and the daily journals started in literature and politics. “The Morning chronicle” (1769) was started by William Woodfull. A powerful literary magazines sprang to life, like “The Quarterly Review” (1809), “The London” Magazines”(1820) and “The Westminster Review”(1824).

(6) Supernaturalism

Supernaturalism is a significant feature of Romantic poetry. The poetry of S.T. Coleridge such as “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” and “Kubla Khan” fill us with a sense of joy and wonder, and leave us spellbound. That is why this age is called “The Renaissance of Wonder”. The elements of supernaturalism abound much in the poetry of Shelley and Keats.

The Romantic Age tried to overthrow the established set of rules and regulations of the neo-classical age. The reaction against Pope and the Augustans was aggressive. The Romantic Age extends from the year 1798-1832. There was change in literary form in this age. Literature became a thing of the common man, and was not written just for the royals. Poetry flourished in this age. William Wordsworth is the most important writer of this age.

Major writers of this period were William Wordsworth, S.T. Coleridge, P.B. Shelley, John Keats, Lord Byron and others.

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History of English Literature (1798-1832)

Unit I –B - Poetry in Romantic Age

Romantic Poetry

The Romantic Period in English literature began with the publication of Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* and end with the death of the novelist, Sir Walter Scott. The historical and literary contexts and effects covered a broader time span. In England, Romanticism had its greatest influence from the end of the eighteenth century up to 1832, all the way up to about 1870. Its primary vehicle of expression was in poetry. Romanticism is a phenomenon of immense scope, pertaining to literature, politics, history, philosophy and the arts.

Romanticism is a movement in art and literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in revolt against the Neoclassicism of the previous centuries. The German poet Friedrich Schlegel, who first used the term *romantic* to describe literature, defined it as "literature depicting emotional matter in an imaginative form." Imagination, emotion, and freedom are certainly the focal points of Romanticism. The characteristics of the literature of Romanticism include subjectivity and an emphasis on individualism, spontaneity, freedom from rules, solitary life rather than life in society, the beliefs that imagination is superior to reason and devotion to beauty, love of and worship of nature.

The collection of poems published as *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 by William Wordsworth (1770-1850) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) has traditionally been seen as the birthplace of English Romanticism. The other English Romantic poets are William Blake (1757-1827), George Byron (1788-1824), Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), John Keats (1795-1821).

It is found in literary history that the strongholds of the Romantic Movement were England and Germany. Our colloquial use of "romance" and "romantic" to describe intense emotional experiences can be traced back to this medieval sense of the word. "Romantic" has in fact been used since the Renaissance to suggest free expression of the imagination in the arts, but mainly in a negative sense.

Romantic term relates to the clarity of the art form, and so lay beyond the bounds of proper subject-matter.

"Romanticism" was adopted across Europe and the New World to describe the contemporary modes of thought, losing in the process many of its negative connotations. The Western world had been shaken by two political revolutions, in America (1776) and France (1789), and by an industrial revolution which brought the vital changes in the traditional lives of people. New ways of living had to be reflected in new ways of thinking. Romanticism, for want of any better word, came to stand for this new experience of the world. The true Romantic was not an over-sensitive dreamer, but a heroic figure facing the painful realities of his time - a figure of genius.

Definitions of Romanticism

Romanticism: a movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that marked the reaction in literature, philosophy, art, religion, and politics from the neoclassicism of the preceding period. Romanticism arose so gradually and exhibited so many phases that a satisfactory definition is not possible. The aspect most stressed in France is reflected in Victor Hugo's phrase "liberalism in literature," meaning especially the freeing of the artist and writer from restraints and rules and suggesting the phase of revolutionary political ideas.

From the historians of English and German literature we get the convenient dates for the Romantic period, beginning in 1798, the year of the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* by Wordsworth and Coleridge. Writing of this titanic change in human affairs, Romantic poets like Blake and Wordsworth respond sharply to England's changing landscapes and human relationships. "Nature" is no longer simply god's gift, some Romantic poets see nature as the sources of strength and happiness. The French Revolution of 1789, conducted in the name of liberty, fraternity and equality for all, was the epitome of the revolt and the desire to take political power from the hands of the landed aristocracy.

Romanticism vs Neo-classicism

For most scholars, the term implies a departure from the Neo-classical qualities of reason and order which reigned supreme during the period of the so-called

Enlightenment. In contrast to them the Romantic poets were looking for the godly existence in the individual. So there was a glorification of the individual and his creative power, his liberation and entering of a world of unlimited possibilities.

The characteristics of Romanticism –

The characteristics of the Romanticism include aspects like beautiful, emotion, feeling, passion, Intuition, vision, excess, country, divinity created natural phenomena, spontaneity, subjectivity, symbolism, and mystery.

Romanticism is often understood as a set of new cultural and aesthetic values. It includes the rise of individualism, and the artistic genius that was a prominent feature in the Romantic poetry of Wordsworth. In Romantic poetry there is a new emphasis on common language and the depiction of apparently everyday experiences; and experimentation with new, artistic forms. One of the fundamentals of Romanticism is the belief in the natural goodness of man, the idea that man in a *state of nature*. Romanticism in British literature is associated with the poets William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, whose book "[*Lyrical Ballads*](#)" sought to reject Neo-classicism.

Imagination -- Emotion -- Nature -- Symbolism

The IMAGINATION was elevated to a position as the supreme faculty of the mind. The Romantics tended to define and to present the imagination as our ultimate creative power. Finally, imagination is taken to be the faculty which enables us to "read" nature as a system of symbols. The poet was seen as someone who possesses imagination in the highest degree and is therefore able to see clearly and deeply into the real essence of things. The emphasis on imagination explains the visionary quality of some romantic poems (especially those by William Blake)

The most significant expression of a Romantic commitment to emotion occurs in Wordsworth's preface to the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), where he maintains that "all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." Although Wordsworth qualifies this assertion by suggesting that the poet is a reflective man who recollects his emotion "in tranquility," the emphasis on spontaneity, on feeling, and the use of the term *overflow* mark sharp diversions

from the earlier ideals of judgment and restraint. Searching for a fresh source of this spontaneous feeling, Wordsworth rejects the Neo-classic idea .

The Romantic treatment of nature is almost always philosophical or moral. Nature and the natural life were not just the focus of Romantic disenchantment with the new urban industrial existence of the late 18th century. Nature was the mirror in which the Romantics could see the eternal powers which had made both man and the physical universe – it was no longer merely the canvas on which the classical dream of order was written.

SYMBOLISM and myth were given great prominence in the Romantic conception of art. In the Romantic view, symbols were the human aesthetic correlatives of nature's emblematic language. They were valued too because they could simultaneously suggest many things, and were thus thought superior to the one-to-one communications of allegory.

Two Generations of English Romantic Poets

The division in two generations corresponds both to the actual age difference between the two groups and to changes in the context where they wrote and in certain features of their works.

The FIRST GENERATION is characterized by emphasis on the self and its relationship with nature.

William Blake (1757-1827)

William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834)

The poets of the first generation pass from a hopeful support to the new issues concerning man and society. That is the more so with Wordsworth, whose longer life makes him more and more complacent toward conservatism.

WILLIAM BLAKE was the first of the great English Romantics, principally because he was the first of the English poets to assault the principles of science and commercialism in an age when the twin aspects of industrialization and 'system' were beginning to dominate human life.

The Romantic poets who came after him, COLERIDGE and WORDSWORTH, helped to redefine the concept of nature as a healing and spiritual force. They were the first to recognize the redemptive powers of the natural world, and were truly the pioneers in what has since become the 'back to nature' movement. Coleridge also looked inward, as well as outward, and in his meditative poetry he enlarged the boundaries of the individual sensibility; he introduced into his verse all the nightmare and drama of his opium-induced visions, so that human nature itself was enlarged and redefined as the subject of poetry. Together Wordsworth and Coleridge helped to create a new definition of the sublime and the beautiful.

The SECOND GENERATION is more interested in the problems connected with the relationship between life and art.

George Byron (1788-1824)

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

John Keats (1795-1821)

(Byron), or the triumph of the aspirations to freedom and equality (Shelley), or the proclamation of a new ethical philosophy centered on beauty and truth (Keats) The Second Generation of Romantic poets is quite different from the First Generation. They are the true incarnation of the romantic revolt. Their rebellion is a total war without truce, aiming at the affirmation of extreme individualism.

From BYRON came the idea of the writer as hero or celebrity - he inaugurated the cult of personality in literary terms. From SHELLEY and from Keats, and especially from the manner of their early deaths, came the notion of the poet as the isolated genius, sorrowful and suffering. They confirmed the status of the poet as above the ordinary laws of society.

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History of English Literature (1798-1832)

Unit I – C – Personal Essay

An essay has been defined in a variety of ways. One definition is a "prose composition with a focused subject of discussion" or a "long, systematic discourse". It is difficult to define the genre into which essays fall. [Aldous Huxley](#), a leading essayist, gives guidance on the subject. He notes that "the essay is a literary device for saying almost everything about almost anything", and adds that "by tradition, almost by definition, the essay is a short piece".

The word *essay* derives from the French infinitive *essayer*, "to try" or "to attempt". In English *essay* first meant "a trial" or "an attempt", and this is still an alternative meaning. The Frenchman [Michel de Montaigne](#) (1533–1592) was the first author to describe his work as essays; he used the term to characterize these as "attempts" to put his thoughts into writing, and his essays grew out of his [commonplacing](#). Montaigne began to compose his essays in 1572; the first edition, entitled *Essais*, was published in two volumes in 1580. For the rest of his life, he continued revising previously published essays and composing new ones. [Francis Bacon's essays](#), published in book form in 1597, 1612, and 1625, were the first works in English that described themselves as *essays*. [Ben Jonson](#) first used the word *essayist* in English in 1609, according to the [Oxford English Dictionary](#).

Montaigne's essays in their original form were all known in England by 1600, and probably a dozen men were at work putting them into English. Only one complete translation was printed, that of John Florio in 1603, which has remained the standard ever since. There were considerable number of imitations in English at that time, definitely ushering the personal essay into being in England, as a form of literary prose. Only one English essayist has survived from this period, who can be regarded as disciple of Montaigne.

Francis Bacon had many accomplishments. He was a scientist, a philosopher, and a politician, and he was adept, too, at taking bribes; for this he had been imprisoned. It is, however, as a literary man that he is perhaps best remembered, a writer so

competent with the pen that for decades there have been some persons willing to argue that Bacon wrote the plays attributed to William Shakespeare.

The essay form is rare in the modern age, although there are some faint signs of its revival. As Bacon used it, the essay is a carefully fashioned statement, both informative and expressive, by which a person comments on life and manners, on nature and its puzzles. The essay is not designed to win people to a particular cause or to communicate factual matter better put in scientific treatises. Perhaps that is one reason why it is not so popular in an age in which the truth of claims and their practical importance are always questioned.

The *Essays* first appeared, ten in number, in 1597. They were immediately popular because they were brief, lively, humane, and well-written. Perhaps they were effective in contrast to the rambling, florid prose written by most writers of the time. A considerable part of their charm lay in their civilized tone. In these essays, Bacon reveals himself as an inquisitive but also an appreciative man with wit enough to interest others. The first edition contained the following essays: "Of Studies," "Of Discourse," "Of Ceremonies and Respects," "Of Followers and Friends," "Of Suitors," "Of Expense," "Of Regiment of Health," "Of Honour and Reputation," "Of Faction," and "Of Negotiating."

By 1612, the number of essays had been increased to thirty-eight, the earlier ones having been revised or rewritten. By the last edition, in 1625, the number was fifty-eight. Comparison of the earlier essays with those written later shows not only a critical mind at work but also a man made sadder and wiser, or at least different, by changes in fortune.

The essays concern themselves with such universal concepts as truth, death, love, goodness, friendship, fortune, and praise. They cover such controversial matters as religion, atheism, "the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates," custom and education. Bacon's essays deal with such intriguing matters as envy, cunning, innovations, suspicion, ambition, praise, vainglory, and the vicissitudes of things.

The influence of Bacon did not lean much in the direction of personal essay. Other English essayist did not come to prominence during the course of the seventeenth century. The Personal essay awaited the rise of English periodical literature, in the reign of Queen Ann, in order to assume its proper place before the public. With the

appearance of *The Tatler* in 1709 and *The Spectator* in 1711, these periodicals revealed the radiating personalities of Addison and Steele. Resting upon these two writers was necessary, because they culminated the Personal essay to its supreme excellence. This literary product pleased and attracted a large number of audience. The Periodical Essay was built upon the foundations laid by Montaigne, while various contemporary literary fashions affected its superstructure. The half century following the Stuart Restoration in England was emphatically a prose period. The essay that developed was probably the least prosaic but more poetic.

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History of English Literature (1798-1832)

Unit II - Pride and Prejudice – Jane Austen

Character List

Elizabeth Bennet - The novel's protagonist. The second daughter of Mr. Bennet, Elizabeth is the most intelligent and sensible of the five Bennet sisters. She is well read and quick-witted, with a tongue that occasionally proves too sharp for her own good. Her realization of Darcy's essential goodness eventually triumphs over her initial prejudice against him.

Fitzwilliam Darcy - A wealthy gentleman, the master of Pemberley, and the nephew of Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Though Darcy is intelligent and honest, his excess of pride causes him to look down on his social inferiors. Over the course of the novel, he tempers his class-consciousness and learns to admire and love Elizabeth for her strong character.

Jane Bennet - The eldest and most beautiful Bennet sister. Jane is more reserved and gentler than Elizabeth. The easy pleasantness with which she and Bingley interact contrasts starkly with the mutual distaste that marks the encounters between Elizabeth and Darcy.

Charles Bingley - Darcy's considerably wealthy best friend. Bingley's purchase of Netherfield, an estate near the Bennets, serves as the movement for the novel. He is a genial, well-intentioned gentleman, whose easygoing nature contrasts with Darcy's initially discourteous behavior. He is blissfully uncaring about class differences.

Mr. Bennet - The patriarch of the Bennet family, a gentleman of modest income with five unmarried daughters. Mr. Bennet has a sarcastic, cynical sense of humor that he uses to decisively irritate his wife. Though he loves his daughters (Elizabeth in particular), he often fails as a parent, preferring to withdraw from the never-ending marriage concerns of the women around him rather than offer help.

Mrs. Bennet - Mr. Bennet's wife, a foolish, noisy woman whose only goal in life is to see her daughters married. Because of her low breeding and often unbecoming

behavior, Mrs. Bennet often repels the very suitors whom she tries to attract for her daughters.

George Wickham - A handsome, fortune-hunting military officer. Wickham's good looks and charm attract Elizabeth initially, but Darcy's revelation about Wickham's disreputable past clues her in to his true nature and simultaneously draws her closer to Darcy.

Lydia Bennet - The youngest Bennet sister, she is gossipy, immature, and self-involved. Unlike Elizabeth, Lydia flings herself headlong into romance and ends up running off with Wickham.

Mr. Collins - A pompous, generally idiotic clergyman who stands to inherit Mr. Bennet's property. Mr. Collins's own social status is nothing to boast about, but he takes great pains to let everyone and anyone know that Lady Catherine de Bourgh serves as his patroness. He is the worst combination of snobbish and sycophantic.

Miss Bingley - Bingley's snobbish sister. Miss Bingley bears excessive contempt for Elizabeth's middle-class background. Her vain attempts to acquire Darcy's attention cause Darcy to admire Elizabeth's self-possessed character even more.

Lady Catherine de Bourgh - A rich, bossy noblewoman; Mr. Collins's patron and Darcy's aunt. Lady Catherine epitomizes class snobbery, especially in her attempts to order the middle-class Elizabeth away from her well-bred nephew.

Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner - Mrs. Bennet's brother and his wife. The Gardiners, caring, nurturing, and full of common sense, often prove to be better parents to the Bennet daughters than Mr. Bennet and his wife.

Charlotte Lucas - Elizabeth's dear friend. Pragmatic where Elizabeth is romantic, and also six years older than Elizabeth, Charlotte does not view love as the most vital component of a marriage. She is more interested in having a comfortable home. Thus, when Mr. Collins proposes, she accepts.

Georgiana Darcy - Darcy's sister. She is immensely pretty and just as shy. She has great skill at playing the pianoforte.

Mary Bennet - The middle Bennet sister, bookish and dull.

Catherine Bennet - The fourth Bennet sister. Like Lydia, she is girlishly enchanted with the soldiers.

Plot Overview

The news that a wealthy young gentleman named Charles Bingley has rented the manor of Netherfield Park causes a great stir in the nearby village of Longbourn, especially in the Bennet household. The Bennets have five unmarried daughters—from oldest to youngest, Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Kitty, and Lydia—and Mrs. Bennet is desperate to see them all married. After Mr. Bennet pays a social visit to Mr. Bingley, the Bennets attend a ball at which Mr. Bingley is present. He is taken with Jane and spends much of the evening dancing with her. His close friend, Mr. Darcy, is less pleased with the evening and arrogantly refuses to dance with Elizabeth, which makes everyone view him as arrogant and hateful.

At social functions over subsequent weeks, however, Mr. Darcy finds himself increasingly attracted to Elizabeth's charm and intelligence. Jane's friendship with Mr. Bingley also continues to flourish, and Jane pays a visit to the Bingley mansion. On her journey to the house she is caught in a rainstorm and catches ill, forcing her to stay at Netherfield for several days. In order to tend to Jane, Elizabeth hikes through muddy fields and arrives with a spattered dress, much to the disdain of the snobbish Miss Bingley, Charles Bingley's sister. Miss Bingley's spite only increases when she notices that Darcy, whom she is pursuing, pays quite a bit of attention to Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth and Jane return home, they find Mr. Collins visiting their household. Mr. Collins is a young clergyman who stands to inherit Mr. Bennet's property, which has been "entailed," meaning that it can only be passed down to male heirs. Mr. Collins is a pompous fool, though he is quite enthralled by the Bennet girls. Shortly after his arrival, he makes a proposal of marriage to Elizabeth. She turns him down, wounding his pride. Meanwhile, the Bennet girls have become friendly with militia officers stationed in a nearby town. Among them is Wickham, a handsome young soldier who is friendly toward Elizabeth and tells her how Darcy cruelly cheated him out of an inheritance.

At the beginning of winter, the Bingleys and Darcy leave Netherfield and return to London, much to Jane's dismay. A further shock arrives with the news that Mr.

Collins has become engaged to Charlotte Lucas, Elizabeth's best friend and the poor daughter of a local knight. Charlotte explains to Elizabeth that she is getting older and needs the match for financial reasons. Charlotte and Mr. Collins get married and Elizabeth promises to visit them at their new home. As winter progresses, Jane visits the city to see friends (hoping also that she might see Mr. Bingley). However, Miss Bingley visits her and behaves rudely, while Mr. Bingley fails to visit her at all. The marriage prospects for the Bennet girls appear bleak.

That spring, Elizabeth visits Charlotte, who now lives near the home of Mr. Collins's patron, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, who is also Darcy's aunt. Darcy calls on Lady Catherine and encounters Elizabeth, whose presence leads him to make a number of visits to the Collins's home, where she is staying. One day, he makes a shocking proposal of marriage, which Elizabeth quickly refuses. She tells Darcy that she considers him arrogant and unpleasant, then scolds him for steering Bingley away from Jane and disinheriting Wickham. Darcy leaves her but shortly thereafter delivers a letter to her. In this letter, he admits that he urged Bingley to distance himself from Jane, but claims he did so only because he thought their romance was not serious. As for Wickham, he informs Elizabeth that the young officer is a liar and that the real cause of their disagreement was Wickham's attempt to elope with his young sister, Georgiana Darcy.

This letter causes Elizabeth to reevaluate her feelings about Darcy. She returns home and acts coldly toward Wickham. The militia is leaving town, which makes the younger, rather man-crazy Bennet girls distraught. Lydia manages to obtain permission from her father to spend the summer with an old colonel in Brighton, where Wickham's regiment will be stationed. With the arrival of June, Elizabeth goes on another journey, this time with the Gardiners, who are relatives of the Bennets. The trip takes her to the North and eventually to the neighborhood of Pemberley, Darcy's estate. She visits Pemberley, after making sure that Darcy is away, and delights in the building and grounds, while hearing from Darcy's servants that he is a wonderful, generous master. Suddenly, Darcy arrives and behaves cordially toward her. Making no mention of his proposal, he entertains the Gardiners and invites Elizabeth to meet his sister.

Shortly thereafter, however, a letter arrives from home, telling Elizabeth that Lydia has eloped with Wickham and that the couple is nowhere to be found, which

suggests that they may be living together out of wedlock. Fearful of the disgrace such a situation would bring on her entire family, Elizabeth hastens home. Mr. Gardiner and Mr. Bennet go off to search for Lydia, but Mr. Bennet eventually returns home empty-handed. Just when all hope seems lost, a letter comes from Mr. Gardiner saying that the couple has been found and that Wickham has agreed to marry Lydia in exchange for an annual income. The Bennets are convinced that Mr. Gardiner has paid off Wickham, but Elizabeth learns that the source of the money, and of her family's salvation, was none other than Darcy.

Now married, Wickham and Lydia return to Longbourn briefly, where Mr. Bennet treats them coldly. They then depart for Wickham's new assignment in the North of England. Shortly thereafter, Bingley returns to Netherfield and resumes his courtship of Jane. Darcy goes to stay with him and pays visits to the Bennets but makes no mention of his desire to marry Elizabeth. Bingley, on the other hand, presses his suit and proposes to Jane, to the delight of everyone but Bingley's haughty sister. While the family celebrates, Lady Catherine de Bourgh pays a visit to Longbourn. She corners Elizabeth and says that she has heard that Darcy, her nephew, is planning to marry her. Since she considers a Bennet an unsuitable match for a Darcy, Lady Catherine demands that Elizabeth promise to refuse him. Elizabeth spiritedly refuses, saying she is not engaged to Darcy, but she will not promise anything against her own happiness. A little later, Elizabeth and Darcy go out walking together and he tells her that his feelings have not altered since the spring. She tenderly accepts his proposal, and both Jane and Elizabeth are married.

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History of English Literature (1798-1832)

Unit II – Pride and Prejudice

Question: [1] Describe the social life as depicted in the novel “Pride and Prejudice”.

OR

Discuss the Theme of Love and Marriage as depicted in “Pride and Prejudice”

As literature often brings out the image of real life, Austen's ‘Pride and Prejudice’ is no exception. It holds a mirror which reflects the life of the eighteenth century people. Studying the novel will draw a real image of the social lives of English people at that time. The English community which was affected by the political, economical and social conditions of the country can be seen in ‘Pride and Prejudice’, though Austen in most of her novels did not deal with the political aspects, the social and economic conditions are explored in details. She gave minute details of how their lives are affected by social and political conflicts. We can find very interesting aspects of their lives through this novel. One interesting aspect depicted in the novel is how the mindset of the people is controlled by their society. Most of their actions are guided by their consciousness of their standings in society. Mothers hunt for their daughters' husbands and daughters too shamelessly hunt for theirs. Fathers too helped them in their shameless way of match making. This very trend that was there during the eighteenth century is what Austen satirizes in this novel.

The high class society refuses to get mingled with the lower class people when it comes to marriage. In all standards, the upper class people look with scorn and disdain towards the lower class. However, in reality no one is an exception when it comes to choosing husbands for their daughters. Since the two main themes of ‘*Pride and Prejudice*’ are on ‘*love and marriage*’ and that of ‘*husband hunting*’, it is clear that Jane Austen talks much on the topic of ‘*marriage*’. Therefore, studying the aspect of marriage in the novel seems to be a valid point. It is evident that the writer portrays the life of the eighteenth century people and how the life of the people was

centered on how good the economic and the social conditions of the people were. One cannot separate their mentality from the conditions of the society.

Girls who grew up in the middle class society were not educated for any profession, but they were expected to be accomplished in music, drawing, dancing, needlework, etc. During that time, women could not legally inherit their parents' property, in case they did not marry, they had no economic security. An ageing spinster was, in most cases, neither respected nor properly cared for. Therefore the chief aim of the people of that time seems to be "to hook a good husband". Even though Jane Austen, in *Pride and Prejudice* satirizes them, it seems that it is unfair to blame them for all the actions taken in their 'husband hunting' expeditions. But at the same time, vulgar behavior like that of Mrs. Bennet could not be appreciated. Their thoughtless nature, their world of gossip, husband hunting and their behavior show that they did not have a mind of their own could not be satirized. By picturing the social milieu in which they exist, we could not fully blame them for their husband hunting life since getting a good husband was the most essential thing for them in order to survive in the long run and gain respect within their society. Therefore, the social condition in which they live forces them to live a husband hunting life. We may be able to make our points clearer if we examine the main marriage that takes place in the novel.

Charlotte Lucas and Mr. Collins: Mr. Collins who inherited the Bennets property at first tried to propose Jane, the eldest of Bennet sisters. But when Mrs. Bennet informs him that she is soon to be engaged to someone else shifts his attention to Elizabeth. He feels that it's his duty as the heir of the family to marry one of the girls. He, like Mr. Bennet did not much think of characters and points of view of an individual. He just thinks that marriage should happen in terms of convenience. He is a man of self importance and when Elizabeth turned down his proposal, he at first thought that she was trying to answer him in an indirect manner but when he came to realize that Elizabeth was quite serious in her declination of his proposal, his pride was hurt. But in no time he recovered because he again propose Elizabeth's best friend Charlotte Lucas.

Lydia and Wickham: Lydia and Wickham eloped from Brighton. It disappoints all the family members. Mrs. Bennet refused to get up of her bed

and did not want to face her neighbors and Mr. Bennet went right away in search of them. Mr. Gardiner also went to follow Mr. Bennet to look for them and after searching for them for a while, news came to the Bennets that Wickham agreed to marry Lydia. When the news comes Mrs. Bennet at once gets out of her bed and goes around town boasting to everyone that Lydia is getting married. She does not feel ashamed that they have done wrong, but only rejoices with the fact that one of her girls is getting married. George Wickham was on the surface charming and agreeable, but was selfish and unprincipled beneath. He first took interest in Elizabeth, and then turned to Lydia. His only reason for getting married to Lydia was because he was offered an allowance by Mr. Darcy if he agreed to marry Lydia. He is an opportunist who has tried several times to seduce rich heiresses. He failed few times and at last gets hold of Lydia. He does not mind marrying for the sake of convenience only. And at last his attempt to hook a rich girl was accomplished with Lydia though it was due to the involvement of Mr. Darcy.

Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy: These two people are the main characters in the novel. They formed a prejudiced opinion of one another from their first meeting. For Darcy, Elizabeth was “tolerable; but not handsome enough” to tempt him and to Elizabeth, “he was only the man who made himself agreeable nowhere, and who had not thought her handsome enough to dance with”. But as time goes, Darcy’s opinion and interest in her grew in a different way in which Elizabeth was not aware. Elizabeth had pride and she was ashamed for her mother’s vulgar behaviors in trying to hook Mr. Bingley. She was aware of how others would think of their family and she bears this burden alone. And when Mr. Darcy unexpectedly proposed her, she was furious and defended her family honor and insulted Mr. Darcy. This outburst of hers made Darcy calculate his own behavior and she found out later when they met again that he had changed his ways in a certain way – that he was not arrogant, proud and conceited as before. And when she found out that her sister’s marriage with Wickham was the result of Darcy’s sacrifice and hard works, she realized that she had been so wrong in many things about him and she started to respect him for who he was.

Apart from these marriages that we find in the novel, there are also some characters which lead us to believe that the viewpoint of marriage is that of a

mere social transaction. When we take a look at Collins's proposal to Elizabeth, we find that he merely propose her because he thinks that since he is to inherit their father's estate, if he marries one of the daughters, the pain in losing their estate will be less. This very clearly shows that he does not view marriage much more than a social transaction. Likewise, Lady Catharine's view for her daughter's marriage is not very different from that of Collins. She feels that her daughter should be married to Mr. Darcy because they are related and if they marry there are certain benefits for both the parties. Though she knew perfectly well that Darcy was not at all interested in her daughter she keeps on pressuring him to marry her daughter.

In the novel, it is found that marriage takes place because of attraction to physical beauty, want of stability in the society, lust, want of wealth, view as a convenient solution for family, etc. it is hardly ever seen love and appreciation of one another among the people involved. In fact it is noticed that love was not at all the reason that people get married for. The fact that most find it convenient and beneficial to get married is so obvious. It is concluded that those who get married just because of attraction of physical beauty, want of stability, lust, etc. do not last in their marriage. Readers witness their unhappy married life. The main aim of Jane Austen seems to be in depicting how thing can fall apart when one keeps an eye only on the physical world rather than the intellectual one.

As we can see in the novel that the chief occupations of the mothers like Mrs. Bennet and Lady Catherine are to strike suitable matches. They have vaulting ambitions for their daughters that they cannot even act as refined person when it comes down to hunting husbands for their daughter. Though they very much wish their daughters to get married to refined families, they themselves cannot help but act vulgar in achieving their goals. They are desperate to get their daughters married to ones that they like. Austen, in depicting these types of mothers once again satirizes their time and made them as a comic character at time. Their eyes were blinded by their desperate search for their daughter's husbands.

Even the fathers seem to be completely conformed to what society asks of them. Though Mr. Bennet was fully aware of his wife's stupidity and vulgarity

at times, he went with the flow of his wife's scheme and had not the courage to stop her from whatever she was employing herself in. Mr. Lucas might also have seen what kind of self importance, proud and consequent man he is have to ignore this very fact and was happy and readily gives her away. He has to keep in mind that his daughter is plain and advancing in age with not much offer and if they refuse the proposal of Mr. Collins, they were afraid that no other suitors would come in the future. And they could not as Charlotte said afford to be '*romantic*' as there might not be any other options in future. So, he had no choice but to take what is offered – stability that his parish could give his daughter.

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History of English Literature (1798-1832)

Unit II – Pride and Prejudice

Question: [2] Account for the enduring popularity of “Pride and Prejudice”.

Answer :

“Pride and Prejudice” is certainly the most popular novel of Jane Austen. It is often classed among the ten best novels of the world. Sheridan remarked that “Pride and Prejudice” was one of the cleverest things he ever read. Warren Hastings admired the novel, especially the character of Elizabeth Bennet. William Gifford remarked about the popularity of the novel: “I have for the first time looked into ‘P and P’; and it is really a very pretty thing. No dark passages; no secrets chambers; no wind-howlings in long galleries; no drops of blood upon a rusty dagger – things that should now be left to ladies’ maids and sentimental washer-women”.

Different persons have liked the novel for different reasons. Let us now find out the qualities of the novel which have won the heart of countless men and women, young and old alike, since its publication in 1813.

[1] Darling Child

Jane Austen called “Pride and Prejudice” ‘her own darling child’. “Pride and Prejudice” is to Jane Austen what “David Copperfield” was to Dickens – her life blood. The novelist is really herself in this novel.

[2] Vitality

The novel is flooded with vitality and vivacity. When Jane Austen first wrote this novel, she herself was in the prime and bloom of her youth. Her powers were fresh and vigorous. Her characters, scenes and dialogues are shaped by fresh energy. Never again is she to write with quite the same vitality as she does in this first spring of her powers.

[3] Theme

The theme of the novel is of general interest. It concerns with various aspects of love and marriage, viewed calmly and dispassionately by the novelist. In every country and every clime people are interested in the problem of marital happiness. Thus the theme of the novel deals with

fundamental human feelings towards love. It is of universal interest. And it has been treated humorously and ironically which adds to its interest.

[4] Plot

“Pride and Prejudice” has a compressed plot. It has a main plot suited to Jane Austen’s purposes. There is no dissociation here between characters and the things they have to do. Events always appear to be the natural consequence of the characters involved. Lydia’s elopement is the only drawback in the novel because it is not direct result of the personalities involved. But this defect does not hamper the action of the story. It has no direct effect on the relationship of Darcy and Elizabeth. Cross compares the technique of “Pride and Prejudice” to “Much Ado About Nothing”. It is necessary, if the novel is to be popular one, that it should have a plot perfect in technique. The plot of “Pride and Prejudice” is perfect in its technique.

[5] Story-Telling

A great novel captures our imagination, grips us by its story and carries us away along with its current. This depends on the art of story telling. Jane Austen is a great story teller. In “Pride and Prejudice” Jane Austen leads us on from page to page with breathless interest. She always rouses our curiosity to know what happens next. The current of her story holds children from play and old men from chimney corner.

[6] Livelier Scenes

Jane Austen has much livelier scenes in Pride and Prejudice, such as Mr. Collins’s marriage proposal, the discomfiture of Lady Catherine, the elopement of Lydia and some bullscenes. They are vivid and dramatic and hold our interest.

[7] Characterization

It is the characters in the novel which appeal to us the most. It depends upon the art of characterization of the novelist. Jane Austen is a perfect artist in delineating characters. She draws them vividly and distinguishing them. Moreover Jane Austen has depicted essential human nature and this is why all her novels, including “Pride and Prejudice” appeals to us.

[8] Elizabeth

The most popular of her novels has always been “Pride and Prejudice”, because of her brilliant creation of Elizabeth Bennet, a heroine as witty as she is charming. Margaret Kennedy has pointed out that to create an

entirely charming girl is one of the rarest achievement in fiction. Very few novelists have done it. Only Tolstoy could create a charming girl, Natasha. It is one of the hardest thing for a writer to catch the lovely spring of heroine's prime. That Jane Austen should have caught it at the age of twenty one is one of the most amazing feats of literature. It is what has made "Pride and Prejudice", so popular. Elizabeth, with her saucy wit, her lively humour, her warm heart, her loyalty, her gaiety has made her one the most endearing characters not only in Jane Austen's novels but in all fiction.

[9] Dialogue

"Pride and Prejudice" has dramatic technique. The characters reveal themselves in dialogues. Some of the most notable dialogues in the novel are those between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, Mr. Collins's proposal and the gems that fall at Rosings from the lips of Lady Catherine. This novel contains Elizabeth's wit, both caustic and lighthearted, her observation, her warm feelings, her vivacity, her vitality. Because of all this the novel has been popular. It does not mean that the novel is without faults. Sheila Kaye-Smith rates the novel lowest among her novels because she finds the two main romances between Elizabeth and Darcy and between Jane and Bingley somewhat unconvincing. Lydia's elopement is a bit jarring. Darcy exists only to play in scenes with Elizabeth. His extreme insolence at the first Meryton ball does not quite match his latter behavior.

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,
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 chasten 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
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 hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence — wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream

We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love — oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

Critical Analysis of the Poem:

Tintern Abbey by William Wordsworth: Summary and Critical Analysis

The poem "Lines Composed A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" is generally known as "Tintern Abbey" written in 1798 by the father of Romanticism William Wordsworth. Tintern Abbey is one of the example of Wordsworth's genius. It may be called a condensed spiritual autobiography of the poet. It deals with the subjective experiences of the poet, and traces the growth of his mind through different periods of his life. Nature and its influence on the poet in various stage forms the main theme of the poem. The poem deals with the influence of Nature on

the boy, the growing youth, and the man. The poet has expressed his tender feeling towards nature.

He has specially recollected his poetic idea of Tintern Abbey where he had gone first time in 1793. This is his second visit to this place. Wordsworth has expressed his intense faith in nature. There is Wordsworth's realization of God in nature. He got sensuous delight in it and it is all in all to him. Tintern Abbey impressed him most when he had first visited this place. He has again come to the same place where there are lofty cliffs, the plots of cottage ground, orchards groves and copses. He is glad to see again hedgerows, sportive wood, pastoral farms and green doors. This lonely place, the banks of the river and rolling waters from the mountain springs present a beautiful panoramic light. The solitary place reminds the poet of vagrant dwellers and hermits' cave.

The poem is in five sections. The first section establishes the setting for the meditation. But it emphasizes the passage of time: five years have passed, five summers, five long winters... But when the poet is back to this place of natural beauty and serenity, it is still essentially the same. The poem opens with a slow, dragging rhythm and the repetition of the word 'five' all designed to emphasize the weight of time which has separated the poet from this scene. The following lines develop a clear, visual picture of the scene. The view presented is a blend of wildness and order. He can see the entirely natural cliffs and waterfalls; he can see the hedges around the fields of the people; and he can see wreaths of smoke probably coming from some hermits making fire in their cave hermitages. These images evoke not only a pure nature as one might expect, they evoke a life of the common people in harmony with the nature.

The second section begins with the meditation. The poet now realizes that these 'beauteous' forms have always been with him, deep-seated in his mind, wherever he went. This vision has been "Felt in the blood, and felt alone the heart" that is. It has affected his whole being. They were not absent from his mind like form the mind of a man born blind. In hours of weariness, frustration and anxiety, these things of nature used to make him feel sweet sensations in his very blood, and he used to feel it at the level of the impulse (heart) rather than in his waking consciousness and through reasoning. From this point onward Wordsworth begins to consider the sublime of nature, and his mystical awareness becomes clear. Wordsworth's idea was that human beings are naturally uncorrupted.

The poet studies nature with open eyes and imaginative mind. He has been the lover of nature form the core of his heart, and with purer mind. He feels a sensation of love for nature in his blood. He feels high pleasure and deep power of joy in natural objects. The beatings of his heart are full of the fire of nature's love. He concentrates attention to Sylvan Wye – a majestic and worth seeing river. He is reminded of the pictures of the past visit and ponders over his future years. On his first visit to this place he bounded over the mountains by the sides of the deep rivers and the lovely streams.

The third section contains a kind of doubt; the poet is probably reflecting the reader's possible doubts so that he can go on to justify how he is right and what he means. He doubts, for just a moment, whether this thought about the influence of the nature is vain, but he can't go on. He exclaims: "yet, oh! How often, amid the joyless daylight, fretful and unprofitable fever of the world have I turned to thee (nature)" for inspiration and peace of mind. He thanks the 'Sylvan Wye' for the everlasting influence it has imprinted on his mind; his spirit has very often turned

to this river for inspiration when he was losing the peace of mind or the path and meaning of life. The river here becomes the symbol of spirituality.

Though the poet has become serious and perplexed in the fourth section the nature gives him courage and spirit enough to stand there with a sense of delight and pleasure. This is so typical of Wordsworth that it seems he can't write poetry without recounting his personal experiences, especially those of his childhood. Here he also begins from the earliest of his days! It was first the coarse pleasures in his 'boyish days', which have all gone by now. "That time is past and all its aching joys are now no more, and all its dizzy raptures". But the poet does not mourn for them; he doesn't even grumble about their loss. Clearly, he has gained something in return: "other gifts have followed; for such loss... for I have learnt to look on nature, not as in the hour of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes the still, sad music of humanity". This is a philosophic statement about maturing, about the development of personality, and of the poetic or philosophic mind as well. So now the poet is able to feel a joy of elevated thought, a sense sublime, and far more deeply interfused.

The fifth and last section continues with the same meditation from where the poet addresses his younger sister Dorothy, whom he blesses and gives advice about what he has learnt. He says that he can hear the voice of his own youth when he hears her speak, the language of his former heart; he can also "read my former pleasure in the soothing lights of thy wild eyes'. He is excited to look at his own youthful image in her. He says that nature has never betrayed his heart and that is why they had been living from joy to joy. Nature can impress the mind with quietness and beauty, and feed it lofty thoughts, that no evil tongues of the human society can corrupt their hearts with any amount of contact with it.

The poet then begins to address the moon in his reverie, and to ask the nature to bestow his sister with their blessings. Let the moon shine on her solitary walk, and let the mountain winds blow their breeze on her. When the present youthful ecstasies are over, as they did with him, let her mind become the palace of the lovely forms and thought about the nature, so that she can enjoy and understand life and overcome the vexations of living in a harsh human society. The conclusion to the poem takes us almost cyclically, back to a physical view of the 'steep woods', 'lofty cliffs' and 'green pastoral landscape' in which the meditation of the poem is happening.

The poet has expressed his honest and natural feelings to Nature's Superiority. The language is so simple and lucid that one is not tired of reading it again and again. The sweetness of style touches the heart of a reader. The medium of this poem is neither ballad nor lyric but an elevated blank verse. The blank verse that is used in it is low-toned, familiar, and moves with sureness. It has the quiet pulse, suggestive of 'central peace', which is felt in all his great poetry. This is the beauty of Wordsworth's language.

UGBA Sem IV - Core English – 211

History of English Literature (1798-1832)

Unit III – Poems

[2] Ode to a Nightingale by John Keats

The Text of the Poem

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singing of summer in full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,

Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:

Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

Ode to a Nightingale by John Keats: Summary and Critical Analysis

Keats's Ode to a Nightingale is considered one of the finest odes in English Literature. It reveals the highest imaginative powers of the poet. The poem was inspired by the song of a nightingale, which the poet heard in the gardens of his friend Charles Brown. The sweet music of the nightingale sent the poet in rapture and one morning he took his chair from the breakfast table, put it on the grass-plot under the plum tree and composed the poem.

After he had finished the poem he came back with scraps of paper in his hand. Brown rescued the papers and found them to be the poem on the nightingale.

Thus the poem is an expression of Keats's feelings rising in his heart at the hearing of the melodious song of the bird. The song of the nightingale moves from the poet to the depth of his heart and creates in him a heartache and numbness as is created by the drinking of hemlock. He thinks that the bird lives in a place of beauty.

When he hears the nightingale's song, he is entrenched by its sweetness and his joy becomes so excessive that it changes into a kind of pleasant pain. He is filled with a desire to escape from the world of caring to the world of beautiful place of the bird.

The poem presents the picture of the tragedy of human life. It brings out an expression of Keats's pessimism and dejection. He composed this poem at the time when his heart was full of sorrow. His youngest brother Tom had died, the second one had gone abroad and the poet himself was under the suspense and agony by the passionate love for Fanny Brawne. All these happenings had induced in the poet a mood of sorrow. He could not suppress it. Thus the poet enjoys the pleasure in sadness/ pain and feasts upon the very sadness/ pain into joy. This complex emotion gives the poem a unique charm.

In the beginning, Keats seems to be an immature youth with a melancholic heart urging to find a means of oblivion and escape. On catching the sight of a nightingale and hearing its music, which he assumes to be an immortal voice of happiness, Keats feels that his body is getting benumbed. But, he also feels an acute pain because he is conscious of his mortality and suffering. He fantasizes of having drunk hemlock or 'some dull opiate': "My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains, / my sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk." The initial situation of awareness and conflict is slowly to change and develop throughout the ode with a corresponding shift in tone.

After describing his plight, Keats acknowledges, rather than envy the bird's 'happy lot' and participates in its permanent happiness. He identifies the bird with dryad, the Greek Goddess of the tree. He contrasts the mortality and suffering of human being with the immortality and perfect happiness of the nightingale. Of course,

Keats immortalizes the bird by thinking of the race of it as the symbol of universal and undying musical voice, which is the voice of nature, and also of ideal romantic poetry, of the world of art and spirit. This universal and eternal voice has comforted human beings embittered by life and tragedies. The poet is longing for the imaginative experience of an imaginatively perfect world. At this stage in the poem, the poet is trying to escape from the reality, and experience the ideal rather than complement one with the other. This dualism is to resolve later. Keats begins by urging for poison and wine, and then desires for poetic and imaginative experience.

But, as the poem develops, one feels that the numbness and intoxication the poet deliberately and imaginatively imposes upon his senses of pain are meant to awaken a higher sense of experience. The vintage, dance and song, the waters of poetic inspiration are the warmth of the south together make a compound and sensuous appeal.

In fact, no one can escape into the ideal world forever. Imaginative minds can have a momentary flight into the fanciful world. But, ultimately one has to return to the real world and must accept the reality. John Keats is no exception to this. He makes imaginative flights into the ideal world, but accepts the realities of life despite its 'fever, fret and fury'.

The process of experience, he has undergone has undoubtedly left him with a heightened awareness of both the modes of experience. When the imaginative life wakes, the pressures of ordinary experience is benumbed: and when ordinary experience becomes acute, the intensity of imaginative reality is reduced. And this makes life and experience more complete.

The song of the bird symbolizes the song of the poet. Keats is contrasting the immortality of poetry with the immortality of the poet. This is the climax of the poem and the point where the different themes harmonized—the beauty of the nightingale's song, the loveliness of the Spring night, the miseries of the world, the desire to escape from those miseries by death, by wine, or by poetry.

The Ode is not the expression of a single mood, but of a succession of moods. From being too happy in the happiness of the bird's song, Keats becomes aware of the contrast between the bird's apparent joy and the misery of the human condition, from the thought of which he can only momentarily escape by wine, by poetry, by the beauty of nature, or by the thought of death. In the seventh stanza the contrast is sharpened: the immortal bird, representing natural beauty as well as poetry, is set against the 'hungry generations' of mankind. Keats expresses with a maximum of intensity the desire to escape from reality, and yet he recognizes that no escape is possible.

One kind of mastery displayed by Keats in this ode is worth noting—the continuous shifting of view-point. We are transported from the poet in the garden to the bird in the trees; in the second stanza we have glimpses of Flora and Provençe, followed by one of the poets drinking the wine; in the fourth stanza we are taken up into the starlit skies, and in the next we are back again in the flower-scented darkness. In the seventh stanza we rang furthest in time and place. The nightingale's song is unrestricted by either time or space. The voice of the nightingale is made immune first to history, and then to geography. It can establish a rapport with dead generations or with faery lands. In the last stanza we start again from the Hampstead garden, and then follow the nightingale as it disappears in the distance.

The poem expresses the poet's love of romance, deep delight in nature and his interest in the Greek mythology. In the poem the reference to Flora, Dryad, and Bacchus is made which are all related to Greek mythology. It shows that Greek mythology had a deep hold on the mind of the poet. The poem contains concrete imagery, richness of coloring and the elements of charm and deep human interest. The mastery of poetic language is perfectly seen in the poem. The style of the poem is Shakespearean. The expressions are unsurpassed.

To sum up, Keats soars high with his 'wings of poesy' into the world of ideas and perfect happiness. But the next moment, consciousness makes him land on the grounds of reality and he bids farewell to the ideal bird. At this moment, Keats must also have been conscious that the very bird, which he had idealized and immortalized, existed in the real world, mortal and vulnerable to change and suffering like himself.

UGBA Sem IV - Core English – 211

History of English Literature (1798-1832)

Unit III – Poems

Adonais: An Elegy on the Death of John Keats

BY [PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY](#)

I I weep for Adonais—he is dead!

Oh, weep for Adonais! though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!
And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years
To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,
And teach them thine own sorrow, say: "With me
Died Adonais; till the Future dares
Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be

An echo and a light unto eternity!"

II Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay,
When thy Son lay, pierc'd by the shaft which flies
In darkness? where was lorn Urania
When Adonais died? With veiled eyes,
'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise
She sate, while one, with soft enamour'd breath,
Rekindled all the fading melodies,
With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,
He had adorn'd and hid the coming bulk of Death.

III Oh, weep for Adonais—he is dead!

Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep!
Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed

Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep
Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;
For he is gone, where all things wise and fair
Descend—oh, dream not that the amorous Deep
Will yet restore him to the vital air;

Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

IV Most musical of mourners, weep again!

Lament anew, Urania! He died,
Who was the Sire of an immortal strain,
Blind, old and lonely, when his country's pride,
The priest, the slave and the liberticide,
Trampled and mock'd with many a loathed rite
Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,
Into the gulf of death; but his clear Sprite

Yet reigns o'er earth; the third among the sons of light.

V Most musical of mourners, weep anew!

Not all to that bright station dar'd to climb;
And happier they their happiness who knew,
Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time
In which suns perish'd; others more sublime,
Struck by the envious wrath of man or god,
Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime;
And some yet live, treading the thorny road,

Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene abode.

VI But now, thy youngest, dearest one, has perish'd,

The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherish'd,

And fed with true-love tears, instead of dew;
Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,
The bloom, whose petals nipp'd before they blew
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;
The broken lily lies—the storm is overpast.

VII To that high Capital, where kingly Death
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,
A grave among the eternal.—Come away!
Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still
He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;
Awake him not! surely he takes his fill
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

VIII He will awake no more, oh, never more!
Within the twilight chamber spreads apace
The shadow of white Death, and at the door
Invisible Corruption waits to trace
His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;
The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface
So fair a prey, till darkness and the law
Of change shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

Adonais: Summary and Analysis.

Adonais, is a pastoral [elegy](#) written by [Percy Bysshe Shelley](#) for [John Keats](#) in 1821, and widely regarded as one of Shelley's best and most well-known works.

The poem, which is in 495 lines in 55 [Spenserian stanzas](#), was composed in the spring of 1821 immediately after 11 April, when Shelley heard of Keats' death. It is a [pastoral](#) elegy, in the English tradition of [John Milton's](#) *Lycidas*. Shelley had studied and translated classical elegies. The title of the poem is modelled on ancient works, such as *Achilleis* (a poem about Achilles), refers to the untimely death of the [Greek Adonis](#), a god of fertility. It was published by [Charles Ollier](#) in July 1821 with a preface in which Shelley made the mistaken assertion that Keats had died from a rupture of the lung induced by rage at the unfairly harsh reviews of his verse in the [Quarterly Review](#) and other journals.

Summary

The poet weeps for John Keats who is dead and who will be long mourned. He calls on [Urania](#) to mourn for Keats who died in Rome (sts. 1–7). The poet summons the subject matter of Keats' poetry to weep for him. It comes and mourns at his bidding (sts. 8–15). Nature, celebrated by Keats in his poetry, mourns him. Spring, which brings nature to new life, cannot restore him (sts. 16–21). Urania rises, goes to Keats' death chamber and laments that she cannot join him in death (sts. 22–29). Fellow poets mourn the death of Keats: [Byron](#), [Thomas Moore](#), Shelley, and Leigh Hunt (sts. 30–35). The anonymous *Quarterly Review* critic is blamed for Keats' death and chastised (sts. 36–37).

The poet urges the mourners not to weep any longer. Keats has become a portion of the eternal and is free from the attacks of reviewers. He is not dead; it is the living who are dead. He has gone where "envy and calumny and hate and pain" cannot reach him. He is "made one with Nature." His being has been withdrawn into the one Spirit which is responsible for all beauty. In eternity, other poets, among them [Thomas Chatterton](#), [Sir Philip Sidney](#), and the Roman poet [Lucan](#), come to greet him (sts. 38–46). Let anyone who still mourns Keats send his "spirit's light" beyond space and be filled with hope, or let him go to Rome where

Keats is buried. Let him "Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb. / What Adonais is, why fear we to become?" He is with the unchanging Spirit, Intellectual Beauty, or Love in heaven. By comparison with the clear light of eternity, life is a stain (sts. 47–52). The poet tells himself he should now depart from life, which has nothing left to offer. The One, which is Light, Beauty, Benediction, and Love, now shines on him. He feels carried "darkly, fearfully, afar" to where the soul of Keats glows like a star, in the dwelling where those who will live forever are (sts. 53–55).

Synopsis

Stanzas 1–35

Adonais begins with the announcement of his death and the mourning that followed: "I weep for Adonais—he is dead!" In Stanzas 2 through 35 a series of mourners lament the death of Adonais. The mother of Adonais, Urania, is invoked to arise to conduct the ceremony at his bier. The allusion is to Urania, the goddess of astronomy, and to the goddess [Venus](#), who is also known as Venus Urania.

The over-riding theme is one of despair. Mourners are implored to "weep for Adonais—he is dead!" In Stanza 9 the "flocks" of the deceased appear, representing his dreams and inspirations. In Stanza 13, the personifications of the thoughts, emotions, attitudes, and skills of the deceased appear. In Stanza 22, Urania is awakened by the grief of Misery and the poet. The lament is invoked: "He will awake no more, oh, never more!" Urania pleads in vain for Adonais to awake and to arise. In Stanzas 30 through 34, a series of human mourners appears. The "Pilgrim of Eternity" is Lord Byron, George Gordon, who had met and was a friend of Shelley's but who had never met Keats. The Irish poet Thomas Moore then appears who laments the sadness and loss that time causes. Shelley himself and Leigh Hunt are also part of the "procession of mourners". In Stanzas 31

through 34 the mourner is described as "one frail Form" who has "fled astray," "his branded and ensanguined brow," a brow "like Cain's or Christ's."

Stanzas 36–55

The sense of despair and hopelessness continues. In Stanza 37 the poet muses over a just punishment for the "nameless worm" and "noteless blot" who is the anonymous (now known to be [John Wilson Croker](#), not the editor, [William Gifford](#)). The worst punishment that Shelley can contrive is that such a scoundrel should live: "Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame!/ Live!" Faced with the contradiction that he would wish a long life upon the miscreant who took his hero's life, in stanza 38 the poet bursts open the gates of consolation that are required of the pastoral elegy: "Nor let us weep that our delight is fled/ Far from these carrion kites." In stanzas 45 and 46, Shelley laments that—like Thomas Chatterton, Sir Philip Sidney, and Lucan—Keats died young and did not live to develop as a poet. Keats transcends human life and has been unified with the immortal: "He has outsoared the shadow of our night;/ Envy and calumny and hate and pain,/ ... Can touch him not and torture not again.... He is made one with Nature." Keats is as one with Nature, the Power, the One, and the one Spirit.

Adonais "is not dead .../ He hath awakened from the dream of life." "Who mourns for Adonais?" he asks in stanza 47. Shelley turns his grief from Adonais to "we" who must live on and "decay/ Like corpses in a charnel," and after a series of stanzas (39–49) in which he celebrates the richer and fuller life that Adonais must now be experiencing, the poet becomes mindful that he is in Rome, itself a city rife with visible records of loss and decay. Moreover, he is in the Protestant cemetery there, where Shelley's three-year-old son is buried as well; and yet, as if mocking all despair, a "light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread." Nature does not abhor death and decay, he sees; it is humans, who fear and hate in the midst of life, who do. "What Adonais is, why fear we to become?" he asks in stanza 51.

It is life's worldly cares—that obscuring and distracting "dome of many-coloured glass"—not Death that is the enemy and the source of human despair. "Follow where all is fled," he urges, and he goads his own heart into having the courage to face not extinction but "that Light whose smile kindles the Universe." The poem concludes by imagining Adonais to be a part of "the white radiance of Eternity." At the end of the elegy, "like a star," the soul of the dead poet "Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are."

UGBA Sem IV - Core English – 211

History of English Literature (1798-1832)

Unit III – Poems

[4] When We Two Parted : George Gordon Byron, 1788 - 1824

The Poem

When we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,
Colder thy kiss;
Truly that hour foretold
Sorrow to this.

The dew of the morning
Sunk chill on my brow--
It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now.
Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame;
I hear thy name spoken,
And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,
A knell to mine ear;
A shudder comes o'er me--
Why wert thou so dear?
They know not I knew thee,
Who knew thee too well--
Long, long shall I rue thee,
Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met--
 In silence I grieve,
That thy heart could forget,
 Thy spirit deceive.
If I should meet thee
 After long years,
How should I greet thee?--
 With silence and tears.
GradeSaver: Getting you the grade

George Gordon Byron was born on January 22, 1788, in Aberdeen, Scotland, and inherited his family's English title at the age of ten, becoming Baron Byron of Rochdale. Abandoned by his father at an early age and resentful of his mother, whom he blamed for his being born with a deformed foot, Byron isolated himself during his youth and was deeply unhappy. He studied at Aberdeen Grammar School and then Trinity College in Cambridge. During this time Byron collected and published his first volumes of poetry. The first, published anonymously and titled *Fugitive Pieces*, was printed in 1806 and contained a miscellany of poems, some of which were written when Byron was only fourteen. As a whole, the collection was considered obscene, in part because it ridiculed specific teachers by name, and in part because it contained frank, erotic verses.

Summary and Analysis of "When We Two Parted"

The first stanza of "When We Two Parted" sets up the parting of the two lovers: for some reason their split was accompanied by "silence and tears" (line 2). Upon parting, the speaker's beloved became physically cold and pale, a change revealed later sorrow which is taking place as the poet writes. The second stanza continues the sense of ominous as the speaker awakes with the morning dew "chill on my brow" (line 10). He believes this chill to have been a "warning / Of what I feel now" (lines 11-12). His beloved has broken all vows (line 13), and the sound of the beloved's name brings shame to both lover and beloved (lines 15-16).

The name of the beloved carries over into the third stanza as an unknown. An equally unknown "they" speak the beloved's name, which sounds as a "knell" (line

18) in the speaker's ear. He shudders and wonders why the beloved was so dear (either to him or to others). He compares his love to those others' concern; they do not know of the speaker's intimate knowledge of the one they name so casually (lines 21-23). The speaker concludes that he shall mourn the beloved's loss "Too deeply to tell" (line 24). In the fourth stanza, the speaker reflects upon his relationship with the beloved. They met "in secret" (line 25) and so he must mourn "in silence" (line 26). What he mourns is that the beloved could forget him and be deceitful (lines 27-28). Thus, the speaker concludes that he could not again meet the beloved many years hence without expressing his pain "with silence and tears" (line 32).

Analysis

"When We Two Parted" is a lyric poem made up of four octets, each with a rhyme scheme ABABCDCD. The concept at the end of each of the first three stanzas is carried over into the first two lines of the following stanza, linking the poem's content together across the stanza breaks to unify the author's sense of sorrow at the loss of his beloved. The poem was first published in 1816, but Byron falsely attributed its writing to 1808 in order to protect the identity of its subject, Lady Frances Wedderburn Webster. Many scholars believe the poem to have actually been written in 1816, when Lady Frances was linked to the Duke of Wellington in a scandalous relationship. The poem is highly autobiographical in that it recounts Byron's emotional state following the end of his secret affair with Lady Frances and his frustration at her unfaithfulness to him with the Duke. If we did not know this, however, the poem would be mysteriously vague, since the sex of neither the lover nor the beloved is revealed, and the poem provides virtually no clue regarding the time, place, or other setting of the poem beyond its being a place with morning dew (and the fact that the poem is written in an older English with the use of "thy").

The poem begins with the bleak tone of despair which will characterize the entire work. Immediately the reader is introduced to the speaker's "silence and tears" (line 2) upon the breakup. Her own reaction is to grow cold—the physical description of her cheek as "cold" and "pale" hints at sickness, but her "colder" kiss (line 6) implies an emotional detachment growing from the very moment of their parting, which Byron finds unbearable. He sees her immediate response and

his own emotional reaction at the time as a portent of the future (the present of the poem) as “that hour foretold / Sorrow,” which would reach from the past to today.

The imagery of coldness carries over from the end of the first stanza into the beginning of the second stanza with the chilly dew upon Byron’s brow, suggesting his own emotional detachment. He awakens into a world still as desolate as the one he ended the previous night. He thus turns his attention to his beloved’s apparent infidelity to him. Her “vows are all broken” (line 13), implying she had made some promises to Byron despite the illicit nature of their affair, and further suggesting Lady Frances’ scandalous relationship. The speaker notes that her fame is now “light”—without weight or guilt and easily blown about—yet there should be shame in the speaking of her name because of him, which he at least will feel for them both (lines 14-16).

The unspeakable nature of Byron’s pain recurs in the beginning of the final stanza, as he reflects that the secret nature of their affair leaves unable to tell of their affair for a second reason: he is unable to mourn publicly for her or her unfaithfulness to him since their romantic relationship had been a secret. He grieves silently over her neglectful heart and deceitful spirit (lines 26-28).

He ends the poem predicting his reaction at some future meeting years later: how would he greet her? Again there would be silence, but also sadness: “silence and tears” (line 32). His pain will not diminish, nor his sense of being wronged by her actions, even after many years. Nonetheless, he will maintain silence forever to prevent further scandal being attached to her name. After all, he does an excellent job of hiding her identity in this poem. The repetition of “silence and tears” at the beginning and end of the poem denotes the poet’s inability to leave his moment of pain behind. He is trapped in a state of grieving a lost love. It is all the more hurtful that he lost her to another man, and all he can offer her is that he will protect her identity by grieving alone.

List of Titles for Acquaintances:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. The Prelude | 9. Essays of Elia |
| 2. The Rime of the Ancient Mariner | 10. Confessions of an English Opium Eater |
| 3. Biographia Literaria | 11. Table Talk |
| 4. Adonais | 12. Imaginary Conversations |
| 5. The Defence of Poetry | 13. Life of Byron |
| 6. Don Juan | 14. Emma |
| 7. The Eve of St. Agnes | 15. Northanger Abbey |
| 8. Waverley | |

SYBA- Semester- IV Core English- 211

(History of English Literature – 1798-1830)

Question: List of Titles for Acquaintance – Unit – 4

[1] Name of Work: The Prelude Name of Author: William Wordsworth

Type of Work: Autobiographical poem

Year of Publication: 1850

Age: Romantic Age

[2] Name of Work: The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

Name of Author: S.T. Coleridge

Type of Work: Poetry

Year of Publication: 1798

Age: Romantic Age

[3] Name of Work: Biographia Literaria Name of Author: S.T. Coleridge

Type of Work: Criticism

Year of Publication: 1817

Age: Romantic Age

[4] Name of Work: Adonais

Name of Author: John Keats

Type of Work: pastoral Elegy

Year of Publication: 1822

Age: Romantic Age

[5] Name of Work: The Defence of Poetry

Name of Author: P.B. Shelley

Type of Work: Criticism

Year of Publication: 1840

Age: Romantic Age

[6] Name of Work: Don Juan

Name of Author: Lord Byron

Type of Work: Satire

Year of Publication: 1819-24

Age: Romantic Age

[7] Name of Work: The Eve of St. Agnes Name of Author: John Keats

Type of Work: Poetry

Year of Publication: 1820

Age: Romantic Age

[8] Name of Work: Waverly

Name of Author: Walter Scott

Type of Work: Novel

Year of Publication: 1814

Age: Romantic Age

[09] Name of Work: Essays of Elia Name of Author: Charles Lamb

Type of Work: Essay

Year of Publication: 1833

Age: Romantic Age

[10] Name of Work: Confessions of an English opium Eater

Name of Author: Thomas De quince

Type of Work: Essay

Year of Publication: 1822

Age: Romantic Age

[11] Name of Work: Table Talk

Name of Author: William Hazlitt

Type of Work: Essay

Year of Publication: 1821-22

Age: Romantic Age

[12] Name of Work: Imaginary Conversations

Name of Author: W.S. Landor

Type of Work: Prose-work

Year of Publication: 1846

Age: Romantic Age

[13] Name of Work: Life of Byron

Name of Author: Thomas Moore

Type of Work: Biography

Year of Publication: 1830

Age: Romantic Age

[14] Name of Work: Emma Name of Author: Jane Austen

Type of Work: Novel

Year of Publication:

Age: Romantic Age

[15] Name of Work: Northanger Abbey Name of Author: Jane Austen

Type of Work: Novel

Year of Publication: 1818

Age: Romantic Age

