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B.E.G.E.-106

UNDERSTANDING POETRY

By: Kshyama Sagar Meher

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QUESTION PAPER

(June – 2019)

(Solved)

UNDERSTANDING POETRY

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Notes: Answer the following questions.

Q. 1. (a) Comment on the following passages in respect of the prosodic features:

- (i) Thy way not mine, O Lord
However dark it be;
Lead me by thine own hand,
Choose out the path for me.

Ans. These lines are written in regular iambic trimeter. The rhyme scheme is abab.

Also Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 9, Q. No. 2.

- (ii) How fleet is the glance of the mind!
Compared with the speed of its flight:
The tempest itself lags behind
And the swift winged arrows of light.

Ans. These lines are in anapestic trimeter. However, the first foot of each of the first three lines is an iambus. The rhyme scheme is abab.

Also Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 12, Q. No. 8 (a).

- (b) Write short notes on the following:

- (i) Ballad Stanza

Ans. Before everything else, it is very important to throw light on the etymology of the word ballad. Etymologically, the word ballad has been taken from Latin word ballare, which means dancing song. Ballad is a shorter narrative poem, which comprises of short stanzas. F.B Gum has explained the definition of ballad as, "A poem meant for singing, quite impersonal in material, probably connected in its origins with the communal dance but submitted to a process of oral traditions among people who are free from literary influences and fairly homogeneous in character." Ballad is a short story in verse, which is intended to be sung with the accompaniment of music. It is opposite to the Epic, which is a lengthy story in

verse. It is a popular poem among the common folks Southern Appalachian Mountains of America.

- (ii) Rhyme Royal

Ans. Rhyme royal, rhyme also spelled rime, seven-line iambic pentameter stanza rhyming ababbcc. The rhyme royal was first used in English verse in the 14th century by Geoffrey Chaucer in *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Parlement of Foules*. Traditionally, the name rhyme royal is said to derive from *The King is Quair* ("The King's Book), attributed to James I of Scotland (1394–1437), but some critics trace the name to the French chant royal. Chaucer probably borrowed it from the French poet and musician Guillaume de Machaut (c. 1300-77), who may have invented it or derived it from earlier French and Provençal poets.

Rhyme royal became the favourite form for long narrative poems during the 15th and early 16th centuries. Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece* (1594) was the last important poem of the period in rhyme royal. Later, Milton experimented with the form, and it was successfully used by William Morris in the 19th century and by John Masefield in the 20th century.

- (iii) Satire

Ans. Satire is a genre of literature, and sometimes graphic and performing arts, in which vices, follies, abuses, and shortcomings are held up to ridicule, ideally with the intent of shaming individuals, corporations, government, or society itself into improvement. Although satire is usually meant to be humorous, its greater purpose is often constructive social criticism, using wit to draw attention to both particular and wider issues in society.

Sample Preview of The Chapter

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UNDERSTANDING POETRY

EARLY MODERN ENGLISH POETS

Why Read a Poem? And, How to Study Understanding Poetry?



INTRODUCTION

Poetry is for delight, ornament and ability. It is not meant for any technological application and has no social relevance. Poetry does not have any practical use. It is literature and part of liberal culture and education. It is akin to history and philosophy. It entertains the mind of the people those who read and understand poetry.

CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

ANSWERING THE QUESTION

'WHAT IS A POEM?'

Poem is an instance of poetry or an example of poetic expression. Poetry is a variety of literature. The Oxford Dictionary defines poetry as an expression of beautiful or elevated thought, imagination of feeling in appropriate language and usually in metrical form. Poetry can be written in verse as well as prose. A piece of prose poem have all the qualities except metre. Many prose poetry have been written. 'The Book of Job' in the Old Testament and 'Dream Children of Lamb' are examples. Plays have been written in both prose and verse. Shakespeare, G. B. Shaw and T. S. Eliot have written in prose and verse.

A poem is a product of the man, the milieu and the moment. Some of W. B. Yeats's poems like 'September 1913', 'Easter 1916', 'Nineteen Hundred Nineteen' and 'Among School Children' were influenced by the Irish history but Yeats did not give us the details of the events in his poems as a historian does. Poetry is, however, different from history as Aristotle says poetry is finer and more philosophical than history. Poetry expresses the universal and history only the particular.

According to Wallace Stevens, reality is a cliché from which we escape by metaphors. A poet looks at the world as a man looks at a woman.

Matthew Arnold also talks high of poetry. He believes the future of poetry is immense. Theories in politics and science change, but poetry stays.

William Wordsworth says poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge. Francis Bacon, however, says reason is superior to poetry. John Locke also rejects the doctrine of 'innate ideas' and says that the source of ideas is experience.

John Dryden was influenced more by the scientific ethos of his age. Eugenius in Dryden's *Essay of Dramatick Poesy* holds the view that his age was superior to the ancients. Eugenius wants the method of science to serve as a model for poets.

According to Alexander Pope, who came at the cusp of neoclassical era in Western Europe, says the office of the poet was to provide felicitous expression to truth.

Samuel Johnson says, the poet must write as the interpreter of nature and the legislator of mankind and consider himself as presiding over the thoughts and manners of future generations, as a being superior to the place.

William Wordsworth describes poetry as the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science.

THE SCOPE OF THIS COURSE:

THE SYLLABUS

The detail syllabus is given below. You can plan your study of the course accordingly.

Understanding Poetry (Revised) B.E.G.E.-106

Block-I

Early Modern Period

- (1) Introductory Unit
- (2) On metre and poetic devices
- (3) Shakespeare and his Sonnets (29 and 30)
- (4) John Milton: 'L' Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso' 'On the Late Massacre' and 'When the Assault'
- (5) John Donne: 'The Sun Rising', 'The Anniversary' and, 'The Relic'

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- (6) Andrew Marvell: 'Thoughts in a Garden'.
Kamala Das: 'The Dance of the Eumuch', 'A
lot Moon in Malabar

Block-II

The Long Eighteenth Century

- (7) John Dryden: *Mac Flecknoe*
(8) Alexander Pope: *An Essay on Man*
(9) Samuel Johnson: *The Vanity of Human
Wishes*
(10) Thomas Gray: *Elegy Written in a Country
Churchyard*

Block-III

The Romantic Poets

- (11) William Wordsworth: 'Intimations of
Immortality', 'Tintern Abbey'
(12) S.T. Coleridge: 'Kubla Khan'
(13) Lord Byron: 'Roll on Thou Deep and Dark Blue
Ocean', 'George the Third'
(14) P.B. Shelly: 'Ode to the West Wind', 'To a
Skylark'
(15) John Keats: 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', 'Ode to a
Nightingale'.

Block-IV

The Great Victorian Poets

- (16) Alfred, Lord Tennyson: 'The Splendour Falls',
'Tears, Idle Tears', 'Ulysses'
(17) Robert Browning: 'Soliloquy of the Spanish
Cloister', 'Andrea del Sarto'
(18) Mathew Arnold: 'The Strayed Reveller', 'The
Scholar Gypsy'
(19) Gerard Manley Hopkins: 'Pied Beauty', 'The
Windhover'
(20) Thomas Hardy: 'To an Unborn Pauper Child',
'Great Things' D.H. Lawrence: 'Bavarian
Gentians'.

Block-V

**The High Modernist, Postmodernist and Recent
Poets**

- (21) William Butler Yeats: 'To a Shade', 'No Second
Troy', 'No Second Coming'
(22) T.S. Eliot: 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock',
'Gerontion'
(23) Philip Larkin: 'Church Going', 'The Whitsun
Weddings'
(24) Ted Hughes: 'The Thought-Fox', 'Hawk
Roosting', 'How to Paint a Water Lily'
(25) Seamus Heaney: 'Death of Naturalist'.

Block-VI

The American Poets I

- (26) R.W. Emerson: 'The Snowstorm' and
'Hamatreya'
(27) Walt Whitman: 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry'
(28) Edgar Allan Poe: 'The Raven'
(29) H.W. Longfellow: 'A Psalm of Life', 'From The
Song of Hiawatha'
(30) Emily Dickinson: 'Because I Could not Stop
for Death', 'A thought Went Up My Mind
Today', 'Death Sets a Thing Significant'.

Block-VII

The American Poets II

- (31) Robert Frost: 'After Apple Picking' and, 'A
Boundless Moment'

- (32) William Carlos Williams: 'Spring and All', 'A
Widow's Lament in Spring time' and, 'The
Dead Baby'.
(33) Wallace Stevens: 'The Snow Man', 'The
Emperor of Ice-Cream'
(34) Langston Hughes: 'The Negro Speaks of
Rivers', 'Young Gal's Blues' and, 'Mother to
Son'
(35) Allen Ginsberg: 'A Supermarket in California'
'Sunflower Sutra'.

Block-VIII

Indian English Poetry

- (36) Rabindranath Tagore: 'I Cast my Net into the
Sea', 'When I go Alone at Night'
Sarojini Naidu: 'Damayanti to Nala in the Hour
of Exile', 'Cradle Song'
(37) Nissim Ezekiel: 'Ganga', 'A Poem of
Dedication'
Kamala Das: 'The Dance of the Eunchs', 'A
lost Noon in Mahapatra'
(38) A.K. Ramanujan: 'Self-Portrait', 'Chicago Zen',
'On the Death of a Poem'
'Jayant Mahapatra: 'Hunger', 'A Rain or Rites'
(39) Arun Kolatkar: 'Suicide of Rama', 'Chaitanya',
'Ajamil and the Tigers'
Agha Shahid Ali: 'Postcard from Kashmir'.
(40) Dilip Chitre: 'The Light of Birds Breaks' 'The
Lunatic's Sleep' Keki Daruwalla: 'Hawk',
'Chinar'.

ASSIGNMENTS AND TERM-END EXAMINATION

This is the homework a student has to do. The details of the assignments are given below.

Assignments

Assignments promote active reading. Teachers also monitor the students through assignments. Assignments should not be a ritual or university needs.

Why Examinations?

Examinations are important in our study. They assess our understanding of the subject. They help in assessing our standing compared to other students. Examination has a long history. It is believed that examinations were conducted for the first time in China in 605 CE during the Sui Dynasty (581-618 CE). In India, East India Company started the examinations. The standardized tests were conducted by the British Universities in the 1850s.

A Model Term-end Examination Question Paper

Given below is a model question paper. It gives an idea how you can pursue your study. Some tips for the final examinations are given:

- Students must understand poetic devices, genres and different metrical compositions.
- Students need to read the poems and should understand the text. In the examinations, students will be asked to explain 4 passages from the prescribed poems.
- Students should read the introduction to different blocks so that they can understand the backgrounds of the poets and the context in which they has written. There will be a question in the paper related to this.

WHY READ A POEM? AND, HOW TO STUDY UNDERSTANDING POETRY? / 3

- There will also be questions on the poets, poems and their age. Students will be asked to write two essays in about 750 words each. A good question paper covers all segments of the course and students should be prepare for that.

**Model Term End Question Paper
Understanding Poetry (Revised)**

Full Marks-100 Time 3 Hours

Q. 1. (a) Scan one of the following passages and comment on its prosodic features:

- The way was long, the wind was cold,
The minstrel was infirm and old;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy,
- One more unfortunate
Weary of breath
Rashly importunate
Gone to her death!

(b) Write short notes on any two of the following:

- Caesura
- Epic
- Synecdoche
- Spenserian Stanza
- Aposiopesis

(2) Explain any four of the following passages with reference to their context supplying brief critical comments where necessary:

- Let the bird of loudest lay
On the sole Arabian tree
Herald sad and trumpet be,
To whose sound chaste wings obey,
- Say first, of God above, man below,
what can we reason, but from what we
konw?
Of man what see we, but his station
refer?
- Five years have past, five summers,
with the length
of five long winter! And again I hear
These waters, rolling from their
mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.
- No wonder of it: sheer plod makes
plough down sillion
Shine, and blue-buak embers, ah my
dear,
Fale gall themselves, and gas Gold-
vermillion
- There will be time to murder and create,
And time for all the works and days of
hands
That lift and drop a question on your
plate;
- We paused before a house that
seemed A swelling of the ground—
The roof was scarcely visible—
The cornice—in the ground—
- I feel that I would like
to go there
and fall into those flowers
and sink into the marsh nearthem,

- I don't know politics but I know the
names
of those in power, and can repeat them
like
Days of week, or names of months,
beginning with Nehru,
- I always loved neathness, Now I hold
the half inch Himalayas in my hand.

(3) Critically comment on Emile Legouis' words, 'The Great Victories of Edward III were being sung in London and Minot's poems were current in the countryside when Chaucer was born and when his mind received its first impressions.'

Or

Write short notes on any four of the followings:

- Venerable Bede
- Sir Philip Sidney
- The Augustan Age
- The Symbolist Movement
- Phillis Wheatley
- Black Mountain Poets
- Henry Derozio

(4) Attempt an evaluation of any one of the following poets, with special reference to the poems prescribed for you:

- Andrew Marvell
- P.B. Shelley
- Allen Ginsberg
- Arun Kolatkar

(5) Critically evaluate one of the following poems:

- 'Ode to a Nightingale'
- 'Ulysses'
- 'After Apple-Picking'
- 'Hawk'

(6) Do you agree with the view that Victorian poetry is a pale imitation of Romantic poetry? Provided reasons for your answer.

(7) Examine Langston Hughes's contribution to the Harlem Renaissance.

(8) What are the distinuishing features of Indian Poetry in English? Illustrate your answer with suitable examples.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q. 1. Have you talked to your friends about any poem that either you or they may have liked? If not, would you like to do so now and record your response below?

Ans. I talked to my friend about Willian Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*. The poet has expressed his tender feeling towards nature in the poem. I told my friends that 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 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

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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.

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.

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.

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".

The poet has expressed his honest and natural feelings to nature's superiority. The language is very simple and lucid that one is not tired of reading it again and again. The medium of this poem is an elevated blank verse.

Q. 2. Do you like singing film songs? Write down why you do so?

Ans. Film songs are entertaining. They delight us. They give us a type of pleasure and we feel good. We like to sing them again and again. The music and the words of film songs remove boredom and we sing them when we feel relaxed.

Q. 3. Imagine that the government has banned film songs. What would happen then?

Ans. Film songs are part of our life. We hear them every day. There are dedicated television channels which telecast film songs. There are radio channels which broadcast songs round the clock and we listen to them whenever we are free. They are very entertaining. Banning them by the government means depriving us from our right to entertain. The people never tolerate the government banning the film songs. That will be very harsh for the song and music lovers.

Q. 4. Note down a few points regarding your plans for reading of this course.

Ans. I will take one month for one block. There are total eight blocks and it will take eight months to complete the course. I will read the introduction and take note of the key points and then proceed to the poem. I will read them word by word to understand. I will take the help of teachers at the study centre in case I do not understand any poems. There are also assignments and I will submit them in time. In the four months before the exam, I will go through the notes and the questions to make myself ready for the exam.

Q. 5. How would you prepare for your exams? Note down at least five points in the space provided below.

Ans. I will prepare in the following ways:

- I will start preparing before four months of the exams.
- I will divide the entire course and give equal time to each paper.
- For BEGE-106, I will go through the notes and study as per the model question paper.
- Starting from the poetic devices, genres and different metrical compositions, we will read the poems and understand the text.
- A day before the exams, I will focus on the notes I have taken.

■ ■