History of English Literature - Important MCQs (Part 18)

Page 87 - Lycidas and Milton's Prose (Part 1)

Q1. What is the allegory in Milton's 'Comus' about?

A. The fall of man

B. Virtue attacked by sensuality and conquering by divine aid

C. The war in heaven

D. Political corruption in London

Answer: B

Q2. In Milton's poem 'Lycidas', what kind of Puritanism do we see?

A. A purely theological one

B. One that is political and ecclesiastical as well as spiritual and ethical

C. A complete rejection of Puritanism

D. A highly comedic one

Answer: B

Q3. Who is 'Lycidas' an elegy for?

A. Milton's wife, Mary Powell

B. Milton's father

C. Milton's college friend, Edward King

D. Oliver Cromwell

Answer: C

Q4. While the form of 'Lycidas' (pastoral elegy) belongs to the Renaissance, what does its famous attack upon the corrupt church proclaim?

A. Milton's adherence to the Catholic faith

B. Milton's adherence to the Puritan cause

C. Milton's desire to become King

D. Milton's hatred of all poetry

Answer: B

Q5. What did Milton do when he returned to England from the Continent in his 31st year?

A. He immediately wrote Paradise Lost

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B. He threw himself into the fierce political and religious controversies of the hour

C. He became an actor on the public stage

D. He retired to the countryside to write sonnets

Answer: B

Q6. Because he gave his strength to his public duty in these controversies, what did Milton do for the next twenty years?

A. He wrote his greatest epic poetry

B. He turned from poetry entirely and continued active as a writer of prose

C. He wrote romantic comedies

D. He painted landscapes

Answer: B

Q7. How many sonnets did Milton produce during the prime of his manhood (a period equal to Shakespeare's whole dramatic career)?

A. About a dozen

B. 154

C. Over 300

D. None

Answer: A

Q8. How does the text describe Milton's prose works?

A. They are his greatest literary achievement

B. They are often marred by coarseness of phrase and intense bitterness of temper

C. They are light, comedic, and highly romantic

D. They are written entirely in Latin verse

Answer: B

Q9. What did Milton himself call his prose works?

A. The work of his 'right hand'

B. The work of his 'left hand'

C. His 'crowning glory'

D. His 'youthful folly'

Answer: B

Q10. Why is Milton's prose style described as heavy and cumbrous?

A. Because he used a typewriter

B. Because modern English prose had not yet come into existence (it featured long trailing sentences, Latin inversions)

C. Because he did not know English well

D. Because it was translated from French

Answer: B

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Page 88 - Areopagitica and Paradise Lost (Part 1)

Q1. Which of Milton's prose treatises stands apart as a great and noble work that every lover of liberty should read?

A. Paradise Lost

B. Areopagitica

C. Comus

D. The Anatomy of Wit

Answer: B

Q2. What is 'Areopagitica' directed against?

A. The monarchy

B. An order of Parliament which established a censorship of books

C. The Spanish Armada

D. The theater

Answer: B

Q3. 'Areopagitica' is essentially a plea for what?

A. Freedom of thought and speech

B. The restoration of the King

C. The banning of all poetry

D. Free trade

Answer: A

Q4. When did Milton finally find the leisure to write his greatest English poem, 'Paradise Lost'?

A. While he was at Cambridge

B. During the height of his political power in the Commonwealth

C. When the restoration of the monarchy drove him into private life and obscurity

D. When he was traveling in Italy

Answer: C

Q5. The inspiration and subject-matter of 'Paradise Lost' come from what?

A. Greek mythology

B. Milton's Puritanism and theology

C. English history

D. Arthurian legend

Answer: B

Q6. Upon the foundation of his theology, what does 'Paradise Lost' undertake to do?

A. 'To be or not to be'

B. 'Assert Eternal Providence and justify the ways of God to men'

C. 'Fools rush in where angels fear to tread'

D. 'Make the world safe for democracy'

Answer: B

Q7. While as a thinker and moralist Milton belonged completely to Puritanism in 'Paradise Lost', to what did he belong as an artist?

A. The Enlightenment

B. The Renaissance (in form, style, machinery, and method)

C. The Romantic Movement

D. The Victorian Era

Answer: B

Q8. What were Milton's avowed models for the form and style of 'Paradise Lost'?

A. Shakespeare's tragedies

B. The great epics of classical antiquity

C. French romances

D. Medieval mystery plays

Answer: B

Q9. What fact is of capital importance when considering 'Paradise Lost'?

A. That it was written as a comedy

B. That it is the greatest regular epic poem in modern literature written not on a classical, but on a theological/Christian subject

C. That it was never finished

D. That it was written entirely in Latin

Answer: B

Q10. How is the combination of influences in Milton summarized in 'Paradise Lost'?

A. A complete rejection of art in favor of religion

B. The zeal for righteousness (Puritanism) blended with the love of learning and passion for beauty (Renaissance/Humanism)

C. Pure science mixed with political satire

D. A rejection of Christianity in favor of paganism

Answer: B

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Page 89 - Milton's Later Poetry

Q1. Which of the following is NOT set forth in 'Paradise Lost'?

A. The revolt of Satan against God

B. The temptation of Christ in the wilderness

C. The fall of the rebel angels

D. The expulsion from Eden

Answer: B

Q2. What was the central purpose of 'Paradise Lost'?

A. To prove that Satan is the true hero

B. To show how 'man's first disobedience' brought sin and death in its train

C. To document English political history

D. To satirize the church

Answer: B

Q3. How does Milton choose to close 'Paradise Lost'?

A. On a note of evil completely triumphant

B. By prophetically introducing the divine work of redemption

C. With the destruction of the earth

D. With a comedic wedding

Answer: B

Q4. What sequel to 'Paradise Lost' did Milton write, covering the temptation of Christ in the wilderness?

A. Samson Agonistes

B. Paradise Regained

C. Comus

D. Lycidas

Answer: B

Q5. How do most modern readers view 'Paradise Regained' compared to its predecessor?

A. As vastly superior

B. As exactly equal in every way

C. As a very slight thing beside its gigantic predecessor

D. As the greatest comedy ever written

Answer: C

Q6. Which 'dramatic poem' crowns the labors of Milton's closing years?

A. Samson Agonistes

B. Paradise Regained

C. Areopagitica

D. L'Allegro

Answer: A

Q7. How is 'Samson Agonistes' fashioned?

A. As a romantic comedy

B. Strictly upon the principles of Greek tragedy

C. As a sequence of sonnets

D. As a prose novel

Answer: B

Q8. Why did Milton return to the story of Samson late in his life?

A. He wanted to write an action play

B. He saw in the blind, disappointed hero an image both of himself and of the overwhelmed Puritan cause

C. Because the King ordered him to

D. Because it was a popular trend

Answer: B

Q9. How does Milton rank among English poets?

A. He is completely forgotten today

B. After Shakespeare, he is the greatest English poet (the greatest outside the drama)

C. He is considered mediocre

D. He is only famous for his prose

Answer: B

Q10. In the judgment of critics, Milton is regarded as one of the three or four supreme poets of what?

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A. His local town

B. The 17th Century

C. The World

D. Political satire

Answer: C

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Page 90 - Characteristics of Milton's Poetry

Q1. Which epithet is most naturally associated with Milton's poetry?

A. Comedic

B. Sublime

C. Satirical

D. Simplistic

Answer: B

Q2. What did Matthew Arnold call the style of which Milton is our one acknowledged master?

A. 'The grand style'

B. 'The romantic style'

C. 'The common style'

D. 'The gothic style'

Answer: A

Q3. Where is Milton's astonishing descriptive power highly evident?

A. In his sonnets about love

B. In the scenes in Hell in the opening books of Paradise Lost

C. In his political pamphlets

D. In his early college poems

Answer: B

Q4. Although lacking in true dramatic sense, what does the debate in the council of fallen angels show?

A. His hatred of politics

B. An extraordinary insight into motive and character

C. His ability to write comedy

D. His ignorance of theology

Answer: B

Q5. Though an epic is theoretically impersonal, how is Milton's epic characterized?

A. It is totally devoid of emotion

B. It is throughout instinct with the spirit of the man himself (intense individuality)

C. It feels as if a machine wrote it

D. It focuses entirely on minor characters

Answer: B

Q6. What quote is used to describe Milton's lofty temper and passionate moral earnestness?

A. 'A fool and his money are soon parted'

B. 'Whose soul was like a star, and dwelt apart'

C. 'To thine own self be true'

D. 'All the world's a stage'

Answer: B

Q7. What form did Milton use for 'Paradise Lost' that had not previously been used for any important non-dramatic poem?

A. Rhyme royal

B. Spenserian stanza

C. Blank verse (English heroic verse without rime)

D. Free verse

Answer: C

Q8. Who remains our greatest master of English heroic verse without rime?

A. Shakespeare

B. Milton

C. Marlowe

D. Spenser

Answer: B

Q9. What does the text say about Milton's touch as a consummate literary artist?

A. He is only good at vast general effects

B. His touch is as sure in delicate detail as in vast general effects

C. He struggled with small details

D. He only cared about the plot, not the words

Answer: B

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Q10. How is Milton's personality sometimes described despite his greatness?

A. Warm, funny, and highly sociable

B. Narrow, hard, and austere

C. Completely laid-back and uncaring

D. Always confused and uncertain

Answer: B

History of English Literature - Important MCQs (Part 18)

Page 91 - The Caroline Poets

Q1. Why is it difficult to establish a satisfactory order for the writers between 1625 and 1700?

A. Because no one knows when they lived

B. Because the Age of Milton and the Age of Dryden overlap in a broad way

C. Because all the records were destroyed in a fire

D. Because they all wrote anonymously

Answer: B

Q2. Under what term does the text group a number of verse writers roughly assigned to the reign of Charles I?

A. The Elizabethan Poets

B. The Caroline Poets

C. The Victorian Poets

D. The Romantic Poets

Answer: B

Q3. Did the Caroline poets stop producing work after the reign of Charles I ended?

A. Yes, they were all executed

B. No, many of them continued to produce through the years of the Commonwealth or even later

C. Yes, they were exiled to France

D. Yes, poetry was banned forever

Answer: B

Q4. What two types of poetry did the Caroline poets write?

A. Epic and Dramatic

B. Secular and Religious

C. Blank verse and Free verse

D. Political and Scientific

Answer: B

Q5. Who is considered the most important of the Caroline poets?

A. John Milton

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B. Robert Herrick

C. Ben Jonson

D. William Shakespeare

Answer: B

Q6. What types of poetry did Robert Herrick write?

A. Only religious hymns

B. Both secular and religious poetry

C. Only long epic poems

D. Only political satires

Answer: B

Q7. Who was Robert Herrick an associate of in his early life?

A. William Shakespeare

B. Ben Jonson

C. Francis Bacon

D. Queen Elizabeth

Answer: B

Q8. What profession did Robert Herrick eventually enter?

A. The military

B. The law

C. The church

D. The theater

Answer: C

Q9. Where did Robert Herrick find himself banished to?

A. A Devonshire parsonage

B. America

C. Scotland

D. The Tower of London

Answer: A

History of English Literature - Important MCQs (Part 18)

Q10. What is the defining characteristic used in the text to group writers as 'Caroline Poets' regardless of dates?

A. Their political affiliation

B. The quality of their thought and style (belonging to the older generation)

C. Their religious denomination

D. Their place of birth

Answer: B