

MA ENGLISH
SEMESTER II
PAPER III
PROSE
UNIT III
WILLIAM HAZLITT

-By Dr. Yogita Lonare
Assistant Professor
Department of English
Durga Mahavidhyalaya
Raipur,(C.G.)
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

William Hazlitt, born on April 10, 1778, Maidstone, Kent, Eng. And died on Sept. 18, 1830, Soho, London, English writer best known for his humanistic essays. Lacking conscious artistry or literary pretention, his writing is noted for the brilliant intellect. William Hazlitt was an English essayist, dramatist and literary critic, painter, social commentator, and philosopher. He is now considered one of the greatest critics and essayists in the history of the English language. Despite his skills as a writer and artist, Hazlitt was a difficult man to know and like over time and many his friendships fell apart. “The Fight” is, arguably, his most famous essay; certainly it is one of the most famous pieces of writing not only about boxing, but about any sport. More than other figure in English literary history, William Hazlitt (1778-1830) demolishes the distinction between creative artist and critical commentator. He was the exemplary critic as artist (Wilde was an admirer) and a peerless prose stylist who stands as one of the masters of the familiar essay. Hazlitt was educated at home and at a local school. At age 13 he had the satisfaction of seeing his writing appear in print for the first time, when the Shrewsbury Chronicle published his letter (July 1791) condemning the riots in Birmingham over Joseph Priestley's support for the French Revolution.

MCQs

1. When was William Hazlitt born?

Ans. In 1778

2. Where was William Hazlitt born?

Ans. Maidstone

3. "William Hazlitt was neither so happy nor as prosperous as the record of his work suggests", who comments?

Ans. Hollingworth

4. Who comments "William Hazlitt had a complex personality that blended an austere Puritanical aspect with the changed one."

Ans. Compton Rickett

5. To which century does Hazlitt belong?

Ans. 19th century

6. Hazlitt's contribution appeared in..

Ans. The Champion

7. In which essay does Hazlitt describe the character of Wordsworth?

Ans. On Genius and Common Sense

8. Which is not the quality of Hazlitt's essays?

Ans. Political satire

9. Who comments Hazlitt is a more vigorous and less mannered essayist than Lamb?

Ans. David Daiches

10. As an essayist Hazlitt belongs to the school of...

Ans. Montaigne and Lamb

11. By temperament and by historical necessity William Hazlitt was...

Ans. Romantic essayist

12. Which essay deals with the skill and finesse of Indian jugglers' performances and those of the intellectuals?

Ans. Indian Jugglers

13. What is the theme of the essay "On Going a Journey?"

Ans. Travelling

14. In which essay does Hazlitt point out about Coleridge and Wordsworth?

Ans. My first acquaintance with Poets

15. In which essay does Hazlitt write only about himself?

Ans. A Farewell to Essay Writing

16. There are indeed strong resemblances between Hazlitt and Dr Johnson, both had a dogmatic and overbearing way, both were common men who comments?

Ans. Geoffrey Keynes

17. Hazrat is ever alive and alert, He enjoyed life ; he loved many things, women and pictures and plays and poems" Who comments?

Ans. Hugh Walker

18. When was William Hazlitt's essay "On going a Journey" published?

Ans. in 1822

19. When did William Hazlitt die?

Ans. 18th December 1830

20. In how many volumes the Table Talk was written?

Ans. 2 volumes

21. What is the genre of the 'Table Talk'?

Ans. Cultural criticism, Social criticism

22. In which collection of essays, the Indian Jugglers published?

Ans. The Table Talk

1. AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTE IN THE ESSAYS OF HAZLITT

Ans. Every essay of Hazlitt is the fragment of autobiography and every sentence a confession. He is a man of strong convictions which he had the intellectual courage to express and dilate upon.

2. RECOLLECTIONS OF THE PAST IN HAZLITT'S ESSAYS

ANS. Hazlitt's essays are repositories of his past recollections and memories. They reveal his love of the past. He himself wrote, "I confess nothing at present interests me but what has been the recollection of the impressions of my early life."

3. HAZLITT AS A CRITIC.

Ans. Hazlitt is a romantic critic. He is fair and judicious as a critic. He enjoyed not only the great romantics like Wordsworth, Coleridge, Rousseau but also liked new classical writers such as Fielding, Pope etc.

4. ELEMENTS OF ROMANTICISM IN 'ON GOING A JOURNEY'

Ans. Love for nature, the desire for solitude, focus on individual and common man, and personification.

5. PUBLICATION OF 2 VOLUMES OF TABLE TALK

Ans. a. I Volume - 6th April, 1821

b. II Volume - 15th June, 1822

6. NAME SOME PROSE WRITERS OF THE ROMANTIC AGE.

Ans . Charles Lamb, William Hazlitt, Thomas De Quincy

75 Words Answers

CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF 'ON GOING A JOURNEY'

Ans. Hazlitt's article on travel advocates the benefits of solo travel within one's own country. His affection for travel is strong. He calls going on a journey one of the pleasantest things in the world. Hazlitt stresses that solitude while on a journey is a must.

“The field’s is his study, nature was his book”

Hazlitt insists that sharing in the experience of nature with a companion takes away from the sensory experience of it. He asserts bluntly 'I cannot see the wit of walking and talking at the same time'. He believes conversation distracts from the scenery and nature does not need to be discussed. Scenery is not to be negotiated.

“A friend in my retreat

Whom I may whisper, solitude is sweet”

Everyone will have their own unique experience of nature and since each experience is personal, it is futile to compare experiences. William hazlitt seeks freedom from fellow men when he journeys. He says "the soul of a journey is life, liberty to think, to feel, do just at one pleases." In his opinion, a journey should be a time of freedom and peace away from all things associated with city life. A journey can provide a little breathing space to refresh and revitalize a person. He finds enjoyment in nature. Hazlitt's language describes the experience as being cathartic like a return to the innocence of childhood. Hazlitt says the freedom found in nature comes from being away from people.

CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF 'THE INDIAN JUGGLERS'

Ans. An Indian juggler is an entertainer in the rural life of India. He has no fixed place where he can live.

In the beginning of the essay Hazlitt describes a stunning performance by an Indian juggler. Hazlitt appreciates the juggler's mechanical mastery saying 'skill surmounting difficulty and beauty triumphing over skill'. Hazlitt is first astonished by an odd and

inexplicable mixture of simple and miraculous power. In the course of his act, the jugglers toss two brass balls in the air, which none of us could do to save our lives . According to Hazlitt, it is nothing but the bending of the faculties of body and mind to it from the tenderest infancy with incessant, ever anxious application up to manhood.

He admires their quality a lot. He is astonished to such an extent that he was left questioning this phone work. He says , in Parliament even the Honourable Noble Lord also stammers and repeats his statements but Indian jugglers never do. The juggling stirs even his own skill. He feels ashamed of himself. He asked himself "have I passed my time pouring like words into empty sieves". He says he can write a book so can many others who have not even known how to spell. Hazlitt appeared to make criticism as art appear easy and effortless, whether critiquing the plays of Shakespeare, writing biographies or discovering his own astonishment about Indian jugglers. Hazlitt's reputation and own skill as a literary and social critic lived on long after his death..

HAZLITT AS AN ESSAYIST

Ans. Hazlitt who is one of the greatest essayists of English literature. He contributed his essays to "Edinburg Review" "The Examiner", "The Times" and the "London Magazine". His well known essays were collected in the "Round Table", "Table Talk" etc. William Hazlitt was a keen observer of life. He was eager to enquire into human life with all its variety. Businesses deal with the world of men and women.

Hazlitt put his essays in an informal manner but it's not Lamb's informality. His informality depends upon systematic enquiry into the topic. His essays are serious and thought provoking. They show his philosophical bent of mind. Hazlitt is more interested in ideas than form. A large number of essays are on abstract ideas such as Egotism, Reason, Imagination, the Fear of Death etc. He does not indulge in moralizing. According to critics he is rather a moral historian than a moral philosopher. Hazlitt conveys his enjoyment and observation through his essays. His essays are not from head but from the heart. Thus Hazlitt is not out of date and does not become Stale.

Hazlitt writes with his familiar style there is no affectation or artificiality in it it has precision and purity of expression his sentences are brief and abrupt vigorous and direct he often writes balanced antithetical sentences to present the contrasting ideas. He also uses epigrams and paradoxes. Like Bacon he is aphoristic. He uses quotations extensively.

