

NCERT Solutions for Class 12

English Kaledoscope

POETRY - A Lecture upon the shadow

Understanding the poem

Question 1. How do the shadows before noon differ from the shadow afternoon? What do the two kinds of shadow represent?

Answer 1. The shadows before noon and afternoon differ in length. The shadow before noon grows shorter. At the time of noon, shadows vanish and afternoon they grow longer. According to the poet, the shadow before noon represents the lover and beloved coming together. At noon is the stage of absolute love. Shadows afternoon represent the lovers and beloved ones moving apart.

Question 2. Love is described as light. What makes the poet talk about shadows?

Answer 2. Shadows symbolize gloom and darkness. Love is a bright light that is overcome by shadows. If lovers are unable to keep their love in the absolute stage then the couple splits apart. The light of their life disappears and they fall in the darkness.

Question 3. Comment on the use of the image of the shadows for the idea that the poet wants to convey.

Answer 3. Poet has described changing the length of shadows. Before noon the shadows grow shorter, at noon they are in absolute stage and afternoon they grow longer. Poet wants to convey, through the poem the message that differences in love's initial stage keep decreasing. They totally Vanish in between them after this stage the differences begin to grow and finally the lover move apart.

Question 4. The poet seems to be addressing his beloved in the poem. What is the message wishes to convey to her?

Answer 4. In this poem, the poet wants to show the image of true lovers. He wants to convey to his beloved that he knew no bounds to love her and she should love him sincerely. True love never fades with time, it is longlasting. He wants to tell her that once they attain the stage of absolute love they must try to retain it. The bond of love between them should not be weakened.

Question 5. Instead of 'A Lecture upon Love' the poet calls the poem 'A Lecture upon the Shadow'. What is the effect that this has on our reading of the poem?

Answer 5. Love is referred to as a strong bond or attraction between the two souls. In fact it is the shadow of devotion. The true form of love is this devotion. The poet has adopted the shadow as the best imagery of love.

Language Work

Question 1. Notice the spelling of the following words

houres shadowes Sunne
noone clearnesse behinde

The 'e' that was used in Donne's period got dropped from English orthography later. Pick out the other words in the poem that have this peculiar feature.

Answer 1. Other words are

blinde
thine
worke

Question 2. Take note also that the apostrophe is not used for indicating the possessive form: loves philosophy

Answer 2. The apostrophe is not used for indicating the possessive form: loves philosophy It was dropped from English orthography later, where apostrophe was not used.

Question 3. Examples from other poems from this period:

- How neatly doe we give one only name
- To parents issue and the sinned bright starre!

Answer 3. In the given words, in the first sentence

doe , the actual word is 'do'

Only, the actual word is ' only '

In both words, 'e' is used

In the second sentence apostrophe is not used, in words like parents and sunnes .

‘e’ was used and apostrophe was not used in Donne’s period. Poet got dropped it from English orthography later.

Try this out

Question 1. Notice the adjectives in phrases such as ' infant loves ' and ' brave clearnesse'. What is the meaning of these adjectives

(i) in isolation

(ii) as part of these phrases

Answer 1.

The adjectives in ' infant love' is an infant. The adjective in brave clearnesse is brave.

The meaning of these adjectives

I) in isolation

Meaning of infant - a newborn baby

Meaning of brave - one who is not scared, opposite of coward.

(ii) as part of these phrases

In these phrases, infant love refers to love at the initial stage. The poet wants to depict that when two lovers are in a bond or attraction, their love is truly pure.

brave clearness refers to the lovers at the initial stage share each other their secrets and entrusts so they are brave to be clear. But as time passes love fades and sharing of secrets and entrusts shroud. They become unworthy to each other.