

## Unit Thirteen: Art and Music, Lesson 1 – What is Beauty?

Beauty is easy to appreciate but difficult to define. As we look around, we discover beauty in pleasurable objects and sights - in nature, in the laughter of children, in the kindness of strangers. But asked to define, we run into difficulties. Does beauty have an independent objective identity? Is it universal, or is it dependent on our sense perceptions? Does it lie in the eye of the beholder? -we ask ourselves. A further difficulty arises when beauty manifests itself not only by its presence, but by its absence as well, as when we are repulsed by ugliness and desire beauty. But then ugliness has as much a place in our lives as beauty, or may be more-as when there is widespread hunger and injustice in a society. Philosophers have told us that beauty is an important part of life, but isn't ugliness a part of life too? And if art has beauty as an important ingredient, can it confine itself only to a projection of beauty? Can art ignore what is not beautiful?

Poets and artists have provided an answer by incorporating both into their work. In doing so, they have often tied beauty to truth and justice, so that what is not beautiful assumes a tolerable proportion as something that represents some truth about life. John Keats, the romantic poet, wrote in his celebrated 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,' by which he means that truth, even if it's not pleasant, becomes beautiful at a higher level. Similarly, what is beautiful forever remains true. Another meaning, in the context of the Grecian Urn-an art object-is that truth is a condition of art.

Poetry in every language celebrates beauty and truth. So does art. Here are two poems from two different times that present some enduring ideas about beauty and truth. The poems are by Lord Byron (1788-1824), an English poet of the Romantic tradition, and Emily Dickinson (1830-1886), an American poet who wrote about the human scene, love and death.

### A Choose the correct answer from the alternatives:

1x5=5

(a) The expression "appreciate" implies-----

- i. praise                      ii. choose                      iii. select                      iv. like

(b) The word "repulsed" mentioned in the passage means -----

- i. disguised                      ii. ignored                      iii. attracted                      iv. regarded

(c) Beauty also prevails in -----

- i. truth                      ii. pleasurable objects                      iii. ugliness                      iv. beautification

(d) The word "beholder" could be replaced by-----

- i. runner                      ii. sender                      iii. watcher                      iv. stopper

(e) what does "difficult" means -----

- i. easy                      ii. simple                      iii. arduous                      iv. soft

### B. Answer the following Question:

2x5=10

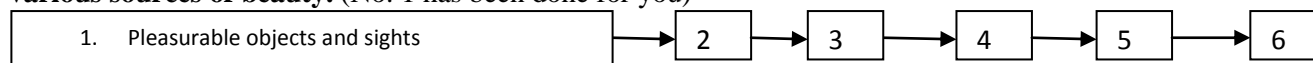
- When do we run into difficulties?
- Is ugliness is a part of life? If so how?
- What has John Keats written in "Ode on Grecian Urn"?
- When does 'Ugliness' occupy a place in our life?
- How do poets and artists provide answer about the question about the questions on how to define beauty?

### 2. Read the passage and complete the table below with the given information.

1x10=10

what	By whom/who/whom	How long/How/ where	Why
Ode on Grecian Urn	John Keats	(i)-----	For describing beauty
The context of the poem	(ii)-----	About an art object	(iii)-----
(iv)-----	Lord Byron	(v)-----	
Depicting beauty	(vi)-----	By incorporating in their literary works	(vii)-----
Write about human scene, love and death	(viii)-----	In her works	Love towards sensuousness
(ix)-----	To the poets	The condition of art	(X)-----

Or Based on your reading of the Passage below, make short notes in each of the boxes in the flow-chart showing the various sources of beauty. (No. 1 has been done for you)



### 3. Summarize the text.

10

## **1. Answer-**

- a) praise
- b) ignored
- c) ugliness
- d) watcher
- e) arduous

## **B Answer**

- a) We run into difficulties when we are asked to define beauty.
- b) Yes, ugliness is a part of life. When we are repulsed by ugliness and desire beauty. So, if there were no ugliness, beauty would be valueless.
- c) In “Ode on Grecian Urn” John Keats has written that Beauty is truth, Truth Beauty. It means that even if is not pleasant, becomes beautiful at higher level. Similarly, what is beautiful forever remains true.
- d) ‘Ugliness’ occupies a place in our life when there is absence of beauty or when there is widespread hunger and injustice in a society.
- e) Poets and artists define beauty as an art which is connected with truth. It is the reflection of truth and justice.

## **2. Answer**

- I. Romantic poet
- II. John Keats’
- III. For Romanticism
- IV. The life Span
- V. 36 years
- VI. Poets and artists
- VII. For romanticism
- VIII. By Emily Dickinson
- IX. Truth
- X. Beauty is truth, truth beauty

Or

- 1. Pleasurable objects and sights
- 2. Sights in nature
- 3. Laughter of children
- 4. Kindness of strangers
- 5. Loveliness of human appearance
- 6. Art objects