|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra** |  | |
| **Module: Literature (British)** | | **Faculty of Letters and Languages** | **Level: Third Year (L 3)** | |
| **Lecturer: Mr A. Boulegroune** | | **Dept. of English Language & Literature** | **Semester: One** | |
| **Tutorial № 03: Critical Analysis of Samuel Tailor Coleridge’s “The Raven”** | | |

Read the Text carefully. Then, answer the questions below.

**The Text:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **The Raven**  Underneath an old oak tree  There was a swine a huge company,  That grunted as they crunched the mast:  For that was ripe, and fell full fast.  Then they trotted away, for the wind grew high:  One acorn they left, and no more might you spy.  Next came a Raven, that liked not such folly:  He belonged, they did say, to the witch Melancholy!  Blacker was he than blackest jet,  Flew low in the rain, and his feathers not wet.  He picked up the acorn and buried it straight  By the side of a river both deep and great.  Where then did the Raven go?  He went high and low,  Over hill, over dale, did the black Raven go.  Many Autumns, many Springs  Travelled he with wandering wings:  Many Summers, many Winters⎯  I can't tell half his adventures.  At length he came back, and with him a she,  And the acorn was grown to a tall oak tree.  They built them a nest in the topmost bough,  And young ones they had, and were happy enow.  But soon came a wooden in leathern guise,  His brow, like a pent-house, hung over his eyes.  He'd an axe in his hand, not a word he spoke,  But with many a hem! and a sturdy stroke,  At length he brought down the poor Raven's own oak.  His young ones were killed; for they could not depart,  And their mother did die of a broken heart.  The boughs from the trunk the woodman did sever;  And they floated it down on the course of the river.  They sawed it in planks, and its bark they did strip,  And with this tree and others they made a good ship.  The ship, it was launched; but in sight of the land  Such a storm there did rise as no ship could withstand.  It bulged on a rock, and the waves rush'd in fast:  Round and round flew the raven, and cawed to the blast.  He heard the last shriek of the perishing souls⎯  See! See! o'ver the topmast the mad water rolls!  Right glad was the Raven, and off he went fleet,  And Death riding home on a cloud he did meet,  And he thank'd him again and again for this treat:  They had taken his all, and REVENGE IT WAS SWEET!  **Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1797** | **Glossary**  **oak tree:** tough hard durable wood that that produces acorns  **swine:** wild pig  **grunted:** low noise made by pigs  **crunched:** make a crushing noise  **ripe:** mature; fully developed  **trotted away:** run at a moderately swift pace  **folly:** foolish or senseless behaviour  **jet:** a hard black substance  **acorn:** fruit of the oak tree  **dale:** an open river valley (in a hilly area)  **nest:** a structure in which birds lay eggs or give birth to their young  **enow:** enough  **leathern:** made of leather  **pent-house:** a shed or roof attached to and sloping from a wall or building  **sturdy:** strong  **sever:** cut  **floated:** caused to rest on the surface of water  **sawed:** cut with a saw  **strip:** remove the bark from wood  **withstand:** resist  **bulged:** collided  **cawed:** utterd a cry, characteristic of ravens  **shriek:** sharp piercing cry  **perishing:** dying  **topmast:** the longgest pole rising from deck of a ship  **went fleet:** move along rapidly and lightly; disappear gradually |

**Short Biography of the Poet**

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born in 1772. When his father died, he was sent away to a London charity school for children of the clergy. He was an avid reader and a bright student. In 1791, he went to Cambridge, but he suddenly interrupted his education to enlist in a regiment of light dragoons. Later, he was re-admitted into Cambridge, where he met the radical poet Robert Southey, whose sympathetic views on the French Revolution he shared. Coleridge left Cambridge without without a degree and, almost on impulse, married Southey's fiancée sister. The marriage was a failure: the couple lived apart for most of their lives. In 1795, Colerifge met William Wordsworth, a poet with similar political and literary views. The result of their collaboration was *The lyrical Ballads* (1798), which opened with one of the four poems that Coleridge had contributed. In 1798, he travelled to Germany with Wordsworth. He had become disillusioned with the political radicalism inspired by the French Revolution and turned his attention to german philosophy, especially the ideas of the philosopher Immanuel Kant. In 1800, he returned to England and went on with the Wordsworths to live in the Lake District. By this time he had become addicted to opium, which was the only available relief for the pain he suffered due to various health problems. Together they became known as the 'Lake Poets'. He fell in love with Wordsworth's sister-in-law, a love that was to be a source of great suffering all through his life. In 1810, his friendship with Wordsworth came to a bitter end. His addiction to opium got worse, producing terrible mood swings and making him unable to work productively. In the following years, he slowly regained his health, worked as a journalist and gave lectures that established him as a distinguished literary critic. In 1817, he wrote his major prose work, Biographia Literaria. He died in 1834.

**Questions**

1. Identify the type of the poem. Justify your answer.
2. The theme of the supernatural is strongly present in the poem. Identify the supernatural elements in the text.
3. How do the notions of life and death intertwine in Coleridge's *The Raven*?
4. How do you interpret Coleridge's view of revenge?
5. Natural elements are important symbols in the poem. What do they stand for? To what extent does the symbolism of the raven differ from the prevalent one?