

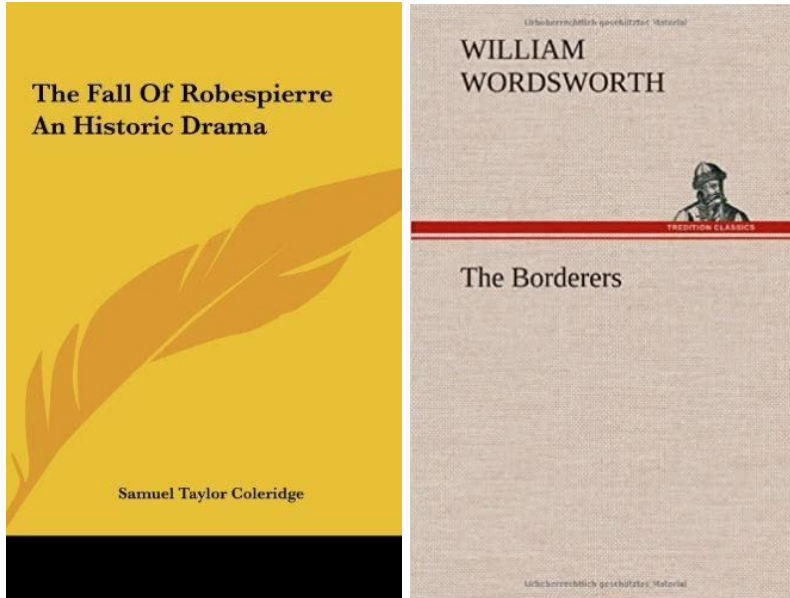
**Note: Click on the Description to get the Link
for VideoExplanation:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A06xA7>

[MySIs](#)

Closest Drama

1. Closet drama, a drama suited primarily for reading rather than production. Closet dramas are plays that have been written to be read, but not performed.
2. During the early 1800s, most plays that were performed were 'melodramas' or 'burlesque.'
3. Serious writers such as Browning and Byron sought to elevate the art form by removing it from the stage altogether by creating closet dramas.
4. This art form was popularized in the Romantic era by such writers as Robert Browning and Goethe.
5. In some ways, the Romantics were revolutionary writers and were radical in thought. So it is no surprise that historical events such as the American and French Revolutions influenced these writers.
6. Coleridge and Southey worked together in 1794 to write a play about the French Revolution called *The Fall of Robespierre*, while Wordsworth's only play, *The Borderers*, was about the French Revolution as well. The Romantic playwrights used the plays to talk about their radical political and social views. Therefore, some theaters were reluctant to produce them.



7. Closet dramas were published in manuscript form, including *dramatis personae* and elaborate stage directions, allowing readers to imagine the text as if it was being performed.
8. The element of **imagination** is an important tenet of Romantic Movement. Writing a successful closet drama was an endeavour to stimulate the theatrical imagination of the readers. If a play could be read and then **imagined on the stage of the mind** held greater value to the Romantics than something interpreted by someone else on stage.
9. Another motivating factor for creating closet dramas was the monopoly that the two most popular theaters in England, **Drury Lane** and **Covent Garden**, held over everyone else at that time. A **'Licensing Act'** was passed **from 1737 to 1843** stating that the only plays produced between September through June had to be performed at one of the two theaters.
10. Between **1642 and 1660**, the English government **banned public performance**. During this time, play-reading became a "substitute" for play-going. **Thomas Killigrew** is an example of a stage playwright who turned to closet drama when his plays could no longer be produced during this period. (he was in exile from England during the English Civil War)
11. Historically, playwrights might choose the genre of 'closet' dramatic writing to **avoid censorship** of their works, for example in the case of political tragedies.

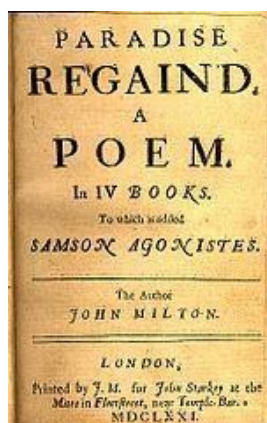
12. The closet drama gave the Romantic writer full control over his or her play; it was **free**, as Byron believed, from the 'judgment' of others.

13. In the early modern period, women writers who were unable to "use their voice" in public were able to emphasize their opinions using the form of closet drama. **Margaret Lucas Cavendish**, author of fourteen folio volumes, explored writing closet dramas during her exile and became one of the most well known women playwrights due to her interest in philosophical nature. Other remarkable women writers are **Joanna Baillie**, **Anne Finch**, **Jane Lumley**, and **Elizabeth Cary**.

14. Closet drama is not to be confused with readers' theatre, in which actors read or recite without decor before an audience.

15. Some Famous examples of Closet Drama-

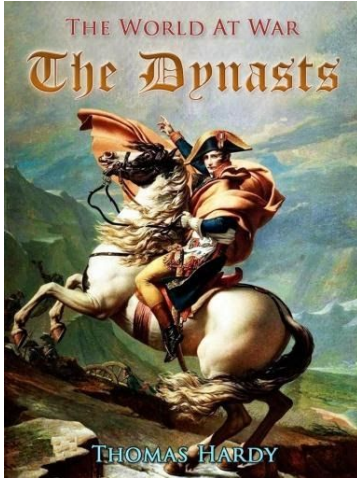
- a. The philosophical dialogues of ancient Greek and Roman writers such as **Plato** (Socratic dialogue) were written in the form of conversations between "characters" and are in this respect similar to closet drama, many of which feature little action but are often rich in philosophical ideas.
- b. **John Milton**'s play **Samson Agonistes**, written in **1671**, is an example of early modern drama never intended for the stage.



Samson Agonistes (from Greek Σαμσών ἀγωνιστής, "Samson the champion") is a tragic closet drama by John Milton. It appeared with the publication of Milton's *Paradise Regain'd* in 1671, as the

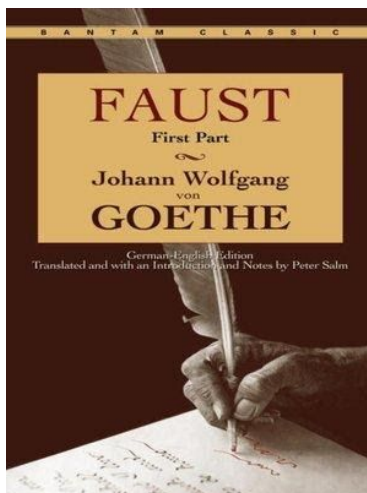
title page of that volume states: "Paradise Regained / A Poem / In IV Books / To Which Is Added / Samson Agonistes".

Thomas Hardy's **The Dynasts** (three parts, 1903–08).



d.

***Faust, Part 1* and *Faust, Part 2* by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, among the most acclaimed pieces in the history of German literature.**



Percy Bysshe Shelley and Lord Byron



**PROMETHEUS
UNBOUND**
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY



Manfred

Lord Byron

Exercise- MCQs

1. The Closet Drama was popularized during the..... period
 - a. Romantic
 - b. Elizabethan
 - c. Victorian
 - d. Modern
2. To the Romantic writer, the best kind of stage was _____.
 - a. Drury Lane
 - b. Covent Garden
 - c. One's own mind
 - d. Outdoors
3. An author who wrote Closet Dramas was _____.
 - a. Byron
 - b. Shelley
 - c. Browning

- d. All of them
4. The author of the closet drama *The Dynasts* is.....
- a. Goethe
 - b. Browning
 - c. Thomas Hardy
 - d. Southey
5. Closet drama may serve the purpose of.....
- a. Abundant entertainment
 - b. High flight of imagination
 - c. Contemplation on radical thoughts
 - d. Avoidance of criticism
6. *Samson Agonistes* was written by.....and was published in
- a. P. B. Shelley, 1785
 - b. John Milton, 1671
 - c. Tomas Hardy, 1771
 - d. William Wordsworth 1801
7. Who among the following is a woman writer of closet drama dealing with philosophical nature?
- a. P. B. Shelley
 - b. Ivanhoe
 - c. Cyril Bravewater
 - d. Margaret Lucas Cavendish
8. Match the following-
- | | |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| a. Wordsworth | a. Manfred |
| b. Coleridge | b. Prometheus Unbound |
| c. Byron | c. The Borderers |
| d. Shelley | d. The Fall of Robespierre |
9. Which statement regarding the closet drama is not true-
- a. It is primarily written to be read only.
 - b. It is the reader's theatre.

- c. It includes *dramatis personae* and elaborate stage directions.
- d. Writer may write it to avoid censorship.

10. Between..... the English government banned public performance of drama.
- a. 1642 and 1660
 - b. 1611 and 1652
 - c. 1740 and 1762
 - d. 1554 and 1595
-

ANSWERS: 1. (a) 2. (c) 3. (d) 4. (c) 5. (c) 6. (b) 7. (d) 8. (a-c, b-d, c-a, d-b)
9. (b) 10. (a)