

Rajasthan RSB Assistant Professor (English Sample Paper)

Q1. In Bapsi Sidhwa's 'Ice-Candy-Man', how is disability represented in the context of the partition of India, and what does this representation reveal about societal attitudes towards disability?

- (a) Disability is depicted as a symbol of strength and resilience, demonstrating that societal attitudes towards disability are predominantly positive and supportive.
- (b) The portrayal of disability in the novel focusses on medical and rehabilitative solutions, highlighting progressive attitudes towards disability and an emphasis on medical intervention.
- (c) Disability is portrayed as a minor issue that is easily resolved within the broader narrative of the partition, reflecting a lack of significant societal impact.
- (d) The novel represents disability as a source of shame and marginalisation, revealing how individuals with disabilities are often excluded from the socio-political discourse and deemed as burdens during times of crisis.

Ans.(d)

Sol. The correct answer is (d).

In *Ice-Candy-Man* (also published as *Cracking India*), disability is closely tied to questions of vulnerability, exclusion, and social perception during the chaos of Partition. Through the child narrator Lenny, who lives with physical disability, the novel reveals how disabled individuals are often viewed through pity, limitation, or social marginalization rather than full personhood.

Partition intensifies these attitudes. During times of violence and national crisis, societies often prioritize political survival while pushing already vulnerable groups to the margins. Sidhwa uses disability not as a decorative trait but as a lens through which to observe power, dependence, fear, and exclusion. At the same time, Lenny's sharp intelligence and moral awareness challenge society's assumptions.

Thus, the novel shows disability as associated with shame and marginalization in social attitudes, exposing how crises deepen exclusion.

Information Booster

Ice-Candy-Man was written by Bapsi Sidhwa and published in 1988. It is a major Partition novel in English.

Bapsi Sidhwa is a Pakistani novelist known for works on Partition, gender, minority identity, and historical trauma.

The story is told through Lenny, a young Parsee girl with polio, whose perspective combines innocence with sharp observation.

Major Themes

Partition violence

Gendered suffering

Childhood perception

Minority identity

Disability and vulnerability

Social hypocrisy

Lenny's position as both insider and outsider allows her to witness social breakdown with unusual clarity.

The novel uses disability to expose exclusionary attitudes and the neglect of vulnerable people during political catastrophe.

Q2. Moorthy, the protagonist of 'Kanthapura', is primarily influenced by which historical figure?

- (a) Mahatma Gandhi
- (b) Subhas Chandra Bose
- (c) BR Ambedkar
- (d) Jawaharlal Nehru

Ans.(a)

Sol. The correct answer is (a) Mahatma Gandhi. Moorthy is the "Gandhian" figure of the village of Kanthapura. After going to the city for education, he is moved by the spirit of the Independence movement and returns to his village to spread Gandhi's teachings. He is often referred to by the villagers as the "Local Mahatma" or the "Small Mountain," while Gandhi is the "Big Mountain."

Information Booster

The Work: Kanthapura (1938).

The Author: Raja Rao, one of the "Big Three" of Indian English literature (alongside R.K. Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand).

Genre: Sthala-Purana (a legendary history of a place) / Indo-Anglican Fiction.

The story is narrated by an old woman, Achakka, in a "Puranic" style. It describes how the quiet village of Kanthapura is transformed by the Indian Independence movement. Moorthy organizes the villagers to fight against the caste system and British oppression through non-violence (Ahimsa) and Satyagraha. The novel ends with the destruction of the village, but the spiritual and political awakening of the people remains.

It is famous for its preface, where Rao discusses the difficulty of conveying Indian emotions and "spirit" in a foreign language (English), arguing for the creation of an Indian dialect of English.

Additional Knowledge

Subhas Chandra Bose (b): While a major figure in the independence movement, Bose's "Indian National Army" advocated for armed struggle, which contrasts directly with Moorthy's strictly non-violent Gandhian approach.

B.R. Ambedkar (c): Although Moorthy works to abolish untouchability (a core Ambedkarite goal), his methods and inspiration in the novel are explicitly derived from Gandhi's religious-political framework.

Jawaharlal Nehru (d): Nehru represented the modern, socialist, and secular face of the Congress. While Moorthy respects the Congress, his personal transformation is a spiritual "conversion" to Gandhi's ascetic lifestyle (wearing Khadi, fasting, etc.).

Q3. Identify the poetic technique being used in the given lines.

If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if the other do.

- (a) Conceit
- (b) Assonance
- (c) Metaphor
- (d) Alliteration

Ans.(a)

Sol. The correct answer is (a) Conceit.

These famous lines are from John Donne's poem A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning. The lovers are compared to the two legs of a mathematical compass: one fixed at the center and the other moving outward but always connected. This is not a simple comparison; it is an elaborate, intellectually surprising, extended analogy that links love and geometry. Such a device is called a conceit.

A conceit is a hallmark of Metaphysical poetry, where poets use unexpected comparisons drawn from science, philosophy, religion, or everyday objects to express emotional and spiritual truths. Here, Donne turns separation into a symbol of unity: though physically apart, the lovers remain spiritually joined.

Thus, the poetic technique used in these lines is conceit.

Information Booster

John Donne (1572–1631) was the leading Metaphysical poet of seventeenth-century England.

A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning was written as a farewell poem to Donne's wife during temporary separation.

A conceit is:

Extended comparison

Ingenious and surprising

Intellectual in design

Symbolically rich

Common in Metaphysical poetry

Why the Compass Image Is Famous

It shows:

Love despite distance

Stability and movement

Unity in separation

Spiritual connection

The compass comparison is one of the most celebrated metaphysical conceits in English poetry.

Q4. In 'Adventures of Huckleberry Finn', which character serves as a moral compass for Huck, despite being a slave?

(a) Tom Sawyer

(b) Pap Finn

(c) The Duke

(d) Jim

Ans.(d)

Sol. The correct answer is (d) Jim. In a society that legally and socially views him as property, Jim is ironically the most "human" and moral character in the novel. While the white characters Huck encounters often use religion or law to justify cruelty, Jim displays innate qualities of sacrifice, parental love, and loyalty. He becomes a surrogate father to Huck, teaching him that humanity transcends race. Huck's moral climax—deciding he would rather "go to hell" than betray Jim—is a direct result of Jim's quiet, steady moral influence.

Information Booster

The Work: Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1884).

The Author: Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens), often called the "Father of American

Literature."

Genre: Picaresque Novel, Satire, Bildungsroman (Coming-of-age story).

Seeking an escape from his abusive, alcoholic father and the "civilizing" influence of society, Huck Finn fakes his own death and sets off down the Mississippi River on a raft. He is joined by Jim, a runaway slave. Their journey is a series of episodic adventures involving scammers (the Duke and King), feuding families, and eventually, a rescue attempt for Jim. Through these encounters, Huck undergoes a moral transformation, unlearning the prejudices of his upbringing.

The Raft as a Symbol: On the raft, Huck and Jim create a temporary utopia where the rules of the shore don't apply. It represents a space of freedom and equality that is constantly threatened by the corruption of the world on land.

Additional Knowledge

Tom Sawyer (a): While Huck admires Tom's imagination, Tom represents "Romance" and adherence to arbitrary rules. He treats Jim's freedom as a game, lacking the genuine moral weight Jim carries.

Pap Finn (b): Huck's biological father. He represents the "moral floor" of the novel—bigotry, greed, and violence. He is the catalyst for Huck's flight but serves as a negative example rather than a moral compass.

The Duke (c): Along with "The King," the Duke represents the fraud and hypocrisy of the "civilized" world. They are con artists who exploit others for profit.

Q5. Which of the following characters in *Coolie* symbolises the exploitation of child labour in colonial India?

- (a) Munoo
- (b) Mr. England
- (c) Babu Nathoo Ram
- (d) Ganpat

Ans.(a)

Sol. The correct answer is (a) Munoo.

In Mulk Raj Anand's *Coolie*, Munoo is the central figure through whom the exploitation of child labour in colonial India is vividly exposed. As a poor orphaned boy, he is forced to work in multiple harsh environments—domestic service, factories, and urban labour systems—where he faces abuse, exhaustion, humiliation, and deprivation.

Munoo is not only an individual character but also a social symbol. Through his suffering, Anand critiques class inequality, colonial economic structures, industrial exploitation, and the denial of childhood itself. His movement from one workplace to another reveals that exploitation is systemic rather than accidental.

Thus, Munoo symbolizes the tragic condition of child labour under colonial society.

Information Booster

Coolie was written by Mulk Raj Anand and published in 1936. It is a major social realist novel in Indian English literature.

Mulk Raj Anand (1905–2004) wrote powerfully about poverty, caste oppression, labour exploitation, and human dignity.

Why Munoo Matters

He represents:

Child labour

Poverty

Class oppression

Colonial exploitation

Loss of innocence

Human resilience

Major Themes

Labour injustice

Social inequality

Industrial cruelty

Colonial society

Survival

Munoo's life reveals how poverty and colonial systems exploit vulnerable children.

Q6. Which of the following techniques used by Lawrence in 'Sons and Lovers' helped him achieve a high degree of psychological realism?

- (a) Dialogues
- (b) Stream of consciousness
- (c) Third person narrator's foreshadowing
- (d) Contrasting parallels

Ans.(c)

Sol. The correct answer is (c). While D.H. Lawrence was a contemporary of Modernists like James Joyce, he didn't rely as heavily on "Stream of Consciousness" (b). Instead, he used a sophisticated third-person omniscient narrator who possessed an almost invasive insight into the characters' subconscious desires and fears. By using foreshadowing, Lawrence creates a sense of psychological inevitability—the feeling that the characters' past traumas and family dynamics (especially the mother-son bond) are driving them toward a specific, unavoidable fate.

Information Booster

The Work: Sons and Lovers (1913).

The Author: D.H. Lawrence, known for exploring the "blood-consciousness" (instinct and emotion) over the "mental-consciousness" (intellect).

Genre: Modernist / Autobiographical Fiction / Bildungsroman.

Set in a mining community, the novel tells the story of Paul Morel. His mother, Gertrude, trapped in an unhappy marriage, pours all her emotional energy and love into her sons. This creates an "Oedipal" struggle where Paul finds himself unable to form healthy romantic relationships with other women (Miriam and Clara) because of his mother's psychological grip on him.

Additional Knowledge

Stream of Consciousness (b): This is a specific technique where the text mimics the chaotic flow of a character's thoughts (seen in Virginia Woolf or James Joyce). Lawrence's prose is more structured and interpretive than this.

The Oedipus Complex: Lawrence was influenced by early psychoanalytic theory (Freud), though he later developed his own unique views on the psyche.

Q7. Select the most appropriate option to fill in the blank.

The last two poems of John Milton's ___ a brief epic in four books, and a dramatic poem 'Samson Agonistes' were published in one volume in the year 1671.

- (a) Paradise Regained
- (b) L' Allegro
- (c) Paradise Lost
- (d) Penseroso

Ans.(a)

Sol. The correct answer is (a) Paradise Regained.

In 1671, John Milton published two major works together in one volume: Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes. The sentence refers to “the last two poems” of Milton, meaning the final important poetic works of his later life. Among these, Paradise Regained is described as a brief epic in four books, while Samson Agonistes is a dramatic poem written in the style of Greek tragedy.

Paradise Regained serves as a companion piece to Paradise Lost. While the earlier epic narrates the Fall of Man, the later poem focuses on Christ’s temptation in the wilderness and the spiritual victory through obedience and restraint.

Thus, the blank must be filled with Paradise Regained.

Information Booster

John Milton (1608–1674) was one of the greatest English poets and intellectuals.

About Paradise Regained

Published: 1671

Form: Short epic in four books

Theme: Christ’s temptation and spiritual triumph

Style: Simpler and more restrained than Paradise Lost

About Samson Agonistes

Published with Paradise Regained in 1671

Form: Closet drama / tragic poem

Theme: Blindness, suffering, faith, and heroic sacrifice

These late works show Milton’s continued concern with redemption, moral strength, and divine purpose.

The final poetic volume of 1671 contained Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes.

Q8. In structuralism, the concept of 'binary oppositions' refers to ___ .

- (a) the underlying oppositional relationships that structure meaning in language and texts
- (b) the contrast between the protagonist and antagonist in a story
- (c) the dual narrative perspectives in a novel
- (d) the comparison of two different literary genres

Ans.(a)

Sol. The correct answer is (a). In Structuralism, meaning is not inherent in a word itself; instead, meaning is produced through difference. We only know what "light" is because we understand what "dark" is. These pairs—like Nature/Culture, Male/Female, Speech/Writing—are called binary oppositions. Structuralists believe these oppositions are the deep structures upon which all human culture and language are built.

Information Booster

Key Figures: Ferdinand de Saussure (linguistics) and Claude Lévi-Strauss (anthropology).

The Concept: Lévi-Strauss argued that the human mind inherently organizes the world into these pairs. In literature, a structuralist analysis doesn't look at "what the author meant," but rather how these underlying oppositions govern the text's meaning.

Deconstruction: Later, philosopher Jacques Derrida challenged this (Post-structuralism), arguing that one half of a binary is always privileged over the other (e.g., Culture is often seen as superior to Nature), and he sought to "deconstruct" these hierarchies.

Q9. Which of the following historical crises forms a theme of Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*?

- (a) Classism and specism
- (b) The savagery of war on women
- (c) Starvation and economic prosperity
- (d) The psychological impact of Western imperialism

Ans.(b)

Sol. Explanation

The correct answer is Option 2: The savagery of war on women.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* is set during the Nigerian Civil War (Biafran War) and powerfully portrays the brutal human cost of war. One of its major themes is the particular suffering experienced by women during conflict. The novel shows how war intensifies violence, displacement, sexual vulnerability, emotional trauma, hunger, and the burden of survival.

Through characters such as Olanna, Kainene, and others, Adichie reveals that women are not merely background figures in history; they endure and resist war's devastation in deeply personal ways. The text emphasizes how war invades domestic life, family bonds, bodily safety, and psychological well-being.

Thus, the savagery of war on women is a significant theme of the novel.

Information Booster

About the Novel

Half of a Yellow Sun was written by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and published in 2006. It is one of the most important contemporary African novels.

About the Author

Adichie is a Nigerian novelist and essayist known for works on identity, feminism, migration, and history. Major works include:

Half of a Yellow Sun

Purple Hibiscus

Americanah

We Should All Be Feminists

Historical Background

The novel is set during the attempt to create the independent Republic of Biafra (1967–1970).

Major Themes

War and violence

Gendered suffering

Love under crisis

National identity

Class and privilege

Memory and loss

Summary

The novel humanizes war by showing how women experience its cruelty and struggle to survive.

Additional Knowledge

Option 1 is incorrect because “specism” is unrelated here and not a theme of the novel.

Option 3 is incorrect because starvation is relevant, but “economic prosperity” does not fit the wartime reality emphasized in the novel.

Option 4 is incorrect because colonial history matters in the background, but the central historical crisis is civil war, not primarily Western imperialism’s psychology.

Q10. How does the theme of female empowerment manifest through the character of Celie in 'The Color Purple'?

- (a) She learns to assert her voice and embrace her independence.
- (b) She becomes more submissive to men over time.
- (c) She relies on her relationship with men for validation and strength.
- (d) She remains isolated and does not change throughout the novel.

Ans.(a)

Sol. The correct answer is (a) She learns to assert her voice and embrace her independence.

In Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple*, Celie’s journey is one of the most powerful representations of female empowerment in modern fiction. At the beginning of the novel, Celie is silenced by abuse, patriarchy, racism, and emotional trauma. She has little confidence and accepts suffering as unavoidable. However, through relationships with strong women such as Shug Avery and Sofia, she gradually discovers her own worth and learns that she has the right to dignity, love, and self-expression.

Celie’s empowerment is shown through her ability to speak openly, challenge oppression, support herself economically, and define her identity beyond male control. She moves from fear to confidence, from dependence to self-reliance, and from silence to a strong personal voice. This transformation makes her one of literature’s most memorable symbols of liberation.

Thus, female empowerment manifests through Celie as she learns to assert herself and embrace independence.

Information Booster

About the Novel

The Color Purple was written by Alice Walker and published in 1982. It won the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award.

About the Author

Alice Walker is an American novelist, poet, and activist associated with feminism and womanism.

Major Themes

Female empowerment

Sisterhood

Race and gender oppression

Healing from trauma

Identity formation

Spiritual growth

Celie's Transformation

She moves from:

Silence → Voice

Fear → Confidence

Abuse → Self-respect

Dependence → Independence

Summary

Celie's growth into a self-aware and independent woman is the novel's clearest expression of empowerment.

Q11. "Mrs. Dalloway is a novel that explores the complexities of colonialism and imperialism... Woolf's use of multiple narrative voices creates a sense of multiplicity and diversity... It is a novel that challenges dominant discourses and power structures."

Which of the following critics have remarked the above about Mrs. Dalloway?

(a) Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

(b) Toril Moi

(c) Sandra Gilbert

(d) Jacques Derrida

Ans.(a)

Sol. Explanation

The correct answer is Option 1: Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.

The statement focuses on colonialism, imperialism, multiplicity of voices, and resistance to dominant power structures—concerns strongly associated with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, one of the most influential postcolonial and feminist critics.

Spivak's criticism often examines how literature is shaped by empire, ideology, representation, and silenced voices. A reading of Mrs. Dalloway through these lenses would emphasize how Woolf's narrative intersects with questions of class, empire, gender, and authority.

Thus, among the given options, Spivak best matches the quoted critical perspective.

Information Booster

About Spivak

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (born 1942) is a literary theorist known for postcolonial criticism, feminism, deconstruction, and subaltern studies.

Major Concepts

Subalternity

Representation

Imperial discourse

Gender and power

Marginal voices

Famous Essay

Can the Subaltern Speak?

Why Mrs. Dalloway Fits This Reading

The novel includes:

British imperial context

Social hierarchy

Multiple consciousnesses

Critique of authority

Gendered experience

Summary

The language of empire and power aligns most clearly with Spivak's critical approach.

Additional Knowledge

Option 2 (Toril Moi) is incorrect because she is primarily known for feminist theory and Beauvoir studies, not this specific postcolonial framing.

Option 3 (Sandra Gilbert) is incorrect because she is associated with feminist literary criticism, especially women writers and the literary canon.

Option 4 (Jacques Derrida) is incorrect because he is linked more with undecidability and instability of meaning than colonial discourse specifically.

Q12. In Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*, how does the concept of Satyagraha (the force of truth) play a role in shaping the villagers' struggle against the British?

(a) The villagers use violent methods to resist British rule.

(b) The villagers focus solely on economic boycotts, ignoring the political struggle.

(c) The villagers are indifferent to the concept of Satyagraha and rely only on passive resistance.

(d) The villagers emphasise the moral power of truth to resist colonial authority without resorting to violence.

Ans.(d)

Sol. Explanation

The correct answer is Option 4: The villagers emphasise the moral power of truth to resist colonial authority without resorting to violence.

In *Kanthapura*, Raja Rao shows how Gandhian ideas transform an ordinary South Indian village into a center of anti-colonial awakening. Satyagraha, Gandhi's principle of truth-force or soul-force, becomes the ethical basis of resistance. Instead of armed rebellion, the villagers learn to oppose injustice through courage, sacrifice, non-cooperation, discipline, and moral conviction.

The movement teaches that truth has spiritual power greater than brute force. Through marches, boycotts, imprisonment, and collective endurance, the villagers challenge colonial authority while maintaining nonviolence. Women also play a major role, showing that political resistance can emerge from the whole community.

Thus, Satyagraha shapes the struggle as a moral and nonviolent resistance grounded in truth.

Information Booster

About the Novel

Kanthapura (1938) by Raja Rao is a landmark Indian English novel centered on Gandhian nationalism.

Meaning of Satyagraha

Coined by Mahatma Gandhi, it means:

Truth-force

Soul-force

Nonviolent resistance

Moral courage

How It Appears in the Novel

Boycott of British institutions

Community mobilization

Peaceful protest

Willingness to suffer for justice

Awakening of political consciousness

Themes

Nationalism

Social reform

Colonial resistance

Collective identity

Women's participation

Summary

The novel turns Gandhian ethics into lived village politics.

Additional Knowledge

Option 1 is incorrect because the movement rejects violence as its main method.

Option 2 is incorrect because the struggle is broader than economics alone.

Option 3 is incorrect because Satyagraha is central, not ignored.

Q13. The given lines from Spenser's Sonnet 77 describe which of the following parts of his beloved?

Lines:

Exceeding sweet, yet voyd of sinfull vice;

That many sought, yet none could ever taste.

Sweet fruit of pleasure, brought from Paradise

By Love himselfe, and in his garden plaste.

(a) Heart

(b) Breasts

(c) Eyes

(d) Lips

Ans.(b)

Sol. Explanation

The correct answer is Option 2: Breasts.

In Spenser's Amoretti Sonnet 77, these lines are part of the blazon tradition, where the poet praises the beloved by describing individual body parts through rich metaphors. The imagery of "sweet fruit," pleasure, Paradise, and the garden suggests fullness, beauty, nourishment, and sensual attraction—commonly associated in Renaissance love poetry with the breasts.

Spenser adopts sensual imagery but tempers it with moral language such as "void of sinful vice," blending desire with idealized admiration. This is characteristic of his sonnet style, where physical beauty is often linked with purity and mutual love.

Thus, the lines describe the beloved's breasts.

Information Booster

About Spenser

Edmund Spenser was a leading Elizabethan poet and author of *The Faerie Queene* and *Amoretti*.

About Amoretti

A sonnet sequence celebrating courtship and eventual union, notable for transforming Petrarchan frustration into reciprocal love.

Literary Device: Blazon

A blazon is a poetic catalogue praising parts of the beloved's body using elaborate imagery. Commonly described parts include:

Eyes

Lips

Hair

Hands

Breasts

Themes in Spenser's Sonnets

Beauty

Desire

Purity

Courtship

Harmony of body and spirit

Summary

The fruit-and-garden imagery belongs to Renaissance praise of the beloved's breasts.

Additional Knowledge

Option 1 is incorrect because the imagery is physical and sensuous rather than emotional like the heart.

Option 3 is incorrect because eyes are usually linked with stars, light, or brightness.

Option 4 is incorrect because lips are often linked with kissing, speech, coral, or cherries rather than the fullness implied here.

Q14. Even though Middlemarch is known for its realistic representation of the then society, which of the following social classes is missing from the novel?

- (a) Aristocracy
- (b) Landed gentry
- (c) Labourers
- (d) Clergymen

Ans.(a)

Sol. The correct answer is (a) Aristocracy. George Eliot's Middlemarch is subtitled "A Study of Provincial Life." While it covers a vast range of social strata, it intentionally omits the High Aristocracy (Duchesses, Dukes, and the Royal Court). The novel is focused on the "middle" of England—the tensions between the old money of the gentry and the new professional classes (doctors, bankers) and the working poor.

Information Booster

The Work: Middlemarch (1871–72).

The Author: George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans). She used a male pen name to ensure her work was taken seriously and to protect her private life.

Genre: Victorian Realism.

Set in a fictional Midlands town in the 1830s, the novel follows several intersecting plotlines, most notably the intellectual Dorothea Brooke's disastrous marriage to the elderly scholar Casaubon, and the idealistic Doctor Lydgate's struggles with his career and marriage to the vain Rosamond Vincy.

Eliot uses a "web" metaphor to show how every person's actions affect others, regardless of their class.

Additional Knowledge

Landed Gentry (b): Represented by Mr. Brooke and Sir James Chettam.

Labourers (c): Represented by characters like the Dagleys, who highlight the rural poverty of the era.

Clergymen (d): Central to the book, represented by Mr. Casaubon, Mr. Farebrother, and Mr. Cadwallader.

Q15. In *The Scarlet Letter*, what is the significance of the meteor that appears in the sky the night Hester, Pearl and Dimmesdale meet on the scaffold?

(a) It is interpreted as a sign of hope for Hester.

(b) It is seen as a sign of Dimmesdale's guilt.

(c) It marks the beginning of a new season.

(d) It symbolises Chillingworth's vengeance.

Ans.(b)

Sol. The correct answer is (b) It is seen as a sign of Dimmesdale's guilt.

In Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, the meteor that blazes across the sky during the midnight scaffold scene carries deep symbolic significance. Reverend Dimmesdale, tormented by hidden sin and moral anguish, interprets the fiery shape in the heavens as a reflection of his own guilty conscience. To him, the sign appears connected to the scarlet letter "A," exposing inward shame that he has never publicly confessed.

The event is important because Hawthorne often shows that symbols do not have one fixed meaning. What the community may interpret differently, Dimmesdale reads as divine judgment upon himself. His mind is so burdened by secrecy that natural phenomena become mirrors of his psychological suffering.

Thus, the meteor functions primarily as a sign of Dimmesdale's guilt and inner torment.

Information Booster

The Scarlet Letter was written by Nathaniel Hawthorne and published in 1850. It is a major work of American Romanticism and symbolic fiction.

About the Scaffold Scene

The midnight scaffold episode is one of the most significant scenes in the novel. It brings together:

Hester Prynne

Pearl

Arthur Dimmesdale

Hidden sin

Public shame

Desire for confession

Symbolism of the Meteor

The meteor may suggest:

Guilt

Divine warning

Public exposure

Psychological unrest

Ambiguity of meaning

Hawthorne's Symbolic Method

Hawthorne uses objects and events—like the scarlet letter, scaffold, forest, and meteor—to reveal

moral and emotional truth.

Major Themes Connected Here

Sin and guilt

Secret vs public identity

Conscience

Judgment

Redemption

The meteor externalizes Dimmesdale's inward guilt, showing how conscience transforms the world into symbolic accusation.

Q16. What does Karnad mean by the statement "What struck me absolutely about Tughlaq's history was that it was contemporary."?

(a) The dramatist lived during Sultan Tughlaq's reign and so he experienced the realities of life.

(b) There was parallelism between the realities of the 14th century India, ruled by a Sultan and the 20th century democratic country governed by a Prime Minister and his colleagues in the Cabinet.

(c) There were many countries showing a strong influence of Sultan Tughlaq's vision and mission in their administration.

(d) Sultan Tughlaq's modus operandi in administration was followed by all the administrators of the world.

Ans.(b)

Sol. Explanation

The correct answer is Option 2: There was parallelism between the realities of the 14th century India, ruled by a Sultan and the 20th century democratic country governed by a Prime Minister and his colleagues in the Cabinet.

When Girish Karnad said that Tughlaq's history felt "contemporary," he meant that the political events of the fourteenth century strongly resembled the political realities of modern India. Though the play is set in the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq, its themes—idealism, failed reforms, political manipulation, public disillusionment, and the gap between vision and execution—echoed twentieth-century governance.

Karnad wrote the play in the 1960s, when India had recently experienced the hopes of independence followed by growing frustration with leadership and administration. Tughlaq's brilliant ideas collapse because of impracticality, authoritarianism, and mistrust. This made the medieval story feel urgently relevant to contemporary audiences.

Thus, "contemporary" means historically distant events reflecting modern political conditions.

Information Booster

About the Play

Tughlaq was written by Girish Karnad in 1964. It is one of the landmark plays of modern Indian theatre.

About the Author

Girish Karnad (1938–2019) was a major playwright, actor, and intellectual who used history and myth to comment on modern society. Major plays include:

Tughlaq

Hayavadana

Nagamandala

Yayati

Why the Play Felt Modern

The play reflects:

Idealism turning into chaos

Administrative failure

Betrayal of public hope

Political violence

Conflict between vision and reality

Isolation of leadership

Historical and Modern Parallel

Muhammad bin Tughlaq: brilliant but disastrous reforms

Modern leaders: ambitious policies facing practical collapse and public disappointment

Summary

Karnad uses medieval history as a mirror for modern politics.

Additional Knowledge

Option 1 is incorrect because Karnad was a twentieth-century playwright, not a contemporary of Sultan Tughlaq.

Option 3 is incorrect because the statement is not about global admiration for Tughlaq's policies.

Option 4 is incorrect because Karnad does not claim all administrators copied Tughlaq's methods.

Q17. In Wole Soyinka's 'A Dance of the Forests', how does the portrayal of Yoruba culture contribute to the play's exploration of traditional values and societal critiques?

(a) It showcases the Yoruba cultural rituals and beliefs as a means to reflect upon the importance of adhering to traditional values and customs in resolving societal problems, as well as, engaging with traditions in a way that is dynamic and relevant to the present.

(b) It highlights the Yoruba culture's emphasis on modernity and the rejection of traditional practices in favour of Western values.

(c) It emphasises Yoruba culture's focus on individual achievements and personal success rather than communal values and responsibilities.

(d) It presents Yoruba culture as irrelevant to the play's themes, focussing instead on universal themes that transcend cultural specifics.

Ans.(a)

Sol. The correct answer is (a).

In A Dance of the Forests, Wole Soyinka draws deeply from Yoruba mythology, ritual, cosmology, and performance traditions to examine both the strengths and failures of society. Rather than presenting tradition as static or decorative, he uses it as a living framework through which the present can be judged. Spirits, ancestral figures, gods, masks, and ceremonial structures help reveal corruption, violence, pride, and historical repetition.

The play warns against romanticizing the past. Soyinka suggests that societies must engage critically with tradition—learning from it, renewing it, and applying it meaningfully to present realities. Yoruba culture therefore becomes both a source of identity and an instrument of social critique.

Thus, option (a) best explains how Yoruba culture functions in the play.

Information Booster

A Dance of the Forests was written by Wole Soyinka and performed in 1960 during Nigerian

independence celebrations.

Wole Soyinka is a Nigerian playwright, poet, and Nobel Laureate (1986).

Use of Yoruba Elements

Deities and spirits

Ritual drama

Ancestors

Masks and dance

Cyclical view of time

Moral accountability

Major Themes

Nation-building

Historical memory

Corruption

Responsibility

Tradition and change

Yoruba culture in the play is dynamic, critical, and socially meaningful—not merely ornamental.

Q18. In 'Night of the Scorpion', what is the scorpion a symbol of?

- (a) Wealth and prosperity
- (b) Good fortune
- (c) Peace and calm
- (d) Fear and suffering

Ans.(d)

Sol. The correct answer is Option 4: Fear and suffering.

In Nissim Ezekiel's poem Night of the Scorpion, the scorpion symbolizes the sudden arrival of pain, fear, and human suffering. Its sting causes physical agony to the mother and emotional anxiety to the family and neighbors. The creature becomes the center of a night filled with superstition, helplessness, ritual, and concern.

At a deeper level, the scorpion also represents how suffering enters ordinary life unexpectedly. The poem contrasts irrational responses, folk beliefs, and genuine maternal endurance. While the scorpion causes fear, the mother's final selfless words transform the scene into one of compassion.

Thus, the primary symbolic meaning of the scorpion is fear and suffering.

Information Booster

Night of the Scorpion is one of Nissim Ezekiel's best-known poems and a classic of Indian English poetry.

Nissim Ezekiel (1924–2004) is often called the father of modern Indian English poetry.

Major Themes

Pain and suffering

Superstition vs rationality

Community response

Maternal love

Rural life

Human resilience

Important Contrast

Villagers: rituals and beliefs

Father: scientific remedies

Mother: selfless concern for children

The scorpion introduces suffering, but the poem ends with compassion and sacrifice.

Q19. In Freudian theory, which term describes the psychological mechanism by which unacceptable thoughts are pushed into the unconscious?

- (a) Sublimation
- (b) Repression
- (c) Projection
- (d) Displacement

Ans.(b)

Sol. The correct answer is (b) Repression.

In Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, repression is the defense mechanism through which disturbing, painful, or socially unacceptable thoughts, desires, memories, and impulses are pushed out of conscious awareness into the unconscious mind. These thoughts do not disappear completely; rather, they remain hidden and may return indirectly through dreams, slips of the tongue, anxiety, symptoms, or symbolic behavior.

Freud considered repression one of the most fundamental mechanisms of the psyche because it helps the mind avoid psychological conflict. However, what is repressed can continue to influence behavior in unseen ways. This concept is central to psychoanalysis and to psychological literary criticism, where critics study how hidden desires or fears shape characters and narratives.

Thus, the Freudian term for pushing unacceptable thoughts into the unconscious is repression.

Information Booster

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) was the founder of psychoanalysis. His theories transformed psychology, literary studies, and cultural criticism.

Key Concepts in Freud

Conscious / unconscious mind

Id, ego, superego

Repression

Dream symbolism

Oedipus complex

Defense mechanisms

Repression in Literature

Critics may analyze:

Hidden guilt in characters

Unspoken trauma

Symbolic dreams

Suppressed desire

Psychological conflict

A character who denies painful memories yet behaves anxiously may be experiencing repression.

Repression hides disturbing thoughts from awareness, but those thoughts continue to act from the unconscious.

Q20. In I'm Nobody! Who are you?, Dickinson critiques which societal concept?

- (a) Pursuit of success
- (b) Social isolation
- (c) Fame and public recognition
- (d) Passage of time

Ans.(c)

Sol. Explanation

The correct answer is Option 3: Fame and public recognition.

In Emily Dickinson's poem I'm Nobody! Who are you?, the speaker rejects the desire to be publicly known and mocks the noisy self-display associated with fame. Dickinson contrasts the private freedom of being "Nobody" with the shallow publicity of being "Somebody."

The poem satirizes a society that values visibility, reputation, and public attention. The famous person is compared to a frog endlessly croaking its name to an admiring bog—an image that turns public recognition into comic vanity.

Thus, Dickinson critiques the social obsession with fame and public identity.

Information Booster

About the Poet

Emily Dickinson (1830–1886) was one of America's greatest poets, known for brevity, originality, inwardness, and unconventional style.

About the Poem

The poem celebrates secrecy, intimacy, and authenticity while mocking public performance.

Major Themes

Privacy

Identity

Fame

Individuality

Social performance

Irony

Why It Matters

Dickinson questions whether public recognition truly gives value to a person.

Summary

The poem opposes noisy fame and values private selfhood.

Additional Knowledge

Option 1 is incorrect because success in a broad sense is not the main target.

Option 2 is incorrect because the poem does not primarily critique isolation.

Option 4 is incorrect because time is not the poem's central concern.

Q21. How does the motif of seeing and being seen shape the racial and social dynamics of the novel in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*?

- (a) Through the Breedlove family's social interactions
- (b) Through the portrayal of white media
- (c) Through Pecola's obsession with mirrors
- (d) Through the community's surveillance and judgment

Ans.(d)

Sol. The correct answer is (d) Through the community's surveillance and judgment.

In Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, the motif of seeing and being seen is deeply connected to how society defines beauty, worth, and belonging. Characters are constantly observed, judged, categorized, and valued according to racialized social standards. The community's gaze becomes a powerful force that shapes identity and self-perception.

Pecola Breedlove suffers not only because of private trauma but also because she is seen through contemptuous social eyes. The community measures her against ideals of whiteness and beauty, treating her as ugly, insignificant, and disposable. This constant surveillance and judgment reinforce racial hierarchy and emotional violence.

Morrison shows that the act of "seeing" is never neutral; it can become a mechanism of exclusion and oppression. Thus, the motif works most strongly through the community's judgmental gaze.

Information Booster

The Bluest Eye was written by Toni Morrison and published in 1970. It is Morrison's first novel and a landmark in African American literature.

Toni Morrison (1931–2019) was a Nobel Prize-winning novelist known for works on race, memory, identity, trauma, and language.

Major Themes

Internalized racism

Beauty standards

Childhood trauma

Community cruelty

Identity

Marginalization

The novel explores:

Who is considered beautiful

Who is ignored or shamed

How public judgment creates self-hatred

How racial ideology enters everyday life

Pecola's Tragedy

Pecola desires blue eyes because she believes being seen differently would make her lovable and safe.

The social gaze in the novel becomes an instrument of racial and emotional oppression.

Q22. Which of following options is correct about the given statements?

A. Sylvia Plath's 'Daddy' is a confessional piece of poetry with several autobiographical elements.

B. However, the description of a fascist and Nazi father, the "daddy" in the poem becomes a symbol for patriarchy as a whole who subjugates women with 'the boot in the face' and has to be killed multiple times so that a woman could survive.

(a) Both A and B are true, but B is arguable.

(b) Both A and B are true, and B is justified.

(c) A is false, but B is true.

(d) A is true, but B is false.

Ans.(a)

Sol. The correct answer is (a) because while both statements contain factual truth regarding the poem's content and context, Statement B represents a specific critical interpretation that is a subject

of intense literary debate.

Statement A is a fact: "Daddy" is a landmark of Confessional poetry, written in 1962 shortly before Plath's death, and it draws directly from her grief over her father, Otto Plath.

Statement B is "arguable": Many critics argue that using Holocaust imagery (Nazis, Jews, Dachau) to describe personal domestic trauma is hyperbolic or even exploitative. Others argue that it is a necessary metaphor to describe the crushing weight of patriarchy. Because there is no single "correct" way to view this metaphor, it remains a point of scholarly contention.

Information Booster

The Work: "Daddy" (published posthumously in the collection Ariel, 1965).

The Author: Sylvia Plath, a central figure in 20th-century American poetry known for her "confessional" style—writing that focuses on the extremely personal and often taboo aspects of life (mental illness, trauma, sexuality).

The speaker addresses her deceased father, comparing him to a Nazi and herself to a Jew. She describes her attempt to "kill" his memory—and her later attempt to find his surrogate in her husband (Ted Hughes)—in order to finally break free from the psychological shadow he cast over her life.

Q23. What is/are the major poetic technique(s) engaged by Walcott in his poems?

1. His use of vivid imagery
 2. Complex metaphors
 3. A blend of European literary traditions with Caribbean oral storytelling
 4. Rhythm and musicality in his verse
- (a) Only 1
(b) Only 2
(c) Only 1,2 and 3
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Ans.(d)

Sol. The correct answer is Option 4: 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Derek Walcott's poetry is celebrated for its extraordinary technical richness, and all four features listed are major aspects of his poetic art. His work combines visual brilliance, intellectual depth, cultural hybridity, and musical language.

1. Vivid Imagery

Walcott creates striking sensory pictures of sea, islands, sunlight, colonial cities, landscapes, bodies, and memory. His imagery often turns the Caribbean world into a living, luminous presence.

2. Complex Metaphors

His poems frequently use layered metaphors that connect history, race, exile, language, and identity. A single image may carry personal, political, and mythic meanings.

3. Blend of Traditions

One of Walcott's greatest achievements is bringing together European literary inheritance (Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, classical epic forms) with Caribbean speech, folklore, oral rhythms, and local history. This fusion creates a distinctly postcolonial poetics.

4. Rhythm and Musicality

His verse is deeply attentive to sound. Through cadence, repetition, alliteration, meter, and lyrical flow, Walcott gives his poetry a musical quality rooted in both written craft and oral performance.

Thus, all four statements correctly describe major poetic techniques used by Walcott.

Information Booster

About Derek Walcott

Derek Walcott (1930–2017) was a Saint Lucian poet, playwright, and Nobel Prize winner (1992). He is one of the greatest voices of postcolonial literature.

Major Works

Omeros

A Far Cry from Africa

The Schooner Flight

Another Life

Sea Grapes

Major Themes

Colonial history

Hybridity

Identity

Language

Sea and landscape

Exile and belonging

Beauty and violence

Walcott proves that Caribbean experience can speak through global literary forms while remaining rooted in local culture.

Walcott's poetry is powerful because it unites image, metaphor, music, and cultural synthesis.

Q24. How does Nathaniel Hawthorne explore the theme of individual versus society in *The Scarlet Letter*?

- (a) By depicting Hester's isolation and ostracism
- (b) By showing the Puritan community's acceptance of Hester
- (c) By highlighting the importance of conformity
- (d) By focusing on the political conflicts of the time

Ans.(a)

Sol. Explanation

The correct answer is Option 1: By depicting Hester's isolation and ostracism.

Nathaniel Hawthorne explores the conflict between the individual and society in *The Scarlet Letter* through Hester Prynne's punishment, exclusion, and moral resistance. After committing adultery in Puritan Boston, Hester is forced to wear the scarlet letter "A" and is publicly shamed by the community. She becomes an outcast, separated physically and socially from the people around her.

This isolation reveals how rigid societies attempt to control personal identity through moral judgment and collective punishment. Yet Hester does not collapse under oppression. Over time, she transforms shame into dignity through patience, labor, compassion, and inner strength. In doing so, Hawthorne shows that the individual conscience can challenge unjust social norms.

The novel therefore presents society as harsh, judgmental, and hypocritical, while Hester emerges as a symbol of resilience and moral independence.

Thus, the theme of individual versus society is most clearly explored through Hester's isolation and ostracism.

Information Booster

About the Novel

The Scarlet Letter was written by Nathaniel Hawthorne and published in 1850. It is one of the greatest American novels of the nineteenth century.

About the Author

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864) was an American novelist and short story writer known for moral complexity, symbolism, sin, guilt, and Puritan history. Major works include:

The Scarlet Letter

The House of the Seven Gables

Young Goodman Brown

Twice-Told Tales

Major Characters

Hester Prynne – central heroine, punished yet strong

Arthur Dimmesdale – minister hiding guilt

Roger Chillingworth – revenge-driven husband

Pearl – Hester’s daughter, symbol of truth and vitality

Themes

Individual vs society

Sin and guilt

Public shame vs private truth

Hypocrisy

Redemption

Female strength

Symbolism

Scarlet Letter “A” = adultery, shame, identity, transformation

Scaffold = public judgment

Forest = freedom outside social control

Summary

Hawthorne uses Hester’s suffering and strength to question oppressive social morality.

Additional Knowledge

Option 2 is incorrect because the Puritan community does not initially accept Hester; it condemns and excludes her.

Option 3 is incorrect because the novel critiques blind conformity rather than celebrating it.

Option 4 is incorrect because the main focus is moral and social conflict, not political disputes.

Q25. What does ‘False consciousness’ refer to in terms of Marxist view of literature?

(a) The set of beliefs and convictions that prevent an individual from perceiving the truth about social and economic realities.

(b) The set of ideas and projections that motivate an individual from perceiving the fact about social and economic realities.

(c) The model of texts and convictions that hinders an individual from searching the hidden about social and political realities.

(d) The set of tasks and responsibilities that allures any individual from making the rules about studies and economic realities.

Ans.(a)

Sol. Explanation

The correct answer is Option 1: The set of beliefs and convictions that prevent an individual from perceiving the truth about social and economic realities.

In Marxist theory, false consciousness refers to the way dominant ideology shapes people's thinking so that they misunderstand or fail to recognize the real conditions of exploitation, class inequality, and material power relations. People may accept unjust systems as natural, fair, or inevitable because ruling ideas are presented as common sense.

In literature, Marxist critics examine how texts may either reproduce false consciousness or expose it. Some works reinforce class myths, while others reveal the realities hidden behind ideology.

Thus, false consciousness is a distorted awareness that conceals actual social and economic truth.

Information Booster

Related Marxist Concepts

Base and superstructure

Ideology

Class struggle

Alienation

Reification

Hegemony

In Literary Criticism

Critics ask:

Does the text justify inequality?

Does it naturalize class power?

Does it reveal hidden exploitation?

Whose interests does it serve?

Example

If workers believe poverty is purely personal failure rather than structural inequality, ideology may be operating as false consciousness.

Summary

False consciousness means seeing society through ideas that hide real class relations.

Additional Knowledge

Option 2 is incorrect because it is poorly framed and less accurate conceptually.

Option 3 is incorrect because it confuses texts with ideology and lacks theoretical precision.

Option 4 is incorrect because it does not describe the Marxist concept at all.

Q26. The God of Small Things' confounding of fantasy and reality connects the novel with which of the following styles?

(a) Existentialism

(b) Hysterical realism

(c) Minimalism

(d) Surrealism

Ans.(d)

Sol. The correct answer is Option 4: Surrealism.

Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things often blends memory, dream, childhood perception,

emotional intensity, and reality in ways that blur ordinary boundaries. This confounding of fantasy and reality links the novel with surrealism, a style that brings together the real and the imaginative, the conscious and the unconscious, and the logical with the unexpected.

The novel's language frequently transforms everyday scenes into heightened symbolic experiences. Through children's perspectives, fractured memory, and lyrical imagery, events seem both realistic and strangely dreamlike. Roy uses this method to reveal emotional truths that ordinary realism alone may not capture.

Thus, the novel's merging of fantasy and reality is most closely connected with surrealism.

Information Booster

The God of Small Things was written by Arundhati Roy and published in 1997. It won the Booker Prize. Arundhati Roy is an Indian novelist and essayist known for political insight, lyrical prose, and social critique.

Major Themes

Childhood and memory

Family trauma

Caste oppression

Forbidden love

Loss

Language and perception

The novel uses:

Dreamlike imagery

Nonlinear memory

Symbolic details

Emotional distortion of time

Strange beauty within pain

Roy fuses inner experience with outer reality, creating a surreal narrative atmosphere.

Additional Knowledge

Option 1 is incorrect because existentialism focuses more on meaning, freedom, and absurdity than this stylistic blending.

Option 2 is incorrect because hysterical realism refers to maximalist, excessive social narration associated with some contemporary fiction.

Option 3 is incorrect because minimalism emphasizes simplicity and spareness, unlike Roy's lush style.

Q27. What is the theme of Becket's final sermon in Murder in the Cathedral?

- (a) Power is greater than faith
- (b) Martyrdom should be selfless
- (c) Politics must rule religion
- (d) Suffering is meaningless

Ans. (b)

Sol. The correct answer is (b) Martyrdom should be selfless.

In T.S. Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral, Thomas Becket's final sermon emphasizes that true martyrdom cannot arise from pride, ambition, or the desire for personal glory. A martyr must surrender completely to God's will rather than seek fame through suffering or death. The sermon therefore distinguishes genuine spiritual sacrifice from ego-driven self-destruction.

Becket has already faced the temptations offered by the four tempters, including the temptation to gain eternal fame through martyrdom. By the time of the sermon, he understands that martyrdom must be accepted humbly as part of divine purpose, not chosen for self-advancement.

Thus, the central theme of the sermon is that martyrdom should be selfless and spiritually pure.

Information Booster

Murder in the Cathedral was written by T.S. Eliot and first performed in 1935. It is a verse drama based on the assassination of Archbishop Thomas Becket in 1170.

T.S. Eliot (1888–1965) was a major modernist poet, critic, and dramatist. Major works include:

The Waste Land

Four Quartets

Murder in the Cathedral

The sermon explains:

The meaning of martyrdom

Divine will and sacrifice

Spiritual humility

Inner purification

Faith over worldly power

Major Themes of the Play

Church vs state

Temptation

Faith

Sacrifice

Martyrdom

Redemption

Becket teaches that true martyrdom is not self-glorification but humble obedience to God.

Q28. How does Mahesh Dattani's play Tara address the issue of gender discrimination?

(a) By showing that gender roles and stereotypes are equally distributed between men and women in the society portrayed

(b) By depicting a family where the male child is given preferential treatment over the female child due to societal norms

(c) By focusing on the positive impact of gender equality on the family's dynamics and future

(d) By illustrating a community where women have more opportunities and are celebrated more than men

Ans.(b)

Sol. Explanation

The correct answer is Option 2: By depicting a family where the male child is given preferential treatment over the female child due to societal norms.

Mahesh Dattani's Tara powerfully exposes gender discrimination through the story of conjoined twins, Tara and Chandan, whose lives are shaped by patriarchal choices. Although both children are born physically connected and deserve equal care, the family and wider social system favor the male child. Decisions about surgery, inheritance, affection, and future opportunities reveal how deeply gender bias operates within the household.

The tragedy of the play lies in the fact that discrimination is not presented as open hatred alone, but

as something embedded in family love, social expectations, and internalized values. Even the mother, Bharati, participates in decisions influenced by patriarchy. Tara suffers because society values the boy's future more than the girl's life chances.

Thus, the play shows that gender injustice begins within intimate spaces such as family and is reinforced by broader cultural norms.

Information Booster

About the Play

Tara was written by Mahesh Dattani and first performed in 1990 (published later). It is one of the most important modern Indian English plays dealing with gender, family trauma, and identity.

About the Author

Mahesh Dattani (born 1958) is a major Indian playwright known for addressing social issues considered taboo or neglected in mainstream theatre. Major plays include:

Tara

Final Solutions

Dance Like a Man

Bravely Fought the Queen

Thirty Days in September

Genre

Social drama

Psychological drama

Modern Indian theatre

Problem play

Plot Summary

The play centers on conjoined twins Tara and Chandan. A medically and morally charged family decision privileges Chandan over Tara, with devastating emotional consequences. The narrative also explores memory, guilt, fractured relationships, and identity.

Themes

Gender discrimination

Patriarchy

Family guilt

Identity and trauma

Love and injustice

Social conditioning

Why the Play Is Important

Dattani shows that sexism is not only institutional but domestic and emotional. The family becomes a microcosm of society.

Summary

Tara reveals how patriarchal preference for sons can destroy lives even within loving families.

Additional Knowledge

Option 1 is incorrect because the play does not present equal distribution of gender roles; it highlights unequal treatment.

Option 3 is incorrect because the drama is not about the success of gender equality, but the damage caused by inequality.

Option 4 is incorrect because the society in the play does not privilege women over men; rather, it

privileges the male child.

Q29. What does the title of the novel *Samskara: A Rite for a Dead Man* signify?

- (a) The spiritual connotations of rituals conducted during death anniversaries
- (b) The socio-religious purification ritual associated with the death of a Brahmin
- (c) The importance of rites and rituals during death
- (d) The society's responsibility of burying the dead irrespective caste and creed

Ans.(b)

Sol. Explanation

The correct answer is Option 2: The socio-religious purification ritual associated with the death of a Brahmin.

The title *Samskara* refers to a rite, sacrament, or ritual act, and in the context of the novel it specifically points to the crisis surrounding the funeral rites of a Brahmin whose conduct has challenged orthodox norms. The issue of who will perform the proper rites becomes central to the narrative.

The title therefore carries social, religious, and philosophical significance. It is not merely about death rituals in general, but about purity, caste, duty, orthodoxy, and the moral contradictions within a rigid social order. Through this ritual crisis, the novel questions the authority of tradition and exposes spiritual emptiness beneath formal observance.

Thus, the title signifies a socio-religious purification/funeral rite linked with Brahminical custom.

Information Booster

About the Novel

Samskara was written by U.R. Ananthamurthy in Kannada and published in 1965. It is one of the masterpieces of modern Indian literature.

About the Author

U.R. Ananthamurthy (1932–2014) was a major Indian novelist, critic, and public intellectual associated with the *Navya* movement in Kannada literature.

Genre

Philosophical novel

Social novel

Anti-caste critique

Modern Indian fiction

Plot Summary

The death of Naranappa, a rebellious Brahmin who rejected orthodox customs, creates a dilemma: should he receive Brahmin funeral rites? The scholar Praneshacharya must confront moral uncertainty, desire, and the limits of religious dogma.

Themes

Ritual vs morality

Caste orthodoxy

Desire and repression

Social hypocrisy

Spiritual crisis

Reform and self-examination

Summary

The title uses a funeral rite to question the meaning of purity and true ethics.

Additional Knowledge

Option 1 is incorrect because the title is not about annual death commemorations specifically.

Option 3 is incorrect because the novel is more specific and critical than a general statement about rituals.

Option 4 is incorrect because this does not capture the Brahminical ritual crisis central to the plot.

Q30. What does 'Postcolonial Criticism' investigate?

- (a) The antithesis based on the expectations of the colonised writers and their criticism
- (b) The relationships between writers and colonised readers the period post-colonisation
- (c) The relationships between colonisers and colonised in the period post-colonisation
- (d) The bonding between critics and the works of the colonisation period

Ans.(c)

Sol. Explanation

The correct answer is Option 3: The relationships between colonisers and colonised in the period post-colonisation.

Postcolonial criticism investigates the political, cultural, linguistic, and psychological effects of colonialism and its aftermath. It studies how power operated between colonisers and colonised peoples, and how those relationships continue to shape identities, institutions, literature, and representation even after formal colonial rule ends.

This field examines issues such as domination, resistance, race, language, hybridity, migration, nationalism, memory, and the persistence of imperial ideology. It also asks how colonized societies reclaim voice and rewrite histories that were once controlled by empire.

Thus, at its core, postcolonial criticism analyzes the relationship between coloniser and colonised, especially in the aftermath of empire.

Information Booster

Major Thinkers

Edward Said – Orientalism

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak – subaltern studies

Homi K. Bhabha – hybridity, mimicry

Frantz Fanon – colonial psychology and liberation

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o – language and decolonization

Key Concepts

Othering

Hybridity

Mimicry

Subalternity

Resistance

Decolonization

Representation

Literary Concerns

Postcolonial critics study:

Colonial narratives

National identity

Partition and migration

Language politics

Race and power

Cultural memory

Summary

Postcolonial criticism reveals how colonial power structures continue to influence societies and texts.

Additional Knowledge

Option 1 is incorrect because the wording is unclear and does not define the field accurately.

Option 2 is incorrect because the field is broader than writer-reader relationships.

Option 4 is incorrect because postcolonial criticism is not about the bond between critics and colonial texts alone.

