

Women's Writing PYQ 2022

Q1. It's time to perform an act of charity/to myself,/ bequeath the heart, like a/spare kidney - /preferably to an enemy." Explain with reference to the context.

Ans. This is a stanza from the poem "The Gift" by Canadian poet Irving Layton. The speaker in the poem is reflecting on the idea of giving and generosity, and suggests that it is time to perform an act of charity, but not in the traditional sense. Rather than giving to others, the speaker suggests giving to oneself by "bequeathing the heart," or giving oneself fully to something or someone, like donating a spare kidney. The speaker even suggests giving to an enemy, which could imply that the act of giving is so selfless and pure that it transcends any negative feelings or conflicts between individuals.

The poem as a whole is a meditation on the nature of giving, and the different ways in which people can give to one another. In this particular stanza, the speaker suggests that it is time for an act of charity or generosity, but with a twist: the gift should be given to oneself, rather than to another person.

The line "bequeath the heart, like a spare kidney" is a metaphor that implies a deep level of commitment and sacrifice. Just as a person might donate a spare kidney to someone in need, the speaker suggests that we should give ourselves fully to something or someone, to the point where it feels like we are giving away a vital part of ourselves. This could mean dedicating oneself fully to a creative project, a cause, or even a relationship.

The final line, "preferably to an enemy," is a provocative statement that suggests the act of giving can transcend personal animosity or conflict. The speaker seems to be suggesting that true generosity means giving without expectation of anything in return, and that even those who we might consider our enemies could benefit from our giving.

Overall, this stanza presents a complex view of giving that goes beyond simple charity or altruism. It suggests that giving can be both selfless and self-serving at the same time, and that the act of giving can bring us closer to others, even those we might consider our enemies.

Q2. Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" has been variously interpreted as a woman's descent into madness or a woman's reclaiming of agency. Explain.

Ans. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story "The Yellow Wallpaper" has been interpreted in a number of ways, but two of the most common interpretations are that it is a story about a woman's descent into madness or a woman's reclaiming of agency.

The story is set in the late 19th century and tells the story of a young woman named Jane who is suffering from a nervous condition. Her husband, John, is a doctor who believes that she needs to be isolated and rest in order to recover. He takes her to a remote country house and locks her in a room with yellow wallpaper.

As Jane spends more time in the room, she begins to see strange things. The wallpaper begins to move and change, and she begins to hallucinate. She also begins to write in a journal, in which she expresses her growing fear and anger.

The story ends with Jane tearing off the yellow wallpaper and escaping from the room. This act can be seen as a symbol of her reclaiming of her own agency. She has finally broken free from the control of her husband and her illness.

However, the story can also be interpreted as a story about a woman's descent into madness. Jane's hallucinations and her increasingly erratic behavior suggest that she is losing her grip on reality. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the story is told from Jane's point of view, which makes it difficult for the reader to distinguish between what is real and what is imagined.

Ultimately, the meaning of "The Yellow Wallpaper" is up to the reader to decide. The story can be interpreted in a number of ways, and each interpretation offers a different perspective on the nature of women's mental health and the role of men in women's lives.

Q3. Examine Harpo in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* as both a perpetrator and victim of patriarchy.

Ans. Harpo in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* is a complex character who can be seen as both a perpetrator and a victim of patriarchy. He is a victim of patriarchy in the sense that he is raised in a society that teaches him that men are superior to women. He is also a perpetrator of patriarchy in the way that he treats his wife, Sofia.

Harpo is initially attracted to Sofia because of her strength and independence. However, he soon begins to resent her for these same qualities. He wants her to be a traditional wife who stays at home and takes care of him. When Sofia refuses to conform to his expectations, he becomes abusive. He hits her, locks her out of the house, and even tries to have her arrested.

Harpo's behavior is a reflection of the patriarchal society in which he lives. He has been taught that men are entitled to control women, and he uses his physical and emotional power to assert that control. However, Harpo is also a victim of patriarchy. He is trapped in a system that defines his worth in terms of his masculinity. He is afraid to be seen as weak or feminine, and he uses violence to compensate for his insecurities.

Harpo's story is a cautionary tale about the dangers of patriarchy. It shows how patriarchy can damage both men and women. It also shows how difficult it is to break free from the expectations of a patriarchal society.

Q4. What is the "inexhaustible treasure referred to by Pandita Ramabai in her autobiography?

Ans. The "inexhaustible treasure" referred to by Pandita Ramabai in her autobiography, *The High-Caste Hindu Woman*, is a metaphor for the spiritual knowledge and wisdom she gained through her study of the Bible and Christianity.

Pandita Ramabai was a prominent Indian social reformer, who lived in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. She was born into a high-caste Hindu family, but was orphaned at a young age and experienced significant hardship and discrimination throughout her life. Despite these challenges, she was a brilliant scholar and linguist, and became a leading advocate for women's education and empowerment in India.

In her autobiography, Pandita Ramabai describes how she was initially skeptical of Christianity, but became increasingly drawn to the religion as she studied the Bible and learned more about its teachings. She describes her discovery of the "inexhaustible treasure" of spiritual knowledge and wisdom, which she found in the Bible and which she believed was available to anyone who sought it.

For Pandita Ramabai, this treasure represented a source of hope and inspiration in a world that often seemed bleak and oppressive. She believed that the spiritual truths she had discovered could help to transform individuals and society, and that they could provide a way forward for those who had been marginalized and oppressed.

Q5. How does money and a room of her own help a woman writer? Discuss with reference to Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own.

Ans. In Virginia Woolf's essay, "A Room of One's Own," she argues that for women to be successful writers, they need both financial independence and a private space of their own in which to work.

Woolf suggests that money is necessary for women to be able to pursue their writing careers, as it provides them with the freedom to pursue their own interests and ideas, without having to rely on others for financial support. Women, she argues, have historically been denied access to financial resources, and have thus been forced to rely on men for support, which has limited their ability to pursue creative endeavors.

Similarly, Woolf argues that women also need a private space in which to work, free from the distractions and demands of daily life. She notes that throughout history, women have been denied access to such spaces, and have been forced to write in public areas, or in the midst of domestic duties. By having a space of her own, Woolf argues, a woman writer can be free to explore her own ideas and perspectives, without being constrained by the expectations and limitations placed on her by society.

In essence, Woolf suggests that by having both financial independence and a private space, a woman writer can be free to pursue her craft in a way that is true to her own voice and vision. Without these resources, she argues, women are forced to write in a way that conforms to the expectations of others, rather than being able to explore their own unique perspectives and experiences.

Q6. Women's Confessional poetry expresses an awareness of their "gendered asymmetry of their relationship to power." Elaborate with reference to Sylvia Plath and Eunice De Souza's poetry.

Ans. Women's Confessional poetry expresses an awareness of their "gendered asymmetry of their relationship to power." This means that women's poetry often reflects on the ways in which women

are marginalized and disempowered in society. Sylvia Plath and Eunice De Souza are two poets who explore this theme in their work.

Plath's poetry is often dark and disturbing, and it often deals with themes of violence, madness, and death. Her poems often reflect on the ways in which women are objectified and abused by men. For example, in her poem "Daddy," Plath writes about her father as a "demon lover" who has "possessed" her.

De Souza's poetry is more hopeful than Plath's, but it still deals with the challenges that women face in a patriarchal society. Her poems often celebrate the strength and resilience of women, even in the face of adversity. For example, in her poem "The Invitation," De Souza writes about the importance of women coming together to support each other.

The work of Plath and De Souza is just two examples of the many ways in which women's Confessional poetry expresses an awareness of their "gendered asymmetry of their relationship to power." This body of work is important because it gives voice to the experiences of women who have been marginalized and silenced by society.

Q7. How does Walker critique the concept of a white God in *The Color Purple*? What kind of religion does she put in its place?

Ans. In her novel *The Color Purple*, Alice Walker critiques the concept of a white God by showing how it is used to oppress and control women. The novel is set in the early 20th century, during a time when African Americans were still living under the oppressive Jim Crow laws. In this context, the white God is seen as a symbol of white supremacy. He is used to justify the subjugation of African Americans, both physically and spiritually.

For example, Celie's father, who is a white man, uses the Bible to justify his abuse of her. He tells her that she is a "worthless piece of trash" and that she will "burn in hell" if she does not obey him. Celie's husband, who is also a white man, uses the Bible to justify his physical abuse of her. He tells her that she is "his property" and that he has the right to do whatever he wants to her.

Through Celie's experiences, Walker shows how the white God is used to keep women in their place. He is a symbol of male authority and control, and he is used to justify the abuse of women.

However, Walker also shows how Celie eventually comes to reject the white God. She meets Shug Avery, a black woman who teaches her about a different kind of God. Shug's God is a God of love, compassion, and forgiveness. He is a God who does not judge or condemn, and he is a God who accepts everyone, regardless of their race or gender.

Celie's relationship with Shug helps her to find her own voice and to stand up for herself. She realizes that she does not need to be afraid of God, and she does not need to be afraid of men. She is able to break free from the oppressive religious beliefs that she was raised with, and she is able to live her life on her own terms.

Walker's critique of the white God is important because it challenges the way that women have been traditionally viewed in religion. She shows that women are not inferior to men, and that they have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. She also shows that there is a different kind of God, a God of love and compassion, who accepts everyone, regardless of their race or gender.

Q8. Fefu and Friends reveals the threat of violence underlying the lives of most women. Elaborate.

View other drafts.

Ans. Maria Irene Fornes' play *Fefu and Friends* reveals the threat of violence underlying the lives of most women through its exploration of the relationships between women and the men in their lives. The play is set in the home of Fefu Gomez, a wealthy widow who invites seven of her friends to spend a weekend with her. The women are all from different backgrounds and have different experiences, but they are all united by their shared experiences of violence.

The play begins with Fefu telling the story of how her husband died. She says that he was a violent man who abused her physically and emotionally. She also says that she is still haunted by the memories of his abuse. The other women share their own stories of violence, including stories of rape, domestic abuse, and sexual assault.

The play's exploration of violence is not limited to the women's personal experiences. The women also talk about the violence that they see in the world around them. They talk about the violence that is perpetrated against women by men, and they talk about the violence that is perpetrated against women by other women.

The play's exploration of violence is important because it shows how violence is a part of the lives of most women. It shows how violence can be physical, emotional, and psychological. It also shows how violence can be perpetrated by men, women, and even children.

The play's exploration of violence is also important because it shows how women can resist violence. The women in the play are not passive victims. They are strong and resilient, and they are able to find ways to resist the violence that they face.

Fefu and Friends is a powerful play that challenges us to think about the violence that is present in our world. It is a play that reminds us that violence is not just something that happens to other people. It is something that can happen to anyone, and it is something that we all have a responsibility to resist.

Q9. Rassundari's demystification of domestic labour belies accepted gender stereotypes.

Comment.

Ans. Rassundari Devi's autobiography "*Amar Jiban*" (My Life) provides a vivid account of her life as a woman living in 19th-century Bengal. One of the prominent themes of the book is Rassundari's experience with domestic labor and how it challenged the gender stereotypes of her time.

Rassundari's account of her daily life makes it clear that domestic labor was not a simple or effortless task. She details the various tasks she was responsible for, such as cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, and caring for her children. She also describes how these tasks were physically demanding and required a great deal of skill and knowledge.

Through her descriptions, Rassundari demystifies the notion that domestic labor is effortless and uncomplicated work, often relegated to women. Her account challenges the gender stereotypes of her time that relegated women to the domestic sphere, while men were seen as the primary breadwinners.

Moreover, Rassundari's autobiography highlights the complexity of domestic labor and the importance of recognizing it as valuable and meaningful work. Rassundari's account demonstrates that domestic labor is not just about completing chores but involves caring for and nurturing a household, which requires a great deal of emotional labor.

In conclusion, Rassundari Devi's autobiography "Amar Jiban" provides an insight into the daily life of women in 19th-century Bengal and highlights the complexity of domestic labor. Her account challenges the gender stereotypes of her time and underscores the importance of recognizing domestic labor as valuable work that requires skill, knowledge, and emotional labor.

Q10. Elaborate on Simone de Beauvoir's contention that woman is a constructed 'other' of a universal self that is always invested with male norms.

Ans. Simone de Beauvoir was a French philosopher, writer, and feminist theorist who argued that the concept of womanhood is a social construct. In her seminal work "The Second Sex," de Beauvoir contends that throughout history, women have been defined as "other" to men, rather than as individuals in their own right. She argues that this definition has been constructed by men, who have defined what it means to be human, based on their own experiences and values.

According to de Beauvoir, the idea of the universal self has always been invested with male norms, and women have been excluded from this self. She argues that this has resulted in the creation of a separate and subordinate category of women who are considered "other" to men.

This process of constructing woman as "other" begins at birth, where gender is assigned based on biological sex. However, de Beauvoir argues that gender is not simply a biological fact but is instead socially constructed. The norms and values associated with being a woman are determined by the dominant culture and are often based on male expectations of what women should be.

De Beauvoir also argues that women have been objectified and defined in relation to men throughout history. Women are often viewed as sexual objects, mothers, or housewives, and their experiences and perspectives are dismissed or ignored.

Furthermore, de Beauvoir contends that women are not passive recipients of this construction but are actively involved in perpetuating it. She argues that women have internalized the values and norms associated with their gender and have learned to view themselves as "other" to men.

In conclusion, Simone de Beauvoir's contention that woman is a constructed "other" of a universal self that is always invested with male norms highlights the ways in which women have been excluded from the dominant culture throughout history. This has resulted in the creation of a subordinate category of women who are considered "other" to men. De Beauvoir's work has had a profound impact on feminist theory and has helped to expose the ways in which gender is a socially constructed category.