

Popular Literature PYQ 2018

Q1. The Red Queen in Through the Looking Glass.

Ans. The Red Queen is a notable character in Lewis Carroll's "Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There," the sequel to his famous work "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland." The Red Queen is a prominent figure in the fantastical world Alice enters through the looking glass, and she is known for her peculiar behavior and her connection to the concept of running to stay in the same place. **Here are some key aspects of the Red Queen's character and her role in the story:**

Running to Stay in the Same Place: One of the most famous characteristics of the Red Queen is her tendency to run continuously, often with Alice, but they never seem to move from their original positions. This reflects the nonsensical nature of the Wonderland world, where normal rules of physics and reality do not apply. The Red Queen explains to Alice that, in her world, one must run as fast as possible just to remain in the same place, and to make any progress, one must run even faster.

Royal and Authoritative: The Red Queen holds a royal title and is a figure of authority in Wonderland. She is depicted as a stern and assertive character, and her position as a queen adds to her commanding presence.

Chess Game: "Through the Looking-Glass" is structured like a chess game, with Alice and various Wonderland characters representing chess pieces. The Red Queen, as the queen in a chess game, plays a central role in this narrative structure. She engages Alice in conversations about the rules of the game and its peculiarities.

Symbolism: The Red Queen's continuous running without progress has been interpreted as a symbol of the futility of certain endeavors, where one expends great effort but achieves little or nothing. This concept has been referenced in various contexts beyond the book itself.

Reflective and Nonsensical: Like many characters in Carroll's works, the Red Queen embodies the whimsical and nonsensical nature of Wonderland. She engages in absurd conversations with Alice and often makes statements that defy logic.

Interactions with Alice: Throughout the story, the Red Queen interacts with Alice, imparting advice and insights into the rules and peculiarities of Wonderland. Her conversations with Alice contribute to the dreamlike and illogical atmosphere of the narrative.

In summary, the Red Queen is a memorable character in "Through the Looking-Glass" who embodies the fantastical and nonsensical nature of Lewis Carroll's Wonderland. Her continuous running without progress and her interactions with Alice contribute to the whimsical and philosophical elements of the story.

OR

The apocalyptic ending of Through the Looking Glass.

Ans. "Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There" by Lewis Carroll has a notable ending that takes on an apocalyptic and dreamlike quality. In this concluding scene, Alice's adventures in the fantastical world of the looking-glass come to a dramatic and surreal conclusion. **Here's an overview of the apocalyptic ending:**

The Red King's Dream: The apocalyptic ending is tied to the Red King, who is sleeping throughout the story. As Alice and other characters interact in the looking-glass world, it is revealed that the entire world is a dream of the Red King. When Alice reaches the end of her journey, she comes across the Red King and realizes that her existence in the looking-glass world is contingent on his dream.

Awakening and Disintegration: Alice's existence in the looking-glass world becomes increasingly unstable as the Red King begins to stir and awaken from his dream. As he does so, the world around Alice starts to disintegrate and become more chaotic.

The World Unravels: In the final scenes, Alice finds herself in a surreal landscape where the hills, trees, and creatures are vanishing into thin air. This imagery symbolizes the collapsing of the entire looking-glass world as the Red King awakens.

A Desperate Farewell: As the world disintegrates, Alice desperately tries to hold onto her own existence. She speaks to various characters she has encountered throughout her journey, bidding them farewell as they vanish. This is a poignant moment in which Alice faces the possibility of ceasing to exist.

The Red King's Awakening: The climax of the apocalyptic ending occurs when the Red King awakens completely, and Alice fears that she will vanish along with the entire looking-glass world. However, as the Red King opens his eyes, Alice wakes up and realizes that she has been sleeping by the side of her sister. The entire adventure appears to have been a dream.

Return to Reality: The story ends with Alice waking up from her dream and returning to the real world, leaving behind the fantastical looking-glass world. She reflects on her dreamlike journey and the strange and whimsical characters she encountered.

The apocalyptic ending of "Through the Looking-Glass" serves to blur the boundaries between dreams and reality, leaving readers with a sense of wonder and ambiguity. It reinforces the notion that Wonderland is a fantastical realm governed by its own dream logic, where nothing is quite as it seems.

Q2. Discuss the motif of 'Water and Shelter' in Bhimayana.

Ans. In "Bhimayana: Experiences of Untouchability," a graphic novel by Srividya Natarajan and S. Anand, the motif of "Water and Shelter" plays a significant role in conveying the experiences of untouchability, discrimination, and the struggle for basic human rights faced by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and the Dalit community in India. **Here's an analysis of how the motif of "Water and Shelter" is depicted in the graphic novel:**

Scarcity of Water: Throughout the graphic novel, the scarcity of clean and accessible water is a recurring theme. It reflects the harsh reality that many Dalits faced, especially in rural areas, where they were denied access to public water sources. In the book, young Bhimrao and his family are

often forced to walk long distances to fetch water, facing discrimination and hostility from upper-caste communities. This scarcity of water symbolizes the denial of basic necessities and the systematic oppression faced by the Dalit community.

The "Untouchable Well": One of the most powerful illustrations in the graphic novel is that of the "untouchable well." This well is segregated and marked as being solely for the use of Dalits. The stark visual contrast between the well for Dalits and the well for upper-caste individuals highlights the deep-rooted discrimination and segregation prevalent in society. It signifies the social ostracization and humiliation faced by Dalits, who were deemed "untouchable" by the caste system.

Inadequate Shelter: The motif of shelter also plays a crucial role in conveying the harsh living conditions faced by Dalits. In the graphic novel, Bhimrao's family lives in a small, dilapidated house with a thatched roof. This dwelling symbolizes the lack of adequate housing and the economic hardships experienced by many Dalit families. It underscores the disparities in living standards based on caste, as upper-caste individuals often enjoyed better housing conditions.

Resilience and Resistance: Despite the adversity and discrimination depicted in the graphic novel, the characters, particularly Bhimrao and his family, demonstrate resilience and the determination to challenge the status quo. They aspire for better living conditions, education, and equality. The narrative also showcases Dr. Ambedkar's lifelong struggle to secure social justice and civil rights for the Dalit community, including access to water, shelter, and other basic necessities.

A Call for Social Reform: "Bhimayana" serves as a powerful visual narrative that calls for social reform and sheds light on the injustices faced by the Dalit community in India. The motif of "Water and Shelter" is a poignant reminder of the fundamental rights denied to them for generations.

In summary, the motif of "Water and Shelter" in "Bhimayana" is a recurring symbol that underscores the themes of discrimination, oppression, and the struggle for basic human rights faced by the Dalit community in India. Through its evocative visuals and storytelling, the graphic novel raises awareness about the enduring legacy of untouchability and the need for social change and equality.

OR

Bhimayana presents "conversion" as an alternative for Dalits. Do you agree?

Ans. "Bhimayana: Experiences of Untouchability" does depict the theme of conversion as one of the responses to the deeply entrenched caste-based discrimination and untouchability faced by Dalits in India. However, whether conversion is presented as the only or the best alternative for Dalits is a matter of interpretation and perspective. It's important to note that the graphic novel primarily focuses on the life and experiences of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a prominent figure who advocated for Dalit rights and played a pivotal role in their struggle for social justice. Here are some key points to consider:

Ambedkar's Advocacy: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, depicted prominently in the graphic novel, did advocate for Dalit conversion to Buddhism as a means to escape the oppressive caste system. He believed that Buddhism offered a path to equality, dignity, and freedom from caste discrimination. Ambedkar's

own conversion to Buddhism, along with thousands of his followers, is a historical event highlighted in the graphic novel.

Multiple Responses: While the graphic novel portrays conversion as an important aspect of Ambedkar's activism, it also acknowledges that there were multiple responses and strategies employed by Dalits to combat untouchability. These responses included education, political activism, social reform, and legal measures aimed at securing equal rights. Ambedkar himself worked on various fronts to address the issues faced by Dalits.

Historical Context: To understand the portrayal of conversion in "Bhimayana," it's essential to consider the historical context. During Ambedkar's time, conversion was seen as a radical step to break free from the caste system and its discriminatory practices. It was a form of protest and a way to assert a new identity that rejected the old caste-based hierarchy.

Debate and Diversity of Opinion: The question of conversion remains a subject of debate and diverse opinions within the Dalit community and among scholars. While some see conversion as a means to reclaim dignity and equality, others emphasize the need for broader social reform and legal protections.

In conclusion, "Bhimayana" portrays conversion as an important aspect of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's efforts to challenge the caste-based discrimination faced by Dalits. However, it does not necessarily present conversion as the sole or exclusive alternative for Dalits. The graphic novel acknowledges the complexity of the issue and the diversity of responses within the Dalit community. The portrayal of conversion serves as a historical and political backdrop to the larger narrative of Dalit struggles for social justice and equality in India.

(For visually challenged students in lieu of Bhimayana)

Write a short notes on any one instance describing the discrimination witnessed by Ambedkar as a young man.

Ans. In the graphic novel "Bhimayana: Experiences of Untouchability," one such instance is depicted:

Discrimination at the Water Tap: In one scene, a young Ambedkar is shown attempting to quench his thirst at a public water tap. However, he is met with discrimination and hostility from the upper-caste individuals present there. They not only prevent him from using the tap but also pour muddy water on the ground to ensure that he cannot access clean water. This act of discrimination highlights the pervasive practice of untouchability and the denial of basic rights and dignity to Dalits, even when it comes to something as fundamental as access to water.

This incident is just one of many in Ambedkar's life that contributed to his deep commitment to fighting against caste-based discrimination and advocating for the rights and dignity of Dalits. It serves as a powerful example of the kind of systemic discrimination and humiliation that Dalits faced in India during that era, which motivated Ambedkar's lifelong struggle for social justice and equality.

OR

What were the challenges faced by the children while travelling in Ambedkar's Waiting for a Visa?

Ans. In B.R. Ambedkar's autobiographical work "Waiting for a Visa," he describes several challenges faced by children like himself who belonged to the untouchable caste while traveling in those times.

These challenges included:

Untouchability: The most pervasive and fundamental challenge faced by untouchable children was the practice of untouchability itself. They were considered impure and untouchable by the higher-caste individuals, and this meant that they were often treated with extreme discrimination and exclusion.

Access to Public Facilities: Ambedkar describes instances where untouchable children were not allowed to use public facilities like water taps, roads, or public transportation. They faced restrictions on movement and were often forced to take longer and more arduous routes to avoid higher-caste areas.

Segregation: Untouchable children were often segregated in schools. They had to sit separately from higher-caste children, and in some cases, they were not even allowed to enter the school premises. This limited their educational opportunities.

Social Isolation: The children faced social isolation and were excluded from various community and religious activities. They were not allowed to enter temples, and their participation in festivals and gatherings was restricted.

Violence and Harassment: Ambedkar also narrates instances of physical violence and harassment faced by untouchable children when they ventured into areas dominated by higher-caste individuals. They were beaten, verbally abused, and humiliated.

Lack of Access to Healthcare: Access to healthcare facilities was limited for untouchable children. They often had to rely on traditional and less effective forms of medicine due to discrimination in hospitals and clinics.

Economic Deprivation: Untouchable families, including children, faced economic deprivation as they were relegated to the most menial and low-paying jobs. This lack of economic opportunities further perpetuated their social and educational disadvantages.

"**Waiting for a Visa**" vividly portrays the harsh realities of caste-based discrimination and the numerous challenges faced by untouchable children as they navigated a society that systemically marginalized and oppressed them. Ambedkar's personal experiences, as described in the book, played a significant role in shaping his commitment to social justice and his lifelong struggle against untouchability and caste-based discrimination.

Q3. Black Tie

Ans. In F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, the black tie dress code symbolizes the opulence, formality, and societal norms of the Roaring Twenties. The characters in the novel often attend lavish parties where the black tie attire is a standard, reflecting their social status and wealth. Jay Gatsby,

the enigmatic millionaire, hosts extravagant soirées where guests adhere to this dress code, highlighting the era's glamour and the stark class divisions.

Black tie events in the novel also underscore the superficiality and performative nature of the characters' lives. Gatsby's obsession with recreating a past with Daisy Buchanan is mirrored in his meticulous attention to appearances, including his adherence to sartorial elegance. The black tie dress code thus serves as a visual representation of the characters' desires to project an image of sophistication and success, while masking the underlying emptiness and moral decay of their pursuits.

In this context, the black tie is not merely a fashion choice but a symbol of the Jazz Age's glittering façade, under which lies the complex interplay of ambition, love, and disillusionment.

OR

the role of caroline in the murder of roger acroyd.

Ans. In Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, Caroline Sheppard plays a crucial role as both a source of local gossip and an informal detective, aiding her brother, Dr. James Sheppard, in uncovering details about the murder. Though not directly involved in the crime, Caroline's curiosity and keen observation skills provide valuable insights that propel the investigation forward.

Caroline is depicted as a stereotypical nosy neighbor, always eager to gather and disseminate information about the goings-on in the small village of King's Abbot. Her penchant for gossip and her extensive network of connections make her a wellspring of useful information, even if she sometimes exaggerates or misinterprets what she learns. This aspect of her character adds a layer of humor to the story while also emphasizing the importance of community knowledge in solving the mystery.

Despite her meddlesome nature, Caroline's sharp intellect and intuition often lead her to the correct conclusions. She frequently speculates about the identities and motives of the suspects, sometimes providing insights that her brother and the famous detective Hercule Poirot take seriously. Her persistent questioning and relentless pursuit of the truth mirror the investigative processes of the official detectives, albeit in a less formal manner.

Ultimately, Caroline's role in the novel highlights the theme of perception versus reality. While she often seems to be merely a busybody, her observations and deductions prove to be significant in piecing together the events surrounding Roger Ackroyd's murder. Her character underscores the idea that everyone, regardless of their position or profession, can contribute to the quest for truth in unexpected ways.

SECTION-B

Q4. Critically examine how the personal intersects with the political in selvadurai's funny boy.

Ans. In Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy*, the intersection of the personal and the political is intricately woven into the narrative, reflecting the tumultuous sociopolitical landscape of Sri Lanka during the

late 20th century. The protagonist, Arjie Chelvaratnam, navigates his personal journey of self-discovery and identity against the backdrop of ethnic conflict and political upheaval, illustrating how individual lives are deeply affected by broader political forces.

Personal Identity and Ethnic Conflict : Arjie's personal journey of understanding his sexual orientation and coming to terms with his identity as a gay young man is paralleled by the rising ethnic tensions between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka. As a Tamil, Arjie's experiences are shaped by the pervasive discrimination and violence against his community. This dual marginalization—being both Tamil and queer—highlights the intersectionality of identity and oppression.

Family and Community : Arjie's family dynamics serve as a microcosm of the larger societal issues. The Chelvaratnam family, like many others, is caught in the crossfire of political events, which strain their relationships and test their loyalties. The family's internal conflicts and attempts to maintain normalcy amid growing external threats reflect the broader impact of political turmoil on personal lives. For instance, the family's decision to send Arjie to a traditional Sinhalese school to "cure" his perceived effeminacy intersects with their need to navigate an increasingly hostile environment for Tamils.

Political Upheaval and Personal Trauma : The political violence and anti-Tamil riots, particularly the devastating events of Black July in 1983, are pivotal in shaping Arjie's personal experiences. The violence disrupts his childhood and forces his family to confront the harsh realities of ethnic hatred. The personal traumas suffered by Arjie and his family members—loss of property, safety, and ultimately the need to flee their homeland—underscore how political events can irrevocably alter individual lives.

Identity and Resistance : Arjie's growing awareness of his sexual identity is also a form of resistance against the societal norms and expectations imposed by both his family and the larger community. His relationship with Shehan, another boy at his school, becomes a significant act of personal rebellion and self-assertion. This personal resistance is set against the backdrop of the Tamil community's struggle for political rights and recognition, drawing a parallel between personal and collective forms of resistance.

Conclusion : In *Funny Boy*, Selvadurai masterfully intertwines the personal and the political, illustrating how Arjie's journey of self-discovery and identity formation cannot be disentangled from the ethnic and political conflicts surrounding him. The novel poignantly shows that personal identities are shaped and sometimes constrained by political realities, and that the search for selfhood can be an act of defiance in the face of oppression. Through Arjie's story, Selvadurai highlights the profound ways in which the personal and the political intersect, influencing and shaping each other in complex and often painful ways.

OR

Discuss selvadurai's funny boy as coming of age narrative.

Ans. Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* is a poignant coming-of-age narrative that chronicles the protagonist Arjie Chelvaratnam's journey of self-discovery and personal growth within the context of

the ethnic tensions in Sri Lanka. The novel employs the traditional elements of a bildungsroman while exploring themes of identity, family, and societal expectations.

Personal Identity and Self-Discovery : Arjie's journey begins in childhood, where he is more comfortable playing with his female cousins and dressing up as a bride, activities that label him as "funny" by his family. This term serves as a euphemism for his nonconformity to traditional gender roles and foreshadows his later realization of his homosexuality. Throughout the novel, Arjie grapples with understanding and accepting his sexual identity, which is a central theme in coming-of-age narratives. His relationship with Shehan, another boy at his school, becomes a significant milestone in this journey, marking his first romantic and sexual awakening.

Family Dynamics and Conflict : Arjie's interactions with his family play a crucial role in his maturation process. His parents' attempts to enforce traditional norms, such as sending him to a conventional Sinhalese school to "correct" his behavior, highlight the societal pressures he faces. These family dynamics are common in coming-of-age stories, where protagonists often struggle with parental expectations and the desire to forge their own paths. The supportive yet challenging relationship with his grandmother, who provides a different perspective on love and identity, further shapes Arjie's understanding of himself.

Societal Expectations and Rebellion : Arjie's experiences at school and within the broader community illustrate the conflicts between individuality and societal expectations. His rebellion against these norms, particularly through his relationship with Shehan, signifies his assertion of identity and autonomy. This rebellion is a typical feature of coming-of-age narratives, where protagonists often challenge the status quo to find their true selves. Arjie's defiance of societal norms also underscores his courage and resilience, essential traits in his journey toward adulthood.

Ethnic Conflict and Personal Growth : The backdrop of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka adds a unique dimension to Arjie's coming-of-age story. The political turmoil and anti-Tamil violence profoundly impact his life and shape his understanding of identity and belonging. The events of Black July and the resulting trauma force Arjie to confront harsh realities and mature quickly. These experiences highlight how external factors can accelerate personal growth and underscore the interconnectedness of personal and political narratives.

Search for Belonging : A significant aspect of Arjie's coming-of-age journey is his search for belonging. As a Tamil and a gay individual, he occupies multiple marginal spaces in society. His struggle to find acceptance and love within these contexts is central to his development. The novel's resolution, which sees Arjie and his family forced to leave their home due to political violence, underscores the ongoing nature of his search for a place where he can truly belong.

Conclusion : Funny Boy is a compelling coming-of-age narrative that masterfully weaves personal growth with broader societal issues. Arjie's journey of self-discovery, set against the backdrop of ethnic conflict and familial expectations, provides a rich exploration of identity, resilience, and the quest for acceptance. Selvadurai's portrayal of Arjie's maturation process highlights the complexities of growing up in a world that often imposes rigid norms and prejudices, making Funny Boy a powerful and resonant coming-of-age story.

Q5. Critically comment on the narrative technique used by Agatha Christie in The Murder of Roger Ackroyd.

Ans. Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* is celebrated not only for its intricate plot but also for its innovative narrative technique. The novel employs several narrative strategies that contribute to its status as a classic in detective fiction. Here, we critically examine some of these techniques:

Unreliable Narrator : One of the most striking narrative techniques in the novel is the use of an unreliable narrator. Dr. James Sheppard, who presents himself as a trustworthy and objective observer, is revealed to be the murderer by the end of the story. This revelation subverts the readers' expectations and challenges the conventions of the detective genre, where the narrator is typically assumed to be reliable. Christie's use of an unreliable narrator adds a layer of complexity to the narrative, compelling readers to reconsider the information presented throughout the novel and their assumptions about trust and perspective.

First-Person Perspective : The novel is narrated in the first person by Dr. Sheppard, which allows for an intimate glimpse into his thoughts and actions. This perspective creates a sense of immediacy and involvement, drawing readers directly into the events of the story. However, it also enables Christie to manipulate the narrative by controlling the flow of information. Dr. Sheppard selectively reveals details, omits critical information, and presents events in a way that misleads both the other characters and the readers, enhancing the mystery and suspense.

Metafictional Elements : Christie incorporates metafictional elements into the narrative, particularly through Dr. Sheppard's awareness of detective story conventions. For instance, he occasionally comments on the tropes and expectations of detective fiction, which serves to both engage and mislead the reader. This self-referential approach adds a layer of sophistication to the narrative, as Christie plays with the readers' familiarity with the genre.

Red Herrings and Misdirection : Christie skillfully employs red herrings and misdirection to keep readers guessing. By providing multiple plausible suspects and motives, she ensures that the true culprit remains hidden until the final revelation. Dr. Sheppard's narration is filled with subtle hints and clues that are easy to overlook, making the final twist both surprising and satisfying. The careful placement of these red herrings demonstrates Christie's mastery of plot construction and her ability to manipulate reader expectations.

Chronological Structure : The novel follows a chronological structure, with Dr. Sheppard recounting events as they occur. This linear progression helps maintain a clear and coherent narrative, allowing readers to follow the investigation alongside Hercule Poirot. The straightforward chronology contrasts with the complexity of the mystery itself, creating a balance that makes the novel accessible while still deeply engaging.

Character Development and Dialogue : Christie's narrative technique also includes vivid character development and sharp, realistic dialogue. Through Dr. Sheppard's observations and interactions, readers gain insights into the personalities and motivations of the other characters. This depth of characterization enriches the narrative and provides a fertile ground for suspicion and intrigue. Additionally, the dialogue is used effectively to advance the plot and reveal critical information in a natural and engaging manner.

Conclusion : Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* is a masterclass in narrative technique. Her use of an unreliable narrator, first-person perspective, metafictional elements, red herrings, chronological structure, and character-driven storytelling all contribute to a richly layered and compelling mystery. These techniques not only keep readers engaged and guessing but also

challenge their perceptions and expectations, making the novel a landmark work in the detective fiction genre.

OR

In The Murder of Roger Ackroyd, Christie destabilises conventional associations between physiognomy, occupation and criminality, Do you agree?

Ans. Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* indeed challenges and destabilizes conventional associations between physiognomy, occupation, and criminality. Traditionally, detective fiction often employs stereotypes where characters' appearances, professions, and behaviors are indicative of their morality or criminal potential. Christie subverts these conventions in several ways:

The Unreliable Narrator and Occupation : Dr. James Sheppard, the novel's narrator and the murderer, is a prime example of this subversion. As a doctor, Sheppard occupies a respected and trusted position in society. In traditional detective fiction, such a character would typically be above suspicion, embodying integrity and reliability. Christie's choice to make the doctor the murderer undermines the assumption that one's profession correlates with moral character. This twist forces readers to question their biases and the stereotypes associated with certain occupations.

Physiognomy and Character Perception : Physiognomy, the notion that one's outer appearance reflects their inner character, is another convention that Christie destabilizes. Throughout the novel, characters' physical descriptions do not necessarily align with their moral qualities or criminal behavior. Dr. Sheppard is described as ordinary and unremarkable, lacking any sinister physical traits that might hint at his guilt. This ordinary appearance serves to camouflage his true nature, playing against the expectation that villains should have a distinguishable look.

Complexity of Characters : Christie imbues her characters with complexity, ensuring that their appearances and professions do not easily pigeonhole them into roles of hero, villain, or victim. For instance, Parker, the butler, and Miss Russell, the housekeeper, are characters whose professions might typically cast them as either loyal servants or potential suspects in traditional detective narratives. However, their roles in the story are nuanced and do not conform to simplistic archetypes.

Subverting Reader Expectations : By destabilizing these conventional associations, Christie effectively subverts reader expectations. Readers are led to question their assumptions about the relationship between appearance, profession, and criminality. This technique not only enhances the mystery and suspense but also reflects a more sophisticated and realistic portrayal of human nature. People cannot be easily judged based on their external attributes or societal roles, a theme that Christie deftly explores through her characters and plot.

The Role of Hercule Poirot : Hercule Poirot, with his meticulous attention to detail and psychological insight, further exemplifies this subversion. Poirot does not rely on stereotypes or superficial judgments in his investigations. Instead, he delves deeply into the characters' motivations and hidden facets, often revealing the surprising and complex nature of individuals. His methodical approach contrasts with the simplistic reliance on physiognomy and occupation to determine guilt, reinforcing Christie's challenge to these conventions.

Conclusion : In *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, Agatha Christie successfully destabilizes the conventional associations between physiognomy, occupation, and criminality. By doing so, she enriches the narrative with deeper psychological complexity and keeps readers engaged through unexpected twists and revelations. Christie's innovative approach not only makes for a compelling mystery but also encourages a more nuanced understanding of human behavior, challenging readers to look beyond appearances and stereotypes.

Q6. The special attitude to language in *Through the Looking Glass* explains its appeal for an adult readership. Discuss with examples from the text.

Ans. Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There* is often appreciated for its playful and innovative use of language, which holds significant appeal for adult readers. The text is rich with linguistic creativity, including wordplay, nonsensical poetry, and logical puzzles, all of which contribute to its enduring charm and complexity. Here are some ways in which Carroll's special attitude to language explains its appeal for an adult readership, illustrated with examples from the text:

Wordplay and Puns : Carroll's use of wordplay and puns adds layers of meaning to the text, inviting readers to engage with the language on multiple levels. Adults, with their more developed linguistic skills and knowledge, can fully appreciate these nuances. For example, when Alice meets the characters Tweedledum and Tweedledee, their names themselves are playful and evocative of their twin-like nature, hinting at the way language can reflect and create character identities.

Nonsensical Poetry : The poem "Jabberwocky," found in *Through the Looking-Glass*, is a prime example of Carroll's linguistic inventiveness. The poem is filled with invented words like "slithy" and "mimsy," which, despite their nonsense, evoke a vivid and coherent imagery due to their sound and context. Adults can appreciate the poem's playful structure and the challenge of interpreting its meaning:

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

This linguistic playfulness encourages readers to explore language creatively and think about how meaning is constructed.

Logical Puzzles and Philosophical Play : Carroll, a mathematician by profession, infuses the narrative with logical puzzles and philosophical musings that resonate with adult readers. The conversation between Alice and Humpty Dumpty about the meanings of words exemplifies this:

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."

This dialogue explores the arbitrariness of language and the power dynamics involved in communication, inviting adults to ponder deeper linguistic and philosophical issues.

Satire and Social Commentary : Carroll uses language to satirize social norms and conventions, which often appeals more to an adult readership capable of recognizing these critiques. The characters Alice encounters often embody absurd or exaggerated versions of real-world figures, and their dialogue often reflects the nonsensical nature of societal rules and hierarchies. The interactions with the Red Queen, for instance, highlight the arbitrary nature of power and authority:

"Well, in our country," said Alice, still panting a little, "you'd generally get to somewhere else—if you run very fast for a long time, as we've been doing."

"A slow sort of country!" said the Queen. "Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place."

This passage can be seen as a commentary on the futility of certain social efforts, resonating with adults who have experienced similar frustrations.

Multilayered Humor : The humor in *Through the Looking-Glass* operates on multiple levels. While children may enjoy the whimsical and absurd elements, adults can appreciate the sophisticated wit and irony. The White Knight's inventions, for example, are humorously impractical:

"I see you're admiring my little box," the Knight said in a friendly tone. "It's my own invention—to keep clothes and sandwiches in. You see I carry it upside-down, so that the rain can't get in."

The absurdity of this logic appeals to a mature sense of humor, recognizing the impracticality and the cleverness of the character's rationale.

Conclusion : Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* appeals to adult readers through its inventive use of language, which encompasses wordplay, nonsensical poetry, logical puzzles, social satire, and multilayered humor. These elements create a rich, textured reading experience that engages adults intellectually and emotionally, allowing them to appreciate the novel's depth and wit on a level that goes beyond the surface narrative.

OR

Bhimayana reinvents the novel as a medium of narration. Do you agree? Give a reasoned answer.

Ans. Yes, I agree that *Bhimayana: Experiences of Untouchability* reinvents the novel as a medium of narration. *Bhimayana*, created by Srividya Natarajan and S. Anand, with illustrations by Durgabai Vyam and Subhash Vyam, breaks away from traditional narrative forms and employs innovative

storytelling techniques that blend text and Gond art to convey its message. Here are several reasons and examples that illustrate how Bhimayana reinvents the novel as a medium of narration:

Integration of Visual Art and Text : One of the most striking features of Bhimayana is its use of Gond art to tell the story. The vivid illustrations are not merely decorative but integral to the narrative, often conveying emotions, themes, and events that words alone cannot. This fusion of art and text creates a multi-sensory reading experience that challenges the conventional novel's reliance on linear text. The art's symbolism and vibrant colors add layers of meaning and cultural context, enhancing the reader's understanding and engagement with the story of B.R. Ambedkar and the broader issues of untouchability and caste discrimination.

Non-Linear Storytelling : Bhimayana employs a non-linear narrative structure, weaving together past and present to show the continuity of caste-based discrimination. The novel intersperses historical episodes from Ambedkar's life with contemporary incidents of caste violence and discrimination. This approach emphasizes the persistent relevance of Ambedkar's struggles and achievements, making a powerful statement about the ongoing nature of social injustice. The non-linear storytelling defies the traditional, chronological progression typical of many novels, inviting readers to make connections across time and reflect on the enduring impact of caste in India.

Use of Indigenous Aesthetics : The incorporation of Gond art, an indigenous art form, is a deliberate choice that brings an authentic, culturally rich aesthetic to the novel. The artwork often takes on a narrative function, depicting scenes, emotions, and abstract concepts through symbolic imagery. For example, the use of animals, trees, and natural elements within the illustrations reflects the deep connection between the Gond community and their environment, adding a layer of cultural specificity and depth to the narrative. This approach challenges the Eurocentric literary traditions and brings indigenous storytelling methods to the forefront, broadening the scope of what a novel can be.

Themes and Social Commentary : The themes explored in Bhimayana—untouchability, caste discrimination, social justice, and resistance—are presented through a combination of personal anecdotes, historical events, and contemporary issues. This thematic richness, coupled with the innovative narrative techniques, offers a profound social commentary that is accessible yet thought-provoking. The novel does not shy away from depicting the harsh realities of caste oppression, but it also highlights the resilience and activism of those who fight against it. By doing so, Bhimayana serves as both a work of art and a powerful tool for social change.

Blurring Genres : Bhimayana blurs the lines between genres, combining elements of biography, history, graphic novel, and social critique. This genre-blurring creates a hybrid form that appeals to a wide range of readers, from those interested in historical biographies to fans of graphic novels and visual art. The seamless integration of these different genres and forms challenges the traditional boundaries of the novel, demonstrating the potential for storytelling to evolve and adapt to new forms and audiences.

Conclusion : In conclusion, **Bhimayana: Experiences of Untouchability** reinvents the novel as a medium of narration through its innovative use of visual art, non-linear storytelling, indigenous aesthetics, and thematic depth. By challenging conventional narrative structures and incorporating diverse elements from different genres, Bhimayana expands the possibilities of what a novel can be, offering a rich, multi-dimensional reading experience that is both culturally specific and universally resonant.

(For visually challenged students in lieu of Bhimayana)

Discuss how Ambedkar's *Waiting for A Visa* reflects upon caste-based oppression and marginalisation.

Ans. B.R. Ambedkar's **Waiting for a Visa** is a powerful autobiographical account that highlights the pervasive caste-based oppression and marginalization in India. Through a series of personal experiences and observations, Ambedkar illustrates the systemic and brutal nature of untouchability and the social exclusion faced by Dalits. Here are several key aspects of how the text reflects upon caste-based oppression and marginalization:

Personal Experiences of Discrimination : Ambedkar recounts several personal incidents that starkly portray the everyday humiliations and injustices faced by Dalits. For example, in one incident, Ambedkar and his siblings are denied water from a public well during a train journey, emphasizing the pervasive nature of caste discrimination that extends even to basic human needs. These personal anecdotes highlight how deeply ingrained and widespread untouchability was in Indian society.

Institutional Discrimination : The narrative demonstrates how caste-based discrimination is institutionalized and perpetuated by social, economic, and political structures. Ambedkar's experiences with educational institutions, public services, and employment vividly depict how these systems systematically exclude and marginalize Dalits. For instance, Ambedkar describes the difficulties he faced in finding accommodation as a student and later in securing a job, underscoring how caste prejudice severely limits opportunities for social mobility and economic advancement.

Social Exclusion and Isolation : Ambedkar's stories also reflect the social exclusion and isolation that Dalits endure. The enforced segregation and social ostracism are depicted through various interactions and the pervasive notion of "untouchability." Ambedkar's account of being denied entry to a barber shop or a place to stay in a village underscores the social alienation that Dalits experience. This exclusion extends to all areas of life, creating a sense of constant surveillance and vulnerability.

Psychological Impact : The psychological toll of caste-based oppression is a significant theme in *Waiting for a Visa*. Ambedkar's reflections on the humiliation, fear, and internalized inferiority that result from systemic discrimination provide a profound insight into the mental and emotional impact of untouchability. This aspect is crucial in understanding how caste-based oppression affects not just the physical and social lives of Dalits but also their mental health and self-esteem.

Collective Struggle and Resistance : Despite the grim realities of caste oppression, *Waiting for a Visa* also highlights the importance of collective struggle and resistance. Ambedkar's own journey from experiencing caste discrimination to becoming a leading figure in the fight against untouchability is a testament to the resilience and agency of Dalits. His narrative serves as both a documentation of suffering and a call to action, inspiring future generations to continue the fight for equality and justice.

Conclusion : *Waiting for a Visa* is a seminal work that provides a detailed and personal account of caste-based oppression and marginalization. Through vivid storytelling and poignant reflections, Ambedkar captures the systemic nature of untouchability and its profound impact on the lives of Dalits. The text not only documents the pervasive discrimination and social exclusion but also underscores the resilience and resistance of those who fight against these injustices. Ambedkar's narrative remains a powerful reminder of the need for continued efforts towards social justice and equality.