

Chapter 7: Bridges

NCERT · Class 11 · English · Woven Words · Essay

Understanding the Text

Question 1

How did the author feel about her mother's passion to make her a dancer?

Solution

The author was not comfortable with the passion of her mother to make her a dancer. She says that her inborn ability to dance was noticed by her mother. The mother of the author was motivated by this to make her a dancer. She says that her mother's interest in making her a dancer was ignited by the film industry. The author says that she was not interested in being a dancer and explains the trouble she faced while travelling to the dance teacher's house. She felt as if she was forced to learn dance and that it was thrust on her.

When she was sent to study at Queen Mary's College in Lahore, at first, she thought that she would not have to learn dance. She thinks it unfortunate that a dance teacher, Radhelal Misra, was sent with her by her mother. In this way, the author did not have a good experience with the passion of her mother to make her a dancer.

Question 2

What were the lessons of life learnt in her younger days that Kumudini carried into her adult life?

Solution

The author learnt many lessons about life in her younger days, and she carried them with her into her adult life. She relates an incident when she stayed in a sprawling house in Delhi that was allotted to her father, who was an engineer. Liaquat Ali, who later became the Prime Minister of Pakistan, was their neighbour. One day, she and her brother were caught by his gardener while picking guavas from his tree. They were not punished by Liaquat Ali but got an open invitation from him to pick the fruits when they wanted. She says that it was one of the first lessons in the games which the politicians play.

She was able to learn the importance of discipline at Queen Mary's College in Lahore. She trusts that following discipline in a daily routine will bring discipline in thinking. She learnt the pangs of hunger when her mother died, which is highlighted in her work. The author was able to understand the nature of the conflict that she dealt with in a play known as Duvidha.

The author could learn to distinguish between sentimentality and sensitivity. She created a piece known as Panch Paras, five senses, in her adult days to explore this realm. She relates how she learnt a lesson from Ram Gopal that before we begin to experiment, we should perfect the technique.

By touring with Ram Gopal, Kumudini was able to learn about her own personality.

Question 3

How did Kumudini react to her mother's death?

Solution

The news of Kumudini's mother's death was not given to her directly by the school principal where she was studying that time. She was informed that she should go home as her mother was sick. She knew about her mother's death only when she reached home. At that time, she was just 14 years old. She stood with her hands hanging loose from her body and feeling helpless in this world. She felt hungry but was not able to express it to anyone. She was scared of appearing greedy.

Question 4

What were the concepts that Kumudini Lakhia represented through Duvidha, Atah Kim and Panch Paras?

Solution

In Duvidha or conflict, the plight of a woman from the middle class who is chained to the traditions of Indian life is examined by Kumudini. In Atah Kim, the concept of the desire for power is explored by the author. She explores spiritual life in Panch Paras.

Question 5

How does Kumudini Lakhia describe her guru Ramgopal's influence on her?

Solution

Kumudini Lakhia described her guru Ramgopal's influence on her intensely. She says that Ram Gopal had a fetish for perfection of line and was a strict disciplinarian. The author was influenced by this and tried to convey this lesson to her students also. She explains how her tour with Ram Gopal helped her to delve deeper into her own personality.

Discuss the following in pairs or in small groups

Question 1

Exceptionally talented people are born so; talent cannot be cultivated.

Solution

Exceptionally talented people are born so; talent cannot be cultivated. A few genetic scientists suggest that genetic factors determine talent. It is genetically inherited and cannot be cultivated. By grooming individuals, production of people who are exceptionally talented would have been possible. But, it is not the case in reality.

Another View –

Another group of scientists trust that talent is not based on heredity or genes. In shaping talent, a major role is played by the environment.

Question 2

Discipline and a questioning spirit can coexist in an individual.

Solution

In an individual, both a questioning spirit and discipline can coexist. Between the two, there is no inherent conflict. If a person is disciplined, the questioning spirit will be present in them in a well-disciplined manner. There is an objective for every discipline, and it is not for the sake of discipline. So, there is no harm if one tries to learn the basics of discipline.

Another View –

Questioning spirit and discipline cannot coexist. A person cannot stick to any discipline if they do not take the fundamental assumptions of the discipline for granted. For instance, if one keeps on

questioning, they cannot follow and apply the principles of the art form they are trying to learn. Both cannot coexist as it requires some kind of surrendering of the questioning spirit to be disciplined.

Question 3

“Before you begin experimenting, you need to perfect the technique with which you experiment.”

Solution

A few people have a tendency to start experimenting without perfecting the technique with which they experiment. It is often recommended by the great exponents of arts that improvisation must follow perfection of the technique with which one begins. The experiment otherwise comes to an end by itself and does not bear any fruit.

Question 4

Kumudini Lakhia's life is an inspiring illustration of the emancipation of women.

Solution

The life of Kumudini Lakhia highlights women's emancipation. She started to learn dance from the inspiration of her mother. Later she joined an agriculture course in an agriculture college where she could experience the behaviour of the American teachers and boys. She chose to join the company of Ram Gopal as a performer after completing the course. She settled into a married life after having a dance career which was successful. These highlight that, despite being a woman, she was free to choose her ways, and the way she established her identity in her career is an inspiring illustration of the emancipation of women.

Appreciation

Question 2

'I can see clear bridges between my life experiences and my work in dance.' How does Kumudini Lakhia weave episodes from the two realms in her account?

Solution

In her account, Kumudini Lakhia explains that the basis of her work in dance is formed by her life experiences. She says that she lived her life though she was focused on dance. From her life

experiences, she has taken cues to present them in her dance.

She tells how, in conflict or Duvida, the plight of a middle-class woman who is chained to the Indian life traditions is examined by her. In Atah Kim, we can observe how the author bases the theme on the desire for power which was experienced by her after her schooling.

Kumudini's work Panch Paras is based on the realm of life. She explains her experience with spiritualism, the arguments she used to have with her grandmother based on God's existence, etc. This bit of experience is used by her in Panch Paras as a theme.

Language Work

Question 1

Distinguish between the following pairs of words

incredulous – incredible

suspicious – susceptible

sensitivity – sentimentality

successive – successful

Solution

Incredulous – unwilling or unable to believe something

Incredible – impossible to believe

Suspicious – having or showing a cautious distrust of someone or something

Susceptible – easy to influence or be harmed

Sensitivity – the quality or condition of being sensitive

Sentimentality – exaggerated and self-indulgent tenderness, sadness, or nostalgia

Successive – following one another or following others

Successful – accomplishing a desired aim or result

Question 2

Interpret these phrases in the context of the essay

mist of protection**at a crossroads**

Solution

Mist of protection – The author has used this phrase to highlight that she had a very protective childhood. Her parents kept watch over her and cared for her. In all her activities, her parents tried their best to influence her. This protection was found similar to a mist that covers our vision.

At a crossroads – At a crossroads implies a situation in which a person is not able to decide the path which they should choose. The phrase in the text is used to explain the author's situation after the completion of the agriculture course and was left with a few job prospects.

Question 3

'Kummi', 'ghumar' and 'dandia' are some dance forms mentioned in the text. Make an inventory of folk dance forms in the different regions of the country.

Solution

Assam – Jhumur, Bihu dance

Chattisgarh – Panthi, Raut Nach

Arunachal Pradesh – Bardo Cham

Himachal Pradesh – Kinnauri Natti

Gujarat – Raas, Padhar, Garba

Kashmir – Dumhal

Karnataka – Yakshagana

Madhya Pradesh – Charkula, Tertali, Girda dance, Jawara

Lakshadweep – Lava

Manipur – Dol chalam, Thang ta

Maharashtra – Pavri Naach

Nagaland – Sua lua or Chang lo

Mizoram – Cheraw dance

Punjab – Giddha, Bhangra, Ludi, Jhumar

Orissa – Goti Pua

Sikkim – Singhi Chamm

Pondicherry – Garadi

Tamil Nadu – Kolattam, Kummi

Rajasthan – Kalbelia, Ghoomor, Bhavai

West Bengal – Domni, Gambhira

Tripura – Hojagiri
