

Read the **poem below** and then answer the questions that follow:

A SECOND OLYMPUS

From the rostrum they declaimed
On martyrs and men of high ideals
When they sent out
Benevolent despots to an unwilling race
Straining at the yoke.
Bull dozers trampling on virgin ground
In blatant violation.
They trampled down all that was strange,
And filled the void.
With half digested alien thoughts;
They left a trail of red.
Whenever their feet had passed
Oh, they did themselves fine.
And strutted about the place,
Self-proclaimed demi-gods
From counterfeit Olympus
One day they hurled down thunderbolts
On a toiling race of the earthworms.
They might have rained down pebbles.
To pelt the brats to death
But that was beneath them
They kept up the illusion
That they were fighting foes.
Killing in the name of high ideals.
At the inquest they told the world
The worms were becoming pests.

Moreover, they said?
They did not like wriggling things
Strange prejudice for gods.

Questions

- (a) What is the poem about? (3mks)

(b) Giving a relevant explanation, identify the persona in the poem. (2mks)

(c) Whom do you think the persona refers to as 'they'? Explain. (2mks)

(d) What is the attitude of the poet towards 'they' in the poem? (2mks)

(e) Identify and illustrate any two themes evident in the poem. (4mks)

(f) What is the dominant style that the poet has used to deliver the message in the poem? Cite one illustration and explain its effectiveness. (3mks)

(g) Describe the character trait displayed by 'they' in the poem. (2mks)

(h) Explain the **meaning** of the following **lines** as used in the passage. (2mks)

(i) They trampled down all that was strange.

(ii) And filled the void.

(iii) With half digested alien thoughts.

MARKING SCHEME

POETRY

- (a) The poem is about colonialism and the evils associated with it e.g. Oppression / racial prejudice etc. The poet ridicules colonialism and depicts it as an evil through which the colonized go through untold suffering. (3mks)
- (b) The persona is an observer. □¹ Reports the happenings depicted in the poem. "...they declaimed ... they trampled down all that was strange..." □¹
- (c) "They" refers to the colonialists / oppressors.
'Benevolent despots ill on an unwilling race.'
'They trampled down all that was strange.'
'Self proclaimed demi-gods.'
- (d) The poet is:
- contemptuous
- despising
- critical
- disapproving
- scornful towards 'they' – the colonialists. Uses expressions that show disapproval e.g.
o self proclaimed demi-gods.
o From counterfeit Olympus...
Any other appropriate answer + correct illustration.
- (e) Themes:
- Colonialism – Benevolent despots to an unwilling race.'
- Oppression – trampled, enslaved, yoke, bulldozed.
- Prejudice – trampled down all that was strange.
- And filled the void.
- With half digested alien thoughts.
Any two appropriate themes – identification (1mk) – Illustration (1mk)
- (f) Metaphor (1mk)
- The rostrum – high moral ground assumed by the colonizers from which they look down upon the victims of their oppression.
- Straining the yoke – suffering of the victims of colonialism as a result of hard labour / economic exploitation etc.
- Half digested alien thoughts – foreign cultural values little understood by the locals.
- A trail of red – heavy full on human life suffered by victims of oppression.
- Self proclaimed demi-gods – colonizers who regards themselves superior to those they colonize.
- Toiling race of earthworms – the hapless victims of colonization.
Any one correct illustration + appropriate explanation. (3mks)
- (g) Character traits displayed by 'they'
- Cruel / unfeeling / brutal
- (i) 'They left a trail of red'
- (ii) 'They might have rained down pebbles.'
'To pelt the brats to death.'

(iii) Killing in the name of high ideals.

- Despising / contemptuous / prejudiced.

(i) From the rostrum they declaimed'

(ii) They trampled down all that was strange'

(iii) They did not like wriggling things.

Any one correct trait + appropriate illustration.

(h) They stamped out the indigenous cultural practices and replaced them with foreign culture that

(i) the locals did not fully understand.

(ii) and replaced/changed

(iii) not properly understood and foreign

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