

GRADE: 9 Subject: English Poem 1 A Work of Artifice

Passage 1

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

The bonsai tree

in the attractive pot

could have grown eighty feet tall

on the side of a mountain

till split by lightning.

But a gardener

carefully pruned it.

It is nine inches high.

(i) What kind of tree is a bonsai? What does it stand for in the poem?

Ans. A bonsai is a miniature tree grown in a container. In the poem, it stands for an individual whose potential is restricted by societal expectations.

(ii) Where could it have grown fully? What has stunted its growth?

Ans. The bonsai could have grown fully on the side of a mountain. Its growth is stunted by the gardener's careful pruning.

(iii) Who does the gardener stand for in the poem? Why does it not let the 'bonsai tree' grow to its full potential?

Ans. The gardener symbolizes the forces that control and shape individuals. The gardener wants to restrict its growth.

(iv) Why does the gardener want the bonsai to remain small and weak? What is its implication in the poem?

Ans. The gardener wants the bonsai to remain small and weak to limit its growth. The implication is that society might benefit from keeping individuals submissive and under control.

(v) What is the main idea projected in the poem?

Ans. The main idea of the poem is limitations imposed on individuals.

Passage 2

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Every day as he

whittles back the branches

the gardener croons,

It is your nature

to be small and cozy,

domestic and weak;

(i) What is the function of the ‘gardener’? Which function of the ‘gardener’ referred to in the poem is in reality regressive and harmful? How?

Ans. The gardener’s function is to care for and shape the bonsai tree. However, this care becomes restrictive by constantly trimming the branches, preventing the tree from reaching its full potential.

(ii) In what tone does the gardener speak? What picture do you form of the ‘gardener’ in your mind as ‘he’ speaks to the bonsai tree?

Ans. The gardener speaks in a soothing tone, which suggests he might be trying to appear gentle and comforting. This creates a sense of hypocrisy because his actions contradict his soothing words. We get a picture that the gardener must love his plant but still restricts its growth.

(iii) In what way is the gardener wrong?

Ans. The gardener is wrong because he assumes the bonsai’s nature is to be small and cozy.

(iv) What do the last two lines suggest?

Ans. The lines “domestic and weak” further emphasize the limitations placed on the bonsai. Domestic implies confinement to a limited space, while weak suggests a loss of power and potential.

(v) What does the word ‘croons’ mean? What does it imply?

Ans. “Croons” means to sing in a soft, low voice. It implies that the gardener might be trying to mask his controlling actions with a gentle outer attitude. It creates a sense of

false comfort because the bonsai's freedom is being restricted despite the soothing voice.

Passage 3

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

how lucky, little tree,

to have a pot to grow in.

With living creatures

one must begin very early

to dwarf their growth:

(i) Who is the speaker? Who is being addressed?

Ans. The speaker is the gardener, the one who controls and shapes the bonsai tree. The one being addressed is the bonsai tree but metaphorically represents living beings, specially women.

(ii) What does the 'pot' mean in the metaphorical context of the poem? Give its relevance to the development of women.

Ans. The pot symbolizes the confinement of individuals by society, particularly women. In the context of women's development, the pot represents the confined space in which they are expected to live and function as per societal norms.

(iii) What do males do to stunt the growth of women?

Ans. The males stunt the growth of women by enforcing gender roles, limiting education, discouraging of independence etc.

(iv) Bring out the significance of the last two lines.

Ans. The last lines signify that in order to curb the individuals and stunt their growth, restrictions must be imposed early on in their lives.

(v) What stereotypical role do women play in life? How are they tricked to perform it?

Ans. Women are expected to be domestic, they should be focused on home and nurturing. They are tricked into performing this role by enforcing it from a young age.

Passage 4

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

the bound feet,
the crippled brain,
the hair in curlers,
the hands you
love to touch.

(i) Which shift in context is brought out with these lines?

Ans. The lines from the above extract introduce a shift from the metaphor of the bonsai to the societal limitations placed on women.

(ii) In which context are women's 'feet' bound? Why?

Ans. The historical practice of foot binding in some cultures, particularly China, was an extremely painful practice. Young girls' feet were broken and bound to restrict their growth, creating the desired appearance of small feet. This practice restricted women's mobility

(iii) Why are women made to look attractive?

Ans. Women are made to look attractive as societal pressure often dictates that women prioritize their physical appearance to be considered desirable. This focus can overshadow other aspects of a woman's potential and value.

(iii) The last two lines are ironic. How?

Ans. The irony lies in the contradiction between a crippled brain and hands you love to touch. It suggests that while a woman's mind might be limited by societal expectations, her physical beauty is still emphasized. This highlights the objectification of women and the focus on appearance over intellectual capacity.

(v) What does the poet seem to lament? What does she expect of women?

Ans. The poet seems to lament the many ways women are controlled and restricted. This includes physical limitations (bound feet), intellectual limitations (crippled brain), and societal pressures on appearance (hair in curlers). The poem suggests that women should be free to develop their full potential.

Teacher's Signature

Principal Signature