

D.H. Lawrence  
Snake  
More challenging questions!

Worksheet by:  
Keith Tankard  
Knowledge4Africa.com

1. Lawrence opens his work with a statement about the heat. Comment on how the poet uses the concept of heat throughout the poem. (6)
  
2. "The voice of my education said to me  
He must be killed,  
For in Sicily the black, black snakes are innocent, the  
gold are venomous.  
And voices in me said, If you were a man  
You would take a stick and break him now, and finish  
him off."
  - Comment on the two voices in the poet's mind. (6)
  - Analyse the evolution of the poet's conception of the snake as presented it in this poem. (4)
  
3. "He lifted his head from his drinking, as cattle do,  
And looked at me vaguely, as drinking cattle do."
  - The poet twice compares the snake to cattle. Why does he do so? (4)
  
4. "And as he put his head into that dreadful hole,  
And as he slowly drew up, snake-easing his  
shoulders, and entered farther,  
A sort of horror, a sort of protest against his  
withdrawing into that horrid black hole,  
Deliberately going into the blackness, and slowly  
drawing himself after,  
Overcame me now his back was turned.  
I looked round, I put down my pitcher,  
I picked up a clumsy log  
And threw it at the water-trough with a clatter."
  - Why does the poet speak of "that dreadful hole" and "horrid black hole". How does this choice of words increase our understanding of the poet's feelings? (4)
  - Comment on the poet's use of rhythm in this stanza to put across his message. (4)
  - What language device or figure of speech is used in "I picked up a clumsy log"? In what way can the log be said to be "clumsy"? (4)
  - Why did the poet regret his actions? (4)
  
5. "For he seemed to me again like a king,  
Like a king in exile, uncrowned in the underworld,  
Now due to be crowned again.  
And so, I missed my chance with one of the lords  
Of life.  
And I have something to expiate;  
A pettiness."
  - Lawrence perceived of the snake differently from the way in which most Christians perceive it. Explain carefully how this is so. (10)

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