

CLASS 12

SUB ENGLISH

STUDY MATERIAL

KEEPING QUIET

THEME

Keepin Quiet written by Pablo Neruda is a poem in favour of peace, humanity and self actualization. We live in troubled times these days in which our utilitarian take on life has not divorced us from fellow beings but also from our own selves. So the poet makes an earnest appeal for a quiet introspection and retrospection with a sole message to keep ourselves quiet for a moment. This powerful silence will bring about an exotic moment for us in which we will begin to see ourselves as who we really are. This will be the moment of self discovery.

Pablo Neruda hints at a state of equilibrium where without any movement , without any activity we shall get a chance to introspect within ourselves about our views , our actions whether we are right or wrong, true or false.

An appeal to come under one umbrella of silence, breaking all the differences we possess.

Wars will cease and people will begin to stop hurting each other because upon discovering the real self in a moment of complete tranquillity; people will rise above petty selfish needs and unite on a plane of humanity and brotherhood.

It is all about life and action. We should stop a while and put aside our possessiveness and narrow minded thoughts. The theme of rejuvenation has also touched upon. Just as spring takes away all the dormancy of winter, the phase of keeping quiet will also be followed by a burst of meaningful activity.

He symbolically presented the fishermen to be oppressors and whales as the oppressed. Then he presented the salt gatherers representing the lower section of society who are victims of several work that damage themselves. He further stresses that man's sadness is formed out of his own thinking and actions. This is the tragedy.

The poet mocks at the victory of those people who get victory over destruction.

The poet invokes Earth as a living symbol to prove his point. Nature remains at work under apparent stillness and keeps the Earth alive. With the word 'Earth', Pablo Neruda hints at all ibeing a human of earth is broader realization. So he advocates complete silence

LITERARY DEVICES USED

1.Count to twelve: Measure of time. Clock has twelve markings on it to measure time. Twelve hints at 12 hours of a day which rules our life. Twelve refers to twelve months of a year. At twelve the hands of a clock/watch are one. Interestingly if we count the letters in the title Keeping Quiet , there are 12 letters.

2. fishermen and whale stand for the oppressor and the oppressed.

3.put on clean clothes : Alliteration

Metaphor : the poet wants the war mongers to shed their blood soiled clothes. Refers to clean minds. Man would cleanse his heart purging it of hatred.

4. In the shade- Just as shade protects us from harsh sun, we will protect each other as brothers, thus live in peace.

5. Earth can teach us- Personification. Earth is personified as a teacher. When Earth appears to be dead, it is actually dormant and carefully preserving the seeds of life.

6. sudden strangeness – alliteration

7. No truck with death – Euphemism (A mild or indirect word or expression substituted for one considered to be too harsh or blunt when referring to something unpleasant or embarrassing)

8. not move our arms- ‘Arms’ stands for body part as well as weaponry. Literary device used is pun. A pun is play on words that produces a humorous effect by using a word that suggests two or more meanings.

9. Walk with their brothers – synecdoche is used. Using a concrete object to convey an abstract idea. It implies brotherhood over here.

10. Wars with fire, wars with gas – Repetition of same words in a line or sentence – Palilogia

SHORT QUESTIONS

1.How, according to Pablo Neruda , can keeping quiet change our attitude to life?

2. What symbol from Nature does the poet invoke to say that there can be life under apparent stillness?

3. What is the ‘sadness’ that the poet refers to in the poem?

4. Do you think the poet advocates total inactivity or death? Why/ why not?