



ENGLISH CORE

CLASS XII
(2020-21)

Textbook : **FLAMINGO**

Text Title : **Keeping Quiet**

Author : **Pablo Neruda**

THEME



3 Keeping Quiet



12074CH11

About the poet

Pablo Neruda (1904-1973) is the pen name of Neftali Ricardo Reyes Basoalto who was born in the town of Parral in Chile. Neruda's poems are full of easily understood images which make them no less beautiful. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in the year 1971. In this poem Neruda talks about the necessity of quiet introspection and creating a feeling of mutual understanding among human beings.

underlying theme

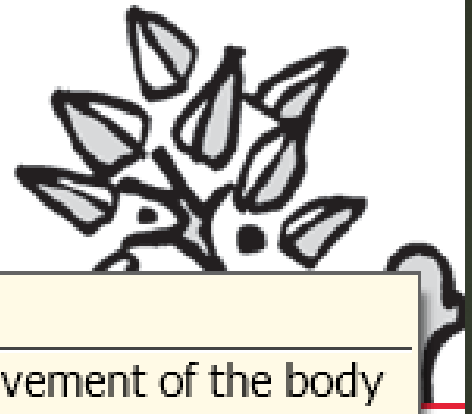
PROCESS OF INTROSPECTION

► initiation

Attempt to eliminate all difference by creating equality based on silence.

Now we will count to twelve
and we will all keep still.

For once on the face of the Earth
let's not speak in any language.
let's stop for one second,
and not move our **arms** so much.



Literary Device

Pun: 1. literal movement of the body
2. Armament

ARRIVAL AT THE EXOTIC MOMENT

► expected change in the surroundings

Context:
Industrialisation
and
urbanisation

It would be an exotic moment
without rush, without engines,
we would all be together
in a sudden strangeness

Literary Device

Alliteration

Exotic moment: unprecedented
moment of silence,
introspection, togetherness
and brotherhood.

ARRIVAL AT THE EXOTIC MOMENT

► expected change in human behaviour

Fishermen in the cold sea
would not harm whales
and the man gathering salt
would look at his hurt hands.

Literary Device

Alliteration

In the moment of introspection, mankind will realise the various ways in which they have harmed themselves and the external environment.

Wars against the environment, atomic, nuclear wars and other forms of warfare.

Those who prepare green wars,
wars with gas, wars with fire,
victory with no survivors,
would put on clean clothes
and walk about with their brothers
in the shade, doing nothing.

Clean clothes:
symbolic of new beginning; a form of resurrection.



NATURE OF HUMAN LIFE

Keeping quiet is not equal to absolute passivity or death.

It is active introspection

Human sadness as a result of:

1. lack of self realisation and understanding
2. constant threat of death

What I want should not be confused

with total inactivity.

Life is what it is about;

I want no truck with death.

If we were not so single-minded about keeping our lives moving,

and for once could do nothing,

perhaps a huge silence

might interrupt this sadness

of never understanding ourselves

and of threatening ourselves with

death.

PARALLEL BETWEEN FUNCTIONING OF EARTH AND INTROSPECTION

Literary Device

Imagery

Perhaps the Earth can teach us
as when everything seems dead
and later proves to be alive.

Valuable lesson of
regeneration to be learned
from nature.

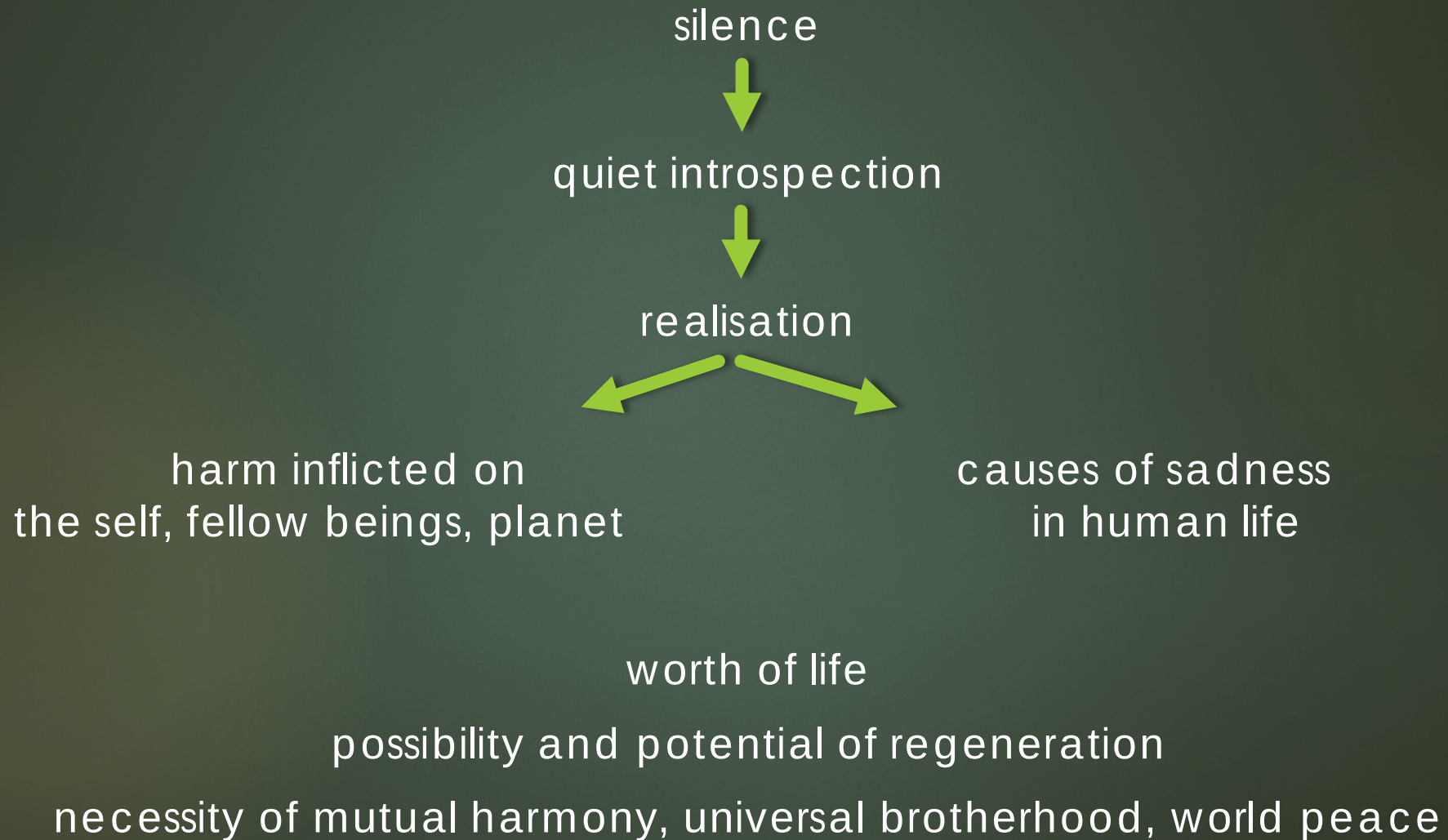
Literary Device

Refrain

Now I'll count up to twelve
and you keep quiet and I will go.

crucial shift from first
person plural to first person
singular.

MAJOR TALKING POINTS



QUICK REVISION

1. The phrase 'sudden strangeness' refers to the _____ moment, according to the poet.
2. 'Not speak[ing] in any language' and 'not mov[ing] our arms so much' would help the humanity to create a feeling of _____.
3. The worst effect of war, as mentioned in the poem, is victory but with _____.
4. What does the poet expect from the people who prepare wars?
5. The poet's suggestion of 'doing nothing' (or quiet introspection) should not be confused with _____.
6. State the two causes of sadness in man's life as discussed by Neruda.
7. What can cause effective interruption in the 'this sadness' of human life?
8. While _____ are responsible for causing harm to whales, the _____ causes harm to the self.
9. The poem begins with the poet asking the audience to _____.
10. The poem concludes with the poet asking the readers/listeners to _____.



HAPPY LEARNING! 😊