

MOTHER

Intent of this allegory

- ✓ *To realize that modern man has lost the meaning of being human.*
- ✓ *Be de-sacralizing the world, we lost our souls.*
- ✓ *Be destroying the earth, we destroyed ourselves.*
- ✓ *We and the earth stand together or fall together.*

An Allegory

There was a very loving, fruitful and provident mother. In her immense fertility she happily begot hundreds nay, thousands of children. Her name was ‘Earth’ and her children’s names were ‘men’ and ‘women’.

Lovingly and with utter prodigality she regaled them with cool and chaste water to drink, fleshy and juicy fruits to eat; soft, green and fresh grass to lie on; nights and days, months and seasons.

When men and women, Mother Earth’s children, were small they loved their mother dearly. They caressed her night and day with their bare hands and feet.

Grateful to Mother Earth they established joyous festivals to usher in and out the seasons, the harvesting of crops, the beginning and ending of the rains, summers and winters.

In their child-like simplicity they even prayed to her and worshipped her in their fields, in their homes and in their little temples and shrines.

As the children of the Mother Earth grew and became learned and educated, slowly they turned colder and colder towards their mother. In the passing of time, unfortunately, they forgot her favors, her love and generosity. Their festivals and celebrations ceased. Their prayers stuck in their throats.

Finally, their love for their mother and their worshipping her was forgotten; worse still, they regarded with horror and contempt their former days of filial devotion to their mother, their prayers, festivals and celebrations.

As they grew more ‘civilized’ they learned to wrest from her, by cunning and by force, the treasures she lovingly concealed in her bosom for the benefit of her children to be born in centuries to come.

Finally, in our days, when they reached the top of development, her children, have become aggressive towards their benign mother. Now, they do not consider the Earth as their mother any longer but as a rival to be conquered, as a wild beast to be entrapped, as

a miser to be stripped bare. And so now, her children, brutally ‘cannibalize’ on her, maim her, strip her of her mantle of beauty and pollute her.

Now, all over the world the, so called thinkers and great intellectuals proudly keep boasting:

- At last, we conquered the earth!
- We discover her secrets. We are the masters!
- We are free now from our former obscurantism and superstition.
- We are rich and prosperous.
- A bright future is waiting for us.
- We need not pray or worship to anyone any more!

But, a question keeps cropping up: Is it really so? Can we live without our Mother?

Points for Reflection and Discussion

1. Is the story of “**Mother**” just a poetical flight of fancy, or does it express a true reality? What? Explain.
2. Who are the children of mother earth?
3. How did ‘primitive’ man feel towards the earth and nature? How did he express it?
4. Did the festivals, celebrations, rituals and myths of ‘primitive’ man have any value? Which?
5. Is it a loss or a gain that those festivals ceased? Why?
6. How and where can modern man find the equivalents to those festivals and myths?
7. How does ‘modern’ man – our ‘civilized’ man – feel towards the earth? What is earth for him?
8. Why the attitudes of man towards earth have changed so radically?
9. What does ‘modern’ man do to the earth today?
10. Can man find meaning and happiness only in science and the so called modern progress? Why?

Explain the meaning of the following sentences:

1. Modern man cannibalizes on the earth and its resources. By doing this, he sucks his own blood.
2. We boast of self sufficiency. Yet, we need the earth as much as the ‘primitive’ man did.
3. We are part and parcel of the earth. We should take care of her as much as we take care of ourselves.
4. The non-renewable resources of the earth should be recycled and not thrown away.
5. Economy truly should economize and not waste the earth’s riches.
6. We have made ourselves ‘orphans’ in a world of plenty. Very soon we shall be ‘destitute’ in a ravished world.
7. We – men of the present generation – should think of those to come after us and not bequeath them a depredated and raped world!
8. Modern science tells us only **the how** things happen, but not **the why** they happen!
9. We, rational beings, cannot be at ease and harpy while ignoring the meaning of life.

10. Man – primitive or modern - needs myths, symbols and beliefs to invest meaning to our existence
11. Religious beliefs and practice - in one form or other - are essential for a meaningful and peaceful life.
12. Primitive man celebrated mother earth's bounty with festivals and all sorts of celebrations and rituals. We need to celebrate life as much as he did, I dare say, even more than he needed them, but the how is taunting us!
13. Modern man has grown self-conceited and thus blinded to his real needs.