



1. Explain: ‘Beneath all uniforms, a single body breathes’.

The line means that though the outward appearance of people varies because of the difference in their attire, there is an inherent similarity between all human beings. All people live and breathe in a similar fashion. Militaries in the world may don different uniforms but they comprise of human beings who essentially are the same anywhere in the world.

2. Who is referred to as ‘our brothers’?

The people who live in countries other than ours have been referred to as our brothers because basically, we all have similar emotions, hopes, joys and sorrows.

3. Explain the expression: ‘Their hands are ours’.

‘Their hands are ours’ means that they too work hard like us with their hands to earn their livelihood. It also means that human beings have basically the same physiognomy.

4. Which poetic device has been used in “war’s long winter starv’d”? Why has war’s winter been called long?

The poetic device used in “war’s long winter starv’d” is a ‘metaphor’. Here the starvation caused by the harsh winter season has been compared indirectly to the destructive period of wartime. The winter of war has been called ‘long’ because unlike the natural phenomenon of the winter season, it is self-inflicted trouble that not only robs the warmth of peace but also seems unending.

5. Explain: ‘A labour not different from our own’.

This expression means that the hard work done by the people who live in other countries is not different in any way from the one that we do. All of us have to toil and work hard in a similar way for survival.

6. Explain: ‘they have eyes like ours that wake or sleep’.

The poet is trying to bring home the idea that those people whom we consider strange or foreign are similar to us in every way. They sleep and wake up each new day just like us. Even though the colour and shape of their eyes is different from ours, they perform a similar function.

7. What do you understand by ‘common life’?

‘Common life’ means life anywhere in the world that has similar patterns and features – birth and death, joys and sorrows, youth and old age, and so on and so forth. This commonness of ‘common life’ is experienced by all the people of the world regardless of the country in which they live.

8. Explain: ‘hells of fire and dust’ and ‘the innocence of air’.

‘Hells of fire and dust’ stands for the devastation created and caused by the arms and ammunition used in wars. ‘Innocence of air’ means the freshness and purity of air that nature has

blessed us with. It also indicates the innocence of the human mind. The dust and smoke thus caused pollute the very air we breathe.

9. What does the poet want to convey by telling us that “It is the human earth that we defile”?

The poet wants to convey that wars cause massive destruction of life and property. They ruin the clean and green environment of the earth and breed hatred and enmity. Hence, no one benefits from war because the damage caused to earth is to be borne equally, for we all share the same earth.

10. ‘They have eyes like ours’. What similarity does the poet find in the eyes of people all over the world?

Ans: -The poet finds that eyes of men all over the world have similar sights and scenes to see, and experience the phenomena of waking up and sleeping in a similar way. Hence, the so-called strange and foreign people to have eyes just like us. Even though the colour and shape of their eyes are different from ours, they bring us identical experiences and perform a similar function.

11. Why does the poet call harvest ‘peaceful’ and war as ‘winter’?

Ans: -Harvests are called ‘peaceful’ because they bring abundance and prosperity and they thrive in peaceful times only. War, on the other hand, is like the severe and harsh ‘winter’ that ruins the crops and starves people. It is only the peaceful times that bring harmony and contentment. War destroys everything and forces people to face hunger, poverty, disease and death.

12. The land our brothers walk upon. Is earth like this, in which we all shall lie!’ What does the poet mean to say through the above lines? Explain.

Ans. The poet means to say in these lines that it is the same land on which we walk and after our death, we would be buried in the same earth. Through these lines, the poet tells us that we do all our activities on the same land. We get food from this land. We make our houses on this land and we get many other things from the same land, then why do we say to some people to be ‘others’? No one is other. We live in the same house or universe as a family. Then why do we create discrimination against some people? Why do we fight with our brothers? It is all because of our greed to get more wealth and power. We want to have more wealth and power than others. In the pursuit to fulfil this desire, we fight with others and hurt them.

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow: -

STANZA 1

*Remember, no men are strange, no countries foreign
Beneath all uniforms, a single body breathes Like ours:
the land our brothers walk upon
Is earth like this, in which we all shall lie.*

Questions:

- (a) What should we remember?
- (b) What uniforms is the poet talking about?
- (c) Where do our brothers walk?
- (d) Where shall we all lie at the end of our life?
- (e) Name the poem and the poet.

Answers:

- (a) We should remember that no men are strange and no country is foreign.
- (b) The different uniforms by different kind of people.
- (c) They walk on this earth.
- (d) We all shall lie in the earth at the end of our life.
- (e) The name of the poem is 'No Men Are Foreign' and the name of the poet is 'James Kirkup'.

STANZA 2

*They, too, aware of sun and air and water,
Are fed by peaceful harvests, by war's long winter starv'd.
Their hands are ours, and in their lines, we read
A labour not different from our own.*

Questions: -

- (a) Who do they refer to in this stanza?
- (b) What are they fed by?
- (c) What are they starved by?
- (d) How is labourer different from us?
- (e) Name the poet.

Answers :

- (a) They refer to the other people of the world.
- (b) They are fed by peaceful harvests.
- (c) They are starved by long winter
- (d) A labour is little different from any one of us.
- (e) The name of the poet is 'James Kirkup'.

STANZA 3

*Remember they have eyes like ours that wake
Or sleep, and strength that can be won
By love. In every land is common life '
That all can recognise and understand.*

Question

- (a) What do the eyes do?
- (b) How can strength be won?
- (c) What is common in every land?
- (d) What can all recognise and understand?

Answer

- (a) The eyes wake and sleep.
- (b) Strength can be won with love.
- (c) Life is common in every land.
- (d) All can recognise and understand that life is common in every land.

STANZA 4

*It is the human earth that we defile.
Our hells of fire and dust outrage the innocence
Of air that is everywhere our own,
Remember, no men are foreign, and no countries strange.*

Questions:

- (a) What are we doing to the earth?
- (b) What is outraging this earth?
- (c) What can we call our own?
- (d) Is there any strange country?
- (e) What should we remember?

Answers :

- (a) We are polluting this earth.
- (b) Hells of fire and dust are outraging this earth.
- (c) We can call the air our own.
- (d) No, there is not any strange country.
- (e) We should remember that no men are foreign and no country is strange.

NO MEN ARE FOREIGN Useful Expression

♣ Beneath all uniforms, ... — the people of different countries wear various dresses but the human body is the same beneath them.

♣ ... in their lines we read — we all have same hands by which we all produce the same type of goods, products and literature.

♣ In every land is common life — in every country, the people are leading the same life. They feel pain and sorrow similarly.

♣ whenever we are told to hate our brothers, ... — the selfish people instigate the innocent to harm each other.

♣ Remember, no men are foreign, and no countries strange — We should not forget that we all are the citizens of the world. Here, no one is a foreigner and no countries are strange. We have similar body and mind everywhere.

Summary of *No men are Foreign*

‘*No Men Are Foreign*’ reinstates the fact that all men are the same, despite the man-made differences of caste, religion, nationality and language.

The poem ‘No Men Are Foreign’ emphasizes the fact that all men are the same, and all men are equal. The poet tries to proclaim the idea of universal brotherhood. The poem’s title itself reflects the central idea of the poem that ‘No Men Are Foreign’. The title reverberates in the first and the last line stressing on the poet’s idea of “all men are the same.”

Kirkup made a comparison to the similarities in the human body between the people who live at different places to state that all are equal. Except for the man-made division in the name of borders and fences, or languages, or ethnicity, all of us live the same life. When we are alive, we walk on the same Earth. Similarly, when we die, we are buried on the same earth. People from different countries enjoy good food during peace and starve during the war and in winter, which is also common to all. Further, the poet draws similarities between the hands that do hard work and the eyes that see the same way when we are awake and closes when we are asleep.

As he concludes, the poet wants the readers to remember the fact that whenever we hate someone, we cheat and hate ourselves. Similarly, if we pick up the war against each other, we pollute the Earth and make it impure.

Analysis of No Men Are Foreign

Stanza 1

Remember, no men are strange, no countries foreign

(. . .)

Is earth like this, in which we all shall lie.

In the first stanza of 'No Men Are Foreign' the poet says that "no men are strange" and "no country is foreign". Using a very serious tone, he reiterates that all people are equal under the sky, for everyone breathes like everyone else. He feels that if borders are removed from Earth, no country will be foreign, and everyone will be free to move around. For the borders is something that separates countries from each other. The poet iterates that the entire Earth is one and the people "Beneath all uniforms" who live on this Earth belong to one human race for they are all "a single body breathes like ours". Further, we have all walked upon the same 'Earth', and when we die, we will be buried in the graves on the same Earth.

Stanza 2

They, too, aware of sun and air and water,

(. . .)

A labour not different from our own.

In the second stanza of 'No Men Are Foreign,' the poet refers to the similarities between the people he belongs and the people from other countries. By 'They' he talks of people who belong to other countries. They too are aware of the "sun and air and water" which is the same to all on earth. When there is no war, we all do farming and enjoy the yields of the harvest. In the same way, during wars and winter, we all starve. Further, with "their hands are ours" he conveys that people different countries too have the same hands and work the same way as we and do. From all these examples, he suggests to the readers that there is no difference among the people belonging to different countries.

Stanza 3

Remember they have eyes like ours that wake

(. . .)

That all can recognise and understand.

In the third stanza of 'No Men Are Foreign,' the poet calls out the readers to remember that even the foreigners have the same eyes. Like the poet's country people, they also use it to "wake or sleep," metaphorically marking the beginning and the end of their day. Similarly, we are given strength with that one can win through love. Moreover, in every land that is in every country, there is one common thing, that is life. If a person could recognize this universality, then the poet says there will be no fights or wars between countries.

Stanza 4

Let us remember, whenever we are told

(. . .)

Remember, we who take arms against each other

The fourth stanza of 'No Men Are Foreign' ultimately reveals the central idea of the poem and the poet's desire for peace among nations. He wants the readers, including himself to remember if someone hates the other in the name of the country, it is his own self the person hates. By hating "our brothers", the fellow human beings, we deprive, cheat, and condemn our own selves. Further, he adds, when waging war against each other, the loss is common to both the side. So, one must understand it before drawing weapons against the other.

Stanza 5

It is the human earth that we defile.

(. . .)

Remember, no men are foreign, and no countries strange.

In the fifth, concluding stanza, of 'No Men Are Foreign' he talks of the extended impact of war. War doesn't affect just the lives on earth but it makes the Earth dirty. The fire and dust of war defile the pure air which is common to all the people on earth. Whenever war happens, it leads to a lot of bloodshed and death. The dead bodies accumulate on the Earth makes the innocent earth impure. Therefore, with all the situations considered the loss is common to all when we hate our fellow human beings. Since everyone is created equally on earth, he wants people to live in harmony. Finally, he repeats the first line "Remember, no men are foreign, and no countries strange" to revitalize the idea that everything is common and everyone is equal on earth.

Literary Devices

i. **Rhyme Scheme** - The entire poem is written in free verse. There is no rhyme scheme in the poem.

The literary devices used are as follows –

i. **Alliteration:** The repetition of a consonant sound in two or more closely placed words is called alliteration. The instances of alliteration in the poem are -

- **Stanza 1** - Body, breathes 'b' sound is repeated
- **Stanza 2** – war's, winter 'w' sound is repeated

i. **Metaphor**

- **Stanza 1** - Uniform refers to the military of different countries
- **Stanza 2** – wars time is compared to the winter season

i. **Repetition:** It is used in the entire poem.

- 'Remember' word is repeated 5 times in this poem.

- ‘Remember, no men are strange, no countries foreign’ is repeated in stanza 1 and stanza 5
- i. **Enjambment** - running lines of poetry from one line to the next without using any kind of punctuation to indicate a stop. Instances of enjambment in the poem are as follows-
- Stanza 1 – line 2, 3 and 4
 - Stanza 2 – line 3 and 3
 - Stanza 3 – line 1, 2, and 3
 - Stanza 4 – line 1 and 2
 - Stanza 5 – Line 2 and 3
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