

PENANG SANGAM HIGH SCHOOL
P.O.BOX 44, RAKIRAKI
SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

WEEK 18

Year/Level: _____ **11** _____ **Subject:** _____ **ENGLISH** _____

Strand	WRITING AND SHAPING
Sub Strand	EN. 11.3.1.1: Compose various text types to communicate ideas for a targeted audience and for a variety of purposes.
Content Learning Outcome	Recall the literary elements of drama. comprehend the setting describe act one and scene plot.

[Paste these notes in the drama section of your literature book]

Characters

Aroha

- Aroha is the central character in the play and she is 60 years old.
- She is very rigid in moral values and is proud of her past and her ancestors and for these reasons she refuses to make compromise between her past and the material world of the present.
- She is full of pride that makes her cling to her land that she regards as sacred and the right of her people and stubbornness and is a very religious person with conservative ideas.
- All the conflicts in the play are focused on her.
- She sees the remnants of her tribe as a degenerates group, lazy and unfaithful to the Maori culture.
- She wants her family to be soild and unchanging like “Pohutukawa Tree” but they reject her for being most deceitful.
- Aroha exemplifies the statement: “Pride goes before a fall” in the paly.
- Her high point of pride is when she sings of Sylvia’s wedding and when she tries to win a moment of understanding with Johnny.
- Her pride begins to fall when Queenie searches for love and becomes pregnant to Roy McDowell and secondly, when Johnny destroys the church.
- She says to Rev. Sedgwick: “My world is blowing over”, which means that her life, values, honour and virtues have been deeply hurt and shattered.
- At the end, she is determined to die.

Queenie

- Queenie is a 17 year old attractive girl, who is inexperienced about life due to little freedom from her mother, Aroha.
- She prefers pop music and Pakeha clothes.
- She has contrary attitude towards Christianity while Aroha treats Rev. Sedgwick with pride and respect.
- Her conservation with Sedgwick reflects her intelligence.
- Queenie likes to dress up and be admired by others and so is a target for any unscrupulous comments for her flattery, which allows Roy to take advantage of her and make her pregnant.
- She is sent by Aoha to live in Tamatea and gets married “all in white” with a crown.
- In the end, she takes Aroha’s place in her a tribe as a queen.

Johnny

- rebellious, 18 year old.
- basically a good boy whose desire is to do something big.
- He is concerned about the Pakeha thinking about the Maoris (the present and the past).
- He finds it difficult to share his mother's feelings about God.
- He starts drinking without his mother's knowledge to feel good and feels a sense of freedom by riding Jezebel, Sylvia's horse.
- His getting drunk at Sylvia's wedding horrifies his mother and does disrespect for the taiaha and the bible when Roy refuses to marry Queenie because she is a Maori, he drinks and wrecks the church in act of destruction of something that symbolizes the white man and church resulting in his imprisonment.
- He also gets to stay in Tamatea after getting out to jail.
- He comes back to TePeranga planning to sell the land and take his mother to Tamatea where their tribe members live.

Reverend Sedgwick

- Reverend Sedgwick is a British immigrant who has come to replace the last preacher in the church.
- He acts as an interpreter in the play. He is an outsider who has a moral voice for Aroha's family and Roy though he is ignored.
- He is able to understand the conflicts between the Maoris and Pakeha and reflected in Aroha, is fairly a flat character but his strength is in telling what is happening in the play.
- He is able to identify that Aroha is proud, won't change with time and confuses Christ with Whetumarama and shows her weakness by **telling her.....you cheated him.....with pride.**

Roy McDowell

- He is a young Pakeha who was not very obedient and so was sent to TePeranga by his father to improve himself.
- He served in the pub and influences Johnny to take alcohol.
- He has an eye for Queenie and flirts with her and gets her pregnant.
- He later refuses to marry her because she is a Maori who won't be accepted by his parents as their daughter-in-law.

Mr Atkinson

- Mr Atkinson is a Pakeha of 50 years old who is a money-minded person and very patient.
- He loves TePeranga and owns an orchard in which the Mataira family works.
- He is married and has a daughter, Sylvia. His attitudes towards Maoris are paternalistic.
- He treats Aroha with respect and relies on the disciplined hardwork of her and her children, to keep his orchard in good shape.
- When he regards Aroha as special, he has no respect for Maoris because he believes that they do not live according to the white man's values.
- His attitude is that he is happy to use the Maori land and labour but he is materialistic.
- Labour brings in money and land is to be bought and sold for money when it provides or promises no more.

Symbolism

The Pohutukawa Tree

- This is the symbol of the play. It acts as a barometer showing the state of Aroha's vigour, strength and health and perhaps also the state of the whole of Mataira's family.
- The tree plays an important role as the movement of the tree corresponds to what is within the Mataira family.
- At the beginning the tree is in a quite good shape and it is blossoming red.
- It suggests unity and togetherness of the Mataira family.
- The red blooms also symbolize the fact where the Pakehas were killed.
- The red flower represents the sign of blood between the Maoris and the Pakeha.
- As the play continues, it starts to droop in sympathy with Aroha's morale.
- When Atkinson mentioned that the roots are showing, Aroha has started to break slowly.
- When the tree begins to droop, it shows that it sympathizes with Aroha's demoralizing morale.
- Atkinson comments on it throughout the play, saying it should be cut down. It is noticed that towards the end of the play, the branches are hanging much lower.
- Mr Atkinson remarks, **"It is not much of a tree now."**
- This is when the Mataira family has completely broken up.
- Queenie goes away to Tamatea to have her baby while Johnny is sent to Reformatory and Aroha dies.
- Thus, we see that the changing appearance of the tree in fact shows the slow decline and the final break up of Aroha and her family.

Significance of the Taiaha

- This is the spear that Whetumarama used to kill the white (Pakeha), Captain who led soldiers against the tribe.
- It was a symbol of war and blood but when Aroha accepts Christ in her life, she offers it to Jesus as assign of peace between Maoris and Pakehas.
- With this same Taiaha, Johnny wrecks the church when Roy refuses to marry Queenie so the Taiaha once more becomes the symbol of hate and dislike.

Importance of the opening scene

- It captures our interest and strikes the keynote of the play.
- The major characters are introduced. Aroha, Queenie and Johnny. They are the Maori family left in TePeranga.
- We also meet a few Pakehas who are Aroha's Neighbours.
- The main conflicts of the play are unfolded:
- We come to know of the existence of racial prejudice in TePeranga. Most Maoris have sold their land and left.
- Another conflict is the generation gap that exists between the young and the old.
- Aroha thinks that her children are truthful to her but already there are signs that the family would break in future.
- We also come to know the deep attachment Aroha has to her past. She refuses to sell the last acre of land which belongs to her ancestors.
- It also captures the reader's attention with an atmosphere of music and fragrance.

Themes

• Generation gap

- Aroha's life was ruled by her Maori culture and she tries to influence her children with her culture but Johnny and Queenie find it hard to get right into Maori culture as they both have experienced at least something of the modern way of life.
- For instance, music and drinking.
- Aroha was also strict and never allowed them to go out or have any freedom.
- This resulted in Johnny and Queenie into being rebellious.
- Johnny wrecks the church and is taken to reformatory and Queenie gets pregnant to Roy.
- This brings shame to the Mataira Family.
- It is very familiar to Fijian culture where children are not given freedom and they rebel.
- It is a clear indication that children should be given a little freedom to learn about life and reality.

• Prejudice

- Roy refusing to marry Queenie is clear show of prejudice.
- He claims that Queenie is a Maori and this would bring shame to his family if he fathers a coloured child.
- This shows that no matter how high ranking Maoris belong to it matters that they are different of culture.
- For instance, Queenie is from a chiefly family and her rank does not matter.
- What matters is her colour. Similarly prejudice is shown in our society in villages mostly.
- The chiefly families are prejudiced to inter-marriages of an 'Adi' or 'Ratu' to commoner, all due to traditional and cultural beliefs.
- The same happens in Hindu and Muslim marriages or Fijians to Europeans.
- But in the common and nobody really takes in to consideration of caste system, culture and tradition.
- The children with mixed blood are a very common site in present society.

• Pride

- Aroha in her pride of Maori culture and tradition isolates herself from her people and her children.
- She prides in and values the teachings of Whetumarama and refuses to change her ways to the modern way of life.
- She also feels that her tribe has lost its respect and prestige by adapting the western way of life.
- This adaption has mocked and shamed Maori traditions and Aroha refuses to be linked by them.
- In this present society , the situation is similar where the older generation still follows its culture while the young have forgotten of just do not want to follow their tradition and culture.
- This is due to the introduction of European way of life.
- The pride that used to stand now have been disintergrated as new things have intervened.

Paragraph question: Describe a scene you like and discuss an issue in this scene and its relevance to you/your society, using apt quotes. [Write about 100-150 words]

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