

LESSON NOTE ON LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH WEEK 3

SUBJECT: Literature-in-English

TOPIC: African Poetry: "The Grieved Lands of Africa" by Agostinho Neto

CLASS: SS2

WEEK: 3

THEMES

1. Africa as a land of grief

Africa is the grieved land. She has experienced many horrible ordeals in the hands of colonial masters who have exploited her weaknesses to cheat her and cause her years of pain and suffering. The poet draws attention to Africa's "tearful woes of ancient and modern slavery" and "the degrading sweat of impure dance" coupled with "the wickedness of iron and fire". Apart from attacks on our resources, there is sufficient assault on individuals who say no; such people have been thrown into jail where they can only hear the "jingling of jailer's keys". The phrase "corpses thrown up by the Atlantic is a reference to the many African souls lost in the seas to slavery and the robbery of African resources as they were shipped to the West.

2. Hope in adversity

The poet nonetheless tells us of the persistent spirit of Africans even when faced with a lot of adversity. "the stifled laughter" in line 14 and "the unconscious brilliance of hidden sensation". All of these are indications that the subjugated hardship will last only for a while.

POETIC DEVICES

1. Diction: the words used in the poem are simple and within the grasp of students who are the main target of the poet.
2. Mood: the mood of the poet can be described as emotionally grieved. The reader is made to feel the poet's grieve about the sordid experiences of the black man before and during the period of colonization.
3. Personification: the lands of Africa is said to be grieving as if they were human beings. Lands are given human attribute of grieving. Line 10, wickedness of iron and fire, line 14, victorious voice of laments etc.
4. Alliteration: the use of repeated consonant sounds in lines 14, victorious voice /v/ repeated, line 20, decked with dances /d/ repeated etc.

5. Repetition: some words are repeated for effect/emphasis. Words like "grieved, sensation, dream, dance" etc.
6. Symbolism: the representation of the Africa continent in line 7 as a beautiful "flower" and "forest" which are "crushed" is symbolical and the wickedness of iron and fire that is responsible for the senseless destruction is symbolized by western colonialism.

HOMEWORK

1. Select two themes in "The Grieved Lands of Africa" and discuss them in detail.
2. Discuss the use of alliteration and personification in the poem.