

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

SS2

WEEK 4

AFRICAN POETRY: 'A GOVERNMENT DRIVER ON HIS RETIREMENT' Cont'd (Figures of Speech and Poetic Devices)

1. EUPHEMISM

The poet uses the instrument of euphemism to narrate the death of the driver who died in a ghastly ill-fated accident caused by himself. For example, in line 33-34, the expressions "and it sent him home/home to rest in peace" are examples of euphemism. He uses mild words to report the death of the driver.

2. DICTION

The poet's choice of words is very simple. It cannot pose a problem to an average reader because it is more of day-to-day English usage. His type of words-selection makes the poem interesting as the poet uses simple, accessible and free flowing language to convey his message. The poem is written with less ambiguous syntax thereby enhancing the comprehension of the subject matter.

3. REPETITION

Instances of repetition abound in the poem such as:

| | | |
|-----------------|---|-------------------------|
| "Many years" | - | {lines 1 & 5} |
| "Come friends" | - | {lines 9 & 21} |
| "Booze" | - | {lines 10, 15, 29 & 31} |
| "Brand new car" | - | {lines 18 & 32} |
| "Fatherland" | - | {lines 2 & 28} |
| "On wheels" | - | {lines 1 & 30} |

4. ALLITERATION

This is the repetition of the same consonant sound in a line of poetry. For example;

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|---|-----------|
| "booze.....booze" | - /b/ | - | {line 26} |
| "rules and regulations" | - /r/ | - | {line 6} |
| "celebrating the celebration" | - /s/ | - | {line 27} |
| "from faithful..... Fatherland" | - /f/ | - | {line 28} |
| "bottle booze" | - /b/ | - | {line 29} |
| "he holds" | - /h/ | - | {line 5} |

5. ONOMATOPOEIA

Some words suggest their meanings through their sounds in the poem. For example;

"pummeled" – meaning to beat or blow by fist.

"booze/boozy"

"boomed".

6. IRONY

The poem is a package of irony. It is an irony of situation to say that a man who has served his country for thirty-five years and has controlled his "boozy throat" from drinking, will die in such a reckless way on wheel after boozing his vision and clear judgment.

7. HYPERBOLE

The expression “Today frees and makes me a king” is an example of hyperbole. The expression is grossly exaggerated to give readers more conviction.

8. SYNECDOCHE

This is a figure of speech that uses a part to represent the whole. The essence is to achieve certain economy of words in literary composition. The expression “my patience is rewarded” is synecdochally used. The word “patience” is used to represent his punctuality, perseverance, dedication, trustworthiness, articulation, industriousness since thirty-five years of service.

9. METONYMY

An example of metonymy is as follows;

“Wheel” is metonymically used to represent the cars the driver has driven for many years.

HOME WORK

1. Vividly analyse the figures of speech and poetic devices in “The Government Driver on his Retirement”.