

LESSON NOTE ON LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH WEEK 8

SUBJECT: Literature-in-English

TOPIC: African Poetry: "A Government Driver on His Retirement" Cont'd

CLASS: SS2

WEEK: 8

THEMES

1. Reward for meritorious service

Despite the persona's grudges about the labour of civil service, he remains disciplined till the day of his retirement. The poetic persona restricts himself to the demands of his job. He shuns the temptations of personal pleasure subjects himself to a thorough self-discipline, thereby focusing strictly on his official duties and working faithfully in service this fatherland. As a result of his outstanding performance in his place of work, he is rewarded with a brand new car as "an appreciative symbol". The poet therefore, brings to the fore the need for diligence in service, with eloquent evidence that such hard work hardly goes unnoticed, not even if one is a driver.

2. The joy of retirement from public service

The poem also emphasizes on the joy and sense of fulfillment that comes with one's retirement from active service. The civil service structure gives the poetic persona a feeling of servitude, hence he sees the day of his retirement as a day of liberation. He will no longer be subjected to very strict rules and regulations once he retires, he would not need to wake up very early to work, he will have his own time to celebrate his liberation from the labour of civil service, this is why he invited friends and well-wishers to come and celebrate with him.

3. The danger of drink-and-drive culture

While many cultures use alcohol drinks to celebrate periods of achievements, bereavement and festivals. Alcohol consumption is also a very dangerous thing that sends people to their early graves, especially when behind wheels (driving).

The poet also uses the poem to pass the message of the danger of being drunk and driving. Through this poetic reflection, it is obvious that alcohol makes people to

have a poor vision while driving, thus, making them have poor judgment, as the poem states in lines 29-30, "on his way on wheels, booze boozers his vision and clear judgment. It is obvious that driving requires high concentration because a wrong sense of judgment while driving can lead to a calamitous end. Therefore, alcohol consumption when driving is very dangerous.

POETIC DEVICES

1. Language

The Language/words used by the poet is very simple.

2. Metaphor

This is seen in line 5 .

3. Repetition

The word "booze" is repeated in lines 10, 15, 26, 28 and 30. Fatherland, duty rules were also repeated, etc.

4. Alliteration

He home line 3 sound /h/ was repeated, line 4, he holds /h/ was also repeated, rules and regulations, sound /r/was repeated, etc.

5. Assonance

Duty rules, booze boozers

6. Personification

Line 23

7. Euphemism

Line 32 and 33

8. Irony

It is very ironic that the persona's hope and aspirations to a live a free man is dashed on the very day he is celebrating his freedom. It is also ironic that the same person is responsible for his own death. This is an example of situational irony.