

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

SUBJECT: LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

CLASS: SS3

SCHEME OF WORK

WEEK	TOPIC
1	Revision of Last Term Work.
2-4	Reading and Analyzing Non-African Drama: Othello by William Shakespeare.
5-6	Revision of African Poems.
7-8	Revision of Non-African Poems.
9-10	Revision of Literary Terms.

REFERENCE

1. Exam Focus by J.O.J. NwachukwuAgbada et al.
2. Essential Literature-in-English for S.S.S. by Ibitola A.O.
3. The Mastery of Literature by IwuchukwuChinweikpeEsq.
4. A Handbook of Creative Writing by J.O.J NwachukwuAgbada.

WEEK ONE **REVISION OF LAST TERM WORK**

Native Son

Plot summary

Book One: Fear

Bigger Thomas wakes up in a dark, small room at the sound of the alarm clock. He lives in one room with his brother Buddy, his sister Vera, and their mother. Suddenly, a rat appears. The room turns into a maelstrom and after a violent chase, Bigger claims the life of an animal with an iron skillet and terrorizes Vera with the dark body. Vera faints and Mrs. Thomas scolds Bigger, who hates his family because they suffer and he cannot do anything about it.

That evening, Bigger has to see Mr. Dalton for a new job. Bigger's family depends on him. He would like to leave his responsibilities forever but when he thinks of what to do, he only sees a

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

blank wall. He walks to the poolroom and meets his friend. Gusiffer R. Bigger tells him that every time he thinks about whites, he feels something terrible will happen to him. They meet other friends, G. H. and Jack, and plan a robbery of the white wealth. They are all afraid of attacking and stealing from a white man, but none of them wants to admit their concerns. Before the robbery, Bigger and Jack go to the movies. They are attracted to the world of wealthy whites in the newsreel and feel strangely moved by the tom-toms and the primitive black people in the film, but they also feel that they are equal to those worlds. After the cinema, Bigger returns to the poolroom and attacks Gus violently, forcing him to lick his blade in a demeaning way to hide his own cowardice. The fight ends any chance of the robbery occurring; Bigger is obscurely conscious that he has done this intentionally.

When he finally gets the job, Bigger does not know how to behave in the large and luxurious house. Mr. Dalton and his blind wife use strange words. They try to be kind to Bigger, but they actually make him very uncomfortable; Bigger does not know what they expect of him. Then their daughter, Mary, enters the room, asks Bigger why he does not belong to a union, and calls her father a "capitalist." Bigger does not know that word and is even more confused and afraid to lose the job. After the conversation, Peggy, an Irish cook, takes Bigger to his room and tells him that the Daltons are a nice family but that he must avoid Mary's communist friends. Bigger has never had a room for himself before.

That night, he drives Mary around and meets her Communist boyfriend, Jan. Throughout the evening, Jan and Mary talk to Bigger, oblige him to take them to the diner where his friends are, invite him to sit at their table, and tell him to call them by their first names. Bigger does not know how to respond to their requests and becomes very frustrated, as he is simply their chauffeur for the night. At the diner they buy a bottle of rum. Bigger drives throughout the park, and Jan and Mary drink the rum and have sex in the back seat. Jan and Mary part, but Mary is so drunk that Bigger has to carry her to her bedroom when they arrive home. He is terrified someone will see him with her in his arms; however, he cannot resist the temptation of the forbidden, and he kisses her.

Just then, the bedroom door opens, and Mrs. Dalton enters. Bigger knows she is blind but is terrified she will sense him there. He silences Mary by pressing a pillow into her face. Mary claws at Bigger's hands while Mrs. Dalton is in the room, trying to alert Bigger that she cannot breathe. Mrs. Dalton approaches the bed, smells whiskey in the air, scolds her daughter, and leaves. As Bigger removes the pillow, he realizes that she has suffocated. Bigger starts thinking frantically, and decides he will tell everyone that Jan, her Communist boyfriend, took Mary into the house that night. Thinking it will be better if Mary disappears and everyone thinks she has left Chicago, he decides in desperation to burn her body in the house's furnace. Her body would not originally fit through the furnace opening, but after decapitating her with a nearby hatchet, Bigger finally manages to put the corpse inside. He adds extra coal to the furnace, leaves the corpse to burn, and goes home.

EVALUATION

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

Narrate the plot on fear

Book Two: Flight

Bigger's current girlfriend, Bessie, suspects him of having done something to Mary. Bigger goes back to work. Mr. Dalton has called a private detective, Mr. Britten. Britten, interrogates Bigger accusingly, but Mr. Dalton vouches for Bigger. Bigger relates the events of the previous evening in a calculated way to throw suspicion on Jan, knowing Mr. Dalton dislikes Jan because he is a Communist. When Britten finds Jan, he puts the boy and Bigger in the same room and confronts them with their conflicting stories. Jan is surprised by Bigger's story but offers him help.

Bigger storms away from the Daltons'. He decides to write the false kidnap note when he discovers that the owner of the rat-infested flat his family rents is Mr. Dalton. Bigger slips the note under the Daltons' front door and then returns to his room. When the Daltons receive the note, they contact the police, who take over the investigation from Britten, and journalists soon arrive at the house. Bigger is afraid, but he does not want to leave. In the afternoon, he is ordered to take the ashes out of the furnace and make a new fire. He is terrified and starts poking the ashes with the shovel until the whole room is full of smoke. Furious, one of the journalists takes the shovel and pushes Bigger aside. He immediately finds the remains of Mary's bones and an earring in the furnace, and Bigger flees.

Bigger goes directly to Bessie and tells her the whole story. Bessie realizes that white people will think he raped the girl before killing her. They leave together, but Bigger has to drag Bessie around because she is paralyzed by fear. When they lie down together in an abandoned building, Bigger rapes Bessie and falls asleep. In the morning, he decides that he has to kill her in her sleep. He hits Bessie's head with a brick several times before throwing her through a window and into an air shaft. He quickly realizes that the only money he has is in her pocket, except for some change.

Bigger runs through the city. He sees newspaper headlines concerning the crime and overhears different conversations about it. Whites hate him and blacks hate him because he brought shame on the black race. After a wild chase over the rooftops of the city, the police catch him.

EVALUATION

Narrate the plot on flight.

Book Three: Fate

During his first few days in prison, Bigger does not eat, drink, or talk to anyone. Then Jan comes to visit him. He says Bigger has taught him a lot about black-white relationships and offers him the help of a communist lawyer named Max. In the long hours Max and Bigger pass together, he starts understanding his relationships with his family and with the world. He acknowledges his fury, his need for a future, and his wish for a meaningful life. He reconsiders his attitudes about white people, whether they are like Britten, or accepting like Jan. Bigger is found guilty and is sentenced to death for his murder and false witness.

EVALUATION

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

Narrate the plot account on fate.

CHARACTERS

Mary Dalton: An only child, Mary is a very rich white girl who has far leftist leanings. She is a Communist sympathizer recently understood to be frolicking with Jan, a known Communist party organizer. Consequently, she is trying to abide, for a time, by her parents' wishes and go to Detroit. She is to leave the morning after Bigger is hired as the family chauffeur. Under the ruse of a University meeting, she has Bigger take her to meet Jan. When they return to the house, she is too drunk to make it to her room unassisted and thus, Bigger helps her. Mrs. Dalton comes upon them in the room and Bigger smothers her for fear that Mrs. Dalton will discover him. Although she dies earlier in the story, she remains a significant plot element, as Bigger constantly has flashbacks during stressful times, in which he sees various scenes from her murder.

Henry Dalton: Father of Mary, he owns a controlling amount of stock in a real estate firm which maintains the black ghetto. Blacks in the ghetto pay too much for rat-infested flats. As Max points out at the inquest, Mr. Dalton refuses to rent flats to black people outside of the designated ghetto area. He does this while donating money to the NAACP, buying ping-pong tables for the local black youth outreach program, and giving people like Bigger a chance at employment. Mr. Dalton's philanthropy, however, only shows off his wealth while backing up the business practices which contain an already oppressed people. An example of this is when the reader learns that Mr. Dalton owns the real estate company that controls a lot of the South Side (where most of the black community lives), but instead of using his power to improve their situation, he does things such as donate ping pong tables to them, or hire individual blacks to work in his house. Mr. Dalton is blind to the real plight of blacks in the ghetto, a plight that he maintains.

Mrs. Dalton: Mary Dalton's mother. Her blindness serves to accentuate the motif of racial blindness throughout the story. Both Bigger and Max comment on how people are blind to the reality of race in America. Mrs. Dalton betrays her metaphorical blindness when she meets Mrs. Thomas. Mrs. Dalton hides behind her philanthropy and claims there is nothing she can do for Bigger.

Jan Erlone: Jan is a member of the Communist Party as well as the boyfriend of the very rich Mary Dalton. Bigger attempts to frame him for the murder of Mary. Even though Bigger attempts to frame him, Jan uses this to try to prove that black people aren't masters of their own destinies, but rather, a product of an oppressive white society. Jan had already been seeking for a way to understand the 'negro' so as to organize them along communist lines against the rich like Mr. Dalton. He is not able to fully do so, but he is able to put aside his personal trauma and persuade Max to help Bigger. He represents the idealistic young Marxist who hopes to save the world through revolution. However, before he can do that, he must understand the 'negro' much more than he thinks he does.

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

Gus: Gus is a member of Bigger's gang, but he has an uneasy relationship with Bigger. Both are aware of the other's nervous anxiety concerning whites. Consequently, Bigger would rather brutalize Gus than admit he is scared to rob a white man.

Jack Harding: Jack is a member of Bigger's gang and perhaps the only one Bigger ever views as a real friend.

G.H: G.H. is another member of Bigger's gang. He is the neutral member of the gang who will do what the gang does, but will not be too closely attached to any one member of the gang.

Mr. Boris Max: A lawyer from the Communist Party who represents Bigger against the State's prosecuting attorney. As a Jewish American, he is in a better position to understand Bigger. It is through his speech during the trial that Wright reveals the greater moral and political implications of Bigger Thomas's life. Even though Mr. Max is the only one who understands Bigger, Bigger still horrifies him by displaying just how damaged white society has made him. When Mr. Max finally leaves Bigger he is aghast at the extent of the brutality of racism in America. The third part of the novel called Fate seems to focus on his relationship with Bigger, and because of this Max becomes the main character of Fate.

Bessie Mears: She is Bigger's casual sex partner. She drinks often, saying she is trying to forget her hard life. At the end of Book 2, Bigger takes and rapes her in an abandoned building, then proceeds to kill her in haste to keep her from talking to the police. This is his second murder in the book.

Peggy: Peggy is the Irish-American housekeeper for the Daltons and, like Max, can empathize with Bigger's status as an "outsider." However, she is more typical of poor whites who are sure to invest in racism if only to keep someone / anyone below themselves. Peggy hides her dislike for blacks and treats Bigger nicely.

Bigger Thomas: The protagonist of the novel, Bigger commits two ghastly crimes and is put on trial for his life. He is convicted and sentenced to the electric chair. His acts give the novel action but the real plot involves Bigger's reactions to his environment and his crime. Through it all, Bigger struggles to discuss his feelings, but he can neither find the words to fully express himself nor does he have the time to say them. However, as they have been related through the narration, Bigger—typical of the "outsider" archetype—has finally discovered the only important and real thing: his life. Though too late, his realization that he is alive—and able to choose to befriend Mr. Max—creates some hope that men like him might be reached earlier.

Debatable as the final scene is, in which for the first time Bigger calls a white man by his first name, Bigger is never anything but a failed human. He represents a black man conscious of a system of racial oppression that leaves him no opportunity to exist but through crime. As he says to Gus, "They don't let us do nothing... [and] I can't get used to it." A line goes, one cannot exist by simply reacting: a man must be more than the sum total of his brutalizations. Bigger admits to wanting to be an aviator and later, to Max, aspire to other positions esteemed in the

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

"American Dream." But here he can do nothing . . . just be one of many blacks in what was called the "ghetto" and maybe get a job serving whites; crime seems preferable, rather accidental or inevitable. Not surprisingly, then, he already has a criminal history, and he has even been to reform school. Ultimately, the snap decisions law calls "crimes" arise from assaults to his dignity and being trapped like that rat he kills with a pan living a life where others hold the skillet.

Buddy Thomas: Buddy, Bigger's younger brother, idolizes Bigger as a male role model. He defends him to the rest of the family and consistently asks if he can help Bigger.

Mrs. Thomas: Bigger's mother. She struggles to keep her family alive on the meager wages earned by taking in other people's laundry. She is a religious woman who believes she will be rewarded in an "afterlife," but as a black woman accepts that nothing can be done to improve her people's situation. Additionally, she knows that Bigger will end up hanging from the "gallows" for his crime, but this is just another fact of life.

Vera Thomas: Vera is Bigger's sister and in her Bigger sees many similarities to his mother. Bigger is scared that Vera will grow up to either be like his mother, constantly exhausted with the strain of supporting a family, or like Bessie, a drunk trying to escape her troubles.

Buckley: The state prosecutor.

Britten: The investigator. He seems quite prejudiced, first towards Bigger (because he is black) and then towards Jan (because he is a Communist).

EVALUATION

1. Describe the main character in the work.
2. Describe Mr Dalton and Buckley as characters in the work.

INFLUENCE OF COMMUNISM ON NATIVE SON

Wright was affiliated with the Communist Party of the United States both prior to and following his publishing of *Native Son*. The presence of communist ideas in *Native Son* is evident as Wright draws a parallel between the Scottsboro boys case and Bigger Thomas's case. There is a parallel between the court scene in *Native Son* in which Max calls the "hate and impatience" of "the mob congregated upon the streets beyond the window" (Wright 386) and the "mob who surrounded the Scottsboro jail with rope and kerosene" after the Scottsboro boys' initial conviction. (Maxwell 132) Critics attacked Max's final speech in the courtroom, claiming that it was an irrelevant elaboration on Wright's own communist beliefs and unrelated to Bigger's case. There are many different interpretations concerning the group that was the intended target of Max's speech. James Baldwin, a renowned critic of Wright, presented his own interpretation of Max's final speech in his *Notes by a Native Son*. He says that Max's speech is "...addressed to those among us of good will and it seems to say that, though there are whites and blacks among us who hate each other, we will not; there are those who are betrayed by

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

greed, by guilt, by blood, by blood lust, but not we; we will set our faces against them and join hands and walk together into that dazzling future when there will be no white or black" (Baldwin 47). However, other critics such as Siegel have argued that the original text in *Native Son* does not imply "the dazzling future when there will be no white or black." Thus, the argument that Max's final speech is a communist promotion is not supported by the texts in the novel. (Kinnamon, p96) Max referred to Bigger as a part of the working class in his closing statement. Furthermore, in 1938, Wright also advocated the image of African Americans as members of the working class in his article in the *New York Amsterdam News*. Wright stated, "I have found in the Negro worker the real symbol of the working class in America." (Foley 190) Thus, Wright's depiction of and belief in the figure of African-American workers and his depiction of Bigger Thomas as a worker showed evidence of communistic influence on *Native Son*.

GENERAL EVALUATION

1. Give a detailed analysis of the plot.
2. Describe four minor characters in the work.

WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT

1. A story which explains a natural phenomenon is A. legend B. parable. C. myth. D. fiction.
2. A narrative in which characters and events are invented is A. fiction. B. epistolary. C. autobiography. D. biography.
3. Lines and stanzas are to poetry as action and dialogue are to A. music. B. prose. C. fiction. D. drama.
4. The performers in a play constitute the A. chorus. B. characters. C. audience. D. cast.
5. The types of literary work are A. eras. B. episodes. C. genres. D. cantos.

THEORY

Comment on the use of allusion in "The proud King."

READING ASSIGNMENT

Read the summary in Exam Focus.

WEEK TWO

READING AND ANALYZING NON-AFRICAN DRAMA: OTHELLO BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

PLOT ACCOUNT

Othello begins on a street in Venice, in the midst of an argument between Roderigo, a rich man, and Iago. Roderigo has been paying Iago to help him in his suit to Desdemona. But Roderigo has just learned that Desdemona has married Othello, a general whom Iago begrudgingly serves as ensign. Iago says he hates Othello, who recently passed him over for the position of lieutenant in favor of the inexperienced soldier Michael Cassio.

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

Unseen, Iago and Roderigo cry out to Brabantio that his daughter Desdemona has been stolen by and married to Othello, the Moor. Brabantio finds that his daughter is indeed missing, and he gathers some officers to find Othello. Not wanting his hatred of Othello to be known, Iago leaves Roderigo and hurries back to Othello before Brabantio sees him. At Othello's lodgings, Cassio arrives with an urgent message from the duke: Othello's help is needed in the matter of the imminent Turkish invasion of Cyprus. Not long afterward, Brabantio arrives with Roderigo and others, and accuses Othello of stealing his daughter by witchcraft. When he finds out that Othello is on his way to speak with the duke, Brabantio decides to go along and accuse Othello before the assembled senate.

Brabantio's plan backfires. The duke and senate are very sympathetic toward Othello. Given a chance to speak for himself, Othello explains that he wooed and won Desdemona not by witchcraft but with the stories of his adventures in travel and war. The duke finds Othello's explanation convincing, and Desdemona herself enters at this point to defend her choice in marriage and to announce to her father that her allegiance is now to her husband. Brabantio is frustrated, but acquiesces and allows the senate meeting to resume. The duke says that Othello must go to Cyprus to aid in the defense against the Turks, who are headed for the island. Desdemona insists that she accompany her husband on his trip, and preparations are made for them to depart that night.

In Cyprus the following day, two gentlemen stand on the shore with Montano, the governor of Cyprus. A third gentleman arrives and reports that the Turkish fleet has been wrecked in a storm at sea. Cassio, whose ship did not suffer the same fate, arrives soon after, followed by a second ship carrying Iago, Roderigo, Desdemona, and Emilia, Iago's wife. Once they have landed, Othello's ship is sighted, and the group goes to the harbor. As they wait for Othello, Cassio greets Desdemona by clasping her hand. Watching them, Iago tells the audience that he will use "as little a web as this" hand-holding to ensnare Cassio (II.i.169).

Othello arrives, greets his wife, and announces that there will be reveling that evening to celebrate Cyprus's safety from the Turks. Once everyone has left, Roderigo complains to Iago that he has no chance of breaking up Othello's marriage. Iago assures Roderigo that as soon as Desdemona's "blood is made dull with the act of sport," she will lose interest in Othello and seek sexual satisfaction elsewhere (II.i.222). However, Iago warns that "elsewhere" will likely be with Cassio. Iago counsels Roderigo that he should cast Cassio into disgrace by starting a fight with Cassio at the evening's revels. In a soliloquy, Iago explains to the audience that eliminating Cassio is the first crucial step in his plan to ruin Othello. That night, Iago gets Cassio drunk and then sends Roderigo to start a fight with him. Apparently provoked by Roderigo, Cassio chases Roderigo across the stage. Governor Montano attempts to hold Cassio down, and Cassio stabs him. Iago sends Roderigo to raise alarm in the town.

The alarm is rung, and Othello, who had left earlier with plans to consummate his marriage, soon arrives to still the commotion. When Othello demands to know who began the fight, Iago feigns reluctance to implicate his "friend" Cassio, but he ultimately tells the whole story. Othello

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

then strips Cassio of his rank of lieutenant. Cassio is extremely upset, and he laments to Iago, once everyone else has gone, that his reputation has been ruined forever. Iago assures Cassio that he can get back into Othello's good graces by using Desdemona as an intermediary. In a soliloquy, Iago tells us that he will frame Cassio and Desdemona as lovers to make Othello jealous.

In an attempt at reconciliation, Cassio sends some musicians to play beneath Othello's window. Othello, however, sends his clown to tell the musicians to go away. Hoping to arrange a meeting with Desdemona, Cassio asks the clown, a peasant who serves Othello, to send Emilia to him. After the clown departs, Iago passes by and tells Cassio that he will get Othello out of the way so that Cassio can speak privately with Desdemona. Othello, Iago, and a gentleman go to examine some of the town's fortifications.

Desdemona is quite sympathetic to Cassio's request and promises that she will do everything she can to make Othello forgive his former lieutenant. As Cassio is about to leave, Othello and Iago return. Feeling uneasy, Cassio leaves without talking to Othello. Othello inquires whether it was Cassio who just parted from his wife, and Iago, beginning to kindle Othello's fire of jealousy, replies, "No, sure, I cannot think it, / That he would steal away so guilty-like, / Seeing your coming" (III.iii.37–39).

Othello becomes upset and moody, and Iago furthers his goal of removing both Cassio and Othello by suggesting that Cassio and Desdemona are involved in an affair. Desdemona's entreaties to Othello to reinstate Cassio as lieutenant add to Othello's almost immediate conviction that his wife is unfaithful. After Othello's conversation with Iago, Desdemona comes to call Othello to supper and finds him feeling unwell. She offers him her handkerchief to wrap around his head, but he finds it to be "[t]oo little" and lets it drop to the floor (III.iii.291). Desdemona and Othello go to dinner, and Emilia picks up the handkerchief, mentioning to the audience that Iago has always wanted her to steal it for him.

Iago is ecstatic when Emilia gives him the handkerchief, which he plants in Cassio's room as "evidence" of his affair with Desdemona. When Othello demands "ocular proof" (III.iii.365) that his wife is unfaithful, Iago says that he has seen Cassio "wipe his beard" (III.iii.444) with Desdemona's handkerchief—the first gift Othello ever gave her. Othello vows to take vengeance on his wife and on Cassio, and Iago vows that he will help him. When Othello sees Desdemona later that evening, he demands the handkerchief of her, but she tells him that she does not have it with her and attempts to change the subject by continuing her suit on Cassio's behalf. This drives Othello into a further rage, and he storms out. Later, Cassio comes onstage, wondering about the handkerchief he has just found in his chamber. He is greeted by Bianca, a prostitute, whom he asks to take the handkerchief and copy its embroidery for him.

Through Iago's machinations, Othello becomes so consumed by jealousy that he falls into a trance and has a fit of epilepsy. As he writes on the ground, Cassio comes by, and Iago tells him to come back in a few minutes to talk. Once Othello recovers, Iago tells him of the meeting he

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

has planned with Cassio. He instructs Othello to hide nearby and watch as Iago extracts from Cassio the story of his affair with Desdemona. While Othello stands out of earshot, Iago pumps Cassio for information about Bianca, causing Cassio to laugh and confirm Othello's suspicions. Bianca herself then enters with Desdemona's handkerchief, reprimanding Cassio for making her copy out the embroidery of a love token given to him by another woman. When Desdemona enters with Lodovico and Lodovico subsequently gives Othello a letter from Venice calling him home and instating Cassio as his replacement, Othello goes over the edge, striking Desdemona and then storming out.

That night, Othello accuses Desdemona of being a whore. He ignores her protestations, seconded by Emilia, that she is innocent. Iago assures Desdemona that Othello is simply upset about matters of state. Later that night, however, Othello ominously tells Desdemona to wait for him in bed and to send Emilia away. Meanwhile, Iago assures the still-complaining Roderigo that everything is going as planned: in order to prevent Desdemona and Othello from leaving, Roderigo must kill Cassio. Then he will have a clear avenue to his love.

EVALUATION

How does the work begin?

Iago instructs Roderigo to ambush Cassio, but Roderigo misses his mark and Cassio wounds him instead. Iago wounds Cassio and runs away. When Othello hears Cassio's cry, he assumes that Iago has killed Cassio as he said he would. Lodovico and Graziano enter to see what the commotion is about. Iago enters shortly thereafter and flies into a pretend rage as he "discovers" Cassio's assailant Roderigo, whom he murders. Cassio is taken to have his wound dressed.

Meanwhile, Othello stands over his sleeping wife in their bedchamber, preparing to kill her. Desdemona wakes and attempts to plead with Othello. She asserts her innocence, but Othello smothers her. Emilia enters with the news that Roderigo is dead. Othello asks if Cassio is dead too and is mortified when Emilia says he is not. After crying out that she has been murdered, Desdemona changes her story before she dies, claiming that she has committed suicide. Emilia asks Othello what happened, and Othello tells her that he has killed Desdemona for her infidelity, which Iago brought to his attention.

Montano, Graziano, and Iago come into the room. Iago attempts to silence Emilia, who realizes what Iago has done. At first, Othello insists that Iago has told the truth, citing the handkerchief as evidence. Once Emilia tells him how she found the handkerchief and gave it to Iago, Othello is crushed and begins to weep. He tries to kill Iago but is disarmed. Iago kills Emilia and flees, but he is caught by Lodovico and Montano, who return holding Iago captive. They also bring Cassio, who is now in a chair because of his wound. Othello wounds Iago and is disarmed. Lodovico tells Othello that he must come with them back to Venice to be tried. Othello makes a speech about how he would like to be remembered, then kills himself with a sword he had hidden on

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

his person. The play closes with a speech by Lodovico. He gives Othello's house and goods to Graziano and orders that Iago be executed.

GENERAL EVALUATION

1. Comment on the ending of the play.
2. Discuss the plot of the play".

WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT

1. The choice of words to create special effects is called A. fallacy. B. atmosphere. C. diction. D. mood.
2. A long narrative chronicling a family's heroic deeds is a/an A. opera. B. epistle. C. fable. D. saga.
3. in drama operates against a character who is unaware of a situation which is known to the audience. A. Verbal irony. B. Dramatic irony. C. Satire. D. Parody.
4. The use of dialogue creates a/an effect. A. humorous B. poetic C. ironic D. dramatic
5. One of the following is not a form of poetry. A. Sonnet B. Ode C. Suspense D. Lyric

THEORY

Discuss the play above as a tragedy.

READING ASSIGNMENT

Read the themes of the work in Exam Focus.

WEEK THREE

READING AND ANALYZING NON-AFRICAN DRAMA: OTHELLO BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE THEMES, MOTIFS & SYMBOLS

THEMES

Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work.

THE INCOMPATIBILITY OF MILITARY HEROISM & LOVE

Before and above all else, Othello is a soldier. From the earliest moments in the play, his career affects his married life. Asking "fit disposition" for his wife after being ordered to Cyprus (I.iii.234), Othello notes that "the tyrant custom . . . / Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war / My thrice-driven bed of down" (I.iii.227–229). While Desdemona is used to better "accommodation," she nevertheless accompanies her husband to Cyprus (I.iii.236). Moreover, she is unperturbed by the tempest or Turks that threatened their crossing, and genuinely curious rather than irate when she is roused from bed by the drunken brawl in Act II, scene iii. She is, indeed, Othello's "fair warrior," and he is happiest when he has her by his side in the midst of military conflict or business (II.i.179). The military also provides Othello with a means

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

to gain acceptance in Venetian society. While the Venetians in the play are generally fearful of the prospect of Othello's social entrance into white society through his marriage to Desdemona, all Venetians respect and honor him as a soldier. Mercenary Moors were, in fact, commonplace at the time.

Othello predicates his success in love on his success as a soldier, wooing Desdemona with tales of his military travels and battles. Once the Turks are drowned—by natural rather than military might—Othello is left without anything to do: the last act of military administration we see him perform is the viewing of fortifications in the extremely short second scene of Act III. No longer having a means of proving his manhood or honor in a public setting such as the court or the battlefield, Othello begins to feel uneasy with his footing in a private setting, the bedroom. Iago capitalizes on this uneasiness, calling Othello's epileptic fit in Act IV, scene i, "[a] passion most unsuited such a man." In other words, Iago is calling Othello unsoldierly. Iago also takes care to mention that Cassio, whom Othello believes to be his competitor, saw him in his emasculating trance (IV.i.75).

Desperate to cling to the security of his former identity as a soldier while his current identity as a lover crumbles, Othello begins to confuse the one with the other. His expression of his jealousy quickly devolves from the conventional—"Farewell the tranquil mind"—to the absurd:

Farewell the plum'd troops and the big wars
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell,
Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, th'ear piercing fife,
The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!"
(III.iii.353–359)

One might well say that Othello is saying farewell to the wrong things—he is entirely preoccupied with his identity as a soldier. But his way of thinking is somewhat justified by its seductiveness to the audience as well. Critics and audiences alike find comfort and nobility in Othello's final speech and the anecdote of the "malignant and . . . turbaned Turk" (V.ii.362), even though in that speech, as in his speech in Act III, scene iii, Othello depends on his identity as a soldier to glorify himself in the public's memory, and to try to make his audience forget his and Desdemona's disastrous marital experiment.

EVALUATION

Discuss the work as love story.

THE DANGER OF ISOLATION

The action of Othello moves from the metropolis of Venice to the island of Cyprus. Protected by military fortifications as well as by the forces of nature, Cyprus faces little threat from external forces. Once Othello, Iago, Desdemona, Emilia, and Roderigo have come to Cyprus, they have

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

nothing to do but prey upon one another. Isolation enables many of the play's most important effects: Iago frequently speaks in soliloquies; Othello stands apart while Iago talks with Cassio in Act IV, scene i, and is left alone onstage with the bodies of Emilia and Desdemona for a few moments in Act V, scene ii; Roderigo seems attached to no one in the play except Iago. And, most prominently, Othello is visibly isolated from the other characters by his physical stature and the color of his skin. Iago is an expert at manipulating the distance between characters, isolating his victims so that they fall prey to their own obsessions. At the same time, Iago, of necessity always standing apart, falls prey to his own obsession with revenge. The characters cannot be islands, the play seems to say: self-isolation as an act of self-preservation leads ultimately to self-destruction. Such self-isolation leads to the deaths of Roderigo, Iago, Othello, and even Emilia.

MOTIFS

Motifs are recurring structures, contrasts, and literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes.

SIGHT AND BLINDNESS

When Desdemona asks to be allowed to accompany Othello to Cyprus, she says that she "saw Othello's visage in his mind, / And to his honours and his valiant parts / Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate" (I.iii. 250–252). Othello's blackness, his visible difference from everyone around him, is of little importance to Desdemona: she has the power to see him for what he is in a way that even Othello himself cannot. Desdemona's line is one of many references to different kinds of sight in the play. Earlier in Act I, scene iii, a senator suggests that the Turkish retreat to Rhodes is "a pageant / To keep us in false gaze" (I.iii.19–20). The beginning of Act II consists entirely of people staring out to sea, waiting to see the arrival of ships, friendly or otherwise. Othello, though he demands "ocular proof" (III.iii.365), is frequently convinced by things he does not see: he strips Cassio of his position as lieutenant based on the story Iago tells; he relies on Iago's story of seeing Cassio wipe his beard with Desdemona's handkerchief (III.iii.437–440); and he believes Cassio to be dead simply because he hears him scream. After Othello has killed himself in the final scene, Lodovico says to Iago, "Look on the tragic loading of this bed. / This is thy work. The object poisons sight. / Let it be hid" (V.ii.373–375). The action of the play depends heavily on characters not seeing things: Othello accuses his wife although he never sees her infidelity, and Emilia, although she watches Othello erupt into a rage about the missing handkerchief, does not figuratively "see" what her husband has done.

PLANTS

Iago is strangely preoccupied with plants. His speeches to Roderigo in particular make extensive and elaborate use of vegetable metaphors and conceits. Some examples are: "Our bodies are our gardens, to which our wills are gardeners; so that if we will plant nettles or sow lettuce, set hyssop and weed up thyme . . . the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills" (I.iii.317–322); "Though other things grow fair against the sun, / Yet fruits that blossom first will first be ripe" (II.iii.349–350); "And then, sir, would he gripe and wring my hand, / Cry 'O sweet creature!', then kiss me hard, / As if he plucked kisses up by the roots, / That grew upon my lips" (III.iii.425–428). The first of these examples best explains Iago's preoccupation with the plant

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

metaphor and how it functions within the play. Characters in this play seem to be the product of certain inevitable, natural forces, which, if left unchecked, will grow wild. Iago understands these natural forces particularly well: he is, according to his own metaphor, a good “gardener,” both of himself and of others.

Many of Iago’s botanical references concern poison: “I’ll pour this pestilence into his ear” (II.iii.330); “The Moor already changes with my poison. / Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons, / . . . / . . . Not poppy nor mandragora / Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world / Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep” (III.iii.329–336). Iago cultivates his “conceits” so that they become lethal poisons and then plants their seeds in the minds of others. The organic way in which Iago’s plots consume the other characters and determine their behavior makes his conniving, human evil seem like a force of nature. That organic growth also indicates that the minds of the other characters are fertile ground for Iago’s efforts.

ANIMALS

Iago calls Othello a “Barbary horse,” an “old black ram,” and also tells Brabantio that his daughter and Othello are “making the beast with two backs” (I.i.117–118). In Act I, scene iii, Iago tells Roderigo, “Ere I would say I would drown myself for the love of a guinea-hen, I would change my humanity with a baboon” (I.iii.312–313). He then remarks that drowning is for “cats and blind puppies” (I.iii.330–331). Cassio laments that, when drunk, he is “by and by a fool, and presently a beast!” (II.iii.284–285). Othello tells Iago, “Exchange me for a goat / When I shall turn the business of my soul / To such exsufflicate and blowed surmises” (III.iii.184–186). He later says that “[a] horned man’s a monster and a beast” (IV.i.59). Even Emilia, in the final scene, says that she will “play the swan, / And die in music” (V.ii.254–255). Like the repeated references to plants, these references to animals convey a sense that the laws of nature, rather than those of society, are the primary forces governing the characters in this play. When animal references are used with regard to Othello, as they frequently are, they reflect the racism both of characters in the play and of Shakespeare’s contemporary audience. “Barbary horse” is a vulgarity particularly appropriate in the mouth of Iago, but even without having seen Othello, the Jacobean audience would have known from Iago’s metaphor that he meant to connote a savage Moor.

HELL, DEMONS, AND MONSTERS

Iago tells Othello to beware of jealousy, the “green-eyed monster which doth mock/ The meat it feeds on” (III.iii.170–171). Likewise, Emilia describes jealousy as dangerously and uncannily self-generating, a “monster / Begot upon itself, born on itself” (III.iv.156–157). Imagery of hell and damnation also recurs throughout Othello, especially toward the end of the play, when Othello becomes preoccupied with the religious and moral judgment of Desdemona and himself. After he has learned the truth about Iago, Othello calls Iago a devil and a demon several times in Act V, scene ii. Othello’s earlier allusion to “some monster in [his] thought” ironically refers to Iago (III.iii.111). Likewise, his vision of Desdemona’s betrayal is “monstrous, monstrous!” (III.iii.431). Shortly before he kills himself, Othello wishes for eternal spiritual and physical torture in hell, crying out, “Whip me, ye devils, / . . . / . . . roast me in sulphur, / Wash

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!” (V.ii.284–287). The imagery of the monstrous and diabolical takes over where the imagery of animals can go no further, presenting the jealousy-crazed characters not simply as brutish, but as grotesque, deformed, and demonic.

SYMBOLS

Symbols are objects, characters, figures, and colors used to represent abstract ideas or concepts.

THE HANDKERCHIEF

The handkerchief symbolizes different things to different characters. Since the handkerchief was the first gift Desdemona received from Othello, she keeps it about her constantly as a symbol of Othello’s love. Iago manipulates the handkerchief so that Othello comes to see it as a symbol of Desdemona herself—her faith and chastity. By taking possession of it, he is able to convert it into evidence of her infidelity. But the handkerchief’s importance to Iago and Desdemona derives from its importance to Othello himself. He tells Desdemona that it was woven by a 200-year-old sibyl, or female prophet, using silk from sacred worms and dye extracted from the hearts of mummified virgins. Othello claims that his mother used it to keep his father faithful to her, so, to him, the handkerchief represents marital fidelity. The pattern of strawberries (dyed with virgins’ blood) on a white background strongly suggests the bloodstains left on the sheets on a virgin’s wedding night, so the handkerchief implicitly suggests a guarantee of virginity as well as fidelity.

THE SONG “WILLOW”

As she prepares for bed in Act V, Desdemona sings a song about a woman who is betrayed by her lover. She was taught the song by her mother’s maid, Barbary, who suffered a misfortune similar to that of the woman in the song; she even died singing “Willow.” The song’s lyrics suggest that both men and women are unfaithful to one another. To Desdemona, the song seems to represent a melancholy and resigned acceptance of her alienation from Othello’s affections, and singing it leads her to question Emilia about the nature and practice of infidelity.

GENERAL EVALUATION

1. Discuss any two themes in the work.
2. Comment on the use of symbols in the play.

WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT

1. The clash of interest that originates from opposing forces in literature is A. climax. B. denouement. C. conflict. D. aside.
2. A major character whose flaws combine with external forces that lead to his downfall is aA. flat character. B. round character. C. romantic hero. D. tragic hero.
3. Which of the following is not a drama? A. Burlesque B. Resolution C. Pantomime D. Opera
4. A literary work in which the characters and events are used as symbols is known as A. characterization. B. allegory. C. metaphor. D. parallelism.

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

5. Characterization in a novel refers to the A. writer's opinion of the characters. B. way the characters are revealed to the reader. C. characters and the way they behave. D. reader's opinion of the characters.

THEORY

Describe the antagonist of the work.

READING ASSIGNMENT

Read analysis of the characters in Exam Focus.

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

WEEK FOUR

READING AND ANALYZING NON-AFRICAN DRAMA: OTHELLO BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE IMPORTANT QUOTATIONS EXPLAINED

1.

Were I the Moor I would not be Iago.
In following him I follow but myself;
Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,
But seeming so for my peculiar end.
For when my outward action doth demonstrate
The native act and figure of my heart
In compliment extern, 'tis not long after
But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
For daws to peck at. I am not what I am. (I.i.57–65)

In this early speech, Iago explains his tactics to Roderigo. He follows Othello not out of “love” or “duty,” but because he feels he can exploit and dupe his master, thereby revenging himself upon the man he suspects of having slept with his wife. Iago finds that people who are what they seem are foolish. The day he decides to demonstrate outwardly what he feels inwardly, Iago explains, will be the day he makes himself most vulnerable: “I will wear my heart upon my sleeve / For daws to peck at.” His implication, of course, is that such a day will never come.

This speech exemplifies Iago’s cryptic and elliptical manner of speaking. Phrases such as “Were I the Moor I would not be Iago” and “I am not what I am” hide as much as, if not more than, they reveal. Iago is continually playing a game of deception, even with Roderigo and the audience. The paradox or riddle that the speech creates is emblematic of Iago’s power throughout the play: his smallest sentences (“Think, my lord?” in III.iii.109) or gestures (beckoning Othello closer in Act IV, scene i) open up whole worlds of interpretation.

2.

My noble father,
I do perceive here a divided duty.
To you I am bound for life and education.
My life and education both do learn me
How to respect you. You are the lord of my duty,
I am hitherto your daughter. But here’s my husband,
And so much duty as my mother showed
To you, preferring you before her father,
So much I challenge that I may profess
Due to the Moor my lord. (I.iii.179–188)

These words, which Desdemona speaks to her father before the Venetian senate, are her first of the play. Her speech shows her thoughtfulness, as she does not insist on her loyalty to Othello at the expense of respect for her father, but rather acknowledges that her duty is “divided.”

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

Because Desdemona is brave enough to stand up to her father and even partially rejects him in public, these words also establish for the audience her courage and her strength of conviction. Later, this same ability to separate different degrees and kinds of affection will make Desdemona seek, without hesitation, to help Cassio, thereby fueling Othello's jealousy. Again and again, Desdemona speaks clearly and truthfully, but, tragically, Othello is poisoned by Iago's constant manipulation of language and emotions and is therefore blind to Desdemona's honesty.

3.

Haply for I am black,
And have not those soft parts of conversation
That chamberers have; or for I am declined
Into the vale of years—yet that's not much—
She's gone. I am abused, and my relief
Must be to loathe her. O curse of marriage,
That we can call these delicate creatures ours
And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad
And live upon the vapor of a dungeon
Than keep a corner in the thing I love
For others' uses. Yet 'tis the plague of great ones;
Prerogated are they less than the base.
'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death. (III.iii.267–279)

When, in Act I, scene iii, Othello says that he is “rude” in speech, he shows that he does not really believe his own claim by going on to deliver a lengthy and very convincing speech about how he won Desdemona over with his wonderful storytelling (I.iii.81). However, after Iago has raised Othello's suspicions about his wife's fidelity, Othello seems to have at least partly begun to believe that he is inarticulate and barbaric, lacking “those soft parts of conversation / That chamberers [those who avoid practical labor and confine their activities to the ‘chambers’ of ladies] have.” This is also the first time that Othello himself, and not Iago, calls negative attention to either his race or his age. His conclusion that Desdemona is “gone” shows how far Iago's insinuations about Cassio and Desdemona have taken Othello: in a matter of a mere 100 lines or so, he has progressed from belief in his conjugal happiness to belief in his abandonment.

The ugly imagery that follows this declaration of abandonment—Othello finds Desdemona to be a mere “creature” of “appetite” and imagines himself as a “toad” in a “dungeon”—anticipates his later speech in Act IV, scene ii, in which he compares Desdemona to a “cistern for foul toads / To knot and gender in,” and says that she is as honest “as summer flies are in the shambles [slaughterhouses], / That quicken even with blowing” (IV.ii.63–64, 68–69). Othello's comment, “'tis the plague of great ones,” shows that the only potential comfort Othello finds in his moment of hopelessness is his success as a soldier, which proves that he is not “base.” He attempts to consider his wife's purported infidelity as an inevitable part of his being a great

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

man, but his comfort is halfhearted and unconvincing, and he concludes by resigning himself to cuckoldry as though it were “death.”

4.

I am glad I have found this napkin.

This was her first remembrance from the Moor,

My wayward husband hath a hundred times

Wooed me to steal it, but she so loves the token—

For he conjured her she should ever keep it—

That she reserves it evermore about her

To kiss and talk to. I'll ha' the work ta'en out,

And give't Iago. What he will do with it,

Heaven knows, not I.

I nothing, but to please his fantasy. (III.iii.294–303)

This speech of Emilia's announces the beginning of Othello's “handkerchief plot,” a seemingly insignificant event—the dropping of a handkerchief—that becomes the means by which Othello, Desdemona, Cassio, Roderigo, Emilia, and even Iago himself are completely undone. Before Othello lets the handkerchief fall from his brow, we have neither heard of nor seen it. The primary function of Emilia's speech is to explain the prop's importance: as the first gift Othello gave Desdemona, it represents their oldest and purest feelings for one another.

While the fact that Iago “hath a hundred times / Wooed me to steal it” immediately tips off the audience to the handkerchief's imminently prominent place in the tragic sequence of events, Emilia seems entirely unsuspecting. To her, the handkerchief is literally a trifle, “light as air,” and this is perhaps why she remains silent about the handkerchief's whereabouts even when Desdemona begins to suffer for its absence. It is as though Emilia cannot, or refuses to, imagine that her husband would want the handkerchief for any devious reason. Many critics have found Emilia's silence about the handkerchief—and in fact the entire handkerchief plot—a great implausibility, and it is hard to disagree with this up to a point. At the same time, however, it serves as yet another instance in which Iago has the extraordinary power to make those around him see only what they want to see, and thereby not suspect what is obviously suspicious.

5.

Then must you speak

Of one that loved not wisely but too well,

Of one not easily jealous but, being wrought,

Perplexed in the extreme; of one whose hand,

Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away

Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes,

Albeit unused to the melting mood,

Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees

Their medicinable gum. Set you down this,

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

And say besides that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
I took by th' throat the circumcised dog
And smote him thus. (V.ii.341-354)

With these final words, Othello stabs himself in the chest. In this farewell speech, Othello reaffirms his position as a figure who is simultaneously a part of and excluded from Venetian society. The smooth eloquence of the speech and its references to "Arabian trees," "Aleppo," and a "malignant and a turbaned Turk" remind us of Othello's long speech in Act I, scene iii, lines 127–168, and of the tales of adventure and war with which he wooed Desdemona. No longer inarticulate with grief as he was when he cried, "O fool! fool! fool!," Othello seems to have calmed himself and regained his dignity and, consequently, our respect (V.ii.332). He reminds us once again of his martial prowess, the quality that made him famous in Venice. At the same time, however, by killing himself as he is describing the killing of a Turk, Othello identifies himself with those who pose a military—and, according to some, a psychological—threat to Venice, acknowledging in the most powerful and awful way the fact that he is and will remain very much an outsider. His suicide is a kind of martyrdom, a last act of service to the state, as he kills the only foe he has left to conquer: himself.

GENERAL EVALUATION

1. Appreciate the language of the work.
2. Comment on the use of irony in the play.

WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT

1. The clash of interest that originates from opposing forces in literature is A. climax. B. denouement. C. conflict. D. aside.
2. A major character whose flaws combine with external forces that lead to his downfall is aA. flat character. B. round character. C. romantic hero. D. tragic hero.
3. Which of the following is not a drama? A. Burlesque B. Resolution C. Pantomime D. Opera
4. A literary work in which the characters and events are used as symbols is known as A. characterization. B. allegory. C. metaphor. D. parallelism.
5. Characterization in a novel refers to the A. writer's opinion of the characters. B. way the characters are revealed to the reader. C. characters and the way they behave. D. reader's opinion of the characters.

THEORY

What is the main theme in Othello?

READING ASSIGNMENT

Read the style and language of the play in Exam Focus.

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

WEEK FIVE

REVISION: READING AND CONTENT ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POETRY- 'PIANO AND DRUMS' BY GABRIEL OKARA

CONTENT

ABOUT THE POET

BACKGROUND OF THE POEM

CONTENT ANALYSIS

THEME

POETIC DEVICES

STRUCTURE OF THE POEM

MOOD

TONE

POETRY: "PIANO AND DRUMS" BY GABRIEL OKARA

ABOUT THE POET

Gabriel ImometimeOkara was born in Nembe in the present day Bayelsa state of Nigeria in 1921-1971. He attended a prestigious Government College Umuahia. Okara is one of the most significant and serious early Nigeria poets. The motifs of childhood innocence and nostalgia run through many of his poems. His first published collection of poetry was *The Fisherman's Invocation* and his second book was *Fantasy*.

BACKGROUND OF THE POEM

In the poem, Okara presents the dichotomy between the past life and modern world. Though the poem dwells on culture clash as its main theme, it is borne out of the disgust Okara has on the attitude of the post-independence elites who instead of redeeming the African continent from the shackles of colonialism, decide to uncritically adopt the Western cultural values at the expense of their traditional cultural values. Hence, the result is a collapse in the system of the African society. This is because these African elites are half-baked and not ready to engage in the manipulation of the complexities of the Western culture. So, the post-colonial Africans exhibit great shortfalls to manage the areas of difference when face with two contrasting and competing cultures.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

The poem, "Piano and Drums", is about the cultural dichotomy of African and Western cultures in post-colonial Africa. It reveals the dilemma faced by individuals who are confronted with the circumstances that would warrant them drop their culture for Western one, in the name of globalisation. The first stanza highlights the poet-speaker's attachment with his cultural heritage before the intrusion of a foreign culture. It shows the simplicity the traditional culture is known for. In the opening of the poem, 'When at break of day at a riverside', the inspiring serenity of traditional culture is suggested, even with the imagery introduced by the drum in the lines 'I hear the jungle drums telegraphing/the mystic rhythm, urgent, raw.' The poet-speaker reveals the connections Africans have with nature. The last three lines of the first stanza showcase the

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

occupation of Africans to be majorly hunting. The rhythm produced from the drums reminds the poet-speaker of his early days as a youth who enjoys watching wild animals or probably engaging in hunting.

The second stanza continues with his attachment for traditional culture. Then suddenly he sees himself in a reminiscing state 'in my mother's laps a sucking; /at once I'm walking simple'. He presents a lifestyle that is divulged of complexity and/or rancour. The poet-speaker creates in the readers' mind the extensive simplicity of cultural norms that characterises the African society with 'paths with no innovations, /rugged, fashioned with the naked/warmth of hurrying feet and groping hearts/in green leaves and wild flowers pulsing'. This simplicity is seen in the relationship that exists among the people as they live in communality without unhealthy rivalry and selfishness.

In the third stanza, the poet-speaker announces the presence of a seductive culture represented by the 'Piano'. 'Then I hear a wailing piano' suggests that the poet-speaker could not withstand the tempting nature of the piano, even when on his mother's lap. That is, several innocent Africans like him were lured by a foreign culture that showed great complexities. In great ignorance, the poet-speaker and others like him are seductively enticed by the Western culture to adapt what it represents at the expense of their traditional culture and norms. He speaks of 'solo speaking of complex ways in/tear-furrowed concerto: /of far away lands'. Under this, so many Africans were deceived by the notion of a foreign land with new horizon (technological development). He sees himself to be persuaded by the 'coaxing diminuendo, counterpoint, /crescendo'. He realises that he was 'lost in the labyrinth/of its complexities, it ends in the middle/of a phrase at a daggerpoint'. This avers that the songs produced by the piano, though seductive enough to draw the poet-speaker and others, were received by people who lack the technicalities to understand the complex meaning of the rhythm. Hence, they become more confused as seen in 'And I lost in the morning mist/of an age at a riverside keep/wandering in the mystic rhythm/of jungle drums and the concerto'. He displays great dilemma between the traditional and Western cultures of what choice to make.

The poem discusses the traditional village lifestyle of the Africans and the complex society of Westerners which was introduced as a result of colonial presence in the continent. The poem seems to answer the question of why has the traditional society lost its heritage and identity to a foreign culture.

THEME

The theme of cultural obliteration

The theme of inferiority

The theme of dilemma and confusion

The theme of the need for cultural reorientation

The theme of neo-colonialism

THEMATIC DISCUSSION

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

The Theme of Cultural Obliteration: The poem talks about the concomitant effect that the coming of the Europeans have on the continent and the culture of the people. A people that have been known to possess a culture propelled on the wheels of simplicity and great affinity to nature, see the fabric of their culture truncated by a foreign culture known for its complexities. The poet represents the African culture with the 'Drums' and the Western with the 'Piano'. He creates a vivid picture of the lifestyle of Africans before the coming of the Whites and their colonial regime through the powerful imagery deployed in the poem, '... at once I'm/in my mother's laps a suckling;/ at once I'm walking simple/paths with no innovation'. From the above lines, Africans lived in a society where innovations such as tarred roads and street lights. In their communal societies, the people were 'rugged, fashioned with the naked/ warmth of hurrying feet and groping hearts/in green leaves and wild flowers pulsing'. The Africans were comfortable with their simple life where they were able to co-exist without rancor and unhealthy rivalry, which technology and science have promoted in the world. But in the third stanza where '... I hear a wailing piano', the poet-speaker reveals the presence of the European culture that has come to efface the African culture and way of life. The culture was forcefully passed on the people who became confused as shown in 'it ends in the middle of a phrase at a dagger point'. Hence, he says, 'And I lost in the morning mist/of an age at a riverside...'. So these Africans see their culture truncated and replaced with a foreign one which has been the reason for the imbalance experienced since the post-colonial era.

The Theme of Inferiority: The poet-speaker reveals his inability to resist the imposition of a foreign culture on him and other Africans like him. After hearing 'a wailing piano', he became distracted and was attracted to tune from the piano even though 'at once I'm in my mother's laps a sucking'. He could not say no to the 'solo speaking of complex ways in/ tear-furrowed concerto: / of faraway lands'. His show of inferiority is affirmed in the line when he confesses that he was 'lost in the labyrinth/of its complexities, it ends in the middle/of a phrase at a daggerpoint'. He is in a dilemma of what culture to uphold as expressed in 'wandering in the mystic rhythm/of jungle drums and the concerto'. This shows the poet-speaker's preference for the Western culture because of the technological impact on the world system at the expense of his traditional culture, which has 'paths with no innovations'.

The Theme of Dilemma and Confusion: The main crux of the poem exposes the altercation between the African culture and the European culture over which is supreme than the other. And this has placed the poet-speaker and other Africans, especially of the post—colonial era, to be in dilemma and confusion over what cultural inclination should be accepted and adopted into the fabric of their societies. The poet-speaker recounts the splendid nature of the traditional culture when he says 'When at break of day at a riverside/I hear the jungle drums telegraphing/the mystic rhythm, urgent, raw/like bleeding flesh, speaking of/ primal youth and the beginning'. But the reverse became the case when he said, 'Then I hear a wailing piano/ solo speaking of complex ways in/tear-furrowed concerto: /of far away lands'. His helplessness and confusion heightened when he cries out that he was 'lost in the labyrinth/of its complexities, it ends in the middle/And I lost in the morning mist'. The internet, computer, exotic cars and modernity that technology provides have caused great confusion in the minds of Africans.

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

The Theme of The Need for Cultural Reorientation: The poem is a clarion call for all apostles of the African heritage, who have been overwhelmed by the intrusion of Western culture into the fabric of the African society, and has been the reason for non-conformity of the action of the people of the post-colonial era to the ethos of African traditional cultural values, due to the distraction stirred by the presence of 'a wailing piano' with 'solo speaking of complex ways in/tear-furrowed concerto'. The resultant effect of the tune of Western complexities and contamination of traditional civilization and norms has made the poet-speaker to raise alarm of his dilemma as reflected in 'And I lost in the morning mist/of an age at a riverside keep'. In order not to have the upcoming generations of the African society to toll the steps of the poet-speaker, the poem suggests a reorientation to sensitize and save them from the mirage of 'faraway lands/and new horizons with/coaxing diminuendo, counterpoint/crescendo'. He alerts the readers of the dangers in the uncritical adoption of foreign ways.

The Theme of Neo-colonialism: Gabriel Okara uses his poem, 'Piano and Drums' to resent the cowardly acceptance of some quarters of the African society that wholeheartedly welcome the imposition of Western ways as represent by the 'Piano'. He states that African even after colonialism seem to be attracted by the seductive 'labyrinth' and 'its complexities' of the piano with little or no understanding of its effects. Hence, they are placed in a confused state the even 'in my mother's lap a suckling', they were still able to hear 'a wailing piano' of faraway lands'. The people have lost their united front bound by the rhythm of the 'Drums' in the face of tempting tunes of the 'piano'. So they are noted to be wandering in confusion of choice to make. They helplessly see themselves being subject to the same ambience of superiority created by the colonial presence.

EVALUATION

1. Give a detailed content analysis of the poem, 'Piano and Drums' by Gabriel Okara.
2. Discuss two major themes of the poem, 'Piano and Drums' by Gabriel Okara.

POETIC DEVICES

Antithesis: The poem is basically a contrast that exists in the worldview of the poet-speaker whose attitude shows great confusion towards his decision on what culture to adopt as represented by the musical instruments: piano and drums. The disagreement that surrounds these instruments is seen in the first two stanzas for the drum and the third stanza for the piano. The poet-speaker in 'I hear the jungle drums telegraphing ... speaking of primal youth and the beginning' reveals how the traditional culture displays a life of simplicity without innovations where hunting of wild animals like 'panther' and 'leopard' was the occupation of the people. On the other hand, the piano speaks complex ways as its sole responsibility. Unlike the drums that produce 'mystic rhythm', the piano produces a 'wailing ... solo speaking of complex ways in tear-furrowed concerto'. The ideas are simplicity against complexity; the traditional culture against the Western culture.

Symbolism: From the title of the poem, 'Piano and Drums', we can understand that the poet-speaker has decided on both musical instruments as symbols aid understanding of the

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

message of the poem. The description 'jungle drums' reveals that this instrument is made from skin of wild animals you find in Africa, while the 'wailing piano' which speaks complexities 'of far away lands and new horizons' shows that it is an instrument of modern technology. In another sense, the drums represent simple, incorrupt, uncontaminated and primitive African ways of life while the piano represents imported culture of Western world. The poet-speaker, on his part, represents the helpless and confused post-colonial Africans who are products of two conflicting cultural values.

Enjambment: In several points of the poem, we realise that few punctuation marks are used. This shows the connections that the lines of the poem possess. In highlighting the effects of the drums on the animals and the people in a traditional African society, the poet-speaker presents the first stanza without a pause at the end of each line as the ideas run into the succeeding lines. The introduction of the Western culture represented by piano is done with the aid of enjambment in the first three lines of the third stanza. Furthermore, the helplessness of the innocent African who was faced with a culture with complex ways is not also in the last three lines of the third stanza.

Personification: Okara employs personification to show the relevance of the musical instruments: piano and drums. In the poem, the drum is seen to be doing the job of a human being by 'telegraphing the mystic rhythm' and 'speaking of primal youth and the beginning'. For the piano, it started by 'wailing' then 'solo speaking of complex ways'. Both instruments (Drums and Piano) have been employed to express the cultural values and norms of the traditional African society and the Western society respectively.

Imagery: The poet employs this device to help readers retain in their mind's eye a clear picture of what they are exposed to in the poem. Majorly, in the first stanza to help readers have pictorial knowledge of the animals found in Africa and the occupation of the people, the lines: 'I see the panther ready to pounce/ the leopard snarling about to leap/ and the hunters crouch with spears poised' are imageries used to stamp this information in the inner mind of the readers. Also imagery is deployed in the lines: 'and at once I'm/ in my mother's laps a suckling; /at once I'm walking simple/paths with no innovations'. The simplicity of the African society is further painted by these words where the poet-speaker is seen walking a road filled with natural elements.

Simile: This device is seen in the line, 'the mystic rhythm, urgent, raw/ like bleeding flesh'. The poet-speaker compares the type of music made by the 'jungle drums' with a bleeding flesh in its entirety of freshness. In other words, he speaks of the African traditional culture which communicates morals and norms that are uncontaminated and unpolluted by hate, greed, selfishness and unhealthy rivalry, which are induced by the Western culture.

Metaphor: This device can be seen in the words, 'And my blood ripples, turns torrent'. The impact of the rhythm from the drums stirs in poet-speaker a sensation that equates it with that

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

of a ripple made on liquid substances. So 'ripple' is used to portray in a comparison the state of the African man's blood under the influence of the traditional culture.

Repetition: For purpose of emphasis, the poet is seen repeating some words to drive home his intended meaning. The following words: mystic rhythm, riverside, lost, complex, jungle drums, concerto are employed to reiterate the views expressed in the earlier line of the poem.

STRUCTURE OF THE POEM

The poem has twenty-nine lines with four irregular stanzas. The first two stanzas has eight lines each, the third stanza has nine lines while the last stanza has four lines. Stanza one and two highlight the beauty and effects of the African traditional culture and its values, while the third one introduces the Western culture with all its complexities and seductive influence on the post-colonial African elites. The last stanza reveals the state of confusion such contact of Western and African culture has on the poet-speaker and others, who find it difficult to manage the complexities of the foreign culture. The poem is a free verse and the language is simple for an average reader.

MOOD: Considering the outburst of the poet-speaker, it is clear that the mood of the poem is that of sadness and disappointment in the characters of the elites of the post-independence Africa, who find it impossible to go back to their traditional cultural values due to their undue attachment to the Western culture.

TONE: The words of the poet-speaker reveal a tone of great helplessness in the face of two conflicting cultures.

GENERAL EVALUATION

1. Comment on four major poetic devices employed in the poem, 'Piano and Drums' by Gabriel Okara.
2. Comment on the mood and tone of the poem, 'Piano and Drums' by Gabriel Okara.

WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT

1. A deliberate violation of the rules of versification constitutes (a) imperfect rhyme (b) poetic license (c) verbal irony (d) comic relief
2. "A black beautiful brilliant bride" is an example of (a) pun (b) alliteration (c) assonance (d) onomatopoeia
3. The paragraph in prose can be compared to ____ in poetry (a) couplet (b) line (c) stanza (d) verse
4. The juxtaposition of two seemingly contradictory words is (a) contrast (b) anti – climax (c) oxymoron (d) antithesis
5. _____ is a play written for television (a) Televista (b) Teledramatic (c) Teleplay (d) Tele – theater.

THEORY

1. Comment on the use of symbolism and imagery in the poem, 'Piano and Drums'.

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

2. The poem, 'Piano and Drums' comments on the attitude of the Nigerian post-independence elites. Discuss.

READING ASSIGNMENT

Read the content of the poem above in Exam Focus.

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

WEEK SIX

READING AND CONTENT ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POETRY: 'AMBUSH' BY GBEMISOLA ADEOTI

ABOUT THE POET

CONTENT ANALYSIS

POETIC DEVICES

THEMES

ABOUT THE POET

Dr. Gbemisola Adeoti is a lecturer in the English Department of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. His area of teaching and research includes Dramatic Literature, Poetry, Literary History/theory and Popular Culture. He is the author of *Naked Soles*, co-editor (with Bjorn Beckman) of *Intellectuals and African Development* and editor of *Muse and Mimesis: Critical Perspectives on Ahmed Yerima's Drama*.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

The poem, 'Ambush', is a work by Gbemisola Adeoti that captures the attitude of Nigerian political leaders toward governance. The poet settles for the title 'Ambush' as it dramatically tell how the Nigerian leaders lie in wait to attack the hopes of the masses. To depict the true nature of these leaders, he employs metaphor to x-ray the traits of the so-called leaders. He says, 'The land is a giant whale/that swallow the sinker/with hook, line and bait'. In the above lines, the exact picture of the leaders is captured. They are only interested in siphoning public funds which would have been deployed to provide the citizenry basic infrastructure and social amenities to enable the masses thrive in life. Instead of providing conducive and thriving environment for the masses, the leaders engage in frustrating them. Hence, the leaders help in 'aborting dreams of a good catch'. When government fails in its responsibilities, it may be impossible for the masses to succeed. No wonder the masses are seen as 'fishers turn home at dusk/blue Peter on empty ships/all Peters with petered out desires.' To effectively expose the spate the masses find themselves, the poet uses biblical allusion on the case of Peter in the bible who fished all night and came back empty, to liken the fate of the people who toil all day and come back empty. This is as a result of the leaders neglecting the masses and failing to provide them a fair playing ground.

In the second stanza, the leaders change nature into a more dangerous form in 'The land is a saber-toothed tiger'. He sees the leaders as tigers that devour the masses as preys. The selfishness and greed that characterize the leadership in Nigeria have devoured the possibilities of the ordinary man on the street to make it and survive. Due to the present carnivorous nature of leaders in Nigeria, adults are seen running away leaving 'infant' to 'shudder home' and 'the grizzled ones snatch their gut/from bayonets of tribulation'. That is, the masses turn to crime and violence as alternative means of survival.

He continues in the third stanza: 'The land is a giant hawk/that courts unceasing disaster/as it hovers and hoots in space'. In order for the masses not to organize themselves and question the leaders, the Nigerian leaders decide to provoke unending crisis that will keep the masses in a

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

spot. Also, the callous nature of governance breeds disaster as unsatisfied groups begin to rise up against the government.

Finally, in the last stanza, these leaders begin to strategically attack those questioning their excesses as stated in 'The land lies patiently ahead/awaiting in ambush/those who point away from direction/where nothing happens/toward the shore of possibilities'. The poet reveals that the leaders don't want to give up in their selfishness, rather would attack anyone that wants to stop them.

EVALUATION QUESTION

1. Give a detailed content analysis of the poem.
2. Comment on the poem, 'Ambush', as a satire.

POETIC DEVICES

The poem, 'Ambush', is characterized by the use of several poetic devices such as metaphor in the first line of the first three stanzas. Imagery is employed to visually capture the way and manner the leaders frustrate and terminate the dreams of the masses. Biblical allusion on the case of Peter in the bible is employed to show the helplessness of the masses who have been adversely affected by the corrupt practices of the leaders. 'The land' is used repeatedly to symbolize the leaders. Neologism is also another device deployed by the poet in the word 'petered'. Other sound device like alliteration, onomatopoeia and assonance are utilized by the poet to drive home meaning.

THEMATIC FOCUS

1. The theme of disillusionment and betrayal.
2. The theme of corruption and insecurity.
3. The theme of greed and selfishness.
4. The theme of political instability and frustration.

GENERAL EVALUATION

1. Comment on the theme of attack of the predator on the prey, using the poem, 'Ambush'.
2. Examine the poetic devices deployed in the poem, 'Ambush'.

WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT

1. "A black beautiful brilliant bride" is an example of A. pun. B. alliteration. C. assonance. D. onomatopoeia.
2. The paragraph in prose can be compared to ____ in poetry. A. couplet B. line C. stanza D. verse
3. The juxtaposition of two seemingly contradictory words is A. contrast. B. anti – climax. C. oxymoron. D. antithesis.
4. In "I am so famished, I can devour a whole cow", the device used is A. hyperbole. B. metaphor. C. irony. D. sarcasm.
5. The repetition of initial consonant sounds in poetry is A. rhyme. B. assonance. C. oxymoron. D. alliteration.

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

THEORY

1. Examine Gbemisola Adeoti's 'Ambush' as an x-ray of the Nigerian political trends.
2. Discuss the major theme of the poem.

READING ASSIGNMENT

Read the themes of the poem above in Exam Focus.

WEEK SEVEN

READING AND CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NON-AFRICAN POETRY: "THE SCHOOL BOY"

CONTENT ANALYSIS

The poem "The School Boy" is a romantic piece that celebrates nature, the rustic setting, as a companion. The poet persona draws consolation from nature unlike the classroom that he sees as a cage. This is an irony. The classroom ought and should be a place of liberation and enlightenment of the soul. The title of the poem helps to foreground the focus of attention of the poet. The poem is the lamentation of a young boy who is not happy with the restriction placed on him, which has not allowed him to fraternize with nature as he would have loved. The regimentation of this child's love by a host of parental and social rules and regulations leads to the child becoming sad as he longs for freedom to bask in the beauty of summer or nature. For the boy, nature is the only place where he can find emotional, physical, psychological fulfilment and happiness. He is unhappy with his parents, who want him to go to school. This ushers in one of the main thematic preoccupation of the poet in the poem, which is the subjugation of the child. This brings to the fore, the conflict between the neoclassicists who believed and celebrated restraint and reason as important virtues that each individual must possess and the romanticist who were exponents of celebrating the beauty of nature and imagination. Thus, this poem celebrates the beauty of nature and the importance of staying intimate with or appreciating nature. He laments that classroom education stifles creativity and offers no joy. The teachers are hostile and the environment is not encouraging at all. He sees education as bondage. This is why he asks in stanza 4 why a bird should not be freed from its cage and sing? The child prefers to be left alone.

A hand illustrated version of "The School Boy" from Copy B of Songs of Innocence currently held at the Library of Congress.

"The School Boy" is a 1789 poem by William Blake and published as a part of his poetry collection entitled "Songs of Innocence." These poems were later added with Blake's "Songs of Experience" to create the entire collection entitled "Songs of Innocence and of Experience Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul." This collection included poems such as "The Tyger," "The Little Boy Lost," "Infant Joy," and "The Shepherd (Blake)." These poems are illustrated with colorful artwork created by Blake first in 1789.^[2] The first printing in 1789

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

consisted of sixteen copies. None of the copies of Songs of Innocence are exactly alike as some of them are incomplete or were colored in posthumously "in imitation of" other copies.

"The School Boy" is a poem written in the pastoral tradition that focuses on the downsides of formal learning. It considers how going to school on a summer day "drives all joy away". The boy in this poem is more interested in escaping his classroom than he is with anything his teacher is trying to teach. In lines 16-20, a child in school is compared to a bird in a cage. Meaning something that was born to be free and in nature, is instead trapped inside and made to be obedient.

The first verse describes the delight of waking up to the birds singing and what a marvellous way this is to start the day.

The next verse, however, contrasts with verse one by describing how distraught the schoolboy is to be at school, and how the thought of this halts his happiness immediately.

Verse three describes school, how when home-schooled you can sit happily and read. At school, there is no freedom; you will learn what you are told to learn, nothing more, nothing less. School cannot delight him.

Verse four compares a boy at school to a bird in a cage: his potential is restrained.

The fifth verse shows how people are dismayed at school and how students are stripped of their joy.

The final verse describes how school can never be fun, but it is like a cold winter's day blasting through the warm summer.

ILLUSTRATION AND FORM

The illustration for this poem predominantly features elements of nature, which is reflected in the poem's content. At the bottom of the print, there are three human figures sitting down examining either the ground or something upon the ground. This indicates an interest in nature and of what it is compiled.

Around the border of the print is a weaving of intertwined vines. Within these vines are foliage such as leaves and flowers-nature within nature. There is also a human figure perched near the base of the vines with her arms extended, reaching up into the climbing flora. Further up the vines, there are two human figures sitting in the crook of two separate vines, each one is reading. This could indicate that the farther one travels into nature, the more one will learn. This, based on Blake's emphasis on a "Natural" education.

Also among the leaves and fruit of the vines, on the left of the print is a bird about to take flight. "Both victory and liberty [...] are associated with bird wings." Birds can also symbolize

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

knowledge and nature. The presence of the bird, further indicated the freedom and learning that can come from education from nature rather than the formal classroom.

Arranged in six stanzas with five lines each, this poem follows a consistently patterned structure. It also contains a rhyme scheme of ababb.

This poem highlights Blake's affinity for alternative methods of education. Consistently repeated is the draining element of schoolroom education and how it causes students to contribute poor learning and retention for students. Blake instead promotes learning outside the classroom, specifically learning in nature where he believes spontaneous and natural creativity flourishes.

The analogy of the bird and the boy is also evidence of the recurring theme of nature within this poem. As a poet of Romanticism, Blake puts an emphasis on nature, the subjective self and on emotions. Within this poem, the allusions to nature are everywhere referencing things such as summer, wind, blossoms, rain showers, birds and spring.^[3] Blake equates the seasons of the Earth to the seasons of the boy's life. Blake also analogizes the boy with a caged bird unable to sing, to attain its free place in nature, just like the boy.

David Almond references "The School Boy" in his novel Skellig to validate his character, Mina's nonformal learning provided to her by her mother and supplemented heavily by Blake's materials. Sahm writes that, "Mina and her mother quote and reference Blake directly, and many of the characters share his interest in education, spirituality, and imagination. But more than merely quoting Blake's words, the characters in Skellig live and exemplify one of his primary ideas: that of contraries."^[6] Namely in Skellig, Almond uses "The Schoolboy" as primary evidence for his character, Mina's non-traditional education.^[6] Which ties in with the text of the poem which continually brings up how being in a traditional school setting is draining, and will make a boy "forget his youthful spring."

EVALUATION

1. Discuss the poem as a romantic piece.
2. Analyze the content of the poem.

WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT

1. "I am the bread of life", illustrates the use of A. contrast. B. metaphor. C. metonymy. D. meiosis.
2. An ode is usually a poem written for A. condemnation. B. celebration. C. instruction. D. entertainment.
3. The main character in a literary work is the A. antagonist. B. protagonist. C. narrator. D. actor.
4. A sonnet may be divided into an octave and A. tercet. B. quatrain. C. sestet. D. septet.
5. "All hands on deck" is an example of A. metaphor. B. personification. C. synecdoche. D. simile.

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

THEORY

Read the content analysis of the poem in Exam Focus and summarize it.

READING ASSIGNMENT

Read the topic on devices of the poem above in Exam Focus.

THEMES IN THE POEM AND POETIC TECHNIQUES

1. Education acquired in a natural setting is more fulfilling than formal education in a classroom: The poet persona revolts against the limitation placed on him by the parents and society. He prefers to learn from nature. Thus the persona rejects conventional formal education. He sees formal education as bondage unlike nature that fires the imagination of creativity.
2. The beauty and splendour of nature: The poetic persona expresses his love for the elements of nature. He sees summer, trees, winds and the budding of plants as a depiction of beauty.
3. Children should be given the opportunity to chart their destiny: The poet believes that children should be given freedom to make their choice of education. This is based on the fact that education of one's choice brings fulfilment and happiness
4. The quest for fulfilment in nature: The quest for fulfilment is a core desire of human beings. The poet portrays the child craving for fulfilment in nature.
5. Loss of the euphoria of the child: The child in question loses hope and happiness in learning.

POETIC TECHNIQUES

1. Metaphor: In line 14, "learning's bower" is a metaphor for the classroom. The bird in line 16 is a metaphorical reference to the boy.
2. Apostrophe: The poet persona makes use of this device when he addresses his parents as if they are present.
3. Dramatic monologue: The persona pours out his thoughts alone without the interference from others.
4. Consonance: We find this device in line 12, where the /n/ is repeated in "And spend many anxious hours" and in "blossom blown" (l. 22).
5. Rhetorical question: This is explored in lines 17, 27 and 30.
6. Personification: The use of personification is evident in in the first stanza of the poem. The bird is given a human attribute of singing in lines 2 and 4. In line 8, the eye is given the human attribute as being cruel. Lines 23 and 24 also explore personification.

GENERAL EVALUATION

1. Discuss the splendor of beauty as portrayed in the poem.
2. Examine the use of metaphor and personification in the poem.

WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

1. A speech in a play in which a character speaks his or her thought alone is A. a monologue. B. an aside. C. a soliloquy. D. an epilogue.
2. In Literature, repetition is used essentially for A. rhyme. B. suspense. C. allusion. D. emphasis.
3. The pattern of a poem without reference to its content is referred to as the A. limerick. B. metre. C. free verse. D. form
4. The performers in a play constitute the A. chorus. B. character. C. audience. D. cast.
5. A metrical foot in which a stressed syllable is following by an unstressed syllable is A. iambic. B. spondaic. C. trochaic D. dactylic.

THEORY

Examine the structure and tone of the poem.

READING ASSIGNMENT

Read analysis on the poem above on the net.

WEEK EIGHT

READING AND CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NON-AFRICAN POETRY: "THE PULLEY" BY GEORGE HERBERT

CONTENT

ABOUT THE POET

George Herbert was born in Wales in 1593. He was an English poet, orator and Anglican priest. His background as a clergyman had a profound influence on his writings. He has been classified as a metaphysical poet. His poems were greatly influenced by John Donne's works because the latter was his mother's friend. His poems were highly philosophical in nature and they celebrated God's love towards man. Herbert wrote about issues of life using a religious approach. Throughout his life, he wrote religious poems characterized by a unique use of imagery, which were easily accessible to his readers. Herbert's writings express his relationship with God. He confessed that his poetry is a picture of the spiritual conflicts between God and man's soul.

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

George Herbert's "The Pulley" focuses on the relationship between God and man, God's love for man and man's weakness. In this poem, Herbert uses the metaphor of the pulley to talk about man's dependence on God and the fact that without God man is nothing. The point being stressed in this poem is that after creating man, God deliberately withholds some benefits from him so that man will turn to Him for his needs and salvation. The implication is that man's yearning for those things lacking in his life will ultimately bring him back to God. Thus, the pulley serves as a metaphor presenting man's helplessness and dependence on God for his sustenance and assistance. The poem adopts a three-part syllogistic approach, which is a

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

common feature of metaphysical poetry. The first part usually raises a question or an issue, which needs to be resolved. The second part works on the issue, the last provides the solution. Within the contest of “The Pulley”, the first part narrates the creation story, while the second part describes an endowment of man with virtue like riches, honour, wisdom beauty, etc. In the third part, God finds a way to retain man’s interest in Him by giving him everything but rest. He succeeds in devising a strategy to continually draw men unto Him. George Herbert’s poems are usually emblematic in nature and “The Pulley” is no exception. The structure of the poem is unusual as the first and last line of every stanza is shorter than the remaining lines. Readers can easily imagine the shape of a pulley and appreciate the poem as these lines create a visual description and the analysis of the poem creates a visual description and the analysis of the poem creates its significance. God gave man everything he will ever need after creation but in bid to restore man to God, He bestows weariness and restlessness on man so that man will always run to Him for salvation.

EVALUATION

1. Give a brief background of George Herbert.
2. Analyze the poem above.

THEMES

1. THE SUPERIORITY OF GOD, THE ALL-KNOWING GOD, OVER MAN

The main theme of the poem is God’s supremacy over man. “The Pulley” establishes the fact that God is in all ramifications superior to man. It is a fact that every human being must accept, that God, as Supreme Being, controls the destiny of each individual and that without Him, nothing that exists can subsist. Thus, the poem is a symbolic portrayal of the fact that man’s efforts are dependent on God, his creator. The poem asserts that God, in His infinite wisdom, knows that making man independent would lead to the abuse of that independence. Therefore, the tone of this poem shows God’s superiority over man. There is that master-subordinate relationship depicted in the poem where God, the master, has full authority over His creation. God requires respect from man hence, He withdraws one special gift which is that of emotional fulfilment and contentment. According to God, the lack of this gift will definitely draw man back to him to draw him under His feet. This tempo is made prominent in the last stanza of the poem: “Let him be rich and weary, that at least/if goodness lead him not, yet weariness/may toss him back to my breast”.

2. THE FRAILITY OF THE HUMAN MIND

Another major theme depicted in the poem is the frailty of the human mind. God as Sovereign and the creator of mankind understands the nature of man. He knows that the mind of man is frail, that man is weak and easily susceptible to a myriad of negative, ungodly influences. God knows that man can easily be manipulated and that he could easily forget his maker if he has all he needs in life. This is why God decides to take rest from man to constantly remind man of his need to depend on God.

3. God desires that man should look up to Him

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

This poem reveals the fact that God desires to draw men unto Him because He created man for a purpose, to serve and worship Him. God desires that men depend on Him and seek His face at all times for everything. God also desires that men should worship and adore Him alone and not idolize the things he made. He, therefore, creates a way to make this possible by not giving man rest, which is synonymous with peace of mind.

4. The reason for man's restlessness

The poem provides an answer for the restlessness of man. People often ask the question: why is man restless? Why is the need of man insatiable? This poem provides an answer to this philosophical question. God bestows restlessness and weariness upon man so that man will always run to Him.

POETIC TECHNIQUES IN THE POEM

The following figures of speech and sound devices are apparent in the poem.

1. Alliteration: This is found in expressions like "so strength" (l. 6), which alliterates the /s/ sound and "repining restlessness" (l. 17), which alliterates the /r/ sound.
2. Assonance: This is found in line 8: "when almost all was out..."
3. Contrast: One also notices the use of contrast in the poem. This is evident in the last stanza of the poem. There is a contrast between "rich" and "weary" in line 18.
4. Dramatic Monologue: this is one prominent technique that runs through the poem. This technique encourages the dramatic mood of the poem by unfolding the relationship between the addresser and addressee. Thus, there is that position of an audience. This is exemplified by use of dialogues in the poem. The phrase, "let us" unconsciously signifies the presence of an unseen audience. All these attest to the effectiveness of the dramatic monologue in the poem.
5. Imagery: The presentation of mental images to express a central idea is seen in the poem. From the title of the poem, readers are prone to create a mental picture as they analyze the poem. The pulley is an image that embodies the idea the poem seeks to express.
6. Inversion: In line 4, the normal order of words reversed towards the end of the line: "let the world's riches, which dispersed lie" the normal order should be: "which lie dispersed" However, if this arrangement of words was the one used, "dispersed" would not rhyme with "by" in line 2
7. Personification: Two things, goodness and weariness, are endowed with human attributes in lines 19-20: "if goodness lead him not, yet weariness/may toss him to my breast".
8. Synecdoche: There is an example of the use of synecdoche in line 20, the last line of the poem where the word "breast" is used as a metaphor for God. Synecdoche is a form of metaphor where a part is used to represent the whole of what is referred to.
9. Biblical Allusion: the poem is an example of biblical allusion as all its contents allude to the creation of the world and man in Genesis 1-2

EVALUATION

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

1. Analyze four poetic devices in the poem.
2. What is the main theme of the work and why?

GENERAL EVALUATION

1. Analyze the content of "The Pulley."
2. Discuss on any two themes in the poem.
3. Examine five poetic devices in the poem.

WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT

1. The struggle between two opposing forces in the plot of a story which can either be internal or external is ____ (a) Conflict (b) Struggle (c) Pathos
2. ____ is the conversation between characters in a literary work.
(a) Dialogue (b) Connotation (c) Canto
3. ____ is the greatest point of interest or entertainment intensity in a literary work.
(a) Climax (b) Anti-Climax (c) Denouement
4. ____ is the quotation that occurs at the beginning of a literary work that highlights a theme. (a) Epigraph (b) Epigram (c) Epithet
5. ____ is an exaggeration for the purpose of emphasis. (a) Exaggeration (b) Litotes (c) Pun

THEORY

How does Herbert explore religion in "The Pulley"?

READING ASSIGNMENT

Read analysis on the poem above on the net.

WEEK NINE

REVISION OF POETIC DEVICES

Below are some of the popular poetic devices often used by not only poets but also by prose writers and play writers. Although any literary author could use them and some do, they are of the poetic origin.

METAPHOR

A metaphor is an indirect comparison between two different things with a common attribute. It is sometimes described as a compressed simile because of the writer's desire to save words. The comparative words- 'as' and 'like'-are sacrificed while the quality is transferred straight to the object.

- E.g. (i) The sunshine of her smile kept me thinking.
(ii) The man is a lion in the field of play.

SIMILE

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

A simile is an expression that describes something by comparing it with something else using the words: as, like, as if, as though, as...as, as...so. This is a direct comparison between two objects that share at least one quality.

E.g. (i) He turned and stared at me like a ghost.

(ii) The girl was as lifeless as a stone.

PERSONIFICATION

It is a figurative device which gives the attribute of life and understanding to inanimate objects.

In other words, this is the representation of a thing or a quality as a person life.

E.g. (i) The trees jubilated in the winds.

(ii) Death lays his cold hands on kings.

HYPERBOLE

A hyperbole consists of an exaggerated statement which cannot be taken literally. Its purpose is to emphasize and achieve a humorous effect.

E.g. (i) The chair weighs a know ton.

(ii) She prepared a mountain of akpu.

IRONY

This is the expression of the exact opposite of what one means though the words are not meant to be taken at face value.

E.g. (i) 'Oh! What a beautiful voice you have' (when actually the person has a croaky voice).

(ii) Michael won't be late: you know how punctual he always is (when actually Michael is a notorious late comer who has been late for school many times.)

PARADOX

A statement which appears to be contradictory at the surface level but which on closer scrutiny bears some truth. In paradox, the ideas are self-contradictory, while in oxymoron, the words placed side by side are self-contradictory.

E.g. (i) The child is the father of the man.

(ii) If you want peace prepare for war.

SARCASM

This is an irony that is used with contempt. It is usually without disguise, it is a direct ridicule to show annoyance or unkind joke. Sarcasm aims to hurt its victim or listener.

E.g. (i) A flight is delayed for two hours. Somebody then remarks: 'Good and efficient service'.

EUPHEMISM

This is a figure of speech which states an unpleasant fact in a pleasant way in order to conceal or hide its real nature.

E.g. (i) He passed away quietly in the night (died)

(ii) The dump is a sight to behold (repulsive)

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

OXYMORON

This is a device which put two contradictory words side by side for effect.

- E.g. (i) It is an open secret that the lovers have separated.
(ii) Parting can be such a sweet sorrow.

METONYMY

It is a figurative device in which the name or attribute of a thing is given for the name of the thing itself.

- E.g. (i) Enugu is such a bustling city.
(ii) How many Shakespeare's have you read?
(iii) The pen is mightier than the sword.

SYNECDOCHE

It is a figurative device in which the part of an object or idea is taken to stand for the name of the thing made from the material.

- E.g. (i) Gray hair (old age) should be respected.
(ii) Nigeria won the cup.
(iii) She was dressed in silk.

ASSONANCE

This is the repetition of similar vowel sounds in the same line or nearby line of a poem or poetic prose passage.

- E.g. (i) With thoughts of the path back, how, rough it was (/oo/ sound and /aa/ sound)

ALLITERATION

It is a systematic repetition of certain consonant sounds in a poetic line or nearby line in order to produce a special sound effect.

- E.g. (i) I bring fresh showers for the flowers, from the seas and the streams. (repetition of 'f' and 's' sounds)
(ii) While wars waste wealth and human resources, peace makes for progress (repetition of 'w' and 'p' sounds).

REPETITION

It is a figure of speech in which a word, phrase or idea is expressed more than once in a piece of poem or in a dramatic or fictive passage for emphasis.

- E.g. (i) Rain, rain go away.
Talk, talk! Who wanted it?
(ii) And she forgot the stars, the moon and the sun
And she forgot the blue above the tree
And she forgot the dells where waters run
And she forgot the chilly autumn breeze
(John Keats: 'Isabella').

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

ANTITHESIS

It is a device in which two unlike ideas are put against each other for effect and obvious contrast.

- E.g. (i) United we stand; divided we fall.
(ii) God made the country, man made the town.

CLIMAX

This is a figurative device which places ideas in an ascending order of importance. Hence, events develop from a lower level to a higher level.

- E.g. (i) The queen's mother was mourned by her family, countless admirers, and her town's people the entire world.
(ii) The warrior came, he saw and he conquered.

ANTI-CLIMAX (BATHOS)

It is the direct opposite of climax. Events or ideas are arranged in descending order of importance in such a way that the ideas lose their importance.

- E.g. (i) The captain lost his two children, household goods and his pet dog in January 27 bomb blast
(ii) The professor lost his head, his job and his books after the nation-wide strike.

ONOMATOPOEIA

This is the use of words whose sounds suggest their meaning or sense

- E.g. (i) Croak, squeak, hiss, boom, bang.

PUN

It is an amusing use of words or phrases with similar sound but different meanings.

- E.g. (i) Seven days without water make one weak (one week)
(ii) 'Come, I'm a mender of soles, let me mend your souls', the man preached.

RHETORICAL QUESTION (Apparent interrogation)

A rhetorical question is a question asked as a way of making a statement, not really because one is expecting a definite answer from the reader or audience

- E.g. (i) Who knows what might happen? Who knows whose turn is by the corner?
(ii) What if I am my father's son? What if I came here through his influence? Haven't I done enough to prove that I am equal to the demands of the position?

LITOTES

This is a deliberate understatement by one who uses the negative in order to express the opposite. It also involves the use of double negativity

- E.g. (i) Let the past go; we shall not be sorry to miss it (in other words, we shall be glad).
(ii) The girl, though petite is not lacking intelligence.
(iii) I am not ungrateful for your assistance.

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

APOSTROPHE

In spite of apostrophe being a certain type of punctuation mark, in literature or rhetoric, it is a figure of speech in which the speaker turns away from the audience to address or appeal to someone or an object which is not present at the scene of reference.

E.g. (i) Death, how unkind you are!

(ii) O wild west wind, thou breathe of autumn's being / Thou from whose unseen presence the leaves dead/ Are driven like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing, ...
(Shelley: 'Ode to the West Wind').

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

ALLUSION

An explicit or indirect reference in a piece of literature (a poem, play or fiction) to a person, place or historical event. In literature many allusions are made to the Bible, to the gods, to a people's myths and legends, etc, for purposes of association or comparison.

E.g (i) When I refused, he gave me some money; perhaps he thought I was a Judas.
(ii) I came, I saw but I could not conquer.
(This is Napoleon Bonaparte of France's statement).

SYNAETHESIA

This is the description of one kind of sensation in terms of another, say colour being attributed to sound; odour to colour; sound to odours etc.

E.g. (i) I am never merry when I hear sweet music.
(ii) The morning light creaks down again
(iii) I dreamt that my hands were covered with the yellow blood of a stranger.

GENERAL EVALUATION

- 1 With your own example, define any ten poetic devices of your choice.
- 2 Identify and define other poetic devices not mentioned here.

WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT

1. Identify the odd literary device from the list. (a) enjambment (b) plot (c) rhyme (d) alliteration.
2. We study literature in school because it (a) provides a means to kill time (b) expose students to life realities (c) provides readers with entertainment (d) teaches readers the use of words
3. Dramatic irony entails (a) the praise of the audience (b) a statement with a deeper significance (c) a statement hilarious and sarcastic (d) the praise tag of a great person
4. The echoing of the meaning of a word by its sound is called (a) phonetics (b) oxymoron (c) pun (d) onomatopoeia
5. A comedy is a play in which (a) nobody dies (b) there is a happy ending (c) there is real laughter (d) the hero is a clown.

THEORY

- 1 List the various types of poems under the kinds of poetry mentioned here.
- 2 Poetry is a spontaneous overflow of excess emotions and feelings. Discuss.

READING ASSIGNMENT

- 1 Exam Focus: Lit-in-Eng by J.O.J. NwachukwuAgbada et al., pgs 5-9.
- 2 Essential Literature-in-English for SSS by Ibitola A. O., pgs 7-12.

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

WEEK TEN

REVISION: LITERARY TERMS AND DEFINITION

CONTENT

BACKGROUND /SETTING

PLOT

SUBJECT MATTER / THEME / MOTIF

CHARACTER / CHARACTERIZATION

These literary terms that will be discussed later are seen also to be the conventions of creative writing or concrete issues considered when appreciating a literary work. That is, a proper understanding of these terms would yield proper appreciation and understanding of any world of art. In other words, students of literature should have a proper understanding of what these terms mean, to be able to discuss the aspects in a work of literature. And these terms are:

BACKGROUND

Background which can be seen as the situation of a play, novel or poem, is a combination of the circumstances, the setting inclusive, out of which emerges the story's action. It also includes the motivation and the stimuli which give rise to the choices open to or made available to some characters in a novel or play. It was the background (situation) of oppression and domination of blacks by whites in South Africa that gave rise to the spineless (timid) characters that we often meet in South African Stories of the apartheid era.

SETTING

Setting is the particular location where all the actions in a piece of fiction or drama take place, at a particular time or under certain psychological and moral conditions. These features serve as the platform against which characters live and pursue their life goals. Moreover, setting is an important factor in the author's choice of subject matter and certainly is influential in the implementation of his theme(s). A story may have a physical, socio-psychological, temporal or metaphorical setting. The physical setting of a story is its realistic background, its geographical environment. It is the physical location of the occurrences in the story. This may be localized in a known or imaginary/unfamiliar place. In drama, the physical scenery presented on stage is also part of its physical setting. The physical features of the places such as the flora and fauna, the jungle, the hills and mountains, the landscape etc. are important in tangible setting. Such other details as sounds (including music and background noises) and odours are also part of physical setting.

The socio – psychological setting of a piece of literature has to do with its social emotional atmosphere, the cultural state of a period. It includes the language spoken and the way it is spoken, the norms and the customs, occupations, attitudes, religious outlook, the moral and state of value, the living conditions, the quality of human relationship, the intellectual and emotional environment of the characters, the economic and social class formations prevalent at a time etc. These influence the characters and inform their motivations and actions in a work.

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

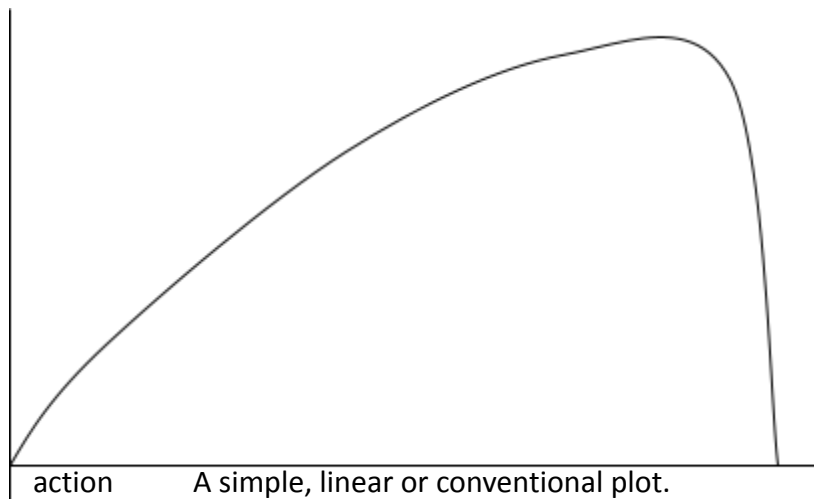
Setting is temporal when it is simply a reference to historical times such as in Renaissance England, at the turn of the century post – independence era in Africa, the Nigerian Civil War period etc. It is metaphorical when it tends to objectify or vividly show internal states.

It is important to note that the kind of setting a writer adopts is a function of his intentions, themes or notions. A writer could also utilize all these levels of setting in one work or could make use of some.

PLOT

Plot is the sequence of actions which constitute the nucleus (centre) of the story and conveys the theme. It is what the characters do or what is done to them as the story progresses. As bones hold up our mass of flesh and remain the only easily observable features on an x – ray film, so is the story's plot, its structural framework. A plot is a carefully thought-out plan in which all the events, all the actions and reactions of the characters contribute towards the forward leap of the story.

It is the plot that imbues (gives) a story with a recognizable form, a definite structure or shape. A simple plot has pyramidal shape made up of an exposition, complication, conflict, climax and denouement. Diagrammatically, it looks like this:



It is necessary to explain the various parts of the simple plot:

- (i) Exposition (Development): At this point, the author establishes the background of the story, paints and builds up the setting and introduces the readers to his character.
- (ii) Complication: Here something throws spanner in the works. That is, some unexpected event disrupts the plans of the chief character.
- (iii) Conflict: This is a clash between the hero and the villain in particular, or the clash of all opposing forces in the story in general.
- (iv) Climax: It is the highest point of tension and intensity in a piece of fiction or drama. It is also called the turning-point because it is after here that the reader descends the slope of the story's actions. A conventional plot usually has one climax while a more complex one would have more than one climax.

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

- (v) Denouement (Resolution): It is the unraveling or unknotting of the events. At this stage in the narration, the tense situation is resolved or contained through the action or inaction of certain characters. The simple or conventional or well-made plot is only possible when we have a subject matter and theme which can be expressed by a linear or straight forward development of events. That is, because X happened, Y took place, and because Y took place, Z occurred etc.

EVALUATION

1. With the aid of a diagram, define plot
2. Briefly discuss background and setting.

SUBJECT MATTER AND THEME AND MOTIF

The subject matter of a work of literature is simply the issue the author discusses in his work. And this issue is made up of the particular actions, characters and settings which the author chooses for his work.

In other words, these make up the subject matter, the surface facts. From the fore-going, a novel's subject could be a place, a situation or the quality of the human condition. It could centre on the adventures of a character with the opposite sex, a flashback into childhood, the modern Nigerian city (always the subject matter of many of Ekwensi's novels), the Nigerian civil war (already the subject matter of many Nigerian novels), undergraduate life the travails of long spinsterhood or the embarrassment of chronic bachelorhood, barrenness etc. Out of a subject matter there could be many themes, themes being the abstract ideas that the subject matter exemplifies. No theme is possible without a subject matter because it is in the relationship of the former to the latter that the ultimate truth the writer has in mind is made obvious.

The theme (thesis) of a novel, poem or drama is the message it wishes to impart, some overt or subtle philosophical pronouncement it strives to make. The subject matter of Sola Owonibi's "Homeless Not Hopeless" is composed of the mere facts of the action, character and setting of the poem; while the truth the author aims at namely, the economical, social and spiritual importance of the beggars in the African society, constitutes the theme. The subject matter, or simply subject, is the area of a story's focus while the theme is the author's attitude towards it. For example, if the subject of a story is poverty, the theme may be the deprivations caused by it or the disadvantages to which a poor person is exposed in a developing country.

Motif should not be confused with motive. It is derived from Latin *movere*, *motum*-meaning to move. It is a particular idea or dominant element running through a work of art, constituting part of the main theme. It is a type of incident, device or formula which recurs frequently in a piece of creative literature. Very many authors aware of these motifs make use of them in their stories, poems or plays. For instance, the motif of a beautiful lady who rejects all her handsome suitors but marries an ugly or non-human one is derived from folklore. Motif or the German *leitmotif* (a guiding spirit) is equally applied to the frequent repetition of a significant phrase or set description or complex of images in a particular work. If the theme of a work is the author's

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

statement of value for or against the events constituting the subject matter of a work, its motif is a recognizable incident which recalls a similar incident in oral or written literature or attracts a historical or bible comparison. In the example we gave about the subject matter of a work being poverty and the theme being the deprivations it gives rise to, the motif could be the biblical incident between Lazarus and the king's dogs which such a theme recalls.

Theme is occasionally used interchangeably with motif even though 'theme' has to do with some underlying doctrine implicitly or explicitly stated in an imaginative writing and which the author persuades his readers to behold. Somehow, every creative writer has his own notions about life and humanity. We call this notion a writer's philosophy of life which in a good artistic work is often hidden from a lazy reader or the reader who is merely interested in the story. Cyprian Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana* has two controlling ideas (themes) namely, the city corrupts young people and secondly, those who are morally deficient must pay for their shortcomings while one of its easily perceivable motifs is 'the wages of sin is death'

CHARACTER AND CHARACTERIZATION

M.H. Abrams speaks of the characters in a literary work in this vein: "the persons presented in a dramatic or narrative work who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with moral and dispositional qualities that are expressed in what they say – the dialogue and by what they do – the action." In drama or fiction, there would be no story or plot without a character or characters. Without characters, there would be no action since the events are determined by them. The conception of, and manner of presentation of characters have a lot of influence on the stature of a piece of creative writing as much as the significance of the story's events and patterning. Character means both the people (including animals) who appear in a novel, play or poem and the description of the personality of any of these figures, particularly those traits which have significant effect on the development of the work.

To build up characters who are realistic and credible, who enjoy our love and affection or elicit our hatred or condemnation is probably one of the most herculean challenges that confront the imagination of a creative writer. In conventional terms, the most important character in a story about whose fortunes and misfortunes we are most desirous of knowing is the protagonist, also called the hero or heroine, whether or not there is anything heroic in his or her experiences or actions. The protagonist is often at the centre of the story's action and controls the universe in which his actions or inaction provoke one form of crisis or the other. In the process of the hero trying to tame his universe, he usually meets some resistance. The reader is often desirous of knowing how he faces these obstacles and what he experiences in the attempt. Sometimes we so get immersed in identifying with him that we laugh when he overcomes and sigh when he is disadvantaged.

The character in opposition to the protagonist is called the antagonist or the villain. He opposes the hero and tries to foil him in his plans. He makes every effort to soil the hero's good name and reputation, and / or snatch his lover or mistress from him. The foil of a character contrasts him; his role in the novel or play is essentially to serve as a mirror of behavioural contrast to the

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

chief character. The hero's goodness stands in bold relief if the antagonist is shown to be mean, cunning and devilish. However, the antagonist need not be an 'evil' character in the way that the protagonist may not have to be a 'good' personality. For example, in *The Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare, the protagonist is Shylock, the resolute money-lender, while the antagonist is the kind-hearted Antonio.

Two main characters exist in literature. There are the round and flat or static characters. This is in fact the only way we can conveniently say it because human personalities are difficult to be neatly classified, the human person being capable of adopting a combination of roundness and flatness if he so desires, and depending on the circumstances before him. The roundness of character indicates that a literary character is dynamic, complex, developing, life-like and multi-faceted. A round character grows and changes as the narrative progresses. The growth may be physical – from childhood to adulthood; it may be mental /psychological – from ignorance to knowledge, or from naiveté to sophistication. A round character is not usually in the same state of innocence or ignorance with which he is associated at the beginning of the novel or play. Towards the end, he now exhibits a new consciousness, a new awareness and can now behold reality with new eyes, capable of surprising the reader in a convincing manner.

The other type of character is the flat or simple character, also referred to as one-dimensional, non-developing or simple character. Flat characters are quite predictable and never really grow or change in the course of the story. Often static characters are minor characters, but this need not be so.

The stock character, on the other hand, may be round or flat. His distinguishing quality is that he is a character type which recurs repeatedly in a particular literary genre. He is an archetypal model, the typical character specimen whom authors try to portray as prototypes.

Characterization is the effort made by a creative writer to erect credible characters. Authors adopt a number of methods in characterization. There is exposition in which the writer or narrator steps into the tale to let the reader know about the character such as his physical attributes, his motives and his traits. Another is the dramatic or scenic or showing method, the author presents the character as he acts, reflects, talks or interacts without any attempt to tell the reader the type of person the character is.

The writer allows the character to reveal himself through his words and actions. Characterization could be advanced by the author's use of some characters to inform his reader about the other characters. In that way the writer is further removed from the scene, and in that way increases his level of objectivity in the story. A writer does this by pitching characters against one another in dialogues at which they talk about their fellow characters.

There is also stream of consciousness method by which the writer merely records the state of a character's mental activity as it traverses the present and the past, as it reels off the character's mental torture or excitement. Though this approach, the writer appears to be showing us the

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

character's mental film of feelings, thoughts and memories which flows or streams. In the end readers learn about characters by what they do, what they say and what others say about them. In one work, a writer may use all these techniques or some of them.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Explain character and characterization to a layman.
2. What factors differentiate subject matter from theme and motif?

LANGUAGE AND STYLE

This has been variously defined as "the manner of linguistic expression" (M.H. Abrams), "the patterning of language" (Richard Taylor), "way of writing" (A.F. Scott), "that which intervenes between the artist and his material" (Victor Jones), "the expertise which goes into your creation" (Chukwuemeka Ike) etc. While some authorities seem to anchor style on language, some consider it as being constituted by the overall presentation and achievement of effect in a work. But it has a lot to do with the manner of writing with which a creative writer is associated. Hence, there is a popular adage which says that the style is the man himself. "Style is the final result of what the author does with the materials he employs – his characters, the environment of the story, the narrative perspective (is it in the first person or in the omniscient voice etc?), the organization of the events and actions and the implementation of linguistic devices. Style includes a creative writer mannerism and rhetoric, his effective use of language for the decoration of ideas and for painting features in bold relief, presenting facts with charity and brevity, the utilization of wits, ironies and jests and the arousal of emotions in others, for, as F.L. Lucas says in his *Style*, "without emotion, no art of literature; nor any other art."

Style possesses two principal ingredients: the content as shown in the expression of ideas and the way this is done; and the consistent and unique manner an author deploys various devices and strategies so as to make his work memorable. To examine a writer's style demands a consideration of all that he does in a piece of creative writing with a peculiarity associated with him. In addition to a characteristic portrayal of characters, setting, narrative points of view, events and actions which we pointed out in the preceding paragraph, there are also the author's use of dialogue, his humour, powers of observation, the length and variety of his sentence structure, his fidelity or otherwise to linguistic conventions, the words and word-types he employs, the paragraphing and figurative use of language.

Discussions on style often tend to centre on the author's levels of language deployment: the high (or grand), the middle (or mean), and the low (or base, or plain) styles. A writer may employ the three levels in the same novel or play, depending on his characters and the cumulative effect he has in mind. It is the duty of an author to ensure that the level of style in a literary work is appropriate to the speaker, the occasion and the dignity of the literary genre in question. The high or grand style is associated with formality in language, consisting of elaborate sentence patterns and figurative ornamentation, tight, united statements, balanced constructions and consciously designed statements. The middle level is akin to informality in language use which would include the language of domestic conversation and the classroom,

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

ordinary speech rhythms, loose constructions, short, simple and compound sentences, phrases and clauses which often stand on their own, declamatory statements and the admittance of interjections, and asides which interfere with the movement of the basic sentence construction. The low level is the illiterate / vulgate speech exemplified by regional dialects, slang and artisan vocabulary.

We may also classify styles according to literary epoch - Augustan style, metaphysical style etc. It may be derived from the source of its influence – the Biblical style; or from a type of use, say the journalistic or the scientific style; or it could be traced to the influence of a specific author – Shakespearean, Miltonic, Achebean, Soyinkanetc styles. It is after the consideration of all these stylistic facets that an author's style may be described in a number of ways. These include its classification as possessing the 'ornate', 'episodic', 'poetic', 'elaborate', 'forceful', 'florid', 'gay', 'sober', 'dull', 'pace/racy' etc. style.

POINT OF VIEW

Point of view in a story is the author's expressive devices, his models of narration. It is associated with the theme, but more precisely it is the outcome of the subject – theme relationship. An author's chosen theme or themes have a direct impact on his viewpoint because just as point of view is the angle from which a story is narrated, an author's theme is informed by his chosen perspective. In drama and poetry, the point of view is often easily identifiable, but in fiction this is not always possible. The fact is that narrations have narrators who may act as filters standing between the author, and the story events, on one hand, and the characters and the author, on the other.

Every story then could be told in a number of way or a combination of some of them. The three common approaches are the use of one of the character in the story; the use of a third person, an outsider who is not a participant in the story events; and lastly, the story could 'tell' itself without the intervention of anybody whatsoever. The use of one of the characters is also referred to as the personalized point of view; the third person narrator (persona) is the omniscient view in which the third – person pronouns (he, she, they or it) are used in reference to characters in a story; and there is also the non-intervening narration, also referred to as the objective point of view in which the narrator merely introduces the characters to the reader without any effort to describe them or to reveal their inner thoughts and motivations.

(i) The Participant/Personalized Point of View

This is equally referred to as the first – person point of view. In this narrative technique, the writer appoints one of the characters who is both a participant and a narrator. Such a character is usually the story's protagonist. He uses 'I' or 'We' in places. The voice is his own, not necessarily the author's. He is not necessarily the author's favourite and what he says, the follies he commits or the fortunes he makes may not necessarily enjoy the author's support. In addition, the first person narrator in any work of literature must not necessarily be a major character. That is, a minor character can enjoy the right to be the narrator in a piece of literature.

(ii) The Non-Participant Narrator/Third Person/Omniscient Point of View

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

The narrator here is omniscient, he is everywhere. He is not a character in the novel. The story told in the omniscient viewpoint uses the third person (he, she, it or they) in describing the characters and their action except when they are conversing. The omniscient narrator is an outsider who enjoys the characteristics of God omniscience. He sees and knows everything, and can and does enter the minds of the story's characters to reveal their fears and hopes. He knows the past, the present and the future of the characters.

The non-participant narrator or the third-person point of view is sub-divided into three: the editorial omniscient narrator, the neutral omniscient narrator and selective omniscience (stream of consciousness). In editorial omniscience, the author, in addition to a full knowledge of his characters, intervenes from time to time to say one or two things about his characters. In neutral omniscience, the narrator makes no comments on his feelings about anything instead he makes available the much he knows about each character without passing value judgement on them or on their actions. In the third type of omniscience the narrator has access to very few of the characters, sometimes to one of them. This is called selective omniscience or stream of consciousness technique because of the narrator's restriction to one character or two whose formed and unformed thoughts, emotions and dreams he is able to make available to the reader by occasionally penetrating their consciousness.

(iii) The Objective/Camera Point of View

Like in the omniscient narrator model, the objective /camera/disappearing author point of view uses the third person pronouns but has no omniscient narrator. The author does not intervene in the course of the story. It is described as 'camera' because the author does no more than present the characters as they act and converse with one another. The author makes no attempt to describe them or to penetrate the recesses of their consciousness, or to judge their actions and reasons for doing what they do. It is the reader who makes all the deductions based on what he hears the characters say or do and what the characters say about other or what they do to one another. There are neither authorial intrusions nor the summarization of events in parts. One incident gives rise to another without intervention from any quarters whatsoever. The result is that there are usually a lot of conversations, almost resembling what happens in a drama.

(iv) Multiple Points of View

This is the use of more than one point of view in the same story. It can lead to the complexity of a work. A story written in the first person could also have a substantial number of passages in which the stream of consciousness is employed by the narrator to dissect his own thought. It is also possible that an author whose point of view is omniscient could have passage of stream of consciousness, some letters or even diaries.

EVALUATION

1. Discuss the aspects to style in literature.
2. Discuss the types of author's point of view.

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

RHYTHM, METRE AND SCANSION

Apart from inventing new pictures/images reflecting one or more of the sense impressions, poets quite often arrange their diction with the purpose of achieving a special kind of beat, pulse, movement or rhythm. This is especially true of English poetry before the 20th century. This is not to say that rhythm is not important in 20th century poetry, for there is a sense in fact in which every good poem has an inherent rhythm, even if it is irregular. J.P. Clark's "Ibadan" may possess irregular rhythm, but it does suggest that the arrangement of buildings and structures in the city is irregular and confused:

Ibadan,
running splash of rust
and gold-flung and scattered
among seven hills
like broken china in the sun.
(J.P. Clark)

Rhythm in words or drumming in wave motion or in landscape refers to the repetition of pattern, particularly when it is done with some amount of variation and movement. Rhythm is a natural process such as we experience in our breathing, speaking, walking, pounding, etc. in the existence of day and night; in the appearance and disappearance of the moon or the seasons etc. In English speech, the voice falls more heavily on some sounds than on others. English poetry has always made use of these rhythmic patterns. Therefore, whenever we read a poem, we should try to observe the words that are emphasized or repeated, and the general pacing of the poem. Essentially that is what rhythm in poetry is about. Rhythm in poetry expresses emotion and suggests or aids the determination of a poem's theme.

In English poetry, the regular beats are referred to as the foot or metre. Until very recently, English poems were written with an eye on certain rules of rhythm known as metrical laws. Metre refers to the pattern of accented and unaccented syllables in a line. This is possible because English as a language is syllable – timed. In other words, every English word is composed of phonemes which are either stressed or unstressed (accented and unaccented). For example, con/duct (noun) and con/duct (verb). When we read a poetic line aloud, our voice is never at the same level throughout; we vary and modulate it. The pitches fall on particular syllables according to the nature of their phonemic weight.

Sometimes a whole word is taken to be a syllable as in come, put, quick, John, eat, hell etc. At other times, the word is regarded as possessing two syllables and so is divided in a manner that the accent falls on the first or second syllable. For example, quickly, report, rapport etc. Thus in a poetic line, one would expect to find a number of accented and unaccented syllables arranged in an identifiable order or pattern, known as the metre. It is the arrangement of the feet in a line of the stressed and unstressed syllables that determines what the metre of the whole poem is;

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

- (i) The Iambus/Iambic Foot (⁰-): consists of one unaccented (unstressed) syllable followed by one accented (stressed) syllable.
 - (a) That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none or few do hang.
 - (b) The curfew tolls the knell of parting day.
- (ii) The Trochee/Trochaic Foot (- ⁰): consist of one accented syllable followed by one unaccented syllable.
 - (a) There they are, my fifty men and women.
In a cavern, in a canyon.
- (iii) The Anapest /Anapestic Foot (⁰⁰ -): two unaccented syllables followed by one accented syllable. It is also called running rhythm because of its prevalence in swift movements.
 - (a) The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold.
- (iv) The Dactyl /Dactylic Foot (-⁰ ⁰): consists of one accented syllable followed by two unaccented syllables
 - (a) Half a league, half a league,
half a league onwards
- (v) The Spondee /Spondaic Foot (- -): One stressed syllable followed by another stressed syllable.
 - (a) All whom war, death, age, ague, tyrannies
Despair, law, chance hath slain
- (vi) The Pyrrhic/Pyrrhic Foot (o o): two successive unstressed syllables as found in the second and fourth feet of the first line below:
 - (a) My way is to begin with the beginning
 - (b) Oh weep for Adonais the quick dreams.

Scansion is the marking of strong and weak stresses where they fall in the various syllables. To scan a passage of poetry is to plod through it line by line, noting its component feet while indicating where the strong and weak pauses fall within the poetic line. It is the measuring and marking of lines by taking them foot by foot for the purpose of establishing their metrical pattern.

RHYME

This is the repetition of the same sound, usually but not always, at the end of two or more lines. Rhymed words must have the same vowel sounds, or similar consonantal sounds preceding the vowels or they must enjoy parity of accents. These would ensure a perfect rhyme.

- (a) There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night dew on still water between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentler on the spirit lies
Than tired eyelids upon eyes.
(Tennyson, "The Lotos Eaters")

First term Literature In English E-Lesson Note

The rhyme scheme in the above passage is ababcc. There are a variety of rhyme schemes including abab, aabb, abba, acbc etc. The portion of the poem cited below has the rhyme scheme of aabbcc.

- (b) Two neighbor, who were rather dense,
Considered that their mutual fence
Were more symbolic of their peace
(Which they maintained should never cease)
If each about his home and garden
Set up a more substantial warden.
(William Soutar, "Parable")

A verse/poem without any rhyme is referred to as blank verse while the free verse is a poem which disregards the traditional nations of rhyme and metre, and rather relies on the nature of the content to achieve its poetic form.

GENERAL EVALUATION

1. What is scansion?
2. Discuss three feet with examples in literature.

WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT

1. We describe as 'tragic flaw' the _____ (a) slip made by a character which results in his fall (b) unsuccessful play written by an otherwise wonderful dramatist (c) typographical error which recurs in a work of drama (d) element of plot whose prominence makes an artistic work faulty
2. To be total or complete a play needs to have a _____ (a) soliloquy (b) conflict (c) prologue (d) epilogue
3. The plot of a novel is best described as _____ (a) the outline of the story in a logical order (b) the story with its beginning, middle and end (c) the distinct summary of the story (d) the story in all its detail
4. The writer of play is known as a _____ (a) playwright (b) playwrite (c) playwrighter (d) playwright
5. A narrative poem _____ (a) preaches a sermon (b) tells a tale or story (c) propounds a philosophy (d) argues in a narrative manner

THEORY

1. Scan the poem, "The Ambassadors of Poverty" by Umeh P. O. C.
2. Discuss the style of the poem, "The Ambassadors of poverty" by Umeh P.O.C.

READING ASSIGNMENT

1. Visit Wikipedia on literary terms and definitions.
2. Visit Encarta on literary terms and definitions, and Scansion.