

## LESSON NOTE ON LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH WEEK 7

**SUBJECT:** LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH  
**TOPIC:** AFRICAN POETRY; "Black Woman" by Leopold Sedar Senghor  
**CLASS:** SS1  
**WEEK:** 7

### BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF THE POEM

"Black Woman" is a response to the countless number of years the white man had devoted to praising and chanting the beauty of the white woman. Senghor's poem published in 1936 was the first time an African was devoting poems to the African woman when this has never been thought about.

The poem "Black Woman", is a negritude (the act of being of the black decent) poem. It is quite clearly about the praise of the African woman as a person and the symbol of the richness of the African culture. The poem expresses the beauty of the African woman and (by extension the African culture) that was so far expressed in the negative light.

The term "woman" repeated all through the poem collocating with "dark", "naked", and "black" refers to the African woman (otherwise women of the black race) as mother, daughter, sister and of course, the poet's home county.

Before the poem was written, beauty had often been seen through the lenses of the Europeans in the figure of the white woman. So was the worthiness of a culture and civilization measured by the European values. The poet changed this trend with his appreciation of beauty in the form of a "Black naked woman" and also with his reiteration (repetition) on the worthiness of the African culture.

### SETTING

The setting of the poem is Africa. However, when the poet entitles his poem "Black Woman", he is referring to the black woman, whether she is in Africa or elsewhere.