

Central Idea

The poem “Last Lesson After Noon” written by D. H. Lawrence expresses the poet’s mood (who happens to be a teacher) of bitter desperation at the thanklessness of a teacher’s work. In this poem, the teacher compares his students to hounds and himself to a hunter. According to the poet, a hunter can do nothing, when the hounds aren’t willing to hunt. So is the case of the students who are indifferent, as far as their hunt for knowledge is concerned. The teacher finds himself involved in a futile activity when the students aren’t willing to learn and therefore, it is of no use hauling or urging them to learn.

Paraphrase

**Line (1 – 5):** The poem reflects the agony of a teacher who is in a disgusted and desperate mood owing to the indifference of his pupils from whom he has failed to evoke any response. The teacher is eagerly waiting for the last bell to go and thus end his tiredness. All his efforts to inspire his students have failed. Here the teacher has compared his students to hounds (which are not easily controlled) who hate and refuse to pursue the knowledge. The teacher is convinced that he can no longer inspire his rowdy (noisy and possibly violent) students and thus accepts defeat of not arousing an response in them.

**Line (6 – 11):** The pupils are indifferent/disinterested, as far as, their pursuit for knowledge is concerned. So, the teacher does not want to bear/ experience this unpleasantness. The teacher has grown sick of the shabby and untidy work, his students have denied. There are sixty students in the class whose disinterestedness has deeply hurt the teacher. The poet/ teacher take it as an insult and now realize his unsuccessful attempt of inspiring his students and thus the utter failure of teaching – learning process.

**Line (12 – 16):** The teacher is terribly agonized. The teacher compares his strength with fuel. He is in declining age and thus does not want to waste his energy on a futile process. He considers his life precious and wants to make a good use of his energy in pursuit of knowledge. He does not want to consume his energy uselessly, the way had been doing so far on his inattentive and indifferent pupils. The attitude of the poet appears to be in an unusual and strange contrast with that of his rowdy pupils. Even, if the teacher makes a serious, determined effort to get his pupils interested in acquiring knowledge, they won’t shed their indifference (here it means the students are

insulting the teacher and in turn they are punished by the teacher), and this is nothing short of a punishment for him. So, the teacher has made up his mind not to waste his strength and energy any more.

**Line (17 - 20):** The teacher is aware about the indifference of his pupils for their studies. He does not want to waste his spiritual and physical energy for trying to impart knowledge to his disinterested students. The teacher does not care if the students do things wrongly. He does not give a damn if they take or follow a wrong course in their life. He is utterly upset, disgusted, disgruntled with his teaching and pupils learning processes. He feels and is convinced that all his efforts are going down the bottomless hole. He had engaged himself in a futile process.

**Line (21 - 24):** The teacher is not worried for his pupils. It does not matter to him if they (pupils) write or don't write the description (here composition) of a dog. When the pupils are not interested in acquiring knowledge, there is no point from persuading them or trying to arouse in them the curiosity for learning. The teacher does not bother at all, although, he is expected by the entire society to put in all his efforts.

**Line (25 - 28):** Out of helplessness and disgust, the teacher says that he does not bother whether his pupils learn or not because he is aware that no amount of energy, effort on his part would inspire them to hunt for knowledge because they (students) themselves do not possess any inclination towards their studies. The teacher is convinced that he and his pupils have failed to communicate. He does not want to waste his energy and is least bothered whether his pupils utilize their energy in the pursuit of knowledge or would direct the same to some other course / path / goal. There is no fun, use in attempting something that is clearly impossible i.e., it is of no use in persuading the students to acquire and pursue knowledge / education against their own wishes. Therefore to end his monotony, which is caused by his rowdy students, he therefore decides to sit and wait for the last bell to go.

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