



Cambridge International AS & A Level

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

9695/72

Paper 7 Comment and Appreciation

February/March 2020

2 hours



You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **two** questions.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.
- You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- All questions are worth equal marks.

This document has **8** pages. Blank pages are indicated.

- 1 Write a critical commentary on the following extract from the play *Egusi Soup* (first produced in 2012) by Janice Okoh.

The scene opens in a room in Mrs Anyia's house in London. She and her daughter Grace are packing to leave for Nigeria, where there is to be a memorial service for her husband John, who died one year ago.

	<i>[One armchair sits empty. This is John Anyia's chair.]</i>	
	<i>[Scattered about are four-pack cartons of UHT milk, a large boxed-up gasoline generator, two plastic wreaths and two overflowing suitcases.]</i>	
	<i>[MRS ANYIA wears a black wrapper and T-shirt. These are her mourning clothes. On the front of the T-shirt is the same blown-up photo that is on the sitting-room wall.]</i>	5
	<i>[MRS ANYIA finishes packing one of the cases. She tries to zip it up, some items fall out. She stuffs them back in and tries again. The exact same items fall out. She stuffs them back in, reties her wrapper and sits on the case.]</i>	10
	<i>[Enter GRACE. She carries loads of bags. They look at each other.]</i>	
Grace:	We're gonna have to leave some stuff behind.	
Mrs Anyia:	Leave what? What can we leave? The generator? Small time now you will complain when there is no electricity. Or you want me to leave the flowers? Yes, leave the flowers and allow your father to lie in a bare grave. Come, sit on it. Sit. Sit.	15
	<i>[GRACE sits on the case. MRS ANYIA struggles to close it.]</i>	
Grace:	We're gonna break it.	
Mrs Anyia:	You are not even trying.	20
	<i>[MRS ANYIA gives up.]</i>	
	I will have to use your suitcases.	
Grace:	What?	
Mrs Anyia:	Are you going to use all your allowance? Dele will have space. He wears the same outfit day in and day out.	25
Grace:	He doesn't.	
Mrs Anyia:	Six days. I have counted.	
Grace:	Those shell suits ¹ are from his consignment. They just need a bit of advertising. He's working on a brand name.	
	<i>[GRACE gets up and starts to repack the case.]</i>	30
Mrs Anyia:	Remind your husband that we are undertaking your father's one-year memorial service, not the Nigerian <i>Apprentice</i> ² . Bring your suitcase.	
Grace:	Mum, we need the space. His cousins want Xboxes and mobile phones.	
Mrs Anyia:	So he thinks this is a holiday we are going on?	35
Grace:	No.	
Mrs Anyia:	If he wants to dish out presents here and there he should do it in his own time.	
	<i>[A pause.]</i>	
	I hope you haven't invested your own money in these shell suits?	40

- Grace: Mum –
- Mrs Anyia: You need to watch these boys. I am just advising you.
[GRACE *pulls out a steering wheel from a car.*]
- Grace: Who's this for?
- Mrs Anyia: I promised Felix that I would bring it for him. 45
- Grace: Who's Felix?
- Mrs Anyia: Felix has tiled the roof-now.
- Grace: What's this got to do with fixing the roof?
- Mrs Anyia: Plenty. You have no concept of negotiation.
[MRS ANYIA *stuffs the wheel back in the case. GRACE goes to the bags.*] 50
- Grace: I suppose we can take these.
- Mrs Anyia: So you have room?
- Grace: If we take out some of our clothes.
- Mrs Anyia: If you have room, can't you manage this? 55
[MRS ANYIA *pushes the boxed generator towards GRACE.*]
- Grace: Mum, that's the size of a suitcase.
- Mrs Anyia: Why do you exaggerate?
- Grace: Fine. Fine. I'll take it.
[MRS ANYIA *takes the gold outfits out of the bags and examines them.*] 60
- Mrs Anyia: Let me see what this woman has done. *Kai!* She didn't machine it well.
[MRS ANYIA *measures the outfit against GRACE.*]
Not well at all. Anne is much taller. Slimmer. You will have to take them back. 65
- Grace: Let's just wait.
- Mrs Anyia: For what?
She is coming. And she says she has something important to tell us.
- Grace: Like what?
- Mrs Anyia: Let us wait and see. 70
- Grace: Something important. That's just like her. Everything has to be big. Dramatic.

¹ *shell suits* – tracksuits

² *Apprentice* – a popular television competition about business

2 Write a critical commentary on the following poem (published in 1800) by Mary Tighe.

Written in Autumn

O Autumn! How I love thy pensive air,
 Thy yellow garb,¹ thy visage sad and dun!²
 When from the misty east the labouring sun
 Bursts through thy fogs that gathering round him dare
 Obscure his beams, which, though enfeebled, dart 5
 On the cold dewy plains a lustre bright:
 But chief, the sound of thy reft³ woods delight;
 Their deep, low murmurs to my soul impart
 A solemn stillness, while they seem to speak
 Of Spring, of Summer now for ever past, 10
 Of drear approaching Winter, and the blast
 Which shall ere long their soothing quiet break;
 Here, when for faded joys my heaving breast
 Throbs with vain pangs, here will I love to rest.

¹ *garb* – clothing

² *dun* – dull and grey

³ *reft* – broken

Turn over for Question 3.

3 Write a critical commentary on the following passage from the novel *Changes* (published in 1991) by Ama Ata Aidoo.

After her baby was born, Esi had wanted to return to work. But that had not been easy. She had had to face the difficulty of having to choose between two not so attractive options. She could stay on at Kumasi, but that meant that she would not be working at all, or not meaningfully. It was not every government department that had regional branches. The Department of Urban Statistics was one of those that didn't. Or she could return to Accra for her regular job: as long as she first convinced Oko that they could still see one another as often as possible at weekends, either she going or he coming. But at the merest hint of that, Oko had made it clear that the subject wasn't even up for discussion. He made it clear that as far as he was concerned they had done enough of that kind of travelling when they were 'just friends'. In fact he had thought one reason why they had got married was to give themselves the chance to be together properly, no? 5 10

In the end the only option left her, which she had had to take, was to ask to be seconded to the regional census co-ordinating office. She had ended up keeping the Birth and Death register. 15

'Surely, one doesn't need a Master's degree in statistics to do that?' she would fume and rage daily. Oko ignored her complaints. The truth was that he didn't feel that sympathetic. And neither did the men in the office. In fact, they let her know that she was unwelcome, and a burden they did not know what to do with.

Having to deal with a man who is over-qualified for a job is bad enough. To have to cope with an over-qualified woman in any situation is a complete misfortune. 20

Now six years later, both she and Opokuya were here in Accra, working. And she had a marital problem. A big problem. She should just gather herself together, and tell Opokuya what she felt. If Opokuya too could not understand her, then that was that. She would accept that she was just a fool, like her mother and her grandmother had said. 25

After all, people change. Look at her. Esi had changed. If she now found Oko's attentions so suffocating that she wanted very badly to split, then people change. There was a time when she had been made to fear that in fact she would never marry. 30

'You have waited too long,' Esi's mother had complained. 'Given your structure, you shouldn't have.' (The poor woman shared the popularly held belief that a young woman who is too tall, too thin and has flat tummy and a flat behind has a slim chance of bearing children. The longer she waits after puberty, the slimmer those chances get!) 35

Esi's main problem was that she was easily bored. And no woman ever caught a man or held him by showing a lack of interest. Esi had known that she would have to work up some enthusiasm in her relationship with men. 'But how?' she had kept asking herself. Now looking back she didn't dare admit, even to herself, that perhaps what she had felt for Oko in the first years of their married life was gratitude more than anything else. Gratitude that in spite of herself he had persisted in courting her and marrying her. 40

'Not many women are this lucky ...' Esi could hear her grandmother's voice. 'And who told you that feeling grateful to a man is not enough reason to marry him? My lady, the world would die of surprise if every woman openly confessed the true reasons why she married a certain man. These days, young people don't seem to know why they marry or should marry.' 45

'What are some of the reasons, Nana?'

'Ah, so you want to know? Esi, we know that we all marry to have children ...' 50

'But Nana, that is such an old and worn-out idea! Children can be born to people who are not married.'

'Sure, sure, but to help them grow up well, children need homes with walls, a roof, fire, pots.'

'Oh Nana. But one person can provide all these things these days for a growing child!' 55

'Maybe ... yes ... Yes, my lady. We also marry to increase the number of people with whom we can share the joys and the pains of this life.'

'Nana, how about love?'

'Love? ... Love? ... Love is not safe, my lady Silk, love is dangerous. It is 60

deceitfully sweet like the wine from a fresh palm tree at dawn. Love is fine for singing about and love songs are good to listen to, sometimes even to dance to. But when we need to count on human strength, and when we have to count pennies for food for our stomachs and clothes for our backs, love is nothing. Ah my lady, the last man any woman should think of marrying is the man she loves.'

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