
LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

9695/72

Paper 7 Comment and Appreciation

October/November 2018

2 hours

No Additional Materials are required.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

An answer booklet is provided inside this question paper. You should follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

Answer **two** questions.

You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

This document consists of **7** printed pages, **1** blank page and **1** insert.

1 Write a critical commentary on the following passage from the story *Workday* (published in 1993) by Awuor Ayoda.

In the darkness of a cold five o'clock morning, Mary stirred in her bed and threw off the blanket with which she covered herself. She folded it up carefully and placed it on the chair by her side. She rolled up the mattress she had been sleeping on with the bottom sheet still inside. This she placed against the wall. She went into the bathroom and filled the tub a third full. She washed quickly, methodically, staring at the wall in front of her. When she had finished, she put on her dress – one of the two she owned. The other was for special occasions. She made her way up the narrow staircase to the children's room. 5

In the two metal-framed bunk beds, the children slept soundly. She shook them awake gently in order not to disturb their mother who slept in the bedroom across the narrow corridor that ran along the top of the house. They blinked vaguely at her and Otieno immediately rolled over and went back to sleep. She took Awino's hand and carried Akong'o back into the bathroom where she began getting them ready for school. 10

'Otieno, what are you still doing in bed? Okwach, get up! Where is that girl Mary? Mary!' 15

'Yes!' Mary called from the bathroom.

'Don't shout at me! When I call you, you come to where I am. Get these children into the bath! When do you think I will get them to school? Can't you, for one day, do things properly? Move!' Elizabeth shouted, giving Mary a push in the back. 20

Mary went back downstairs with the other two children and when the four were washed she led them back upstairs, thinking that she must not forget to mop up the bathroom later. She helped them dress: oiling them all over, fetching their clothes, putting on their shoes, brushing their hair. Then she made her way into the kitchen where she put on the eggs to cook, placed slices of bread under the grill, set the water boiling for tea. She laid the table – six places. 25

'Where are the children?' asked Elizabeth, coming down the stairs. 'Mary, fetch the children. Or are you waiting for me to do it? What are you doing standing there? Can't you hear me?'

'Leave her alone,' said Peter as he came into the room. 'You start shouting at her first thing in the morning, waking everyone up, and you continue until you leave. If you didn't go to work, she *would* be deaf.' 30

'Peter, the only thing you have to say to me is to tell me what you were doing until two o'clock this morning. You don't really live in this house. You are not a husband to me and even less a father to these children! You don't know where the money for food comes from, so don't interfere! Mary, get out of here! I'm not talking to you. Peter, if you could find the time to show some interest in your own ...' 35

'Shut up!' snapped Peter. 'Don't question me as if you were the man in this house.'

'You see what I mean,' Elizabeth answered evenly. 'We can't talk to each other even when you start the argument. You know very well that I know about that woman – the reason why you never get home before midnight these days. Why do you come home at all? Why don't you ...' A resounding slap on the side of her face silenced her. 40

'I said shut up. Akong'o, what are you doing standing there? Sit down and eat your breakfast. Elizabeth get the breakfast.' 45

Elizabeth looked at him hard for a moment, thought better of continuing, and walked into the kitchen where the smell of burning toast greeted her.

'Mary! For God's sake, can't you ever do anything right? Where are you?'

As Mary appeared Elizabeth threw at her the dish-towel she was using to remove the grill of burnt toast. 'You stupid village girl! You burn everything! Throw this mess away.' 50

Mary did so, while Elizabeth put the rest of the breakfast on the table.

'I just can't teach her how to do things right! And I hate bread in the morning.'
No one answered as she sat down. Mary put on a fresh kettle of water to boil for tea. 55

'You'll have to take all the children in today,' Peter said as they finished. 'I have an early appointment and I'll be late if I take Otieno and Awino.'

'I can't,' Elizabeth shot back, 'I have already been late every day this week because you have this or you have that. When I lose my job, will you find the money for this household? This morning if you don't take them then they miss school.' 60

'Right. Then they have to miss school,' answered Peter as he made for the door. 'I'll see you tonight.'

'See you tonight indeed! See me tomorrow morning more like it.' The door had already slammed behind him.

'OK. Everybody hurry up. We're late! Mary! What are your bed things still doing in the sitting-room? Take them away! Quickly! What if someone were to walk in and see *that*? Have you no shame? Stand still while I'm talking to you. Cook the chicken and sukuma wiki for lunch. Make sure it's ready when we get back this time. Burn all the rubbish in the back this morning. Here's the money for milk. And when you go out, lock all the doors. And buy some bread as well. Will you children get outside? 70
Mary! I said take your bed things out of here!' With that she was gone.

- 2 Write a critical comparison of the following two poems: *Out of Sleep* (published in 1933) by Beram Saklatvala and *Island Man* (published in 1984) by Grace Nichols.

Out of Sleep

Out of sleep, as from the sea, I rise,
 To the unfamiliar and blinding scene;
 With clumsy knuckles clear my sea-filled eyes,
 Amphibious, neither earthy nor marine. 5
 Up to the shoulders drenched with sleep or sea,
 My body's cognisant of wave and dream.
 But drier mind has let such dreaming be,
 And sees the wave's crest curling, grey and cream
 Slowly it breaks, and then from fish to man 10
 Transforms me suddenly with sullen roar,
 And I begin, as gaily as I can,
 The long laborious wading to the shore.

Beram Saklatvala (published 1933)

Island Man

(for a Caribbean island man in London who still wakes
 up to the sound of the sea)

Morning
 and island man wakes up
 to the sound of blue surf
 in his head
 the steady breaking and wombing 5
 wild seabirds
 and fishermen pushing out to sea
 the sun surfacing defiantly
 from the east
 of his small emerald island 10
 he always comes back groggily groggily
 Comes back to sands
 of a grey metallic soar
 to dull North Circular¹ roar 15
 to surge of wheels
 muffling muffling
 his crumpled pillow waves
 island man heaves himself
 Another London day

¹North Circular – a busy London road

Turn over for Question 3

3 Write a critical commentary on the following passage from the play *The Apple* (published in 1909) by Inez Bensusan.

Ann and Helen are sisters, both in their mid-twenties.

[As the curtain rises ANN is discovered working the sewing machine. She is a slight, shortsighted girl about twenty-seven, but looks older, as though all her life she has been overworked. She wears a washed-out cotton frock and a big apron. She is an alert, active, nervous type. The opening and banging of the hall door is heard, then HELEN enters. She is a tall, buxom type, very handsome with a fine figure, neatly dressed in tailor-made style, stiff collar, little tie, short pleated skirt, plain hat, simple but distinctly smart, the type to be met with frequency in city offices, but young with good colour and clear complexion. ANN looks up in surprise, then looks at the clock and back again at HELEN.] 5 10

Ann: How awfully early you are, Ellie—only half past three.

[HELEN resolutely throws herself into the armchair and begins almost savagely to tear off her gloves. She looks heated and excited.]

I do hope you're not ill? What's the matter? I'll make you a cup of tea.

HELEN does not answer. 15

You're sure you're quite well, dear!

She rises.

Helen: Yes there's nothing wrong with me. Don't start fussing, for goodness sake.

[She takes off her hat, jabs the pins into the crown, and throws it across the room onto the sofa.] 20

Ann: But, Ellie dear—

[HELEN holds her hands before her eyes.]

There! I'm sure you're ill.

[ANN moves towards her. HELEN sits up quickly.]

Helen: Don't talk rubbish, I tell you. I'm as strong as a bullock, worse luck! 25

Ann: Ell, what do you—?

Helen: I'm excited, bad-tempered, that's all. I've been thinking hard on the way home. Too much thinking is more than my cheap brain can stand I suppose.

Ann: Then you've a headache? I was sure of it. I will make you some tea. 30

[She moves towards the kitchen.]

Helen [petulantly]: Oh, sit down, do! I'll get my own tea when I want it. I won't have you slaving for me. You're worked to death as it is. Do sit down!

Ann: The kettle won't be a minute.

[She moves off. HELEN jumps up, goes after her, seizing her by the shoulders and pushing her into the chair by the table.] 35

Helen: What a blessed nuisance you are, Ann, always on the hop, like a jumping bean. It's bad enough the way the others make use of you, but I'm hanged if I'll allow it.

[ANN protests.] 40

What's this you're making?

[She picks up the material.]

- Ann:* It's Norah's dress for the Lamonds' party. Isn't it sweet? [*Holding it up*] The bodice is such a dear, it's going to be crossed-over like this [*showing her*] and have lace and insertion and blue ribbons run through. 45
[*HELEN moves away.*]
Don't you like it?
- Helen:* Why can't Norah make her own things? She has more spare time than you.
- Ann:* But the poor child is so tired after her day's work. I wouldn't be a nursery governess for anything. 50
- Helen* [*bitterly*]: She's not too tired to go to a party anyway.
[*She sits.*]
- Ann:* You don't grudge her that surely? I never thought Mrs Prescott would spare her, but she said if she got up at five next morning she might go. 55
Poor Norah, she will be tired.
- Helen:* You're giving it to her of course?
[*ANN nods.*]
Where did you get the money?
- Ann:* Whatever's come over you today, Ell? I'm sure you're ill. 60
- Helen:* Where did you get it? Father didn't give it to you.
[*ANN shakes her head.*]
Mother hasn't got it to give. You've pawned something again. What?
- Ann* [*uncomfortably*]: It wasn't a bit of good to me. I didn't want it.
- Helen* [*sternly*]: What? 65
- Ann:* That little medallion thing. [*Quickly*] I never wore it. It was no good to me.
- Helen:* Ann! You're awfully fond of it. How dare you!
- Ann:* But the poor child—she had to wear something, and they pay her so badly where she is. She can't save a penny. I couldn't bear the thought that—
- Helen* [*angrily*]: Why didn't you ask Father? 70
- Ann* [*surprised*]: What an idea!
- Helen* [*bringing her hand down violently on the table*]: He ought to pay for Norah's clothes—not you or me. It's a sin, a disgrace, that a girl should have to pawn her trinkets, in order to go decently clad! Ugh! It makes me sick.

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