



THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

DIPLOMA IN ENGLISH

- **LEVEL 3**

FINAL EXAMINATION

- **November 2014**

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

- **LSD 1203**

DURATION

- **THREE HOURS (03 hours)**

DATE: 09. 11. 2014

TIME:

1.30 pm.

-

4.30pm.

ANSWER QUESTION 01, QUESTION 02, AND ANY ONE FROM PART (C).

Part A

- 1) (a) How has the author conveyed the idea of violence in the following excerpt from a novel?

"Kevin said you stayed up to 25 minutes with your grandfather. Is that what I told you?" Papa's voice was low.

"I wasted time, it was my fault," Jaja said.

"What did you do there? Did you eat food sacrificed to idols? Did you desecrate your Christian tongue?"

I sat frozen; I did not know that tongues could be Christian, too.

"No," Jaja said.

Papa was walking toward Jaja. He spoke entirely in Igbo now. I thought he would pull at Jaja's ears, that he would tug and yank at the same pace as he spoke, that he would slap Jaja's face and his palm would make that sound, like a heavy book falling from a library shelf in school. And then he would reach across and slap me on the face with the casualness of reaching for the pepper shaker.

But he said, "I want you to finish that food and go to your rooms and pray for forgiveness," before turning to go back downstairs. The silence he left was heavy but comfortable, like a well-worn, prickly cardigan on a bitter morning.

(15 marks)

- (b) **What is the main idea in this poem? State briefly how the idea is conveyed effectively**

I have known hours built like cities,
House on grey house, with streets between
That lead to straggling roads and trail off,
Forgotten in a field of green;

Hours made like mountains lifting
White crests out of the fog and rain,
And woven of forbidden music—
Hours eternal in their pain.

Life is a tapestry of hours
Forever mellowing in tone,
Where all things blend, even the longing
For hours I have never known.

(15 marks).

Part B

- 2) **Read the following passage and answer the questions below.**

Chika climbs in through the store window first and then holds the shutter as the woman climbs in after her. The store looks as if it was deserted long before the riots started; the empty rows of wooden shelves are covered in yellow dust, as are the metal containers stacked in a corner. The store is small, smaller than Chika's walk-in closet back home. The woman climbs in and the window shutters squeak as Chika lets go of them. Chika's hands are trembling, her calves burning after the unsteady run from the market in her high-heeled sandals. She wants to thank the woman, for stopping her as she dashed past, for saying "No run that way!" and for leading her, instead, to this empty store where they could hide. But before she can say thank you, the woman says, reaching out to touch her bare neck, "My necklace lost when I'm running."

"I dropped everything," Chika says. "I was buying oranges and I dropped the oranges and my handbag." She does not add that the handbag was a Burberry, an original one that her mother had bought on a recent trip to London.

The woman sighs and Chika imagines that she is thinking of her necklace, probably plastic beads threaded on a piece of string. Even without the woman's strong Hausa accent, Chika can tell she is a Northerner, from the narrowness of her face, the unfamiliar rise of her cheekbones; and that she is Muslim, because of the scarf. It hangs around the woman's neck now, but it was probably wound loosely round her face before, covering her ears. A long, flimsy pink and black scarf, with the garish prettiness of cheap things. Chika wonders if the woman is looking at her as well, if the woman can tell, from her light complexion and the silver finger rosary her mother insists she wear, that she is Igbo and Christian. Later, Chika will learn that, as she and the woman are speaking, Hausa Muslims are hacking down Igbo Christians with machetes, clubbing them with stones. But now she says, "Thank you for calling me. Everything happened so fast and everybody ran and I was suddenly alone and I didn't know what I was doing. Thank you."

"This place safe," the woman says, in a voice that is so soft it sounds like a whisper. "Them not going to small-small shop, only big-big shop and market."

"Yes," Chika says. But she has no reason to agree or disagree, she knows nothing about riots: the closest she has come is the prodemocracy rally at the university a few weeks ago, where she had held a bright-green branch and joined in chanting "The military must go! Abacha must go! Democracy now!" Besides, she would not even have participated in that rally if her sister Nnedi had not been one of the organisers who had gone from hostel to hostel to hand out fliers and talk to students about the importance of "having our voices heard."

Chika's hands are still trembling. Just half an hour ago, she was in the market with Nnedi. She was buying oranges and Nnedi had walked farther down to buy groundnuts and then there was shouting in English, in pidgin, in Hausa, in Igbo. "Riot! Trouble is coming, oh! They have killed a man!" Then people around her were running, pushing against one another, overturning wheelbarrows full of yams, leaving behind bruised vegetables they had just bargained hard for. Chika smelled

the sweat and fear and she ran, too, across wide streets, into this narrow one, which she feared - felt - was dangerous, until she saw the woman.

She and the woman stand silently in the store for a while, looking out of the window they have just climbed through, its squeaky wooden shutters swinging in the air. The street is quiet at first, and then they hear the sound of running feet. "Close window," the woman says.

Chika shuts the windows and without the air from the street flowing in, the dust in the room is suddenly so thick she can see it, billowing above her. Later she will see the hulks of burned cars, jagged holes in place of their windows and windshields, and she will imagine the burning cars dotting the city like picnic bonfires, silent witnesses to so much. She will find out it had all started at the motor park, when a man drove over a copy of the Holy Koran that had been dropped on the roadside, a man who happened to be Igbo and Christian. The men nearby, men who sat around all day playing draughts, men who happened to be Muslim, pulled him out of his pickup truck, cut his head off with one flash of a machete, and carried it to the market, asking others to join in; the infidel had desecrated the Holy Book. Chika will imagine the man's head, his skin ashen in death, and she will throw up and retch until her stomach is sore. But now, she asks the woman, "Can you still smell the smoke?"

"Yes," the woman says. She unties her green wrapper and spreads it on the dusty floor. She has on only a blouse and a shimmery black slip torn at the seams. "Come and sit." Chika looks at the threadbare wrapper on the floor; it is probably one of the two the woman owns. "No, your wrapper will get dirty," she says.

"Sit," the woman says. "We are waiting here long time."

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Questions

- i) What are the differences between the two women in this excerpt? Support your answer with details from the passage

(15 marks).

- ii) What is the author trying to convey in this passage by the interaction between these two women?

(15 marks).

- iii) What is the effect of the different grammatical tenses in this passage?

(10 marks)

Part C

- 3) Analyse the following poem paying attention to meaning, techniques and overall effect

Never

The clouds' disintegrating script
spells out the word *squander*.
Tree shadows lie down in the field.
Clipped to a grass blade's underside,
a crisp green grasshopper
weighs down the tip,
swaying between birth and death.
I'll think of him as we clink
glasses with the guests,
eating olives as the sun goes down.

(30 marks)

- 4) Analyse the following poem, paying attention to meaning and techniques and overall effect.

How to Love

After stepping into the world again,
there is that question of how to love,
how to bundle yourself against the frosted morning—
the crunch of icy grass underfoot, the scrape
of cold wipers along the windshield—
and convert time into distance.

What song to sing down an empty road
as you begin your morning commute?
And is there enough in you to see, really see,
the three wild turkeys crossing the street
with their featherless heads and stilt-like legs
in search of a morning meal? Nothing to do
but hunker down, wait for them to safely cross.

As they amble away, you wonder if they want
to be startled back into this world. Maybe you do, too,
waiting for all this to give way to love itself,
to look into the eyes of another and feel something—
the pleasure of a new lover in the unbroken night,
your wings folded around him, on the other side
of this ragged January, as if a long sleep has ended.

(30 marks)