



Index No:

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA**

**B.A. / DIPLOMA IN ENGLISH**

**AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**

**- LEVEL 3**

**FINAL EXAMINATION**

**- August 2017**

**TEXTUAL ANALYSIS**

**- LSU1203 / LSD1203**

**DURATION**

**- THREE HOURS (03 hours)**

**DATE: 20. 08. 2017**

**TIME: 9.30 am. - 12.30 pm.**

**ANSWER QUESTION 01 IN PART (A), QUESTION 02 IN PART (B), AND ANY ONE FROM PART (C).**

**PART A**

- 1) (a) Comment very briefly on the poetic technique(s) used in this poem and its/their effectiveness?

**The First**

Moon  
remember  
how men left their  
planet  
in streams of  
flame  
rode weightless  
in the skies  
till you pulled them down  
and then  
in the blinding sunlight  
how the first shadow  
of an  
Earthling  
lay on your  
bleak dust?

**(15 marks)**



Index No:

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA**

**B.A. / DIPLOMA IN ENGLISH**

**AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**

**- LEVEL 3**

**FINAL EXAMINATION**

**- August 2017**

**TEXTUAL ANALYSIS**

**- LSU1203 / LSD1203**

**DURATION**

**- THREE HOURS (03 hours)**

**DATE: 20. 08. 2017**

**TIME: 9.30 am. - 12.30 pm.**

**ANSWER QUESTION 01 IN PART (A), QUESTION 02 IN PART (B), AND ANY ONE FROM PART (C).**

**PART A**

- 1) (a) Comment very briefly on the poetic technique(s) used in this poem and its/their effectiveness?

**The First**

Moon  
remember  
how men left their  
planet  
in streams of  
flame  
rode weightless  
in the skies  
till you pulled them down  
and then  
in the blinding sunlight  
how the first shadow  
of an  
Earthling  
lay on your  
bleak dust?

**(15 marks)**

- (b) Read the following piece of prose and provide brief answers to the questions that follow.

**Interview with a Lemming**

The weary scientist, tramping through the mountains of northern Europe in the winter weather dropped his knapsack and prepared to sit on a rock.

"Careful, brother," said a voice.

"Sorry," murmured the scientist, noting with some surprise that a lemming<sup>1</sup> which he had been about to sit on had addressed him. "It is a source of considerable astonishment to me," said the scientist, sitting down beside the lemming, "that you are capable of speech."

"You human beings are always astonished," said the lemming, "when any other animal can do anything you can. Yet there are many things animals can do that you cannot, such as stridulate, or chirr, to name just one. To stridulate<sup>2</sup>, or chirr<sup>3</sup>, one of the minor achievements of the cricket, your species is dependent on the intestines of sheep and the hair of the horse."

"We are a dependent animal," admitted the scientist.

"You are an amazing animal," said the lemming.

"We have always considered you rather amazing, too," said the scientist.

"You are perhaps the most mysterious of creatures."

"If we are going to indulge in adjectives beginning with 'm,' said the lemming sharply, "let me apply a few to your species--murderous, maladjusted, maleficent and muffle-headed."

"You find our behavior as difficult to understand as we do yours?"

"You, as you would say, said it," said the lemming. "You kill, you mangle, you torture, you imprison, you starve each other. You cover the nurturing

---

<sup>1</sup> A **lemming** is a small rodent (like rats) usually found in or near the Arctic. They generally have long, soft fur, and very short tails. Lemmings have become the subject of a widely popular misconception that they commit mass suicide when they migrate by jumping off cliffs. What happens is they fall off cliffs when trying to migrate.

<sup>2</sup> (of an insect, especially a male cricket or grasshopper) make a shrill sound by rubbing the legs, wings, or other parts of the body together.

<sup>3</sup> (especially of an insect) make a prolonged low trilling sound.

earth with cement, you cut down Elm trees to put up institutions for people driven insane by the cutting down of Elm trees, you--"

"You could go on all night like that," said the scientist, "listing our sins and shames."

"I could go on all night and up to four o'clock tomorrow afternoon," said the lemming. "It just happens that I have made a lifelong study of the self-styled higher animal. Except for one thing, I know all there is to know about you, and a singularly dreary, dolorous<sup>4</sup> and distasteful store of information it is, too, to use only adjectives that begin with 'd.'"

"You say you have made a lifelong study of my species--" began the scientist.

"Indeed I have," broke in the lemming. "I know that you are cruel, cunning and carnivorous, sly, sensual and selfish, greedy, gullible and guileful<sup>5</sup>--"

"Pray don't wear yourself out," said the scientist, quietly. "It may interest you to know that I have made a lifelong study of lemmings, just as you have made a lifelong study of people. Like you I have found but one thing about my subject which I don't understand."

"And what is that?" asked the lemming.

"I don't understand," said the scientist, "why you lemmings all rush down to the sea and drown yourselves."

"How curious," said the lemming. "The one thing I don't understand is why you human beings don't."

### Questions

1. What is the overall message or theme of this piece of prose?
2. Describe one of the techniques the writer has used to make it effective and interesting?

(15 marks)

---

<sup>4</sup> feeling and expressing sorrow or distress

<sup>5</sup> cunning

**PART B**

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

Twice a month, like a dutiful son, I visited my parents in Enugu, in their small overfurnished flat that grew dark in the afternoon. Retirement had changed them. They were in their late eighties, both small and mahogany-skinned, with a tendency to stoop. When I arrived, I would find them either sitting out on the veranda overlooking the road or sunk into the living-room sofa, watching Animal Planet. During a visit in November, my parents talked about the increase in armed robberies all over the east. Thieves, too, had to prepare for Christmas. My mother told me how a vigilante<sup>6</sup> mob in Onitsha had caught some thieves, beaten them, and torn off their clothes—how old tires had been thrown over their heads like necklaces, amid shouts for petrol and matches, before the police arrived, fired shots in the air to disperse the crowd, and took the robbers away. “Do you know,” she continued, “one of the armed robbers, in fact the ring leader, was Raphael? He was our houseboy years ago. I don’t think you’ll remember him.” I stared at my mother. “Raphael?”

My mother said again, “You probably won’t remember him. There were so many of those houseboys. You were young.” But I remembered. Of course I remembered Raphael.

Nothing changed when Raphael came to live with us, not at first. He seemed like all the others, an ordinary-looking teen from a nearby village. The houseboy before him had been sent home for insulting my mother. Another, John, had not been sent away; he had broken a plate while washing it and, fearing my mother’s anger, had packed his things and fled before she came home from work. All the houseboys treated me with the contemptuous care of people who disliked my mother. Please come and eat your food, they would say—I don’t want trouble from Madam. My mother regularly shouted at them, for being slow, stupid, hard of hearing; even her bell-ringing, sounded like shouting.

I was my parents’ only child, born late in their lives. “When I got pregnant, I thought it was menopause,” my mother told me once. She had a brusque manner, as did my father; they had about them the air of people who were quick to dismiss others. Throughout my childhood, I worried about not being quick enough to respond when they spoke to me. I worried, too, that I did not care for books. I read books only enough to satisfy them, and to answer the kinds of unexpected questions that might come in the middle of a meal. What I loved was kung fu. I watched “Enter the Dragon” so often that I knew all the lines, and I longed to wake up and be Bruce Lee. I would kick and strike at the air, at imaginary enemies who had killed my imaginary

---

<sup>6</sup> a member of a volunteer committee organized to suppress and punish crime summarily (as when the processes of law are viewed as inadequate); *broadly* : a self-appointed doer of justice

family. I would pull my mattress onto the floor, stand on two thick books and leap onto the mattress, screaming "Haaa!" like Bruce Lee. One day, in the middle of my practice, I looked up to see Raphael standing in the doorway, watching me. I expected a mild reprimand. He had made my bed that morning, and now the room was in disarray. Instead, he smiled, touched his chest, and brought his finger to his tongue, as though tasting his own blood. My favorite scene. I stared at Raphael with the pure thrill of unexpected pleasure. "I watched the film in the other house where I worked," he said. "Look at this." He pivoted slightly, leaped up, and kicked, his leg straight and high, his body all taut grace. I was twelve years old and had, until then, never felt that I recognized myself in another person.

Raphael and I practiced in the back yard, leaping from the raised concrete and landing on the grass. Raphael told me to suck in my belly, to keep my legs straight and my fingers precise. He taught me to breathe. My previous attempts, in the enclosure of my room, had felt stillborn. Now, outside with Raphael, slicing the air with my arms, I could feel my practice become real, with soft grass below and high sky above, and the endless space mine to conquer. This was truly happening. I could become a black belt one day.

On weekends, if my parents went to the staff club without me, Raphael and I watched Bruce Lee videotapes, Raphael saying, "Watch it! Watch it!" Through his eyes, I saw the films anew; some moves that I had thought merely competent became luminous when he said, "Watch it!". My parents did not notice how close Raphael and I had become. All they saw was that I now happened to play outside, and Raphael was, of course, part of the landscape of outside: weeding the garden, washing pots at the water tank. At one lunch, Raphael served white disks of boiled yam on a bed of greens, and then cubed pawpaw and pineapple. "The vegetable was too tough," my mother said. She glanced at him. "What is wrong with your eyes?" The whites of Raphael's eyes were red. A painful, unnatural red. He mumbled that an insect had flown into them.

"It looks like Apollo," my father said. My mother pushed back her chair and examined Raphael's face. "Ah-ah! Yes, it is. Go to your room and stay there." Raphael hesitated, as though wanting to finish clearing the plates. "Go!" my father said. "Before you infect us all with this thing." Raphael, looking confused, edged away from the table. My mother called him back. "Have you had this before?" "No, Madam."

"We're going to buy medicine for you. Use it three times a day and stay in your room. Don't cook until it clears." Turning to me, she said, "Okenwa, make sure you don't go near him. Apollo is very infectious." Later, my parents drove to the pharmacy in town and came back with a bottle of eye drops, which my father took to Raphael's room in the boys' quarters, at the back of the house, with the air of someone going reluctantly into battle. That evening, I went with my parents to Obollo

Road to buy akara for dinner; when we returned, it felt strange not to have Raphael open the front door, not to find him closing the living-room curtains and turning on the lights. In the quiet kitchen, our house seemed emptied of life. As soon as my parents were immersed in themselves, I went out to the boys' quarters and knocked on Raphael's door. It was ajar. He was lying on his back, his narrow bed pushed against the wall, and turned when I came in, surprised, making as if to get up. I had never been in his room before. The exposed light bulb dangling from the ceiling cast sombre shadows.

"What is it?" he asked. "Nothing. I came to see how you are." He shrugged and settled back down on the bed. "I don't know how I got this. Don't come close." But I went close. "I had Apollo in Primary 3," I said. "It will go quickly, don't worry. Have you used the eye drops this evening?" He shrugged and said nothing. The bottle of eye drops sat unopened on the table.

"You haven't used them at all?" I asked.

"No."

"Why?"

He avoided looking at me. "I cannot do it." Raphael, who could disembowel a turkey and lift a full bag of rice, could not drip liquid medicine into his eyes. At first, I was astonished, then amused, and then moved. I looked around his room and was struck by how bare it was—the bed pushed against the wall, a spindly table, a gray metal box in the corner, which I assumed contained all that he owned.

"I will put the drops in for you," I said. I took the bottle and twisted off the cap. "Don't come close," he said again. I was already close. I bent over him. He began a frantic blinking. "Breathe like in kung fu," I said. I touched his face, gently pulled down his lower left eyelid, and dropped the liquid into his eye. The other lid I pulled more firmly, because he had shut his eyes tight.

"Ndo," I said. "Sorry." He opened his eyes and looked at me, and on his face shone something wondrous. I had never felt myself the subject of admiration. He touched my arm. I turned to go.

"I'll come before I go to school," I said. In the morning, I slipped into his room, put in his eye drops, and slipped out and into my father's car, to be dropped off at school. By the third day, Raphael's room felt familiar to me, welcoming, uncluttered by objects. As I put in the drops, I discovered things about him that I guarded closely: the early darkening of hair above his upper lip, the ringworm patch in the hollow between his jaw and his neck. I sat on the edge of his bed and we talked about "Snake in the Monkey's Shadow." He got up to demonstrate the snake style, and afterward, both of us laughing, he grasped my hand in his. Then he let go and moved slightly away from me.

"This Apollo has gone," he said.

His eyes were clear. I wished he had not healed so quickly.

I dreamed of being with Raphael and Bruce Lee in an open field, practicing for a fight. When I woke up, my eyes refused to open. I pried my lids apart. My eyes burned and itched. Each time I blinked, they seemed to produce more pale ugly fluid that coated my lashes. It felt as if heated grains of sand were under my eyelids. I feared that something inside me was thawing that was not supposed to thaw.

My mother shouted at Raphael, "Why did you bring this thing to my house? Why?" It was as though by catching Apollo he had conspired to infect her son. Raphael did not respond. He never did when she shouted at him. She was standing at the top of the stairs, and Raphael was below her.

"How did he manage to give you Apollo from his room?" my father asked me. "It wasn't Raphael. I think I got it from somebody in my class," I told my parents. "Who?" I should have known my mother would ask. At that moment, my mind erased all my classmates' names. "Who?" she asked again. "Chidi Obi," I said finally, the first name that came to me. He sat in front of me and smelled like old clothes. "Do you have a headache?" my mother asked.

"Yes." My father brought me Panadol. My mother telephoned Dr. Igbokwe.

Dr. Igbokwe arrived and shined a torch in my eyes. After he left, my parents created a patient's altar by my bed—on a table covered with cloth, they put a bottle of orange Lucozade, a blue tin of glucose, and freshly peeled oranges on a plastic tray. They took turns putting in my eye drops, They did not know how well I could put in the drops myself. Each time they raised the bottle above my face, I remembered the look in Raphael's eyes that first evening in his room, and I felt haunted by happiness.

My parents closed the curtains and kept my room dark. I was sick of lying down. I wanted to see Raphael, but my mother had banned him from my room, I wished that he would come and see me. Surely he could pretend to be putting away a bedsheet, or bringing a bucket to the bathroom. Why didn't he come? He had not even said sorry to me. I strained to hear his voice, but the kitchen was too far away and his voice, when he spoke to my mother, was too low.

Finally, my parents went out together. I hurried downstairs and to the kitchen. It, too, was empty. I went out to the open veranda. I heard Raphael's voice before I saw him, standing near the tank, digging his foot into the sand, talking to Josephine, Professor Nwosu's house help. Professor Nwosu sometimes sent eggs from his poultry, and never let my parents pay for them. Had Josephine brought eggs? She was tall and plump; with her, Raphael was different—the slouch in his back, the agitated foot. He was shy. She was talking to him with a kind of playful power, as though she could see through him to things that amused her. My reason blurred.

"Raphael!" I called out. He turned. "Oh. Okenwa. Are you allowed to come downstairs?" He spoke as though I were a child, as though we had not sat together in his dim room. "I'm hungry! Where is my food?" It was the first thing that came to



me, but in trying to be imperious I sounded shrill. Josephine's face puckered, as though she were about to break into slow, long laughter. Raphael said something that I could not hear, but it had the sound of betrayal. My parents drove up just then. Josephine hurried out of the compound, and Raphael came toward me. His shirt was stained in the front, orangish, like palm oil from soup. Had my parents not come back, he would have stayed there mumbling by the tank; my presence had changed nothing.

"What do you want to eat?" he asked.

"You didn't come to see me."

"You know Madam said I should not go near you."

Why was he making it all so common and ordinary? I, too, had been asked not to go to his room, and yet I had gone, I had put in his eye drops every day. "After all, you gave me the Apollo," I said. "Sorry." He said it dully, his mind elsewhere. I could hear my mother's voice. I was angry that they were back. My time with Raphael was shortened, and I felt the sensation of a widening crack. "Do you want plantain or yam?" Raphael asked, not to placate me but as if nothing serious had happened. My eyes were burning again. He came up the steps. I moved away from him, too quickly, to the edge of the veranda, and my rubber slippers shifted under me. Unbalanced, I fell. I landed on my hands and knees, startled by the force of my own weight, and I felt the tears coming before I could stop them. Stiff with humiliation, I did not move. My parents appeared.

"Okenwa!" my father shouted. I stayed on the ground, a stone sunk in my knee. "Raphael pushed me." "What?" My parents said it at the same time, in English. "What?"

There was time. Before my father turned to Raphael, and before my mother lunged at him as if to slap him, and before she told him to go pack his things and leave immediately, there was time. I could have spoken. I could have cut into that silence. I could have said that it was an accident. I could have taken back my lie and left my parents merely to wonder.

### Questions

- i) According to this short fiction passage, what kind of person is Raphael?  
(15 marks)
- ii) Why does the narrator lie to his parents about Raphael pushing him?  
(10 marks)
- iii) What seems to be the writer's message in this piece of prose?  
(15 marks)

**PART C**

- 3) Choose ONE of the poems below and comment on its effectiveness.

**Secretariat**

So this is the summit of a man's career –  
Two hardboard walls, constructed shabbily.  
A naked bulb and rotting wooden floor;  
No windows but instead a door  
Half hidden by a broken metal screen  
From which a tattered piece of green  
Curtain blows.

The room has neither sky or sun nor tree  
Nor any kind of personality.  
It is four walls two of them hardboard (bare);  
A written table (large) covered with baize  
Stacked high with files. A rickety chair:  
Two china cups tea-stained with cracking glaze;  
Above, a rusty fan layered with dust.  
In fact there is dust everywhere.

A room along the corridors of power –  
What years of study, study, planning, sweat, chicanery  
Two win this foothold. Yet once there  
Only a roughly scribbled name  
Upon a crumpled piece of cardboard to proclaim  
Who has the right to sit on just that chair  
Facing  
A hardboard wall constructed shabbily

4)

After Auschwitz<sup>7</sup>

Anger,  
 as black as a hook,  
 overtakes me.  
 Each day,  
 each Nazi  
 took, at 8: 00 A.M., a baby  
 and sauteed<sup>8</sup> him for breakfast  
 in his frying pan.

And death looks on with a casual eye  
 and picks at the dirt under his fingernail.

Man is evil,  
 I say aloud.  
 Man is a flower  
 that should be burnt,  
 I say aloud.  
 Man  
 is a bird full of mud,  
 I say aloud.

And death looks on with a casual eye  
 and scratches his anus.

Man with his small pink toes,  
 with his miraculous fingers  
 is not a temple  
 but an outhouse,  
 I say aloud.  
 Let man never again raise his teacup.  
 Let man never again write a book.  
 Let man never again put on his shoe.  
 Let man never again raise his eyes,  
 on a soft July night.  
 Never. Never. Never. Never. Never.  
 I say those things aloud.

I beg the Lord not to hear

(30 marks)

<sup>7</sup> **Auschwitz concentration camp** was a network of German Nazi concentration camps and extermination camps built and operated by the Third Reich in Polish areas annexed by Nazi Germany during World War II. Thousands of Jews were killed in these camps by Hitler's forces.

<sup>8</sup> Sautéing is a method of cooking food that uses a small amount of oil or fat in a shallow pan over relatively high heat