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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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Paper 7 Comment and Appreciation

May/June 2016

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 **5** printed pages, **3** blank pages and **1** insert.

1 Write a critical commentary on the following extract, the opening of the play *Over My Dead Body* (1997) by Violet Barungi.

[There are three people in the room in the middle of a discussion. MR. MBOGO, the father, a man in his early forties, is tall, broad and dark complexioned with serene intelligent eyes and regular features. His wife, NGOMA, is in her late thirties. She is pretty, but there is a perpetual hungry look in her eyes which mars her beauty.]

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The third person is their daughter, BOONA, commonly known as BO. She is about twenty with her mother's pretty features and her father's intelligent eyes.

MBOGO is standing by the window, his back leaning against the metal frame, half-shutting out the rays of the mid-morning sun. NGOMA, who has just come from Church services, is still in her Sunday best. She is sitting in one of the armchairs, her restless hands beating a tattoo¹ on the arm rests. BOONA, who appears to be the subject of discussion, is sitting on the edge of the settee, her eyes downcast and her hands nervously plucking the frayed cloth of the chair.]

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Mbogo *[Fixing BOONA with a commanding gaze]:* I don't want to hear anymore talk of "I want to get married," is that clear?

[BOONA raises her eyes slowly and looks rebelliously at her father. She starts to say something, but falters under his gaze. Her lips trembling, she looks beseechingly at her mother who nods her encouragement before turning to her husband.]

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Ngoma *[Anxiously]:* Husband, I ...

Mbogo *[Impatiently silences her with his hand]:* Quiet! Your turn will come when I have finished. So *[turning back to BOONA]* I want you to go to your room and sit down and answer that letter from the University, accepting the course you've been offered. I myself will take it there first thing in the morning. In the meantime, I've arranged for you to go to your uncle in Jinja for the rest of the holiday to help in his shop. That should keep you out of harm's way in addition to giving you gainful employment. You'll be glad of a few extra shillings when the time to start college comes. Have I made myself clear?

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Boona: But, Papa ...

Mbogo *[Moving menacingly towards her. He stands towering over her, his eyes hard and uncompromising]:* Yes, daughter?

Boona *[Sullenly]:* Nothing.

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Mbogo *[Turning and striding back to his former position]:* Good. We understand each other, I trust. You are an intelligent girl, Bo, so don't let anybody *[with a side-glance at his wife]* deceive you into thinking that there's a short cut to success. You've got to earn it all by yourself through sweat and endurance. And most importantly, you cannot depend on anybody else for happiness; you've got to make your own. No doubt you think that I'm a hard man and there are many who will concur with you. But I want you to know that I'm doing this for your own good. In years to come, you'll look back and thank me for it. You may go now and do me a favor, spare some time to reflect on what we've just discussed. *[Turns to look out of the window. BOONA sits still for a minute, looking stunned. Then in slow motion, she gets up and starts to walk to the door.]*

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Her mother ostentatiously runs to her side and puts her arms around her waist and walks her to the door. After she exits, NGOMA closes the door and stands against it, looking at her husband's back, waiting.] 50

Mbogo [After a few minutes of silence, his back still turned to the room]: You have the floor now.

Ngoma [Carefully choosing her words]: Are you sure you're doing the right thing, husband? Bo's not a child and should have a say in a matter which primarily concerns her. I think her views should be taken into account. 55

Mbogo [Turning swiftly to face her, his eyes narrowed]: And if her views are wrong as they obviously are? Do we wash our hands of her and let her go her way? Bo is twenty years, yes, but she has not been exposed enough to the world and its evils to be able to tell good from bad. She is at crossroads and needs us to guide her in the right direction. I don't think, Ngoma, you realize fully what a bright girl Bo is and what a bright future lies ahead of her. With that in mind, do you still want her to throw it all over the fence for a few trinkets that swine has been dangling before her? 60

Ngoma [Her tone is still mild]: You are quite behind times, husband. What matters these days is not how much education one has but how much money. I grant you in the past a good education was like a passport to success, but not any more. How many young people, with their degrees and diplomas in their pockets roam the streets looking for non-existent jobs? Numberless. Jamil next door is a case in point. Armed with his degree in education, he wakes up early in the morning and comes back late at night with holes in his shoes but no job. This has been going on since he graduated three years ago, and his mother tells me he's getting quite desperate. 70

Mbogo [Unimpressed]: Jamil would have a job now if he were willing to work up-country. But all these young people want to hang around in the city. I've yet to see a doctor who was unemployed, though. In fact what they complain of is the reverse, overwork. 75

Ngoma [Nimbly]: And underpay.

Mbogo [Unruffled]: Yes, that too, but an enterprising young person can get around that by going into business or joining firms with better pay packages. A doctor is like a cook; there will always be need for one everywhere every time. 80

Ngoma: Teachers were like that at one time.

Mbogo [Sharply]: Why do you keep harping on teachers? You're surely a one track-minded person. Anyway, you were eager enough to marry one years ago, but with due respect, I don't consider the turn the discussion has taken relevant. If you have any more arguments you wish to raise as to why Bo should not pursue her education, speak now otherwise the subject is closed as far as I'm concerned. 85

¹ *beating a tattoo*: drumming a rhythm

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- 2 Write a critical commentary on the following extract from the novel *In the Orchard, the Swallows* (2012) by Peter Hobbs.**

It is cold, despite the woollen shawl I have borrowed from Abbas.

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In a few moments, before the evidence of life begins to show in the small house through the trees, before the farmer comes to his orchard and finds me here, I will stand and brush the sand from my shalwar, stretch once again to ease the aches in my muscles and joints, and begin the slow journey home.

5

- 3 Write a critical commentary on the following poem *The Sisters* by Judith Wright (published 1976).

The Sisters

In the vine-shadows on the veranda;
under the yellow leaves, in the cooling sun,
sit two sisters. Their slow voices run
like little winter creeks, dwindled by frost and wind,
and the square of sunlight moves on the veranda.

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They remember the gay¹ young men on their tall horses
who came courting; the dancing and the smells of leather
and wine, the girls whispering by the fire together;
even their dolls and ponies, all they have left behind
moves in the yellow shadows on the veranda.

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Thinking of their lives apart and the men they married
thinking of the marriage-bed and birth of their first child,
they look down smiling. "My life was wide and wild,
and who can know my heart? There in that golden jungle
I walk alone," say the old sisters on the veranda.

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¹ *gay*: lively and happy

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