

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen question number: Question 2 ☒ Question 3 ☒ Question 4 ☒
Question 5 ☒ Question 6 ☒ Question 7 ☒
Question 8 ☒

Education and reading is a prominent theme in Elmirai Kitchen, which is mainly explored through the character of Ashley, who continuously dismisses the need for education and instead wishes to embark on a life of crime and gang culture due to the fact that he is so heavily influenced by Digger.

In this ^{scene} ~~extract~~, Ashley's father Desi is presented to be extremely encouraging of education, which is something that the audience had not seen prior to this moment. Kwei-Arman uses the character of Desi to utter ~~a~~ the simple interrogative 'do you read?' to Ashley, who immediately dismisses Desi's question through the ~~almost~~ almost rhetorical interrogative utterance 'why am I going to do that?'. Tension is built throughout the scene, firstly through Ashley's declarative



'I ain't never seen you pick up a book'. The use of slang and non-standard English in this quotation is ironic because he is not well-educated, and it also acts as a vehicle to show that prior to this moment Del had not been a positive influence on Ashby and was instead discouraging, which is heightened through the quotation "you did ask me about college, when you wanted me to take a day off to run fucking food errands...". The use of profanity shows that ~~the~~ Ashby is easily angered when asked about his education, and the use of ellipsis implies that he is waiting for an ~~expected~~ angry response from Del.

The fact that Kwei-Arman chooses to have Ashby ~~throw~~ throw his 'college books in the bin' is symbolic of the fact that at ~~that~~ ^{the} time that the play was written, there was a report from the UK Department of Education which stated that black students were not succeeding in schools due to the



lack of support they were given. ~~Ashley~~
The character of Ashley is likely to be
affected greatly by this because he lives in
a family environment that deals with
poverty and therefore he is unable to
attend private school (~~but~~ unlike Kwei-
Arman himself, who ~~attended~~ went to private
school and grew up in a middle class
family) and therefore Ashley is tempted
into a life of crime and gang
culture because he idolises Digger who
constantly romanticises the 'street
life' through the way his character is
so outward and violent, which
gives him a sense of power and
authority. This is first apparent in
the stage direction '~~point~~ pulls out
his gun and points it at Deli', which
comes as a shock to the audience
due to the fact that guns are
illegal in the UK, and so he is seen
as a threat. ~~get~~ This is heightened
through the fact that they live
in Hackney, an area which was
dubbed 'murder mile' by the media
at the time and therefore violence



and gang culture surrounds the characters and has an omnipresent influence over Ashley because he ~~grew up in~~ ^{is a product of} that environment and that could be a contributing factor as to why ~~he~~ ^{he} rejects his education. Furthermore, in the extract, ~~But he~~ ~~the~~ Ashley uses the declarative utterance 'college does not fit into the plan I have for my life', which ~~furthers the point~~ could imply that Ashley ~~feels~~ is a victim to the 'invisibility syndrome' which was a concept created by theorists which highlights the sense that a large amount of black males feel downtrodden and oppressed by society due to the colour of their skin and therefore they consequentially feel less self-worth, which can lead to poor decisions in life. *1

One of the biggest contributing factors to education and reading in the play ~~to~~ is the character of Anastasia, who constantly encourages it from the offset. She uses the same



interrogative utterance 'do you read?' when she meets Deli for the first time, which shifts the overall tone of the play because she is a female who positively influences the male-dominated cast. She introduces ~~present~~ herself without using slang or profanity, which juxtaposes the rest of the characters and immediately highlights her education.

*1 → This idea is supported by Ashmley's exclamation 'reading all breed of self-help manuals like you's a blasted white man!' and through the use of mild profanity he highlights the fact that he believes reading and education is only prominent in white culture and so he disassociates himself from it to keep his pride and image intact. When trying to impress Digger and the other characters he is surrounded by.

Anastasia's character uses lots of exclamation, and through the quotation 'The good news! It's the help



that I can give.' which shows her enthusiasm to support the rest of the characters who are in desperate need of a female figure in their lives.

Anastasia acts as a maternal figure towards Ashraf. Kwei-Arman employs an authoritative in Anastasia's character when she asks Ashraf 'you think when my son was nineteen he'd talk to a big woman like that?' after he disrespects her through the offensive interrogative utterance 'you looking for a fit young ting to work?'. This feeling of disrespect is juxtaposed by Kwei-Arman's personal life, where he stated in an interview that he has a very kind, loving and supportive mother, which contrasts greatly to the familial situation in Elmina's kitchen where all of the mothers are absent (Elmina, Ashraf's child's mother).

Although Anastasia constantly attempts to evoke good and educational traits



in all of the characters, she is consistently disrespected by the male characters who pride themselves in their 'bad man' image. For instance when Digger asks Anastasia if ~~she~~ he had '[seen her] with Bobber and dem', which implies that he would associate her with a 'crack crew' rather than as an educated woman. This is an extremely derogative way to speak to Anastasia, and it continues throughout the play, particularly highlighted when the character of Clifton manipulates and mocks her by calling her a 'dirty gal' and threatening her through the interrogative utterance 'What is it you and my son have that you didn't have when you were whining on top of me last night?'. These threatening and hurtful remarks eventually lead to Anastasia leaving, and consequently leaving the males alone in their flawed, ^{dangerous} and uneducated environment.

