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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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Paper 6 1900 to the Present

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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 **14** printed pages, **2** blank pages and **1** insert.

CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE: *Americanah*

- 1 **Either** (a) 'Ifemelu is a character searching for an identity she feels comfortable with.'

Discuss Adichie's presentation of Ifemelu in the light of this comment.

- Or** (b) Paying attention to the language and tone, analyse the effects of the writing in the following passage, considering ways in which it is characteristic of Adichie's methods and concerns.

Ifemelu had grown up in the shadow of her mother's hair. It was black-black, so thick it drank two containers of relaxer at the salon, so full it took hours under the hooded dryer, and, when finally released from pink plastic rollers, sprang free and full, flowing down her back like a celebration. Her father called it a crown of glory. "Is it your real hair?" strangers would ask, and then reach out to touch it reverently. Others would say "Are you from Jamaica?" as though only foreign blood could explain such bounteous hair that did not thin at the temples. Through the years of childhood, Ifemelu would often look in the mirror and pull at her own hair, separate the coils, will it to become like her mother's, but it remained bristly and grew reluctantly; braiders said it cut them like a knife. 5 10

One day, the year Ifemelu turned ten, her mother came home from work looking different. Her clothes were the same, a brown dress belted at the waist, but her face was flushed, her eyes unfocused. "Where is the big scissors?" she asked, and when Ifemelu brought it to her, she raised it to her head and, handful by handful, chopped off all her hair. Ifemelu stared, stunned. The hair lay on the floor like dead grass. "Bring me a big bag," her mother said. Ifemelu obeyed, feeling herself in a trance, with things happening that she did not understand. She watched her mother walk around their flat, collecting all the Catholic objects, the crucifixes hung on walls, the rosaries nested in drawers, the missals propped on shelves. Her mother put them all in the polythene bag, which she carried to the backyard, her steps quick, her faraway look unwavering. She made a fire near the rubbish dump, at the same spot where she burned her used sanitary pads, and first she threw in her hair, wrapped in old newspaper, and then, one after the other, the objects of faith. Dark grey smoke curled up into the air. From the verandah, Ifemelu began to cry because she sensed that something had happened, and the woman standing by the fire, splashing in more kerosene as it dimmed and stepping back as it flared, the woman who was bald and blank, was not her mother, could not be her mother. 15 20 25

When her mother came back inside, Ifemelu backed away, but her mother hugged her close.

"I am saved," she said. "Mrs Ojo ministered to me this afternoon during the children's break and I received Christ. Old things have passed away and all things have become new. Praise God. On Sunday we will start going to Revival Saints. It is a Bible-believing church and a living church, not like St Dominic's." Her mother's words were not hers. She spoke them too rigidly, with a demeanour that belonged to someone else. Even her voice, usually high-pitched and feminine, had deepened and curdled. That afternoon, Ifemelu watched her mother's essence take flight. Before, her mother said the rosary once in a while, crossed herself before she ate, wore pretty images of saints around her neck, sang Latin songs and laughed when Ifemelu's father teased her about her terrible pronunciation. She laughed, too, whenever he said, "I am an agnostic respecter of religion," and she would tell him how lucky he was to be married to her, because even though he went to church only for weddings and funerals, he would get into heaven on the wings of her faith. But, after that afternoon, her God changed. He became exacting. Relaxed hair offended Him. Dancing offended Him. She bartered with Him, offering starvation in exchange for prosperity, for a job promotion, for good health. She fasted herself bone-thin: 30 35 40 45

3

dry fasts on weekends, and on weekdays, only water until evening. Ifemelu's father followed her with anxious eyes, urging her to eat a little more, to fast a little less, and he always spoke carefully, so that she would not call him the devil's agent and ignore him, as she had done with a cousin who was staying with them. "I am fasting for your father's conversion," she told Ifemelu often. For months, the air in their flat was like cracked glass. Everyone tiptoed around her mother, who had become a stranger, thin and knuckly and severe. Ifemelu worried that she would, one day, simply snap into two and die. 50

Chapter 3

ARAVIND ADIGA: *The White Tiger*

- 2 **Either** (a) Discuss some of the ways in which Adiga makes the opposition between 'The Darkness' and 'The Light' significant in the novel.
- Or** (b) Paying close attention to language and tone, discuss the effects of the writing in the following passage and consider in what ways it is characteristic of Adiga's narrative methods and concerns.

For the Desk of:

His Excellency Wen Jiabao
Now probably fast asleep in the
Premier's Office
In China

5

From the Desk of:

His Midnight Educator
On matters entrepreneurial:
'The White Tiger'

Mr Premier.

10

So.

What does my laughter sound like?

What do my armpits smell like?

And when I grin, is it true – as you no doubt imagine by now – that my lips widen into a devil's rictus?

15

Oh, I could go on and on about myself, sir. I could gloat that I am not just any murderer, but one who killed his own employer (who is a kind of second father), and also contributed to the probable death of all his family members. A virtual mass murderer.

But I don't want to go on and on about myself. You should hear some of these Bangalore entrepreneurs – my *start-up* has got this contract with American Express, my *start-up* runs the software in this hospital in London, blah blah. I hate that whole fucking Bangalore attitude, I tell you.

20

(But if you absolutely must find out more about me, just log on to my Web site: *www.whitetiger-technologydrivers.com*. That's right! That's the URL of my start-up!)

25

So I'm sick of talking about myself, sir. Tonight, I want to talk about the other important man in my story.

My ex.

Mr Ashok's face reappears now in my mind's eye as it used to every day when I was in his service – reflected in my rearview mirror. It was such a handsome face that sometimes I couldn't take my eyes off it. Picture a six-foot-tall fellow, broad-shouldered, with a landlord's powerful, punishing forearms; yet always gentle (*almost* always – except for that time he punched Pinky Madam in the face) and kind to those around him, even his servants and driver.

30

Now another face appears, to the side of his, in memory's mirror. Pinky Madam – his wife. Every bit as good-looking as her husband; just as the image of the goddess in the Birla Hindu Temple in New Delhi is as fair as the god to whom she is married. She would sit in the back, and the two of them would talk, and I would drive them wherever they wanted, as faithfully as the servant-god Hanuman carried about his master and mistress, Ram and Sita.

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Thinking of Mr Ashok is making me sentimental. I hope I've got some paper napkins here somewhere.

Here's a strange fact: murder a man, and you feel responsible for his life – *possessive*, even. You know more about him than his father and mother; they knew his foetus, but you know his corpse. Only you can complete the story of his life; only you know why his body has to be pushed into the fire before its time, and why his toes curl up and fight for another hour on earth. 45

Now, even though I killed him, you won't find me saying one bad thing about him. I protected his good name when I was his servant, and now that I am (in a sense) his master, I won't stop protecting his good name. I owe him so much. 50

The Second Night

ELEANOR CATTON: *The Rehearsal*

- 3 Either** (a) Discuss the significance of the role and characterisation of Stanley in the novel.
- Or** (b) Paying close attention to language and tone, analyse the effects of the writing in the following passage and consider in what ways it is characteristic of Catton's narrative methods and effects.

'I enjoyed your performance last week,' the saxophone teacher says when Julia arrives. 'Your performance of the ride home after the concert, both of you in the car together. What you were feeling. What you saw. I enjoyed it.'

'Thanks,' Julia says.

'Did you practise?' the saxophone teacher says eagerly. 'Like I asked?' 5

'Some,' Julia says.

'What have you been focusing on?'

'I guess big-picture,' Julia says. 'How one girl comes to seduce another.'

'Let's start big-picture then,' the saxophone teacher says, and gestures with her palm for Julia to begin. 10

'I've been looking at all the ordinary staples of flirting,' Julia says, 'like biting your lip and looking away just a second too late, and laughing a lot and finding every excuse to touch, light fingertips on a forearm or a thigh that emphasise and punctuate the laughter. I've been thinking about what a comfort these things are, these textbook methods, precisely because they need no decoding, no translation. 15

Once, a long time ago, you could probably bite your lip and it would mean, I am almost overcome with desiring you. Now you bite your lip and it means, I want you to see that I am almost overcome with desiring you, so I am using the plainest and most universally accepted signal I can think of to make you see. Now it means, 20

Both of us know the implications of my biting my lip and what I am trying to say. We are speaking a language, you and I together, a language that we did not invent, a language that is not unique to our uttering. We are speaking someone else's lines. It's a comfort.'

Julia's saxophone is lying sideways across the lap of the cream armchair, the mouthpiece resting lightly on the arm, and the curve of the bell tucked in against the seam where the seat-cushion meets the steep upholstered curve of the flank. The posture of the instrument makes the saxophone teacher think of a girl curled up with her knees to her chest and her head upon the arm, watching television alone in the dark. 25

'I don't know how to seduce her,' Julia says. Her eyes are on the saxophone too, travelling up and down its length. 'Sometimes I think that it would be like trying to bewitch her with a spell of her own invention if I tried to smile at her and bite my lip and cast my eyes down, if I tried to look vulnerable and coy. Would it even *work*? Even the thought makes me feel disarmed and sweaty and undone. But what's the alternative? Should I behave like a boy, play the part of a boy, do things she might want a boy to do? 30

'Is that how it works?' Julia says, rhetorical and musing now. She is still looking at the saxophone, lying on its side upon the chair. 'Like a big game of let's-pretend? Like a play-act? It feels like there's this duologue about a girl and a boy who fall in love with each other. And maybe the actors are both girls but there's only these two parts in this play, only two, so one of them has to dress up: one of them has to be moustached and breast-strapped and wide-legged and broad to play the boy. 40

'If you're just looking at the costumes and the script and the curtains and the lights, all the machinery of it, then you'll just see a boy and a girl having a love affair. But if you look at the actors underneath, if you choose not to be deceived by the spectacle of the thing, then you'll see that it's actually two girls. Maybe that's what it 45

has to be like whenever two girls get together: one of the girls always plays the part of the boy, but it's both of them that are pretending.'

'Oh, but why can't the two girls just perform a duologue about themselves?' the saxophone teacher says, enjoying herself. 'A play written for two girls.' 50

'There aren't any,' Julia says. 'There aren't any plays about two girls. There aren't any roles like that. That's why you have to pretend.'

'Surely you're mistaken, Julia,' the saxophone teacher says. 'Surely that isn't right.' 55

Julia shrugs and looks away into the sheen of the piano and her own blurry image reflected back. She says, 'There is one thing going for me, despite all this. Danger.'

Chapter 9

ATHOL FUGARD: *My Children! My Africa!* and *The Road to Mecca*

- 4 **Either** (a) Discuss some of the ways Fugard presents conflict in **both** of the plays. You should refer to specific moments in your answer.
- Or** (b) Paying close attention to language and tone, analyse the effects in the following extract and consider ways in which it is characteristic of Fugard's methods and concerns.

Elsa: I wasn't much of a help tonight, was I?

Helen: You were more than that. You were a 'challenge'. I like that word.

Elsa: But we didn't solve very much.

Helen: Nonsense! Of course we did. Certainly as much as *we* could. I *am* going to see a doctor and an optician, and Katrina ... [*She remembers.*] ... or somebody else, will come in here a few times a week and help me with the house. 5

Elsa: My shopping list! 10

Helen: It is as much as 'we' could do, Elsa. The rest is up to myself and, who knows, maybe it will be a little easier after tonight. I won't lie to you. I can't say that I'm not frightened any more. But at the same time I think I can say that I understand something now. 15

The road to my Mecca *was* one I had to travel alone. It was a journey on which no one could keep me company, and because of that, now that it is over, there is only me there at the end of it. It couldn't have been any other way.

You see, I meant what I said to Marius. This is as far as I can go. My Mecca is finished and with it – [*Pause.*] I must try to say it, mustn't I? – the only real purpose my life has ever had. [*She blows out a candle.*] I was wrong to think I could banish darkness, Elsa. Just as I taught myself how to light candles, and what that means, I must teach myself now how to blow them out ... and what that means. [*She attempts a brave smile.*] The last phase of my apprenticeship ... and if I can get through it, I'll be a master! 20

Elsa: I'm cold.

Helen: Cup of tea to warm you up and then bed. I'll put on the kettle. 30

Elsa: And I've got just the thing to go with it. [*She goes into the bedroom alcove and returns with her toilet bag, from which she takes a small bottle of pills.*] Valiums. They're delicious. I think you should also have one. 35

Helen [*all innocence*]: So tiny! What are they? Artificial sweeteners? [*The unintended and gentle irony of her question is not lost on ELSA. A little chuckle becomes a good laugh.*]

Elsa: That is perfect, Helen. Yes, they're artificial sweeteners.

Helen: I don't know how I did it, but that laugh makes me as proud of myself as of any one of those statues out there. 40

9

[She exits to put on the kettle. ELSA goes to the window and looks out at Mecca. MISS HELEN returns.]

Elsa: Helen, I've just thought of something. You know what the real cause of all your trouble is? You've never made an angel. 45

Helen: Good Heavens, no. Why should I?

Elsa: Because I think they would leave you alone if you did.

Helen: The village doesn't need more of those. The cemetery is full of them ... all wings and halos, but no glitter. *[tongue-in-cheek humour]* But if I did make one, it wouldn't be pointing up to Heaven like the rest. 50

Elsa: No? What would it be doing?

Helen: Come on, Elsa, you know! I'd have it pointing to the East. Where else? I'd misdirect all the good Christian souls around here and put them on the road to Mecca. 55

[Both have a good laugh.]

Elsa: God, I love you! I love you so much it hurts.

Helen: What about trust?

[Pause. The two women look at each other.] 60

Elsa: Open your arms and catch me! I'm going to jump!

Curtain.

The Road to Mecca, Act 2

10

LIZ LOCHHEAD: *Selected Poems*

- 5 **Either** (a) 'In Lochhead's poetry there is often something dark and uncertain.'

In the light of this comment, discuss Lochhead's poetic methods and effects. In your answer you should refer to **three** poems from your selection.

- Or** (b) Paying close attention to language and tone, write a critical appreciation of the following poem and consider ways in which it is characteristic of Lochhead's methods and concerns.

Everybody's Mother

Of course everybody's mother always and
so on ...

Always never
loved you enough
or too smothering much.

5

Of course you were the Only One, your
mother
a machine
that shat out siblings, listen

everybody's mother
was the original Frigid-
aire Icequeen clunking out
the hardstuff in nuggets, mirror-
silvers and ice-splinters that'd stick
in your heart.

10

15

Absolutely everyone's mother
was artistic when she was young.

Everyone's mother
was a perfumed presence with pearls, remote
white shoulders when she
bent over in her ball dress
to kiss you in your crib.

20

Everybody's mother slept with the butcher
for sausages to stuff you with.

Everyone's mother
mythologised herself. You got mixed up
between dragon's teeth and blackmarket stockings.

25

Naturally
she failed to give you

Positive Feelings
about your own sorry
sprouting body (it was a bloody shame)

30

11

but she did
sit up all night sewing sequins
on your carnival costume 35

so you would have a good time

and she spat
on the corner of her hanky and scraped
at your mouth with sour lace till you squirmed

so you would look smart 40

And where
was your father all this time?
Away
at the war, or
in his office, or any-
way conspicuous for his
Absence, so 45

what if your mother did
float around above you
big as a barrage balloon
blocking out the light? 50

Nobody's mother can't not never do nothing right.

12

ARTHUR MILLER: *Death of a Salesman*

- 6 **Either** (a) Discuss some of the dramatic effects created by Miller's presentation of women in the play.
- Or** (b) Paying close attention to language and action, discuss the dramatic effects in the following extract and consider how far it is characteristic of Miller's methods and concerns.

Willy: Boys!

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And the stock exchange, friend!

Act 1

14

W.B. YEATS: *Selected Poems*

- 7 **Either** (a) Discuss Yeats's presentation of nature in his poetry. In your answer you should consider at least **two** poems from your selection.
- Or** (b) Paying close attention to language and tone, write a critical appreciation of the following poem and consider in what ways it is characteristic of Yeats's poetic methods and concerns.

Adam's Curse

We sat together at one summer's end,
 That beautiful mild woman, your close friend,
 And you and I, and talked of poetry.
 I said, 'A line will take us hours maybe;
 Yet if it does not seem a moment's thought, 5
 Our stitching and unstitching has been naught.
 Better go down upon your marrow-bones
 And scrub a kitchen pavement, or break stones
 Like an old pauper, in all kinds of weather;
 For to articulate sweet sounds together 10
 Is to work harder than all these, and yet
 Be thought an idler by the noisy set
 Of bankers, schoolmasters, and clergymen
 The martyrs call the world.'

And thereupon 15
 That beautiful mild woman for whose sake
 There's many a one shall find out all heartache
 On finding that her voice is sweet and low
 Replied, 'To be born woman is to know –
 Although they do not talk of it at school – 20
 That we must labour to be beautiful.'

I said, 'It's certain there is no fine thing
 Since Adam's fall but needs much labouring.
 There have been lovers who thought love should be
 So much compounded of high courtesy 25
 That they would sigh and quote with learned looks
 Precedents out of beautiful old books;
 Yet now it seems an idle trade enough.'

We sat grown quiet at the name of love;
 We saw the last embers of daylight die, 30
 And in the trembling blue-green of the sky
 A moon, worn as if it had been a shell
 Washed by time's waters as they rose and fell
 About the stars and broke in days and years.

I had a thought for no one's but your ears: 35
 That you were beautiful, and that I strove
 To love you in the old high way of love;
 That it had all seemed happy, and yet we'd grown
 As weary-hearted as that hollow moon.

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