



LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

9748/03

Paper 3 The Individual and Society in Literature

3 hours

Additional Materials: Answer Paper

Set texts may be taken into the examination room. They may bear underlining or highlighting. Any kind of folding or flagging of pages in text (e.g. use of post-its, tape flags or paper clips) is not permitted.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your name, class and question number on all the work you hand in.
Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.
Write your answer to each question on a fresh sheet of paper.
Do not use paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid on your work.

Answer **three** questions, one from each of Sections A, B and C.
You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.

At the end of the examination, fasten each of your answers **separately**.
Attach the **cover sheet** to Section A.
All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

Section A

1

Either (a) The extract below is from the play *August: Osage County* (2008) by Tracy Letts.

In this scene, some members of the Westons, a Midwestern American family—Violet Weston, 65, Ivy Weston (Violet's 44 year old daughter), and Mattie Fae (Violet's 57 year old sister)—are gathered around a dining room table in the family home in Oklahoma. They have come together following the funeral of Beverly Weston, late husband of Violet and father of Ivy. At this point in the conversation they turn their attention to the subject of youth and age.

Write a critical commentary on the extract, relating it to the theme of the individual and society in literature.

(*Mattie Fae holds a photograph in front of Violet.*)

MATTIE FAE: Is this the idea?

VIOLET: (*Takes the photograph*) Look at me. (*Shows the photograph to Ivy*) Look at me.

IVY: You're beautiful, mom. 5

VIOLET: I was beautiful. Not anymore.

MATTIE FAE: Oh, now—

IVY: You're still beautiful.

VIOLET: No. One of those lies we tell to give us comfort, but don't you believe it. Women are beautiful when they're young, and not after. Men can still preserve their sex appeal well into old age. I don't mean those men like you see with shorts and those little purses around their waists. Some men can maintain, if they embrace it ... cragginess, weary masculinity. Women just get old and fat and wrinkly. 10 15

MATTIE FAE: I beg your pardon.

VIOLET: Think about what makes a young woman sexy. Think about the last time you went to the mall and saw some sweet little gal and thought, "She's a cute trick." What makes her that way? Taut skin, firm boobs, an ass above her knees— 20

MATTIE FAE: I'm still very sexy, thank you very much.

VIOLET: You're about as sexy as a wet cardboard box, Mattie Fae, you and me both. Don't kid yourself. Look ... can we all just stop kidding ourselves? Wouldn't we be better off, all of us, if we stopped lying about these things and told the truth? 25 "Women aren't sexy when they're old." I can live with that.

MATTIE FAE: Can you live with that?

VIOLET: I can live with it, but I disagree. What about Sophia Loren?

VIOLET: What about Lena Horne? She stayed sexy until she was eighty. 30

MATTIE FAE: The world is round. Get over it. Now try this dress on.

IVY: I'm sorry, I won't.

MATTIE FAE: Ivy.

VIOLET: All right, the heat in here is getting just stupid now— Now listen to me: you don't know how to attract a man. I do. 35 That's something I've always—

IVY: It's a funeral! We just buried my father, I'm not trying to attract—!

VIOLET: I'm not talking about today, dummy, this is something you can wear some— 40

IVY: I have a man. All right? I have a man.

(*Mattie Fae turns her attention to Ivy.*)

VIOLET: You said ... you told me you weren't looking for a man—

IVY: And I'm not. Because I have one. Okay? Now will you leave it alone? 45

(*Pause.*)

VIOLET: No, I won't leave it alone MATTIE FAE: No, let's not leave it alone.

IVY: I wish you both could see the brainsick looks on your faces—

VIOLET: Who is it? 50

IVY: Nobody. Forget it—

VIOLET: No, no you don't, I want to know who you're—

IVY: I'm not talking about this—

MATTIE FAE: Ivy, please tell us—

IVY: No.

MATTIE FAE: Is he someone from school? 55

VIOLET: Tell me you're not back with Loser Barry.

IVY: No, it isn't Barry.

VIOLET: Thank you, Jesus.

MATTIE FAE: Tell us something, how old is he, what does he do?—

IVY: I'm not telling you anything, either of you, so you might as well— 60

MATTIE FAE: You have to tell us *something*!

IVY: No, I really don't

VIOLET: Are you in love, Ivy?

IVY: (*Stunned*) I ... I don't ... I'm ... 65

(*She bursts into awkward laughter and exits down the second-floor hallway. Violet and Mattie Fae squeal and follow Ivy off.*)

- Or (b) The following extract is taken from *The Enemy* (first published in 1967) by V. S. Naipaul, in which the narrator recalls his younger days in Trinidad.

Write a critical commentary on the extract, relating it to the theme of the individual and society in literature.

I had always considered this woman, my mother, as the enemy. She was sure to misunderstand anything I did, and the time came when I thought she not only misunderstood me, but quite definitely disapproved of me. I was an only child, but for her I was one too many.

She hated my father, and even after he died she continued to hate him. 5

She would say, 'Go ahead and do what you doing. You is your father child, you hear, not mine.'

The real split between my mother and me happened not in Miguel Street, but in the country.

My mother had decided to leave my father, and she wanted to take me to her mother. 10

I refused to go.

My father was ill, and in bed. Besides, he had promised that if I stayed with him I was to have a whole box of crayons.

I chose the crayons and my father. 15

We were living at the time in Cunupia, where my father was a driver on the sugar estates. He wasn't a slave-driver, but a driver of free people, but my father used to behave as though the people were slaves. He rode about the estates on a big clumsy brown horse, cracking his whip at the labourers and people said – I really don't believe this – that he used to kick the labourers. 20

I don't believe it because my father had lived all his life in Cunupia and he knew that you really couldn't push the Cunupia people around. They were not tough people, but they think nothing of killing, and they are prepared to wait years for the chance to kill someone they don't like. In fact, Cunupia and Tableland are the two parts of Trinidad where murders occur often enough to ensure quick promotion for the policemen stationed there. 25

At first we lived in the barracks, but then my father wanted to move to a little wooden house not far away.

My mother said, 'You playing hero. Go and live in your house by yourself, you hear.' 30

She was afraid, of course, but my father insisted. So we moved to the house, and then trouble really started.

A man came to the house one day about midday and said to my mother, 'Where your husband?'

My mother said, 'I don't know.' 35

The man was cleaning his teeth with a twig from a hibiscus plant. He spat and said, 'It don't matter. I have time. I could wait.'

My mother said, 'You ain't doing nothing like that. I know what you thinking, but I have my sister coming here right now.'

The man laughed and said, 'I not doing anything. I just want to know when he coming home.' 40

I began to cry in terror.

The man laughed.

My mother said, 'Shut up this minute or I give you something really to cry about.' 45

I went to another room and walked about saying, 'Rama! Rama! Sita Rama!' This was what my father had told me to say when I was in danger of any sort.

I looked out of the window. It was bright daylight, and hot, and there was nobody else in all the wide world of bush and trees. 50

And then I saw my aunt walking up the road.

She came and she said, 'Anything wrong with you here? I was at home just sitting quite quiet, and I suddenly feel that something was going wrong. I feel I had to come to see.'

The man said, 'Yes, I know the feeling.'

55

My mother, who was being very brave all the time, began to cry.

But all this was only to frighten us, and we were certainly frightened. My father always afterwards took his gun with him, and my mother kept a sharpened cutlass by her hand.

Section B

**Answer one question in this section, using two texts that you have studied.
The texts used in this section cannot be used in Section C.**

2

- Either** **(a)** With reference to any **two** texts you have read, discuss the ways in which the writers present characters as protectors of their societies.
- Or** **(b)** Compare the ways in which any **two** texts you have read use recurring devices to show the relationship between an individual and society.

Section C

**Answer one question in this section, using one text that you have studied.
The text used in this section cannot be used in Section B.**

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE: *The Scarlet Letter*

3

- Either (a)** 'Thus, therefore, the floor of our familiar room has become a neutral territory [...] where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other.' (Custom-House)

With reference to this quotation from the text, consider Hawthorne's use of the supernatural in presenting the relationship between the individual and society.

- Or (b)** 'Roger Chillingworth's aspect had undergone a remarkable change [...] Now there was something ugly and evil in his face.' (Chapter 9)

Discuss Hawthorne's presentation of the diabolic in *The Scarlet Letter*.

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

9

- Either (a)** 'Violence, in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, is not a force of chaos but a force for order.'

In the light of this comment, consider Williams's presentation of violence and its effects on individuals in the society of the play.

- Or (b)** Consider Williams's use of symbolism to portray relationships between individuals and their society in *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Othello*

10

- Either (a)** Explore Shakespeare's presentation of Othello and Desdemona's marriage in relation to ideas about the individual and society.

- Or (b)** 'IAGO: Will you hear me, Roderigo?
RODERIGO: 'Faith, I have heard too much, for your words and performances are no kin together.' (Act 4 Scene 2)

Discuss Shakespeare's exploration of the clash between word and action in *Othello*, in relation to the theme of the individual and society.

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Question 1b © V. S. Naipaul; *The Enemy*; Cambridge University Press, 2008.

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