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Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH **9695/23**

Paper 2 Prose and Unseen **May/June 2024**

2 hours



You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **two** questions in total:
  - Section A: answer **one** question.
  - Section B: answer **one** question.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.
- Dictionaries are **not** allowed.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- All questions are worth equal marks.

This document has **12** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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Section A: Prose

Answer **one** question from this section.

KIRAN DESAI: *The Inheritance of Loss*

1 **Either** **(a)** Discuss Desai's presentation of Gyan, considering his importance in the novel.

Or **(b)** Comment closely on Desai's presentation of Jemubhai's concern for his powder puff in the following passage.

> The afternoons in Piphit lasted so long, the Patels were resting, trying to efface the fear that time would never move again, all except for Jemubhai who had grown unused to such surrender.

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What for?’

(*from* Chapter 28)

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IAN McEWAN: *Atonement*

2 **Either** **(a)** Discuss ways in which McEwan presents the assault on Lola, considering its importance to the novel.

Or **(b)** Comment closely on the following passage, considering McEwan's presentation of the event.

Of the four dolphins whose tails supported the shell on which the Triton squatted, the one nearest to Cecilia had its wide-open mouth stopped with moss and algae.

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Look what you've done.'

(*from* Chapter 2)

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TURN OVER FOR QUESTION 3.

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Stories of Ourselves, Volume 1

3 **Either** **(a)** Compare ways in which the writers of **two** stories present childhood.

Or **(b)** Comment closely on ways in which Amit Chaudhuri presents the car journey in the following passage from *Real Time*.

On their way to the house, Mr Mitra said he didn't know if they should buy flowers. They were very near Jogu Bazaar; and Mr Mitra suddenly raised one hand and said:

'Abdul, slowly!'

The driver eased the pressure on the accelerator and brought the Ambassador almost to a standstill. Not looking into the rearview mirror, he studied two boys with baskets playing on the pavement on his left.

'Well, what should we do?' Mr Mitra's face, as he turned to look at his wife, was pained, as if he was annoyed she hadn't immediately come up with the answer.

'Do what you want to do quickly,' she said, dabbing her cheek with her sari. 'We're already late.' She looked at the small dial of her watch. He sighed; his wife never satisfied him when he needed her most; and quite probably it was the same story the other way round. Abdul, who, by sitting on the front seat, claimed to be removed to a sphere too distant for the words at the back to be audible, continued to stare at the children while keeping the engine running.

'But I'm not sure,' said the husband, like a distraught child, 'given the circumstances.'

She spoke then in a voice of sanity she chose to speak in only occasionally.

'Do what you'd do in a normal case of bereavement,' she said. 'This is no different.'

He was relieved at her answer, but regretted that he had to go out of the car into the market. He was wearing a white cotton shirt and terycotton trousers because of the heat, and shoes; he now regretted the shoes. He remembered he hadn't been able to find his sandals in the cupboard. His feet, swathed in socks, were perspiring.

He came back after about ten minutes, holding half a dozen tuberoses against his chest, cradling them with one arm; a boy was running after him. 'Babu, should I wipe the car, should I wipe the car …' he was saying, and Mr Mitra looked intent, like a man who has an appointment. He didn't acknowledge the boy; inside the car, Mrs Mitra, who was used to these inescapable periods of waiting, moved a little. He placed the tuberoses in the front, next to Abdul, where they smeared the seat with their moisture. Mr Mitra had wasted some time bargaining, bringing down the price from sixteen to fourteen rupees, after which the vendor had expertly tied a thread round the lower half of the flowers.

'Why did she do it?' he asked in an offhand way, as the car proceeded once more on its way. Going down Ashutosh Mukherjee Road, they turned left into Southern Avenue.

Naturally, they didn't have the answer. They passed an apartment building they knew, Shanti Nivas, its windows open but dark and remote. Probably they'd been a little harsh with her, her parents. Her marriage, sixteen years ago, had been seen to be appropriate. Usually, it's said, Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, and Saraswati, of learning, two sisters, don't bless the same house; but certainly that wasn't true of the Poddars, who had two bars-at-law in the generation preceding this one, and a social reformer in the lineage, and also a white four-storeyed mansion on a property near Salt Lake where they used to have garden parties. Anjali had married Gautam Poddar very soon after taking her M.A. in history from Calcutta University.

As they passed a petrol pump, Mr Mitra wondered what view traditional theology took of this matter, and how the rites accommodated an event such as this – she had jumped from a third-floor balcony – which couldn't, after all, be altogether

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uncommon. Perhaps there was no ceremony. In his mind's eye, when he tried to imagine the priest, or the long rows of tables at which people were fed, he saw a blank. But Abdul couldn't identify the lane.

(*from* Real Time)

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MARK TWAIN: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

4 **Either** **(a)** Discuss some of the ways in which Twain presents Huck's journey as an adventure story.

Or **(b)** Comment closely on the following passage, considering ways in which Twain presents the end of the fight between the Grangerfords and the Shepherdsons.

When I got down out of the tree, I crept along down the river bank a piece, and found the two bodies laying in the edge of the water, and tugged at them till I got them ashore; then I covered up their faces, and got away as quick as I could. I cried a little when I was covering up Buck's face, for he was mighty good to me.

It was just dark, now. I never went near the house, but struck through the woods and made for the swamp. Jim warn't on his island, so I tramped off in a hurry for the crick, and crowded through the willows, red-hot to jump aboard and get out of that awful country – the raft was gone! My souls, but I was scared! I couldn't get my breath for most a minute. Then I raised a yell. A voice not twenty-five foot from me, says –

'Good lan'! is dat you, honey? Doan' make no noise.'

It was Jim's voice – nothing ever sounded so good before. I run along the bank a piece and got aboard, and Jim he grabbed me and hugged me, he was so glad to see me. He says –

'Laws bless you, chile, I 'uz right down sho' you's dead agin. Jack's been heah, he says he reck'n you's ben shot, kase you didn' come home no mo'; so I's jes' dis minute a startin' de raf' down towards de mouf er de crick, so's to be all ready for to shove out en leave soon as Jack comes agin en tells me for certain you *is* dead. Lawsy, I's mighty glad to get you back agin, honey.'

I says –

'All right – that's mighty good; they won't find me, and they'll think I've been killed, and floated down the river – there's something up there that'll help them to think so – so don't you lose no time, Jim, but just shove off for the big water as fast as ever you can.'

I never felt easy till the raft was two mile below there and out in the middle of the Mississippi. Then we hung up our signal lantern, and judged that we was free and safe once more. I hadn't had a bite to eat since yesterday; so Jim he got out some corn-dodgers and buttermilk, and pork and cabbage, and greens – there ain't nothing in the world so good, when it's cooked right – and whilst I eat my supper we talked, and had a good time. I was powerful glad to get away from the feuds, and so was Jim to get away from the swamp. We said there warn't no home like a raft, after all. Other places do seem so cramped up and smothery, but a raft don't. You feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on a raft.

(*from* Chapter 18)

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TURN OVER FOR QUESTION 5.

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Section B: Unseen

Answer **one** question from this section.

Either

5 Comment closely on the presentation of the narrator's experience in the following poem.

In your answer, consider the writer's choice of language, imagery and poetic methods.

The Summit

So we come at last to what seemed

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The ultimate hills.

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Or

6 Comment closely on the presentation of the woman from America in the following passage.

In your answer, consider the writer's choice of language, structure and narrative methods.

This woman from America married a man of our village and left her country to come and live with him here. She descended on us like an avalanche. People are divided into two camps: those who feel a fascinated love and those who fear a new thing.

Some people keep hoping she will go away one day, but already her big strong stride has worn the pathways of the village flat. She is everywhere about because she is a woman, resolved and unshakable in herself. To make matters worse or more disturbing she comes from the west side of America, somewhere near California. I gather from her conversation that people from the West are stranger than most people.

People of the West of America must be the most oddly beautiful people in the world; at least this woman from the West is the most oddly beautiful person I have ever seen. Every cross-current of the earth seems to have stopped in her and blended into an amazing harmony. She has a big dash of Africa, a dash of Germany, some Cherokee and heaven knows what else. Her feet are big and her body is as tall and straight and strong as a mountain tree. Her neck curves up high and her thick black hair cascades down her back like a wild and tormented stream. I cannot understand her eyes though, except that they are big, black, and startled like those of a wild free buck racing against the wind. Often they cloud over with a deep, intense, brooding look.

It takes a great deal of courage to become friends with a woman like that. Like everyone here, I am timid and subdued. Authority, everything can subdue me; not because I like it that way but because authority carries the weight of an age pressing down on life. It is terrible then to associate with a person who can shout authority down. Her shouting matches with authority are the terror and sensation of the village. It has come down to this. Either the woman is unreasonable or authority is unreasonable, and everyone in his heart would like to admit that authority is unreasonable. In reality, the rule is: If authority does not like you, then you are the outcast and humanity associates with you at their peril. So try always to be on the right side of authority, for the sake of peace, and please avoid the outcast. I do not say it will be like this forever. The whole world is crashing and interchanging itself and even remote bush villages in Africa are not to be left out!

It was inevitable though that this woman and I should be friends. I have an overwhelming curiosity that I cannot keep within bounds. I passed by the house for almost a month, but one cannot crash in on people. Then one day a dog they own had puppies, and my small son chased one of the puppies into the yard and I chased after him. Then one of the puppies became his and there had to be discussions about the puppy, the desert heat, and the state of the world and as a result of curiosity an avalanche of wealth has descended on my life. My small hut-house is full of short notes written in a wide sprawling hand. I have kept them all because they are a statement of human generosity and the wild carefree laugh of a woman who is as busy as women the world over about things women always entangle themselves in – a man, a home …

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