

SCOBA S.6

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

(Prose and Poetry)

Paper 1

INSTRUCTIONS:

This paper consists of **THREE** sections **I**, **II** and **III**.

Attempt all questions in each section.

You are advised to spend **1 hour 10 minutes** on section **I**, and **55 minutes** each on Sections **II** and **III**

SECTION I (34 marks)

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow on it.

Anger has become the national habit. You see it on the sullen faces of fashion models who have obviously been told that anger sells. It pours out of the radio all day. Washington journalism hams snarl and shout at each other on television. Generations exchange sneers on TV and printed page. Ordinary people abuse congressmen and president with shockingly personal insults. Rudeness is a justifiable way of showing you can no longer control the fury within. Vile speech justifiable on the same ground, is inescapable.

America is angry at Washington, angry at the press, angry at immigrants, angry at television, angry at traffic, angry at people who are well-off and angry at people who are poor, angry at blacks and angry at whites.

The old are angry at the young, the young angry at the old. Suburbs are angry at cities, and **rustic American** is angry at both whenever urban and suburban intruders threaten the peaceful rustic sense of having escaped from God's Angry Land.

Enough: a complete catalogue of the varieties of bile spoiling the American day would fill a library. The question is why. Why has anger become a **reflexive response** to the inevitable vagaries of National life?

Living perpetually at the boiling point seems to leave the country depressed and pessimistic. Study those scowling models wearing the latest clothes in the Sunday papers and magazines. These are faces that expect only the worst. What a pity to waste such lovely new clothes on people so incapable of happiness.

The popularity of anger is doubly puzzling, not only because the American habit even in the worst of times has traditionally been **mindless optimism**, but nowadays for the nation to be angry about.

The country happily re-elected President Eisenhower in 1956 because it believed his campaign boast of giving it peace and prosperity. The “peace”, of course, was life under the endless threat of nuclear devastation.

By contrast the country now, at last, really does enjoy peace, and if the prosperity is not so solid as it was in the 1950s, American wealth is still the world’s vastest. So, with real peace and prosperity, what’s to be furious about?

The explanation, I suspect, is that the country got itself addicted to anger and can’t shake the habit. It was **hooked** long ago when there was vary good reason for anger.

Massive, irritating and even scary expressions of it were vital in shaking an obdurate government, contemptuous of public opinion, from its determination to purpose war ad infinitum in Vietnam.

Massive, irritating and even scary expressions of anger - from Americans both black and white - were needed for the triumph of Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement.

These were **monumental** victories. If the nation had been unwilling to get mad - to shout, “We are not willing to take it anymore!” - they might not have been won.

But what monumental struggle confronts us now? Giving young black people, but America is our most pressing problem, but nobody shouts about that. Most other problems are so unmonumental that we might think ripe for greatness an era of civility conducive to good feelings among neighbors of all races and persuasions, a golden age of progress in learning and the arts and science.

Is this making you angry? It is easy to imagine the cries of rage from a people habituated to a crying rage: Are women not still oppressed by glass ceiling? Do black Americans no longer have to suffer the disrespect of a racist world? Who dares talk of prosperity when the wealth is distributed so unfairly?

True. All true. There is far too much poverty, racism remains an affliction, women still don’t have economic equality with men. These present economists, philosophers and statesmen with exceedingly complex problems **not amenable to solution by red-hot anger**.

Politically- minded people concerned with these issues have always known that low-grade anger must be maintained, that political feet must be kept to the fire, that squeaky wheels get the grease, and so on. The high intensity fury now seething through the land on these and a hundred other issues, however, doesn’t seem focused on any social or economic goal. It is as though the nation got mad as hell a long time ago, got good results, and now can’t shake the anger habit.

- **Russel Baker: Hooked on Anger.**

(a) State the author’s main argument in the passage.

(3 marks)

- (b) What evidences in the passage prove that
- (i) the prevailing mood of anger in America is unjustifiable? (4 marks)
 - (ii) anger can be used to achieve positive results in society? (4 marks)
- (c) Show the various forms of expression of anger in the passage. (10 marks)
- (d) Explain the contextual meaning of the following words and expressions
- (i) America is angry at Washington (2 marks)
 - (ii) rustic America (2 marks)
 - (iii) reflexive response (2 marks)
 - (iv) mindless optimism (2 marks)
 - (v) hooked (2 marks)
 - (vi) monumental (2 marks)
 - (vii) not amenable to solution by red-hot anger. (2 marks)

SECTION II (33 marks)

2. Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow on it.

The racial dividing lines of Southern towns are baffling and treacherous for a stranger, for they are not as clearly marked as in the North - or not clearly marked for him. I passed a porch with dark people; on the corner about a block away was a Restaurant. When I reached the corner, I entered the restaurant.

I will never forget it. I don't know if I can describe it. Everything abruptly froze into what, even at that moment, struck me as a kind of Marx Brothers' parody of horror. Every white face turned to stones; the arrival of the messenger of death could not have had a more devastating effect than the appearance in the restaurant doorway of a small unarmed, utterly astounded black man, I had realized my error as soon as I opened the door. But the absolute terror on all these white faces - I swear that not a soul moved - paralyzed me. They stared at me, I stared at them.

The spell was broken by one of those women, produced, I hope, only in the south with a face like a rusty hatchet, and eyes like two rusty nails left over from the crucifixion. She rushes at me as barked - for it was not a human sound: "What you want boy? What you want in here?" And then, a de-contaminating gesture. "Right around there, boy. Right around there."

I had no idea what she was talking about. I backed out of the door.

"Right around there, boy," said a voice behind me.

A white man had appeared out of nowhere, on the sidewalk which had been empty not more than a second before. I stared at him blankly. He watched me steadily, with a kind of suspended menace.

My first shock had subsided. I really had not had time to feel either fear or anger. Now both began to rise in me. I knew immediately that he was pointing to the colored entrance.

And this was a dreadful moment as brief as lighting and far more illuminating. I realized that this man thought that he was being kind; and he was, indeed, being as kind as can be expected that I must not speak to him, must not involve myself with him in any way whatever. I wasn't hungry any more, but I certainly couldn't say that. Not only because this would have forced both of us to go further into what confrontation I dared not think, but was the first I realized that this accent was going to be a very definite liability since I certainly couldn't change it, I was going to have to find some way to turning it into some kind of asset. But not this very flaming moment, on this dark and empty street.

I saved my honour, hopefully, by reflecting, well, this is what you came here for. Hit it - and I tore my eyes from his face and walked through the door he had kindly pointed out.

I found myself in a small cubicle, with one electric light, and a corner, perhaps four or five stools on one side of the cubicle was a window. The window more closely resembled a cage - wire mesh, and an opening in the mesh. I was nearly close enough to touch them, certainly close enough to touch her, close enough to kill them all, but they couldn't see me, either.

Hatchet - face now turned to me and said, "boy," it was no longer necessary.

I told her I wanted a hamburger and a cup of coffee, which I didn't, but I wanted to see how those on my side of the mesh were served; and wondered if she had to wash hands each time, before she served the white folks again. Possibly not. For the hamburger came in paper, and the coffee in paper cup.

I did all I could do to be silent as I paid her, and she turned away. I sat down on one of the stools, and a black man came in, grunted a greeting to me, went to the window, ordered, paid, sat there for a while, thinking that I'd certainly asked for one hell of a gig.

I wasn't sorry I'd come---I was never in fact, ever to be sorry about that, and until the day I die, I will always consider myself among the great privileged because, however inadequately, I was there. But I could see that the difficulties were not going to be where I had confidently placed them --- in others --- but in me. I was far from certain that I was equipped to get through a single day down here, and if I could not so equip myself then I would be a menace to all that others were trying to do, and a betrayal of their vast travail. They had been undergoing and overcoming for a very long time without me, after all, and they hadn't asked me to come, my role was to do a story and avoid becoming one. I watched him without wonder and respect. If he could do that, then the people on the other side of the mesh were right to be frightened --- if he could do that, he could do any-thing and when he walked through the mesh there would be nothing through the mesh there would be nothing to stop him. But I couldn't do it yet; my stomach was as tight as a black rubber ball. I took my hamburger and walked outside and dropped it in into the weeds. The dark silence of the streets now frightened me a little, and I walked back to my hotel.

My hotel was a very funky black joint, so poverty stricken and for so long, that no one had anything to hide, that no one had anything to hide, or lose—not that they had stopped trying: they failed in the first endeavor as monotonously as they succeeded in the second. Life still held out the hope of what Americans, helplessly and honestly, call a “killing” and what blacks, revealingly enough, call a “hit”. There seemed to be music all the time, someone was dancing at all the time, someone was dancing at the time. It would have seemed, from a casual view, that this hotel was the gathering place for all the dregs included the entire black society, it was a very various and revealing truth. Lodging for transient blacks, or entertainment for the locals is a severely circumscribed matter in the Deep South, so that, for example, if one is not staying with friends or relatives one stays in a hotel like mine, or, of one’s friends and relatives decide to but you a drink, they will bring you to the bar of this hotel. I like it very much, I liked watching staid Baptist ministers and their plump, starched wives seated but a table away from the town’s loose fallen ladies and their unstarched men. I thought it healthy, because it reduced the possibilities of self-delusion—especially in those years. The man had everybody in the same bag, and for the same reason, no matter what kind of suit he was wearing, or what kind of car he drove. And the people treated each other, it seemed, with rather more respect than was typical of New York, where, of course, the opportunity for self-delusion were, comparatively, so much greater.

- **James Baldwin: No Name in the Street.**

- (a) Who is the speaker in the passage? (4 marks)
- (b) (i) What inconveniences does the speaker go through in the passage? (5 marks)
(ii) How does he attempt to overcome them? (6 marks)
- (c) How do the following devices contribute to your understanding of the author’s message?
(i) Sarcasm (6 marks)
(ii) Symbolism (6 marks)
(iii) Language (6 marks)

SECTION III (33 marks)

3. Read the following poem and answer the questions that follow on it.

A Sudden Storm

The wind howls, the trees sway,
The loose house-top sheets clatter and clang,

The open window shuts with a bang,
And the sky makes night of day.

Helter-skelter the parents run,
Pressed with a thousand minor cares:
'Hey, you there! Pack the household wares!
And where on earth's my son?

Home skip the little children:
'Where have you been, you naughty boy?' -
For he loves the approach of rain

The streets clear, the houses fill,
The noise gathers as children shout
To rival the raging wind without,
And nought that can move is still.

A bright flash! - a lighted plain;
Then from the once-blue heavens,
Accompanied by noise that deafens,
Steadily pours the rain.

Pius Oleghe

- (a) Discuss the effect of the approaching storm on man and nature in general as portrayed in the poem. (8 marks)
- (b) Identify the speaking voice in the poem (2 marks)
- (c) How effective are the poetic techniques used? (12 marks)
- (d) Comment on the following on the poem
- (i) Tone (2 marks)
 - (ii) Mood (2 marks)
 - (iii) Intention (2 marks)
 - (iv) Attitude (4 marks)

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