UNIVERSITE DE TUNIS

ECOLE NORMALE SUPERIEURE

Concours d'entrée à l'Ecole normale supérieure

Session : juillet 2008

Section : Lettres anglaises

Epreuve de dissertation

Durée : 4h - Coef. : 3

Discuss only one of the following statements:

1) **"Character is arguably the most important single component of the novel....Yet character is probably the most difficult aspect of the art of fiction to discuss in technical terms."**

2) **"Through time-shift, narrative avoids presenting life as just one...thing after another, and allows us to make connections of causality and irony between widely separated events."**

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Epreuve de langue
Durée : 3h - Coef. : 2

Part I - Reading comprehension (10 marks)

Read the text carefully and answer the following questions:

1) Explain using your own words: ". . . a wad of crisp fivers ain't good for a living soul unless they're flying out of your hand into some shopkeeper's till, and the shopkeeper is passing you tip-top things in exchange over the counter"
2) In what way did the "telly" change the life of the family?
3) Discuss the following statement:"but suddenly we saw their real value. . ." (paragraph 4)
4) What is the source of happiness and pleasure according to the narrator?
5) There is an obvious political statement in this text. Identify this statement, and comment on the author's point of view.

Part II - Grammar and use of English (10 marks)

Give the plural of:

1) Horse race
2) Grown-up
3) Looker-on
4) Woman writer
5) Manservant

Fill each of the blanks with ONLY ONE suitable word:

"During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year , . . . the clouds hung oppressively in the heavens, I had been passing alone on . . . , . . . a singularly dreary tract of country, and . . . length . . . myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, . . . view of the melancholy [house]."

Part III - Writing (20 marks)

Write a five-paragraph essay on ONE of the following topics (write legibly and illustrate your ideas with examples):

Topic 1: Do we really need advertisements?

Topic 2: Can television play an educational role?

Television and the telly boys

(The narrator is a boy who has been sent to a Borstal for robbery)

Normally, I sweated on a milling machine; but my dad died from cancer of the throat, and mam collected a cool five hundred in insurance and benefits from the factory where he'd worked, "for your bereavement" they said, or words like that.

Now I believe, and mam must have thought the same, that a wad of crisp fivers ain't good to a living soul unless they're flying out of your hand into some shopkeeper's till, and the shopkeeper is passing you tip-top things in exchange over the counter; so, as soon as she got the money, mam took me and my five brothers and sisters to town and got us dolled-up in new clothes. Then she ordered a twenty-one inch telly, a new carpet, and took a taxi home with bags of grub and a new fur coat. And do you know she'd still near three hundred left in her handbag, so how could any of us go to work after that? Poor old dad, he didn't get a look in, and he was the one who'd done the suffering and dying for such a lot of lolly.

Night after night we sat in front of the telly with a ham sandwich in one hand, and a bar of chocolate in the other, and a bottle of lemonade between our boots; and I've never known a family as happy as ours was in that couple of months when we'd got all the money we needed. And when the dough ran out I didn't think about anything much, but just roamed the streets-looking for another job, I told mam- hoping to get my hands on another five hundred nicker so as the nice life we'd got used to could go on and on for ever.

Because it's surprising how quick you can get used to a different life. To begin with, the adverts on the telly had shown us how much more there was in the world to buy than we'd ever dreamed of. And the telly made all these things seem twenty times better than

we'd ever thought they were. We used to cock our noses up at things in shops that didn't move, but suddenly we saw their real value because they jumped and glittered around the screen, not like the crumby adverts you saw on posters or in newspapers as dead as doornails. The films they showed were good as well, because we couldn't get our eyes unglued from the cops chasing the robbers who had satchel-bags crammed with cash and looked like getting away to spend it-until the last moment. I always hoped they would end up free, and I could never stop wanting to put my hand out, smash into the screen (it only looked a bit of rag-screen like at the pictures) and get the copper in a half-nelson so's he'd stop following the bloke with the money-bags...

And it was when these cops were chasing the crooks that we played some good tricks with the telly, because when one of them opened his big gob to spout about getting their man, I'd turn the sound down and see his mouth move like a goldfish mimicking what they were supposed to be acting-it was so funny the whole family went into fits on the brand-new carpet. It was the best of all, though, when we did it to some Tory telling us how good his government was going to be if we kept on voting for them-their slack chops rolling and opening, hands lifting to twitch moustaches and touching their buttonholes to make sure the flower hadn't wilted, so that you could see they didn't mean a word they said, especially with not a murmur coming out because we'd cut off the sound. Yes, we played so many good stunts on the box of tricks that mam used to call us the Telly Boys, we got so clever at it.

Alan Sillitoe
(*The Loneliness of the Long-distance Runner,* 1960)

Borstal: youth custody centre.
Wad of fivers : collection of £5 banknotes.
Lolly: (slang) : money.
Nicker (slang) : one pound sterling.
Dough: (slang) : cash, money.
Half-nelson: a tight hold in fighting which gives an advantage over an opponent.

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SECTION : LETTRES ANGLAISES
EPREUVE DE TRADUCTION
DUREE : 3H COEF : 2

Translate into English

Je viens de croiser Bob Embelstone et Gilbert Wagner, deux de mes collègues. Nous nous sommes lancés un « ça va ? » avec gentillesse ; pourtant, je sais parfaitement que dès qu'ils seront assez éloignés pour que je ne les entende plus, Bob (à moins que ne soit Gilbert) dira : « Ce pauvre Patrick a toujours l'air aussi ahuri » et Gilbert (à moins que ne soit Bob) renchérira : « Il ne changera plus à son âge. Niais[1] il est, niais il restera. » Constatation faite sur un ton de vraie camaraderie, car ils m'aiment bien, l'un et l'autre, comme m'aime tout le monde dans le service. Les hommes parce que je ne suis pas un rival pour leur avancement, les filles parce qu'elles s'attendrissent sans cesse un peu en me voyant. Il fait dire que je suis un assez beau garçon. Brun aux yeux bleus —que je tiens de ma grand-mère maternelle, Mary Mac Collan et de toute hérédité irlandaise—, j'ai des épaules de déménageur, et j'excelle à peu près dans tous les sports. Malheureusement, tout le monde est persuadé que je suis un imbécile.

[1] simple-minded, halfwit

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Translate into Arabic or French

Recently, a couple of things happened that made me realize that it was perhaps time to reconsider my opposition to cable TV. For one thing, Max attempted to install (read: leave lying around in a form suggestive of installation) a huge wall antenna. It lies on its side now, gathering dust and tormenting me.

For another, I started to feel that, if I wanted to write about American culture, I ought perhaps to have some exposure to it.

And third, and last, I wanted to do right by my girls. It dawned on me that keeping them overly insulated from such a major source of kid-conversation wasn't, perhaps, such a wonderful thing.

Henry Jenkins, director of the Comparative Media Studies Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has said that raising children without exposure to the media is "committing a form of child abuse." Julia, whose dream in life is to study Latin ("Why don't they teach it anymore? It's so unfair!") could, I thought, perhaps do with a small regular dose of something like "Drake and Josh." My friend Natasha says she was a "total social outcast" in grade school because she hadn't known how to do the voices from "Happy Days" on the playground.

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Translate into English

رسالة إلى إيلين

عزيزتي إيلين ،

الآن انتهيت من فض حقائبي. أنت عظيمة ولست أدري ماذا أفعل بدونك. كل شيء يلزمني وضعْته في الحقائب. تسعة قمصان "فان هوسن" ثلاثة منها لا تحتج للكيّ. "أغسلها ونشفها والبسها". وأنت تعلمين أنني لن أفعل شيئا من هذا القبيل. ربطة العنق التي اشتريتها لي في العام الماضي في بوند ستريت ، وجدْتها مع خمس كرافاتات أخرى. "خمس كرافاتات تكفيك. أنت لن تخرج كثيرا ولن يدعوك أحد لحفلة. وإذا دعيت فلا تذهب". كم أحببتكِ لأنك لم تنسيّ أن تضعي في حقائبي هذه الربطة ... ربطة عنق قرمزية اللون ، واحدة من ملايين الأشياء الصغيرة التي تشد قلبي إليك .. في مثل هذا الوقت من العام الماضي ، بعد ثمانية أشهر من معرفتي إياك ، في القطار الذي يسير تحت الأرض ، الساعة السادسة والناس مزدحمون. ونحن واقفان وأنت متكئة عليّ ، فجأة قلت لك :"إنني أحبك. أريد أن أتزوجك". احمرّ خداك والتفت الناس إلينا. طيلة ثمانية أشهر عرفتك فيها لم أقل لك إنني أحبك. كنت أتهرب وأداري وأزوغ. ثم فجأة وسط الزحام ، في الساعة السادسة مساءً ، حين يعود الناس تعبين مرهقين إلى بيوتهم بعد عمل شاق طيلة اليوم ، فجأة خرجت الكلمة المحرّمة من فمي وكأنني محموم يهذي.

الطيب صالح