

SESSION 2016

**CAPLP
CONCOURS EXTERNE
ET CAFEP**

Section : LANGUES VIVANTES – LETTRES

ANGLAIS – LETTRES

ANGLAIS

Durée : 5 heures

L'usage de tout ouvrage de référence, de tout dictionnaire et de tout matériel électronique (y compris la calculatrice) est rigoureusement interdit.

Dans le cas où un(e) candidat(e) repère ce qui lui semble être une erreur d'énoncé, il (elle) le signale très lisiblement sur sa copie, propose la correction et poursuit l'épreuve en conséquence.

De même, si cela vous conduit à formuler une ou plusieurs hypothèses, il vous est demandé de la (ou les) mentionner explicitement.

NB : La copie que vous rendrez ne devra, conformément au principe d'anonymat, comporter aucun signe distinctif, tel que nom, signature, origine, etc. Si le travail qui vous est demandé comporte notamment la rédaction d'un projet ou d'une note, vous devrez impérativement vous abstenir de signer ou de l'identifier.

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1. Composition en langue étrangère

Paying equal attention to the following two texts, comment on their authors' representations of America as a mythical territory of icons.

Document 1

So it was with a fairly blank mind, and yet a hope of understanding, or at least of seeing, something very remarkably fresh, that I woke to hear we were in harbour, and tumbled out on deck at six of a fine summer morning to view a new world. New York Harbour is loveliest at night perhaps. [...]

5 But there was beauty in the view that morning, also, half an hour after sunrise. New York, always the cleanest and least smoky of cities, lay asleep in a queer, pearly, hourless light. A thin mist softened the further outlines. The water was opalescent under a silver sky, cool and dim, very slightly ruffled by the sweet wind that followed us in from the sea. A few streamers of smoke flew above the city, oblique and parallel, pennants of our civilisation. The space of water is great, and so
10 the vast buildings do not tower above one as they do from the street. Scale is lost, and they might be any size. The impression is, rather, of long, low buildings stretching down to the water's edge on every side, and innumerable low black wharves and jetties and piers. And at one point, the lower end of the island on which the city proper stands, rose that higher clump of the great buildings, the Singer, the Woolworth, and the rest. Their strength, almost severity, of line and the lightness of their
15 colour gave a kind of classical feeling, classical, and yet not of Europe. It had the air, this block of masonry, of edifices built to satisfy some faith, for more than immediate ends. Only, the faith was unfamiliar. But if these buildings embodied its nature, it is cold and hard and light, like the steel that is their heart. The first sight of these strange fanes¹ has queer resemblances to the first sight of that lonely and secret group by Pisa's walls. It came upon me, at that moment, that they could not have
20 been dreamed and made without some nobility. Perhaps the hour lent them sanctity. For I have often noticed since that in the early morning, and again for a little about sunset, the sky-scrapers are no longer merely the means and local convenience for men to pursue their purposes, but acquire that characteristic of the great buildings of the world, an existence and meaning of their own.

Our boat moved up the harbour and along the Hudson River with a superb and courteous
25 stateliness. Round her snorted and scuttled and puffed the multitudinous strange denizens of the harbour. Tugs, steamers, queer-shaped ferry-boats, long rafts carrying great lines of trucks from railway to railway, dredgers, motor-boats, even a sailing-boat or two; for the day's work was beginning. Among them, with that majesty that only a liner entering a harbour has, she went, progressed, had her moving—English contains no word for such a motion—'*incessu patuit dea*'². A
30 goddess entering fairyland, I thought; for the huddled beauty of these buildings and the still, silver expanse of the water seemed unreal. Then I looked down at the water immediately beneath me, and knew that New York was a real city. All kinds of refuse went floating by; bits of wood, straw from barges, bottles, boxes, paper, occasionally a dead cat or dog, hideously bladder-like, its four paws stiff and indignant towards heaven.

35 This analysis of fairyland turned me towards the statue of Liberty, already passed and growing distant. It is one of those things you have long wanted to see and haven't expected to admire, which, seen, give you a double thrill, that they're at last *there*, and that they're better than your hopes. For

¹ fane : (archaic or poetical, from Latin *fanum*) temple, sanctuary

² Virgil, *The Aeneid*, '*Et vera incessu patuit dea*' : '*And the true goddess was revealed in her step*'.

Liberty stands nobly. Americans, always shy about their country, have learnt from the ridicule which Europeans, on mixed aesthetic and moral grounds, pour on this statue, to dismiss it with an apologetic laugh. Yet it is fine—until you get near enough to see its clumsiness. I admired the great gesture of it. A hand fell on my shoulder, and a voice said, ‘Look hard at that, young man! That’s the first time you’ve seen Liberty—and it will be the last till you turn your back on this country again.’ It was an American fellow-passenger, one of the tall, thin type of American, with pale blue eyes of an idealistic, disappointed expression, and an Indian profile. The other half of America, personated by a small, bumptious, eager, brown-faced man, with a cigar raking at an irritating angle from the corner of his mouth, joined in with, ‘Wal! I should smile, I guess this is the Land of Freedom, anyway.’ The tall man swung round: ‘Freedom! Do you call it a free land, where—’ He gave instances of the power of the dollar. The other man kept up the argument by spitting and by asseveration. As the busy little tugs, with rugs on their noses, butted the great liner into her narrow dock, the pessimist launched his last shafts. The short man denied nothing. He drew the cigar from his lips, shot it back with a popping noise into the round hole cigars had worn at the corner of his mouth, and said, ‘Anyway, it’s some country.’ I was introduced to America.

Rupert Brooke, *Letters from America*, 1913

Document 2

American landscape is *known*, like famous speeches in Shakespeare’s plays or phrases in the King James Bible are known. They are already read, so that when you come across them in their proper context, they jar and falsify the moment. In the auditorium, Macbeth’s nihilism and despair are weakened as you overtake the actor in his assessment of life as full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. On the page *In The beginning God created the heavens and the earth* slips by in a far too familiar rhythm, so you forget to wonder: what beginning? Created from what? Why? And as you actually pass through the boundless grasslands of Montana, or deserts of Arizona and New Mexico, a thousand Westerns complete with their wide-open background scores rush to clog the mind. *The Big Country*, *The Searchers*, *Stagecoach*, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, *Wagon Trail*, *Red River* and, of course, *Blazing Saddles*. John Wayne, Henry Fonda, Ward Bond, James Stewart, Montgomery Clift stride or lope into view and people the empty vista outside the window, filling it with human endeavour. There’s a stored image for every inch of the landscape passing by. Gunslingers on galloping horses kick up the dust getting out of town fast ahead of the posse, cowboys bed down by campfire, guns at the ready beneath the saddle under their head, ranchers locked in sullen, greedy conflict with immigrant farmers plan violent evictions, wagon trains full of pilgrims in search of a new life and the odd run-out-of-town whore circle as the Indians charge down from the hills to attack the intruders, the lonely hero walks away westward from the danger of being included in the civil society he has helped to bring about. Each image comes complete with its own landscape. Every landscape comes with its own set of meaningful images, seen already in darkened cinemas and on TV. We know the landscape of America, even if we have never been there. We’ve inhabited it, even if we’ve never set foot outside London, Delhi or Helsinki. We’ve been a part of it, even if we’ve never been further west than the movie house at the local mall in a New England suburb, or if we spend our days shopping till we drop on Fifth Avenue.

But what do I do with all this *view*? I can attempt to describe what the eye catches, and try to nail down the strobing images in an approximation of words. So. The sky is vast and vacuously blue, the empty deserts at sunset threaten the spirit with their scrubby grey-green dying light, the rivers wind from bare trickles in parched earth to thunderous rushing torrents, the canyons dismay and dizzy you

30 as you stare down into them and try to make out the bottom, the mountains loom in anthropomorphic
shapes of things seen best in dreams, the grasslands and wheatfields wave like an endless syrupy
ocean tickled into motion by the breeze. You know, you've seen it in the movies. What is
remarkable, what is strange about passing through America, peering at it through the screen of the
train window, is that everything is familiar. It is much more as if America is passing through you,
what you are, what you've known. Sitting there looking out at the landscape is like having a dye
35 injected so that the tendrils of memory in the brain light up and trace the private history of your
mind. As I sit and watch the weird rock formations, sagebrush, cactus and Joshua trees of the desert
land go by, the cinema in Tottenham Court Road where I saw my first shootouts jumps vividly into
my present. The smell and plush of the carpet underfoot comes flooding back to me, the tense
anticipation as the lights begin to fade, the solid dark presence of my father sitting beside me, the
40 blue smoke from his cigarette curling up into the bright beam on its way to the screen which will
light up with dreams and places and complexities of human joy and trouble that my striving six-year-
old brain can barely imagine, let alone make sense of. That's what the landscape of America is like.

Jenny Diski, *Stranger on a Train*, 2002

2. Thème

5 Au début de l'année 2008, soit environ un an et demi après être devenu, grâce à mon premier
roman, la nouvelle coqueluche des lettres américaines, je fus frappé d'une terrible crise de page
blanche, syndrome qui, paraît-il, n'est pas rare chez les écrivains ayant connu un succès immédiat et
fracassant. La maladie n'était pas venue d'un coup : elle s'était installée en moi lentement. C'était
comme si mon cerveau, atteint, s'était figé peu à peu. À l'apparition des premiers symptômes, je
n'avais pas voulu y prêter attention : je m'étais dit que l'inspiration reviendrait le lendemain, ou le jour
d'après, ou le suivant peut-être. Mais les jours, les semaines et les mois avaient passé et l'inspiration
n'était jamais revenue.

10 Ma descente aux enfers s'était décomposée en trois phases. La première, indispensable à toute
bonne chute vertigineuse, avait été une ascension fulgurante : mon premier roman s'était vendu à deux
millions d'exemplaires, me propulsant au rang d'écrivain à succès. C'était l'automne 2006 et en
quelques semaines mon nom devint un nom : on me vit partout, à la télévision, dans les journaux, en
couverture des magazines. Mon visage s'affichait sur d'immenses panneaux publicitaires dans les
stations de métro. Les critiques les plus sévères des grands quotidiens de la côte Est étaient unanimes :
15 le jeune Marcus Goldman allait devenir un très grand écrivain.

20 Un livre, un seul, et je me voyais désormais ouvrir les portes d'une nouvelle vie : celle des jeunes
vedettes millionnaires. Je déménageai de chez mes parents à Montclair, New Jersey, pour m'installer
dans un appartement cossu du Village, je troquai ma Ford de troisième main pour une Range Rover
noire flambant neuve aux vitres teintées, je me mis à fréquenter les restaurants huppés, je m'attachai
les services d'un agent littéraire qui gérait mon emploi du temps et venait regarder le base-ball sur un
écran géant dans mon nouveau chez-moi. Je louai, à deux pas de Central Park, un bureau dans lequel
une secrétaire un peu amoureuse et prénommée Denise triait mon courrier, préparait mon café et
classait mes documents importants.

Joël Dicker, *La Vérité sur l'Affaire Harry Quebert*, 2012