

SESSION 2015

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**CAPLP  
CONCOURS EXTERNE  
ET CAFEP**

**SECTION : LANGUES VIVANTES – LETTRES**

**ANGLAIS – LETTRES**

**ANGLAIS**

Durée : 5 heures

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*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.**

**Tournez la page S.V.P.**

## 1. Composition en langue étrangère

After reading the two documents, comment on the extract from Julian Barnes's novel *The Sense of an Ending* (document 1), using what the author says about the interconnectedness of history and literature (document 2).

### Document 1

In our final history lesson of the year, Old Joe Hunt, who had guided his lethargic pupils through Tudors and Stuarts, Victorians and Edwardians, the Rise of Empire and its Subsequent Decline, invited us to look back over all those centuries and attempt to draw conclusions.

5 'We could start, perhaps, with the seemingly simple question, What is History? Any thoughts, Webster?'

'History is the lies of the victors,' I replied, a little too quickly.

'Yes, I was rather afraid you'd say that. Well, as long as you remember that it is also the self-delusions of the defeated. Simpson?'

10 Colin was more prepared than me. 'History is a raw onion sandwich, sir.'

'For what reason?'

'It just repeats, sir. It burps. We've seen it again and again this year. Same old story, same old oscillation between tyranny and rebellion, war and peace, prosperity and impoverishment.'

'Rather a lot for a sandwich to contain, wouldn't you say?'

15 We laughed far more than was required, with an end-of-term hysteria.

'Finn?'

'History is that certainty produced at the point where the imperfections of memory meet the inadequacies of documentation.'

'Is it, indeed? Where did you find that?'

20 'Lagrange, sir. Patrick Lagrange. He's French.'

'So one might have guessed. Would you care to give us an example?'

'Robson's suicide, sir.'

25 There was a perceptible intake of breath and some reckless head-turning. But Hunt, like the other masters, allowed Adrian special status. When the rest of us tried provocation, it was dismissed as puerile cynicism – something else we would grow out of. Adrian's provocations were somehow welcomed as awkward searchings after truth.

'What has that to do with the matter?'

30 'It's a historical event, sir, if a minor one. But recent. So it ought to be easily understood as history. We know that he's dead, we know that he had a girlfriend, we know that she's pregnant – or was. What else do we have? A single piece of documentation, a suicide note reading "Sorry, Mum" – at least, according to Brown. Does that note still exist? Was it destroyed? Did Robson have any other motives or reasons beyond the obvious ones? What was his state of mind? Can we be sure the child was his? We can't know, sir, not even this soon afterwards. So how might anyone write Robson's story in fifty years' time, when his

35 parents are dead and his girlfriend has disappeared and doesn't want to remember him anyway? You see the problem, sir?'

We all looked at Hunt, wondering if Adrian had pushed it too far this time. That single word 'pregnant' seemed to hover like chalk-dust. And as for the audacious suggestion of alternative paternity, of Robson the Schoolboy Cuckold ... After a while, the master replied.

40 'I see the problem, Finn. But I think you underestimate history. And for that matter historians. Let us assume for the sake of argument that poor Robson were to prove of historical interest.'

Historians have always been faced with the lack of direct evidence for things. That's what they're used to. And don't forget that in the present case there would have been an inquest, and therefore a coroner's report. Robson may well have kept a diary, or written letters, made phone calls whose contents are remembered. His parents would have replied to the letters of condolence they received. And fifty years from now, given the current life expectancy, quite a few of his schoolfellows would still be available for interview. The problem might be less daunting than you imagine.'

45 'But nothing can make up for the absence of Robson's testimony, sir.'

50 'In one way, no. But equally, historians need to treat a participant's own explanation of events with a certain scepticism. It is often the statement made with an eye to the future that is the most suspect.'

'If you say so, sir.'

'And mental states may often be inferred from actions. The tyrant rarely sends a handwritten note requesting the elimination of an enemy.'

55 'If you say so, sir.'

'Well, I do.'

Was this their exact exchange? Almost certainly not. Still, it is my best memory of their exchange.

Julian Barnes, *The Sense of an Ending*, 2011

## Document 2

*Vanessa Guignery*: First, I have picked up three definitions of history in your novels and I would like you to elaborate on these definitions. The first one comes from *Flaubert's Parrot*, where the narrator writes that one is often tempted to 'declare that history is merely another literary genre'; could you comment on that?

*Julian Barnes*: I suppose one of the things I meant there was that most of the evidence of history, most of the evidence of lives of people who have lived and what they did and what happened to them, has disappeared, that what we think of as historical evidence is a very, very tiny fragment of all the total evidence that was there during the lifetime of most of humanity. And therefore, inevitably there is bias; there are one or two sorts of bias. Either you only write the history for which there is evidence, or, if you try to write more than that, if you try to write a more complete history, then you have to fictionalise or imagine. And so, to that extent, history, if it attempts to be more than a description of documents, a description of artefacts, has to be a sort of literary genre. But often, the greatest historians write narrative as well as the best novelists.

*Sources*, 2000

Reprinted in *Conversations with Julian Barnes*, 2009

## 2. Thème

On lui avait certifié qu'il avait été singulièrement brillant ce soir-là, parce qu'il était parvenu à puiser profondément en lui, au point que le cours de la campagne électorale en serait modifié. Oui, étrangement bon, c'était incontestable. Il avait prononcé son discours le plus flamboyant, d'ailleurs ses braises rougeoieraient longtemps dans la mémoire des militants : un discours débarrassé des scories de langage qui minaient ses interventions jusqu'alors. Les radios, le lendemain matin, en diffuseraient les meilleurs extraits et les prochains sondages inciteraient à l'euphorie. Les portes du pouvoir lui seraient ouvertes.

Le candidat avait descendu les marches de la tribune sous les vivats. Des yeux étincelaient dans la foule, laquelle s'était fendue devant lui comme une petite mer dont il était le Moïse. Il avait prolongé la soirée entouré d'un petit cercle de proches collaborateurs, qui avaient toujours une plaisanterie prête à fuser pour le cas où un dîner commencerait à pencher vers le doute. Il les connaissait tous comme sa poche, les ayant tous *faits*. Avec eux, aucun mauvais coup à craindre. Ils formaient un rempart de fidèles, aucun Brutus en fleur parmi eux... La seule tête nouvelle entraperçue pendant cette soirée avait été cet homme revenu lui remettre la cassette. Il l'avait remercié machinalement, avait glissé l'enregistrement de son discours dans son attaché-case. Le dîner s'était passé dans les rires, puis était venue la nuit. Le lendemain matin, il annonçait par un communiqué laconique qu'il retirait sa candidature et renonçait à la politique, *définitivement*.

Seule tête nouvelle, juste avant ce dîner, celle de l'homme à la cassette. Elle était apparue comme au paroxysme d'un cauchemar, quand on bascule du supportable à l'intenable. Elle lui était apparue parce qu'il fallait qu'elle apparaisse ; cette journée ne pouvait donc pas finir bien, dans la simple distillation de son succès. Il avait fallu ce visage au teint de craie, surgi d'on ne sait quelle représentation de théâtre nô, avec des sourcils surlignés, froncés.

Eric Faye, 'Le candidat', dans *Un clown s'est échappé du cirque*, 2005