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AGRÉGATION EXTERNE D'ANGLAIS

ÉPREUVE HORS PROGRAMME

Première partie (*en anglais, durée maximale : 40 mn*)

Vous procéderez à l'étude et à la mise en relation argumentée des trois documents du dossier proposé (A, B, C non hiérarchisés). Votre présentation ne dépassera pas 20 minutes et sera suivie d'un entretien de 20 minutes maximum.

Deuxième partie (*en français, durée maximale : 5 mn*)

À l'issue de l'entretien de première partie, et à l'invitation du jury, vous vous appuierez sur l'un des trois documents du dossier pour proposer un projet d'exploitation pédagogique dans une situation d'enseignement que vous aurez préalablement définie. Cette partie ne donnera lieu à aucun échange avec le jury.

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DOCUMENT A

Ian McEwan, *On Chesil Beach* [2007], London, Vintage, 2008, pp. 3-6.

5 THEY were young, educated, and both virgins on this, their wedding night, and they lived in a time when a conversation about sexual difficulties was plainly impossible. But it is never easy. They had just sat down to supper in a tiny sitting room on the first floor of a Georgian inn. In the next room, visible through the open door, was a four-poster bed, rather narrow, whose bedcover was pure white and stretched startlingly smooth, as though by no human hand. Edward did not mention that he had never stayed in a hotel before, whereas Florence, after many trips as a child with her father, was an old hand. Superficially, they were in fine spirits. Their wedding, at St Mary's, Oxford, had gone well; the service was decorous, the reception jolly, the send-off from school and college friends raucous and uplifting. Her parents had not condescended to his, as they had feared, and his mother had not significantly misbehaved, or completely forgotten the purpose of the occasion. The couple had driven away in a small car belonging to Florence's mother and arrived in the early evening at their hotel on the Dorset coast in weather that was not perfect for mid July or the circumstances, but entirely adequate: it was not raining, but nor was it quite warm enough, according to Florence, to eat outside on the terrace as they had hoped. Edward thought it was, but, polite to a fault, he would not think of contradicting her on such an evening.

20 So they were eating in their rooms before the partially open French windows that gave onto a balcony and a view of a portion of the English Channel, and Chesil Beach with its infinite shingle. Two youths in dinner jackets served them from a trolley parked outside in the corridor, and their comings and goings through what was generally known as the honeymoon suite made the waxed oak boards squeak comically against the silence. Proud and protective, the young man watched closely for any gesture or expression that might have seemed satirical. He could not have tolerated any sniggering. But these lads from a nearby village went about their business with bowed backs and closed faces, and their manner was tentative, their hands shook as they set items down on the starched linen tablecloth. They were nervous too.

35 This was not a good moment in the history of English cuisine, but no one much minded at the time, except visitors from abroad. The formal meal began, as so many did then, with a slice of melon decorated by a single glazed cherry. Out in the corridor, in silver dishes on candle-heated plate warmers, waited slices of long-ago roasted beef in a thickened gravy, soft boiled vegetables, and potatoes of a bluish hue. The wine was from France, though no particular region was mentioned on the label, which was embellished with a solitary, darting swallow. It would not have crossed Edward's mind to order a red.

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40 Desperate for the waiters to leave, he and Florence turned in their chairs to
consider the view of a broad mossy lawn, and beyond, a tangle of flowering
shrubs and trees clinging to a steep bank that descended to a lane that led to the
beach. They could see the beginnings of a footpath, dropping by muddy steps, a
45 way lined by weeds of extravagant size—giant rhubarb and cabbages they
looked like, with swollen stalks more than six feet tall, bending under the weight
of dark, thick-veined leaves. The garden vegetation rose up, sensuous and
tropical in its profusion, an effect heightened by the grey, soft light and a
delicate mist drifting in from the sea, whose steady motion of advance and
50 withdrawal made sounds of gentle thunder, then sudden hissing against the
pebbles. Their plan was to change into rough shoes after supper and walk on the
shingle between the sea and the lagoon known as the Fleet, and if they had not
finished the wine, they would take that along, and swig from the bottle like
gentlemen of the road.

And they had so many plans, giddy plans, heaped up before them in the misty
55 future, as richly tangled as the summer flora of the Dorset coast, and as
beautiful. Where and how they would live, who their close friends would be, his
job with her father's firm, her musical career and what to do with the money her
father had given her, and how they would not be like other people, at least, not
inwardly. This was still the era—it would end later in that famous decade - when
60 to be young was a social encumbrance, a mark of irrelevance, a faintly
embarrassing condition for which marriage was the beginning of a cure. Almost
strangers, they stood, strangely together, on a new pinnacle of existence, gleeful
that their new status promised to promote them out of their endless youth—
Edward and Florence, free at last! One of their favourite topics was their
65 childhoods, not so much the pleasures as the fog of comical misconceptions from
which they had emerged, and the various parental errors and outdated practices
they could now forgive.

From these new heights they could see clearly, but they could not describe to
each other certain contradictory feelings: they separately worried about the
70 moment, some time soon after dinner, when their new maturity would be tested,
when they would lie down together on the four-poster bed and reveal themselves
fully to one another.

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DOCUMENT B

John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women* [1869]. In *The Basic Writings of John Stuart Mill – On Liberty, The Subjection of Women & Utilitarianism*, New York: Modern Library, 2002, pp. 157-159

[...] The laws of most countries are far worse than the people who execute them, and many of them are only able to remain laws by being seldom or never carried into effect. If married life were all that it might be expected to be, looking to the laws alone, society would be a hell upon earth. Happily there are both feelings and interests which in many men exclude, and in most greatly temper, the impulses and propensities which lead to tyranny: and of those feelings, the tie which connects a man with his wife affords, in a normal state of things, incomparably the strongest example. The only tie which at all approaches to it, that between him and his children, tends, in all save exceptional cases, to strengthen, instead of conflicting with, the first. Because this is true; because men in general do not inflict, nor women suffer, all the misery which could be inflicted and suffered if the full power of tyranny with which the man is legally invested were acted on; the defenders of the existing form of the institution think that all its iniquity is justified, and that any complaint is merely quarrelling with the evil which is the price paid for every great good. But the mitigations in practice, which are compatible with maintaining in full legal force this or any other kind of tyranny, instead of being any apology for despotism, only serve to prove what power human nature possesses of reacting against the vilest institutions, and with what vitality the seeds of good as well as those of evil in human character diffuse and propagate themselves. Not a word can be said for despotism in the family which cannot be said for political despotism. Every absolute king does not sit at his window to enjoy the groans of his tortured subjects, nor strips them of their last rag and turns them out to shiver in the road. The despotism of Louis XVI. was not the despotism of Philippe le Bel, or of Nadir Shah, or of Caligula; but it was bad enough to justify the French Revolution, and to palliate even its horrors. If an appeal be made to the intense attachments which exist between wives and their husbands, exactly as much may be said of domestic slavery. It was quite an ordinary fact in Greece and Rome for slaves to submit to death by torture rather than betray their masters. In the proscriptions of the Roman civil wars it was remarked that wives and slaves were heroically faithful, sons very commonly treacherous. Yet we know how cruelly many Romans treated their slaves. But in truth these intense individual feelings nowhere rise to such a luxuriant height as under the most atrocious institutions. It is part of the irony of life that the strongest feelings of devoted gratitude of which human nature seems to be susceptible, are called forth in human beings towards those who, having the power entirely to crush

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their earthly existence, voluntarily refrain from using that power. How great a place in most men this sentiment fills, even in religious devotion, it would be cruel to inquire. We daily see how much their gratitude to Heaven appears to be stimulated by the contemplation of fellow-creatures to whom God has not been so merciful as he has to themselves.

Whether the institution to be defended is slavery, political absolutism, or the absolutism of the head of a family, we are always expected to judge of it from its best instances; and we are presented with pictures of loving exercise of authority on one side, loving submission to it on the other—superior wisdom ordering all things for the greatest good of the dependents, and surrounded by their smiles and benedictions. All this would be very much to the purpose if anyone pretended that there are no such things as good men. Who doubts that there may be great goodness, and great happiness, and great affection, under the absolute government of a good man? Meanwhile, laws and institutions require to be adapted, not to good men, but to bad. Marriage is not an institution designed for a select few. Men are not required, as a preliminary to the marriage ceremony, to prove by testimonials that they are fit to be trusted with the exercise of absolute power. The tie of affection and obligation to a wife and children is very strong with those whose general social feelings are strong, and with many who are little sensible to any other social ties; but there are all degrees of sensibility and insensibility to it, as there are all grades of goodness and wickedness in men, down to those whom no ties will bind, and on whom society has no action but through its ultima ratio, the penalties of the law. In every grade of this descending scale are men to whom are committed all the legal powers of a husband. The vilest malefactor has some wretched woman tied to him, against whom he can commit any atrocity except killing her, and, if tolerably cautious, can do that without much danger of the legal penalty. And how many thousands are there among the lowest classes in every country, who, without being in a legal sense malefactors in any other respect, because in every other quarter their aggressions meet with resistance, indulge the utmost habitual excesses of bodily violence towards the unhappy wife, who alone, at least of grown persons, can neither repel nor escape from their brutality; and towards whom the excess of dependence inspires their mean and savage natures, not with a generous forbearance, and a point of honour to behave well to one whose lot in life is trusted entirely to their kindness, but on the contrary with a notion that the law has delivered her to them as their thing, to be used at their pleasure, and that they are not expected to practise the consideration towards her which is required from them towards everybody else.

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DOCUMENT C

Lucian Freud, *Ib and her husband* (1992). Oil on canvas. 66 x 58 inches. Painted 1992. Private collection.

