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AGREGATION EXTERNE D'ANGLAIS

ÉPREUVE HORS PROGRAMME

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

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 minutes*)

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.

DOCUMENT A

Sebastian Faulks. *Human Traces* (2005), London: Vintage, 2006, pp. 158-160.

Jacques felt a shudder of excitement go through him: to be in the presence of genius was a transcendent experience, in the light of which the other moments of his life might be reviewed. He thought of his first frog.

Charcot spoke without rhetorical flourish, though this merely intensified the drama. 'Ladies and gentlemen, I intend first to take some cases from the outpatients' department that I have not seen before and to examine them. I shall share my thoughts with you as I do so. My purpose is threefold. I wish you to understand the difficulties that beset any "blind" diagnosis of a neurologic kind. Next, I want it to be clear to you that close visual scrutiny and steady observation are the keys to making a successful diagnosis. Finally, I want you to remember that it is the continuing contact with the patient and his symptoms that allows us to learn—much more than theories dreamed up in universities whose professors are far from the bedside of the unfortunate. In this respect I am a practical man, one might almost say Anglo-Saxon. Bring in the first patient, please.'

An old woman, trembling in her rags and shawls, was brought on, held at the elbow by Babinski and an elderly nurse, Mademoiselle Cottard. Charcot asked her to stretch out her hand, which had a tremor visible even to Jacques, who was close to the back of the raked seating on the ramp. Charcot asked questions about the duration of the symptoms and attached a metal clamp called a sphygmograph to the woman's hand to measure the rate of the tremor. He asked her to undress so that the audience could see the extent to which her limbs were deformed; and in her grey under-linen, she made her way unsteadily to and fro across the stage. Jacques noticed the loss of flexion in the left ankle. A dialogue between doctor and patient ensued, though neither seemed to relish it, the woman reluctant to project her tremulous voice and Charcot preferring the evidence of his eyes: he stuck his face up close to hers, but refrained from touching her. Eventually, he asked her to replace her clothes and take a seat at the back of the stage for comparison with subsequent patients.

'You will have noticed that the patient walks in a way wholly characteristic of her disease,' said Charcot. 'Like this.' Carefully, but with precise mimicry, he walked back and forth across the stage; in his progress was exactly the mixture of spastic hesitancy and dragging determination shown by the old woman, who now sat quite still, apart from the trembling in her hands. One or two of the audience giggled at the niceness of the impersonation.

'Listen,' said Charcot. 'You must listen as well as watch. The sound of the footsteps is important. The ataxic throws her legs and feet forward. The alcoholic bends his knees like a circus horse. If the ankle flexors are affected, as is the case with this patient, the foot is flaccid. As she walks, she bends the knee too much to compensate—like this. The thigh lifts more than it should, so that when she drops it, the toes hit the ground before the heel. So her step makes two sounds. Listen carefully. There. The ataxic, by contrast, has almost no flexion at the knee. He thrusts his leg like this and his foot therefore makes only one sound. Look behind me.'

Electric lights in metal shades hung at intervals from the ceiling of the lecture hall, and there were brighter spotlights on the stage which illuminated charts and illustrations held on stands to which Charcot now pointed. 'Some of my students will be familiar with the pattern of these footprints,' he said. 'Over the months, we have asked patients to dip their feet in ink, then walk on paper. My staff have drawn up these scale representations of the results.' He took a long wooden pointer from the table next to his top hat and walked along the half dozen stands, pointing to the different patterns of footprints.

'Parkinson's,' he said. 'Locomotor ataxia. This is Sydenham's chorea, something we encounter very often in the outpatients' clinic. This is a rather unusual pattern. If Doctor Marie would just… Thank you. The larger pattern. That's it.'

The assistants replaced all the different charts with a single sequence. From left to right, the blackened footprints of a human being trailed life-size across the lit stage, their image preserved in ink and lit by the spotlights that Charcot's white-aproned men trained on them. While Jacques was thrilled by the diagnostic brilliance of his older colleagues and the way that the described patterns repeated themselves so unfailingly in character, he was moved by the sense of something more profound. In the clangorous wards around them the epileptics frothed and screamed, thrashing their heads on the soiled floor; the hysterics mounted their bizarre performances, bending their bodies into rigid hoops while torrents of verbal filth poured from their mouth; but there in the quiet of the amphitheatre, the footprints of the wretched beings, abandoned by life and the world, left traces of their passage—a claim in ink that they had been something more than transients—and with it some fragile plea that those who followed after them were bound to try to understand their compromised existence.

DOCUMENT B

Arthur James BALFOUR. Speech at the 1912 International Eugenics Congress in London, *The Times*, 25 July 1912

[…] We have to admit that those who have given most thought to the problems which are included under the word eugenics, those who have given most thought to the way in which the hereditary qualities of the race are transmitted, are those who at this moment take the darkest view of the general effect of the complex causes which are now in operation.

I hope their pessimism is excessive; but it is undoubtedly and unquestionably founded not upon sentiment, but upon the hard consideration of hard fact. And those who refuse to listen to their prophecies are bound to answer their reasoning, for the reasoning is not beyond what it is in the power of every man to weigh. It depends upon facts which it ought not to be difficult to verify; it depends upon premises whose conclusions follow almost inevitably. And those who roughly and rather contemptuously put aside all these prophecies of ill to the civilisation of the future are bound, in my opinion, to give the closest scrutiny to all these arguments before they reject them, and to say where and how, and in what particulars, they fail to support the conclusions drawn from them. Though certain broad conclusions may seem obvious, the subject itself is one of profound difficulty. I would go further, and venture to say that probably there is more difference of opinion at this moment among many scientific men with regard to certain fundamental principles lying at the root of heredity than there was, for example, in the seventies or eighties of the last century after the great Darwin's doctrines were generally accepted—as indeed they are, in their outline, part of the universal heritage of the race—but before all the more minute scientific investigations had taken place with regard to the actual method by which inherited qualities are handed on from generation to generation. Eugenics has got to deal with the fact of this disagreement, which is of scientific importance. It also suffers from another fact, which is of social and political importance—namely, that every faddist seizes hold of the eugenic problem as a machinery for furthering his own particular method of bringing the millennium upon earth.

But further, I am not sure that those who write and talk on this subject do not occasionally use language which is incorrect in itself, and which is apt to produce a certain prejudice upon the impartial public. I read, for instance, as almost an ordinary commonplace of eugenic literature, that we are suffering at this moment from the fact that the law of natural selection is, if not in abeyance, producing less effect than it did when selection was more stringent, and that what we have got to do is, as it were, to go back to the good old days of natural selection. I do not believe that to be scientifically sound. I say nothing about its other aspects. The truth is that we are very apt to use the word 'fit' in two quite different senses. We say that the 'fit' survive. But all that that means is that those who survive are fit: they are fit because they survive, and they survive because they are fit. It really adds nothing to our knowledge of the facts. All it shows is that here is a class, or a race, or a species, which does survive and is adapted to its surroundings, and that is the only definition, from a strictly biological point of view, of what 'fit' means. But it is not all the eugenist means.

He does not mean that mere survival indicates fitness: he means something more than that. He has got ideals of what a man ought to be, of what the State ought to be, and of what society ought to be, and he means that those ideals are not being carried out because we have not yet grasped the true way of dealing with the problems involved. If you are to use language strictly, you ought never to attribute to nature any intentions whatever.

You ought to say 'Certain things happen'. Everything else is metaphor, and sometimes it is misleading metaphor. For instance, those who are interested in this subject will read constantly that in certain cases the biologically fit are diminishing in number through the diminution of their birth-rate, and that the biologically unfit are increasing in number because their birth-rate is high. But according to the true doctrine of natural selection, as I conceive it, that is all wrong. The professional classes, we are told, have families so small that it is impossible for them to keep up their numbers. They are biologically unfit for that very reason. Fitness means, and can only mean from the naturalistic point of view, that you are in harmony with your surroundings, and if your numbers diminish you are not in harmony with your surroundings, for there is not that adaptation which fitness in the naturalistic sense implies. In the same way, I am told that the number of feeble-minded is greatly increasing. That can only mean, from a naturalistic point of view, that the feeble-minded are getting more adapted to their surroundings [*laughter*]. I really am not making either a verbal quibble or an ill-timed joke. It is all-important to remember, in my opinion, that we are not going to imitate; and we do not desire to imitate natural selection, which no doubt produces wonderful things, wonderful organisms, in the way of men, but has also produced very abominable things by precisely the same process. The whole point of eugenics is that we reject the standard of mere numbers. We do not say survival is everything. We deliberately say that it is not everything; that a feeble-minded man, even though he survives, is not so good as the good professional man, even though that professional man is only one of a class that does not keep up its numbers by an adequate birth-rate.

The truth is that we ought to have the courage of our opinions, and we must regard man as he is now, from this point of view—from the point of view of genetics—as a wild animal. There may be, and there are, certain qualifications to that. I suppose there are both among barbarous and among civilised tribes marriage customs and marriage laws which have their root, I do not know whether in formulated laws of eugenics, but which at all events harmonise with what we now realise are sound laws of eugenics. Still, broadly speaking, man is a wild animal; and we have to admit that if we carry out to its logical conclusion the sort of scientific work which is being done by congresses of this sort, man must become a domesticated animal. […]

DOCUMENT C

"Ethnological Stand, British Guiana Court at the Colonial and Indian exhibition". Engraving from *The Illustrated London News*, 1886.

ETHNOLOGICAL STAND, BRITISH GUIANA COURT.