

SESSION 2014

**CAPES
CONCOURS EXTERNE
ET CAFEP**

Section : LANGUES VIVANTES ÉTRANGÈRES : ANGLAIS
Section : LANGUES RÉGIONALES :
BASQUE, BRETON, CATALAN, CRÉOLE,
OCCITAN – LANGUE D'OC

COMMENTAIRE DIRIGÉ EN 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.

Comment on the following text, showing how India is depicted both as a real place and as an imaginary homeland.

I was born in the city of Bombay . . . once upon a time. No, that won't do, there's no getting away from the date: I was born in Doctor Narlikar's Nursing Home on August 15th, 1947. And the time? The time matters, too. Well then: at night. No, it's important to be more . . . On the stroke of midnight, as a matter of fact. Clock-hands joined palms in respectful greeting as
5 I came. Oh, spell it out, spell it out: at the precise instant of India's arrival at independence, I tumbled forth into the world. There were gasps. And, outside the window, fireworks and crowds. A few seconds later, my father broke his big toe; but his accident was a mere trifle when set beside what had befallen me in that benighted moment, because thanks to the occult tyrannies of those blandly saluting clocks I had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, my
10 destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country. For the next three decades, there was to be no escape. Soothsayers had prophesied me, newspapers celebrated my arrival, politicians ratified my authenticity. I was left entirely without a say in the matter. I, Saleem Sinai, later variously called Snotnose, Stainface, Baldy, Sniffer, Buddha and even Piece-of-the-Moon, had become heavily embroiled in Fate – at the best of times a dangerous sort of involvement.
15 And I couldn't even wipe my own nose at the time.

Now, however, time (having no further use for me) is running out. I will soon be thirty-one years old. Perhaps. If my crumbling, over-used body permits. But I have no hope of saving my life, nor can I count on having even a thousand nights and a night. I must work fast, faster than Scheherazade, if I am to end up meaning – yes, meaning – something. I admit it: above
20 all things, I fear absurdity.

And there are so many stories to tell, too many, such an excess of intertwined lives events miracles places rumors, so dense a commingling of the improbable and the mundane! I have been a swallower of lives; and to know me, just the one of me, you'll have to swallow the lot as well. Consumed multitudes are jostling and shoving inside me; and guided only by the
25 memory of a large white bedsheet with a roughly circular hole some seven inches in diameter cut into the center¹, clutching at the dream of that holey, mutilated square of linen, which is my talisman, my open-sesame, I must commence the business of remaking my life from the point at which it really began, some thirty-two years before anything as obvious, as *present*, as my clock-ridden, crime-stained birth.

30 (The sheet, incidentally, is stained too, with three drops of old, faded redness. As the Quran tells us: *Recite, in the name of the Lord thy Creator, who created Man from clots of blood.*)

One Kashmiri morning in the early spring of 1915, my grandfather Aadam Aziz hit his nose against a frost-hardened tussock of earth while attempting to pray. Three drops of blood plopped out of his left nostril, hardened instantly in the brittle air and lay before his eyes on
35 the prayer-mat, transformed into rubies. Lurching back until he knelt with his head once more upright, he found that the tears which had sprung to his eyes had solidified, too; and at that moment, as he brushed diamonds contemptuously from his lashes, he resolved never again to kiss earth for any god or man. This decision, however, made a hole in him, a vacancy in a vital inner chamber, leaving him vulnerable to women and history. Unaware of this at first,
40 despite his recently completed medical training, he stood up, rolled the prayer-mat into a thick cheroot, and holding it under his right arm surveyed the valley through clear, diamond-free eyes.

¹ *Jury's note:* Saleem's grandfather, Aadam Aziz, a trained doctor, first met Naseem, who was to become his wife, as he had to examine her ailing body, hidden behind a sheet with a seven-inch hole for modesty's sake.

The world was new again. After a winter's gestation in its eggshell of ice, the valley had beaked its way out into the open, moist and yellow. The new grass bided its time
45 underground; the mountains were retreating to their hill-stations for the warm season. (In the winter, when the valley shrank under the ice, the mountains closed in and snarled like angry jaws around the city on the lake.)

Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*. 1981. London: Picador, 1982, p. 9-10

Annex 1

An interview with Salman Rushdie, recorded November 12th, 2010

Question: *How do magic and fantasy help you arrive at realism?*

Salman Rushdie: The question is: "What does truth mean in fiction?" Because of course the first premise of fiction is that it's not true, that the story does not record events that took place. These people didn't exist. These things did not happen. And that's the going in point of a novel. So the novel tells you flat out at the beginning that it's untruthful. But then so what do we mean then by "truth in literature?" And clearly what we mean is human truth, not photographic, journalistic, recorded truth, but the truth we recognize as human beings. About how we are with each other, how we deal with each other, what are our strengths and our weaknesses, how we interact and what is the meaning of our lives? I mean this is what we look at. We don't need to know that Anna Karenina really existed. We need to know who she is, and what moves her, and what her story tells us about our own lives and about ourselves and that is the kind of truth that as readers we look for in literature. And now once you accept that stories are not true, once you start from that position, then you understand that a flying carpet and "Madam Bovary" are untrue in the same way, and as a result both of them are ways of arriving at the truth by the road of untruth, and so then they can both do it the same way.

From <http://bigthink.com/ideas/25136>

Accessed February 11th, 2013

Annex 2

The term magic realism [or magical realism], originally applied in the 1920s to a school of surrealist German painters, was later used to describe the prose fiction of Jorge Luis Borges in Argentina, as well as the work of writers such as Gabriel García Márquez in Colombia, Isabel Allende in Chile, Günter Grass in Germany, Italo Calvino in Italy, and John Fowles and Salman Rushdie in England. These writers weave, in an ever-shifting pattern, a sharply etched *realism* in representing ordinary events and details together with fantastic and dreamlike elements, as well as with materials derived from myths and fairy tales. [...] Fabulative novels violate, in various ways, standard novelistic expectations by drastic—and sometimes highly effective—experiments with subject matter, form, style, temporal sequence, and fusions of the everyday, the fantastic, the mythical, and the nightmarish, in renderings that blur traditional distinctions between what is serious or trivial, horrible or ludicrous, tragic or comic.

M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 1957.
Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1988, p. 232

Annex 3

The magical realism of the Latin Americans influences Indian-language writers in India today. The rich, folk-tale quality of a novel like *Sandro of Chegem*, by the Muslim Russian Fazil Iskander, finds its parallels in the work—for instance—of the Nigerian, Amos Tutuola, or even Cervantes. It is possible, I think, to begin to theorize common factors between writers from these societies—poor countries, or deprived minorities in powerful countries—and to say that much of what is new in world literature comes from this group.

Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*.
London: Granta Books, 1991, p. 68-69