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AGRÉGATION 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

Jonathan Coe, *Middle England.* London: Penguin Random House UK, 2018, pp. 3-5.

I.
April 2010

The funeral was over. The reception was starting to fizzle out. Benjamin decided it was time to go.
'Dad?' he said. 'I think I'm going to make a move.'
'Good,' said Colin. 'I'll come with you.'
They headed for the door and managed to escape without saying any goodbyes. The village street was deserted, silent in the late sunshine.
'We shouldn't really just leave like this.' said Benjamin, glancing back towards the pub doubtfully.
'Why not? I've spoken to everyone I want to. Come on, take me to the car.'
Benjamin allowed his father to hold him by the arm in a faltering grip. He was steadier on his feet that way. With indescribable slowness, they began to shuffle along the street towards the pub car park.
'I don't want to go home,' said Colin. 'I can't face it, without her. Take me to your place.'
'Sure,' said Benjamin, even as his heart plummeted. The vision he had been promising himself - solitude, meditation, a cold glass of cider at the old wrought-iron table, the murmur of the river as it rippled by on its timeless course – disappeared, spiralled away into the afternoon sky. Never mind. His duty today was to his father. 'Would you like to stay the night?'
'Yes, I would,' said Colin, but he didn't say thank you. He rarely did, these days.

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The traffic was heavy, and the drive to Benjamin's house took almost an hour and a half. They drove through the heart of Middle England, more or less following the course of the River Severn, through the towns of Bridgnorth, Alveley, Quatt, Much Wenlock and Cressage, a placid, unmemorable journey where the only punctuation marks were petrol stations, pubs and garden centres, while brown heritage signs dangled the more distant temptations of wild-life centres, National Trust Houses and arboretums in front of the bored traveller. The entrance to each village was marked not only by the sign announcing its name, but by a flashing reminder of the speed at which Benjamin was driving, and a warning notice telling him to slow down.
'They're a nightmare, aren't they, these speed traps?' Colin said. 'The buggers are out to get money from you every step of the way.'

'Prevents accidents, I suppose,' said Benjamin.

His father grunted sceptically.

Benjamin turned on the radio, tuned as usual to Radio Three. He was in luck: the slow movement of Fauré's Piano Trio. The melancholy, unassuming contours of the melody not only seemed a fitting accompaniment to the memories of his mother that were filling his mind today (and, presumably, Colin's), but also seemed to mirror in sound, the gentle curves of the road, and even the muted greens of the landscape through which it carried them. The fact that the music was recognizably French made no difference: there was a commonality here, a shared spirit. Benjamin felt utterly at home in this music.

'Turn that racket off, can't you?' Colin said. 'Can't we listen to the news?'

Benjamin let the last thirty or forty seconds of the movement play out, then switched to Radio Four. It was the *PM* programme and immediately they were plunged into a familiar world of gladiatorial combat between interviewer and politician. In one week's time there would be a general election. Colin would vote Conservative, as he had done in every British election since 1950, and Benjamin, as usual, was undecided, except in the sense that he had decided not to vote. Nothing they were likely to hear on the radio in the next seven days would make any difference. Today's big story seemed to be that the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, fighting for re-election, had been caught on microphone describing a potential supporter as 'a sort of bigoted woman', and the media were making the most of it.

'The prime minister has shown his true colours,' a Conservative MP was saying, gleefully. 'Anyone who expresses these legitimate concerns is simply a bigot, in his view. And that's why we can never have a serious debate about immigration in this country.'

'But isn't it true that Mr Cameron, your own leader, is every bit as reluctant - '

Benjamin turned the radio off without explanation. For a while they drove in silence.

'She couldn't stand politicians,' Colin said, bringing some subterranean train of thought to the surface and not needing to specify who he meant by 'she'. He spoke in a low voice, thick with regret and repressed emotion. 'Thought they were all as bad as each other. All on the fiddle, every one of them. Fiddling their expenses, not declaring their interests, holding down half a dozen jobs on the side…'

Document B

"How broken is Britain?", *The Economist*, February 4th, 2010.

THEY are not the world's most effusive people at the best of times. But even by their usual gloomy standards, Britons seem to have got themselves into a slough of despond of late. Well before the economic crisis they were weeping on the shoulders of pollsters, who reported rapidly rising levels of dismay about the country's direction and an increased sense of nostalgia about the good old days. For those (and they are legion, on inner-city council estates as well as in the shires) who think that society in Britain is "broken", the country is stuck in a mire of crime, fractured families and feral youth.

It is an idea that resonates. Every week serves up a new tragedy or outrage to be added to the pile of evidence. Such episodes have the power to jolt the public mood, as in 1993 when Tony Blair, then the shadow home secretary, described the murder of two-year-old James Bulger as a sign of "a society that is becoming unworthy of that name". A similarly awful attack last year on two boys in South Yorkshire was held up by David Cameron, the Conservative leader, as not an "isolated incident of evil" but evidence of a profound problem that goes to the heart of society. He has made "broken Britain" a leitmotif in the run-up to the general election due by June 3rd.

It would be idiotic to claim that Britain is perfect. The vomitous binge-drinking mainly by the young, the drug abuse and teenage pregnancy that are still higher than in most west European countries and the large proportion of single-parent families all tell a tale. But the story of broad decline is simply untrue. Stepping back from the glare of the latest appalling tale, it is clear that by most measures things have been getting better for a good decade and a half. In suggesting that the rot runs right through society, the Tories fail to pinpoint the areas where genuine crises persist. The broken-Britain myth is worse than scaremongering—it glosses over those who need help most.

The bad old days

The broken Britain of legend is one where danger stalks the streets as never before. In the real Britain, the police have just recorded the lowest number of murders for 19 years. In mythical broken Britain, children are especially at risk. Back in real life, child homicides have fallen by more than two-thirds since the 1970s. Britain used to be the third-biggest killer of children in the rich world; it is now the 17th. And more mundane crimes have fallen too: burglaries and car theft are about half as common now as they were 15 years ago. Even the onset of recession has not reversed that downward trend so far.

Comatose teenagers line every gutter in the boozy Britain of popular imagination. Yet after a long period of increase, there are tentative signs that Britons are drinking less alcohol. The overall consumption of drugs is dropping (though some narcotics, including cocaine, are becoming more popular) and rates of smoking are now among the lowest in Europe.

As for family breakdown, some commentators seem to think that sex really was invented in 1963. British grannies know differently. Teenage pregnancy is still too common, but it has been declining, with the odd hiccup, for ages. A girl aged between 15 and 19 today is about half as likely to have a baby in her teens as her grandmother was. Her partner will probably not marry her and he is less likely to stick with her than were men in previous generations, but he is also a lot less likely to beat her. In homing in on the cosier parts of the Britain of yesteryear, it is easy to ignore the horrors that have gone. Straight white men are especially vulnerable to this sort of amnesia.

A dangerous misdiagnosis

Such forgetfulness can be partly blamed on a dominant national press that tends to report the grotesque exceptions not the blander rule. But politicians have connived in this. Labour is far from blameless, but it is the Tories who are on course to be the next government. In attempting to convince voters that society has suffered a comprehensive breakdown (and pandering to his own party's right wing), Mr Cameron has been guided towards social policies that are designed to heal the entire country, rather than help the relatively few who need it. His proposed tax break for married couples and gay civil-partners is an example. It does nothing for workless households. It would help only 11% of the 4m British children in poverty, while handing bonuses to plenty of well-off people. That would be a bad idea at any time; in a period when the state must tighten its belt it is an extraordinary proposal.

Above all, however, it is a distraction from the Conservatives' far better policies to deal with something that does need fixing: education. The main reason why a small but worrying proportion of families and young people is falling behind is that schools are failing to give them the skills they need to get and hold a job. This is about more than Britain's ability to compete in a brave new globalised world that demands flexible, highly skilled workers. It also has to do with social behaviour.

The waning of the manufacturing jobs that used to be the mainstay of the working class has created a generation of young males, in particular, who don't know what to do with themselves. Britons have been boozers and scrappers for centuries, but self-destructive behaviour today in part reflects the perception that their lives are not worth much. As for children bearing children, there is evidence elsewhere that if girls are given better education—not just about sex,

but also in areas likely to improve their job prospects—they are less likely to get pregnant at 16. Yet for all the official talk at home about ever-improving exam results, Britain is beginning to slide down the international league table of educational attainment.

The government used to be keen on overhauling education but it has run out of puff. Now it is the Tories who have thoughtful ideas about getting more good school places through supply-side reforms. They should focus on these rather than proselytising about marriage, which suggests a nannying streak curiously at odds with Mr Cameron's (largely correct) view that government has got too big for its boots. Britain has a crunched economy, an out-of-control deficit and plenty of social problems; but it is not “broken”.

Document C

Grayson Perry, *"The Upper Class at Bay"* ['The Upper Class at bay or an endangered species brought down'], 2012. Wool, cotton, acrylic, polyester and silk tapestry, 200 x 400 cm, Arts Council Collection, London.