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Advanced

PAPER 2: Varieties in Language and Literature

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Source Booklet

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SECTION A

Unseen Prose Non-fiction Texts

Society and the Individual

Text A

This article by Matilda Marcus appeared in The Guardian in January 2020. The author is a member of the Advocacy Academy – a ‘Youth Organising Movement’ from south London that ‘encourages young people to engage in collective action to improve their communities.’

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Text A continued.

Read all about it – the truth about British colonialism

GLOSSARY

Metru and New Standard – a play on the titles of **Metro** and **Evening Standard**, the morning and evening newspapers that are distributed free of charge on the London transport network

Fill in the Blanks – a project run by The Advocacy Academy in 2019–20

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Text A continued.

At 7am on Thursday, seven teenagers, myself included, 'hacked' the most widely distributed newspapers in London, replacing them with 5,000 copies of our own creation.

The reason is simple. We want everyone to learn about the British empire and its history in the land we call home. We are a group of sixth-form students, who came together on The Advocacy Academy's social justice fellowship programme, working to ensure that each young person in the UK will have the opportunity to be taught a history that reflects our country's diversity. We would like to dismantle the institutional racism within our education system and curriculum one step at a time.

For more than 10 years, I've learned close to nothing about British colonial history in school; nothing about how millions were murdered, how children were packed into concentration camps, how nations were arbitrarily divided. I learned nothing about the tools my country used to extradite my grandmother from the Guyanese town she called home.

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Text A continued.

I realise a lot of my white peers might not appreciate that their school system has avoided teaching a defining feature of Britain's history from the past 300 years. No, not the Industrial Revolution or the world wars, but the fact that by 1913, Great Britain had complete or partial control of more than 23% of the globe. Yet each of us involved in the Fill in the Blanks project has heritage from British colonies and we understand the frustration of having your history eradicated.

Just as every student in Germany has to learn about the Holocaust, so, too, should every British student understand and face Britain's role in colonialism and slavery.

Five months ago, we decided our anger could be brought into the public sphere, but we needed a plan of action, something that would make people look twice. We resolved to take the news into our own hands and show the public what the world could look like if our government brought our histories into our classrooms.

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Text A continued.

We created our own papers – Metru and New Standard (geddit?) – and spread them around the London underground for half-asleep commuters to stumble across. Every aspect of our false covers captured a Britain we’d like to see. Our celebrities such as Blac Chyna no longer endorses her skin-lightening products which reinforce the inherently colonial practice of “colourism” – the discrimination against individuals with a dark skin tone.

We show black women revered at the top of their fields, with Mary Seacole’s portrait on the new £50 note. Some of this work is already being done by the Museum of British Colonialism, which we have also advertised on the front cover of our paper.

So on the morning of 9 January, the Fill in the Blanks crew, armed with Metru, went into the underground to disperse our message. Within an hour, thousands of papers had been distributed across London and we slipped away into the crowds with the news “Boris backs empire education” left for commuters to digest. In the early afternoon, our machine started up again, with advocates running from college to our meeting point, sweeping up New Standard papers and hitting the underground once again.

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Turn over

Text A continued.

On the way home, sitting on the tube, I dreamed of seven south London teenagers sparking a national conversation about how our educational curriculum shapes the lives of those it teaches.

British students have lost an integral part of their history. It's time we are taught the downsides of our past in order to stop mistakes being repeated. How can we learn about what we are not taught?

We should not have to find out about colonialism and slavery for ourselves. We urge those who set the national curriculum to teach our histories and Fill in the Blanks.

Love and Loss

Text B

Nick Cave is a singer-songwriter best known for his work with the band Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds. This blog post, part of a regular series in which Nick answers questions submitted by fans, was posted on the band's website in August 2019.

ISSUE #57 / AUGUST 2019

GLOSSARY

Notting Hill – an affluent area of London

largesse – a generous gift or charitable donation

Why did you give up on your relationship with PJ Harvey in the 90s? I love her music. I think she's an amazing person and she writes brilliant songs.

RAMON, SAO PAULO, BRAZIL

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Text B continued.

I had a real hard time with your music, my boyfriend was a fan, until The Boatman's Call. This record really spoke to me. Can you explain?

TANYA, TORONTO, CANADA

Dear Ramon and Tanya,

The truth of the matter is that I didn't give up on PJ Harvey, PJ Harvey gave up on me. There I am, sitting on the floor of my flat in Notting Hill, sun streaming through the window (maybe), feeling good, with a talented and beautiful young singer for a girlfriend, when the phone rings. I pick up the phone and it's Polly.

'Hi,' I say.

'I want to break up with you.'

'Why?!' I ask.

'It's just over,' she says.

I was so surprised I almost dropped my syringe.

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Text B continued.

Deep down I suspected that drugs might have been a problem between us, but there were other things too. I still had a certain amount of work to do on my understanding of the concept of monogamy, and Polly had her own issues, I suspect, but I think at the end of the day it came down to the fact that we were both fiercely creative people, each too self-absorbed to ever be able to inhabit the same space in any truly meaningful way. We were like two lost matching suitcases, on a carousel going nowhere.

Songwriting completely consumed me at that time. It was not what I did, but what I was. It was the very essence of me. Polly's commitment to her own work was probably as narcissistic and egomaniacal as my own, although I was so deep into my own shit that I can't really comment on this with any certainty. I remember our time together with great fondness though, they were happy days, and the phone call hurt; but never one to waste a good crisis, I set about completing The Boatman's Call.

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Text B continued.

The Boatman's Call cured me of Polly Harvey. It also changed the way I made music. The record was an artistic rupture in itself, to which I owe a great debt. It was the compensatory largesse for a broken heart, or at least what I thought at the time was a broken heart – in recent years I have re-evaluated that term. The break up filled me with a lunatic energy that gave me the courage to write songs about commonplace human experiences (like broken hearts) openly, boldly and with meaning – a kind of writing that I had, until that date, steered clear of, feeling a need to instead conceal my personal experiences in character-driven stories. It was a growth spurt that pushed me in a direction and style of songwriting that has remained with me ever since – albeit in different guises. It also pointed a way to a more poignant, raw, stripped back way of performance – the suspended and barely supported vocal.

The Bad Seeds, to their eternal credit, stepped back and just let these piano-driven songs be. There are few bands on earth that understand that to **NOT play, can be as important as its opposite.**

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Text B continued.

Tanya, maybe it is a combination of all of these elements that changed the way you felt about The Bad Seeds' music. Perhaps there is also a feminine energy within The Boatman's Call which you respond to. It feels a wiser, more empathetic record than anything that had been done previously, but whatever the reason, I am happy that you were drawn into the fold.

Love, Nick

Encounters

Text C

This August 2020 article, titled ‘I Was Bloodied and Dazed. Beirut Strangers Treated Me Like a Friend,’ was written by the New York Times’ Middle East correspondent, Vivian Yee. It appeared both online and in print within hours of the events she recounts.

BEIRUT — I was just about to look at a video a friend had sent me on Tuesday afternoon — ‘the port seems to be burning,’ she said — when my whole building shook, as if startled, by the deepest boom I’d ever heard. Uneasily, naïvely, I ran to the window, then back to my desk to check for news.

Then came a much bigger boom, and the sound itself seemed to splinter. There was shattered glass flying everywhere. Not thinking but moving, I ducked under my desk.

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Text C continued.

When the world stopped cracking open, I couldn't see at first because of the blood running down my face. After blinking the blood from my eyes, I tried to take in the sight of my apartment turned into a demolition site. My yellow front door had been hurled on top of my dining table. I couldn't find my passport, or even any sturdy shoes.

Later, someone would tell me that Beirutis of her generation, who had been raised during Lebanon's 15-year civil war, instinctively ran into their hallways as soon as they heard the first blast, to escape the glass they knew would break.

I was not so well-trained, but the Lebanese who would help me in the hours to come had the heartbreaking steadiness that comes from having lived through countless previous disasters. Nearly all of them were strangers, yet they treated me like a friend.

When I got downstairs, dodging the enormous broken window that rested jaggedly in my stairwell, my neighborhood, with its graceful old-Beirut architecture and arched windows, looked like a picture from the wars I had seen from afar — a mouth missing all its teeth.

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Text C continued.

Someone passing on a motorbike saw my bloody face and told me to hop on. When we couldn't get any closer to the hospital, our way blocked by hillocks of broken glass and stranded cars, I got off and started walking.

Everyone on the street seemed to be either bleeding from open gashes or swathed in makeshift bandages — all except one woman in a chic, backless top leading a small dog on a leash. Only an hour before, we had all been walking dogs or checking email or shopping for groceries. Only an hour before, there had been no blood.

As I neared the hospital, elderly patients sat dazed in wheelchairs in the streets, still hooked to their IV bags. A woman lay on the ground in front of the exploded emergency room, her whole body dripping red, not moving much. It was clear that they weren't taking new patients, certainly not any as comparatively lucky as I was.

Someone named Youssef saw me, sat me down and started cleaning and bandaging my face. Once he was satisfied I could walk, he left and I started wandering, trying to think of another hospital I could try.

I ran into a friend of a friend, someone I had met only a few times before, and he bandaged the rest of my wounds, disinfecting the lacerations with splashes of Lebanon's national liquor, an anise-flavored drink called arak.

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Turn over

Text C continued.

Until then, I hadn't had more than the vaguest guesses about what might have happened. Someone was reporting that fireworks had exploded at the port. Much later, Lebanese officials acknowledged that a large cache of explosive material seized by the government years ago was stored where the explosions occurred.

Survivors walked by, moving faster than the jammed-up traffic. To anyone who appeared unhurt, people called out, "alhamdulillah al-salama," or, roughly translated, thank God for your safety.

Before the end of the night, after my co-workers had found me, after a passing driver named Ralph had offered to take us to one of the few hospitals still accepting patients, after a doctor had put 11 staples in my forehead and another sprinkling on my leg and arms, people would be saying the same thing to me: Thank God for your safety.

Crossing Boundaries

Text D

In this extract from the introduction to his 2007 book *Pies and Prejudice: In Search of the North*, radio presenter Stuart Maconie explains what motivated his decision to write the book.

GLOSSARY

Pict – the Picts were a group of peoples who lived in the far north of Scotland in the first millennium AD. They are thought to have painted or tattooed their bodies with a blue dye called woad

ASBOs – Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, a punishment for young offenders in use in England from 1998 until 2014

haute couture – the creation of exclusive clothing by elite designers

A few years ago, I was standing in my kitchen, rustling up a Sunday brunch for some very hungover, very northern mates who were ‘down’ for the weekend. One of them was helping me out, finding essential ingredients like paracetamol and orange juice, and asked me, ‘Where are the sun-dried tomatoes?’

‘They’re next to the cappuccino maker,’ I replied.

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Turn over

Text D continued.

A ghastly, pregnant silence fell. Slowly, we turned to meet each other's gaze. We didn't say anything. We didn't need to. Each read the other's unspoken thought; we had changed. We had become the kind of people who rustled up brunch on Sundays, passed around sections of the Sunday papers, popped down to little bakeries; the kind of people who had sun-dried tomatoes and cappuccino makers.

Southerners, I suppose.

Now before readers from Godalming and Sidcup, Aylesbury and Exeter hurl this book across the non-fiction section enraged, let me explain. I don't like thinking this way, like a Pict in an animal pelt, face blue with woad. I'd rather be cosmopolitan, suave, displaying an easy confidence with pesto and fish knives and the Hammersmith and City Line. I have tried to change, really I have. I say 'lunch'. I say 'book' with an 'uh' not an 'oooh'. Though I draw the line at 'supper' and 'barth'.

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Text D continued.

But then again... Then again, I do have a cappuccino maker and some sun-dried tomatoes. Actually, moving with the times, of course, it's now some sun-blushed tomatoes (so much juicier, don't you think, and lovely tossed in with balsamic and feta). But on some level, I feel it should be a plate of tripe and a pound of lard, the sort of food you want after a hard day digging coal from a three-foot seam or riveting steel plates – proper jobs, in fact, as opposed to tapping effeminately at a keyboard for hours on end or talking to yourself in a radio studio.

This book, then, is an attempt to rediscover both the north itself and my own inner northerner.

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Text D continued.

The north. What is it? Where is it? Where does it begin and end, what does it mean to be northern and why, in a country that you could drop and easily lose in one of the American Great Lakes, does that two and a half hour journey from London to Manchester or Leeds still feel like crossing time zones, political borders and linguistic and cultural frontiers? When we say the north, what do we really mean? It's something both powerful (like Newcastle Brown) and attractively vague (like most Oasis lyrics). The north means the Lake Poets and Lindisfarne Island and at the same time sink estates, ASBOs and the AIDS capital of Britain (Doncaster, if you're interested). The north is big and complicated. Square metres of it are crowded, square miles of it are almost deserted. Surprisingly for an area so well covered by CCTV, it still says 'Here Be Dragons' on the **Daily Telegraph and Radio 4's map of Britain.**

And so, by supersaver and service station, by West Coast Main Line and M6, I began the journey back home. 'Home is the place,' wrote Robert Frost, 'where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in.' But would it still feel like home? Would they have to take me back? Would I want them to?

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Text D continued.

It can be grim up north, and heart-stoppingly beautiful. It isn't all football and fags. It's politics and folklore, civil war and nuclear power, heavy industry and haute couture, poetry and Pina Colada, ships and shops, chips and fish, and football and fags, come to think of it.

And, of course, pies and prejudice.

SOURCE INFORMATION

Text A: ‘Read all about it – the truth about British colonialism | Matilda Marcus’, The Advocacy Academy; Matilda Marcus

Text B: taken from <https://www.theredhandfiles.com/your-relationship-with-pj-harvey/>

Text C: taken from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/04/world/middleeast/lebanon-explosion-beirut.html>

Text D: taken from Stuart Maconie, *Pies and Prejudice: In Search of the North* (London, 2008)