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English Language and Literature

Advanced

PAPER 2: Varieties in Language and Literature

Friday 07 June 2024 – Morning

Time: 2 hours 30 minutes

Source Booklet

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THE QUESTION PAPER.**

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SECTION A

Unseen Prose Non-fiction Texts

Society and the Individual

Text A

This passage is taken from *Diary of a Nursing Sister on the Western Front, 1914–1915*, published in 1915. The anonymous diarist worked on ‘Ambulance Trains’ during the First World War, treating the British Army’s injured personnel before returning them to the battlefield. These entries detail her first four days of active service, following several weeks of training.

GLOSSARY

Tommies – slang term for lower ranking British soldiers

portmanteaux – plural form of portmanteau, a heavy suitcase

R.A.M.C / R. E. / R.T.O. – abbreviations for two regiments in the British Army: the Royal Army Medical Corps and the Royal Engineers, and an abbreviation for Railway Transportation Officer

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Text A continued.

Tuesday, October 13th.— At last I am on the train, and have just unpacked. ... No one knows where we are going; we start this afternoon.

6 p.m.— Not off yet. We had lunch in a small dining-car, we four Sisters at one table, Major ----- and his two Civil Surgeons at another, and some French officials of the train at another. Meal cooked and served by the French—quite nice, no cloth, only one knife and fork. They are all very friendly and jolly.

In between the actual dealing with the wounded, which is only too real, it all feels like a play or a dream: everything, and every house and every hotel, school, and college, being used for something different from what it was meant for. You hear a funny alternation of educated and uneducated English on all sides of you, and loud French gabbling of all sorts. By day you see aeroplanes and troop trains and artillery trains; and by night you see searchlights and hear the incessant wailing and squawking of the train whistles. On every platform and at every public door or gate are the red and blue French soldiers with their long spikey bayonets, or our Tommies with the short broad bayonets that don't look half so deadly though I expect they are much worse.

The train is one-third mile long, so three walks along its side gives you exercise for a mile. The ward beds are lovely: broad and soft, with lovely pillow-cases and soft thick blankets; any amount of dressings and surgical

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Turn over

Text A continued.

equipment, and a big kitchen, steward's store, and three orderlies to each waggon. Shouldn't be surprised if we get "there" in the dark, and won't see the war country. Sometimes you are stopped by bridges being blown up in front of you, and little obstacles of that kind.

Wednesday, October 14th.— Still in the siding "waiting for orders" to move on. There's a lot of waiting being done in this war one way and another, as well as a lot of doing.

8.45 p.m.— Started at last.

Thursday, October 15th, 10 a.m.— Braisne. Got here about 8 o'clock. After daylight only evidence of the war I could see from my bed were long lines of French troops in the roads, and a few British camps; villages all look deserted. Guns booming in the distance, sounds like heavy portmanteaux being dropped on the roof at regular intervals. Some London Scottish on the station say all the troops have gone from here except themselves and the R.A.M.C. There are some wounded to come on here.

4 p.m.— We have only taken twelve cases on as yet, but are having quite an exciting afternoon. Shells are coming at intervals into the village. I've seen two burst in the houses, and one came right over our train. The wounded Tommies got rather excited, and translated the different sounds of "them Jack Johnsons" and "them Coal-boxes" and "Calamity Kate," and of our guns and a machine-gun popping. There is a troop train just behind us that they may be potting at, or some gunners in the village, or the

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Turn over

Text A continued.

R.E. camp. You hear the shell coming a long way off, rather like a falsetto motor-engine, and then it bursts (twice in the trees of this wood where we are standing). The R.T.O. is now having the train moved to a safer place. (There's another close to the train.)

They make such a fascinating purring noise coming, ending in a singing scream; you have to jump up and see. It is a yellowish-green sound! But you can't see it till it bursts.

Friday, October 16th, 2 p.m. — Have had a very busy time since last entry; many very bad cases, fractured spine, a nearly dying lung case, a boy with wound in lung and liver, three pneumonias, some bad enterics.

Love and Loss

Text B

This passage is an edited extract from the author Joseph Conrad's tribute to the American novelist Stephen Crane (1871–1900).

GLOSSARY

Brede – Stephen Crane lived from 1899 to 1900 at Brede Place, a large manor house in Sussex

My acquaintance with Stephen Crane was brought about by Mr. Pawling, partner in the publishing firm of Mr. William Heinemann.

One day Mr. Pawling said to me: "Stephen Crane has arrived in England. I asked him if there was anybody he wanted to meet and he mentioned two names. One of them was yours." I had then just been reading, like the rest of the world, Crane's **Red Badge of Courage**. The subject of that story was war, from the point of view of an individual soldier's emotions. That individual (he remains nameless throughout) was interesting enough in himself, but on turning over the pages of that little book which had for the moment secured such a noisy recognition, I had been even more interested in the personality of the writer.

Apparently Stephen Crane had received a favourable impression from a book of mine which had also been published lately. I was truly pleased to hear this.

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Text B continued.

On my next visit to town we met at a lunch. I saw a young man of medium stature and slender build, with very steady, penetrating blue eyes, the eyes of a being who not only sees visions but can brood over them to some purpose.

He had indeed a wonderful power of vision, which he applied to the things of this earth and of our mortal humanity with a penetrating force that seemed to reach, within life's appearances and forms, the very spirit of life's truth. His ignorance of the world at large—he had seen very little of it—did not stand in the way of his imaginative grasp of facts, events, and picturesque men.

His manner was very quiet, his personality at first sight interesting, and he talked slowly with an intonation which on some people, mainly Americans, had, I believe, a jarring effect. But not on me. Whatever he said had a personal note, and he expressed himself with a graphic simplicity which was extremely engaging. He knew little of literature, either of his own country or of any other, but he was himself a wonderful artist in words whenever he took a pen into his hand. I don't think he was ever in doubt about what he could do. Yet it often seemed to me that he was but half aware of the exceptional quality of his achievement.

This achievement was curtailed by his early death. It was a great loss to his friends, but perhaps not so much to literature. I think that he had given his measure fully in the few books he had the time to write. Let me not be

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Text B continued.

misunderstood: the loss was great, but it was the loss of the delight his art could give, not the loss of any further possible revelation. As to himself, who can say how much he gained or lost by quitting so early this world of the living, which he knew how to set before us in the terms of his own artistic vision? Perhaps he did not lose a great deal.

My wife and I like best to remember him riding to meet us at the gate of the Park at Brede. Born master of his sincere impressions, he was also a born horseman. He never appeared so happy or so much to advantage as on the back of a horse. He had formed the project of teaching my eldest boy to ride, and meantime, when the child was about two years old, presented him with his first dog.

Those who have read his little tale, "Horses," and the story, "The Open Boat," in the volume of that name, know with what fine understanding he loved horses and the sea. And his passage on this earth was like that of a horseman riding swiftly in the dawn of a day fated to be short and without sunshine.

Encounters

Text C

This anonymous article titled ‘My Peninsular Medal. By an Old Peninsular’ appeared in Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine in January 1850. It recounts the author’s experiences in the military conflict known as the Peninsular Wars (1807–1814), in which the United Kingdom assisted Portugal in its combat with France and Spain. In this extract, the author travels from his base in the town of Passages to the city now known as San Sebastián in Northern Spain.

GLOSSARY

isthmus – a narrow strip of land, surrounded by water on two sides, connecting two land masses

clerk of the military chest – an official who works in the department that controls the army’s finances

ad libitum – a Latin phrase, here meaning ‘as much as was desired’

Six or seven months had now elapsed since St Sebastian was stormed and taken by the British and Portuguese forces.

Less than an hour’s walk brought me to the scene of that fierce, and, for a period, doubtful conflict. The road was closed up by hills, which afforded no opportunity for a prospect;

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Text C continued.

and not a soul did I meet in the whole distance. All at once I came in sight of the battered and demolished fortress. Imagine a town knocked to pieces. Imagine this town suddenly presenting itself to your view.

The road unexpectedly opened upon a sandy plain, on which rose a few eminences, called the Chofres, that had afforded a position for some of the breaching batteries of the besiegers; at the extremity of this plain ran the river Urumea, discharging itself into the sea; and on an isthmus, beyond the river, stood St Sebastian. It stood like a city in the desert. All was solitude and desolation. The town, though it had contained many thousand inhabitants, at this moment afforded no visible indication of human residence. It was not forsaken; yet nothing could I discover of the tokens which usually indicate life and activity as we approach the abodes of men—on the road, neither vehicles, nor cattle, nor human beings. I was alone, and the city was solitary. No; here, at my feet, upon the sandy plain, was a memorial, at least, of man and of his doings. A rise in the level had been washed down at its edge by the rains of winter; and, projecting from the crumbling bank, appeared the bleached and ghastly remains of a human being; doubtless one out of the multitudes who, having fallen in the siege, had been consigned to a shallow and hasty grave. I will not deny that the sight arrested my steps. Remember, it was the first victim of war I had ever looked upon. Nay, more; it invested the whole panorama with a new character. I stood, as it were, surveying a

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Text C continued.

vast cemetery, the soil now concealing in its bosom the multitudes who, not long before, had drenched its surface with their blood. Entering the town, I did indeed see before me, as “my friend” had said, “the tremendous effect of cannon-balls.” Yet that was not the whole: destruction appeared in a threefold aspect. The batteries had knocked houses and defences into rubbish and dust; the mines had torn up the works from their foundations; and a general conflagration had ravaged the whole town. The scene was sombre and oppressive. War had now advanced his pavilion into other lands; but here had left in charge two vast and hideous sentinels—Desolation and Silence! I passed through some of the principal streets, in which the fallen stones had been piled on each side, to make a thoroughfare; and walked along the ramparts, where some of the dead were still visible, partially covered by fragments of the ruined masonry. No living creature did I encounter, save one, a miserable object, a soldier in the Spanish uniform, apparently an invalid, recovering from wounds or sickness. On my approaching him, he appeared unwilling to speak or be spoken to. Nor is it difficult to explain why a Spaniard, meeting an Englishman on the walls of St Sebastian, should feel little disposed for conversation. And so I visited the place, inspected the fortifications, and returned to Passages, without exchanging a word with anyone.

“My friend,” in honour of my arrival, had invited a brace of dinner-guests: one, like myself, a clerk of the military

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Text C continued.

chest, the other a young hospital mate. Our dinner was excellent; Irish stew, a Passages hare, and an enormous omelet, all cooked by Antonio; capital draught cider; with the cheese, two bottles of English porter as a particular treat; and Andalusian wine ad libitum.

Crossing Boundaries

Text D

In this extract from an article published in The Guardian newspaper in 2021, Lagipoiva Cherelle Jackson explains the personal and social significance of tattoos in the culture of Samoa, and in Polynesian culture more generally.

GLOSSARY

roundtable – a discussion or business meeting where participants exchange their views

Polynesia – a region in the southern Pacific, comprising over a thousand islands, including Samoa

missionaries – members of Christian religious communities who travelled to European colonies around the globe in the 19th and 20th centuries, seeking to convert indigenous peoples to Christianity

Shortly before my interview with six Europeans at a roundtable in Germany, I gently covered my hand tattoo with a skin-toned foundation.

I knew that without the proper context, they would stereotype me in the western sense and presume me either a criminal or at least uneducated or unprofessional. A perception of tattooing common on that side of the world.

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Text D continued.

But the tattoo or tatau (in Samoan) which they may have found offensive in their worldview, was treasured in mine, the Samoan culture.

Instead of signifying low social standing, the tattoo in Polynesia is a mark of respect, hierarchy and cultural integrity. Unlike the European tattoos that they know, my hand was inked by a tufuga ta tatau (master tattooist), a preordained artist and chief borne of the lineage of tattooists in the Samoan hierarchy of chiefs.

It wasn't a buzzing electric needle that broke my skin but rather a serrated bone comb made of a boar's tusk and hand tapped by the tufuga using burnt candlenut soot as ink.

I was eight years old. My interviewers might all have fainted had they known this.

The pantsuit I chose that morning also conveniently covered the markings on my thighs, the female Samoan tattoo, the malu, the same markings carried by generations of Samoan women, a rite of passage, a sign of chiefly lineage and a "dress" of pride.

My malu was not simply a "tattoo", it is a link to my ancestors, a duty to my culture and a tribute to my mother.

Yet, when I set foot on a plane to leave Samoa, or enter the hallowed halls of the United Nations for meetings, I hide all my tattoos, because in those spaces, they won't understand.

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Text D continued.

Travelling through the US, UK and some parts of Europe over the years, I have found myself staring randomly at the arms of strangers, mainly men with tattooed sleeves depicting Polynesian motifs.

I saw the ali'ao (trochus shell) on the arm of a UPS driver in New York, the ave'au (starfish) on a young man in the tube in London and the gogo (seagull) on the neck of a young woman on the streets of Amsterdam.

Spotting the motifs on people without a connection to Samoa or Polynesia makes me smile, transporting me home as I recall the meaning of these treasured marks of nature on our skin and how it has transcended borders.

But I also cringe at the audacity of those who bore our markings without connection to our cultures and the sheer disregard for the sacredness of the motifs they casually displayed. These are sacred tribal markings, and are assigned through chiefly lineage and placement in a tribe, village or community.

Our cultural practice was passed down verbally, and according to the late Va'asili'ifiti Moelagi Jackson, high chief, orator and my mother, tattoos also played a part in this transfer of knowledge.

“We had no paper, we had no pens, but we had our bodies, traditional ink and tools to mark our skin. The body was used as a canvas, and that was one way for our ancestors to pass down knowledge. My malu therefore does not

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Text D continued.

belong to me, but to my community,” she told me once.

At some point, I hope that tribal tattoos of Polynesia on Polynesians, received by bare hand and nature’s tools are viewed as a cultural norm to be embraced and not as a sign of rebellion or a history of narcotics.

But then again, if the chiefs and warriors before us managed to sustain the art of *tatau* despite great efforts by missionaries to wipe it out, then we certainly don’t need international endorsement or Western understanding to give value to our cultural practice.

After all, the true value of the *tatau* lay in us: Samoans, Polynesians and those who inherited it.

SOURCE INFORMATION:

Text A: taken from Anonymous, *Diary of a Nursing Sister on the Western Front, 1914–1915* (Edinburgh and London, 1915). Accessed online at: <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/18910>

Text B: taken from Joseph Conrad, ‘Stephen Crane’, *Notes on Life and Letters* (London, 1921)

Text C: taken from Anonymous, ‘My Peninsular Medal’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* Vol. 67 (January–June 1850), accessed online at: <https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/gutbook/lookup?num=44332>

Text D: taken from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/30/we-had-no-paper-but-we-had-our-bodies-the-sacred-and-symbolic-in-polynesian-tattoos>