

**EXAMEN LANSAD
22 mai 2021****Durée : 1h30 –**

5 I would like you to imagine yourselves somewhere in Southern Africa, standing in an Indian store, in a poor area, in a time of bad drought. There is a line of people, mostly women, with every kind of container for water. This store gets a bowser¹ of precious water every afternoon from the town, and here the people wait.

The Indian is standing with the heels of his hands pressed down on the counter, and he is watching a black woman, who is bending over a wadge² of paper that looks as if it has been torn from a book. She is reading *Anna Karenin*.

10 She is reading slowly, mouthing the words. It looks a difficult book. This is a young woman with two little children clutching at her legs. She is pregnant. The Indian is distressed because of the lines of people, all thirsty. He doesn't have enough water for them. He is angry because he knows there are people dying out there, beyond the dust clouds.

This man is curious. He says to the young woman, "What are you reading?"

"It is about Russia," says the girl.

15 "Do you know where Russia is?" He hardly knows himself.

The young woman looks straight at him, full of dignity, though her eyes are red from dust, "I was best in the class. My teacher said I was best."

The young woman resumes her reading. She wants to get to the end of the paragraph.

20 The Indian looks at the two little children and reaches for some Fanta, but the mother says, "Fanta makes them thirstier."

The Indian knows he shouldn't do this but he reaches down to a great plastic container beside him, behind the counter, and pours out two mugs of water, which he hands to the children. He watches while the girl looks at her children drinking, her mouth moving. He gives her a mug of water. It hurts him to see her drinking it, so painfully thirsty is she.

25 Now she hands him her own plastic water container, which he fills. The young woman and the children watch him closely so that he doesn't spill any.

She is bending again over the book. She reads slowly. The paragraph fascinates her and she reads it again. [...]

30 It is time for the woman to leave the haven of the Indian store, and set off back along the four miles to her village. Outside, the lines of waiting women clamour and complain. [...]

1 Une tonne à eau, c'est à dire une citerne montée sur remorque

2 Un paquet, une liasse.

She sends a thankful look to the Indian, whom she knew liked her and was sorry for her, and she steps out into the blowing clouds. [...]

35 This was hard, oh yes, it was hard, this stepping, one foot after another, through the dust. Hard, but she was used to hardship, was she not? Her mind was on the story she had been reading. She was thinking, She is just like me, that Russian girl, and she is looking after children, too. I could be her, that Russian girl. And the man there, he loves her and will ask her to marry him. She had not finished more than that one paragraph. Yes, she thinks, a man will come for me, and take me away from all this, take me and the children, yes, he will love me and look after me.

40 She steps on. The can of water is heavy on her shoulders. On she goes. The children can hear the water slopping about. Half way she stops, sets down the can.

Her children are whimpering and touching it. She thinks that she cannot open it, because dust would blow in. There is no way she can open the can until she gets home.

"Wait," she tells her children, "wait."

45 She thinks, My teacher said there is a library, bigger than the supermarket, a big building and it is full of books. The young woman is smiling as she moves on, the dust blowing in her face. I am clever, she thinks. Teacher said I am clever. The cleverest in the school - she said I was. My children will be clever, like me. I will take them to the library, the place full of books, and they will go to school, and they will be teachers - my teacher told me I could be a teacher. My children will live far from here, earning money. They will live near the big library and enjoy a good life.

50 You may ask how that piece of the Russian novel ever ended up on that counter in the Indian store? It would make a pretty story. Perhaps someone will tell it.

On goes that poor girl, held upright by thoughts of the water she will give her children once home, and drink a little of herself. On she goes, through the dreaded dusts of an African drought.

55 We are a jaded lot, we in our threatened world. We are good for irony and even cynicism. Some words and ideas we hardly use, so worn out have they become. But we may want to restore some words that have lost their potency.

We have a treasure-house of literature, going back to the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans. It is all there, this wealth of literature, to be discovered again and again by whoever is lucky enough to come upon it. A treasure. Suppose it did not exist. How impoverished, how empty we would be.

60 We own a legacy of languages, poems, histories, and it is not one that will ever be exhausted. It is there, always.

We have a bequest of stories, tales from the old storytellers, some of whose names we know, but some not. The storytellers go back and back, to a clearing in the forest where a great fire burns, and the old shamans dance and sing, for our heritage of stories began in fire, magic, the spirit world.

65 And that is where it is held, today.

Ask any modern storyteller and they will say there is always a moment when they are touched with fire, with what we like to call inspiration, and this goes back and back to the beginning of our race, to the great winds that shaped us and our world.

70 The storyteller is deep inside every one of us. The story-maker is always with us. Let us suppose our world is ravaged by war, by the horrors that we all of us easily imagine. Let us suppose floods wash through our cities, the seas rise. But the storyteller will be there, for it is our imaginations which shape us, keep us, create us - for good and for ill. It is our stories that will recreate us, when we are torn, hurt, even destroyed. It is the storyteller, the dream-maker, the myth-maker, that is our phoenix, that represents us at our best, and at our most creative.

75 That poor girl trudging through the dust, dreaming of an education for her children, do we think that we are better than she is - we, stuffed full of food, our cupboards full of clothes, stifling in our

superfluities?

I think it is that girl, and the women who were talking about books and an education when they had not eaten for three days³, that may yet define us.

Excerpted and adapted from the Nobel Lecture delivered by Doris Lessing, Nobel Prize for Literature in 2007

QUESTIONS ON THE TEXT

TOTAL 40 points

PART ONE – LEXIS, SYNTAX, GRAMMAR

A. Use the prompts and context to complete and/or reformulate the sentence. [8x1.5=12 pts]

EXAMPLE : Fanta makes them thirstier(l. 19-20)

→ They will only _____ be thirstier_____ if you give them Fanta.

A1. « There is a line of people, mostly women » (l. 2)

→ Few _____ are among the people standing in line.

A2. « This man is distressed because of the lines of people. He doesn't have enough water for them. » (l. 10)

→ The reason why _____

A3. « The Indian knows he shouldn't do this but he pours out two mugs of water » (l. 21)

→ Although _____

A4. The young woman and the children watch him closely so that he doesn't spill any water. (l. 25)

→ It's important to the woman and children that _____ gets spilled.

A5. She is held upright by thoughts of the water she will give her children (l. 52)

Only the thoughts of _____

A6. There is no way she can open the can until she gets home. (l. 42)

Not until _____

A7. It is our stories that will recreate us. (l. 72)

What will _____

A8. It is not a legacy that will ever be exhausted. (l. 60)

Never _____

B. Choose the word that best fits each gap.

[no error = 6 pts ; 1 error = 4 pts ; 2 errors = 3 pts ; 3 errors = 1 point...etc; a blank counts as one error]

3 This is a reference to a deleted passage of the lecture

LIST : any – such – both – neither – either – none – so – or – too

Please note that each word can only be used once.

B1. We were not prepared for _____ a hot, dry season, and _____ were you.

B2. Look. It's very simple. _____ we take action now, _____ the climate crisis will reach a point of no return.

B3. _____ the heat and the wind have been hard on the inhabitants this season.

B4. The heat was just _____ intense that _____ of our emergency measures was effective.

B5. The heat was just _____ intense for _____ of our emergency measures to be effective.

C – Tenses [6 pts]

1. Complete with an appropriate verb form, based on context:

EXAMPLE :

She's busy at the moment : she ___is looking___ (to look) after her children

C1. When the dust storm started, she _____ (to look) after her children.

C2. When the dust storm started, she _____ (to look) after her children for two hours.

C3. Look around you, there is dust everywhere : a severe dust storm _____ (to hit) the village.

C4. Look around you, there is still dust everywhere : the village _____ (to hit) by a severe dust storm a week ago.

2. Complete with one or several words so as to obtain the correct hypothetical form, based on context.

EXAMPLE : Let us suppose our world is ravaged by war: the storyteller ___will___ be there.

C5. Let us suppose our world _____ ravaged by war: the storyteller would be there.

C6. Let us suppose our world had been ravaged by war: the storyteller would _____ there.

PART TWO – CONTENTS ANALYSIS, WRITING

D – Analysis. [4 pts]

Choose the one option among the four that is a completely inappropriate answer to the question.

D1. What is the woman doing in the store ? She is waiting

a. for her daily water portion

b. for the dust storm to blow over

c. for someone to return the rest of the book to the owner

d. for a bus back to school

D2. Why does the Indian storekeeper give extra mugs of water to the woman and her children ? Out of :

- a. friendship
- b. love
- c. contempt
- d. pity

D3. What do the interior monologues (l. 33-37 + 44-49) reveal ?

- a. her determination
- b. her cynicism
- c. her desperation
- d. her hopes

D4. « We are a jaded lot » (l.54) because:

- a. we need nothing
- b. we live easy lives
- c. we are not interested in anything that really matters
- d. we dream too much

E. Opinion or creative writing.

Choose one of the two and write 100 words or more [12 pts]

E1. How much do you agree with Lessing's trust in the power of storytelling ? Have you, for example, found comfort in stories during this pandemic ?

or

E2. Write the short version of the story suggested by Lessing in lines 50-51.

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