

CONCOURS GÉNÉRAL DES LYCÉES

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SESSION 2023

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VERSION ET COMPOSITION EN LANGUE ANGLAISE

(Classes de terminale voie générale et toutes séries technologiques)

Durée : 5 heures

L'usage de tout dictionnaire est interdit

Consignes aux candidats

- Ne pas utiliser d'encre claire
- N'utiliser ni colle, ni agrafe
- Ne joindre aucun brouillon
- Ne pas composer dans la marge
- Numéroté chaque page en bas à droite (numéro de page / nombre total de pages)
- Sur chaque copie, renseigner l'en-tête + l'identification du concours :

Concours / Examen : CGL

Matière : ANGL

Session : 2023

Tournez la page S.V.P.

The girl's sharp eyes peered at the back of the stubby reddish hand she held. There emblazoned in red and blue was a tattooed eagle perched on a cannon. Parker's sleeve was rolled to the elbow. Above the eagle a serpent was coiled about a shield and in the spaces between the eagle and the serpent there were hearts, some with arrows through them. Above the serpent there was a spread hand of cards. Every space on the skin of Parker's arm, from wrist to elbow, was covered in some loud design. The girl gazed at this with an almost stupefied smile of shock, as if she had accidentally grasped a poisonous snake; she dropped the hand.

"I got most of my other ones in foreign parts," Parker said. "These here I mostly got in the United States. I got my first one when I was only fifteen years old."

"Don't tell me," the girl said, "I don't like it. I ain't got any use for it."

"You ought to see the ones you can't see," Parker said and winked.

Two circles of red appeared like little apples on the girl's cheeks and softened her appearance. Parker was intrigued. He did not for a minute think that she didn't like tattoos. He had never yet met a woman who was not attracted to them.

Parker was fourteen when he saw a man in a fair, tattooed from head to foot. Except for his loins which were girded with a panther hide¹, the man's skin was patterned in what seemed from Parker's distance—he was near the back of the tent, standing on a bench—a single intricate design of brilliant color. The man, who was small and sturdy, moved about on the platform, flexing his muscles so that the arabesque of men and beasts and flowers on his skin appeared to have a subtle motion of its own. Parker was filled with emotion, lifted up as some people are when the flag passes. He was a boy whose mouth habitually hung open. He was heavy and earnest, as ordinary as a loaf of bread. When the show was over, he had remained standing on the bench, staring where the tattooed man had been, until the tent was almost empty.

Parker had never before felt the least motion of wonder in himself. Until he saw the man at the fair, it did not enter his head that there was anything out of the ordinary about the fact that he existed. Even then it did not enter his head, but a peculiar unease settled in him. It was as if a blind boy had been turned so gently in a different direction that he did not know his destination had been changed.

He had his first tattoo sometime after—the eagle perched on the cannon. It was done by a local artist. It hurt very little, just enough to make it appear to Parker to be worth doing. This was peculiar too, for before he had thought that only what did not hurt was worth doing. The next year he quit school because he was sixteen and could. He went to the trade school² for a while, and then he quit the trade school and worked for six months in a garage. The only reason he worked at all was to pay for more tattoos. His mother worked in a laundry and could support him, but she would not pay for any tattoo except her name on a heart, which he had put on, grumbling. However, her name was Betty Jean and nobody had to know it was his mother. He found out that the tattoos were attractive to the kind of girls he liked but who had never liked him before. He began to drink beer and get in fights. His mother wept over what was becoming of him. One night she dragged him off to a revival³ with her, not telling him where they were going. When he saw the big lighted church, he jerked out of her grasp and ran. The next day he lied about his age and joined the Navy.

1 hide (here): skin

2 A trade school teaches a practical, generally manual, job instead of general knowledge.

3 a revival (here): a religious meeting

45 Parker was large for the tight sailor's pants but the silly white cap, sitting low on his forehead, made his face by contrast look thoughtful and almost intense. After a month or two in the Navy, his mouth ceased to hang open. His features hardened into the features of a man. He stayed in the Navy five years and seemed a natural part of the grey mechanical ship, except for his eyes, which were the same pale slate color as the ocean and reflected the immense spaces around him as if they were a microcosm of the mysterious sea. In port Parker wandered
50 about comparing the run-down places he was in to Birmingham, Alabama. Everywhere he went he picked up more tattoos.

He had stopped having lifeless ones like anchors and crossed rifles. He had a tiger and a panther on each shoulder, a cobra coiled about a torch on his chest, hawks on his thighs, Elizabeth II and Philip over where his stomach and liver were respectively. He did not care
55 much what the subject was so long as it was colorful; on his abdomen he had a few obscenities but only because that seemed the proper place for them. Parker would be satisfied with each tattoo about a month, then something about it that had attracted him would wear off. Whenever a decent-sized mirror was available, he would get in front of it and study his overall look. The effect was not of one intricate arabesque of colors but of something haphazard and
60 botched. A huge dissatisfaction would come over him and he would go off and find another tattooist and have another space filled up. The front of Parker was almost completely covered but there were no tattoos on his back. He had no desire for one anywhere he could not readily see it himself. As the space on the front of him for tattoos decreased, his dissatisfaction grew and became general.

65 After one of his furloughs⁴, he didn't go back to the Navy but remained away without official leave, drunk, in a rooming house in a city he did not know. His dissatisfaction, from being chronic and latent, had suddenly become acute and raged in him. It was as if the panther and the lion and the serpents and the eagles and the hawks had penetrated his skin and lived inside him in a raging warfare. The Navy caught up with him, put him in the brig⁵ for nine
70 months and then gave him a dishonorable discharge.

After that Parker decided that country air was the only kind fit to breathe. He rented the shack on the embankment and bought the old truck and took various jobs which he kept as long as it suited him. At the time he met his future wife, he was buying apples by the bushel and selling them for the same price by the pound to isolated homesteaders on backcountry
75 roads.

"All that there," the girl said, pointing to his arm, "is no better than what a fool Indian would do. It's a heap of vanity." She seemed to have found the word she wanted. "Vanity of vanities," she said.

80 Well what the hell do I care what she thinks of it? Parker asked himself, but he was plainly bewildered. "I reckon you like one of these better than another anyway," he said, dallying until he thought of something that would impress her. He thrust the arm back at her. "Which you like best?"

"None of them," she said, "but the chicken is not as bad as the rest."

"What chicken?" Parker almost yelled at her.

85 She pointed to the eagle.

Flannery O'Connor, 'Parker's Back', *Everything That Rises Must Converge*, 1965

4 furlough: a period of time off work.

5 brig (here): naval military prison.

Questions to be answered in the following order:

1. A restless soul: Show how the sight of a tattooed man transforms Parker.
2. How do Parker's tattoos affect his relationships to others?
3. Study the relationships between tattoos and storytelling in the text.
4. What is at stake in fashioning one's visual identity? Use examples from the English speaking world.

Translation into French:

From "He had his first tattoo sometime after..." (l. 31) to "...nobody had to know it was his mother." (l. 39).