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PRINCIPAL COURSE FRENCH

9779/04

Paper 4 Topics and Texts

May/June 2016

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 60

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This document consists of **26** printed pages.

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Part I: Topics – Marking grid for content

18–20	<i>Excellent</i>	Excellent ability to organise material in relation to the question. Comprehensive knowledge of both texts/films. Ability to look beyond the immediate material and to show good understanding of underlying themes.
15–17	<i>Very good</i>	Thoughtful and well argued response to the question. Thorough knowledge of both texts/films. Detailed understanding and illustration of thematic and comparative issues.
12–14	<i>Good</i>	Well argued response to the question. Equally sound knowledge of both texts/films. Good understanding and illustration of the thematic and comparative issues.
9–11	<i>Satisfactory</i>	Mainly relevant response to the question. Shows fair knowledge of texts/films. Some understanding and illustration of the thematic and comparative issues AND/OR good understanding of texts/films, but lacking detail. Stronger on one text/film than on the other.
5–8	<i>Weak</i>	Uneven OR basic response to the question. Shows some knowledge and understanding of the texts/films. Includes some relevant points, but development and illustration are limited. Contains padding AND/OR has some obvious omissions OR is largely narrative.
1–4	<i>Poor</i>	Little attempt to answer the question. Poor knowledge and understanding of the texts/films. Insubstantial with very little relevance.
0		No rewardable content.

Part I: Topics – Marking grid for language

10	<i>Excellent</i>	Almost flawless. Excellent range of vocabulary and complex sentence patterns. Good sense of idiom.
8–9	<i>Very good</i>	Highly accurate. Wide range of vocabulary and complex sentence patterns. Some sense of idiom.
6–7	<i>Good</i>	Generally accurate. Good range of vocabulary and some complex sentence patterns.
4–5	<i>Satisfactory</i>	Predominantly simple patterns correctly used and/or some complex language attempted, but with variable success. Adequate range of vocabulary, but some repetition.
2–3	<i>Weak</i>	Persistent errors. Simple and repetitive sentence patterns. Limited vocabulary.
1	<i>Poor</i>	Little evidence of grammatical awareness. Very limited vocabulary.
0		No rewardable language.

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1 LA FRANCE PENDANT LA GUERRE (1939–45)

- A « Le comportement des Français face à l'invasion et à l'occupation nazie est vivement critiqué. » Jusqu'à quel point êtes-vous d'accord avec cet avis ? Expliquez votre réponse en vous référant aux ouvrages étudiés.**

Film: *Lucie Aubrac* (Berri)

The film primarily examines the activities of a group of Resistance fighters in the Lyons area, and to that end candidates may find much material with which to rebut the title. On the other hand, there are a number of details which contrast with a positive interpretation of French actions, and this could lead to a balanced discussion. The film shows through the daily life of the French, how loyalties were split; some interests were best served by collaborating with the Nazis and some favoured a more honourable ethic in the resistance.

The story of the Aubrac couple is remarkable, showing the strength of character, courage and love for each other, as well as their commitment to the Resistance. Various forms of resistance, even on a daily basis in Lyons, (one of the key centres of resistance), are evoked: black market, helping Jews survive, maintaining escape networks, forging documents. The Aubrac couple, serving selflessly in the resistance, and going beyond the call of duty (for personal reasons too) are at one extreme of the scale of French patriotic behaviour. Analysis of Aubrac's Resistance group will reveal differing degrees of commitment and heroism amongst its members: Resistance leaders (Jean Moulin), committed followers (Samuel/Aubrac), collaborators, traitors are all present. Aubrac's parents are arrested and deported, demonstrating the general wave of anti-Semitism and a willingness (of some Frenchmen) to betray the existence of Jews to the Nazi authorities. There is thus a mixed picture.

Némirovsky, *Tempête en juin* (from Némirovsky, *Suite française*)

The book concentrates on the early days of the war, before the German soldiers have completely overrun the country, thus the emphasis is on the reaction of individuals and families to the early bombs and destruction and the worsening economic situation.

The chaos of the invasion and beginning of the Occupation surprised many of the characters who are self-absorbed and continue to act as if order and society would continue as before. A number of them reveal a lack of perspective, and demonstrate surprising arrogance and self-interest e.g. Corte and Florence, feelings of social superiority and wealth, e.g. M and Mme Pericand; Charles Langelet's life and mentality are in denial of the changed country and society. Hubert Pericand has youthful and naive ideas about defeating the advancing armies, but realises that defeat is inevitable when he discovers the reality of the shortage of guns and ammunition amongst the soldiers he tries to help. Theft and exploitation (Corbin, Corte) become the norm. Thus the majority of characters are not interested in the war, but are anxious to advance their self-preservation and to try to continue living as if the war was not on. Maurice and Jeanne Michaud are the exception. Maurice is one of the few who helps others (e.g. carrying their luggage), and has no inflated view of his importance in the world. Whilst there are a few well-meaning or patriotic characters, much of the text focuses on the fear, selfishness and greed of the majority.

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Dutourd, *Au bon beurre*

The satirical novel concentrates on French behaviour and attitudes during the Occupation. At the forefront are greed, treachery and opportunism of those who target first and foremost financial gains during the Occupation. War is seen, with a dose of black humour, as a positive thing: *Grâce à Dieu, la guerre continuait*, and there is a distinct atmosphere of cowardice and a lack of moral compass: *la France méritait ses malheurs*. There is ample illustration of rivalry, division and betrayal; behaviour is motivated by political or personal expediency; (e.g. the depiction of those who forge Resistance identities at the end of the war (e.g. Legrandier, Delahausse). Collaboration with the Germans is both passive and active. Aspects indicate the wide-spread support of the Vichy régime. The Poissonnard couple thrive by speculating on people's misery, while supporting the policies of Pétain. Personal privation (e.g. food shortages), exploitation (e.g. Léonie) and Anti-Semitism (e.g. Rappoport) are rife. Those characters who might try to do good are satirised mercilessly.

B « Bien que ces ouvrages traitent d'une période de l'invasion et de l'occupation de la France, l'espoir est toujours présent. » Jusqu'à quel point ce jugement est-il valable ? Expliquez votre réponse en vous référant aux ouvrages étudiés.

Film: *Lucie Aubrac* (Berri)

Wartime Lyon, governed by Klaus Barbie, is indicative of the pressure on the French to conform to the repressed lifestyle imposed by the occupying power. Although elements are not always in the foreground, it is clear that the French try to carry on a normal life, even going as far as to collaborate with the enemy in order to improve their personal (economic) situation. Wartime privations were the norm, thus rationing, the black market, restrictions on movement and raids and ID checks are shown in the film. However, arrests of resistance fighters, black marketeers and Jews were frequent. Hope, where this was alive, meant survival. The prospect of combatting or defeating the Nazi army through patriotic activity, and more particularly the Resistance movement, appealed to a minority. The film shows through the daily life how split loyalties there were between those who accepted the status quo and those who lived in the hope of a brighter future.

The resistance fighters were active in the Lyons region, and the Aubrac couple in particular showed determination and resilience in undermining the Nazi war effort. The instances of betrayal (both meetings of Resistance leaders, for example) are evidence of self-interest and a lack of patriotism, or perhaps more sinister reasons for siding with the enemy. The film, of course, centres on the lives and exploits of the true resistance heroes Jean Moulin and the Aubrac couple, and answers will point to their activities (undermining the German regime through sabotage, assassination, etc.), the risks they ran (discovery of forged documents, denunciation, torture, death), and the conditions they lived under. The film's narrative shows them to be unassuming but determined fighters, each in their own way, and emphasises the strenuous efforts which were made to battle against the odds with surprising success.

Némirovsky, *Tempête en juin* (from Némirovsky, *Suite française*)

The chaos of the invasion and beginning of the Occupation surprised many of the characters who are self-absorbed and continue to act as if order and society would continue as before.

The panic which follows the mass departure from Paris brings out the worst of human behaviour. Widespread chaos ensues – railways suffering overcrowding or bombed tracks, shortages of gasoline and food. The Michauds are portrayed as moral beacons among the selfishness all around them. Examples of egotism and arrogance include Corte, Corbin and Pericand. The army is at one point the source of hope in defeating the invader. Hubert is the

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naïve young patriot who has high hopes for a reversal of military fortune, but that soon proves to be a chimera, as the French are short of weapons and ammunition and the soldiers are soon overrun. News of the armistice is greeted by the displaced as an answered prayer. Survivors wind their way bit by bit to Paris, where an occupying enemy and a harsh winter await them; the French are unable to think beyond their immediate world. Hope has been crushed.

Dutourd, *Au bon beurre*

The overwhelming majority of characters are not interested in the war, but are anxious to advance their self-preservation and to try to continue living as if the war were not on. At the forefront are greed, treachery and opportunism of those who target financial gains during the Occupation or getting one up on their neighbours. There is ample illustration of rivalry, division and betrayal and exploitation of people in a weaker position. Behaviour is motivated by political or personal expediency with no regard for the bigger picture, patriotism or any moral scruples. Where characters are motivated to do something for the good of the country, their efforts are ridiculed (e.g. Léon's bungled attempt to kill Laval). War represented a suspension of normal order and becomes an opportunity to reveal baser human instincts. Any element of hope is restricted to survival until the end of the war, and even then, hope in human nature is dashed by the Poissonard's manipulation of those who displease them (e.g. Léon's posting abroad).

2 LES RELATIONS FAMILIALES EN CONTEXTE FRANCOPHONE

A Quelles différences y a-t-il entre la présentation des rôles masculins et celle des rôles féminins dans ces ouvrages ?

Film: *C.R.A.Z.Y.* (Vallée)

In *CRAZY* the family situation is a complex one. Zach is born into a conservative environment with gender-defined roles. His father and brothers are at ease with their male identities and lifestyle, whereas Zach does not fit into the stereotype expected of him. The father, something of a caricature of the masculine figure of dominance and traditional outlook, has to come to terms with a variety of personal challenges: Raymond's descent into drug dependency, and Zach's femininity as a child, his 'gift from God', and his homosexuality. The father's reaction ranges from conservative isolationism, through paternal concern to a questioning of religious authority and eventually he embraces a more open-minded acceptance of individualism.

The mother is, emotionally supportive and caring for her sons, is religious, committed to the Church and sets great store in spirituality. She is unstinting in her support for Raymond and Zach as they face their problems. She has an intuitive understanding (and telepathic link) to Zach. The figure of Zach cuts across the neat divide. The symbolism of the David Bowie figure, which generates mockery (from the neighbourhood) and shame, is echoed by his experiences with Toto and in Jerusalem and foreshadows his identity at the end of the film. The resolution of the crisis is a plea for tolerance and acceptance, rather than social stigmatisation of those who do not conform to type.

Sebbar (ed.), *Une enfance outremer*

The father figure is a unifying factor for a number of stories and the male is the dominant role in the majority of them:

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In Bey's story, the father as authoritarian figure who is politically active; she obeys his wish not to go to school during FLN general strike (première humiliation); the family has an association with the guerilla movement; the males of the family, father, uncles are taken away and executed. Then psychological emptiness and anguish come to the fore.

Chouaki's character has no father : *la béance à vie ...sur mon front le cinglant signe du sort* ; a social stigma. It falls to the mother to raise him and encourage school success.

Similarly it is the (temporary) absence of a father figure which is striking in Erouart-Siad's story. He is humiliated at school because of this. It is only when the father returns that the family feels complete. Both Raharimanana and Erouart-Siad show the social stigma and emotional impact on not having a male authority in the house.

Dongala fils d'instituteur ; there are mixed messages from the social background of his parents whose origins reflect North/South divide which feeds into sense of not belonging, of alienation. His parents forced him to use his right hand, not the dominant left. The father represents the world of books, learning, education : *je voulais tout savoir*.

Efoui, whose story centres on father's obsession with prayers and burial plot following the sister's death. The chasm of grief evoked by silences and memory, very different from many of the other father figures.

Raharimanana's story is partly about a friend, Anja, whose father is taken away by soldiers of the revolution, and imprisoned for black marketeering. In contrast, the mother became a broken reed who was avoided by the author. Overbearing sense of isolation as reaction to political violence and social dissolution. His own father is both disciplinarian and the vector for culture and education; the narrator wants to read his father's entire library. It is the mother, though, whom he badgers to teach him to read and send him to school.

The mother figure or female is generally reduced to a supporting role in the family. Marie-Thérèse Humbert's story about Lydie, though, shows a different emphasis, when the maid talks about her choice in courting men.

Chraïbi, *La Civilisation, ma mere*

The book charts the development of a family in pre- and post-war Morocco. The mother, her strength of character, and the transformations which take place in her daily routine and outlook. It is a conservative, Muslim society which is the backdrop, where men are traditionally the ones who are educated and who go out to work. Thus the father and two sons are free agents and have a knowledge of the world. The mother, at the outset, is a metaphor for women's situation in a changing world, and is the focus of the book. From an illiterate woman who does not venture into the outside world, she becomes liberated from stifling social traditions. She becomes literate, becomes active in the women's liberation movement, learns to drive, pursues education, and in the end decides to join her son in France to extend her knowledge. While there is a blossoming of potential, her sincerity, humour and love of family are unaltered. The choice of two (male) narrators underlines the strong ties between sons and mother, and brings out the tenderness, amusement and admiration they feel for her. Their role contrasts with that of the father, who is increasingly isolated from the family; he represents the old, conservative mentality of Moroccan society and politics. It is no surprise, at the end of the novel, that he does not follow his family into exile (and, by implication, civilisation) in France.

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B A quelles difficultés ces personnages doivent-ils faire face en s'adaptant à l'environnement familial, culturel et social ? Expliquez votre réponse en vous référant aux ouvrages étudiés.

Film: *C.R.A.Z.Y.* (Vallée)

Zach spends much of his childhood attempting to come to terms with himself and his social environment. He desperately wants to not be different, but fate marks him out early on as having a special gift (of healing). His rebellion is both an inner one, fighting against himself, fighting against social conservatism, his father, and the school. As a teenager he embraces atheism, thereby rejecting the Catholic Church, smokes (his brother's) cannabis, rejecting the house rules, and prays that he does not become homosexual. His battle or refusal not to accept himself severely tests his friendship with Michelle, leads to a frenzied brawl at school in the belief that by beating up Toto he could purge himself of 'otherness', and generates arguments with his conservative father. Pretence and denial work only in the short term. The suffocating family environment leads to several crises. Jerusalem becomes a symbol of Zach finding himself on a number of levels, and after flirting with death in the desert, he returns home a changed person, a prodigal son, to the town of his childhood where he gains acceptance by his father. Father and son complete their difficult journey towards acceptance of 'the other'.

Sebbar (ed.), *Une enfance outremer*

The stories recount episodes which have leave a mark in the memory of the narrator. Candidates may choose to mention some of the following:

Some of the stories point to challenges and changes in the social or political landscape (Bey, Chouaki, Raharimanana) ; the shifting sands of decolonisation (Djibouti) and independence (Algeria).

Problems of identity, adaptation (Bey, Chouaki, Brival, Pineau, Sebbar) ; racial and sexual identity (Brival) raised through the topos of carnival masks.

The pressures on local culture and heritage set against the linguistic/political/social environment (Dongala, Bey, Sebbar, Chouaki) ;

Death, violence, trauma (Lahens, Bey, Raharimanana).

Discussion of the family, its impact and meaning – e.g. portrayals of father (Erouart-Siad, Dongala) or the absence of father (e.g. Bey).

Chraïbi, *La Civilisation, ma mère*

Education was traditionally the preserve of men in pre-war Morocco. Strict gender stereotyping in Islamic culture meant that the woman's place was in the home exclusively. The story of the mother's education in social, technological and political issues highlights the difficulties for women to change their lives but also for such a society of accepting change. The challenge to male-dominated society is amply spelt out through the vector of the mother's development (confronting social conservatism, women's education, women's discussion of politics and their role in society). Her husband is (perhaps unrealistically) long suffering and supportive of her education and personal development, and bears her abandoning of her traditional role (e.g. cooking meals) with stoicism. However, her interest in, and commitment to, political and social change is a stumbling block both for him and the country at large. This refusal to entertain the thought of women becoming freethinking and politically engaged is unacceptable to him (so he does not join her going to France). It is also rejected by the menfolk in the villages she visits, as she is advocating women's emancipation, anathema to the established way of life in rural Morocco.

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3 INTEGRATION/EXCLUSION/CITOYENNETÉ

A Comment réagissent les habitants des cités de banlieue aux souffrances sociales et au mal-être ?

Film: *La Haine* (Kassovitz)

The beginning of the film portrays a crisis situation, when a policeman shoots one of the residents. The pictures of rioting at the beginning indicate the degree of frustration and social unrest amongst the disenfranchised population. The three main protagonists, who bond together as a group, represent three separate minorities (Arab, Jew, African) in the housing estate. The setting in the *cité* in the Parisian suburbs suggests it is a separate world from the capital, and the focus on graffiti, drab surroundings and a lack of serviceable resources forces the characters to busy themselves and confront daily life in a variety of ways. The viewer sees solidarity, friendship and humour come to the fore within a context of violence and exclusion.

Vinz is a hothead, a vector for violent posturing (pistol, mirror) and anger. Hubert and Saïd try to reason with him not to give in to an act of violent revenge, though ultimately fail as a succession of events illustrating the disdain, rejection and racism of parts of society lead Vinz to carry the gun around. Hubert is the voice of reason. He tries to offer a positive way of life (e.g. running a community gym). Despite encountering problems in Paris, where he is abused by the police and encounters a gang of skinheads, his attitude is non-confrontational. He sells drugs on the estate and gives his mother money to pay the electricity bill. Only when Vinz is accidentally shot by the plain clothes policeman does he resort to violence. Vinz's and Saïd's aggressive responses to their alienation from society are tempered by realities of daily life. Vinz goes food-shopping for his grandmother, for example.

Whilst they have created their own sub-culture and way of survival in the *cité*, their response to meeting outsiders is instructive. Three times the youths are confronted with biased police behaviour, which fuels their frustration and violence. The reaction of the three protagonists to the journalist underlines the fact that they are not impersonal hooligans who belong in a zoo, but individuals who are to be respected. The episode in the vernissage emphasises the difference in education and social codes between the representatives of the banlieue and Parisian intellectuals; misunderstanding, offensive behaviour and a rejection of 'civilised norms' ensue. The episode with the old man shows them as polite listeners, but they do not understand the significance of the story; for the audience, it is clear that Grunwalski fails to adapt to circumstances (by not being able to catch up with the train), so dies; the problem of not being able to adapt will befall Vinz, Saïd and Hubert, after they too miss the train.

Film: *La Désintégration* (Faucon)

There is a variety of responses by the characters in the film. The first generation of immigrants (e.g. Ali's parents) work and have found their niche. Two of Mme Aouzi's children (Rachid, Yasmina) are well integrated into local society, are positive and making their way in life. They contrast with Ali, the one who is most frustrated by the lack of job offers and who turns to Islamic fundamentalism. Frighteningly, he is manipulated into becoming a suicide bomber. Two other young men also find themselves drawn into religious extremism: Nasser, who after a violent altercation with a racist on the estate, hides with Djamel; and Hamza (Nico), who is a Western convert to Islam. They are both taught to believe that there can be no integration into Western society, and that they must turn to Allah, (e.g. *Cette société représente un danger pour vous*). Ali's mother reminds him of the basic Islamic tenets of respect and sharing; the imam preaches non-violence; but Ali only listens to the distorting advice of Djamel who reads passages on jihad from the Koran. Ali's behaviour changes significantly, and he grows apart, even within the family, as a way of compensating for his

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lack of success elsewhere; he wears the djellaba, grows a beard, berates his sister for not wearing a veil; he also attracts the attention of the intelligence agents, who warn the family about Djamel's baleful influence. The angry young man, who has been used as an instrument by extremists, is an exceptional case; the majority of characters play their role in a close knit society. The mother's reaction to Ali's suicide bombing is a touching reminder of the personal loss to the community.

Begag, *Béni ou le paradis privé*

The narrator, Ben Abdallah, recounts life as a second generation immigrant in Lyons. He grows up aware of the difficult position he is in, finding the traditions and culture of his family impermeable and alien to Western culture (e.g. Christmas presents, going out with girls) and that French society sees him as a foreigner, even though he was born in France (e.g. *Pour un étranger vous maîtrisez plutôt bien le français*). The family is set in its ways; the father wants to arrange for a marriage for the elder son in the traditional way; he rejects the notion that his son might marry a non-Algerian for social and ethnic reasons: *Quoi ? c'est des Françaises que vous voulez, bande de chiens ! Vous voulez salir notre nom, notre race !* He wants Nordine to go to Algeria, build a house and prepare for return of the family. The father is well aware of the extent of racism in French society : *Allez, allez épouser des Françaises : quand vous pleurerez parce qu'elles vous auront traité de « bicou », vous reviendrez chez votre vieux qui comprend rien*. He is an unqualified worker who works long hours for the family. Despite his advice being ignored by Béni, his assessment turns out to be correct.

Racist attitudes are confirmed by the casual conversation the café Béni overhears. His excellence at school is held against him for his Algerian descent, but he is committed to doing well. His mother, who only ventures out of the home to do the shopping, is happiest talking to fellow Algerian women in the market, not French.

Béni desperately wants to be accepted by France and the French, and tries to renounce his name and change his appearance to appear more French and less Algerian. But his attempts are in vain: racism and contempt in society are as immutable as his physical appearance.

He is accepted socially by the rebellious youth of the area rather better than by the Vidal family. His desire to be one of them even leads him to play truant. He attempts to join in their activities (e.g. gaining entry to cinema, night club), but fails signally because of his appearance.

B A votre avis, les valeurs de la société française, comprennent-elles 'liberté, égalité, fraternité' ? Répondez en discutant des ouvrages étudiés.

Film: *La Haine* (Kassovitz)

The film centres on a housing estate. It is an area of depravation, high unemployment, violence, social exclusion. Its' location on the edge of the city suggests exclusion from the mainstream life of Parisian society. With the absence of authority (e.g. father figure) and no jobs, there is little on offer than keeping fit, socialising (dance, music) and drug trafficking. Graffiti on the walls about the police shows frustration; this contrasts with the advertising slogans (*le monde est à vous/nous*), an ironic commentary on the plight of the banlieues, and a reminder that there is not just equality of opportunity but also a social divide.

The three main characters, representative of three minority groups, bond together, perhaps because of their common situation on the estate. The impromptu barbecue on the roof shows fraternity amongst the inhabitants of the estate, but this is disrupted (symbolically) by the

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police. Of the three, only Hubert shows signs of being able to communicate in a different social situation (at the vernissage); there is a lack of communication between the two social groups there. Fraternity on a larger scale is thus limited. Elsewhere in the film the three are treated with a singular lack of respect by journalists and the police, and ethnic discrimination, if not racism, is evident. The ideals of the Revolution, it would appear, are somewhat muted.

Film: *La Désintégration* (Faucon)

There is a distinction to be drawn between those who have tried to live their lives with ambition, hard work and who are at ease and Ali. M and Mme Aouzi have worked hard as first generation immigrants; two of their children, Rachid and Yasmina are well integrated into local society. These contrast with Ali, who by coming into contact with Djamel, becomes increasingly convinced of a lack of acceptance by society (e.g. his frustration at not finding an appropriate job); he comes to feel that the symbolic values of the State do not hold true for all: '*Liberté, égalité fraternité entre blancs, et zéro musulman.*' Nasser, at the outset, wants to stand up against racism and discrimination on behalf of some youngsters, but chooses violence. The development of the plotline of radicalisation emphasises that some do not accept, or indeed reject, the core values of French society (*Cette société représente un danger pour vous*).

Book: *Béni ou le paradis privé*

The book charts the difficulties faced by a second generation immigrant who feels wishes to be accepted fully by French society, but who comes across prejudice and racism. He is ambitious and energetic, and though he was born in Lyons, teachers regard him as non-French because of his name and appearance. His pursuit of a girl named France gives a symbolic note to his personal situation as well as painting a picture of the wider context of racism: *Ben Abdallah et France ! Tout de suite ça sent l'agression, l'incompatible*. He is hassled by police (contrôle de papiers abusif). Other discrimination is clear when the family stops off for the night on the way to a funeral; there is clear distrust by the proprietor of the hotel, and he insists that whole family show ID and carte de travail to be able to get a room. The father also spells out, in his rejection of his sons' desire to marry French girls, how widespread racism is: *c'est des Françaises que vous voulez, bande de chiens ! Vous voulez salir notre nom, notre race !...Allez, allez épouserdes Françaises : quand vous pleurerez parce qu'elles vous auront traité de « bicou », vous reviendrez chez votre vieux qui comprend rien*. France is not universally seen as a country which welcomes immigrants, as the café conversation about Gitans demonstrates: *tu les accueilles, tu leur donnes du boulot, ils violent tes femmes: France, pays d'accueil ! Voilà le résultat !* Béni's thoughts of his own past/identity/family on the way to the nightclub show how different he feels about his own identity and that of France. The episode of the nightclub itself shows acceptance of Black culture in the form of music but rejection of the physical appearance of an Algerian immigrant. The name Béni is an ironic commentary on his position, as is the thought *la guerre d'Algérie est finie*, when it is clearly still much in the minds and attitudes of the *Français de souche*. The three core values of the Revolution thus ring hollow.

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4 VISIONS DE SOCIÉTÉ

A Ces histoires, jusqu'à quel point présentent-elles une image optimiste de la société?

Film: *Delicatessen* (Jeunet)

The post-apocalyptic society portrayed in the film is a desperate dog-eat-dog one, where fear and hunger rule. Survival at any price motivates most of the community. Humanity is reduced to cannibalism, save the trogladists, who are vegetarian. The behaviour, attitude and character of Louison suggest a different, kinder set of values. It is this, combined with the elements of love (Julie) and culture (music) which triumph over the evil of the house. This might offer a rare ray of optimism against the backdrop of desperation, greed and selfishness which characterise a community bent on survival at any cost. Interpretations of the film may vary, seeing the film as a satire of eating habits, a representation of the inhumanity of society, or as a metaphor for the Occupation.

Film: *Alphaville* (Godard)

The city of the title is a futuristic state which has reduced most people to programmable machines, a society in which the world of logic is highly prized and obedience to Von Braun is paramount. Emotion is discouraged. Visitors are interrogated, and if found to be suspicious or undesirable by Alpha 60, they are condemned to death, as are those citizens who have transgressed norms of behaviour. There is no freedom of thought, and thought itself is controlled by reducing the number of allowable words in 'the Bible'. Conversation and actions are stylised to such an extent that they often become meaningless. The aims of von Braun are complete domination of the universe through nuclear war. The antidote to this repressive society, provided by Lemmy Caution, is poetry (Eluard's *La Capitale de la douleur*), and then sabotage. When the computers malfunction, humans are unable to walk or behave normally. The only option is to escape from the nightmare of Alphaville. The final scene, where Lemmy's love is reciprocated, puts a positive spin on the myth of Orpheus returning from the underworld.

Barjavel: *Ravage*

Whilst some answers may point to the sophistication of a technology-driven world in the Paris of 2052, where scientific progress has been significant, there is likely to be consideration of the consequences of the failure of technology and the very basic human instincts which come to the fore when the world returns to a state of nature.

La Ville Radieuse shows a sociological consideration of society ; descriptions waver between utopia and dystopia. Towns are well-structured, clean, pleasant. Technology has replaced man in many respects. People are there but not always effective in their work (e.g. *serveuses de bar*). Technology (especially the wondrous material *plastec*) is held in greater regard than people, as the description of the train crash demonstrates. The label 'Siècle 1er de l'Ere de Raison' points to how culture and social considerations have been trumped by technology. Only manual workers still have a tough and short life. Finance and power are lampooned through the character of Seita. Life has become artificial (fisherman would not dream of eating their catch, Blanche is not interested in emotions, just material comfort).

The events following the power cut show man's propensity to be weak and selfish. It does allow man to become once again the centrepiece of society through various testing experiences. When Blanche and François finally reach Vaux, having escaped the dehumanising capital, now in ruins, they become the vehicle for the author to show that key values, which had been lost in technological Paris, are essential to man and society – the love of the earth, effort, courage, pride and love of the family. The book can also be read as a satire of modern society.

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B Quels sont les plus grands dangers de société présentés dans les ouvrages que vous avez étudiés ?

Film: *Delicatessen* (Jeunet)

A number of lines of enquiry are possible. The post-apocalyptic life in the prison of a block of flats highlights the base side of human nature when survival is at stake. The butcher represents a terrifying figure who, whilst providing food and lodging, determines the fate of many; all the tenants are beholden to him and do not question his actions, but acquiesce in cannibalism and murder. (Parallels with a dictator such as Hitler, are clear). Louison, a Candide figure, could be viewed as a device for bringing out the characteristics of the tenants, or he might be a cypher for a non-conformist, a person who remains true to his principles. The dangers of a conformist/totalitarian society which is paralleled with the Nazis are demonstrated by the violent nature and scornful attitudes of the butcher and the postman; they harbour a visceral hatred of the troglodists (resistance fighters). Many of the other tenants are collaborators who are happy to go on a manhunt at the end of the film; the prospect of loss of life is a very real one. Society has broken down, the relations between characters are cynical and embittered; the tenants live in a tyranny.

Film: *Alphaville* (Godard)

The repressive society of Alphaville subordinates human beings to the dictatorship of Von Braun and the rule of life by technology. Answers may point to the lack of individual freedom, the absence of freedom of thought and the disappearance of expression of imagination, the state's harnessing of technology to dominate humanity, the absolute faith in science and technology which leads to a dysfunctional society – the city is seen as soulless, an amalgam of unfriendly concrete and glass decorated with flashing signs. Further, the breakdown of normal social relations, underpinned by the manipulation of language, (and with that, thought), reveal a society devoid of emotion and creativity. The use of violence and capital punishment for those who disobey or who are deemed to represent a threat underline the dangers of a dictatorship. The role of women is worthy of consideration: their function is in service to the state : in the hotel they are portrayed as sex workers; at the swimming pool they recover executed bodies while performing synchronised swimming, thus normal values and aesthetics are twisted out of shape. The stylised action and meaningless use of language underline the dystopic nature of Alphaville.

Barjavel: *Ravage*

Answers might target the earlier part of the book and analyse the over-reliance on technology, a world where life is comfortable and well-regulated, but where humans have little to do or decide. Barjavel's awareness of the fallibility of modern science is all too clear. Allied with the utopia/dystopia of *la Ville Radieuse*, answers may point to the nature of changing social values and attitudes to death, as demonstrated by the *Conservatoires*. *Le patriarche* explores the return to nature and the problems with establishing a self-reliant, agrarian society with no machinery. This may be the antidote to the over-reliance on technology described in the first part, but this part also points to the problems of an authoritarian regime, with its refusal to contemplate anything other than primitivism. Money and commerce are banned; alcohol is understandably banned, but so are books which condemn civilisation to work hard and not be bothered by ideas or concepts beyond the immediate. Buildings are kept to a modest size, unlike the structures of *la Ville Radieuse*. Life here is healthy. The position of women may be commented on too. They are forced into a state of polygamy to ensure the survival of the tribe.

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5 LES VOYAGES

A A votre avis, que signifie les différents voyages dans les ouvrages que vous avez étudiés ?

Film: *Code inconnu: récit incomplet de divers voyages* (Haneke)

The film consists of 39 fragments plus a prologue and an epilogue. The fragmented narrative allows for a number of different interpretations of the different characters' 'journeys' and their interconnectedness.

Attitudes to work/daily life: Anne is trying to make it as a film actress while her boyfriend, Georges, tries to make sense of his profession as a photographer. Georges' brother, Jean, is meanwhile trying to escape from the influence of his father who wants him to take over the family farming business. Maria, the Romanian beggar, is caught without papers and deported. Back home, she boasts she had a good job as a teacher in Paris and, unperturbed by the ignominy of the experiences she has gone through, pays money to be smuggled back into the country, provoking questions about the reason for journey: self-exile or a search for money. Amadou is presented as a music teacher for deaf-mute children, a challenging profession.

Attitudes to truth and falsehood combine with different narrative voices reflecting the varied perceptions of events and life. The film is multi-layered, including the film of a film, to question different voices or layers of narrative. Anne is cast in a film where she is trapped in a room by a killer, a scenario contrasted with Anne's notion that the child that lives next door might be the victim of abuse. To force her lover to react, Anne tells him she considered an abortion, but then denies being pregnant. She pleads for her life, but this turns out to be in the film she is shooting. Maria's claim that she worked as a teacher in Paris is wishful thinking.

The social interaction between characters and events is a reflection on urban living. The images from Kosovo are contrasted with shots of Paris; this could be interpreted as a satirical comparison of human values. The film enjoins a cross section of cultures, contrasting attitudes and prejudices in a way which forces the audience to review examples of social interaction, justice, and the (non) functioning of codes in society.

The journeys are 'incomplete journeys' according to Haneke. They reflect the kaleidoscope pattern of urban life. Haneke's aim is to challenge the traditional unifying force of a clear narrative thread. He is, perhaps, more concerned with ways of perception that create the illusion of unity than offering a clear message.

Van Cauwelaert, *Un aller simple*

The structure of the novel interweaves the biographies of two characters by the author. It is the architecture for a work which traces two parallel lives, two characters who feel out of place where they live, are in search of identity, two men who like story telling, are separated from significant women. At the outset, it seems that Aziz will be the central figure, but it turns out that Jean-Pierre uses Aziz to write his story, the starting point being his carnet which then gains a substantial preface, then Aziz becomes the commentator, a substitute for the author. Resemblance of the two characters leads to confusion and finally substitution.

The structure of the novel allows the reader to distance him/herself from the characters and events, and the interplay of true/false, illusion/reality, and the games that the author plays suggest an approach which is not a straightforward criticism of urban society. The urban environments (Marseilles, Lorraine, Paris) contrast with the desert scenes and deliberately

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generate misunderstandings or obfuscations which are at the heart of the plot (the problem of Aziz's identity, of immigration, the nature of government bureaucracy; for J-P Schneider a stifling environment where he cannot communicate properly with his parents or with women.). Further, J-P Schneider uses Aziz to talk about himself, he uses Irghez to talk about Lorraine, and the grey men to evoke the civilisation under threat, ie the Lorraine steelworkers who will lose their jobs. The resolution of the identity crisis is accompanied by the return to Lorraine, where the individual (Aziz) has found his place/identity in society.

Discussion could focus on the parallels between Aziz, Jean-Pierre and the respective women in their failed relationships which intersperse the journey narrative: Aziz – Lila ; Jean-Pierre – Clémentine, Jean-Pierre – Agnès. The two women in Jean-Pierre's life link his failure as a writer with his failure as a lover. Both encouraged him to write, but he was unable to find the creative urge. Agnès, his childhood friend refused him, which filled him with shame. The lack of communication between the two echoes the relationship J-P has with his parents. Valérie's relationship with both men has obvious parallels, though, and she is the point at which the destinies and identities of Aziz and Jean-Pierre become entwined. After Jean-Pierre's death, Aziz returns the body to Clémentine in Paris, but then, realising that she no longer is interested in Jean-Pierre, has second thoughts and returns it to Jean-Pierre's birthplace, Uckange, where he enables the parents to reunite with their son metaphorically, if not physically. The journey implied by the title may well be a one way *Bildungsreise* for J-P, but it is more of a return journey for Aziz.

Jorge Semprun, *Le grand voyage*

The novel is not only about the five seemingly endless days endured by Semprún and 119 other men in a goods wagon destined for Buchenwald. It is a journey through fragmented memories before, during and after deportation, incarceration and release. The journey is a means of coming to terms with the horror of the past and the inhumanity of the Nazi regime, the behaviour of local citizenry in France and Buchenwald, together with an explanation of political and philosophical commitment. It is a means with which the author comes to terms with his own survival, an attempt to accept destiny's choice.

B Comment les relations humaines sont-elles présentées dans les deux ouvrages que vous avez étudiés ?

Film: *Code inconnu: récit incomplet de divers voyages* (Haneke)

There is much material which could be viewed as inviting (negative) social comment: Respect (or the lack of it) in social relations: Amadou starts a furious row with Jean about the contemptuous way Jean treats a Romanian beggar; analysis of the lack of community and communication in multicultural Paris; the characters' attempts to achieve contact through dissimulation (e.g. Anne's claim to have had an abortion; the letter purporting to be from an abused child in the adjoining apartment). Immigration and multiculturalism, racial prejudice, e.g. French police pursue Amadou instead of Jean, after the altercation between the two; the Arab youth who confronts Anne in the metro, spits in her face and complains that she is a racist. This links with the theme of contempt. This is a feature of a number of examples of how the characters treat each other, e.g. the well-heeled Parisian whose face, full of disdain, hypocritically gives the beggar a large denomination note. This contrasts with Maria's shame at having to beg. Arrogance, e.g. the manner in which Georges surreptitiously photographs faces on the metro. The parallel/contrast of the media images from Kosovo suggest a mockery of human values as well as a satire on race and behaviour. Bigotry: the travesty ensues as the police arrive and arrest the beggar (Maria) contrasts with the African moralist (Amadou) who wants Jean to apologise to Maria.

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The film brings together a cross section of cultures, contrasting attitudes and prejudices in a way which invites the viewer to reflect on examples of social interaction, justice, and the (non) functioning of codes in society.

Van Cauwelaert, *Un aller simple*

Answers may look at the author's ludic narrative in tracing the childhood and youth of Aziz and his life with gypsies in Marseilles. He is an engaging and sociable type who fits in with his surroundings. Aziz, an avid reader, develops a tissue of lies, fiction, and dream: his deportation to Morocco, his relationship to Schneider and Mlle d'Armeray, the journey of discovery to Irghez (Paradise) contribute to different elements of identity and self-orientation. His relationship to Schneider moves from the illegal immigrant accompanied by an uncommunicative bureaucrat who has difficulties in relating to his family and to women, to that of guide, leading Schneider on a journey of self-discovery, passion and recklessness and finally death. Schneider's carnet is an excuse for Aziz to continue the journal after Schneider's death and to add his introductory story. The two contrasting biographies are brought together at the end to form a neat conclusion.

Answers may examine the significance of three women who leave both men feeling sad and unfulfilled: Clémentine, who has taken up with another man, thereby rejecting J-P and making him feel misunderstood and inadequate; Agnès, who refuses J-P in his youth; Lila, a gypsy girl whom Aziz marries, but from whom he is separated shortly afterwards by his arrest and deportation. Valérie d'Armeray, by contrast, is key to the development of both J-P Schneider and Aziz. In contrast to the men she is at ease with herself and her surroundings, and she is the literal and metaphorical guide, initiating them into adventure and passion. The journey is towards a non-existent place (Irghez), but she introduces culture, activities, and common sense in the journey of self-discovery for the two men.

Jorge Semprun, *Le grand voyage*

There is an engaging narratology, weaving memories of deportation and imprisonment. Semprun comments on those he came into contact with during resistance fighting, arrest and imprisonment, deportation, life in Buchenwald, life after release from the camp. The story begins with the narrator talking to a character, le gars de Semur, who turns out to be fictitious. This allows the author to discuss past and present events, to sketch out his life in the Resistance in the le maquis du Tabou (Yonne), and to show the multiple identities of the writer (je, il). Answers may pick out a number of themes. The deportation journey itself conveys the fear, fatigue, anxiety, and death of the 120 occupants of the cattle truck. During the Occupation in France and in the camp in Buchenwald, the range of behaviour, attitudes and relations is varied, and the circumstances of war shine a particularly harsh light on them. There is a numbness and seeming neutrality about a number of the conversations and meetings, reflecting the painfulness of memory and the absurdity of existence. Life in the camp is harsh; prisoners are safe in a group, in physical danger if exposed.

Friendship, companionship is juxtaposed with betrayal (the double agent in the Resistance group). The naiveté and surprise/disgust of many is brought out by the narrator showing the crematorium of the camp to the women from Mission France. The treatment of prisoners by soldiers and German civilians (contempt, scorn, hatred, brutality). Antisemitism (both in school and in the camp). The selfishness of Ramaillet, who receives food parcels in prison, but does not share them with others. There might be comment on the narrator's attitude to Germans, for example, his anger with the woman whose house overlooks the camp and who feigns ignorance of events, contrasting with his decision not to execute the two SS soldiers captured at the end of the war.

Candidates will present appropriate illustration to back up their argument.

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6 Racine, *Phèdre*

A Believing Thésée to be dead, Phèdre declared to Hippolyte her love for him. When he returns unexpectedly, Thésée's suspicions are aroused by Phèdre's abrupt announcement that she is unworthy of him and will conceal herself. C enone, in a misguided attempt to protect Phèdre from her husband's wrath, has implied to Thésée that Hippolyte has made amorous overtures to his stepmother. Too honourable to inculcate the latter, Hippolyte has attempted unsuccessfully to deny these allegations by confessing that he is in love with the political prisoner Aricie. Thésée has laid a curse on his son and banished him. Phèdre's belated decision to disculpate Hippolyte has been curtailed by the news that she has a rival for Hippolyte's affections. It is therefore left to Aricie to attempt to placate the king by pointing out that Hippolyte has led a blameless life and that he should not be sacrificed on the evidence of treacherous gossip. Thésée has been taken in by C enone's performance and his attitude shows his impetuous nature, his instinctive reluctance to admit that he might be wrong, and his equally instinctive hostility to an enemy of his people. His wounded pride distorts his perception of Hippolyte's true nature. The fact that Aricie has promised Hippolyte to maintain their honourable silence as to the identity of the guilty party makes it impossible to influence this false perception. Aricie knows that she cannot betray her lover in an attempt to save him, and that there is no other solution.

B Racine stated in the preface that the character of Phèdre possessed all the qualities which were '*propres   exciter la compassion et la terreur*'. How far do you agree?

Racine's portrayal of Phèdre carries with it a moral ambiguity to which he also alludes in the preface : she is neither entirely guilty nor entirely innocent. Her illicit passion for her stepson and her untimely confession in Act II had to be balanced by a strong sense of her morality and her overriding conviction that her death would restore the moral order she has upset. She is at pains from the outset to emphasise her attempts to conceal her passion. She has committed no crime, but feels guilty of betraying her husband in her heart. She has done everything possible to avoid Hippolyte, but is trapped in a claustrophobic court where she is constantly aware of his presence. Our compassion is therefore engaged by her moral rectitude, self-reproach and desperate attempts to contain her feelings. She decides to confess to Thésée in order to spare Hippolyte from his misguided wrath, but stops short when she learns that he is in love with Aricie. Compassion is aroused rather than outrage because she has been spared no torture hitherto apart from jealousy, believing that Hippolyte is indifferent to women. This final torment is beyond endurance. The element of terror is generated by the cruelty of fate. She cannot control the effects of her tainted heredity, nor the false rumour of Thésée's death which precipitates her confession to Hippolyte. All her attempts to prevent suffering to others are frustrated by forces beyond her control. Her suicide and determination to restore moral order thereby leave us with the image of a victim of fate. We are reminded of her statement when she first appears : « Tout m'afflige et me nuit, et conspire   me nuire. »

C To what extent does the role of C enone maintain the spectator's sympathy for Phèdre?

C enone initially takes a censorious tone, complaining that Phèdre is neglecting those around her and seeking death for reasons which have not been revealed. She is fearful that Phèdre's death might rob the latter's children of their status in a power struggle. She is glad to see Phèdre react violently to the mention of Hippolyte, who represents this threat, but only at this point does she discover the reason for this reaction. Her determination to stop Phèdre from courting death is redoubled by the news of Thésée's death : Phèdre's son will become a slave if she is not there to defend him. She encourages Phèdre to confront Hippolyte on this

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issue, pointing out that contact with him is no longer a matter for feeling guilty. The disastrous consequences of this encounter are blamed on Œnone :

« Par tes conseils flatteurs tu m'as su ranimer.
Tu m'as fait entrevoir que je pouvais aimer. »

This is hardly fair. Œnone was seeking to protect both Phèdre and her son. She unwittingly put Phèdre in a situation whereby Hippolyte's physical presence precipitated an outburst of passion. Thereafter, Œnone is driven by her dislike and mistrust of Hippolyte to persuade Phèdre to allow her to cause Thésée to banish his son by implying that he has tried to seduce his stepmother. When Phèdre realises the destructive consequences of this advice, she curses Œnone for making her forget her duty, for encouraging her to see Hippolyte, and for bringing Thésée's curse down on his head. Œnone could be said to have taken advantage of Phèdre's debilitated state to further her own agenda, but the terrifying power of frustrated passion, augmented by jealousy and channelled by cruel circumstances are at least as influential on the course of events as misguided advice.

7 Molière, *Tartuffe*

A Two Acts precede Tartuffe's appearance. Much has been said to prepare the spectator, in terms of the discrepancy between his pretence of piety and the reality of his hypocrisy, gluttony and lechery. It has also been made clear that only Orgon and Madame Pernelle have been taken in by his play-acting, and one can scarcely imagine that a man of such obviously bogus moral attitudes can believe in his ability to get away with his ruse. The stage direction is significant, in that when he notices Dorine he switches on the performance. It corresponds to what we have been led to expect, and perhaps even surpasses it. The clichés of the ascetic life are concentrated into a few lines: mortification of the flesh, generosity to outcasts, rejection of temptations of the flesh. Dorine points to the exaggerated nature of this behaviour and to the fact that Tartuffe is manifestly unable to cope with such temptations. Her mockery immediately incites the spectator to laugh at Tartuffe and to recognise that his sensitivity to female flesh will prove to be his fatal weakness and undermine his ability to maintain any illusion of asceticism. This point is emphasised by his reaction to the news that Elmire wishes to see him. Dorine has commented earlier on his obvious interest in her, and his reaction betrays his delight at the prospect of a tête à tête with her. The extract sets up a comic tension with the expectation that Tartuffe will use the encounter to embark on a seduction plan.

B **What is your reaction to the behaviour of Orgon and its consequences for him and his family?**

Molière goes to considerable lengths from the outset to get the spectator to see the ridiculous side of Orgon's infatuation with Tartuffe as well as the disruption to family life. The point is made that, prior to Tartuffe's arrival, Orgon was a rational and loyal individual. He has become *hébété* – stupefied – since adopting Tartuffe as the family's moral mentor. Obsession distorts his view of reality and makes him resistant, hostile even, to the sane people who are trying to talk sense into him. Comic predictability is key to the conditioning of audience reaction, notably in the *Et Tartuffe.....Le pauvre homme* sequence. The description of Tartuffe he gives to Cléante not only stands in comic contrast to that provided by Dorine, but fizzles out in the line : « C'est un homme....qui...ah !... un homme... un homme enfin. » An irony of which Orgon is comically unaware. It can be pointed out that Orgon embarks on a number of destructive plans to assert his authority and impose his fantasy on the real world: Mariane must marry Tartuffe, Damis must be expelled for his impertinence, Tartuffe must see Elmire as frequently as possible, Tartuffe must inherit his entire estate forthwith. It is all mad, but our reaction to this madness must be tempered by several issues: the tireless efforts of the sane characters to correct the path to destruction, the ability of Dorine to make Orgon

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look ridiculous when he is trying to look authoritative, and the certainty that Tartuffe's weakness for the flesh will betray him. The lunatic's power to wreck the family's life is circumscribed by the comic tone and the theatrical convention which guarantees that order will be restored.

C Some critics have found the last act to be neither comic nor credible. What do you think of it?

Following Orgon's confrontation with Tartuffe over the attempted seduction of Elmire, and Tartuffe's rejoinder that he is in a position to throw them onto the street, Orgon has mentioned a casket containing incriminating documents which he has foolishly handed over to Tartuffe for 'safe keeping'. The situation appears desperate: Tartuffe now owns everything; Monsieur Loyal arrives to serve notice of expulsion; Valère brings the news that Tartuffe has handed the incriminating documents to the King and urges Orgon to flee; it is too late, as Tartuffe arrives with the King's legal representative, ostensibly to take Orgon to prison. That said, there are moments of comedy to lighten the tone: Orgon's characteristically excessive denunciation of 'tous les gens de bien', suitably satirised by Cléante; Madame Pernelle's infuriating assertion that accusations against Tartuffe cannot be true, together with Orgon's well-deserved and laughable frustration at her obstinacy; Dorine's reiteration of *le pauvre homme* as Tartuffe is about to confiscate all their possessions, and her ironical lines about Tartuffe's piety. The existence of the incriminating casket may appear contrived, but it leads to the crucial involvement of the king and thus to the fulfilment of Molière's agenda. The threat to society posed by Tartuffe and his like has become so serious that Louis XIV has to take action. And Louis XIV, unlike Orgon and others who have succumbed to imposters, is wise and perspicacious. The punishment of religious hypocrisy is more important than errors of judgement by a man who, in earlier civil upheavals, loyally defended the king. Dramatically, the spectator's anxiety about the deep family crisis is happily resolved by the intervention of an entirely credible and reliable authority.

8 Balzac, *Le Père Goriot*

A Goriot has been planning with Delphine the provision of a suitably luxurious love-nest for her and Eugène. Infuriated by her husband's treatment of her, he has dismissed her concern about possible scandal. His resources are almost exhausted, but this arrangement will, in his deluded perception, make Delphine eternally grateful to him and give him permanent access to her company as he will occupy a small room above the apartment. His obsession with self-sacrifice blinds him to the harsh fact that his daughters take him for granted, exploit his irrational generosity and do not want him around them. Even as he talks about the new arrangement, Delphine has dragged Eugène off for a moment of intimacy. Eugène's reaction to this new arrangement is equally characteristic. He cannot accept such extravagant indulgence, as he has nothing. For all his new-found vanity and ambition, nourished by his initial experiences in this social environment, he retains a sense of moral propriety. His conscience has also been shaken by Vautrin's attempt to implicate him in the plot to murder Victorine Taillefer's wealthy brother, as Victorine's interest in Eugène would be complemented by her inheriting a fortune. While the other residents of the Maison Vauquer enjoy Vautrin's evocation of a romance blessed with riches, Goriot is successful in persuading Eugène to pursue his relationship with Delphine. He would like to think that he can resist the temptation of a luxurious life in the rue d'Artois as a kept man, but he is aware of the difficulty of resisting Delphine's love. The constant tension between his honourable instincts and the pressures applied by the need to succeed in Parisian society constitute a *leitmotif* of the novel.

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B Discuss the view that Balzac admires energy more than morality.

The novelist who kept a statuette of Napoleon in his room was himself famously energetic and ambitious. His perception of human potential is strongly influenced by the view that those who harness their energies in a dynamic way are more interesting and probably more successful than those who do not. The characters who illustrate varying degrees of energy in this novel must be seen in the context of an evolving society in which a strongly competitive acquisitiveness plays a key role in survival. Thus, the miserable Maison Vauquer houses mainly those who lack this quality: colourless individuals who are anaemic both physically and metaphorically. The exception is Vautrin, a highly energetic and often amusing crook with an uncertain background and dubious aims. At one level, his advice to Rastignac is seen to be of positive value, and his bravura performance never fails to give the impression that Balzac admires him for his rebellious nature and his contempt for the feeble people around him. As to the issue of morality, Vautrin is not to escape justice, and Rastignac is not to be corrupted by an evil genius. In Rastignac we find the battleground on which honourable instincts are constantly challenged by the reality of what it takes to succeed. In nineteenth century Paris, moral rectitude is seen as simply incompatible with success, as it is axiomatic that successful people are hardnosed and selfish. Goriot's 'goodness' is ultimately self-defeating and self-destructive, as it fails to accommodate the notion that his daughters are supreme examples of the self-interest which is essential in this context. Balzac admires survival, and takes the moral implications for granted.

C 'Balzac's social realism is far more than a matter of accurately recorded physical detail.' Discuss this statement in relation to *Le Père Goriot*.

Some attention must first be given to the importance of Balzac's aim to describe contrasting aspects of the environment in great, some would say laboured, detail. Part of Balzac's originality is the patient recording of physical detail for posterity. Examples can be given from the Pension Vauquer and the luxurious surroundings through which Eugène passes as he finds his way into Parisian society. Of equal importance are the clothes and styles of speech of the characters from various backgrounds. That said, the purpose of this provision goes beyond historical accuracy with the aim of relating the physical details to wider social and historical forces. The stratification of the Pension Vauquer tells us about the relative abilities of the inhabitants to earn money and hold onto it. The opulence which surrounds both aristocratic and nouveaux riches couples not only stands as a statement of their success and status but as a symbol of the vanity of all this in relation to their loveless marriages and frantic attempt to achieve satisfaction in extra-marital relationships. Balzac has been described as a visionary as well as an observer. Rastignac is the vehicle for his vision of the forces at work in Parisian society, which means that the details of the Pension Vauquer play the additional role of spur to ambition. If he wants to escape from this shabby environment, he must do better than the people who live there. In the process of trying to break into a higher echelon, he must learn the rules and accept them or perish. The themes of money and self-interest are central to Balzac's vision. The essential reality is that economic factors condition human behaviour, and those who have the perspicacity to see this and the energy to cope with its implications will succeed. In the process, they may have to jettison morally worthy principles.

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9 Maupassant, *Bel-Ami*

A Georges has divorced his wife and is looking to advance his career and further improve his financial situation. He knows that Suzanne Walter adores him, and decides that he will marry her, despite the fact that she is betrothed to a marquis and that he has had an affair with her mother, who is passionately in love with him but consumed with guilt. Suzanne knows nothing of this and thinks that her mother will support the match. She is flattered and excited when Georges suggests that he kidnap her and present the parents with a *fait accompli*. In this extract, they have just discovered that Suzanne has disappeared. Predictably, Walter fears a scandal and will insist on Georges marrying Suzanne. His wife is horrified, for a reason of which he is unaware. Her adamant rejection of the match falls on deaf ears. The implications for her are appalling: she has suffered enough from her infidelity and compulsive desire for Georges, and must now contemplate having him as a son-in-law. Her daughter will enjoy that to which she is not entitled. Walter is characteristically peremptory in his decision making and pragmatic in his assessment of the social implications: he draws some comfort from the feeling that Georges, although without pedigree, will be a successful public figure. His moral outrage at Georges' machinations and implied blackmail is soothed by the thought that the latter has formidable qualities which will take him far. Neither the matter of Suzanne's potential happiness or otherwise nor his wife's violent objection interfere with his thought process.

B Discuss the view that the very limited nature of Duroy's range of emotions is essential to his success.

Duroy is driven by ambition and envy. From his poorly paid dead-end job and his miserable lodgings by the railway, his vision is changed by his chance meeting with Forestier. The possibility of a career structure is fortuitously accompanied by entry into a society hitherto inaccessible to him. From the moment he witnesses the life style of Forestier and his well-heeled friends, he thinks of nothing but acquiring what they have and more. Once he is made aware of his power of sexual attraction, he determines to exploit it. The ease with which his first attempt at seduction succeeds triggers an appetite for further conquests. Duroy simply wants what other people have, and has a self-belief bolstered by instant gratification. At each stage of his advance, it can be shown that covetousness backed by confidence is never perturbed by self-doubt or conscience. It does not matter to him that his articles are not his own work. He delights in the thought that he is seducing the wives of the men around him. There is no sense of embarrassment, no concern for damaged feelings, no conscience over taking advantage. If he suffers at all, it is occasionally from wounded pride, but the satisfaction of revenge rapidly heals his wound. His tastes are driven by what he perceives as the accepted fashion. He does not know the meaning of the word love, unless it be the love of money: throughout the novel he calculates his financial situation, needs, gains and potential gains. As a character, he does not evolve, but hones the techniques which work to get him what he wants.

C 'If women are exploited in this novel, it does not follow that they are innocent victims.' How far do you agree?

The dinner party to which Duroy is invited after his chance meeting with Forestier leaves him with the impression that he is extremely attractive to women. The flattery which is showered upon him ignites his ambition to break into this society and to succeed in it. The enthusiasm of Mme de Marelle triggers his first act of seduction, and he is astounded by the ease with which he can obtain a mistress. She immediately provides him with a luxurious apartment in which they can meet. But she has her own agenda: apart from the sexual needs which her frequently absent husband does not satisfy, she requires an escort to take her on a regular

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tour of dubious bars. She makes a scene when he refuses to go out for the evening, and another when she thinks that the money she has lent him has been used to pay prostitutes, but she always comes back for more. She summons him to the apartment and declares that she cannot live without him: he must be available when she is. He agrees to move in to the apartment in order to be available, and she tells him that any infidelity on his part will end their relationship. Only when she learns of his intention to marry Suzanne Walter does she confess that she has been duped from the start, and he simply turns his back on her.

Relations between Duroy and Forestier deteriorate rapidly. When the latter tells him that he is « plus bête que je ne l'aurais cru », Duroy makes up his mind to seduce Mme Forestier in revenge. He senses that she will be an easy conquest, but her response is unexpected: she is bored by men who are in love, and despises their obsession with physical relationships. She refuses to be Duroy's mistress, but offers him her friendship. However, when Forestier is dying and she sends for Duroy, he interprets this as encouragement and determines to make her his next conquest. But she again imposes clear and unequivocal terms, principally her independence. She will not be « une épouse obéissante et soumise ». In control for most of the novel, she is out-manoeuvred by Duroy when he wants to get rid of her, and is forced into a divorce.

It was she who advised Duroy to try his luck with Mme Walter. Her obvious vulnerability to his charms make her an easy conquest. But at no point is it she who controls the situation. Faithful to her husband until this encounter, she is consumed with guilt and jealousy. Her weakness has led her into a trap. Her suffering is intensified by Duroy's seduction of Suzanne. She is a victim of her own naivety.

Thus, Duroy's ability to learn how to master every situation and every relationship enables him to manipulate even the most sophisticated of these women.

10 Anouilh, *Antigone*

- A** Créon has failed to persuade Antigone to abandon her protest and embrace the possibility of happiness in domestic life with Hémon. In some respects, Hémon's attitude has fallen into line with that of Antigone. He continues to see life from the perspective of idealistic youth, and perceives Créon's political expediency as a betrayal. The father he had always seen as all-powerful has accepted that the destruction of his son's future happiness is a price which has to be paid for the maintenance of political stability. The stage direction *crie soudain comme un enfant* is significant, in that it emphasises Hémon's inability to come to terms with the unpalatable realities of adult responsibilities. His loss of both a fiancée and a hero at the same time is intolerable.

Créon, as ever, remains calm and pragmatic, but he does not want Hémon to be as harsh in his judgement as was Antigone. Neither seems able to accept his arguments, but he cannot negotiate because his role as king has to be played out regardless of the personal consequences. To revert to his own metaphor, the ship of state must be steered and kept afloat. Anyone who rocks the boat faces elimination for the good of the greater number.

Hémon's position is manifestly self-defeating. He needs to grow up. But Créon knows that he is offering a bleak alternative, as the transition to adult pragmatism is painful. Anouilh does not provide a clear indication as to which argument is more persuasive, as everyone is a loser in his view of life. We might feel distress or impatience over Hémon's adolescent tantrum. We might admire Créon for his fortitude in paying the price for defending the stability of the state, or lament the fact that he has nothing to offer but a mediocre package accepted in a mood of resignation.

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B Discuss the view that *Antigone* is a tragedy because it leaves us with no faith in the survival of anything worthwhile.

The closing scene of the play would seem to support this view. In order to defend what he regards as being necessary to defend, Créon has lost the three people closest to him. He tells the page boy that it is foolish to look forward to being an adult. The world-weary mood in which he staggers off to the next council meeting leaves little room for faith. The survival of Ismène is scarcely encouraging, as she is seen to embody the mediocrity which Antigone and Hémon reject. Whether or not Antigone attains the status of tragic heroine is debatable, but some thought must be given to Créon's arguments in his main debate with Antigone. What constitutes happiness? In his view, it is not the perpetuation of a child's view of the world, but the embracing of other ideas: the readable book, the child playing at your feet, the practice of craftsmanship, the enjoyment of a moment of relaxation at home after work. These are the things to cling onto in a world in which the political role he feels forced to play should not be the focus of Antigone's attention. He insists on the idea that youth cannot afford to let these worthwhile elements of life slip through their fingers. If Antigone claims to inhabit a world which is inaccessible to Créon with his wrinkles and wisdom and middle-aged spread, we can only wonder why she despises him for no longer being an adolescent idealist. She has the opportunity to make something of her life, and she turns it down. The tragedy is surely the waste. Even if the alternative is seen as having severe limitations and disadvantages, Créon's faith in even the limited potential of human activity is better than such waste.

C Antigone has been variously described as a heroine and an obstinate adolescent. Is either of these descriptions appropriate?

Antigone's heroic gesture is to defy the king's orders and try to bury the body of Polynices which has been left to rot as a symbol of Créon's authority. In the opening scenes, she comes across as a principled and passionate individual. She is aware that she faces death for defying the king, and takes pride in her defiant attitude, in contrast to her compliant sister. But even at this early stage, during her conversation with Ismène, she displays a petulance which suggests immaturity: « Je ne veux pas avoir raison. » For her, the need to 'understand' is related to the suppression of the spontaneous enjoyment of life, and is the realm of the old. She refuses to accept Ismène's pusillanimous view that it is beyond her capacity to carry out the ritual burial. She asserts that it was her duty as a sister, and she tells Créon that she would do the same thing again, even if it were a futile gesture: « Il faut faire ce que l'on peut. » But having established some kind of moral high ground, she makes a comment to Créon which it is difficult to admire. For whose benefit did she commit this act? « Pour personne. Pour moi. » Créon's rational explanation of his role as leader is met with the suggestion that he could have refused the responsibility of kingship and been a free agent as she is determined to be. His description of the nature of his responsibility is greeted with the retort: « Je ne veux pas comprendre. » She is impervious to the facts about the corpses being indistinguishable from each other, and declines a vision of the future which is different from the past. Créon asserts that her determination to die is the fulfilment of a childish fantasy in which only a child's freedom and idealism can justify the perpetuation of life. Personal reactions from candidates can be accommodated within the context of an awareness of the main issues raised by the play.

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11 de Beauvoir, *Les Belles Images*

A Dominique is in a state of collapse after being abandoned by her wealthy lover Gilbert, who intends to marry the 19 year old daughter of his former mistress. Dominique intends to reveal to the bride-to-be that her fiancé has had an affair with her mother. Her state of mind raises two issues: she has succeeded in her professional life by trampling on people and will show ruthlessness towards the naïve Patricia to avoid looking ridiculous: « J'aime mieux être odieuse que ridicule. » Secondly, she is appalled at the prospect of having no male companion: « Une femme sans homme est une femme seule. » As for Laurence, she is overwhelmed by a series of family problems and realises that she has spent her whole life being dictated to by other people. There is no authenticity in her decisions or actions. Her attempt to enlist the support of Jean-Charles is predictably futile, as he again shows his lack of sensitivity and his materialistic attitudes. Their relationship has come under particular strain as a result of a car accident in which Laurence wrote off the car to avoid killing a young cyclist. Jean-Charles makes it clear that she would have done better to save the car, as they did not have comprehensive insurance. Laurence is calling into question the moral compass of both her mother and her husband and her lack of control over her own life. She feels trapped and isolated in a family and a society driven by selfishness and materialism.

B 'Catherine makes few appearances in the novel, but her role is at its core.' Explain and discuss this comment.

Catherine has reached the age at which she is becoming aware of the evil and suffering in the world, and is asking fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of existence. This development flies in the face of the efforts of her parents to cocoon her in their world of material comfort and middle-class certainties. They do not allow their daughter to read the newspaper, as it contains unpalatable material. Laurence refers the problem to her husband, on the assumption that it is his role to provide guidance on these weighty matters. His attitude is initially dismissive: « Il n'y a pas lieu de prendre au tragique une petite crise de sensibilité. » Laurence's father, a wiser man, knows that the problem will not go away. Catherine's precocious friend Brigitte will see to that. When Jean-Charles realises that Catherine is becoming so disturbed that her school results are being badly affected, he reacts. He needs a model daughter in his model household. He will send Catherine to a psychiatrist and he will stop her from seeing Brigitte during the school holidays. A trip to Rome and some riding lessons will restore her senses. It is Laurence's refusal to allow this treatment of Catherine that is a key issue. For once, she opposes her husband's wishes, because she has lost faith in the plan to programme Catherine so that she becomes a carbon copy of her parents. Her insistence that Catherine be allowed to develop at her own pace and make her own friends is a sign that she has come to realise that their inauthentic life style must not be imposed on the next generation.

C Is any male character in this book worthy of respect? Why (not)?

Simone de Beauvoir's agenda is to encourage women to assert themselves in a male-dominated society. The reader sees a group of men who discuss the merits of modern technology from a purely materialistic point of view. The role of the architect is not to create an aesthetically pleasing structure but to house people as cheaply as possible. Profit is the driving force. Status symbols are the key to happiness. The treatment of women by the principal male characters leaves no room for respect. Gilbert Mortier, the millionaire, abandons his ageing mistress in favour of the young daughter of a previous one, and does so with no apparent scruples. Jean-Charles comes across as a self-seeking philistine. From his perspective, Laurence's job is to play the role of the perfect middle-class wife and mother and to support him without question. Domestic tiffs are solved by expensive presents and

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shallow sweet-talk. Catherine's declining performance at school must be corrected rather than addressed sympathetically. The advancement of his career is Jean-Charles's main preoccupation. Laurence's lover Lucien is driven by sexual desire. He will exploit Laurence's need to keep everybody happy to ensure his own gratification as frequently as possible. The one male character who does not conform to these male chauvinist behaviour patterns is Laurence's father. He comes across as intelligent, cultivated, rational and sensitive. But he lives largely apart from the rest of them in his own little world, bemused by the ways of modern society and preferring to lead a solitary life. One might admire his authenticity and respect his values and his independence of mind, but it could also be said that he has opted out and does nothing to create a better world.

12 Bazin, *Au nom du fils*

- A** Bruno has been courting Odile Lebleye, whose father approves of him but is dubious about the activities of his sister Louise. Daniel is, characteristically, marking time. The last thing he wants is for Bruno to disappear with Odile and distance himself from the home environment. Daniel has been forced to accept the fact that, despite Bruno just about surviving the latest stage of his law degree, his intention is to head for the lowly status of a Post Office employee, so the best Daniel can hope for is that he gets a posting near home. The vexed question of holidays focuses on the difficulty for Daniel of hanging on to Bruno when he wants to be with Odile, as no female chaperone is available to accompany them to their country retreat. Thus, much to Daniel's dismay, Bruno displays an unusual level of initiative to get himself invited to Odile's relatives in the Auvergne. Clearly, Bruno is no longer prepared to sacrifice his own agenda to keep his father company. He is now in need of a relationship outside the family and, with the casual egoism of the young, accepts the use of his father's car to facilitate his plans. Daniel will, as ever, be indulgent to a fault and be the loser in every respect. The bitter simile *gai comme un hibou* captures his sense of abandonment. The domestic routine is utterly stifling and exacerbated rather than relieved by the increasingly infrequent communications from his children. The last sentence of the extract makes it clear that Bruno's priorities are now established elsewhere.
- B** To what extent do you agree with Marie's remark to Daniel: « Je ne te méprise pas : tu n'es pas méprisable. Je te plains. »?

The context of Marie's remark must be made clear: her attempts to persuade Daniel to cement their relationship have again run up against indecision and procrastination. His family is opposed to the idea of his marrying Marie, and he is subservient to this weight of opinion, notably when expressed by Bruno. It would not be unreasonable to categorise Marie's response as extraordinarily charitable, if the reader feels that Daniel has exploited Marie's affection for his own gratification but is too feeble to make a commitment in the face of the family's opposition. Nor would it be unreasonable to take the view that Daniel is caught in a web of emotional ties which create conflicting loyalties. His mother-in-law has lost one daughter and has been tirelessly encouraging Daniel to marry the other one. His children have been brought up to regard Laure as a kind of surrogate mother and regard Marie as an unsuitable interloper. Daniel can never make a decision, particularly if it might involve conflict with the family (especially Bruno). His honest attempt to be a good parent is incompatible with his need for Marie as a consoling presence, and to this extent she is probably right in expressing pity rather than scorn.

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C What impression of French provincial life in the 1950s do you get from this novel?

Fundamental to this issue is the amount of detail contained in the novel about the surroundings and conditions which affect the lives of the characters. It could be called realistic or naturalistic. The dingy world of lower middle class people in a dull town focuses on the narrow confines of the characters' lives. Three generations live cheek by jowl, with the matriarchal figure of Mamette constantly prying and offering a sharp commentary on everything which goes on. Holidays are typically restricted to the family's other property, a predictable routine which becomes unacceptable to the younger generation. The education system is characterised by the sterile rote learning of Daniel's pupils, and, for the most able, fierce competition for advancement to the revered milieu of the *Polytechnique*. The law is what a parent wants an offspring to study, and working for the PTT is a declaration of failure. Proposals of marriage are subjected to bourgeois scrutiny in terms of respectability and financial advantage. All this takes place in a claustrophobic world whose inhabitants have no interest in what goes on outside it. The young who manage to escape will look back on it with a measure of contempt, but most are resigned to conventions which seem to crush the spirit and perpetuate a stultifying atmosphere to which the majority succumbs.

13 Gary, *La Vie devant soi*

A Madame Rosa's physical and mental condition has deteriorated rapidly. The doctor is convinced that she should be moved to hospital, but Momo knows that this is not what she wants, and nor does he: he must take care of her to the last. In order to deflect the doctor's plan, he invents the story that Madame Rosa's family are about to arrive in order to take her back to Israel. Dr Katz pertinently observes that Momo, as an Arab, is exceptional in his knowledge of Jewish language and customs. There is no Arab-Israeli conflict in this downtrodden area, as solidarity is the only path to survival. And this is particularly true in their common desire to avoid contact with the French authorities. Likewise, the Africans are there to help. As Madame Rosa has been conscious during the conversation, she has drawn immense comfort from the outcome. The destination will not be Israel but the *trou juif* in the basement. This is Madame Rosa's bolthole. Only here does she feel secure, surrounded by things Jewish and out of harm's way. Momo knows that he has to organise the formidable task of getting her down the stairs for the last time. Once installed, he will ensure that she thinks that she looks her best. He helps her to pray and he follows Jewish custom by lighting candles. The situation compels him to reiterate his view that euthanasia should be allowed. He only has perfume to cope with the decay, but his devotion is unswerving.

B Analyse the theme of fear in this novel.

Madame Rosa tells Momo that she takes refuge in her *trou juif* when she is afraid. She adds: « C'est pas nécessaire d'avoir des raisons pour avoir peur, Momo. » This remark makes a profound impression on Momo, as he becomes increasingly aware that in this community there is a lack of security which can make anyone feel vulnerable at any time. For Momo, fear is associated above all with the idea that Madame Rosa might not be there when he wakes up in the morning or when he gets home. At his first meeting with Madame Nadine, she tells him not to be afraid. He comments that the remark is *débile*, implying that whilst someone from Nadine's background might not experience fear on a daily basis, he, Momo, has learnt from Monsieur Hamil that it is an essential safeguard against danger : « la peur est notre plus sûre alliée et sans elle Dieu sait ce qui nous arriverait ». For him it is a state of being: « j'ai une peur bleue sans aucune raison, comme on respire. » He believes that he will only escape from fear by becoming a policeman because they control everything. For Madame Rosa, fear is about being absorbed by the State and losing her freedom. She is terrified of being taken to hospital and institutionalised. This is an example of the whole

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community's awareness of the fragility of their material circumstances. It is also implied that religion is a bastion against fear, as in the case of Monsieur Hamil's pilgrimage to Mecca « tellement il avait peur ». There is throughout the story a sense of the contrast between the security offered by solidarity and mutual support within this diverse community, and the threat posed by anyone or anything which seeks to interfere.

C What impression do you have of the role of the French authorities in the lives of these characters?

The term *Assistance publique* is regarded as a grotesque misnomer. Madame Rosa does not get any financial help because she does not want the authorities involved in her life. The prostitutes are under constant threat of arrest. They have no other means of keeping body and soul together but will be charged with indecent behaviour if apprehended. Nobody in authority has the slightest understanding of the desperate plight of women who are forced into this way of life by sheer necessity. The Africans live in ghettos where plumbing and heating are not provided by the authorities. Momo says that the shanty towns where many immigrants lived were bulldozed by the authorities because they gave a bad impression of France. When he meets Madame Nadine and she asks him questions, his immediate reaction is to suspect that she is from Social Services, perceived as persistently interfering once they spot you. As Momo puts it at a later stage: « dès qu'on sait qui vous êtes on est sûr de vous le reprocher. » Madame Rosa's greatest fear of being put in hospital is that her adoptive children will be taken into care, where there is no care. She is hostile to the idea of being brought into line. All forms of institution are depressing because they deprive people of their individuality. The authorities are always there in the background as a menacing presence, never seen to be able or willing to provide something which will improve these people's lives without there being an ulterior motive: control.