

CONCOURS GÉNÉRAL DES LYCÉES

—

SESSION 2020

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VERSION ET COMPOSITION EN LANGUE ANGLAISE

(Classes de terminale toutes séries générales et technologiques)

Durée : 5 heures

L'usage de tout dictionnaire est interdit

Consignes aux candidats

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

Concours / Examen : CGL

Epreuve : 101

Matière : ANGL

Session : 2020

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“Blonde is a work of fiction [...] the characterizations and incidents presented are totally the products of the author’s imagination. Accordingly, Blonde should be read solely as a work of fiction, not as a biography of Marilyn Monroe.” (disclaimer)

The Kiss

This movie I've been seeing all my life, yet never to its completion.

Almost she might say *This movie is my life!*

Her mother first took her when she was two or three years old. Her earliest memory, so exciting! Grauman's Egyptian Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard. This was years before she'd
5 been able to comprehend even the rudiments of the movie story, yet she was enthralled by the movement, the ceaseless rippling fluid movement, on the great screen above her. Not yet capable of thinking *This was the very universe upon which are projected uncountable unnameable forms of life.* How many times in her lost childhood and girlhood she would return with yearning to this movie, recognizing it at once despite the variety of its titles, its many
10 actors. For always there was the Fair Princess. And always the Dark Prince. A complication of events brought them together and tore them apart and brought them together again and again tore them apart until, as the movie neared its end and the movie music soared, they were about to be brought together in a fierce embrace.

Yet not always happily. You couldn't predict. For sometimes one knelt beside the
15 deathbed of the other and heralded death with a kiss. Even if he (or she) survived the death of the beloved, you knew the meaning of life was over.

For there is no meaning to life apart from the movie story.

And there is no movie story apart from the darkened movie theater.

But how vexing, never to see the end of the movie!

20 For always something went wrong: there was a commotion in the theater and the lights came up; a fire alarm (but no fire? or was there a fire? once, she was sure she smelled smoke) sounded loudly and everyone was asked to leave, or she was herself late for an appointment and had to leave, or maybe she fell asleep in her seat and missed the ending and woke dazed as the lights came up and strangers around her rose to leave.

25 *Over, it's over? But how can it be over?*

Yet as an adult woman she continued to seek out the movie. Slipping into theaters in obscure districts of the city or in cities unknown to her. Insomniac, she might buy a ticket for a midnight show. She might buy a ticket for the first show of the day, in the late morning. She wasn't fleeing her own life (though her life had grown baffling to her, as adult life does to those
30 who live it) but instead easing into a parenthesis within that life, stopping time as a child might arrest the movement of a clock's hands: by force. Entering the darkened theater (which sometimes smelled of stale popcorn, the hair lotion of strangers, disinfectant), excited as a young girl looking up eagerly to see on the screen yet again *Oh, another time! one more time!* the beautiful blond woman who seems never to age, encased in flesh like any woman and
35 yet graceful as no ordinary woman could be, a powerful radiance shining not only in her luminous eyes but in her very skin. *For my skin is my soul. There is no soul otherwise. You see in me the promise of human joy.* She who slips into the theater, choosing a seat in a row, near the screen, gives herself unquestioningly up to the movie that's both familiar and unfamiliar as a recurring dream imperfectly recalled. The costumes of the actors, the hairstyles, even the
40 faces and voices of the movie people change with the years, and she can remember, not clearly but in fragments, her own lost emotions, the loneliness of her childhood only partly assuaged by the looming screen. *Another world to live in. Where?* There was a day, an hour, when she realized that the Fair Princess, who is so beautiful because she is so beautiful and because she

45 is the Fair Princess, is doomed to seek, in others' eyes, confirmation of her own being. *For we are not who we are told we are, if we are not told. Are we?*

Adult unease and gathering terror.

The movie story is complicated and confusing, though familiar or almost familiar. Perhaps it's carelessly spliced together. Perhaps it's meant to tease. Perhaps there are flashbacks amid present time. Or flash-forwards! Closeups of the Fair Princess seem too intimate. We
50 want to stay on the outsides of others, not be drawn inside. *If I could say, There! that's me! That woman, that thing on the screen, that's who I am.* But she can't see ahead to the ending. Never has she seen the final scene, never the concluding credits rolling past. In these, beyond the final movie kiss, is the key to the movie's mystery, she knows. As the body's organs, removed in an autopsy, are the key to the life's mystery.

55 *But there will be a time* maybe this very evening when, slightly out of breath, she settles into a worn, soiled plush seat in the second row of an old theater in a derelict district of the city, the floor curving beneath her feet like the earth's curve and sticky against the soles of her expensive shoes; and the audience is scattered, mostly solitary individuals; and she's relieved that, in her disguise (dark glasses, an attractive wig, a raincoat) no one will recognize her and
60 no one from her life knows she's here, or could guess where she might be. *This time I will see it through to the end. This time!* Why? She has no idea. And in fact she's expected elsewhere, she's hours late, possibly a car was scheduled to take her to the airport, unless she's days late, weeks late; for she's become, as an adult, defiant of time. *For what is time but others' expectations of us? That game we can refuse to play.* So too, she's noticed, the Fair Princess is
65 confused by time. Confused by the movie story. You take your cues from other people. What if other people don't provide cues? In this movie the Fair Princess is no longer in the first bloom of her youthful beauty, but of course she's still beautiful, white-skinned and radiant on the screen as she climbs out of a taxi on a windswept street; she's in disguise in dark glasses, a sleek brown wig, and a tightly belted raincoat, closely tracked by the camera as she slips into
70 a movie theater and purchases a single ticket, enters the darkened theater, and takes a seat in the second row. Because she's the Fair Princess, other patrons glance at her but don't recognize her; perhaps she is an ordinary woman, though beautiful, no one they know. The movie has begun. She gives herself up to it within seconds, removing her dark glasses. Her head is forced back by the angle of the screen looming over her, and her eyes are cast upwards in an expression
75 of childlike, slightly apprehensive awe. Like reflections in water, the movie light ripples across her face.

Joyce Carol Oates, *Blonde*, 2000.

1. QUESTIONS

- 1) The portrait of a woman: how does Joyce Carol Oates characterise Marilyn Monroe in this passage?
- 2) Study the interplay of voices and points of view in this extract.
- 3) The portrait of an icon: explore the relationship between fiction and identity here.
- 4) Using examples from fiction, theatre or cinema in English, examine how art and entertainment are shown as interacting with the real world.

2. TRANSLATION

Translate from “*In this movie the Fair Princess...*” (line 66) to the end of the text.

