



ENGLISH A1 – HIGHER LEVEL – PAPER 1
ANGLAIS A1 – NIVEAU SUPÉRIEUR – ÉPREUVE 1
INGLÉS A1 – NIVEL SUPERIOR – PRUEBA 1

Monday 4 May 2009 (morning)
Lundi 4 mai 2009 (matin)
Lunes 4 de mayo de 2009 (mañana)

2 hours / 2 heures / 2 horas

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Write a commentary on one passage only.

INSTRUCTIONS DESTINÉES AUX CANDIDATS

- N'ouvrez pas cette épreuve avant d'y être autorisé(e).
- Rédigez un commentaire sur un seul des passages.

INSTRUCCIONES PARA LOS ALUMNOS

- No abra esta prueba hasta que se lo autoricen.
- Escriba un comentario sobre un solo fragmento.

Write a commentary on **one** of the following:

1.

Journeying from Michaelis House to the farm at Plaston [near White River] and back was a longer passage and involved different contradictions. Every July and December, the long holidays, I boarded the Trans-Karoo Express which took a day and a half to get to Johannesburg. I travelled second class and spent the time with a variety of white, lower-middle class South Africans – soldiers in transit getting drunk and trying to chaff the girls, women with *padkos*¹ consisting of biscuit-tins full of ham sandwiches, chicken, boiled eggs, dried fruit and thermos flasks full of tea, card-playing travelling salesmen, Afrikaans youths reading *poesboekies*², ancient pipe-smoking fallen patriarchs who had gnarly hands and stared out of the window at the flat landscape, railway workers with thin moustaches who drank brandy and Coke and cursed.

I ate in the dining room and spent my pocket-money, such as it was, on ginger-ale and bitters with a slice of lemon, the most sophisticated drink permitted to underage passengers in the lounge section. I would always try to get a top bunk, where I could hide and read. During my high-school years I too became interested in girls and sometimes made half-hearted attempts to approach them, standing in the corridor leaning on the polished metal rail and looking out of the window and hoping that somehow a social interaction would arise. It never did. At the back of the train was the third-class section, where black people travelled. While I could move along the corridor to the first-class section and even use their shower, the third-class coaches were sealed off from us, and we from them, by locked doors.

Arriving in Johannesburg at mid-morning, I would have to wait for the rest of the day in and around the station until I could catch the overnight train to Nelspruit. I would explore the part of the city immediately around the station, or walk downtown. A couple of times I went to the café-bioscope near the station, a sleazy and old-fashioned place where one could eat *slap* chips³ and drink cool-drinks, which one placed on fold-down trays on the back of the seats, while watching a movie. Once, while I was watching something with cowboys in it, a man in the next seat placed his hand on my right thigh. I rolled up a comic-book that I was holding into a tight cylinder and hit his hand with it. The hand withdrew. I was always back well in time to catch the Nelspruit train, which left at dusk.

The descent into the Lowveld was overnight, arriving just after dawn, and I would be awoken by the vomitorious stench of the SAPPI⁴ plant as the train passed through the Elandsfontein valley. As with the descent down the Hex River pass from the higher land to the Western Cape, I would watch for the ecological signs that told me I was coming home: the change from grassland to bushveld, the first orange orchards, the dark stands of mango and avocado trees still without detail in the early light.

Lesley would usually be there at the station but if she was late I would wait the half-hour or so under the tall palm trees that stood outside the building, or sit on my bags in the single hall with its closed refreshment kiosk and its closed ticket-office, listening to the sound of trains and the noise of motors and machines in the distance as the town woke up.

40 Once I was in the car and driving along the familiar roads I had arrived back in life and could forget for however many weeks the conservatory, the uniforms, the punishments and humiliations, the books, the green lawns and playing fields, the unadorned dormitories and rows of neatly made-up beds that attended my education.

45 The journey back at the end of the holidays was the same but played out in reverse: the mad dash to catch the train in Nelspruit, the slow ascent to the highveld through the night accompanied by coal-smoke and sparks that faded in the darkness, the Trans-Karoo Express with its soldiers, girls, *padkos*, card-games, brandy-and-Coke, pipe-smoke, dining car and lounge, the descent into the winelands from the Hex River pass, the sight of Table Mountain, the arrival at first Bellville then Cape Town stations, Jack on the platform, the brief re-acquaintance with Clifton, the metal trunk with school clothes in it, the lists and timetables and ultimately the first roll-call in the
50 conservatory that signified that my freedom was again at an end, returning me to a limbo which had simply to be endured, an unpleasant prescription swallowed without sugar.

Michael Cope, *Intricacy*, Cape Town: Double Storey, Memoir (2005)

¹ padkos: food in picnic hamper

² poesboekies: men's magazines

³ slap chips: fried potatoes

⁴ SAPPI: a pulp and paper mill

2.

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