

TEXTS

Reading has long been regarded as the only means to acquire culture, that's why many educationalists now complain that youngsters don't read books anymore. They fear that literature might be superseded by television and films, and that this growing lack of literacy might destroy not only children's reading skills but also their capacity to understand anything more elaborate than a comic strip.

It cannot be denied that reading makes your mind work better, and it is fundamental to thinking. Good books challenge and excite your mind either because you read about things, ideas, countries you had not the slightest notion of before, and this new learning experience opens the way to your imagination, or because they depict characters who are so true to life in their complexity that they make you ponder about the human heart. You keep thinking of some of the passages long after you have shut the book, and you will then re-read them and find a new interpretation that widens your understanding. Some books have such a strong impact on your mind that they remain vivid in your memory and influence your life for ever after. They thus contribute to the development of your moral and intellectual faculties, that is to say the development of your culture.

All the other modern means of communication such as radio, television, films, newspapers, provide you with information and knowledge about the world and human achievements, but if the spectator's mind is not naturally curious, it will not be impressed very long by these fleeting images and words. All the bright thrilling images of TV and all the ready-made ideas of newspapers encourage people to be lazy and passive. They afterwards find books boring because they require too big an effort of the imagination.

In my opinion, many things contribute to our culture, but reading remains the best means to train our minds to work by themselves and to derive the maximum profit from all our attainments.

More and more people worry about the future of the earth and denounce the noxious consequences of the intensive use of chemical products in agriculture, and of the effects of nuclear energy on our life. New political parties widespread based on the ecological movements, have been created, and call for a coherent environmental policy.

It cannot be denied that the widespread use of pesticides tends to destroy natural ecosystem and then endangers man's life. Everybody knows as well that the disposal of nuclear wastes has become an international concern. I could also mention deforestation and urbanization as being other factors of destruction for natural ecosystem.

All those threats have arisen from the development of the consumer society that requires more and more energy for mass production, while the modern notion of comfort necessitates more and more electric power. Besides, the progress of medicine has created a fantastic growth of the world population, and this has led to an increasing demand for food, that is to say for more pesticides to protect the crops, for more fertilizers to increase production, for more energy to make machines work, and so on...

What's more, in our western world, very few people are willing to live now as their ancestors did. They are not ready to give up any aspect of their daily comfort. If we take the example of the car, we observe that, in spite of the government's measures of dissuasion, and even though most people agree that exhaust fumes are becoming unbearable, the number of vehicles on the roads doesn't decrease. Moreover, if people stopped buying machines, all our economic system would collapse. So, it seems very difficult to find a satisfactory solution to our environmental problems.

In our time, many people enjoy watching horror films because it enables them to experience shivers of fear without running any risk. It sets their adrenaline going without putting them in danger. Most people dream of experiencing strong sensations under the impression that it would make their lives more enjoyable, but few of them are bold enough to practise the dangerous sports that would provide them with these exhilarating sensations.

It may be useful to point out that there are different sorts of horror films and that they correspond to different types of spectators. The stories of terrifying monsters coming from other galaxies to destroy mankind in the most varied and horrible ways delight those people bored by the routine of everyday life. Then there are the more subtle psychological studies of evil characters or the mystery scenarios whose suspense leaves the spectators breathless. They stimulated the imagination of the spectators who feel relieved when they get out of the movie house and find themselves back in their peaceful environment. They feel as if they have undergone anti-stress therapy with an electric shock treatment.

Personally, I am not keen on horror films. I am not interested in blood-thirsty monsters. The picture of perverted sadistic killers gives me the creeps and I don't like that. I feel that I am being manipulated, that I'm not in control of my sensations and feelings, that the film-maker is playing with my nerves, and I really hate that.

The street was quiet in the mornings and on the weekday afternoons. But toward evening, or on holidays, the street would fill with the soldiers who came from the camp nine miles away. They seemed to prefer Front Avenue to almost other street, and sometimes the pavement resembled a flowing river of brown soldiers. They came to town on holidays and went around in glad, loud gangs together, or walked the sidewalks with grown girls. And the old Frankie had always watched them with a jealous heart; they came from all over the whole country and were soon going all over the world.

They went around in gangs together, those lasting twilight of the summertime – while the old Frankie dressed in her khaki shorts and Mexican hat, watched from a distance by herself. Noises and weathers of distant places seemed to hover about them in the air. She imagined the many cities that these soldiers came from, and thought of the countries where they would go – while she was stuck there in the town forever, and stealing jealousy sickened her heart.

The Blue Moon was a place at the end of Front Avenue, and often the old Frankie had stood out on the sidewalk with her palms and nose pressed flat against the screen door, watching all that went on there. Customers, most of them soldiers, sat at the tables, or stood at the counter having drinks, or crowded around the juke-box. Here sometimes there were sudden commotions. Late one afternoon when she passed the Blue Moon, she heard wild angry voices. The old Frankie knew the Blue Moon well, although she had never been inside. There was no written law to keep her out, no lock and chain on the screen door. But she had known in an unworded way that it was a forbidden place to children. The Blue Moon was a place for holiday soldiers and the grown and free. The old Frankie had known she had no valid right to enter there, so she had only hung around the edges and never once had she gone inside. But now this morning before the wedding all of this was changed. The old laws she had known before meant nothing to F. Jasmine, and without a second thought she left the street and went inside.

Adapted from Carson McCULLERS, *The Member of the Wedding*.

Catherine now ran the inn (...), and her work there had helped her cope with her husband's death.

Yet, in the nine months since the bridge tragedy, she had found it impossible not to believe that some day the door would open and Ed would cheerfully call, "Where are my girls?" Sometimes she still found herself listening for the sound of her husband's voice.

Now, in addition to all the shock and grief, her finances had become an urgent problem. Two years earlier, Catherine had closed the inn for six months, mortgaged it and completed a massive renovation and redecoration project (...)

One Friday afternoon, Catherine was in the house, getting ready to go to the inn for the dinner hour. The insurance people were expected soon (...). But, when the two somber executives arrived, it was not to begin the process of payment. "Mrs. Collins," the older of the two said, "I hope you will understand our position. We sympathize with you and understand the situation you are in. The problem is that we cannot authorize payment on your husband's policies without a death certificate and that is not going to be issued."

Catherine stared at him. "You mean it's not going to be issued until they have absolute proof of his death? But suppose his body was carried downriver into Atlantic?"

Both men looked uneasy. (...) "All the other bodies have been recovered. There isn't so much as a wheel or tire or engine part of a Cadillac in the riverbed below the accident site."

"Then you're saying ..." Catherine was finding it hard to form words.

"We're saying that the exhaustive report on the accident (...) categorically states that Edwin Collins could not have perished in the bridge tragedy that night. The experts feel that even though he may have been in the vicinity of the bridge, no one believes Edwin Collins was a victim. We believe he escaped being caught with the cars that were involved in the accident and took advantage of that propitious happening to make the disappearance he was planning. We think he reasoned he could take care of you and your daughter through the insurance and go on to whatever life he had already planned to begin."

Mary HIGGINS CLARK, adapted from *I'll Be Seeing You*, 1993.

Radio and cinema had one novelty in common: they were forms of communication which dispensed with the written word, except for the captions of silent films. The written word had gone hand in hand with civilization from the beginning. Now, theoretically, an illiterate could be well-informed about the world as the best-read man. Reading might have been expected to decline as a result, but this did not happen. Perhaps the habit was too inbred. Besides, primary education, now almost universal in Europe, made literacy also universal. Far from declining, the written, or rather the printed word, triumphed as never before. Newspapers, which had greatly increased their circulation during the First World War, continued to do so after it. In Great Britain, which carried the process furthest, the Press by 1930 ranked twelfth among British industries, ahead of shipbuilding. Newspapers now counted their readers by millions where they had previously counted by thousands. They had bigger headlines, shorter paragraphs, simple writing. They derived their incomes mainly from advertisements not from the halfpennies or pennies paid by readers. The decisive figure was the proprietor – Northcliffe and Beaverbrook in Great Britain, Hugenberg in Germany – not the editor. Nearly all the great newspapers were conservative in character, and often Conservative in allegiance. They were among the most materialistic elements in a materialistic age. Nevertheless, they provide more news than had been provided by even the most esteemed of a staid past.

The newspapers, like the cinema and usually the radio, expressed popular culture, and observers talked as though this were the only culture which now existed. The flood of the mass-age was supposed to have submerged the standards of previous times, but this was far from being the case. There was also a middle culture and a high culture – the distinctions between them resting on levels of sophistication (middlebrow and highbrow), not on class. The middlebrow culture was the least interesting, a repetition of past patterns interspersed with lamentations against anything new, either above or below. Those who condemned James Joyce or Picasso also disapproved of the cinema. These middlebrows felt more menaced than before, hence the intolerance which contrasted oddly with their professions of liberalism. Original artists and thinkers were constantly, though ineffectually, harassed. The works of three great British writers – Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, T. E. Lawrence – came under the legal ban of pornography. The organizer of an art exhibition learned to expect, in England, a visit from the police. In Paris and Berlin he took precautions against a riot.

Nevertheless, this was an age of intellectual and artistic activity. Paris reached perhaps its highest point as the cultural capital of Europe. English artists had always congregated there, though fewer Germans did so as a result of the First World War. There were now also more Russians, usually refugees for political reasons, and more Americans. These Americans were no longer in Paris merely to learn and to admire; they were there to lead and to create. Ernest Hemingway and Gertrude Stein, for example, counted as decisive figures in European literature. Gertrude Stein was significant in another way. Her writings expressed the spirit of subversion which now shaped much of European art. Many forces combined to end the reign of reason which had run since the Renaissance. In the 19th century, for instance, science had powerfully supported rationalistic philosophy. Scientists were expected to discover general laws of increasing certainty, and they expected it themselves. In the 20th century, scientists began to doubt the finality of their conclusions, just when ordinary men came to believe that reason had triumphed....

A. J. P. Taylor, *From Sarajevo to Potsdam*, Thames and Hudson for Book Club Associates
1968, pp. 99-104.

When I got to the airport, I learned that the plane from Cairo, on which my brother was travelling, had been delayed at Paris with engine trouble and was expected to be about an hour late. As a rule I can pass the time quite happily, watching the planes land and take off, but that evening I had a headache, which I thought that the noise of the engines might make worse. I decided, therefore, to walk around to make the time pass quickly.

First of all I went back to the place where I had left my car to make sure that all the doors were locked. The walk in the fresh air did me good, for I felt slightly better as I entered the main airport building again. I made my way to the restaurant, where I ordered a cup of black coffee. As I stood drinking this at the counter, I studied the faces of the people around me. Some passengers were obviously anxious about the time, and kept looking at their watches; others checked to see that they had tickets, passports and money. Where there was a group of people, it was easy to tell which one was about to leave. He was the object of everyone's attention and looked either very happy or very sad at the thought of departure. There was one woman who burst into tears as she said goodbye to the relatives or friends who had come to see her off.

When I finished my coffee, I went along to the bookstall, where I bought a couple of magazines, both of them about travel, which would help to make the time pass pleasantly. Then I went into one of the waiting-rooms and made myself comfortable in a big armchair. I had hardly had time to open one of my magazines when someone came up and put his hand on my shoulder. It was an old friend, who was just about to leave on a business trip to South America. Since we had not seen each other for a long time, we found plenty to talk about until the arrival of my brother's plane from Paris was announced.

Teaching is supposed to be a professional activity requiring long and complicated training as well as official certification. The act of teaching is looked upon as a flow of knowledge from a higher source to an empty container. The student's role is one of receiving information; the teacher's role is one of sending it. There is a clear distinction assumed between one who is supposed to know (and therefore not capable of being wrong) and another, usually younger person who is supposed not to know. However, teaching need not be the province of a special group of people nor need it be looked upon as a technical skill. Teaching can be more like guiding and assisting than forcing information into a supposedly empty head. If you have a certain skill you should be able to share it with someone. You do not have to get certified to convey what you know to someone else or to help them in their attempt to teach themselves. All of us, from the very youngest children to the oldest members of our cultures should come to realize our own potential as teachers. We can share what we know, however little it might be, with someone who has need of that knowledge or skill.

From Herbert Khol, *Reading: How To* (New York: Bantam Books, 1973), p. 1.

“I’ve taught in this city for over thirty-five years now; many of your parents were pupils under me in the old city schools before this estate was built; and I’m certain that in all those years I’ve never encountered a generation as difficult as this one. I thought I understood young people, I should be able to with all my experience, yet there’s something happening today that’s frightening, that makes me feel that it’s all been a waste of time... Like it’s a waste of time standing here talking to you boys, because you won’t take a blind bit of notice what I’m saying. I know what you’re thinking why doesn’t he get on with it and let us go, instead of standing there babbling on? That’s what you’re thinking isn’t it, MacDowall?”

“No, sir.”

“Oh yes it is. I can see it in your eyes, lad, they’re glazed over. You’re not interested. Nobody can tell you anything, can they, MacDowall? You know it all, young people, you think you are so sophisticated with all your *gear* and your music. But the trouble is, it’s only superficial, just a sheen with nothing worthwhile or solid underneath. As far as I can see there’s been no advance at all in discipline, decency, manners or morals. And do you know how I know this? Well, I’ll tell you. Because I still have to use this everyday.”

He brought the stick round from behind his back for the boys to have a look at.

“It’s fantastic isn’t it, that in this day and age, in this superscientific, all-thing-bright-and-splendiferous age, that the only way of running this school efficiently is by the rule of the cane. But why? There should be no need for it now. You lot have got it on a plate.

“I can understand why we had to use it back in the twenties and thirties. Those were hard times; they bred hard people, and it needed hard measures to deal with them. But those times bred people with qualities totally lacking in you people today.

They bred people with respect for the start. We knew where we stood in those days, and even today a man will often stop me in the street and say “Hello Mr Gryce, remember me?” And we’ll pass the time of day and chat and he’ll laugh about the thrashings I gave him.

“But what do I get from you lot? A honk from a greasy youth behind the wheel of some big second-hand car. Or an obscene remark from a gang – after they’ve passed me.

They took it then, but not now, not in this day of the common man, when every boy quotes his rights, and shoots off home for his father as soon as I look at him... No guts... No backbone... You’ve nothing to commend you whatsoever. You’re just fodder for the mass media!”

He clashed the stick in front of their chests, making the air swish in its wake, then he turned round and leaned straight-armed on the mantelshelf, shaking his head. The boys winked at each other.

“I don’t know. I just don’t know.”

Barry HINES, *A Kestrel for a Knave*, 1968

This morning I bought a pack of cigarettes instead of my usual 40. I decided to smoke until after lunch. Usually I smoke continuously at my office desk, but today I sucked peppermints instead. Halfway through the morning I nearly gave in. When a cup of tea was brought to me at 11 o'clock, I opened the packet and put a cigarette in my mouth. I felt ashamed of my weakness and did not light it.

The difficulty of concentrating on my work grew worse. The thought of smoking drove everything from my mind. If I had eaten more sweets I should have been sick, so I chewed a pencil. I felt I had to have something in my mouth.

It was so ridiculous that I laughed at myself. At the same time I was angry that I should feel so humiliated by this slavery. I was even more resentful towards those who had started the scare about smoking. Why don't they leave things alone? How could they be so sure they were right?

I began to count the minutes that would bring me nearer the end of this self-imposed penance. I was rather proud of myself for having got through the morning. I had a hasty lunch, thinking all the time of the cigarette that would follow. When at last coffee was brought and I was released from my vow, I lit the first cigarette of the day. To my surprise I did not particularly enjoy it. After such a build up of expectation, the reward came as an anti-climax.

In the afternoon the battle started all over again. I had become a split personality. The voice of the temper kept interrupting my work with infinitely cunning suggestions. It said: "You can't go on like this. You should begin more gradually. Make it 20 instead of 10 a day." A little later, after an irritating phone call, the voice tried a fresh line: "One cigarette now will soothe your nerves – just one. You've earned it."

By evening I found myself engaged in an almost continuous debate. The voice was alternately wheedling and bullying. Every crafty stratagem was proposed and had to be countered. It was as though I was engaged in a battle of wits with an ingenious adversary who knew all my weaknesses.

As I write this, after dinner, I have two cigarettes left. I shall smoke them both before going to bed. I know I shan't enjoy them. Somehow this sheer purgatory has spoiled the pleasure of smoking. The very sight of a cigarette now makes me angry. It is absurd that such a trivial act of puffing smoke should destroy my peace of mind. Tomorrow I shall have to go through this wretched business all over again!

From When and How to Stop Smoking by Eustace Chesser

There is a risk of people imitating what they see on the screen in the way of crime and violence. First there was always a risk of children acting out scenes which could be dangerous. For example, I remember a woman who was head of an infants' school telling me that she had happened to look out of her window when the children were in the playground and had seen them putting a small boy on a chair with a noose round his neck and the rope over a branch of a tree; fortunately she was in time to intervene before the child was hanged. I remember a film of no particular merit in which the hero was imprisoned and escaped by electrocuting his guard, the technique of doing this being shown in detail. This is the kind of scene which we would cut ...

I films for young people and adults we always tried to keep off the screen any details of criminal techniques, such as how to open a locked door with a piece of celluloid, or how to open a safe; if we were consulted before production I used to advise that the details should not be shown. When I gave talks in prisons about film censorship I invariably had full sport for this, since fathers who were in prison for criminal offences did not want their children to start on crime.

Every time I gave a talk in prison someone used to mention the French film *Riffi* made by Jules Dassin in 1954. This remarkable film showed in great detail a robbery of a jewellery's shop, the robbery sequence lasting about half an hour and being backed only by natural sound – one of the most brilliant film sequences of all time. I remember our discussion at the time. We took into account the fact that the robbery was accomplished only with the use of elaborate and obviously expensive equipment, and that only the most experienced and skilled criminals could possibly imitate it; we believed therefore that it was relatively safe. When talking in prisons some years later I learned that there had been several robberies in which the techniques had been copied, so perhaps we were wrong. However, I once met at dinner a judge of the Central Criminal Court who told me that *Riffi* was easily the best film he had ever seen. When I said that possibly it had added to his work, and that I would be interested to know whether he thought that we should not have passed it, he said, "Certainly not. It was a marvellous film. Of course it should have been passed;"

From *What the Censor Saw* by John Trevelyan

A suitable case for killing?

When BBC television decided to make a programme on voluntary euthanasia – or, as it's sometimes called, “mercy killing” – the *Radio Times* sent a reporter to Holland to interview two doctors, Gertruida and Andries Postma for an accompanying article. In 1973 Dr. Gertruida Postma had been tried for the “mercy killing” of her mother, Mrs. Margina Gravelink.

The *Radio Times* writer discovered that when she was 78 years old, Mrs. Gravelink suffered serious brain damage from a cerebral haemorrhage and went into a coma. She regained consciousness and though she still had a clear mind she was so ill physically that she became very unhappy. In fact, she was so unhappy that she attempted suicide by throwing herself from a high bed. She survived but her health grew even worse and she had to be moved to an old people's home. When Dr. Postma visited her there, she felt that her mother was waiting for her to help her out of her misery.

One day, a few weeks later when she went to see her mother, Dr. Postma took a phial of morphine to the bedside. She injected her mother with drug and Mrs. Gravelink died within a minute. The speed with which she died showed-people said later- what a terrible condition her mother had been in. The dose might have taken an hour to kill a healthy person.

When the *Radio Times* writer asked Dr. Gertruida Postma and her husband how they felt now about “mercy killing” they replied jointly: “There are two kinds of euthanasia – active and passive. In active euthanasia, the patient's life is deliberately ended, perhaps by giving the patient a drug. In passive euthanasia, the patient is merely allowed to die ... In any 100 doctors there will be perhaps 20 who practise active euthanasia, 60 who practise passive euthanasia and 20 who are completely against it and believe that life must be maintained in all circumstances, no matter how hopeless it is and even if the patient's life has become terrible or reduced to the level of a vegetable.

“Our object is to encourage doctors to talk about euthanasia and to declare their practice openly. Then the law could be changed straight away. The old medical laws are not fitted to modern medical science – where we can keep life going beyond its human limits, where we can continue physical life when the brain has ceased to function, when life has no dignity or personal meaning.

“We want to see a change in the law allowing for voluntary euthanasia. We must make the way clear for patients so that they are able to discuss their situations and make a rational choice about their death.

“Three conditions must govern euthanasia in every case: the patient must be obviously and unmistakably dying with only days or weeks to live; the patient must ask for death; and the doctor must make known what he has done so that there can be no question of , for example, murder for gain. Death certificates should be quite clear, saying, for instance: “Patient with secondary cancer – euthanasia performed.” There must be nothing secret about it...”

The Postmas want to encourage a situation in which people could make a “testament of life” in the days of their good health to make sure of their own euthanasia if they are ever injured and lose the use of their rational minds, for example, in a road accident.

From an article in the *Radio Times*

The sun was already quite high in the sky when I started off the next morning. It was for ever the same routine: tapping the ground with my stick, walking cautiously, watching for spiders, pushing aside the undergrowth, wading into the water when the banks were impassable. I noticed that I lost some of my sweets through a hole in my bag, but because I was still not hungry I did not care.

Then I heard the vultures.

They were king vultures; I recognized them immediately. Where the vultures are, there is usually the flesh of corpses. I knew that they were eating the people from the crash.

I was, in fact, still in the area over which the wreckage of or plane was scattered. I saw a piece of the fuselage. The aircraft number was still recognizable and then I came upon a bit of the wreckage that looked like the cabin, with tangles of wire, and bent sheet metal.

There was a smell of petrol, but no trace of survivors. I did not stop very long near the wreckage, because I wanted to push on. Yet my progress was so painfully slow.

On the second day my injuries still did not hurt me, nor on the third. Instead my back began to hurt – it had grown badly sunburnt. The fastening at the back of my dress was broken and through the trees the sun had caught me. In the Peruvian jungle the sun is as brutal as the rain – people from temperate climates of Europe are not equal to either of them.

But in spite of the pain on my back I covered much more ground on the third day, after a good night's rest. I had the feeling that I had got stronger, though I lived on nothing but a few sweets and water. Of course, I was constantly bitten by mosquitoes and horse flies that were impossible to get rid of, but I did not care about that ...

Then I did not notice the mosquitoes and flies any more, because I heard the sound of aeroplanes.

I shouted. I knew it was useless and yet I was shouting. "Hello," I cried, and "Help!" again and again, "Help, help!"

They must have been very close, but the pilots did not see me under the trees, of course. I couldn't even see the planes and I had nothing that I could use to draw their attention to me.

The noise died away. I was alone again, but I was not too discouraged. I was able to walk, I was not hungry, I could drink from the clear river. There was still hope.

From *Girl Against The Jungle* by Juliana Koepcke

SWEET 16 AND READY TO WORK

American youngsters have long earned pocket money doing small jobs before or after school – delivering newspapers, packing supermarket bags or running errands. Their earnings went on the movies, sweets or small presents for their families or friends. Nothing wrong with that. But nowadays a regular job after the school day is a commonplace.

In 1960 the Bureau of Labour found that just under a third of the 16-to 19-year-olds went from the classroom to a job. By 1987 nearly half of these older children were in regular employment.... Many were earning \$200 a month working 17 hours a week in shops and fast-food restaurants or doing housework and looking after children. Lucky ones were earning as much as \$500. With families providing a home and regular meals, this is pure profit.

Few families object. ... Some reason that their children are learning the American work ethic. And in many families both parents are out working all day and see their offspring only for an evening meal, if that. The children are no more deprived of parental attention than they would be if they came straight home from school.

One thing most of the youngsters are not learning is how to save. It is reckoned that about 30% put aside some or all of their earnings towards going to college, but most spend their money on themselves and feel no need to apologize for doing so. Only about 5% of these teenagers make any contribution to the family finance. Instead, the money goes on clothes, cars (the one thing most boys will save for), videos, and going out to enjoy themselves. For these young earners ... there may be hard shocks in store when they have to start paying rent and buying food, petrol and insurance out of their own money.

Meanwhile, some teachers complain that their pupils arrive at school too tired to meet any intellectual challenges. This is particularly true if the school day and a stretch of work are followed by a long session watching television or videos. In any event, working schoolchildren are often unable to take part in after-school activities. If parents will not limit the hours their children work, no one else will. The laws, both federal and state, tend to be laxly enforced.

The Economist, July 2, 1988

Juvenile Delinquency

Nowadays, the problem of juvenile delinquency is very acute and disquieting. It is dealt with at length in newspapers, television broadcasts, religious and political meetings. People air their views, quarrel, agree or disagree, because they all feel involved in this problem. If solutions were easy to find teenage crime would not be on the increase. So, I do not really know what parents and the police can do to prevent young people from getting into trouble.

It is the duty of parents to protect their children from dangers and also to prevent them from becoming dangerous by teaching them how to behave reasonably and wisely. Parents should have clear moral standards and they should manage to inspire their children with the desire to behave sensibly or even nobly, which can be done only if parents can find a happy medium between authority and tolerance, and if their own behaviour sets an example which inspires trust, honesty and wisdom... If the children are happy at home and know they can rely on their parents, they won't roam the streets in search for something or someone to admire, which will make them forget the vacuity of their hearts. But, on the street, they often misplace their admiration. They mistake brutality for strength, cruelty and insolence for courage.

As to the police, they should not limit their action to blind repression. They should understand that the young are demoralized by joblessness and the prospect of recession, by poverty and the slums they live in, and so resort to violence out of despair. A friendly word and an understanding attitude might be more successful in preventing them from getting into trouble than treating them like hardened criminals.

The American Dream

The American Dream has attracted millions of people from all over the world. America: the promised land, the golden country, the land of liberty and opportunity. Such were for centuries the slogans that encouraged huge waves of immigration. There are many examples of poor immigrants that became industrial magnates; the JP Morgans, the Rockfellers, the Kennedys are only a few examples of those who climbed “the ladder of success.”

We know that at the present time America is limiting the number of the immigrants she lets in. However, the American Dream is still inspiring people to immigrate to the United States. Lots of Chicanos cross the border illegally so as to have their share in all this prosperity and happiness. But they are quite often disillusioned by the American way of life. Jobs are scarce, competition is fierce, the unemployment rate is high and newcomers are not always welcome. So, it is much more difficult nowadays for poor and uneducated foreigners to climb up the social ladder and make a fortune in the United States.

But, in fact, even if the situation is far from being idyllic, even if sociologists and philosophers denounce the selfishness and materialism born from the society of affluence that has forgotten the lofty ideal and the humanitarian trends which gave birth to the American Dream, we must admit that the United States still offers more liberty and opportunity to individuals than most other countries in the world. If you have ingenuity, skills, energy and initiative, you can still hope to make a fortune in the USA. Numerous scientists who were unknown in their country have become rich and famous in the USA. The spirit of the American Dream has changed but America remains the land of opportunity because stress is still put on personal achievement in its society.

A Mysterious Letter

Sophie Amundsen was on her way home from school. She had walked the first part of the way with Joanna. They had been discussing robots. Joanna thought the human brain was like an advanced computer. Sophie was not certain she agreed. Surely a person was more than a piece of hardware?

When they got to the supermarket they went their separate ways. Sophie lived on the outskirts of a sprawling suburb and had almost twice as far to school as Joanna. There were no other houses beyond her garden, which made it seem as if her house lay at the end of the world. This was where the woods began.

She turned the corner into Clover Close. At the end of the road there was a sharp bend, known as Captain's bend. People seldom went that way except on the weekend....

As Sophie opened the garden gate, she looked in the mailbox. There was usually a lot of junk mail and a few big envelopes for her mother, a pile to dump on the kitchen table before she went up to her room to start her homework.

From time to time there would be a few letters from the bank for her father, but then he was not a normal father. Sophie's father was the captain of a big oil tanker, and was away for most of the year. During the few weeks at a time when he was at home, he would shuffle around the house making it nice and cosy for Sophie and her mother. But when he was at sea he could seem very distant.

There was only one letter in the mailbox – and it was for Sophie. The white envelope read: "Sophie Amundsen, Clover Close." That was all, it did not say who it was from. There was no stamp on it either.

As soon as Sophie had closed the gate behind her she opened the envelope. It contained only a slip of paper no bigger than the envelope. It read: *who are you?*

Nothing else, only the three words, written by hand, and followed by a large question mark.

She looked at the envelope again. The letter was definitely for her. Who could have dropped it in the mailbox?

Sophie's world by Jostein GAARD

Reading today

Many sociologists and educationalists agree with the statement that literature is in danger of being superseded by television and the cinema. Reading, which was of yore considered the best means of improving men's minds, is often nowadays incompatible with modern audio-visual mass media, which are said to deter reading. At the same time we must point out that there have never been so many books published as today, which is a paradoxical situation and proves that people still find that reading is a profitable activity.

It cannot be denied that new technologies have an ever-increasing importance. In the twinkling of an eye, computers give information and statistics that would have required hours of reading not so long ago. Video-games are said to develop fundamental academic and practical skills by speeding eye-hand coordination and by sharpening maths abilities. Computer simulation is now used to train people for dangerous jobs, which would never have been possible from books. Television is indeed a wonderful mean to improve our knowledge of the world and of human achievements; no book can provide us with so many documents, such thrilling images.

But does all this improve man's mind? New technologies bring entertainment and exoticism without any effort of the imagination. They supply the users with ready-made images, games or documents. People are then encouraged to be lazy and passive. Youngsters in particular get accustomed to this passive activity; they are attracted by its facility, and they drop the habit of reading books. The trouble is that the less they read, the less they feel like reading. They allow their reading skills to slip. That's why specialists speak of the new generation becoming "alliterate". They lose the opportunity of entering into communication with the writers, as a sort of privileged relationship, which is purely mental and intellectual, and helps men develop their own personalities. There is a tendency for technical progress to frustrate the human need for effort and creation so that, if men stop reading, they may soon become the slaves of machine.

Justice

Many people complain that Justice is not fair nowadays but the same complaint has been going on for centuries. In fact, Justice has never been fair and I think the situation was worse in the past when judicial decisions could depend on one man only, the emperor, the tsar or whoever had an absolute power in a country. The Bastille in Paris was the first place the French people attacked because it was the symbol of despotism, a place where people could be interned by “letter de cachet,” a direct order of the king against which there was no recourse. It was still worse in the Middle Ages when peasants in serfdom could not do anything to defend themselves against the most cruel exactions of their lords who had power of life and death over them. We cannot speak of fair justice either when people resorted to the “will of the Lord” to settle a problem, which generally meant that the stronger of the two opponents was declared innocent no matter what he had actually done. If God had allowed him to win in single combat, he couldn’t be guilty. I can also mention the periods when racial or religious intolerance prevailed. Many men and women were burnt alive when charged with witchcraft in the 17th century in Salem; being a black man was enough to be lynched in the southern states of America in the 18th century; certain minorities could be deprived of their goods, their freedom and even their lives, without anybody caring about justice during World War II;

Therefore, I think we should feel happy to live in our days. Justice is not always fair, it is true, but it cannot be fair because the law is enforced by men, and men are governed by their passions, their prejudices, their private interests, all of which often blind them in their judgements. Nowadays, in a democratic country like Great Britain, all men have a right to a fair trial and most laws have been written in a spirit of equity. Unfortunately, this is not the case everywhere. So, witnesses, counsels, judges, journalists, all the people who have something to do with Justice, should try to amend their attitudes, and then Justice would be much better.

Prisons

At its best, any prison is so unnatural a form of segregation from normal life that it rarely reforms its prisoners. More often than not, their segregated life encourages the prisoners' immoral and antisocial tendencies, together with their feelings of being rejected by society, and their instinctive and obscure desire for revenge. That's why bloody riots constantly burst out in penitentiaries.

When in jail, young offenders always meet hardened criminals. They get an education there by learning useful addresses and all the tricks necessary to become real hoodlums. A list could certainly be easily made of all the people who after a stay in prison for minor offences turned into real gangsters. Of course, if you are more optimistic you can retort that nobody knows about those who were redeemed by their stay in prison, since they behave normally and we do not hear about them afterwards, especially as, since they do not like their past to be known, they never mention it. We may then meet people in everyday life who used to be young delinquents.

Many attempts have been made already to reform the prison system, such as trying to prevent young offenders from meeting hardened criminals and trying to enable young prisoners to acquire a higher level of education, to take up technical studies or to be trained for a manual job so that they may have a new start in life.

Indeed, if we really want to "reform" a young delinquent we shouldn't keep him in jail. Locking him up also means we shut him up within himself. Confinement is likely to make him worse because solitude, resentment and anger will pervade his mind. Some experiments of half-open reformatories have proved to be successful. But of course this solution is not without any danger either.

Youth and Unemployment

In these days many people complain about the rebellion and the restlessness of the young. They do not always understand that their violence is nothing but the expression of their fear of the future. This fear is not limited to the suburbs of big cities, it has spread throughout all layers of society, since a diploma is no longer a guarantee against unemployment.

It cannot be denied that, for a few decades, technological progress has had a great deal of influence on working conditions. It has freed men from hard toil but it has also deprived them of jobs since many menial tasks are now also done by machines. The mass production of synthetic fabrics, of sneakers has considerably decreased the number of dressmakers, ironing ladies, cobblers; one computer can do the work of scores of office clerks; big harvesters do not require so many hands in the field.

It would be difficult for me, and it would be pretentious too to suggest solutions to the problems of unemployment, so many governments all over the western world have tried and failed for many years already. Everybody knows about the different attempts to improve the situation: part-time jobs, training periods, shorter working-hours. Until now, none of those suggestions has proved successful, and so, more and more young people feel anxious and distressed.

Progress cannot be stopped, and the problem it engenders cannot easily be solved, but young people must learn to face the new order of the world so as to adapt to it and make the best of it. Instead of clinging to old ways of thinking and despairing because they cannot have the jobs they have dreamed of, they should study the new prospects opened up by the market and devote their time and energy to preparing for new technology, for greater mobility, for a different social order. Many periods in history have presented the same challenge to new generations because of wars, revolutions, inventions and discoveries, and so on. In such troubled times adaptability, inventiveness and self-reliance are the only means to survive.

I would like to be a journalist

I would for sure be very interested in becoming a journalist. It is not, as you might think, for the glamour of that profession, or because reporters are said to spend their time travelling all over the world. I would like to be a journalist because I firmly think that I could be useful.

I would not like to work for one of those papers whose headlines gloat over the horrors of some murder, recounting at length the skill of burglars and swindlers, or revealing some scandalous gossip. I would not like either to belong to one of the papers entirely devoted to the frenzied life of politics, ready to inflame their readers in support of some alluring cause, no matter what the truth or the consequences may be. Neither am I interested in the lives of movie-stars, in their grandly-furnished houses, their millions of dollars worth of jewels, their numerous cars, yachts and planes.

I think that if I were a journalist, I would devote my time, energy and articles to the weary, the hungry, the wretched, to all those that cannot make themselves heard, that nobody knows of and that, nevertheless accomplish their daily tasks courageously and unflaggingly. I find it normal for world champions, for example, to be interviewed and to have their pictures in magazines. However, in my opinion, it would be better if people could read and know about the humble and the heroic actions of anonymous individuals who manage to raise their children decently in spite of money problems, who sacrifice their own comfort in order to help neighbours in need, who endanger their lives to save some stranger in trouble. I would like to be an investigative journalist and find some exemplary figures and write a chronicle about them every day. It would be a fair reward for them to see their efforts recognized and it would perhaps help some trying people dissatisfied with their lot realize that they have a sheltered and privileged way of life.

Laughter is the Best Medicine

At least nine out of every ten illnesses are caused – or at least made worse – by stress, pressure and anxiety. It seems that the way we respond to problems and troubles can produce many symptoms of ill health. But although our minds can make us ill, they can also make us better and help us to stay healthy.

There are a number of ways in which you can use your mind to improve your health: 1. Laugh as much as you can. Laughter is a positive, natural phenomenon which helps by improving respiration, lowering blood pressure and “toning up” the heart.

2. Don’t be cool or unemotional. Insurance companies in the USA have shown that if a wife kisses her husband before he goes to work, then he’ll be less likely to have an accident on the road. He will, on average, live five years longer than if she doesn’t give him a morning kiss.

3. If you feel sad, then cry. Research has shown that tears don’t just provide an important stress relieve valve – they help the body to get rid of harmful chemical wastes. If you suppress your natural instinct to cry, then you are increasing your chances of acquiring a stress-related disorder.

4. Anger is a killer. Diseases such as high blood pressure, strokes and heart disease are all common consequences of uncontrolled anger. Find a positive way to release it, such as through physical exercise or talking about your problems.

5. A lack of confidence can be very destructive, so build it up. You can do this by imagining that you are creating an advertisement for yourself, writing down all your good points. You’ll probably be surprised to find out how many virtues you have.

6. Smile as much as you can. We all respond to the face we see – for example, if you see someone yawn, you feel tired and if you see someone scowling, then you’ll feel cross. If people see you smiling, then they will smile back at you. They will like you, too.

7. Learn to assert yourself. In hospitals the patients who live longest are the ones who stick up for themselves. The same is true of life.

8. Boredom is one of the biggest killers in our society. Be prepared to take risks and chances to add excitement to your life. If you don’t take risks, you’ll never know what you can achieve.

9. Put purpose into life. By adding ambition, hope and purpose, you’ll give yourself new powers with which to combat the stresses and strains associated with frustrations, boredom and pressure.

10. Get into the habit of following your instincts. Practise first with minor decisions – what to eat and wear. You’ll be surprised at how good your unconscious mind is at making decisions for you

By Dr. John Winsor, *The Sunday Times of Malta*

BLACK CULTURE IN AMERICA

In 1619 twenty Africans landed at Jamestown, Virginia and were sold into slavery. The history of the Negroes in America is deeply rooted in African culture whose own rich heritage flourished under its own kings.

The early European colonies in America looked for a supply of cheap labor to use on their plantations and found it in West Africa. By the 19th century millions of Negroes were involved in the slave trade to work in the fields, plantations and mines of the Americas. They worked to harvest rice, tobacco and cotton and by the end of the 18th century they could be found throughout Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia.

Many in America did not feel comfortable about slavery and the idea of man's natural rights was expressed in the Declaration of Independence which stated that "all men are created equal." The idea to be free was the ideal behind the American Revolution.

The life of the Negro slave was not an easy one. He was forced to work long hours and lived under harsh colonial laws. Some obeyed their masters out of fear, others who were bolder tried to revolt. But most slaves were not hard to control and their lives became easier if they remained submissive. They found comfort in Christianity and from this evolved their own songs known as Spirituals which were among the first songs created in America by the Americans.

There were some people known as Abolitionists who wanted to do away with slavery and a growing debate developed between those who favored slavery and those who were opposed. It became a moral issue which almost divided the country and culminated in the Civil War (1861-1865).

After the war the black slaves numbering close to four million were freed but their life was not easy. They were not prepared for their new independence. They needed to be assimilated into the culture of the white society and this was not always successful.

The 20th century saw a rise in prejudice against blacks as they were free in name only and were denied most of the right and benefits of American life. Many blacks left the south and moved up north which seemed to promise a better life, but in the north their living conditions grew worse and opportunities for them diminished. They lived in poor neighborhoods called ghettoes and faced bitter prejudice.

It was not until the 1960s that civil rights organizations won important victories for the

black people and a charismatic leader, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. became a symbol of the black people's quest for equality and true freedom. His tragic death in 1968 led to the passage of the Civil Rights Bill which has created many opportunities for blacks with the hope of living in a truly integrated society.

The Importance of History

The importance of history is in its capacity to help one to draw conclusions from the past events. It may be said that history is to the human race, what memory is to each man. It sheds the light of the past upon the present, thus helping e to understand oneself, by making one acquainted with other peoples. Also, as one studies the rise and fall of empires and civilizations, the lessons of the past help one to avoid the pitfalls of the present.

History makes one's life richer by giving meaning to the books one reads, the cities one visits or the music one hears. It also broadens one's outlook by presenting to one an admixture of races, a mingling of cultures and a spectacular drama of the making of the modern world out of diverse forces.

Another importance of history is that it enables one to grasp one's relationship with one's past. For example, if one wonders why the U. S. flag has 48 stars or why Great Britain follows monarchy, one has to turn to history for an answer.

History is of immense value to social scientists engaged in research. Thus, the political scientist doing research on the parliamentary form of government, has to draw his materials from the treasure trove of history.

It preserves the traditional and cultural values of a nation, and serves as a beacon light, guiding society in confronting various crises. History is indeed, as Allen Nerins puts it, "a bridge connecting the past with the present and pointing the road to the future."

Cyberspace

Cyberspace now touches all lives. For some it has become as essential as the telephone or the letter. For others it is still a *fearful whisper of technological promise*. Sometimes we look on *bemused*, uncertain why all those little addresses that begin 'http://' appear in advertisements, and sometimes we are shocked by the possibilities, when a friend sends letters instantly across the globe through the telephone. When cables and phone lines are allied to computers, this parallel world of cyberspace is created. It is often called a *virtual* world because it does not exist in *tangible*, physical reality but in the light and electronics of communications technology. In the virtual world people live virtual lives, alongside their real lives, that may be as substantial as marriage and as unsubstantial as checking a television guide. Even those uninterested in the virtual world are affected, often without their knowing. *An automated bank teller* gives us money because its communications in cyberspace authorize it to; after we have given our password and told an ATM what we want, it then uses a phone line to call a computer that decides whether our request is legitimate.

Virtuality, whether chosen by us or not, has grown parallel to reality and *encompasses* us all. Cyberspace and its virtual lives need their cultural, political and economic shapes analysed for their social consequences and meaning.

Cyberspace : The Culture and Politics of Cyberspace and the Internet

By : Tim Jordan

More than ever before, people are crossing borders and embarking on what are sometimes long and dangerous journeys in search of a better life. As they move from one environment to another, these migrating peoples carry with them their foods, religions, morals, clothing, culture and language. But, what happens to their language as a result of migration ?

Some groups of migrants maintain a distinctive language over many generations, and in some cases forms of speech are kept largely intact over hundreds of years. Over time, many migrants adopt the language of their new homeland, often creating completely new dialects as they mix the host language with aspects of their native tongue. But even when migrants shed their native tongue, terms derived from the earlier language often persist. As words derived from an earlier language disappear, forms of grammar, syntax, and sentence structure sometimes persist.

Euro-Disney in France is perhaps the most visible and controversial places to see the march of American culture across the planet. Julius Caesar conquered Gaul with Roman legions, but the U. S. is doing it with Mickey Mouse, and the Internet.

The Internet started in the U. S., and that's still where it is most dominant. Almost two thirds of the world's Web traffic comes from the U. S. Japan is second, with 7 percent, followed by Germany with 5 percent. Spanish language Web sites, one of the fastest growing Internet segments, make up less than 2 percent.

Even though the number of Web users from outside the U. S. is expected to grow faster than that of Americans, most of what you find on the Web is American. Some countries find that threatening.

"A lot of governments fear American imperialism of all kinds, whether it is our food or our Internet," says Esther Dyson, chair of EDventure Holdings, an interim chairman on the Internet Corporation of Assigned Names and Numbers. "I think that the people like McDonald's hamburgers and they also like the Internet, so it's kind of the government trying to control what people do."

At the United Nations, delegates follow the debate by listening to translators. That may stop the U. N. from turning into tower of Babel, but you often miss the subtleties of a language.

Web-based tools, like Transparent Language or Altavista's Babelfish help you get the gist of a Web site in another language. But not everyone likes the idea.

Several French organizations have been fighting for years to protect the French language and culture from being swamped by the English words and American influences. One group, Defence of the French Language, has launched an effort to keep French Web sites in French.

"It is the role of the association to alert those who edit sites that most of the time there are French words to replace the English and it is unnecessary to use English when there exists a French word," says Marceau Dechamps, a spokesman for the group. "There's also the weight of the keepers of the language."

If the group and its supporters refuse to visit sites that use English, Dechamps says, it will encourage those sites to change their habits.

Despite efforts to limit the spread of the Internet by language, politics or economics, the Web continues to spread across borders. As more countries add Web sites in their own language, there will be more pressure to translate those pages into other languages. **NEW YORK ---- CNN**

The Bullfight

In Spain the bullfight is more than a sport : it is a part of the country's culture. The cries, the exciting moments in American sport, seem trivial compared to the Spanish contest between man and beast. In every bullfight, the matador faces death, pits his skill, strength, and knowledge against that of a bull whose only desire is to kill him.

Every Spanish bullfight fan is an aficionado; he can tell a dangerous pass from one which simply looks dangerous, and a good kill from a cowardly one. Most of the fans know about bullfighting from having tried it in an amateur fight. In fact, almost all Spanish boys have the desire to be a matador; and a great many try, some succeeding, others becoming banderillos or picadors, but most setting for a seat at as many bullfights as they can possibly attend. Because of their knowledge of the sport, the spectators are extremely critical, and a poor performance is always marked by the boos of the crowd and a barrage of seat cushions, wine bottles, and shoes. However, it is the same knowledge which makes the sport an impromptu art, a communication of emotion between matador and crowd.

The bullfight fan is like the American jazz fan who goes to hear the same group night after night, waiting for that one electrifying moment of the creative artist at his best; most of the time the music is mediocre, but when it's at its best, nothing else matters. And when the great matador, reaching his peak with a brave, strong bull, stands poised over those horns; hoping that they won't come up and dig his very guts out, hoping that the sword doesn't hit a bone and break off in his hand, plunges his sword down into the back of the bull's neck and punctures the bull's lungs, and when every man who ever saw an amateur bullfight or faced a bull or ran from one, knowing what it means to lean over a bull's horns and expose one's groin, holds his breath and, not saying a word, watches the matador in the hot, bright sun, on the white sand prove to the whole world to see his courage and strength and skill, sees him become one with the proud, noble – this is the moment of truth.

So, the bullfight is not a sport at all, but an art – not comparable to American baseball or American anything – the art of the matador who fights one day in Madrid, then sleeps in the back seat of a car filled with costumes, capes, sword, and manager's cigar smoke as it bounces over dirty roads, and despite T. B., gets out of the car in time to eat, dress, and enter the arena to face two

pecially bred bulls in one afternoon, hoping to kill those bulls honourably, knowing that if he does, he will be a hero, and if he doesn't, he will be insulted verbally and physically.

The new shape of shopping

Marketing is facing new challenges in the retail area.

Shopping in the UK had its golden age in the 1980's. There was buoyant consumer confidence, new technological products, such as CD's, stimulated demand, and edge-of-town developments boomed. However, the new retail environment is much more complex, competitive and uncertain. New strategies will be vital for survival.

The "grey market" will double by 2020. The over-60's will be richer and have more leisure. However, it is not easy to predict their shopping habits. Just what product mix will match them? How far will the over-60's take on board new technologies and attitudes.

There has been much talk of the emergent "green consumer". Yet it is the falling demographic sectors who shop most greenly - the young.

Reflecting the uncertain and fragmented nature of the future retail landscape, marketing has had to become increasingly complex and "micro". Time and effort is going into targeting niche markets. Markets are being analysed not only in terms of class or area but according to minute differentiations in tastes, lifestyles and attitudes.

The markets opened up by out-of-centre supermarkets are becoming saturated. One response has been a move downmarket into deep discount supermarkets. Some experts predict a growth of teleshopping helped by the spread in cable networks. One spin-off of teleshopping, incidentally, will be a rise in specifically targeted advertising via such networks. Instead of broadcasting adverts to the old "admass", the new buzz word is "narrowcasting".

Retailing will become more international. In the UK the pioneers in deep discounting were continentals such as Aldi and Netto. Recently, the Japanese have been buying big stores such as Simpson and Aquascutum. Many British now cross the channel to shop in France - the cross-channel spree has become a national institution.

In general, however, the British consumer may stay different from his neighbours on the continent. A recent survey of food retailers, for example, showed that while "lifestyle" and "environment"

were important factors for continental consumers, "cheapness" and "safety" remained the Anglo-Saxon priorities.

Hidden Rules

Is the sun red or yellow? Should you crack a joke in a business presentation? Are such questions important? Is it only language you need to learn?

International business people often invest time and money in improving their knowledge of foreign languages in order to be able to communicate with colleagues from around the world. Language, of course, is vital, but it is only half the problem.

There are hidden rules for playing the game of doing business with people of other cultures. It is all too easy to "put your foot in it" by making mistakes which can upset your foreign counterparts.

An American, greeting a mid-European businessman by saying "Hi Dieter, great to meet you!" may not be favourably regarded in a country where more formal modes of address are usual.

In the West, business cards are given a cursory glance and pocketed. In Japan, they are highly regarded, looked at closely and left on the table during a business meeting.

In Britain, most business presentations would include a joke. In many other countries, this would be unheard of.

Will you cause offence if you refuse to eat something generally regarded as inedible in your country? Your counterpart may be watching your reaction when he offers you this local delicacy.

Small talk and relationship building are considered highly important in some parts of the world; talking about the weather, the wine and the local area come before business. In other places, people get down to business immediately.

It is important to know the way things are usually dealt with in your host country. Problems arise because we see things differently. It helps to be aware of how other nationalities perceive certain things.

The Japanese see the sun as red. It is an important national symbol which appears on their flag. When Japanese children paint pictures, they paint a red sun. European and American children paint

the sun yellow. When children travel and see the sun painted in a different colour, they are surprised and find it very strange.

Adults find these differences harder to accept. Both sides may feel uneasy because they are unsure of the rules of the game in the opposite culture.

It is, however, very dangerous to have stereotyped views of what the other culture is like. Such views are often narrow and can cause criticism and intolerance. "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing" and can encourage you to make predictions about what will happen in your business transactions. If your ideas are too narrow, you may be surprised at all the people you meet who do not fit into your pattern and who behave differently from the way you predicted they would.

Our ideas then, have to be flexible and constructed from thorough research and observation. We should also recognise that it is not only people's national background that influences their behaviour and personality, but also their particular regional background, their personal background and their company culture.

Sales in recessions

Sales figures are often used as evidence of the general health of the economy. In a recession, any rise in high street sales is quoted by government ministers as evidence of the increase in consumer confidence that is the first step on the road back to economic growth.

In free market terms, sale figures reflect the state of local market forces at any one place and at any one time. They show the amount of a product that the public wants to buy at the current price.

To a large extent, this is true. At times of falling sales, high street shops are forced to reduce prices - with out-of-season sales, special offers and even "closing down" sales. Newspapers are full of advertisements for special offers on consumer durables, cars, for example, or computers and video recorders.

The reason for these goods being the ones that are most frequently discounted in times of recession is that they are the most expensive in terms of their opportunity cost - their relative value to buyers compared to the value of alternative goods and services on which they may want to spend that same amount of money. If you have £X, you can buy a CD player or go on a short holiday, but you cannot do both.

Even more important, perhaps, is the consumer's fear of his or her personal future. In recessions come job losses, with job losses comes an increased reluctance to spend; it is expensive luxuries such as videos that are the first items to be cut from household budgets. People feel the need to save against the possible future loss of income. In recessions, a greater proportion of the public's income is saved than in times of economic growth.

The effect of all this on manufacturers can easily be seen. Falling sales lead to production cut-backs. This results in the under-capacity of plant and machinery. Since fixed overheads remain basically the same, other ways of cutting back on costs and thus of reducing prices have to be found. Almost always, this is achieved through cutting back on jobs.

But therein lies the problem. Although, for a manufacturer, cutting back on the workforce is a relatively simple short-term solution, it is not necessarily the best long-term strategy. In certain key industries, skilled labour is hard to find - and keep. the job market can fluctuate as erratically as the consumer market. There are fashionable jobs and unfashionable jobs. There are glamorous jobs and jobs that nobody wants to do. These trends are reflected in the kind of further training chosen by school leavers and in the kinds of further education courses on offer.

Manufacturers, therefore, tend to wait longer before laying off any staff than they would do if they were obeying market forces. To keep these workers fully occupied, companies may have to depress prices artificially to a point lower than that demanded by prevailing market forces, merely in order to maintain production levels.

It is almost certainly true, therefore, that there are forces at work at the time that an economy is entering a recession that distort the real value of sales figures. It may also be true that, on the way out of a recession, or in a boom period, the competition for scarce labour has the same distorting effect.

Dirty business

Industrial pollution is costing more than the insurers reckoned. And we will all have to pay.

Over the last few years pollution has become the biggest headache for insurers around the world. Changes in the law, American court decisions and a greater willingness to sue by individuals and environmental lobby groups have meant that many insurance companies have been faced with frighteningly huge bills.

Many claims bedevilling insurance underwriters at Lloyds of London arise from the 1950's to 1970's when pollution cover was provided automatically as an addition to a standard insurance policy. The underwriters had no idea of what would come: a rash of old cases of industrial and chemical pollution. Many of these claims were from the USA where the principle of "strict liability" applies. A company can be liable for pollution on its land even if it was unaware of it and had not owned the land when the pollution occurred. On the basis of strict liability many millions of dollars have been paid out to claimants, although more recently some American court rulings have gone the insurers' way. Insurers are now beginning to make provisions for 30 and 40 year old liabilities.

Many environmentalists in Europe favour the strict liability ruling as they think it will discourage companies from polluting land irresponsibly and might even enhance their efficiency. Various European countries, including Italy, Greece and Holland, have signed a convention on environmental pollution, embodying the principle of strict liability. It has not yet been imposed on the whole of the European Union.

The UK, which does not apply the strict liability principle, maintains the legal position that if future pollution could not reasonably be foreseen on the basis of diligent research and best current knowledge, the owner of the land could not be held responsible. British environmentalists are campaigning for strict liability and also support the introduction of a national register of contaminated land.

In the USA the principle of joint and several liability is wreaking even more damage to insurers. This principle means that if, say, a chemical factory fouls a field, not only the chemical company

but also its directors, bankers and investors can be held liable. And each can be obliged to pay the full damages for the pollution, granting the victims damages of many times what they originally applied for.

To respond to this, a "super fund" in the States has been set up - financed by levies on industry and insurers, to cope with environmental pollution claims on an industry-wide basis.

Such a draconian principle as joint and several liability has pushed insurers to even more caution. They are reluctant to provide blanket cover for unforeseen environmental damage under a general protection policy. Premium rates have soared and policies are much more restrictively worded.

As well as rising costs for insurance cover, manufacturing companies fear that multinationals will be tempted to set up in places such as Bhopal in India where companies are not obliged to pay heavily for environmental damage - or even the death of workers. There is a growing worry that increasing environmental constraints could damage the competitive position of companies in Europe.

EXERCISES & FINAL EXAMS

THE SUN'S POWER

The sun shone down from a clear sky growing steadily hotter as it rose above the low hills. All the grass and other green plants had been burnt brown some months before, so that the plain and the hills were of a uniform, infinitely sad or infinitely restful colour – sad to those who had grown up surrounded by the meadows and woods of a green countryside, and could see no beauty in this bare land – restful to those others who found in it something their spirit and senses could understand and feel at home in.

I am one of those who love the desert; it brings peace to my mind after the daily battle for one's bread. When I am tired of fighting, a green countryside does not allow me to forget: everywhere I can see flowers and trees, birds and beetles continuing the restless struggle before my eyes, each trying hard to win, even if its own life is the death of another.

In the desert, however, the sun is master; all else retires before its merciless rays. Only where there is water does the earth of the desert give rich home to trees and flowers; but one has to go a long way to find water in a desert, otherwise it would not be a desert. So those who love the peace of a treeless and grassless place can stand on the top of a rocky hill and see nothing around them but the sunbaked desert, with no signs of effort or passion to disturb them. Then, strengthened in spirit, with rested nerves and a peaceful mind, they can return to the battle for existence in the towns.

Questions:

I – Vocabulary:

- 1- Give a word with a similar meaning to the following:
steadily, uniform, restful, bare, master
- 2- Give a word with the opposite meaning to the following:
clear, strengthened, to win, treeless, to disturb

II – Give short answers to the following questions *using your own words*. Use one complete sentence.

- 1- Why were the plain and hills of a uniform colour?
- 2- Why does the writer love the desert?
- 3- Why is the sun master in the desert?

III – Paraphrase the following sentences:

- 1- Only where there is water does the earth of the desert give rich home to trees and flowers...
- 2- it brings peace to my mind...

IV – State briefly, in two or three sentences, why the writer prefers the desert to green places.

Prisons

At its best, any prison is so unnatural a form of segregation from normal life that it rarely reforms its prisoners. More often than not, their segregated life encourages the prisoners' immoral and antisocial tendencies, together with their feelings of being rejected by society, and their instinctive and obscure desire for revenge. That's why bloody riots constantly burst out in penitentiaries.

When in jail, young offenders always meet hardened criminals. They get an education there by learning useful addresses and all the tricks necessary to become real hoodlums. A list could certainly be easily made of all the people who after a stay in prison for minor offences turned into real gangsters. Of course, if you are more optimistic you can retort that nobody knows about those who were redeemed by their stay in prison, since they behave normally and we do not hear about them afterwards, especially as, since they do not like their past to be known, they never mention it. We may then meet people in everyday life who used to be young delinquents.

Many attempts have been made already to reform the prison system, such as trying to prevent young offenders from meeting hardened criminals and trying to enable young prisoners to acquire a higher level of education, to take up technical studies or to be trained for a manual job so that they may have a new start in life.

Indeed, if we really want to "reform" a young delinquent we shouldn't keep him in jail. Locking him up also means we shut him up within himself. Confinement is likely to make him worse because solitude, resentment and anger will pervade his mind. Some experiments of half-open reformatories have proved to be successful. But of course this solution is not without any danger either.

Questions:

I – Vocabulary:

1- Give a word with a similar meaning to the following:

keep, start, pervade, reform, jail

2- Give a word with the opposite meaning to the following:

Rejected, obscure, optimistic, minor, prevent

II – Give short answers to the following questions **using your own words. Use one complete sentence.**

- 1- Why do bloody riots burst out in prisons?
- 2- What are the measures taken to reform young prisoners while in jail?
- 3- State the reasons given by the writer to explain that imprisonment is not the best way to reform young delinquents.

III – Paraphrase the following sentences:

- 1- if we really want to “reform” a young delinquent we shouldn’t keep him in jail.
- 2- Confinement is likely to make him worse because solitude, resentment and anger will pervade his mind.

IV – Summarize paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 **OR** 2, 3, and 4.

In a study titled *Male and Female Drivers: How different are they?* Professor Frank McKenna of the University of Reading looked at the accident risk between men and women. He found that men drive faster, commit more driving violations, and are more **inclined to** drink and drive. They look for **thrills** behind the wheel, while women seek independence. And, although anecdotal **evidence** might suggest otherwise, women are not starting to drive as **aggressively** as men.

Despite the increase in women drivers, McKenna's researchers found no evidence that this is changing accident patterns. It seems that the age is far more important than gender in the car. It is the biggest single factor in accident patterns, and, while inexperienced new drivers of both sexes are more likely to be involved in accidents, the study found striking new evidence to confirm that young men drive less safely than any other group.

The survey shows that men and women aged 17 to 20 are most likely to be involved in bend accidents – men almost twice as often – but the difference **decreases** as drivers mature.

Nearly half of all accidents involving young men and one-third of those involving young women take place when it is dark. Again, there is a **steady** decrease in such accidents as drivers grow older, but gender differences remain significant until drivers reach the age of 55.

Although there is little difference between men and women in the distance they keep from the car in front, there are differences across age groups. Young drivers show less regard for the danger of following more closely, and young men are likely to 'close the gap' as an aggressive signal to the driver in front to speed up or get out of the way.

Men consistently choose higher speeds than women of the same age and driving experience. "This could be because men seek a thrill when they drive," says McKenna. "Speed choice is one of the most important causes of accidents. But breaking the speed limits is regarded by men as a minor **offence**."

Contrary to public belief, young drivers, as a group, are more likely to avoid drinking alcohol if they are driving, while men in the 30 to 50 age group admitted to drinking the most alcohol before driving.

Men are most likely **to nod off**, probably because they are **willing** to drive for longer periods without a break – driver fatigue is a significant factor in accidents.

According to Andrew Howard, of the Automobile Association, "We have to combat the group that speeds for thrills. The key is how men are brought up to look at the car. It is this which needs to be **addressed**."

I- Vocabulary:

1- Give a word with a similar meaning to the following:

1-inclined to:

2- thrills:

3-evidence:

4-offence:

5-to nod off:

2- Give a word with the opposite meaning to the following:

1-steady:

2-aggressively:

3-decreases:

4-willing:

5-addressed:

II- Give short answers to the following questions **using your own words. Use one complete sentence.**

1- What is the most significant factor in accident patterns?

.....
.....

2- Why are men more likely to nod off while driving?

.....
.....

3- Why do men choose higher speeds than women of the same age and driving experience?

.....
.....

III- Paraphrase the following sentences:

1- Young drivers show less regard for the danger of following more closely (...)

.....
.....

2- (...) driver fatigue is a significant factor in accidents.

.....
.....

IV- State **briefly** the differences between men and women while driving.

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Some cities in the U.S. insist that people **recycle** their garbage. These cities have garbage police who look inside people's garbage bins. If the garbage police find recyclable materials like glass, newspaper, aluminium or certain plastics in your garbage, you have to pay a **fine**.

Garbage is one of the biggest problems of our time. Rich countries are producing more of it every year. The problem is, what can we do with it?

We all make garbage every time we eat or drink. Our Coca-Cola comes in an aluminium can or plastic bottle, and our food comes from the supermarket packaged in paper, metal, or plastic. Most of that goes into our bins and then to one of two places: a **landfill** or an **incinerator**.

Landfills take a lot of space. They look horrible and smell bad, and they can poison the soil or water under them. Incinerators are no better. They pollute the air with smoke that can be toxic and usually smells bad, too.

Garbage is an international problem. Because air and water can cross frontiers, one country's landfills and incinerators can pollute another country's air and water. Rich countries with too much garbage sometimes pay poorer countries to take it. So some countries that don't produce a lot of garbage get a lot of it anyway.

As the population of our planet continues **to grow**, we will continue to produce more and more garbage. Can we produce less and recycle more, or will our planet soon be covered in a blanket of trash?

Easy Speaksway, Nov.-Dec. 1992.

I- Vocabulary:

- Explain the following words:

1- recycle:

2-fine:

3-landfill:

4-incinerator:

5-to grow:

II- Comprehension questions:

Give short answers to the following questions **using your own words**.

1- What is the main idea of the text?

.....
.....

2- How do we all make garbage?

.....

.....

3- Why is garbage an international problem?

.....

.....

IV- Writing:

- Write a short paragraph about **one** of the following topics:

1- People should protect their environment.

2- We are all responsible for the destruction of our environment.

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Half an hour before **daybreak** three of the boys assembled, as they agreed, near the old bridge. The fourth, a boy by the name of Tolly, had not turned up. His absence did not greatly surprise the others. They knew that his mother did not want him to come on this **expedition** into the forest.

Charles, who was the oldest and their accepted leader, waded downstream to the place where their boat was tied up in the shelter of some overhanging bushes. Then he rowed the boat to the **shallow** water near the bridge, where the boys **loaded** it with the provisions, blankets and other things which they were taking on their journey.

Dawn was just breaking as they climbed into their boat and pushed off from the bank. A **swift** current carried them downstream, so there was no need to row. They took it in turns to keep the boat in the centre of the river. Three hours later they entered the forest where they **intended** to spend the next few days.

“Let’s go ashore now and make some tea,” suggested Charles. “No one will see us here.”

It was forbidden to light fires in the forest, but people rarely came this way.

While Charles tied the boat up, the other two boys set about gathering wood for a fire. When they came back, each with a large handful of sticks, they found Charles looking very worried.

“We haven’t got any matches,” he announced gloomily. “Tolly was going to bring them.”

This was bad news. They were miles away now from the nearest shop.

I-Vocabulary: (3 marks)

Explain the following words:

- 1- daybreak
- 2- expedition
- 3- shallow
- 4- swift
- 5- loaded
- 6- intended

II- Comprehension questions: (4 marks)

Answer the following questions using your own words.

- 1- Why did the boys meet in the forest early in the morning?
- 2- The boys weren't surprised by the absence of their friend. Explain.
- 3- How much time did they want to spend in the forest?
- 4- Why couldn't they light a fire in the forest?

III- Composition: (5 marks)

Write a short essay giving the reasons why people should not light fires in the forest.

American Customs.

America is well-known for its equality, liberty, fraternity. Everyone is very friendly and informal. Children often call their parents by their first names and at work, subordinates do not normally use "Mister" when addressing their supervisors. To those visitors who come from a more rigid and stratified society, such casualness can be confusing, leading to egregious **blunders**. Conversely, many worldly, sophisticated Americans appear **mortified** because they feel America is not "civilized," with a capital "C." However, we know of terribly embarrassing incidents from mistakes which only an innocent foreigner would have made.

- Public **displays** of affection between the sexes are very common, unlike perhaps where you have come from. In many cities, especially San Francisco, homosexuality is an accepted way of life. You may therefore see men being affectionate with men and women with women. If you disapprove of homosexuals because of your religious or cultural **beliefs**, please keep it to yourself. You might even find yourself a guest in a gay person's home-and might become shocked to realize that your **host** is a normal human being like any other and that you are actually enjoying his hospitality. Many couples also live together without being married-and may never marry. But you must realize their **bond** is probably as strong as the bond of marriage. So don't think one of them is available for a "date."

- America is a notoriously "open" society, and to most foreigners Americans often appear exceptionally and "instantly" friendly. But sometimes such openness can lead to serious **misunderstanding**, especially between men and women. A casual invitation to have drinks and/or dinner does not mean that your American host also wants to become "intimate" with you afterwards. So be careful not to read too much into a friendly invitation

QUESTIONS

1. Match the following words to the suitable definition or synonym (2 points).

Blunder	Mortify	Display	Belief	Host	Bond	Misunderstanding
---------	---------	---------	--------	------	------	------------------

	Person who receives other people at home as guests.
	Show.
	Stupid careless mistake.
	State of being joined or together.
	Failure to understand rightly or correctly.

2. Answer the following questions according to the text (2 points).

a. How do homosexuals behave in San Francisco?

b. Do all couples marry? Give a reason for your answer.

c. What evidence can you find in the text showing that Americans are casual people?

d. Why can openness lead to misunderstanding in America?

3. Fill in the blanks with the Present Perfect Simple or Present Perfect Continuous form of the verbs in Brackets (1.5 points).

a. He (drink) _____ heavily lately.

b. He (not drink) _____ any alcohol for years.

c. Mrs. Harris (work) _____ hard all her life.

d. I see you (work) _____ overtime during this last week.

e. He (make) _____ a documentary in Somalia for over a month.

4. Rewrite the following sentences without changing the meaning of the original sentence (1.5 points).

a. Because he didn't behave himself, Tommy was sent to bed early last night.

Tommy wouldn't

b. We couldn't go to the Tower of London because we didn't have enough time.

If

c. When Bill slipped down the stairs, he broke his leg.

If

5. Composition. Write 80 words about *American habits* (3 points).

CANADA

The roots of Canadian English can be found in the **events** which followed the American Revolution Of 1776. Those who had supported Britain found themselves unable to stay in the new United States, and most went into exile in the Ontario region of Canada. From there they **spread** to all parts of the country. They were soon followed by many thousands who were attracted by the **cheapness** of land. Within fifty years, the population of Upper Canada (above Montreal) had reached 100,000 - mainly people from the United States.

In the east, the Atlantic Provinces had been **settled** with English speakers much earlier (the first contacts were as early as 1497, when the British explorer John Cabot claimed Newfoundland), but even today these areas contain less than 10 per cent of the population, so that they have only a marginal **role** in the development of the Canadian 'norm'. In Quebec, the use of French language and culture remains from the first period of exploration, with the majority of people using French as a mother-**tongue**: here, English and French coexist uneasily.

Because of its origins, Canadian English has a great deal in common with the rest of the English spoken in North America - and is often difficult to distinguish for people who live outside the region. To British people, Canadians may sound American; to Americans, they may sound British. Canadians themselves insist on not being identified with either, and certainly there is a great deal of evidence in **support** of this view.

QUESTIONS

1. Match the following words with the suitable definition or synonym.

event	spread	cheapness	settle	role	tongue	support
-------	--------	-----------	--------	------	--------	---------

	Low in price, costing little money.
	Thing that happens, incident.
	Help; give one's approval.
	Extend, become distributed.
	Make one's permanent house.

2. Answer the following questions according to the text.

a. Why did some English people have to escape to Canada after the American Revolution?

b. Why did people go to Canada after the first immigrants?

c. Why is French spoken in Quebec?

d. What kind of English does the Canadian English resemble?

3. Put the verbs into the *Present Continuous* or the *Simple Present*.

a. The Weeltech company (make) _____ bicycles and mopeds. They (be) _____ very successful and at the moment they (build) _____ a bigger factory in Nottingham.

b. Normally they (produce) _____ more mopeds than bicycles, but this year they (produce) _____ 20% more bicycles than mopeds.

4. Put the following verbs into the *Simple Past* or *Past Continuous*.

a. Zoë (finish) _____ her breakfast and (ring) _____ her friend Katy.

b. Katy (listen) _____ to the radio when Zoë (phone)
_____ her.

c. She (turn) _____ down the radio when the phone (ring)
_____ .

5. Composition. Write 80 words about the following topic: *How does it feel being a student?*

While I was walking along the road the other day I happened to notice a small brown leather purse lying on the pavement. I **picked** it **up** and opened it to see if I could find out the owner's name. There was nothing inside it except some small **change** and a rather old photograph – a picture of a woman and a young girl about twelve years old, who looked like the woman's daughter. I put the photograph back and took the purse to the police station, where I **handed** it to the sergeant in charge. Before I left, the sergeant made a note of my name and address in case the **owner** of the purse wanted to write and thank me.

That evening I went to have dinner with an uncle and aunt of mine. They had also invited another person, a young woman, so that there would be four people at table. The young woman's face was **familiar**, but I could not remember where I had seen it. I was quite sure that we had not met before. In the course of conversation, however, the young woman happened to remark that she had lost her purse that afternoon. I at once remembered where I had seen her face. She was the young girl in the photograph, although she was now much older. Of course she was very surprised when I was able to describe her purse to her. Then I explained that I had recognised her face from the photograph I had found in the purse. My uncle insisted on going round to the police station immediately **to claim** the purse. As the police sergeant handed it over, he said that it was a remarkable coincidence that I had found not only the purse but also the person who had lost it.

I-Vocabulary: (3 marks)

Explain the following words:

1-picked...up

2-handed

3-change

4-owner

5-familiar

6-to claim

II- Comprehension questions: (4 marks)

Answer the following questions using your own words:

1- Why did the writer open the purse he found on the pavement?

- 2- Why did the writer take the purse to the police station?
- 3- The sergeant made a note of the writer's name. Explain.
- 4- Why was the woman surprised when the writer described the purse to her?

III- Composition: (5 marks)

Write a short essay telling a story about a remarkable coincidence which happened to you.

SOUTH AFRICA

One further area where there is a substantial number of mother tongue speakers of English is South Africa. Although Dutch colonists arrived in the Cape as early as 1652, British **involvement** in the region dates only from 1795, during the Napoleonic Wars, when an expeditionary force invaded. British control was established in 1806, and a **policy** of settlement began in earnest in 1820, when some 5,000 British were given land in the eastern Cape. English was made the official language of the region in 1822, and there was an **attempt** to anglicize the large Dutch- (or Afrikaans-) speaking population. English became the language of law, education, and most other aspects of public life. Further British settlements followed in the 1840s and 1850s, especially in Natal, and there was a massive influx of Europeans following the development of the gold and diamond areas in the Witwatersrand in the 1870s. Nearly half a million immigrants, many of them English-speaking, arrived in the country during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The English language history of the region thus has many strands. There was initially a certain amount of regional dialect variation among the different groups of British settlers, with the speech of the London area predominant in the Cape, and Midlands and Northern speech strongly represented in Natal; but in due course a more homogeneous accent emerged - an accent that **shares** many similarities with the accents of Australia, which was also being settled during this period. At the same time, English was being used as a second language by the Afrikaans speakers, and many of the Dutch colonists took this variety with them on the Great Trek of 1836, as they moved north to escape British **rule**. An African variety of English also developed, spoken by the black population, who had learned the language **mainly** in mission schools, and which was influenced in different ways by the various language backgrounds of the speakers. In addition, English came to be used, along with Afrikaans and often other languages, by those with an ethnically mixed **background** (Coloureds); and it was also adopted by the many immigrants from India, who arrived in the country from around 1860.

QUESTIONS

1. Match the following words with the suitable definition or synonym.

Involvement	Policy	Attempt	Share	Rule	Mainly	Background
-------------	--------	---------	-------	------	--------	------------

	Try
	Chiefly, primarily.
	Distribute something among people in the same proportion.
	Origin, person's social class.
	Fact of including or affecting somebody in one operation.

2. Answer the following questions according to the text.

a. What year were the first British settlers given land?

b. How many new settlers arrived in South Africa since 1875 to 1900?

c. What other dialect is similar to the one spoken in South Africa?

d. Where did the Black Population learn English?

3. Make single sentences changing the verb into the *Past Simple* or *Past perfect*.

a. We got on the plane. We handed in our boarding passes.

After

b. We sat down and fastened our seat-belts. We found out seats.

As soon as

c. The plane took off. We didn't unfasten our seat-belts.

Until

4. Put the verbs in brackets into the *Simple Past* or *Past Continuous*.

a. They (buy) _____ ice-creams while they (wait) _____ to play.

b. They (play) _____ when it (start) _____ to rain.

c. They (stop) _____ when the rain (start) _____.

d. When the rain (stop) _____ they (go on) _____ with their game.

e. Zoë (finish) _____ her breakfast and (ring) _____ her friend Katy.

5. Composition. Write 80 words about the following topic: *Riding a moped at the age of 14, is it dangerous?*

A most **noticeable** thing about the teenage world is its **flying** fashions in clothes, singers, dances, amusements, everything that interests its inhabitants. The subjects of these fashions seem **trivial**; to many serious observers, the interest the young take in this stream of nothings is a positive proof of the emptiness of their society and their lives...

But our purpose is to try to understand rather than to criticize. What can we make of these **fleeting** interests? What can we make of the process of continual change that **absorbs** the young so deeply? It is perhaps worth enquiring, before we come to any conclusions about the social values of such activities, just how fashion works and what social purposes it achieves...

Our clothes and appearance put each one of us into a category, and **draw** appropriate reaction from members of other groups and categories.

Like passports they proclaim important facts that need to be known about us in most social situations: our salary, occupation, status...

All in all, clothes and fashion are essential tools in urban life. We need them to inform us about the multitude of different types of people we meet and deal with. In fact, it is likely that modern existence could be almost impossible if we had **to go through it** dressed alike in overalls. That everyone reacts strongly to clothes is so, but is not often admitted. We tend to consider this reaction trivial and ridiculous, but even the most **liberal** and intelligent people are in fact **inhibited** by contact with somebody who is, to them, inappropriately dressed. This is a powerful force, but an unconscious one. The interest of the young in fashion means that for them these mechanisms are their daily toys; they will grow up understanding more exactly their own reactions to dress as **a social indicator**. Anything which makes unconscious and uncontrollable social forces conscious is surely to be applauded.

From "The Teenage Revolution" by Peter LAURIE

I- Vocabulary:

1- Give a word or a phrase with a similar meaning to the following:

1- fleeting:

2- draw:

3- inhibited:

4- to go through it:

5- a social indicator :

2- Give a word or a phrase with the opposite meaning to the following:

1- noticeable:

2- flying:

- 3- trivial:
- 4- absorbs:
- 5- liberal:

II- Answer the following questions **using your own words. Use complete sentences.**

1- How do people react to dress and fashion in society? Explain.

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2- What is the significance of dress in society? Explain.

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3- What does young people's interest in dress and fashion imply? Explain.

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III- Paraphrase the following sentences:

1- That everyone reacts strongly to clothes is so, but is not often admitted.

.....

.....

.....

2- Anything which makes unconscious and uncontrollable social forces conscious is surely to be applauded.

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IV- State **briefly** the writer's opinion about dress and fashion in the text.

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The Ghoul and the Cow

Once upon a time there was a man who lived close to a forest. He raised cattle and wished he had a son to help him when he grew up. His wife became pregnant and **fulfilled** his wish, he being the only child they had. The father was very happy and **doted on** his son. In fact he loved him more than all the land and the cattle he owned.

When his son grew up, his father started sending him to the forest to watch the cows. One day a cow slipped on a rock and broke its leg. By the time the son collected the cattle to take them back home, night had already fallen. **Even so**, he could not simply leave the **disabled** cow there because the wolves would devour it before morning. So he went to his father and told him what had happened. They decided that the cow had to be saved **at all costs**. The father brought a knife, slaughtered the cow, and removed the hide. The meat had to be carried home and sold the next day. Father and son were both already starving and tired, and to carry all that meat home would require a lot of energy. The father had an idea: they would roast the liver and it first. “Go and look for some fire,” he told his son.

The son walked about in the forest and **spotted** a fire not too far away. He thought it might be a bushman or journeyman. He went over there and found a ghoul sitting by the fire warming himself. **At the sight of** the ghoul, the child was horrified. He tried to **sneak away**, but it was too late. The ghoul had become aware of his presence. “What do you want, boy?” He said.

“Some fire, please.”

“All right. Come over here and take me on your back.”

The son had no choice and went back to his father with the ghoul on his back. When his father saw him, he said: “Oh, my son, you brought someone who’s going to eat us tonight.”

When his son bent down to let the ghoul down, his leg twisted under the weight and broke.

“I’m going to eat you and your son,” the ghoul told the father.

“You are welcome,” the father replied. “It’s our fate. Please start with the cow, **it’s all ready**. Look at this wonderful fresh red meat.”

While the ghoul was busy devouring the cow, the father put his son on his back and slipped away into the forest, leaving the entire herd of cows behind.

When they had emerged from the forest and were safely at home, the son said: “But father, you left all the cows!”

“Come, my son,” he replied **without the slightest hint of regret**, “you’re my real capital. Cows can be replaced, but you can’t.”

(From Moroccan Folktales (Syracuse University Press), translated by Jilali El Koudia)

I- Vocabulary:

1-Give for each word another word of similar meaning as used in the text:

1-fulfilled:

2-doted on:

3-disabled:

4-spotted:

5-sneak away:

2- Explain briefly what you understand by the following phrases:

1- Even so:

2- at all costs:

3- at the sight of/

4- it’s all ready:

5- without the slightest hint of regret:

II- Answer the following questions **using your own words. Use one complete sentence.**

1-Why did the father offer the slaughtered cow to the ghoul?

.....
.....

2- Why did the father carry his son on his back?

.....
.....

3- What does the father mean by “it’s our fate”?

.....
.....

III- Paraphrase the following sentences:

1- (...) he loved him more than all the land and the cattle he owned.

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2- “you’re my real capital (....)”

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IV- Summarise the text in *one* paragraph.

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“Avoid the rush-hour” must be the slogan of large cities the world over. If it is, it’s a slogan no one takes **the least notice of**. Twice a day, with predictable regularity, the pot boils over. Wherever you look, it’s people, people, people. The trains which leave or arrive every few minutes are packed: an endless procession of human sardine tins. The streets are so crowded, **there is hardly room** to move on the pavement. The queues for buses reach **staggering** proportions. It takes ages for a bus to get to you because the traffic on the roads has virtually come to a **standstill**. Even when a bus does at last arrive, it’s so full, it can’t take any more passengers. This whole crazy system of commuting stretches man’s resources to the utmost. The smallest unforeseen event can bring about conditions of utter **chaos**. A power-cut, for instance, an exceptionally heavy snowfall or a minor derailment must always make city-dwellers realize how precarious the balance is. The extraordinary thing is not that people put up with these conditions, but that they actually choose them in preference to anything else.

Large modern cities are too big to control. They impose their own living conditions on the people who inhabit them. City-dwellers are obliged by their environment to adopt a wholly unnatural way of life. They lose touch with the land and rhythm of nature. It is possible to live such an air-conditioned existence in a large city that you are barely conscious of the seasons. A few flowers in a public park (if you have the time to visit it) may remind you that it is spring or summer. A few leaves clinging to the pavement may remind you that it is autumn. Beyond that, what is going on in nature seems totally irrelevant. All the simple, good things of life like sunshine and fresh air are at a premium. Tall buildings blot out the sun. Traffic fumes pollute the atmosphere. Even the distinction between day and night is lost. The flow of traffic goes on unceasingly and the noise never stops.

The funny thing about it all is that you pay dearly for the “privilege” of living in a city. The demand for accommodation is so great that it is often impossible for ordinary people to buy a house of their own. Exorbitant rents must be paid for tiny flats which even country hens would disdain to live in. Accommodation apart, the cost of living is very high. Just about everything you buy is likely to be more expensive than it would be in the country.

In addition to all this, city-dwellers live under constant threat. The crime rate in most cities is very high. Houses are burgled with alarming frequency. Cities breed crime and violence and are full of places you would be afraid to visit at night. If you think about it, they’re not really **fit to live** in at all. Can anyone really doubt that the country is what man was born for and where he truly belongs?

I- Vocabulary:

1- Explain the following words and phrases **using your own words**:

1- staggering:

2- standstill:

3- chaos:

4- the least notice of:

5- there is hardly room:

6- fit to live in:

II- Answer the following questions **using your own words**. Use one complete sentence.

1- According to the text, why is city life unnatural?

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2- Why do city-dwellers live in fear?

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3- Why is living in a city a privilege?

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III- Paraphrase the following sentences:

1-They impose their own living conditions.

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2- Cities breed crime and violence.

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IV- What does the writer of the text think of life in the city? **Don't write more than one paragraph.**

Summer comes, and Miss Sophie D. proud of her hi-tech toy, travels down, as she does every year, to take her holidays in the country town where she lived as a child. On the TGV, she calls her family phone: "I'm on the train; I'll be with you in three hours." The family are impressed.

Last year, there were 6.3 million mobile phones in Britain, 5.4 million in Italy, 5.1 million in Germany and only 2.3 million in France.

Having for years been behind the others, France is rapidly catching up in the field of portable phones. In 1993, there were 270.000, but by June this year the figure had reached 3.5 million, and the marketing people think there will be ten million portable phones before the year 2000...

Prices are coming down because competition is playing its part as the three principal protagonists fight for the market. Leading up by a long way is Itineris (France Telecom) with 55%, followed by SFR (Générale des Eaux) with 40%, and Bouygues Telecom 5%.

In fact, the advantages of a phone which can be used almost anywhere and can get help in the case of an accident are obvious. But it can also be a nuisance if it rings in the middle of a concert or at a restaurant, and many accidents happen when drivers try to use the mobile while at the wheel. It is also said that mobile phones emit harmful rays with carcinogenic effects.

Adapted from The News, September 1997.

I- Vocabulary:

- Explain the following words:

1- recycle:

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2-fine:

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3-landfill:

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4-incinerator:

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5-to grow:

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II- Comprehension questions:

Give short answers to the following questions **using your own words**.

1- What is the main idea of the text?

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2- How do we all make garbage?

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3- Why is garbage an international problem?

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IV- Writing:

- Write a short paragraph about **one** of the following topics:

1- People should protect their environment.

2- We are all responsible for the destruction of our environment.

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MASS TOURISM

Nowadays, mass tourism has become a big industry. Every year, thousands of people go abroad looking for exotic countries, unknown and new experiences. Although mass tourism provides work and money for foreign countries, it destroys their environment. Even ecotourism causes problems. Therefore, mass tourism should be limited in order to protect the environment and the people of these foreign countries.

In the first place, mass tourism causes pollution and wastes. Very often, in the most popular touristic destination, there is not enough money to face and combat the problem of this deterioration of the environment. In fact, travel agencies abroad do profit a lot from mass tourism, without caring for the environment. When a popular touristic destination becomes overpopulated, travel agencies look for a new one somewhere else. If this problem of mass tourism is not limited, it will become more serious in the future.

Moreover, mass tourism has very often a negative impact on the culture of the people who receive tourists. The tissues and artistic objects handcrafts become cheap souvenirs which tourists buy and export. A part from a very small amount of money, this brings nothing to the inhabitants. In fact, mass tourism contributes to the destruction of traditional cultures.

For tourists, travel is a short, wonderful experience, but for the inhabitants as well as their countries, mass tourism causes problems in the long run, problems with no immediate solutions.

Comprehension questions:

Read the text again and answer the following questions:

- a. In what ways does mass tourism damage the environment?
- b. Why do the countries visited by many tourists have little money to protect the environment?
- c. Who benefits the most from mass tourism?
- d. How can the problems associated with mass tourism be controlled?

I was shown into the waiting-room which, as I had expected, was full. Any waiting-room – especially a dentist's, as this was – is not the best place in the world to spend an afternoon. No

matter how hard a dentist tries to make his waiting-room look pleasant, it always has an atmosphere of its own. There is that odd smell that reminds you of a hospital. A small table in the centre is covered with very old and torn magazines; the curtains are faded; and the armchairs have a hollow, sunken look about them.

This waiting-room was no exception. There were dusty pictures on the wall and the tattered magazines on the table looked like a great pile of waste paper. I took my seat and decided to pass the time watching the people around me.

A little man beside me was turning the pages quickly and nervously. It was hard to understand what he was looking at, for every three minutes or so he would throw the magazine on to the table, seize another, and sink back into his chair. Opposite me there was a young mother who was trying to restrain her son from making noise. The boy had obviously grown weary of waiting. He had placed an ash-tray on the floor and was making aeroplane-noises as he waved a pencil in his hands. Near him, an old man was fast asleep, snoring quietly to himself, and the boy's mother was afraid that sooner or later her son would wake the gentleman up. Meanwhile, the little man next to me kept sighing loudly. At last, he got up, walked towards the door and impatiently began examining the pictures on the wall. Soon growing bored, he snatched yet another magazine from the bottom of the pile and dropped wearily into a chair. Even the boy had become quiet and was sleeping in his mother's arms. There was a deathly silence in the room as the door opened and a nurse entered. The people looked up expectantly with a ray of hope in their eyes, then settled down again as the next lucky patient was led out of the room.

I- Vocabulary:

1- Give a word with a similar meaning to the following:

1-odd:

2- reminds:

3- tattered:

4- snatched:

5- seize:

2- Give a word with the opposite meaning to the following:

1- hollow:

2- faded:

3- dusty:

4- to restrain:

5- bored:

II- Give short answers to the following questions **using your own words. Use one complete sentence.**

1- Why is a waiting-room not the best place in the world to spend an afternoon?

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2- How did the little man and old man busy themselves?

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3- Why did the room become quiet at the end?

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III- Paraphrase the following sentences:

1-No matter how hard a dentist tries to make his waiting-room look pleasant, it always has an atmosphere of its own.

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2- The boy had obviously grown weary of waiting.

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IV- Describe **briefly** the atmosphere of the waiting-room.

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