

Epreuve écrite

Examen de fin d'études secondaires 2015

Section: B-G

Branche: Anglais

Numéro d'ordre du candidat

Glossary:

Laïcité/secularism: the belief that religion should not play a role in government, education, or other public parts of society

Flemming Rose: is a Danish journalist, author and since 2010 foreign affairs editor at a Danish newspaper which published the Mohammed cartoons.

Part One: Comprehension Questions

30 marks

Read the text and answer the questions in your own words as far as possible.

1. In the author's eyes, what misunderstandings exist in relation to *Charlie Hebdo*? (4 marks)
2. Explain the controversy surrounding the publication of the latest *Charlie Hebdo* cartoon. (8 marks)
3. Which additional reasons help to explain why some people do not publish offensive images in the media? (12 marks)
3. What is meant by the 'tyranny of silence'? What are its impacts? (6 marks)

Part Two: Development Essay

30 marks

**Write a well-structured essay of 250 – 350 words and indicate the number of words used.
Do NOT repeat any ideas from the article.**

"Are there any limits to censorship?" Discuss.

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After the Paris attacks we're in danger of abandoning the right to offend

In the two weeks since the Paris attacks I have arrived at a few conclusions. Some are partly linked to the fact that I am French, European, a journalist, and that I write for a UK-based global media organisation. I want to dwell here on misunderstandings, on fear, on politics, and on what principles can and should be upheld in liberal democracies in the aftermath of those events.

First, the misunderstandings. Sensitivities vary but mine is that Charlie Hebdo has never been racist or anti-Muslim; anticlerical, certainly. But there has been a great deal of incomprehension about it based simply on ignorance.

There has been passionate debate about whether Charlie Hebdo's latest, and very moderate, cover should be shown by the media, and if so, how. Some, including the Guardian, decided to run it as part of the news coverage; others decided it was too offensive and refused to publish it. My view is that the cover image absolutely needed to be shown – not just for its news value, but because all free, independent media must show solidarity when a massacre takes place in a newsroom because of what its team produced.

The biggest discovery for me, however, was the degree to which arguments made in much of the British media about not hurting sensitivities masked the real reason for not reproducing the image: fear. Some journalists were scared to tweet the Charlie Hebdo cover.

Now the politics. Much has been said about French secularism, or 'laïcité', and how that contrasts with the multiculturalism that is upheld in the UK. But I am struck by how many progressive, leftwing people have come to consider that blasphemy is a line that should not be crossed if we are to live in a society of good manners and peaceful acceptance of cultural differences. In short, these people believe that some things are too sacred to be touched.

Equally, I am struck by the argument that we should be especially sensitive to the views of minorities, or any group perceived as weak. They certainly should be listened to, but should they infringe on our free choices in a democracy? Or, what about weakness and vulnerability? They are also relative notions. So what can we take away from all this? My views largely coincide with those of Flemming Rose: Europe mustn't go back to the era before the Enlightenment. Yet that will be the case if the right to blaspheme or to go against anything deemed sacred by some is rejected. "We are still a free society but some of the mechanisms of a society of fear are starting to take hold," he told me, as we discussed self-censorship in the media.

In a globalised, digital world it becomes difficult to define what a minority or a majority is, and whose sensitivities count most. "If you accept the right not to be offended, you won't be able to say anything that might offend. You have to shut up," Rose added, explaining where the tyranny of silence starts. "Rejecting the right not to be offended is the price we pay to live in liberal democracy. So we all have to grow thicker skins."

(Natalie Nougayrède, adapted from The Guardian, 22nd January 2015; 558 words)

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Likewise, economic globalization cannot be undone. But regulation can and should be improved. After all, some things are still worth protecting. There are good reasons not to leave culture, education, lifestyles, or jobs completely exposed to the creative destruction of market forces.

517 words

(adapted from Project Syndicate, December 9, 2014)

Glossary:

grievances: a real or imagined wrong or other cause for complaint or protest, especially unfair treatment

READING COMPREHENSION

Answer the following questions about the article by using your own words as much as possible.

1. What is the current reaction towards immigration? (8 marks)
2. Explain the reasons motivating this attitude. (8 marks)
3. Anxiety about immigration goes beyond mere intolerance. Explain. (4 marks)
4. Why, according to the text, is there an emerging class divide and who is affected? (10 marks)

DEVELOPMENT QUESTION

Write a well-structured and convincingly argued essay between 250 and 350 words about the topic below. Indicate the number of words used at the end of your text.

Immigration is something that we should embrace as a society. Discuss.

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IMMIGRATION AND THE NEW CLASS DIVIDE

A British politician, Pat McFadden, recently warned members of his Labour Party that they should try to make the most of the global economy and not treat immigration like a disease. As he put it, "You can feed on people's grievances or you can give people a chance. And I think our policies should be around giving people a chance." In a world increasingly dominated by grievances – against immigrants, bankers, Muslims, "liberal elites," "Eurocrats," cosmopolitans, or anything else that seems vaguely alien – such wise words are rare. Leaders worldwide should take note.

In the United States, Republicans are threatening to close the government down just because President Barack Obama has offered undocumented immigrants who have lived and worked in the US for many years a chance to gain citizenship. The United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) wants to introduce a five-year ban on immigration for permanent settlement. Russia's deputy prime minister, Dmitry Rogozin, once released a video promising to "clean the rubbish" – meaning migrant workers, mostly from former Soviet republics – "away from Moscow." Even the once famously tolerant Dutch and Danes are increasingly voting for parties that criticize "the plague of immigration". Always keen to assert the freedom to insult Muslims, the Dutch Freedom Party wants to ban all mosques.

Retaining one's job in a tightening economy is undoubtedly a serious concern. But the livelihoods of most of the middle-aged rural white Americans are hardly threatened by poor Mexican migrants. UKIP is popular in some parts of England where immigrants are rarely seen. And many of the Dutch Freedom Party's voters live nowhere near a mosque. Anti-immigrant sentiment cuts across the old left-right divide. One thing Tea Party or UKIP supporters share with working-class voters who genuinely fear losing their jobs to low-paid foreigners is anxiety about being left behind in a world of easy mobility, supranational organizations, and global networking.

It would be a mistake to dismiss anxiety about immigration as mere intolerance or apprehension about the globalized economy as simply reactionary. National, religious, and cultural identities are being transformed, though less by immigration than by the development of globalized capitalism.

In the new global economy, there are clear winners and losers. Educated men and women who can communicate effectively in varied international contexts are benefiting. People who lack the needed education or experience – and there are many of them – are struggling. In other words, the new class divisions run less between the rich and the poor than between educated metropolitan elites and less sophisticated, less flexible, and, in every sense, less connected provincials.

But it is the relative *success* of ethnic minorities and immigrants that is more upsetting to indigenous populations. Short of unleashing massive and bloody ethnic cleansing Americans and others have no choice but to get used to living in increasingly diverse societies.