

UH 156/2

SESSION 2021

ÉPREUVE A OPTION

ENS Ulm – ENS de Lyon

**ANALYSE ET COMMENTAIRE EN LANGUE VIVANTE ÉTRANGÈRE
D'UN OU PLUSIEURS TEXTES OU DOCUMENTS
RELATIFS À LA CIVILISATION D'UNE AIRE LINGUISTIQUE**

ALLEMAND – ANGLAIS – ARABE – CHINOIS
ESPAGNOL – HÉBREU – ITALIEN – PORTUGAIS

Durée : 6 heures

L'usage de la calculatrice n'est pas autorisé

Les candidats doivent **obligatoirement** traiter le sujet correspondant à la langue qu'ils ont choisie au moment de l'inscription.

Tournez la page S.V.P.

ANALYSE ET COMMENTAIRE DE TEXTES EN ANGLAIS

Durée : 6 heures

Analysez et commentez, **en anglais**, les cinq documents suivants :

Document 1

- 1 The phenomena of consumer organizing and consumer movements are not confined to recent decades. While many consumers have undoubtedly displayed a voracious appetite for getting ever more stuff, others have demonstrated an engaged form of citizenship eager to inject morality and politics into the marketplace.
- 5 [...] The history of consumer movements can be roughly divided into three types. Although there is overlap between them, [...] they do form something of a chronology. The first type of consumer movement that has existed is that which has involved the mobilization of consumers around the concerns of other types of person: for instance, the slave, the worker, the child. If it maps onto a specific period, it was from the end of the eighteenth century to the early twentieth century. A
- 10 second type of consumer movement is that which sees consumers organize both to protect their own self-interest and to campaign for the rights of all consumers. The two key instances of this form of consumer movement are the consumer co-operative movement which began in the latter half of the nineteenth century and peaked in the mid-twentieth, and the consumer goods and services testing movement which became a global movement in the second half of the twentieth
- 15 century. A final type of consumer movement is that which has emerged over the last two to three decades and which is associated with ethical consumerism, green consumerism and fair-trade. In many ways, this marks a return to the duties many consumers felt towards the welfare of others that marked many movements in the nineteenth century. [...]
- 20 The most widely cited instigator of [the first form] of consumer mobilization was the anti-slavery movement. Women in Britain and America purchased brooches, badges, ribbons, pins, buttons and jewellery, bearing the legend "Am I not a man and a brother?", in order to protest against the slave trade in the 1790s. [...]
- Not all consumer movements of this period were so socially progressive. In the United States boycotts may well have been launched by abolitionists but they were also instigated by Southern
- 25 advocates of 'non-intercourse' with the North. Self-interest, too, could be a factor. Later in the century, consumer groups emerged in many British municipalities to campaign for better access to utilities such as water, gas, and electricity. The point is that consumer mobilization could be used to serve a variety of political ends. [...]
- 30 In many senses, this form of consumer movement will always exist. Consumers will always seek to use their consumption either to promote the interests of others or to help their own welfare, or both. More distinct are our second type of consumer movements, those which develop the role of the consumer into a more general form of politics and political identity. [...]
- 35 By the middle decades of the twentieth century, many of the demands of consumer groups about access to a decent standard of living were being met, either directly or indirectly, through the development of social democratic institutions. [...] With the establishment of welfare regimes

across Europe and North America, the stage was set for the creation of a new form of consumer politics, focused more on rights than on duties. Consumption, or the right to enjoy its pleasures, had become an entitlement for citizens who had made sacrifices in two world wars and expected a share in the societies being reconstructed in their name in the late 1940s and 1950s.

40 [...] The origin of the third type of consumer movement was marked by the return to popularity of the boycott. In recent decades, in Britain alone, there have been boycotts against lead in paint (1984), against an amusement park because of its captured whales and dolphins (organized by Greenpeace, 1984), against Tarmac and MAN-VW over their links with cruise missiles (organized by CND, 1983), and against Schweppes for using non-returnable bottles (organized by Friends of
45 the Earth, early 1970s).

[...] To this extent, the history of consumer activism has come full circle: today's protestors have much in common with the campaigners of the nineteenth century. Yet like the affluent shoppers [of the 1950s], today's ethical shoppers are more fully aware that they are consumers. It is not so much that they bring specific political issues to specific acts of consumption. It is more that they
50 recognize that the whole world of consumption is now political and that politics pervades every product and service that is bought and sold. As consumerism (as a cultural description of our age) pervades so many aspects of our lives, so too will it be likely that consumerism (as a political movement) will increase in popularity and scope.

Matthew Hilton, "Consumer movements", in F. Trentmann (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 505-520.

Document 2

1 The memorable report of the Jamaica House of Assembly, dated November 23rd, 1804, after describing the abolition of slavery as the most fearful of calamities, proceeds to say— "an abolition by the legislature is not the sole means by which the West Indies may be ruined." (In colonial language, the destruction of slavery and the destruction of the West Indies are
5 synonymous.) "The same object," they proceed, "obtained as completely, although with somewhat less rapidity, BY ENCOURAGING THE CULTIVATION OF SUGAR IN THE EAST INDIES, where the fertility of the soil, the facility of irrigation, the abundance of provision, the cheapness of labour, and the structure of society, give advantages which nature has denied to these islands," etc. The colonists have further informed us that slavery in the British West Indies mainly depends on
10 *British* consumption of its produce. "The continent," says one of their ablest advocates, "can be, and *is* supplied with sugar at a cheaper rate than it can be grown by the British Planter."

These are important admissions. BY THE SIMPLE SUBSTITUTION OF EAST FOR WEST INDIA SUGAR, THE SLAVE-OWNERS THEMSELVES CONFESS THAT SLAVERY MAY BE ANNIHILATED. To effect its annihilation by this simple means, to whom can we appeal with such propriety as to our
15 enlightened and patriotic countrywomen? In the domestic department they are the chief controllers; they, for the most part, provide the articles of family consumption; instead of purchasing that luxury, the cultivation of which constitutes at once the chief profits and oppressions of slavery, they can substitute that which is the genuine produce of free labour, and by so doing become a blessing to existing and unborn millions. By so doing they may confer
20 incalculable benefits on the starving population of Ireland, and greatly improve the condition of our own; for the sugar imported from the East Indies would be paid for by the export of home

manufactures, which, among a population in our eastern dominions of eighty million, would find a wide and profitable market. By the simple substitution of East for West India sugar, they may save their impoverished country the annual tax of THREE MILLION now paid in the direct support
25 of slavery; they may save the annual sacrifice of more than two thousand lives of British soldiers in the ignoble enterprise of maintaining a system abhorrent to British law and British feeling. [...]

By the simple substitution of East for West India sugar, the most essential service of all would be rendered to the infatuated slave-holder, by putting an end to a system which perverts his understanding, sears his conscience, and hardens his heart. The system to which he so tenaciously
30 clings, when contemplated in a moral point of view, with reference to its ultimate consequences, must be regarded as a far greater curse to the slave-holder than to the slave, in as much as the active agents of oppression must be obnoxious to sufferings infinitely transcending in severity and duration those experienced by its passive victims. [...]

There is nothing vindictive in this proposition, as some humane persons have vainly imagined.
35 [...] "The sufferings of the miserable slave are augmented in exact proportion to the increased demand for sugar; just as a manufacturer is enabled, when the price of goods is high, to give a larger sum for his machinery, to employ it more incessantly, and consequently to wear it out more rapidly, so is the planter tempted to act with his human machinery."¹ "A reduced consumption of West India sugar may indeed lessen the slaves' labour, but a want of employment can never form
40 one of the miseries of a slave population, since it must lead directly and necessarily to emancipation."²

Adapted from: Elizabeth Heyrick, *Appeal to the Hearts and Consciences of British Women*, Leicester, Albert Cockshaw, 1828.

Document 3

1 To some people the vision of a leggy adolescent happily squealing over the latest fancy present from Daddy is just another example of the way teen-agers are spoiled to death these days. But to a growing number of businessmen, the picture spells out the profitable fact that the American teen-agers have emerged as a big-time consumer in the U.S. economy. They are multiplying in numbers.

5 They spend more and have more spent on them. And they have minds of their own about what they want.

The time is past when a boy's chief possession was his bike and a girl's party wardrobe consisted of a fancy dress worn with a string of dime-store pearls. What Depression-bred parents may still think of as luxuries are looked on as necessities by their offspring. Today teen-agers surround
10 themselves with a fantastic array of garish and often expensive baubles and amusements. [...]

Nobody knows how much parents spend on them for actual necessities nor to what extent teen-agers act as hidden persuaders on their parents' other buying habits. Counting only what is spent to satisfy their special teen-age demands, the youngsters and their parents will shell out about \$10 billion this year, a billion more than the total sales of GM.

15 Until recently businessmen have largely ignored the teen-age market. But now they are spending millions on advertising and razzle-dazzle promotional stunts. Their efforts so far seem only to have

¹ See "First Report of the Liverpool Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association."

² See a Paper printed at Liverpool, 1827, entitled "West India Sugar."

scratched the surface of a rich lode. In 1970, when the teen-age population expands from its present 18 million to 28 million, the market may be worth \$20 billion. If parents have any idea of organized revolt, it is already too late. Teenage spending is so important that such action would send quivers through the entire national economy. [...]

At 17, Suzie Slattery of Van Nuys, California, fits any businessman's dream of the ideal teen-age consumer. The daughter of a reasonably well-to-do TV announcer, Suzie costs her parents close to \$4,000 a year, far more than average for the country but not much more than many of the upper middle-income families of her town. In an expanding economy more and more teen-agers will be moving up into Suzie's bracket or be influenced as consumers by her example.

Last year, \$1,500 was spent on Suzie's clothes and \$550 for her entertainment. [...] She pays \$4 every two weeks at the beauty parlor. She has her own telephone and even has her own soda fountain in the house. On summer vacation days, she loves to wander with her mother through fashionable department stores, picking out frocks or furnishings for her room or silver and expensive crockery for the hope chest she has already started. [...] Her parents' constant indulgence has not spoiled Suzie. She takes for granted all the luxuries that surround her because she has had them all her life. But she also has a good mind and some serious interests. A top student in her school, she is entering Occidental College this fall and will major in political science.

SOME FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT A BOOMING MARKET

BEAUTY CARE; Teen-agers spent \$20 million on lipstick last year. \$25 million on deodorants (a fifth of total sold). \$9 million on home permanents. Male teen-agers own 2 million electric razors.

ENTERTAINMENT: Teen-agers lay out more than \$1.5 billion a year for entertainment. [...] Although they create new musical idols, they are staunchly faithful to the old. Elvis Presley, still their favorite, has sold 25 million copies of single records in four years, an all-time high.

HOMEMAKERS: Major items like furniture and silver are moving into the teen-age market because of growing number of teen-age marriages. One third of all 18- and 19-year-old girls are already married. [...] Teen-agers are now starting hope chests at 15.

CREDIT RISKS: Some 800,000 teen-agers work at full-time jobs and can buy major items on credit.

"A Young \$10 billion Power", *Life Magazine*, August 31st, 1959.

Document 4

There was a debate along these lines in the dark days of the 1950s when, face to face with the massive consumer boom which flourished under the aegis of Harold Macmillan (remember "You've Never Had It So Good"?), and after a second defeat at the polls, Labour entered one of its earlier nights of travail. Can it be, Mr Gaitskell inquired at the Blackpool Conference, that the whole culture on which the labour movement rests — the 'cloth cap' communities of traditional working-class areas and occupations — was being eroded by the telly, the fridge, the new car, the washing machine and the glossy magazine.

It is instructive now to recall how that debate went. The Gaitskell view was part of the whole revisionist attack by the Right—the attempt to shift the labour movement into more centrist, 'post-

10 capitalist' paths. It was predicated on the 'embourgeoisement'— the belief that, with affluence, the working class was becoming middle-class, and that class itself was a fast-disappearing phenomenon.

Put that way the proposition was patently absurd, as well as politically dangerous. Class relations do not disappear because the particular historic cultural forms in which class is 'lived' and
15 experienced at a particular period, change. On the other hand, because of its resistance to the political strategy and analysis in which the proposition was embedded, the Left was largely driven into an equally untenable — but 'correct' — corner: the defence of 'Clause 4' of the Labour Party Constitution and the denial that *anything* had changed or could change under capitalism. (Clause 4 remains enshrined; though that piece of formalism has actually contributed precious little to
20 deepening the concept of social ownership: the statist form of nationalisation has, meanwhile, continued to decline into widespread unpopularity, even amongst socialists).

Failing to think the things through, because they did not accept the categories of analysis which the Right provided, the Left too found itself boxed in. For, in fact, as we all know now, the slow, uneven, contradictory impact of consumer capitalism *did* refashion and reshape social relations
25 and cultural attitudes quite widely and irrevocably. [...] The growth in mass consumption, though it did not destroy or overturn the barriers of class divided society, did profoundly modify everyday life-patterns, the social experience and expectations and the lived universe of the majority of ordinary people. One can find evidence of this in a hundred everyday ways — in the new kinds of modern conveniences which found their way into ordinary homes; in the changes in patterns of
30 leisure, entertainment, holidays; in shifts in patterns of drinking and entertainment, or food consumption. The areas most visible to public comment at the time — and impossible to deny — lay in the new youth culture — the revolution in musical tastes, styles of dress and modes of behaviour. [...]

The question is whether the Left can also operate on the same ground, turn these popular
35 experiences and emergent attitudes and aspirations to *its* advantage. Or whether its only alternative is to become aligned with important but increasingly minority and traditional constituencies which need defence in the face of the current onslaught, goodness knows, but which are not where the mass experience of the common people any longer is at. This is not an argument for abandoning either the traditional Labour constituencies or those particularly hard-pressed and disadvantaged
40 minorities with whom the labour movement now needs to forge real alliances in action at the grass-roots level. But it is an argument for not seeing these existing constituencies in anachronistic cultural terms. Blacks, for example, in addition to being massively unemployed and socially oppressed have constructed a whole culture of resistance around the appropriation of modern sounds and advanced technological equipment. [...] Also, it is an argument for recognising the
45 complexity and diversity of cultural experience in Britain today and developing strategies which address the mass common experience, which project a programme on behalf of the majority and begin to conceive the future in ways which will connect with the perspectives of the whole society.

Stuart Hall, "The Culture Gap", *Marxism Today*, January 1984.

Document 5

- 1 In contemporary American culture, consuming is as authentic as it gets. Advertisements, getting a bargain, garage sales, and credit cards are firmly entrenched pillars of our way of life. We shop on our lunch hours, patronize outlet malls on vacation, and satisfy our latest desires with a late-night click of the mouse.
- 5 Yet for all its popularity, the shopping mania provokes considerable dis-ease: many Americans worry about our preoccupation with getting and spending. They fear we are losing touch with more worthwhile values and ways of living. But the discomfort rarely goes much further than that; it never coheres into a persuasive, well-articulated critique of consumerism. By contrast, in the 1960s and early '70s, a far-reaching critique of consumer culture was a part of our political discourse.
- 10 Elements of the New Left, influenced by the Frankfurt School, as well as by John Kenneth Galbraith and others, put forward a scathing indictment. They argued that Americans had been manipulated into participating in a dumbed-down, artificial consumer culture, which yielded few true human satisfactions.
- For reasons that are not hard to imagine, this particular approach was short-lived, even among
- 15 critics of American society and culture. It seemed too patronizing to talk about manipulation or the "true needs" of average Americans. In its stead, critics adopted a more liberal point of view, and deferred to individuals on consumer issues. Social critics again emphasized the distribution of resources, with the more economistic goal of maximizing the incomes of working people. The good life, they suggested, could be achieved by attaining a comfortable, middle-class standard of
- 20 living. This outlook was particularly prevalent in economics, where even radical economists have long believed that income is the key to well-being. While radical political economy, as it came to be called, retained a powerful critique of alienation in production and the distribution of property, it abandoned the nascent intellectual project of analyzing the consumer sphere. Few economists now think about *how* we consume, and whether it reproduces class inequality, alienation, or power.
- 25 "Stuff" is the part of the equation that the system is thought to have gotten nearly right. Of course, many Americans retained a critical stance toward our consumer culture. They embody that stance in their daily lives – in the ways they live and raise their kids. But the rejection of consumerism, if you will, has taken place principally at an individual level. It is not associated with a widely accepted intellectual analysis, and an associated *critical politics of consumption*.
- 30 But such a politics has become an urgent need. The average American now finds it harder to achieve a satisfying standard of living than 25 years ago. Work requires longer hours, jobs are less secure, and pressures to spend more intense. Consumption-induced environmental damage remains pervasive, and we are in the midst of widespread failures of public provision. While the current economic boom has allayed consumers' fears for the moment, many Americans have long-
- 35 term worries about their ability to meet basic needs, ensure a decent standard of living for their children, and keep up with an ever-escalating consumption norm.

Juliet Schor, "The New Politics of Consumption: Why Americans Want so much more than they Need", *The Boston Review*, 1-8, 1999.