

SESSION 2006CLASSES DE PREMIÈREANGLAIS

Consumer culture develops in free-market industrialized nations where citizens are constantly bombarded with a vast and ever – changing array of mass – produced commodities. Prior to industrialization, most goods were made at home or in small shops and were designed for specific, functional purposes. With the transition to mass need for their daily existence, people were confronted with unfamiliar items that they did not necessarily need for their daily existence. Thus, advertising was employed to create needs by making a connection between products and their use.

Consumer culture is not static. It is conditioned by political, economic and technological forces. In the United States, consumer culture has progressed through a series of fluid stages since the advent of industrialization. Early on, the normative assumptions underlying marketing strategies stressed the values of the preindustrial era – thriftiness, hard work and obedience to authority. New commodities were associated with necessities. Advertisements in print media pictured mass-produced goods in relation to traditional activities and roles.

Manufacturers and advertisers realized that such a strategy would not serve to augment the demand for new commodities. Roughly around the turn of the century, the basic norms underpinning consumer culture shifted from an ethic of production to one of consumption. This marked a fundamental transformation in values, as pride in workmanship was replaced by pride of ownership. The change was facilitated by a growth in urbanization, the breakdown of traditional family ties and the increased buying power and leisure time of workers.

As people focused less on work and securing basic necessities, they concentrated more on life – style issues. Advertising strategies promoted the goals of achieving happiness and social success. Ads were designed, first, to create public anxiety about being out of touch with the latest in modern tastes and conveniences, and then, to assure consumers that these fears could be assuaged by their purchases.

The invasiveness of the ad – image system within society is heavily influenced by the communications medium employed for disseminating advertising messages. Television and advertising combine to forge a compelling connection between the social and psychological construction of needs and the material manifestation of a consumer society. Through the complex interplay of imagery, television's life – style simulations situate fantasy within the context of real experience. Because television's vivid sensuality breeds a sense of intimacy with the viewer, the distinction between the imagery world that it portrays and real life becomes obfuscated. Thus, individuals can readily envision the satisfaction that will be gained from consumption.

In addition to promoting consumption outright, television fosters a sense of commonality among the mass public by translating abstract societal norms, frequently originating with elites, into sound and pictures. Television's capacity to effect shifts in national priorities and ethical standards has grown over time. Its presentation of the complicated interrelationship between social values and the rewards of consumption has become more intricate and persuasive. Further, images originating on TV increasingly pervade other media, reinforcing and enhancing television's impact.

During the television age, the consumerist ethic has undergone several different transformations. Television has played a major role in the transmission of the core values of domesticity of the Eisenhower era and the aristocratic morality of "Camelot". However, television's ability to convey the normative agenda was never so fully realized as during the Reagan era.

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50 Nicolaus Mills has characterized the 1980s as **the culture of triumph** – a culture
predicated upon the admiration of power and status. The culture of triumph was a culture of
celebrity, where those commanding star status exerted an inflated influence over the social
fabric. Traditional conceptions of the work ethic and family values were recast, so that
55 achievement was now equated with the possession of material goods so well represented in
celebrity society.

With President Reagan and the first Lady leading the pack, the opulent life-styles and
extravagant exploits of luminaries from Hollywood and politics were wrested from the realm
of the mythical and rendered accessible to American consumers. Ordinary citizens' vicarious
experiences could be made "real" by their ability to acquire the trappings of the images they
60 admired.

As Mills asserts, "The extravaganzas of the 1980s, like the culture of triumph, were not
concerned with the work ethic of small-town America. They were advertisements for America
the Grand, and their aesthetic... was one in which the beautiful was the expensive, the good
was the costly. "These visions of life were conveyed via the mutually reinforcing images of
65 television advertising and programming, which featured beautiful people, with beautiful
things, in beautiful places.

Diana Owen.
American Studies Newsletter;
Number 36 May 1995: pp 16 – 17.

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I. COMPREHENSION (08 marks) (01 mark : 4 = 08)

- A. 1- Choose the most suitable title for this passage (01 mark)**
 a) Consumer culture.
 b) The evolution of consumer culture.
 c) Advertising and television.

B. Find in the text words meaning (05 marks)

- 2- an article or product or material that is bought and sold.
 3- The action of describing a product or service publicly in order to persuade people to buy or use it.
 4- Not moving or changing.
 5- a person who buys goods or uses services.
 6- a feeling of pleasure or satisfaction that one gets from doing something well.

C. Give the meaning of the following words or phrases (03 marks)

- 7- “**leisure time**”. L.20
 8- “**assuaged**” in fears could be assuaged. L.26
 9- “**fosters**” in television fosters a sense of commonality. L.37
 10- “**breeds**” in television breeds a sense of intimacy. L.32
 11- “**outright**”. L.36

D. Enumerate three main roles that advertising can play in a consumer society (03 marks)

- 12- -----
 13- -----
 14- -----

E. Find in the text (06 marks)

- 15- Two quotes showing that consumer culture can vary according to periods and places.
 16- Two quotes that depict the roles that television can play in a consumer culture.
 17- Two quotes showing that the author of this article was interested in the American culture.

F. Say whether the following statements are true or false and justify in quoting from the text (08 marks)

- 18- Advertising can do without television in a consumer society.
 19- Television affects the viewers’ minds and changes their life – styles.
 20- Television can reduce the gap existing between different social classes.
 21- The influence of television is getting less and less important.

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G. Do you agree with these statements ? Justify in two or three lines, using your own words **(06 marks)**

22- Consumer culture is conditioned by political, economic and technological forces.

23- Television breeds a sense of intimacy with the viewer.

24- Now, people are very much influenced by television in their daily behaviours.

II. **LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE** **(06 marks) 18 : 3 = 06 marks**

H. Complete the following sentences with suitable tag questions **(04 marks)**

25- Let's talk about consumer culture, ----- ?

26- Don't spend too much time near television sets, ----- ?

27- Every body promotes the culture of triumph here, ----- ?

28- He hardly watches television, ----- ?

I. Word formation Complete adequately the following table **(08 marks)**

Verb	adjective	adverb	noun
29			Consumption
30	familiar		31
32	33	34	pride
35	36		fear

J. Complete these sentences in a coherent and meaningful way **(04 marks)**

37- If we hadn't lived in a consumer society, we ----- with a vast and ever-changing array of mass produced commodities.

38- Prior to industrialization, people ----- make most goods at home. (expressing the habit in the past).

39- After a fundamental transformation in values, pride of ownership ----- pride in workmanship.

40- The ----- people focused on work and securing basic necessities, the ----- they concentrated on life – style issues.

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K. Write an equivalent sentence starting with the given words (02 marks)

41- Traditional conceptions of the work ethic and family values were recast, so that achievement was now equated with the possession of material goods.

⇒ Achievement was now equated with possession of material goods -----
-----.

42- In addition to promoting consumption outright, television fosters a sense of commonality among the mass public.

⇒ Television -----.

III. **WRITING** You have to do both writings

Topic one : What are according to you, the different roles that a television can play in the transformation of a society ? Enumerate these roles and show how they can affect the viewers' life – styles. (around 250 words) (03 marks)

Topic two: Write a letter to the head of your favorite TV channel to express your feelings about their programmes and advertisements. (150 to 200 words)

ANSWER SHEET

I. COMPREHENSION

A.

1- The evolution of consumer culture : **(01 mark)**

B. (05 marks)

2- a commodity

3- To advertise

4- static

5- a consumer

6- Pride

C. (03 marks)

7- free time 0,5

8- to make something less severe 0,5

9- to encourage, to promote 0,5

10- to create, to give birth to 0,5

11- now, completely 01

D. (03 marks)

12- It creates new needs.

13- It promotes the goals of achieving happiness and social success.

14- It can participate in transforming the realities of a country.

E. (06 marks)

15- a- a consumer culture is not static.

b- a consumer culture has progressed through a series of fluid stages.

16- a- It can create needs.

b- breeds a sense of intimacy with the viewer.

17- a- In the United States, consumer culture has progressed through a series of fluid stages.

b- the Eisenhower era.

F. (08 marks)

18- False: Television and advertisement combine to forge a compelling connection. 28-

29

19- True: Through the complex from consumption. 30-35

20- True: it fosters a sense ----- into sound and pictures. 36-38

21- False: Television's capacity to effect shifts has grown over time... TV impact. 38-42

CLASSES DE PREMIÈRE**G. (06 marks)**

- 22-
- 23-
- 24-

II. LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE Total : 18 : 3 = 06**H. (04 marks)**

- 25- shall we ?
- 26- will you ?
- 27- don't they ?
- 28- does he ?

I. (08 marks)

- 29- to consume.
- 30- to familiarize.
- 31- familiarity, family
- 32- to pride, to be proud
- 33- proud
- 34- proudly
- 35- to fear, to frighten
- 36- fearful

J. (04 marks)

- 37- wouldn't have been bombarded / overloaded / overwhelmed
- 38- used to, would
- 39- replaced
- 40- the less, the more

K. (02 marks)

- 41- Achievement was now equated with possession of material goods since (because, as) traditional conceptions of the work ethic and family values were recast.
- 42- Television not only promotes consumption outright, but also fosters a sense of commonality among the mass public.

III. ESSAY (06 marks)

- Cohesion (02 marks)**
- Coherence (02 marks)**
- Accuracy (01 mark)**
- Fluency (01 mark)**