

UGANDA ADVANCED CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION

MOCK EXAMINATIONS 2016

P310/1 LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

PROSE AND POETRY

3 HOURS

Instructions to candidates:

- Attempt all sections
- You are advised to spend 70 minutes (1 hour 10 minutes) on section 1 and 55 minutes each on section II and III
- Read section I twice and then answer the questions. There is no need to read the whole paper first.
- Do the same for sections II and III

SECTION I

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

The importance of taking account of the social structures within which communications flow has been underlined by the studies of Lazarsfield and his associates. Such studies have brought to light the existence of a communication network of interconnected individuals. This is in contrast to the concept of a mass of disconnected individuals each in direct contact with the media. Of key importance here are the opinion leaders, who are particularly exposed to mass media, and who act as intermediaries.

The number of empirical studies has attempted to assess the impact of the mass media. A substantial volume of research has concentrated on the effects of television. It is clear from this that both the consumption of television and its impact is heavily patterned, and that 'the level and direction of consumption varies sharply with age, sex, intelligence, education social class, parental habits and social relations. The effect of television depends on these variables. We must

get away from the habit of thinking in terms of what people do with television and substitute for it the idea of what people do with television' The impact of television on leisure, for example, depends to a considerable extent on what people did with their time before they had TV. Himmelweit has noted what she calls a 'displacement effect'; television viewing replaces comparable activities such as reading comics, cinema visits and radio listening. On the other hand, it has little effect on reading books, and sports activities.

Such researches have been stimulated largely by a growing public anxiety about the effect of the mass media and especially television which penetrates the home with an immediacy and potential power far greater than other forms. Lazarsfield and Merton have identified four main kinds of anxiety. Firstly, there is alarm at the potency of the media to manipulate the individual and his powerlessness in the face of such a threat. Secondly, there is the fear that economic interest groups may use the media to minimize social criticism and ensure conformity to the economic status quo. Thirdly, there is anxiety lest a desire to attract mass audiences causes deterioration in cultural standards. And finally, there is the fear that the media are producing passivity, dependency and escapism.

The evidence is somewhat complex. Many individuals with anxiety tendencies do seek fantasy and escape, and for these, television meets a need, and probably reinforces their escapist tendencies. Himmelweit, Oppenheim and Vince have not found evidence that TV makes children passive. But Belson discovered that television reduced the activities and initiative of viewers. Lazarsfield and Merton in America, however, argue that television does have a narcotic effect, and that 'the commercially-sponsored mass media indirectly but effectively restrain the cogent development of a genuinely critical outlook'. There is little doubt that violence on TV does not have the cathartic effect frequently claimed for it by reducing aggression vicariously. On the contrary, such material would appear to be especially dangerous for delinquents for whom such characters have been found to provide heroes, and models for action, while heavy exposure to violence on the screen heightens the possibility that someone will behave aggressively.

The long-term effect on tastes and interests is more difficult to discover. Himmelweit found that when there was only one channel, television did extend tastes, but with the opportunity for selective viewing offered by a second channel, there was a marked narrowing of tastes and preferences. American studies have similarly found evidence for a hardening of taste at a level which reflects its own search for a common denominator of taste. Himmelweit found that it widened tastes only for the bright ten and eleven years old, and for the average thirteen and fourteen years old.

The effects of television though significant and important, do not appear to be dramatic. But it is difficult to come to any firm conclusions from the available evidence of its cumulative

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and long term effects. The fact that the impact of television in a three-week election campaign is slight does not rule out the possibility that it may have more marked effects on political attitudes over a greater length of time. More research will be needed before this can be judged with any degree of certainty.

The influence of the Press is difficult to assess on the available evidence. The reports of 1949 and 1962 concluded that the popular press and on occasion, the quality press, fell short of the highest standards and were guilty of excessive partisanship, distortion, triviality and sensationalism. But the complex nature of the communication process does not enable conclusions to be drawn based simply on the content of communication. However, the 1949 report concluded that with few exceptions, newspapers ‘fail to supply the electorate with adequate materials for sound political judgment. The fact that collectively the Press represents the whole spectrum of political opinion does little to help the average reader who is not in a position to perform the very complex task of comparing a number of partial and distorted accounts in order to extract an unbiased conclusion. The most probable result is that in those areas where the reader has direct experience, the Press is unlikely to have a major influence. But where he relies almost entirely on the Press, its distortions could have more significant effect.

Questions:

- (a) Find a suitable title for this passage and give reasons to justify the suitability.
- (b) (i) What according to the passage determines the effect of television consumption?
(ii) State the growing public worries about the impact of the mass media as spelt in the passage.
- (c) What according to research reports in the passage are the negative effects of mass media on people?
- (d) Explain the following words and expressions as used in the passage.
 - (i) act as intermediaries
 - (ii) empirical studies
 - (iii) variables
 - (iv) public anxiety
 - (v) appear to be dramatic
 - (vi) political attitudes
 - (vii) triviality and sensationalism

(viii) whole spectrum.

SECTION II

But someone was knocking at the door to my room. Why should I wake up? It would be impossible to fall asleep again. It was so hot. The knocking continued. I switched on the light by the bed: 3:30 a.m. It must be my father. Furious, I pulled on a pair of shorts and a T-shirt. “What do you want’ what’s the matter?” I asked him through the door. Had he gone berserk? What could he have to talk about at that ridiculous hour?

- 15 “Ok, all right,” I said, rubbing my eyes awake as I stepped to the door and opened it.
“What?”
- 16 To my surprise, my father stood there looking very uncertain.
- 17 “It’s your mother,” he told me, in a burly, formal voice. “I think she’s dead, but I’m not sure.” He was avoiding my eyes..
- 18 “What do you mean,” I answered.
- 19 “I want you to go downstairs and figure it out.”
- 20 I could not believe what he was saying to me. “You want me to figure out if my mother is dead or alive?”
- 21 “ I can’t tell! I don’t know!!” he shouted angrily.
- 22 “Jesus Christ,” I muttered, angry and beside myself.
- 23 I turned and glanced about my room, wondering if I could find anything to carry with me on this mission; what do you use to determine a life or a death? I couldn’t see anything obvious that might be useful.
- 24 “I’ll wait up here,’ my father said. ‘You call up and let me know.’”
- 25 I could not believe it; a man married to a woman more than forty years and he can’t tell if she’s alive or dead and he wakes up his kid and tells her, “You figure it out.”
- 26 I was at the bottom of the stairs. I halted just outside the dining room where my mother slept. Suppose she really was dead? Suppose my father was not just being crazy and hateful? “Naw,” I shook my head and confidently entered the room.
- 27 “Momma?!” I called, aloud. At the edge of the cot, my mother was leaning forward, one arm braced to hoist her body up. She was trying to stand up! I rushed over. “Wait, Here, I’ll help you!” I said.

28 And I reached out my hands to give her a lift. The body of my mother was stiff. She was not yet cold, but she was stiff. Maybe I had come downstairs just in time! I tried to loosen her arms, to change her position, to ease her into lying down.

29 “Mommam!” I kept saying. “Momma, listen to me! It’s OK! I’m here and everything. Just relax. Relax! Give me a hand, now. I’m trying to help you lie down!”

30 Her body did not relax. She did not answer me. But she was not cold. Her eyes were not shut.

31 From upstairs my father was yelling, “Is she dead? Is she dead?”

32 “No!” I screamed at him. “No! She’s not dead!”

33 At this, my father tore down the stairs and into the room. Then he braked.

34 “Milly?” he called out, tentative. Then he shouted at me and banged around the walls. “You damn fool. Don’t you see now she’s gone? Now she’s gone!” We began to argue.

35 “She’s alive! Call the doctor!”

36 “No!”

37 “Yes!”

38 At last my father left the room to call the doctor.

39 I straightened up. I felt completely exhausted from trying to gain a response from my mother. There she was, stiff on the edge of her bed, just about to stand up. Her lips were set, determined. She would manage it, but by herself. I could not help. Her eyes fixed on some point below the floor.

40 “Momma!” I shook her hard as I could to rouse her into focus. Now she fell back on the cot, but frozen and in the wrong position. It hit me that she might be dead. She might be dead.

41 My father reappeared at the door. He would not come any closer. “Dr. Davis says he will come. And he call the police.”

42 The police? Would they know if my mother was dead or alive? Who would know?

43 I went to the phone and called my aunt. “Come quick,” I said. “My father thinks Momma has died but she’s here but she’s stiff.”

44 Soon the house was weird and ugly and crowded and I thought I was losing my mind.

45 Three white policemen stood around telling me my mother was dead. “How do you know?” I asked, and they shrugged and then they repeated themselves. And the doctor never came. But my aunt came and my uncle and they said she was dead.

46 After a conference with the cops, my aunt disappeared and when she came back she held a bottle in one of her hands. She and the police whispered together some more. Then one of the cops said, “Don’t worry about it. We won’t say anything.” My aunt signaled me to follow her into the hallway where she let me understand that, in fact, my mother had committed suicide.

47 I could not assimilate this information: suicide.

48 I broke away from my aunt and ran to the telephone. I called a friend of mine, a woman who talked back loud to me so that I could realize my growing hysteria, and check it. Then I called my cousin Valerie who lived in Harlem; she woke up instantly and urged me to come right away.

- 49 I hurried to the top floor and stood my sleeping son on his feet. I wanted to get him out of this house of death more than I ever wanted anything. He could not stand by himself so I carried him down the two flights to the street and laid him on the backseat and then took off.

Questions

- (a) Describe the relationship between mother, father and son as portrayed in the passage.
- (b) Show how death is depicted in the passage
- (c) Describe the mood in the passage
- (d) Discuss the style employed in the passage
- (e) What is the writer's attitude to marriage and family?

SECTION III

Read the poem below and answer the questions following it.

Pedestrian, to passing Benz-man

You man, lifted gently
out of the poverty and suffering
we so recently shared; I say –
why splash the muddy puddle on to
my bare legs, as if, still unsatisfied
with your seated opulence
you must sully the unwashed
with your diesel-smoke and mud-water
and force him buy, beyond his means
a bar of soap from your shop?

a few years back we shared a master
today you have none, while I have
exchanged a parasite for something worse.
But maybe a few years is too long a time.
Albert Ojuka (Kenya)

Questions:

- (a) What is the writer's intention in writing this poem
- (b) Describe the tone in the poem
- (c) Comment on the poetic devices employed in the poem
- (d) Describe the speaker's feelings towards the 'you' in the poem.