

SESSION 2012

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**CAPES  
CONCOURS EXTERNE  
ET CAFEP**

Section : LANGUES VIVANTES ÉTRANGÈRES : ANGLAIS  
Section : LANGUES RÉGIONALES

**COMMENTAIRE DIRIGÉ EN ANGLAIS**

Durée : 5 heures

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*L'usage de tout ouvrage de référence, de tout dictionnaire et de tout matériel électronique (y compris la calculatrice) est rigoureusement interdit.*

*Dans le cas où un(e) candidat(e) repère ce qui lui semble être une erreur d'énoncé, il (elle) le signale très lisiblement sur sa copie, propose la correction et poursuit l'épreuve en conséquence.*

*De même, si cela vous conduit à formuler une ou plusieurs hypothèses, il vous est demandé de la (ou les) mentionner explicitement.*

**NB : Hormis l'en-tête détachable, la copie que vous rendrez ne devra, conformément au principe d'anonymat, comporter aucun signe distinctif, tel que nom, signature, origine, etc. Si le travail qui vous est demandé comporte notamment la rédaction d'un projet ou d'une note, vous devrez impérativement vous abstenir de signer ou de l'identifier.**

**Tournez la page S.V.P.**

**Comment on the following text, paying particular attention to Jefferson's ambivalence about slavery.**

Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*

Query XVIII: The *particular* customs and manners that may happen to be received in that state?

It is difficult to determine on the standard by which the manners of a nation may be tried, whether *catholic*<sup>1</sup>, or *particular*. It is more difficult for a native to bring to that standard the manners of his own nation, familiarized to him by habit.

5 There must doubtless be an unhappy influence on the manners of our people produced by the existence of slavery among us. The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it; for man is an imitative animal. This quality is the germ of all education in him. From his cradle to his grave he  
10 is learning to do what he sees others do. If a parent could find no motive either in his philanthropy or his self-love, for restraining the intemperance of passion towards his slave, it should always be a sufficient one that his child is present. But generally it is not sufficient. The parent storms, the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives a loose to his worst of passions, and thus nursed, educated, and  
15 daily exercised in tyranny, cannot but be stamped by it with odious peculiarities. The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved by such circumstances.

And with what execration should the statesman be loaded, who permitting one half the citizens thus to trample on the rights of the other, transforms those into despots, and these into enemies, destroys the morals of the one part, and the amor patriae of the other. For if a slave can have a  
20 country in this world, it must be any other in preference to that in which he is born to live and labour for another: in which he must lock up the faculties of his nature, contribute as far as depends on his individual endeavours to the evanishment of the human race, or entail his own miserable condition on the endless generations proceeding from him.

With the morals of the people, their industry also is destroyed. For in a warm climate, no man  
25 will labour for himself who can make another labour for him. This is so true, that of the proprietors of slaves a very small proportion indeed are ever seen to labour. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just: that his justice  
30 cannot sleep for ever: that considering numbers, nature and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation, is among possible events: that it may become probable by supernatural interference! The Almighty has no attribute which can take side with us in such a contest.—But it is impossible to be temperate and to pursue this subject through the various considerations of policy, of morals, of history natural and civil. We must be contented to  
35 hope they will force their way into every one's mind. I think a change already perceptible, since the origin of the present revolution. The spirit of the master is abating, that of the slave rising

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<sup>1</sup> *Catholic*: universally prevalent; said of substances, actions, laws, principles, customs, conditions, etc. (*The Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.)

from the dust, his condition mollifying, the way I hope preparing, under the auspices of heaven, for a total emancipation, and that this is disposed, in the order of events, to be with the consent of the masters, rather than by their extirpation.

Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*. 1785. London: Penguin Classics, 1999, p. 168-169.

## ANNEXE 1

In late November, 1780, just after the British fleet that had been threatening Virginia since October sailed from the Chesapeake, Governor Jefferson wrote that he was busily employed in answering queries about Virginia for François Marbois (later Marquis de Barbé-Marbois), secretary to the French minister at Philadelphia, who had circulated among members of the Continental Congress a list of queries concerning the various states. His questions sought useful information on population, geography, natural resources, governments, laws, religion, education, the military, commerce and manufacturing, navigation and seaports, the native Indians, and various other matters. (...) It is not surprising that when Joseph Jones, the Virginia delegate queried by Marbois, forwarded the list of questions to Jefferson, the busy governor searched for time to provide answers. He had long been collecting information on Virginia and recording it on loose memoranda kept in bundles at Monticello. Marbois' queries would enable him to put those to good use. Such was the origin of the only book that Jefferson ever authored, his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, now widely regarded as one of the most important scientific and political works written by an American in the eighteenth century and one of the most famous products of the Enlightenment in America.

Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., *In Pursuit of Reason: The Life of Thomas Jefferson*. 1987. New York: Ballantine Books, 1988, p. 76.

## ANNEXE 2

All the plans for gradual emancipation assumed that slavery was a moral and economic problem that demanded a political solution. All also assumed that the solution needed to combine speed and slowness, meaning that the plan needed to be put into action quickly, before the burgeoning slave population rendered it irrelevant, but implemented gradually, so the costs could be absorbed more easily. Everyone advocating gradual emancipation also made two additional assumptions: First, that slave owners would be compensated, the funds coming from some combination of a national tax and from revenues generated by the sale of western lands; second, that the bulk of the freed slaves would be transported elsewhere, the Fairfax plan favoring an American colony in Africa on the British model of Sierra Leone, others proposing what might be called a 'homelands' location in some unspecified region of the American West, and still others preferring a Caribbean destination.

As we have seen, the projected cost of compensation was a potent argument against gradual emancipation, and the argument has been echoed in most scholarly treatments of the topic ever since. Estimates vary according to the anticipated price for each freed slave, which ranges between one hundred and two hundred dollars. The higher figure produces a total cost of about \$140 million to emancipate the entire slave population in 1790. Since the federal budget that

year was less than \$7 million, the critics seem to be right when they conclude that the costs were not just daunting but also prohibitively expensive. The more one thought about such numbers, in effect, the more one realized that further thought was futile. There is some evidence that reasoning of just this sort was going on in Jefferson's mind at this time, changing him from an advocate of emancipation to a silent and fatalistic procrastinator.

Joseph Ellis, *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation*. 2000. New York: Vintage Books, 2002, p. 106.

### ANNEXE 3

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights; that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

*The Declaration of Independence*, 4 July 1776, in Avery Craven, Walter Johnson and F. Roger Dunn, *A Documentary History of the American People*. 1951. New York: Ginn and Company, 1951, p. 159.

### ANNEXE 4

More than anyone, Thomas Jefferson embodies the American conundrum on race. Author of the Declaration of Independence, he is best remembered for his advocacy of liberty. But freedom's advocate owned and sold slaves and trafficked in human beings; he grew to believe more and more in black inferiority. This gross imbalance he represents between national promise and execution remains our greatest state embarrassment today.

So central is he to American history and our view of ourselves as Americans that we cannot learn enough about him.

Lucia Stanton, *Slavery at Monticello*. 1996. Chapel Hill: University of Carolina Press, 2003, p. 7.