

**BANQUE DE SUJETS**

# **ANGLAIS / PHILOSOPHIE**

**SECTION EUROPÉENNE**

**SESSION 2016**

BACCALAURÉATS GÉNÉRAL ET TECHNOLOGIQUE  
SESSION 2016

ÉPREUVE SPÉCIFIQUE MENTION « SECTION EUROPÉENNE OU DE LANGUE ORIENTALE »  
Académies de Paris-Créteil-Versailles

Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°1

**Notions : civilization, politics**

**Question : Is there something like a clash of civilizations ?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

5 It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.

S. HUNTINGTON, "The Clash of Civilizations?", *Foreign Affairs*, (Summer) 1993

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n° 2

**Notions : civilization, politics**

**Question : Is culture always a factor of unity among men ?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

5 First, differences among civilizations are not only real; they are basic. Civilizations are differentiated from each other by history, language, culture, tradition and, most important, religion. The people of different civilizations have different views on the relations between God and man, the individual and the group, the citizen and the state, parents and children, husband and wife, as well as differing views of the relative importance of rights and responsibilities, liberty and authority, equality and hierarchy. These differences are the product of centuries. They will not soon disappear. They are far more fundamental than differences among political ideologies and political regimes.

S. HUNTINGTON, "The Clash of Civilizations?", *Foreign Affairs*, (Summer) 1993

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n° 3

**Notions : civilization, politics, exchanges, religion**

**Question : Is religion a factor of unity among men, or of conflict ?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

5 Fifth, cultural characteristics and differences are less mutable and hence less easily compromised and resolved than political and economic ones. In the former Soviet Union, communists can become democrats, the rich can become poor and the poor rich, but Russians cannot become Estonians and Azeris cannot become Armenians. In class and ideological conflicts, the key question was "Which side are you on?" and people could and did choose sides and change sides. In conflicts between civilizations, the question is "What are you?" That is a given that cannot be changed. And as we know, from Bosnia to the Caucasus to the Sudan, the wrong answer to that question can mean a bullet in the head. Even more than ethnicity, religion discriminates sharply and exclusively among  
10 people. A person can be half-French and half-Arab and simultaneously even a citizen of two countries. It is more difficult to be half-Catholic and half-Muslim.

S. HUNTINGTON, "The Clash of Civilizations?", *Foreign Affairs*, (Summer) 1993

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n° 4

**Notions : Mind, matter, language**

**Question : Can machines talk ?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

5 But there is a respect in which mechanism is not conceivable. This is a consequence of the fact that mechanism is incompatible with the existence of any intentional behavior. The speech of human beings is, for the most part, intentional behavior. In particular, stating, asserting, or saying that so-and-so is true requires the intentional uttering of some sentence. If mechanism is true, therefore, no one can state or assert anything. In a sense, no one can say anything. Specifically, no one can assert or state that mechanism is true. If anyone were to assert this, the occurrence of his intentional "speech act" would imply that mechanism is false.

N. MALCOM, 'The conceivability of mechanism', *The Philosophical Review*, LXXVII, 1968.

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n° 5

**Notions : Consciousness, mind, matter**

**Question : Can we give an objective account of consciousness ?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

Without some idea, therefore, of what the subjective character of experience is, we cannot know what is required of physicalist theory.

5 While an account of the physical basis of mind must explain many things, this appears to be the most difficult. It is impossible to exclude the phenomenological features of experience from a reduction in the same way that one excludes the phenomenal features of an ordinary substance from a physical or chemical reduction of it—namely, by explaining them as effects on the minds of human observers. If physicalism is to be defended, the phenomenological features must themselves be given a physical account. But when we examine their subjective character it seems that such a result is impossible.  
10 The reason is that every subjective phenomenon is essentially connected with a single point of view, and it seems inevitable that an objective, physical theory will abandon that point of view.

T. NAGEL, 'What is it like to be a bat?' (1974), in *Philosophical Review*, LXXXIII, 4.

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n° 6

**Notions : Mind, matter, language.**

**Question : Can a computer think ?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

5 That is, even if my thoughts occur to me in strings<sup>1</sup> of symbols, there must be more to the thought than the abstract strings, because strings by themselves can't have any meaning. If my thoughts are to be about anything, then the strings must have a meaning which makes the thoughts about those things. In a word, the mind has more than a syntax, it has a semantics. The reason that no computer program can ever be a mind is simply that a computer program is only syntactical, and minds are more than syntactical. Minds are semantical, and the sense that they have more than a formal structure, they have a content.

J. SEARLE, 'Can computers think?', *Minds, Brains and Science*, 1983.

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<sup>1</sup> strings = series

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Sujet n° 7

**Notions : Mind and matter, consciousness**

**Question : Is man nothing but a complex arrangement of physical constituents ?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

5 There does seem to be, so far as science is concerned, nothing in the world but increasingly complex arrangements of physical constituents. All except for one place: in consciousness. That is, for a full description of what is going on in a man you would have to mention not only the physical processes in his tissues, glands, nervous system, and so forth, but also his states of consciousness: his visual, auditory, and tactual sensations, his aches and pains. That these should be correlated with brain processes does not help, for to say that they are correlated is to say that they are something 'over and above'. [...] So sensations, states of consciousness, do seem to be the one sort of thing left outside the physicalist picture, and for various reasons I just cannot believe that this can be so.

J. C. C. SMART, 'Sensations and Brain Processes', in *Philosophical Review*, April, 1959.



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Sujet n° 8

**Notions : Art, imitation, aesthetic pleasure**

**Question : Why do we enjoy art ?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

Poetry in general seems to have sprung from two causes, each of them lying deep in our nature. First, the instinct of imitation is implanted in man from childhood, one difference between him and other animals being that he is the most imitative of living creatures, and through imitation learns his earliest lessons; and no less universal is the pleasure felt in things imitated. We have evidence of this in the facts of experience. Objects which in themselves we view with pain, we delight to contemplate when reproduced with minute fidelity: such as the forms of the most ignoble animals and of dead bodies. The cause of this again is, that to learn gives the liveliest pleasure, not only to philosophers but to men in general; whose capacity, however, of learning is more limited. Thus the reason why men enjoy seeing a likeness is, that in contemplating it they find themselves learning or inferring, and saying perhaps, 'Ah, that is he.' For if you happen not to have seen the original, the pleasure will be due not to the imitation as such, but to the execution, the coloring, or some such other cause.

ARISTOTLE, *Poetics*, part IV, circa 335 B.C.E.

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n° 9

**Notions : Art, fiction, reality, feelings**

**Question : Can we be changed by art ?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

I suggest that much of the value of dreaming, fantasizing, and making-believe depends crucially on one's thinking of oneself as belonging to a fictional world. It is chiefly by fictionally facing certain situations, engaging in certain activities, and having or expressing certain feelings, I think, that a dreamer, fantasizer, or game player comes to terms with his actual feelings - that he discovers them, learns to accept them, purges himself of them, or whatever exactly it is that he does.

If I am right about this, people can be expected to derive similar benefits from novels, plays, and films only if it is fictional that they themselves exist and participate (if only as observers) in the events portrayed in the works, i.e., only if my theory is on the right track.

Kendall WALTON, "Fearing Fictions", in *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. LXXV, n° 1, JANUARY 1978

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n° 10

**Notions : Art, fiction, reality, feelings**

**Question : How can we be moved by fictions ?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

5 My conclusion, then, is simple: when we respond emotionally to fictional characters, we are responding to mental representations of thought-contents identifiable through descriptions derived in suitable ways from the propositional contents of fictional sentences. I think this conclusion, given the arguments leading up to it, affords explanations of a number of puzzling features of fictions. It shows, for example, how we can know something is fictional but still take it seriously without having to believe or even half-believe it. We can reflect on, and be moved by, a thought independently of accepting it as true.

P. LAMARQUE, "How Can We Fear and Pity Fictions?" (1981), *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 21, 4.

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n° 11

**Notions : art, truth, knowledge**

**Question : Does art state truths?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

5 It is prudent to approach so volatile a concept as 'artistic truth' by identifying truths that are, by contrast, beyond dispute. Scientific truths, for one. We have a relatively clear and firm conception of how science arrives at its truths. It will be protested that the once unquestioned belief in 'scientific method' has recently been brought under fire and rejected. It continues to dominate the scientific community, however, and is still espoused by more traditionalist philosophers of science. In any event, both this conception and its challengers occupy positions shared, partisan agreement within philosophy of science. But a 'method of artistic truth' is not matter for debate and hardly makes sense.

J. STOLNITZ, "On the Cognitive Triviality of Art", *in British Journal of Aesthetics*, 32, 3  
(July 1992)

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n° 12

**Notions : art, language, fiction, reality.**

**Question : Is art a « beautiful lie » ?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

My third conclusion then is this: the pretended illocutions which constitute a work of fiction are made possible by the existence of a set of conventions which suspend the normal operations of the rules relating illocutionary acts and the world [...]

5 But in contrast, fiction is much more sophisticated than lying. To someone who did not understand the separate conventions of fiction, it would seem that fiction is merely lying. What distinguishes fiction from lies is the existence of a separate set of conventions which enables the author to go through the motions of making statements which he knows to be not true even if he has no intention to deceive.

J. SEARLE, "The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse", *in Expression and Meaning* (1979)

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n° 13

**Notions : art, interpretation, meaning**

**Question : Are works of art meaningless ?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

5 However, this would do nothing to eliminate the oddity of talking about the meaning of a literary work. For the interpretation of a work is the interpretation of parts and passages, of characters, settings, symbols, structure, action, rhetorical features, and so forth. When a satisfactory interpretation of these different textual elements has been achieved, there is no further 'meaning' which an interpretation can reveal. Furthermore, if it is only half odd to talk about 'analyzing the meaning of *Macbeth*', it is also half odd to talk about 'analysing the meaning of "Pass me the salt" '.

S. H. OLSEN, "The 'Meaning' of a Literary Work", *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation*, 1982.

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Sujet n° 14

**Notions : Mind and matter**

**Question : Can a machine think ?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

If Strong AI (1) were true, then anybody should be able to acquire any cognitive capacity just by implementing (2) the computer program simulating that cognitive capacity. Let us try this with Chinese. I do not, as a matter of fact, understand any Chinese at all. I cannot even tell Chinese writing from Japanese writing. But, we imagine that I am locked in a room with boxes full of Chinese symbols, and I have a rule book, in effect, a computer program, that enables me to answer questions put to me in Chinese. I receive symbols that, unknown to me, are questions; I look up in the rule book what I am supposed to do; I pick up symbols from the boxes, manipulate them according to the rules in the program, and hand out the required symbols, which are interpreted as answers. We can suppose that I pass the Turing test for understanding Chinese, but, all the same, I do not understand a word of Chinese. (...).

You can see the difference between computation and real understanding if you imagine what it is like for me also to answer questions in English. Imagine that in the same room I am given questions in English, which I then answer. From the outside my answers to the English and the Chinese questions are equally good. I pass the Turing test for both. But from the inside, there is a tremendous difference. What is the difference exactly? In English, I understand what the words mean, in Chinese I understand nothing. In Chinese, I am just a computer.

John Searle  
*Mind : A brief introduction (2004)*

(1) computational theory of mind.

(2) to implement: to make something that has been decided start to happen or be used.

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n° 15

**Notions : Consciousness. Mind and matter.**

**Question : Can we reduce consciousness to brain processes ?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

5 The really difficult part of the mind-body problem is the problem of consciousness. Suppose we had a fully satisfactory materialist neurobiological account of various mental states: beliefs, desires, hopes, fears, etc. All the same, such an account would not explain consciousness. Nagel illustrates this with the example of a bat. Bats have a different  
10 lifestyle from ours. They sleep all day long, hanging upside down from rafters, and then they fly around at night, navigating by detecting echoes from sonar they bounce off of solid objects. Now, says Nagel, someone might have a complete knowledge of a bat's neurophysiology; he might have a complete knowledge of all the functional mechanisms that enable bats to live and navigate; but all the same, there would be something left out of this person's knowledge: What is it like to be a bat? What does it feel like? And this is the essence of consciousness. For any conscious being, there is a what-it-is-like aspect to his existence. And this is left out of any objective account of consciousness because an objective account cannot explain the subjective character of consciousness.

John Searle  
*Mind : A brief introduction (2004)*



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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n° 16

**Notions : Conscience. Mind and matter.**

**Question : Is neuroscience really unable to explain consciousness?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

Consciousness is the biggest mystery. It may be the largest outstanding obstacle in our quest for a scientific understanding of the universe. The science of physics is not yet complete, but it is well understood; the science of biology has removed many ancient mysteries surrounding the nature of life. There are gaps in our understanding of these  
5 fields, but they do not seem intractable<sup>1</sup>. We have a sense of what a solution to these problems might look like; we just need to get the details right. Even in the science of the mind, much progress has been made. Recent work in cognitive science and neuroscience is leading us to a better understanding of human behavior and of the processes that drive it. (...). Consciousness, however, is as perplexing as it ever was. It still seems utterly  
10 mysterious that the causation of behavior should be accompanied by a subjective inner life. We have good reason to believe that consciousness arises from physical systems such as brains, but we have little idea how it arises, or why it exists at all. How could a physical system such as a brain also be an experiencer<sup>2</sup>? (...) Present-day scientific theories hardly touch the really difficult questions about consciousness. We do not just  
15 lack a detailed theory; we are entirely in the dark about how consciousness fits into the natural order.

D. Chalmers  
*The conscious mind* (1996)

(1) a being able to experience something.

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<sup>1</sup> Intractable = very difficult or impossible to solve

<sup>2</sup> Experiencer = a being who is able to experience something

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n° 17

**Notions : Conscience. Free will.**

**Question : Can we really believe in free will?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

5 Believers in free will always, in another compartment, believe simultaneously that volitions have causes. They think, for example, that virtue can be inculcated by a good upbringing, and that religious education is very useful to morals. They believe that sermons do good, and that moral exhortation may be beneficial. Now it is obvious that, if virtuous volitions are  
10 uncaused, we cannot do anything whatever to promote them. To the extent to which a man believes that it is in his power, or in any man's power, to promote desirable behavior in others, to that extent he believes in psychological causation and not in free will. In practice, the whole of our dealings with each other are based upon the assumption that men's actions result from antecedent circumstances. Political propaganda, the criminal  
15 law, the writing of books urging this or that line of action, would all lose their raison d'être if they had no effect upon what people do. The implications of the free will doctrine are not realized by those who hold it. We say "why did you do it?" and expect the answer to mention beliefs and desires which caused action. When a man does not himself know why he acted as he did, we may search his unconscious for a cause, but it never occurs to us that there may have been no cause.

B. Russell  
*Science and religion* (1935)

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n° 18

**Notions : Conscience. Free will.**

**Question : Can we prove the existence of free will?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

[...] experience regularly and normally guides us in forming beliefs about our freedom. It leads us to believe that we possess varying degrees of control over how we act – sometimes that this control is present, sometimes that it is diminished or even absent. Experience guides us to form beliefs not only about the causal powers of objects but about the non-causal power that is our own freedom. So freedom, as much as causation, is something that experience represents. [...] If we still can acquire knowledge of causal power by relying on its fallible representation by experience, then we can just as well acquire knowledge of non-causal freedom too, and in the same way.

5

Arguing over the telephone with an awkward and deeply exasperating colleague, I raise my voice, deliberately speak ever more woundingly – and then, as my temper mounts, finish by quite intentionally delivering a gross insult and smashing down the phone. I feel myself doing all this – and I feel my control over what I do lessening progressively as I do it. I can feel myself just losing it. As I experience my action, I feel it is increasingly my anger that is determining how I am acting, not I. Who is to say that my experience of my agency is not representing all this to me?

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T. Pink  
*Free will: a very short introduction (2003)*

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n° 19

**Notions : State. Politics.**

**Question : Is democracy a regime where citizens do not care about the common good ?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

‘What’s a democratic political system actually like? I mean, this is how we’ll learn about the corresponding democratic individual, obviously.’

‘Obviously,’ he agreed.

5 ‘Well, in the first place, the members of the community are autonomous, aren’t they? The community is informed by independence and freedom of speech, and everyone has the right to do as he chooses, doesn’t he?’

‘That’s the claim, anyway,’ he answered.

‘And given this right, then clearly every individual can make for himself the kind of life which suits him.’

10 ‘Clearly.’ (...)

‘You’re not forced to hold political office in this kind of community,’ I said, ‘even if you’d be good at it; you’re not forced to be a subject either, unless you want to. You don’t have to go to war when there’s a war on, or to keep the peace when everyone else is, if peace isn’t to your liking. Then again, even if you’re legally forbidden to play a part in governmental or

15 judicial procedures, you can still do both, if you feel like it. Isn’t this an extraordinarily pleasant way to spend one’s life, in the short term?’

‘Yes, probably,’ he said, ‘but not in the long term.’ (...)  
This political system, however, doesn’t care what kinds of provenance people had before coming to government; as long as someone claims to be sympathetic to the general

20 populace, he is honoured within this political system.’

‘A very vulgar way of going about things,’ he commented.

‘So these are democracy’s features—these and others like them,’ I said. ‘It looks as though it’s an enjoyable, lax, and various kind of political system, which treats everyone as equal, whether or not they are.’

Plato  
*Republic* (VIII 557a-558c)  
Translated by R. Waterfield

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n° 20

**Notions : State. Politics.**

**Question : Can a people rule justly?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

5 The difficulty which has been already raised, -what power should be assigned to the mass  
of freemen and citizens who are not rich and have no personal merit- can be solved now.  
There is still a danger in leaving them to share the great offices of state, for their folly will  
lead them into error, and their dishonesty into crime. But there is a danger also in not  
10 letting them share, for a state in which many poor men are excluded from office will  
necessarily be full of enemies. The only way of escape is to assign to them some  
deliberative and judicial functions. For this reason Solon and certain other legislators give  
them the power of electing to offices and of calling the magistrates to account, but they do  
not allow them to hold office individually. When they meet together, their perceptions are  
quite good enough and combined with the better class they are useful to the state. But  
each individual, left to himself, forms an imperfect judgment.

Aristotle  
*Politics* (III, 1281 b 25)  
Translated by B. Jowett

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n° 21

**Notions : State. Politics.**

**Question : Why is free speech so important?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

Someone might now object that my argument shows, at most, only that free speech is essential to a democracy, and therefore does not show that it is a universal human right that may properly be claimed even in non-democratic societies. We may want to reply, to that objection, that democracy is itself a universal human right, and that non-democratic societies are tyrannies. But we need not rely on that claim, because we can distinguish democracy, as a form of political organization, from the more basic obligation of government to treat all those subject to its dominion with equal concern, as all people whose lives matter. That plainly is a basic human right; and many of the more detailed human rights we all recognize flow from it. And so does a right of free speech. Even in a country ruled by prophets or generals in which ordinary citizens have no real vote, these citizens must nevertheless have the right to speak out, to cry for the attention or to buy the ear of those who will decide their fates, or simply to bear witness, out of self-respect if nothing else, to what they believe to be wicked or unfair. A government that deems (1) them too corrupt or debased (2) or ignoble even to be heard (...) can hardly pretend that it counts their interests as part of its own.

R. Dworkin  
*A new map of censorship* (1994)

(1) to deem: to consider.

(2) to debase: to make somebody/something less valuable or respected.

BACCALAURÉATS GÉNÉRAL ET TECHNOLOGIQUE  
SESSION 2016

ÉPREUVE SPÉCIFIQUE MENTION « SECTION EUROPÉENNE OU DE LANGUE ORIENTALE »  
Académies de Paris-Créteil-Versailles

Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n° 22

**Notions : State. Freedom.**

**Question : Is civil disobedience compatible with democracy ?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

Civil disobedience arises when a significant number of citizens have become convinced either that the normal channels of change no longer function, and grievances (1) will not be heard or acted upon (2), or that, on the contrary, the government is about to change and has embarked upon and persists in modes of action whose legality and constitutionality are open to grave doubt. (...)

5 There is all the difference in the world between the criminal's avoiding the public eye and the civil disobedient's taking the law into his own hands in open defiance. This distinction between an open violation of the law, performed in public, and a clandestine one is so glaringly obvious that it can be neglected only by prejudice or ill will. (...). Moreover, the  
10 common lawbreaker, even if he belongs to a criminal organization, acts for his own benefit alone; he refuses to be overpowered by the consent of all others and will yield only to the violence of the law-enforcement agencies. The civil disobedient, though he is usually dissenting from a majority, acts in the name and for the sake of a group; he defies the law  
15 and the established authorities on the ground of basic dissent, and not because he as an individual wishes to make an exception for himself and to get away with it. (...). Of all the means that civil disobedients may use in the course of persuasion and of the dramatization of issues, the only one that can justify their being called "rebels" is the means of violence.

H. Arendt

Civil disobedience in *Crisis of the republic* (1972)

(1) grievance: something that you think is unfair and that you complain or protest about.

(2) acted upon: taken into account.

(3) dissent: disagreement.

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n° 23

**Notions : State. Freedom.**

**Question : Is democracy the tyranny of the majority?**

*In order to answer this question, you will provide a personal and structured reflexion, based on an accurate understanding of the text below, and on your philosophical knowledge.*

The pure idea of democracy, according to its definition, is the government of the whole people by the whole people, equally represented. Democracy, as commonly conceived and hitherto (1) practiced, is the government of the whole people by a mere majority of the people exclusively represented. (...). In a representative body actually deliberating, the  
5 minority must of course be overruled; and in an equal democracy, the majority of the people, through their representatives, will outvote (2) and prevail over the minority and their representatives. But does it follow that the minority should have no representatives at all? Because the majority ought to prevail over the minority, must the majority have all the votes, the minority none? Is it necessary that the minority should not even be heard? (...).  
10 In a really equal democracy, every section would be represented, not disproportionately, but proportionately. A majority of the electors would always have a majority of the representatives, but a minority of the electors would always have a minority of the representatives. Man for man, they would be as fully represented as the majority. Unless  
15 they are, there is not equal government, but a government of inequality and privilege: one part of the people rule over the rest.

J. Mill

*Considerations on Representative Government* (1861) ch.7

(1) hitherto: until now.

(2) to outvote: to defeat somebody/something by winning a larger number of votes.