**GP Comprehension MCQ – Culture – Cultural Heritage**

GP Comprehension - Topic: Culture - Cultural Heritage

*Irina Bokova writes about the importance of cultural heritage*

Paragraph 1

On July 7, in the wake of the destruction of the sacred shrines in Timbuktu, a Unesco World Heritage site, the spokesman of Ansar Dine, one of the Islamist groups controlling northern Mali, declared to the press that ‘there is no world heritage. It does not exist. Infidels must not get involved in our business.’ This statement captures the challenge we face. For the spokesman of Ansar Dine, culture is narrowly defined. It is exclusive and static. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization stands for a different vision. Culture is dynamic and has universal meaning. When cultural heritage is attacked anywhere in the world, like the Umayyad Mosque in Aleppo and World Heritage sites damaged by severe bombing in Syria, each of us is shocked; this is a loss to all humanity.

Paragraph 2

Some sites have an outstanding universal value; they belong to all and must be protected by all. Let us be clear. We are not just talking about stones and buildings. This is about values, identities and belonging. Destroying culture hurts societies for the long term. It deprives them of collective memory banks as well as precious social and economic assets. Warlords know this. They target culture because it strikes to the heart and because it has powerful media value in an increasingly connected world. We saw this in the wars in the former Yugoslavia, where libraries were often burned first. In Timbuktu, extremists are attacking the symbols of a tolerant and erudite Islam to impose their own narrow, fraudulent vision. Culture is not hit as collateral damage. Culture stands on the frontline of conflicts, deliberately targeted to fuel hatred and block reconciliation. This is why we must start seeing cultural heritage as an international security issue. The question is how do we stand up for it.

Paragraph 3

For Unesco, we must act on three levels. First, after years of efforts to build stronger legal instruments, we must do more to implement them and strengthen the capacities of states to do so. We have today a comprehensive set of legally binding international treaties to protect culture: the 1954 convention for the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict, the Unesco convention against the illicit trafficking of cultural property and in the 1972 World Heritage Convention. Each of these sends two key messages: that states have an obligation to protect their heritage, and not everything is allowed in war. This is already an achievement, but in a world that is changing quietly, legal texts can never be as fast as a rocket. We need renewed leadership to strengthen national capacities and awareness. This means enhancing our work with museums, customs authorities, the police and art dealers.

Paragraph 4

Unesco is helping Mali to undertake damage assessment and reconstruction, and to secure museum collections. This means transmitting geographical coordinates of protected sites to military forces and recalling their obligation to keep this heritage a ‘safe place.’ Most soldiers have never heard of the cultural conventions; they need training and simple, accurate information. All of this calls for resources and experts on the ground. Implementing legal texts means also bringing cultural war crimes to justice. Already in 2001, the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia included in the destruction of cultural heritage in its case regarding the 1991 attack against the Croatin port of Dubrovnik. Today, the destruction of cultural heritage is part of the debates in the U.N. Security Council about the situation in Syria. The chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Fatou Bensouda, declared the destruction of Timbuktu’s shrines was indeed ‘a war crime’. The world must now act accordingly.

Paragraph 5

Second, we must build stronger coalitions for culture through tighter coordination with all patterns involved, including armed forces, Interpol, the World Customs Organisation and other actors, such as international auction houses. This is delicate work. Attracting too much attention to culture can expose it to new risks. But the significant results we got after the museum of Baghdad was pillaged in 2003 showed what broad cooperation can do. No single agency can succeed alone. This is why Unesco contacted the coalition of states to urge all parties to protect Libya’s heritage during the military intervention. Today, we are teaming up with Norway to safeguard the manuscripts held in the museum of Bamako.

Paragraph 6

Lastly, the best way to protect culture in conflict is to make the most of it to prevent conflicts, and make it a pillar of peace building. Unesco works across the global to harness the power of culture to bring people together and foster reconciliation. We saw this power during the restoration of the Koguryio Tombs complex in North Korea, undertaken with the financial support of South Korea. This might sound high-minded compared to the terrible news we hear everyday from conflict zones. It is true that culture alone is not enough to build peace, but without culture peace cannot be lasting.

Paragraph 7

The world thought big when the convention was adopted in 1972. We need to think big once again, to protect culture under attack. We often hear that protecting culture is a luxury best left for another day, that people must come first. The fact is protecting culture is protecting people. It is about protecting their way of life and providing them with essential resources to rebuild when war ends. This is why, for culture also, there is a responsibility to protect.

**Read the choices carefully and infer the right answer.**

**1. Which of the following statement(s) is/are true in explaining the author’s purpose in the beginning with the quote from the spokesman of Ansar Dine?**

A: She wants to prove that the people of Ansar Dine do not preserve their culture.

B: Her purpose is to prove to the readers that there are people who oppose the preservation of culture.

C: The spokesman of Ansar Dine advocates that their culture belongs to them and is not shared by the world.

D: Her purpose is to create a negative impression of people who think in this narrow fashion.

(1) C only

(2) D only

(3) A and C only

(4) C and D only

**2. Which of the following statement(s) is/are true in explaining what the author is implying by using the words ‘not just’ to explain the value of cultural sites in paragraph 2?**

A: The importance of cultural sites does not merely lie in their physical form.

B: The physical form of cultural sites is of little importance.

C: Other factors give form to our principles and values and remind us of our common heritage.

D: Other factors are more important in establishing our individual identity.

(1) A and C only

(2) A and D only

(3) B and C only

(4) B and D only

**3. What is lost when ‘collective memory banks’ are destroyed in paragraph 2?**

(1) It results in having to mould a new culture.

(2) It results in the complete loss of the people’s culture.

(3) What is lost are all the shared precious experiences gathered over many years.

(4) What is lost are all the elderly who are well versed in the culture.

**4. What is the author implying when she says that the warlords ‘target culture because it strikes to the heart’ in paragraph 2?**

(1) Warlords prefer to engage in psychological warfare than physical warfare.

(2) She implies that warlords conquer people by destroying their culture because it is directly related to their health.

(3) She implies that warlords force people to assimilate into their culture to gain control of people’s emotions.

(4) She implies that warlords aim to demoralise people and hurt their emotional state because it is a source of attachment to their communities.

**5. Which of the following statement(s) is/are true in showing who might dismiss the author’s argument about the need to protect culture in conflict in paragraph 6?**

A: Those who feel culture by itself cannot bring about harmony.

B: People living in war-torn areas might dismiss the author’s arguments because they believe in times of war, protecting the civilians should be the priority over preventing culture.

C: Pessimists who believe that solely safeguarding and upholding culture is insufficient as a deterrent for cross-border attacks might dismiss the author’s argument.

D: Those who feel that the author is being too idealistic and not in touch with what the common man considers important.

(1) A only

(2) D only

(3) B, C and D only

(4) A, B, C and D

**6. Which of the following statement(s) is/are true in explaining what the author suggests would be lost if we fail to protect culture in paragraph 7?**

A: Humanity will not be safeguarded.

B: People’s traditions and customs would be lost.

C: People’s wealth would be lost.

D: There will be a loss of necessary means for national reconstruction in the wake of war.

(1) B only

(2) C only

(3) A and D only

4) A, B and D only

**7. Why does the author keep repeating the words ‘protect’ and ‘protecting’ in the last paragraph?**

(1) She is trying to remind herself of her duty to keep her culture intact.

(2) She wishes to convey a sense of urgency for us to be involved in cultural preservation.

(3) She tries to brainwash the readers into adopting her point of view.

(4) She tries to draw emphasis on the nobility of her stand.

AQ Practice

11. Irina Bokva feels that cultural heritage belongs to all and must be protected by all. To what extent do you agree or disagree with her views? How applicable do you find her observations to yourself and your own society?

3 points –

Why you agree to the writer and extent of agreement

Why you disagree to the write and extent of disagreement

How applicable the writer’s observation to your country

Introduction1.

Requirement of the question examine the extent of agreement and disagreement and applicability.

Main body

Why you agree to the writer and extent of agreement

1. quote the writer – values, identity and sense of belongings

2. explain this quote – Our values determine the common mindset and senses on how we conduct our way of life and this gives us the identity or characteristics of our culture. Consequently, our identity creates the cultural platform for us to feels a sense of belongings.

3. why you agree to this view -

4. example

5. extent of agreement – why you disagree

6. linking sentence

Why you disagree to the writer and extent of disagreement

1. quote the writer –

2. explain this quote –

3. why you disagree to this view

4. example

5. extent of disagreement – why you agree

6. linking sentence

How applicable is the writer’s view to Singapore

1. quote the view observation

2. explain this

3. why it is applicable

4. example

5. why it is not applicable

6 linking sentence