

# Broken Britain

## Nothing is left of the family silver

(1) Exactly how and why Britain has decomposed into a more rotten country than it was two or three decades ago is hard to gauge, but some answers can, I think, be found in the destruction of an industrial society and the loss of the cohesion and community afforded by the manufacturing base. The devastation of manufacturing and its social fabric occurred, during the 1980s and 90s, in parallel (5) with an extreme form of privatization of infrastructure, utilities and services that were (and in continental Western Europe largely still are) seen as public and civic functions, not merely opportunities to make money. Traditional industries were replaced by retail and “service” industries, and one in particular – financial services – so that the economy came to rest on the whims and needs of supranational banking. Modern Britain is defined by, more than anything, the City of London, its (10) money and values, both in terms of the prostitution of politics to the interests of high finance (the assumption that taxpayers’ money will be levied to bail out banks, and the fact that it is now almost de rigeur for cabinet members leaving office to take lucrative consultancies with those same banks) and the reforging of society in the banks’ image of greed.

The country’s seduction of, and dependence on, global finance was supposed to generate a “trickle-(15) down effect”. Instead, tens of billions in taxpayer money have gone into bailing out, propping up and lavishly rewarding the very institutions that have looted our economy. We were told by the government – when, as Gordon Brown put it to Parliament, he “saved the world” with bailouts – that we would “own” the Royal Bank of Scotland and its subsidiaries such as NatWest, Ulster Bank, and Coutts, bankers to the elite. Having taken us to the edge, and been rescued by our hard-earned (20) wages, the City banks and insurance companies this year announced a total of £14 billion (\$22 billion) paid out in the latest round of bonuses.

One of the few who know the world of banking and are prepared to talk about it honestly is Martin Woods, a former fraud detective with the National Crime Squad (equivalent to the FBI) and a consultant on money laundering. He makes the interesting point that “one major effect of the (25) dependence of the economy on banks was to change the geography of opportunity. In industrial times, there were apprenticeships and opportunities in business and industry all over the country. Now the only real money is in London, so people are more likely to work there – and the ethos of London becomes more powerful in the way the country thinks.” When crowds gathered on April 1, 2009, to protest against the financial sector, an event that turned into another riot, bankers (30) contemptuously waved £10 notes at them from their offices on high.

Woods is right to suggest that Britain’s unpleasantness radiates from its capital. London’s hubris has become so heightened of late that posters now greeting those arriving from the north or west of England at Kings Cross, Euston and Paddington stations list such feel-good statistics as “Maybe it’s because Londoners are 37% more likely to be an opinion leader compared with the rest of the UK” (35) and “Maybe you’ve developed a ‘power walk’ which only becomes apparent when your friends outside London have to jog to keep up.” The go-

getting Londoner is always in a hurry, carrying a designer bag and tastefully sized takeaway coffee, in this campaign's gleefully insensitive, sneering finger stuck up at provincial Britain.

Paul Gilroy, a professor of social theory at the London School of Economics, calls this mood "post-(40) colonial melancholia". England, he says, is a country that blends racism and xenophobia with "manic elation (in sports) as well as self-loathing and depression, "a condition in which citizens can only "mourn the loss of global power and prestige: being great, operating on the world stage, punching above our weight – all the fantasies of being able to mould and shape a world to which we are increasingly peripheral. These things carry with them the burden of our unresolved colonial (45) history." Gilroy draws particular attention to Britain's wars and talks about "the positioning of the Murdoch papers as the voice of our heroic troops, done with great cynicism, to buoy up their circulation."

...

I left Britain for the better part of thirteen years in 1990, a few weeks before Margaret Thatcher was ousted by members of her own entourage and replaced by fellow Conservative John Major. Britain (50) then was a nation seen by Mrs. Thatcher's admirers as having cast off the yoke of socialism and by her opponents as having ravaged the "workshop of the world", as Britain had been known for more than a century. Mrs. Thatcher notoriously insisted that "there is no such thing as society", and perhaps this is where the putrefaction begins. She forged a culture of privatization, selling off the nation's collective assets to a newly empowered oligarchy of individual shareholders. Her fans saw (55) an experiment that pushed the limits of free-market capitalism; her opponents saw a wasteland in which the structures of civic life had been shattered and replaced by the glorifications of selfishness and greed.

I returned in 1995, but left again the day after Tony Blair was elected by a landslide in 1997. Blair was seen by supporters as a new dawn after a long Conservative night and by skeptics who declined (60) to vote for him, including myself, as Mrs. Thatcher's natural successor. I returned for good in 2003 to find the country, led and propelled by Blair for six years, more malodorous than when I left, and sad to say, it is even more noxious now that it was then, as the news reflects.

To mourn the destruction of past values...is not nostalgia. Something was certainly lost by 1985, the sixth year of Thatcher's administration, when former Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, by then Lord (65) Stockton, gave one of the major political speeches in modern Britain to the Tory Reform Group. Macmillan, a Conservative who had presided over the nation's post-war boom, likened the privatization program to selling the family silver. "First of all the Georgian silver goes, and then all the nice furniture that used to be in the salon. Then the Canalettos go." (Lord Stockton later claimed that his criticism had been directed at "the using of these huge sums as if they were income," but the (70) term "family silver" has become so deeply ingrained that it even reappeared during recent debates on the bailout of Greece.)

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# TEST D'ORIENTATION EN LANGUES 2012

## ANGLAIS

Lire le texte. Reporter vos réponses aux QCM sur la grille de correction. Une seule bonne réponse par question.

Attention : Les questions sont groupées par coefficient et ne suivent pas forcément l'ordre des informations du texte.

**Barème :**

*bonne réponse: 2 points*

*absence de réponse: 0 point*

*mauvaise réponse: -1 point*

### Questions 1 - 4: coefficient 1

1. Certain British newspapers have...
  - a. ... done their patriotic duty by becoming the voice of British troops fighting overseas.
  - b. ... exploited British involvement in overseas wars to boost their sales.
  - c. ... revealed military secrets from stolen copies of the Murdoch papers.
  - d. ... drawn attention to the fact that Britain is illegally involved in overseas military actions.
  
2. In 1990...
  - a. ... Margaret Thatcher was re-elected.
  - b. ... Margaret Thatcher lost a general election.
  - c. ... Margaret Thatcher was forced out of power by a group of cabinet ministers.
  - d. ... Margaret Thatcher resigned, knowing she would lose the next election.
  
3. In 1990, Margaret Thatcher's opponents claimed that...
  - a. ... Britain had escaped the influence of socialism.
  - b. ... the British economy was stronger than it had been in over a century.
  - c. ... Britain was poised to become the "workshop of the world".
  - d. ... the British economy was in tatters.
  
4. In 1997, Tony Blair...
  - a. ... won a general election the day after a natural disaster.
  - b. ... won a general election by a narrow margin.
  - c. ... won a general election by a wide margin.
  - d. ... won a general election with Conservative support.

### Questions 5 - 8: coefficient 2

5. The phrase "family silver" in the title of the article alludes to a speech made by...
  - a. ...Lord Stockton in 1985.
  - b. ...Prime Minister Harold Macmillan to the Tory Reform Group.
  - c. Both a and b are correct.
  - d. Neither a nor b is correct.
  
6. The reasons for Britain's decline over the past twenty or thirty years are...
  - a. ...impossible to know.
  - b. ... difficult to assess.
  - c. ... obvious to everyone.
  - d. ... clear only to economic experts.
  
7. During the Thatcher administration...
  - a. ... public utilities were sold off to a small, privileged group.
  - b. ... power was divided more equally among more people.
  - c. ... the limits of free-market capitalism restructured political life.
  - d. ... waste lands were reclaimed for agriculture.
  
8. When Tony Blair was first elected, the writer saw him as...
  - a. ... a new kind of leader for Britain.
  - b. ... standing diametrically opposed to Margaret Thatcher's policies.
  - c. ... no real change from Margaret Thatcher.
  - d. ... even worse than Margaret Thatcher.

### **Questions 9-12: coefficient 3**

9. In 2011, City banks and insurance companies...
  - a. ... refunded a total of £14 billion to taxpayers.
  - b. ... paid £14 billion in rewards to their employees.
  - c. ... lost £14 billion, taking them to the brink of bankruptcy.
  - d. ... donated £14 to political campaigns.
  
10. In the UK, a "London-centric" world-view is more prevalent now because...
  - a. ... apprentices all over the UK hope one day to work in London.
  - b. ... most well-paid jobs are to be found in London.
  - c. ... the best British universities are located in London.
  - d. ... the London-based media have a disproportionate influence on culture.
  - e.
  
11. The City can be said to dominate British politics because...
  - a. ... cabinet ministers are as greedy as City bankers.
  - b. ... City bankers provide prostitutes to cabinet ministers.
  - c. ... City bankers raise money to fund election campaigns.
  - d. ... politicians use tax income to fund the very banks they will eventually work for as consultants.
  
12. The writer feels that as compared with 2003, Britain today is...
  - a. ... better off since Tony Blair left office.
  - b. ... faced with serious environmental problems.
  - c. ... not represented as fairly by the news media.
  - d. ... in a worse state, socially speaking.

### **Questions13-16: coefficient 4**

13. During an April 2009 protest...
- ...bankers taunted crowds with £10 notes.
  - ... bankers carried banners depicting £10 notes .
  - ... bankers threw £10 notes out of their office windows, causing a riot.
  - ... bankers agreed to donate £10 to help with legal fees of protestors who were arrested.
14. As evinced by posters seen in various London train stations, London's relationship with the provinces is marked by..
- ... a welcoming attitude and sensitivity.
  - ... a "can-do" spirit and leadership.
  - ... excessive pride and contempt.
  - ... good feelings and friendship.
15. Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister in...
- ... 1976.
  - ...1977.
  - ...1978.
  - ...1979.
16. Harold Macmillan compared privatization to...
- ... selling valuable family heirlooms that could never be replaced.
  - ... selling the furnishings of a Georgian home to a museum.
  - ... selling antiques to earn extra income.
  - ... selling forged paintings by Italian masters.

### **Questions 17-20 : coefficient 5**

17. Until the 1980s, industrial Britain benefited from...
- ... a wave of privatization of infrastructure, utilities and services.
  - ... more varied business opportunities.
  - ... a more cohesive society.
  - ... the devastation of the manufacturing base.
18. Harold Macmillan was Prime Minister during the...
- ... 1930s and 40s.
  - ... 1940s and 50s.
  - ... 1950s and 60s.
  - ...1970s and 80s.
19. According to Paul Gilroy, the British suffer from "post-colonial melancholia" because...
- ... Britain no longer plays a central role in world affairs.
  - ... Britain no longer excels in sports on the world level.
  - ... many Britons suffer from self-loathing and depression.

- d. ... many Britons are victims of racism and xenophobia.
20. Harold Macmillan, a Conservative, later claimed that the “family silver” speech...
- a. ... had not been intended as a criticism of Thatcher’s policies.
  - b. ... was only meant to criticize the way money from privatizations was used.
  - c. ... was only meant to criticize the fact that more money had not been raised from privatizations.
  - d. ... had not gone far enough in criticizing Thatcher’s policies.

## GRAMMAIRE

### Questions 21-24 : coefficient 1

21. Where's that funny noise coming from? You should stop \_\_\_\_\_ the tires.
- a. to check
  - b. checking
  - c. check
  - d. have checked
22. \_\_\_\_\_ you think, my solution is better than yours.
- a. No matter that
  - b. No matter which
  - c. No matter how
  - d. No matter what
23. If you had studied \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_, you would understand the importance of those events.
- a. the history...the school
  - b. a history... a school
  - c. history...school
  - d. some history...some school
24. \_\_\_\_\_ her poor results, she eventually managed to get into the LSCE.
- a. Although
  - b. Even though
  - c. Notwithstanding
  - d. In despite of

### Questions 25-28 : coefficient 2

25. It's not \_\_\_\_\_ down the law.
- a. for judges laying
  - b. for judges to lay
  - c. by judges laying
  - d. by judges to lay
26. She \_\_\_\_\_ the contract under duress, so it is null and void.
- a. has been making sign
  - b. has been made signing
  - c. was made signing
  - d. was made to sign
27. \_\_\_\_\_ still don't understand a thing about the Euro crisis.
- a. Most people
  - b. Most of people

- c. Most of the people
  - d. Most the people
28. I won't have \_\_\_\_\_ a smear campaign against such an honest man.
- a. you to launch
  - b. you launching
  - c. you with launching
  - d. you launched

**Questions 29-32: coefficient 3**

29. I \_\_\_\_\_ speak to him for a few minutes before the battery in my cell phone died.
- a. could
  - b. have been able to
  - c. could have
  - d. was able to
30. As the famous supermarket slogan reminds us, in hard times “\_\_\_\_\_ helps”!
- a. every little
  - b. how little
  - c. very little
  - d. too little
31. I want those crystal chandeliers \_\_\_\_\_ by tomorrow noon!
- a. clean
  - b. cleaned
  - c. Both a and b are correct.
  - d. Neither a nor b is correct.
32. The applicants, some \_\_\_\_\_ claimed to be trilingual, didn't actually speak either foreign language fluently.
- a. of them
  - b. of who
  - c. of whom
  - d. of whose

**Questions 33-36 : coefficient 4**

33. I'll tell him when he \_\_\_\_\_ on Monday, when I think we \_\_\_\_\_ finished with the project, that he could have given us a hand.
- a. comes....will be
  - b. will come...are
  - c. comes...are
  - d. will come...will be
34. \_\_\_\_\_ the situation to him properly, he would never have started legal proceedings.
- a. His solicitor had explained
  - b. Had his solicitor explained
  - c. If his solicitor explained

- d. Would his solicitor have explained
35. Sheldon \_\_\_\_\_ pay through the nose to get such a rare comic book, but then again, maybe Penny bought it for him for Christmas.
- has had to
  - can have had to
  - ought to have had to
  - must have had to
36. "It's no use \_\_\_\_\_ over spilt milk and there's no need \_\_\_\_\_ over old ashes," sighed Pat, just before she passed away.
- crying...raking
  - to cry...to rake
  - to cry... raking
  - crying...to rake

Questions 37-40 : coefficient 5

37. "Never was \_\_\_\_\_ owed by \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_," declared Winston Churchill in a speech during the Battle of Britain, and this expression of the debt of the British people to the heroic pilots of the RAF has become one of the most famous quotations in history.
- so many... so much... so little
  - so few...so little...so many
  - so little...so much...so few
  - so much...so many...so few
38. \_\_\_\_\_ money she had left over after her living expenses, she put by for a rainy day.
- What little
  - How little
  - Whatever little
  - Whichever little
39. They spent a fortune satisfying their every whim, but were \_\_\_\_\_ for it.
- all the happiest
  - some the happier
  - much the happiest
  - none the happier
40. The Saint Hildevert church \_\_\_\_\_ for years now – we're beginning to wonder if the work will ever be finished so that it can be reopened to the public.
- has been being repaired
  - has been repaired
  - was being repaired
  - is being repaired