

CAPES/ CAFEP EXTERNE D'ANGLAIS

SESSION 2013

ÉPREUVE SUR DOSSIER

PREMIÈRE PARTIE

Vous procéderez en anglais à la mise en relation des documents suivants, en vous appuyant sur la consigne ci-dessous :

Analyse the representation of political power in the following set of documents.

Document A: Thomas Jefferson, *Letter to Edward Carrington* (16 January 1787).

Document B: Barack Obama, *The Audacity of Hope* (2006).

Document C (audio): “Outside groups swamp Montana’s Media Market”, *NPR* (9 October 2012).

DOCUMENT A

Thomas Jefferson, *Letter to Edward Carrington* (16 January 1787).

I am persuaded myself that the good sense of the people will always be found to be the best army. They may be led astray for a moment, but will soon correct themselves. The people are the only censors of their governors: and even their errors will tend to keep these to the true principles of their institution. To punish these errors too severely would be to suppress the only safeguard of public liberty. The way to prevent these irregular interpositions of the people is to give them full information of their affairs through the channel of the public papers, and to contrive that those papers should penetrate the whole mass of the people. The basis of our governments being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter. [...]

Cherish therefore the spirit of our people, and keep alive their attention. Do not be too severe upon their errors, but reclaim them by enlightening them. If once they become inattentive to the public affairs, you and I, and Congress, and Assemblies, judges and governors shall all become wolves. It seems to be the law of our general nature, in spite of individual exceptions; and experience declares that man is the only animal which devours his own kind, for I can apply no milder term to the governments of Europe, and to the general prey of the rich on the poor.

Source: http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/amendI_speechs8.html

DOCUMENT B

Barack Obama, *The Audacity of Hope* (2006).

For the politician who is worried about keeping his seat, there is a force that pushes and pulls at him, that shapes the nature of political debate and defines the scope of what he feels he can and can't do. Forty or fifty years ago, that force would have been the party apparatus: the big-city bosses, the political fixers, the power brokers in Washington who could make or break a career with a phone call. Today, that force is the media. [...]

Simple math tells the tale. In the thirty-nine town hall meetings I held during my first year in office, turnout at each meeting averaged four to five hundred people. [...] In contrast, a three-minute story on the lowest-rated local news broadcast in the Chicago media market may reach two hundred thousand people. In other words, I — like every politician at the federal level — am almost entirely dependent on the media to reach my constituents. It is the filter through which my votes are interpreted, my statements analysed, my beliefs examined. For the broad public at least, I am who the media says I am. I say what they say I say. I become who they say I've become.

The media's influence on our politics comes in many forms. What gets the most attention these days is the growth of an unabashedly partisan press: talk radio, Fox News, newspaper editorialists, the cable talk-show circuit, and most recently the bloggers, all of them trading insults, accusations, gossip, and innuendo twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. [...]

There was another lesson to be learned: as soon as Ms. Noonan's [anti-Obama] column hit, it went racing across the Internet, appearing on every right-wing website as proof of what an arrogant, shallow boob I was. In that sense, the episode hinted at a more subtle and corrosive aspect of modern media — how a particular narrative, repeated over and over again and hurled through cyberspace at the speed of light, eventually becomes a hard particle of reality; how political caricatures and nuggets of conventional wisdom lodge themselves in our brain without us ever taking the time to examine them. [...]

Of course, the PR machinery of politicians and their parties helps feed these narratives. The spin works, though, precisely because the media itself is hospitable to spin. Every reporter in Washington is working under pressures imposed by editors and producers, who in turn are answering to publishers or network executives, who in turn are poring over last week's ratings or last year's circulation figures and trying to survive the growing preference for PlayStation and reality TV. To make the deadline, to maintain market share and feed the cable news beast, reporters start to move in packs, working off the same news releases, the same set pieces, the same stock figures. Meanwhile, for busy and therefore casual news consumers, a well-worn narrative is not entirely unwelcome. It makes few demands on our thought or time; it's quick and easy to digest. Accepting spin is easier on everybody.

Source: Barak Obama, *The Audacity of Hope*, 2006. Edinburgh, Canongate Books (2007), p. 120-125.

DOCUMENT C

AUDIO: “Outside groups swamp Montana’s Media Market”, *NPR* (9 October 2012).

A report by Martin Kaste (National Public Radio) about political ads.

Source: <http://www.npr.org/2012/10/09/162551936/outside-political-groups-swamp-montanas-media-market>