

Gabler Models: AP Language 2003 Exam

Response A

All things in life require balance to perform at their greatest efficiency. It is said that “all work and no play makes one a dull boy.” Therefore, one must be able to recreate just as much as one works on a daily basis. Entertainment is essential to maintain the balance between “work and play.” Without entertainment, one would become consumed by one’s work. Without a variety of entertaining actions to engage in, the mind slowly deteriorates, affected by the extremes of work. On the other hand, a sensible balance of “work and play” helps ease the mind’s pressures. Thus, the sanctuary that entertainment provides does not “ruin” society; in fact, the balance that entertainment provides prevents society from becoming enveloped in the repetitious monotony of an “all-work no play” lifestyle.

Surely one can easily see why the aristocrats of the nineteenth century and the intellectuals of the twentieth century argued that entertainment degrades society. The idea of a laid-back life of drinking in pubs after work and having a few good laughs contradicted the “Puritan” work ethic that the eighteenth century was used to. A new wave of immigrants from Ireland and later, from southern and eastern Europe brought to the United States the lifestyle of ease and fun. With this, a clash of two societies resulted in a number of social changes. Labor workers formed unions and demanded 8 hour work days and better pay. The slogan went “Eight hours for work, eight hours for sleep, and eight hours to do what we please.” Aristocrats and business managers despised this because it ruined work efficiency.

One can easily see the effects of the rise of entertainment during the nineteenth century. Today, a multitude of labor unions exist. Each worker is entitled to not only an eight-hour work day, but also a paid vacation, social security benefits, injury compensation, and many other privileges. The demand for entertainment balanced American society into an efficiently working creature that has made the United States as prosperous as it is today. Instead of degrading society, the revolution brought about by the demands of entertainment in the nineteenth century has changed society for the better.

The turbulent decade of the 1960’s was a time in which the United States was filled with organizations demanding social change. The counter-culture movement supported the concept of “love not war.” The gathering at Woodstock at the end of the decade marked the peak of a movement that demanded unlimited entertainment freedoms. People who attended the Woodstock gathering were exposed to the wild, unrestrained use of psychedelic drugs and sharing sexual partners. The ultra-liberal movement was shunned by intellectuals who feared that freedom of such types of entertainment would plague society.

One must only look at the decades that follow to see the effects of the counterculture, unlimited entertainment movement. People became conscious that too much entertainment is not good. The popular slogan of “love not war” died out as the public became aware of the effects of unrestrained “entertainment.” Many contracted venereal diseases from sharing sexual partners. The sharing of drug needles also initiated the AIDS epidemic in the United States. As people began to acknowledge these facts, they advocated social order and conservative reforms. Balance had to be maintained.

If one were to study the metabolic processes in a living organism, one would see that any living entity is in a constant state of dynamic equilibrium. The same equilibrium should be maintained in society. While entertainment is a necessary factor in society, too much entertainment has a devastating effect. Furthermore, not enough entertainment is equally as bad as too much entertainment. It is only with a sensible balance of “work and play” can society efficiently progress.

Response T

Any individual who feels that entertainment can “ruin” society needs to rethink himself drastically. There has been so much controversy in this politically correct society we live in about the entertainment industry and its “poisonous” effects. All these songs and movies about sex, drugs, and crime are sure to corrupt our society, at least that is the assumption made by critics. This argument is made assuming that our society today lacks the mental capacity to formulate its own ideas and decide for itself. We are not simply robots who ape every action we see on pretty movie screens or hear in headphones with loud bass. May I remind all those critics that these things are entertainment? They are created to entertain, not to send out some hidden agenda to do drugs and commit crimes. The notion that entertainment can “ruin” society is preposterous.

No artist, actor, or musician has been surrounded in more controversy than the hated rapper Eminem. Just hearing the name brings feeling of disgust to critics nationwide. His raps include everything from bank robbers to murder to massive drug overdoses. Surely this kind of thing will end life and we know it, right? Of course not. I personally have no problem with the man or his music, and often listen to it on the radio. How can I listen to such “garbage”? Because it’s entertainment. I don’t think to myself, “Maybe this man has a point, I need to score some ecstasy, rob a bank, and beat my wife.” No one does. But once again critics believe we are thoughtless drones who will comply with any idea a famous icon puts in our head. It’s just entertainment. It’s just fun to listen to. Period.

Every critic hates Jackass. That’s right, that insane show on MTV that involves absolute morons pulling crazy pranks and thoughtless antics just to get a laugh. Millions of Americans saw the movie, most of them laughed, some were

horrified. I personally am not a fan of the show, but knew some who are, none of which have recreated any of the stunts performed on the show. Why? Because it's brainless. The show is there to make you laugh, not for you to copycat. People like to laugh at other people making asses of themselves, they don't want to be laughed at. Critics need to realize that no one is going to run out and intentionally hurt themselves because some famous guy did. And if they are, you really need to wonder about that person in the first place.

If this is really becoming a pressing issue in today's world, our society needs to take a good look at itself. We have become so politically correct in trying to please everyone that going out and having a good time has become immoral. If we are enjoying life, we must not be doing something wrong. Apparently in today's world, the only reason to go out and see a flick is to scrutinize it and create an uproar about how much of a cancer it is to society. Relax. Take a deep breath, loosen the death grip you have on the world, and enjoy the movie for what it is, entertainment. It's there to help you get away from the real world for a few hours, not analyze how what your watching will destroy it. Entertainment is not a poison. It will not ruin society. And if you think that what is said on records or shown in theaters is going to destroy society then I feel sorry for you, because the society you live in has no individual thought and is essentially a walking, talking conformity. I choose to think differently. Don't let that slip out, I would want anyone thinking I was enjoying life for a moment.

Response DD

The overwhelming amount of stress in each person's life is an undeniable fact, and throughout history humans have sought escapes from harsh reality. Forms of entertainment, ranging from the soothing sounds of Beethoven to the bloody spectacles of the Roman Coliseum, have a huge impact on both the individual and society's culture as a whole. However, in the modern age, the advent of movies, television, and radio has exerted such a force on the human mind that some fear these forms of entertainment have the ability to destroy the values of society. These fears are well-placed, as modern entertainment's never-ending search for the next "sensation" leads to the subversion of society's values and traditions.

Some argue that entertainment, especially the modern, "mindless" form (as stated by Neal Gabler), aids society in many ways. The art forms of film and television provide an outlet for creativity, for new ways of viewing the world around us. New technologies allow for the creation of fantastic worlds, expanding human imagination. In addition, entertainment provides a method of escape from the cruelties of the world into a realm of the fantastic, where dreams can almost always be realized. Some entertainment can be thought-provoking as well. Even video games, viewed by many as the epitome of useless entertainment, have positive benefits, such as improved hand-eye coordination and strategic thinking. The benefits of modern entertainment are boundless, some argue, and for these reasons it is a beneficial aspect of society.

However, all of the positive arguments in this case are underscored by a deeper negative result: the ruin of society. The nineteenth century critics cited by Gabler were more than likely concerned with the antics of Vaudeville theater, a popular form of entertainment in poor districts of cities. While they provided an escape from the harsh living, the Vaudeville acts also promoted racial stereotypes and placed their humor on such a low level that, instead of raising the poor into higher mental capacities through thought-provoking tales, they dragged the audience down into a pit of licentiousness and stupidity. This resulted in a lower standard for respectable behavior. Many years later, a famous movie would have a similar effect. At the end of *Gone with the Wind*, the principle male character tells his former lover, "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a da—." Before this time, swear words were strictly taboo, never spoken in public society. This simple action opened the floodgates for cussing throughout society, especially in entertainment.

Moreover, entertainment distorts reality to an unhealthy extent. Modern "reality" TV bears about as much resemblance to reality as an elephant does to a naked mole rat. Sensational situations, hyped-up tension, and larger-than-life characters are portrayed as being common. In addition, most entertainment today features physically perfect people. Most males can never hope to be as muscle-bound as a wrestling star or as handsome as Brad Pitt, yet we are told time and time again by our entertainment sources that if we do not look like them, we are less than human and of little, if any, worth. In the same way, distorted ideas concerning women remain prevalent in entertainment. The inability of an individual to match society's supposed ideal as portrayed in entertainment hurts the common person's self-esteem, and leads everyone down a false path to happiness.

Despite the positive benefits of entertainment, the modern version, most often in movies, television, and radio, does more harm than good. Through their never-ending quest for the next "sensational" spin on the formulaic, mindless form of entertainment, the promoters of these modern sources degrade society's values and harm the health of humanity. This is most unfortunate, as entertainment, when used properly, has the potential to uplift the human spirit to a higher understanding. Instead, it is used for cheap thrills and the degradation of the human psyche.