**DS5 - PSI – Feedback – *Expression écrite***

**Why affirmative action in American universities had to go**

Not long after America dismantled over two centuries of slavery and segregation, it embarked on a project of “affirmative action”. At the time, the affront to liberal norms of fairness and equality under the law was assuaged by the fact that the people who stood to benefit had been oppressed. Yet after 50 years with more racial progress than setbacks, an applicant to America’s top universities with the right skin colour still has a much better chance of getting in than one with identical credentials but the wrong skin colour.

On June 29th the Supreme Court ended the scheme.

It was right to do so. That is because affirmative action rested on contorted constitutional logic. It was also unpopular outside progressive circles. Worst of all, it didn’t work. America’s best universities have never been representative, even with race-based affirmative action. The very same universities favour the children of alumni and donors—a shadow, unjustifiable affirmative-action scheme for the white and wealthy hidden behind the prominent one for black and Hispanic applicants.

The Supreme Court’s ruling will reverberate widely. But the immediate impact will be on universities, and the task is to ensure that it is beneficial.

After the civil-rights era, America began to try to live up to its constitutional promise to guarantee all its citizens due process and equal protection under the law. That is why, in 1978, the Supreme Court justified affirmative action not as reparations for a terrible past, but with the argument that diversity promotes “cross-racial understanding and the breaking down of racial stereotypes”.

It was always odd that affirmative action was crafted for the benefit of black students’ white peers. Nonetheless, top universities leapt on the rationale of diversity, using it to construct racially balanced classes while suggesting that these were the happy result not of quotas, which are banned, but of “race-conscious” holistic admissions schemes that treat people as individuals rather than as avatars for their racial group.

In last week’s decision, the court’s dissenting liberal justices claimed that the new ban “will serve only to highlight the court’s own impotence in the face of an America whose cries for equality resound”. In fact, Americans were not happy with the old policy. Even liberal Californians voted down a proposal in 2020 to reinstate affirmative action, banned in the state since 1996.

Universities seeking social justice should stop using race as a proxy for disadvantage and start looking at the thing itself. Instead of giving a leg-up to members of groups that are on average badly off, they should favour individuals who are poor. One trial found that simply offering application-fee waivers to promising students from poor backgrounds dramatically increased the chance of them ending up in highly selective universities.

The best universities may seek stealthy ways to preserve racial preferences. Many are dropping requirements for standardised tests, which would make it harder to detect quiet discrimination against members of unfavoured groups who shine in them. Harvard quoted part of the majority opinion that opens the door to considering race if an applicant were to write about it in a submitted essay.

Rather than coaxing a generation of minority students into drafting disingenuous adversity statements—and continuing to admit a vast hereditary mediocracy through the back door—universities like Harvard would do well to craft a fairer system of admissions. They should not seek to protect the monied monoculture that they have created. Instead, they should take the chance to become the genuinely representative institutions that they claim to be.

*The Economist*, June 30th 2023

1. **What arguments justify getting rid of affirmative action according to the article? (80 words, +/- 10%)**
2. **In your opinion, is positive discrimination an effective tool to fight inequalities? (180 words, +/- 10%) No / Yes /can only be temporary and systemic racism needs to be addressed.**

***Thème***

En tant que nouvelle directrice de cabinet, Amélie Mortiers était chargée de composer une équipe. Dès sa prise de fonctions, en mai 2017, elle avait pensé à Éric pour l’accompagner dans cette aventure. Elle aurait pu se laisser suggérer des profils aguerris par des chasseurs de têtes, mais non, elle avait préféré solliciter un camarade de lycée. Les retrouvailles avaient eu lieu quelques mois plus tôt grâce à Magali Desmoulins, qui avait eu l’idée de créer le groupe Facebook des Anciens de Chateaubriand. Si cette initiative avait pu paraître pathétique, elle avait finalement ravi la plupart des conviés.

Il fut pour le moins surpris d’être contacté par Amélie. Éric avait gardé le souvenir d’une fille hautaine, dont l’assurance frôlait le dédain.

Amélie pénétra dans le café pile à l’heure. En dépit de son large sourire, il ne put s’empêcher de ressentir chez elle comme quelque chose de malveillant.

« Tu n’as pas changé, dit-elle en s’asseyant.

— C’est une formule de politesse, je suppose.

— Peut-être », avoua-t-elle en souriant pour masquer la réalité : elle avait presque eu du mal à le reconnaître.

(182 mots) Extrait adapté de ***La vie heureuse* – David Foenkinos, 2023**

**Remarques liminaires**: ceci est un texte littéraire avec un narrateur omniscient qui relate des faits au passé. Il y a de nombreux plus-que-parfait, dont on sait à présent qu’ils peuvent se traduire aisément par leur équivalent direct « had+pp » en anglais.

Une connaissance des équivalences en termes de niveau d’études et du champ lexical du monde de l’éducation en général pouvait s’avérer utile dans cet extrait. À bon entendeur ;-)

***Vocabulaire***

*Kindergarten – primary school – junior school – highschool (year 10 – 11 – 12) – A-Levels – higher education / college / university – a degree – a master’s degree – a Phd – qualifications – diplomas – skills – curriculum – etc.*

En tant que nouvelle directrice de cabinet, Amélie Mortiers **était chargée de** composer une équipe.

As the new head of staff, Amélie **was in charge of** setting up a team.

**Dès** sa prise de fonctions, en mai 2017, elle avait pensé à Éric pour l’accompagner dans cette aventure.

**As soon as** she had taken the position, in May 2017, she had thought of Eric to accompany her in this adventure.

Elle **aurait pu** se laisser suggérer des profils aguerris par des chasseurs de têtes, mais non, elle avait préféré solliciter un camarade de lycée.

She **might have chosen** from a list of experienced profiles suggested to her by head hunters, but no, she had preferred to ask a friend from high school.

***Attention à la notion de spéculation dans le passé (modal+have+pp)***

Les retrouvailles avaient eu lieu **quelques** mois **plus tôt** **grâce à** Magali Desmoulins, qui **avait eu l’idée** de créer le groupe Facebook des Anciens de Chateaubriand.

Their reunion had taken place **a few** months **earlier** thanks to Magali Desmoulins, who **had had the idea** to create the Facebook group of the Former Friends of Chateaubriand high-school.

***‘Plus tôt’ --- il s’agit ici de discours indirect donc ‘before’ ne pourra pas convenir (rappel discours rapporté : cf code QR British Council ;-) )***

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Si cette initiative **avait pu paraître** pathétique, elle avait finalement ravi la plupart des conviés.

Though this endeavour **could have seemed** pathetic at first, it had finally delighted most of the people invited to joint it.

*Encore de la speculation dans le passé, cette fois-ci avec une nuance supplémentaire à cause du verbe lexicale ‘pouvoir’ qui implique la possibilité au sens lexical du terme --- COULD+HAVE+pp.*

***Vocabulaire***

guests / hosts

Initiative / endeavour

Il fut **pour le moins** surpris d’être contacté par Amélie.

He had been surprised, **to say the least**, at being contacted by Amélie.

***Vocabulaire***

*Pour le moins: to say the least*

*To be surprised AT smthg (les prépositions posent souvent problème en anglais – notion de collocations)*

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Éric avait gardé le souvenir d’une fille **hautaine**, **dont** l’**assurance** frôlait le **dédain**.

Eric remembered / had kept in mind the image of /a **condescending** girl / a girl **who looked down on** people/, / the high opinion of which / whose **self-confidence** / bordered on **contempt**.

**Traduction de “dont” …**



Amélie pénétra dans le café pile **à l’heure**.

Amélie made her entrance in the café **right on time**.

**En dépit de** son large sourire, **il ne put s’empêcher de ressentir** chez elle comme quelque chose de malveillant.

**Despite** her broad smile, he **could not help himself from feeling** there was something somewhat malevolent about her.

« **Tu n’as pas changé**, dit-elle en **s’asseyant**.

‘**You haven’t changed’**, she said (while) **sitting down**.

— C’est une formule de politesse, je suppose.

‘I suppose you are saying this **out of politeness’**.

— Peut-être », avoua-t-elle en souriant pour masquer la réalité : elle avait presque eu du mal à le reconnaître.

(224 mots) Extrait adapté de *La vie heureuse* – David Foenkinos, 2023

‘Perhaps’, she confessed / consented / admitted, smiling to / cover up / conceal the / reality / truth – she had / barely recognized him / almost failed to recognize him.