

# Literature: A Way to Cultural Learning

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## Abstract

In a world changing rapidly and bringing cultures close to each other more than any time before, culture teaching has become a necessity in foreign language education. Yet, the efforts made towards culture teaching through civilization and literature courses were not fruitful and such courses were and are still regarded as mediums to narrate the past or tell a story, but not to teach culture. Therefore, this research work attempts at investigating the role that literature, as a teaching material in the civilization course, has in improving students' understanding of the target culture and; therefore, a better achievement in the course. To reach that aim, the experimental method has been followed and data was gathered using an experimental design and a questionnaire with a sample from second year students at the department of English, Batna2 University. Results have shown that literature is of an immense role in teaching culture and that teachers are expected to make the first steps towards a real change in their teaching strategies for better cultural teaching and learning.

**Key Words:** *Culture, Culture Learning, Literature, Literary Texts.*

## المخلص

في عالم يتغير بسرعة جاعلا الثقافات اقرب ما تكون من بعضها أكثر من أي وقت آخر. أصبح تدريس الثقافة حتميا في مجال تعليم اللغات الاجنبية. لكن يبدو أن الجهود لم تؤتي ثمارها وأصبح تدريس الثقافة من خلال مقياسي الحضارة والأدب مجرد سرد للماضي أو لقصة لكن ليس لتدريس الثقافة. ولهذا يهدف هذا البحث لمحاولة كشف الدور الذي يلعبه الأدب كوسيلة تدريسية في تحسين الفهم الثقافي و التحصيل الدراسي للطلبة في مقياس الحضارة. و لبلوغ هذا الهدف تم إتباع المنهج التجريبي وقمنا بجمع المعلومات عن طريق تجربة إلى جانب استبيان مع عينة من طلبة السنة الثانية بمعهد اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة باتنة. و قد أفضت النتائج إلى استخلاص أن للأدب دور كبير في تدريس الثقافة و بان الأستاذ مدعو لاتخاذ الخطوات الأولى نحو تغيير المناهج التدريسية من أجل تعلم و تدريس أحسن للثقافة.

**الكلمات الدالة:** *الثقافة التعلم الثقافي، الأدب النصوص الأدبية.*

## Literature: A Way to Cultural Learning

### Introduction

Assuming that native language learning goes along with the learning of the ways and attitudes of the social group (Rivers, 1968), may imply of a similar process in foreign language learning. Learning about peoples' attitudes, beliefs and values or what is termed in language education cultural learning, has become a preaching song in foreign language education and all efforts to make of it a realizable objective have been sustained. Europeans along with Americans were the first to make progress in this field and their teaching methodologies translated their cherished goal of awarding culture and culture teaching a similar weight like language teaching in foreign language education.

In the different Algerian educational contexts, there are attempts to make of culture and culture teaching integral components in foreign language teaching. The integration of courses devoted exclusively to the teaching of the target civilization/s and culture/s reflects the seriousness of the matter. A close observation of the designed curricula shows that the courses designed to teach the target culture are introduced to the students cross-historically by tracing back the origins of the target civilizations, their progress in time and space, besides some insights in the different institutions. But, can it be assumed that these courses in culture have achieved the ultimate goals for which they have been designed? And are students aware of their

true significance? Both questions will undoubtedly raise big issues for investigation but the present work is meant to cover just a small part of the whole matter.

Teaching culture should be more than a historical narration to the past or factual presentation. Students learning the foreign language must be given the opportunity to establish categories of contrast and comparison and gain an objective insight into the different ways of thinking and reacting of the target culture. And the teacher should not “confirm the prejudices of his students nor attack their deeply held convictions. His aim should not be to win converts to one system or the other” and, “his presentation of cultural material must be objective, analytic and informative” (Rivers, 1968, p. 270). Having students capable of holding objectively the different worldviews and transcending their mono-cultural vision is the ultimate goal intended from teaching civilization. Thus, stress will be on the fact that a reconsideration of the objectives from culture teaching, along with new teaching strategies will meet the designed goals from teaching English as a foreign language.

Focus, however, will be on the effective use of literary texts as a teaching aid in the course/s of culture. American civilization/culture was chosen to be the case study for the present research paper. Literary texts are expected to enhance cultural understanding of students and improve their achievement in this course.

## **I. Definition of Culture and its Importance in Language Teaching**

Culture, a concept that falls in the category of the ones difficult to define, was given different definitions in different disciplines. In sociology, it is defined as a system that regulates people's behavior, and in anthropology it is seen as people's way of life and manifestation of their observable way of thinking and feeling (Thanasoulas, 2000). In Education, however, two main dimensions of the word's meaning have been distinguished. One is narrow and stands for the literature, geography, drama, music, etc of any society. The other is broader and covers the society's customs, traditions and thoughts (Long-Fu, 2001).

The western world is known to have the lead in culture teaching, and the different teaching methodologies designed around cultural learning have translated the deep convictions of the importance lying behind it. Using the language effectively in communication had been always the central aim from learning any language. Culture which cannot be taken away from language was given a similar weight but in as far as its goal was improving the linguistic performance of learners (Byram, 1989). Also, the inclusion of culture in language teaching had been for purely affective factors. The learner must feel confident within the new language system to achieve successfully in learning and acquiring the new language system (Brown, 1987), and culture is supposed to be one of the most important affective factors that play this role.

The importance of teaching culture placed teachers in a position where they cannot choose to teach culture or not. Their choice would be rather of the possible teaching methodologies that could best promote cultural understanding among learners. Differences in perceptions diversified the teaching practices, but similarity in objectives converged them.

## **II. The Different Methodologies to Culture Teaching**

The grammar translation method was the oldest method to culture teaching. Translation from and into the target language was a full recognition of language as a social phenomenon that connects people together and transmits their thoughts and beliefs. Hence the method was far from being a mechanical process of translating words (Rivers cited in Long-Fu, 2001). However, the grammar translation method seemed out of tune, when the goal from learning the language became communicative. The direct method, based on the construction of dialogues stemming from daily life situations depicting the culture, came to achieve the above goal. A less interest in context or culture characterized the audio lingual method which placed more interest on the oral skill in teaching the language (Long-Fu, 2001). The last decades of the twentieth century, however, were years of radical change. Learning foreign languages became more pressing and the inclusion of culture was not something to be questioned. Therefore enabling students to communicate in the different contexts was a key element in the communicative or functional approach. And this was realized by teaching the language in its social and cultural contexts.

Therefore one can easily realize the growing concern toward culture and culture teaching in the different methodologies, where continuity is to be felt despite the differences. Attempts to achieve the same and walk on the same paths can be sensed in the Algerian educational system to foreign language education. The different textbooks used in middle and secondary schools can be witness on that, as students are instructed in the foreign language with a constant reference to the foreign culture. This may range from dialogues picturing daily life situations to a variety of cultural information about the target culture. However, there is doubt of whether students are aware of the importance of such cultural teaching and learning or not.

The process of culture teaching and learning being pursued at more advanced levels acquires more importance and significance as courses are devoted exclusively to the teaching of culture. Such courses tend to be courses in history than in culture or civilization. This nature of the courses forced many students to believe that what they acquire from such courses is more or less historical knowledge, which has no link with culture. Thus they put their major focus on learning by heart a lot of details and facts, which they feel obliged to remember later in exams only. This has resulted in the students' negative attitudes toward this course, which has ultimately led in losing the course its basic educational value. Regaining the lost interest among students and making them behave positively toward culture courses necessitates the adequate remedies. Thus, many ways exist but many are not possible as well. Spending some time in the foreign country where the language is

spoken, or having native speakers in the different teaching contexts cannot be easily afforded. Yet other cheaper routes exist.

### **III. Reading Literature and Cultural Learning**

Reading which has always been regarded as the best transmitter of thought and knowledge between cultures, has acquired a unique place in foreign language education and precisely in the teaching of culture. Though, one of the oldest methods to culture teaching, reading proved that “ any authentic use of language, any reading of original texts (as opposed to those fabricated for classroom use)... will introduce cultural concomitants into the classroom whether the teacher is conscious of them or not” (Rivers, 1968: p. 262); therefore, all kinds of prejudices that may view reading an old fashioned teaching method which does not correlate with the rapid changes witnessed in foreign language education must be put away. But are students capable of perceiving the significance of reading? And are they ready to spend more time on it.

The present situation, undoubtedly, reveals other facts. A regress in the reading habit is to be observed among students learning English as foreign language and the few readings achieved with a relative success are part of a course requirement. Moreover, students are always complaining about the difficulties they meet while reading. Sometimes it is the language, which they find difficult and at others, it is the content of the reading that sounds strange and beyond their schemata knowledge. Therefore, a careful selection of what to read and an appropriate type of activities to be developed around the readings

are necessary if the ultimate goal from reading is to promote the cultural understanding of students which would ultimately lead to the improvement of their achievement in the civilization course. The use of authentic texts as reading materials in the language classroom appeared to take several forms. They can be factual like newspapers and magazines, or expository, like narratives and poetry. Which of these forms can be useful in the context that has been just described cannot be easily decided.

Literature, however, sounds to have more appeal among students and is expected to yield the desired objectives. Literature with its recognized authenticity and being part of the target culture is capable of raising the learners' awareness of the different human life situations, and contributing to world knowledge. Moreover, it develops the reading skill and makes reading an enjoyable activity (Ur, 1996). Yet, to think of using literature in the described context seems to be theoretically more feasible, as students may complain about the usefulness of literature in the civilization course while a separate course in literature is designed to fulfill the course requirements. Hence, the use of literature in the course of civilization should be made relevant to the course to reduce such negative attitudes and reactions from students.

#### **IV. The Type of Classroom Activities to be Used with Literary Texts**

Shift in literary theory has also led to a shift in classroom practice with literary texts. Focus on the teacher, as a source of



meaning construction and explanation had been an old practice. The reader or the student and his own understanding of the text turned to be the new approach to reading and working with literary texts. Breakdowns and misunderstandings occur as a result of the linguistic and cultural gaps that exist in the readers' prior knowledge. Therefore, language, content, and the cultural aspects of the text are largely influenced and determined by the cultural background of the reader (Fenner, 2001).

As teachers have no insight on how learning goes on inside the learner, the latter must be engaged in a further process of talking or writing to gain that insight (Fenner, 2001). For this reason, classroom activities will be developed around oral as well as written performance. These two will be witness of the learner's cultural understanding. The activities developed around the spoken language can be classified under three major types, different in nature and goals.

## **Pre-reading Activities**

It is of great importance to get students ready for the text they will read. An oral discussion of the theme to be studied or a speculation of the text content through its title can be effective activities to tease out learners' prior-knowledge, what they know and what they do not. Another kind of pre-reading activities can be an association of the most difficult vocabulary by providing a glossary of the words whose meanings cannot be inferred from the whole context of the reading (Guin, 1990).

### **While- reading Activities**

After students have been cued into the topic of the text to be read, they can start reading. The kind of activities to be adopted at this stage aim at discovering explicit meanings in the text and checking students' overall comprehension. Asking different questions about the text and the possible information that may have escaped the students' attention can achieve the above objective.

### **Post- reading Activities**

Post-reading involves the students in a more fruitful discussion that should make them react, discuss their ideas and make their own meanings. At this stage, students get below the surface meanings of the text to discover implicit meanings. This can be done by making comparisons between the students' native culture and society with those found in the text (Lazar, 1993). This makes students aware of the cultural differences existing between their native culture and the target culture, which will further make them react objectively to the meanings found in the text and construct their own understanding.

### **Follow-up Activities**

The three above activities aim at involving the students in an oral activity that would pronounce their understandings of the basic facts found in the text and their deeply held beliefs and views. Students should add something to the work and give their personal reactions and opinions about it. A written task can fulfill the above objective.

Evaluating their written performance would take into consideration content before form. These different activities are designed for literary texts in general. But, they can be narrowed down and developed to meet the different literary genres.

## **V. Field Work**

To investigate the credibility of the basic assumption that introducing literary texts in the American civilization course would improve students' achievement and understanding of the target culture in learning English as a foreign language, an experimental design had been adopted. This latter is believed to suit best this research, since it permits a close examination of the effects that literary texts may have on improving the students' cultural understanding and therefore their achievement in the civilization course.

The population representing this study is second year students at the Department of English at the University of Batna<sup>2</sup>, making the random sample of this study. The basic tools, which were employed to collect the necessary data, were: an attitude questionnaire administered to students and a rating scale to record their observable behavior in the course of the experiment.

### **1. The Attitude Questionnaire**

It was administered to a sample population of ten percent from second year students and it aims at collecting necessary data from students before starting the experiment. The data concerned their

attitudes towards the civilization courses in general, American civilization with a particular focus, also, their attitudes and opinions about reading in general and reading literature in particular. The questionnaire is a thirty-one item questions divided into four sections. Information obtained from the questionnaire will make a useful reference to the planning of the reading sessions, as far as the choice of the texts and the kind of tasks and activities to be designed around the readings are concerned.

## 2. The Rating Scale

To assume that using literary texts would bring change and improve the students' achievement in the civilization course and ultimately their understanding of the target culture, we need to work with two similar groups. Only one group will be taught using the literary texts, the other will be instructed in the traditional way. So that any observed change with the first group, can be attributed to the newly used technique and not to other factors.

In order to obtain the necessary data required in our experimental design we used a rating scale to observe four categories of students' behavior in the course of the experiment and which are:

- a. **Students' Prior Knowledge:** students' guesses, predictions and background knowledge about the specific topic.
- b. **Factual Understanding:** students' grasp and understanding of the basic meanings and facts.

- c. Factual Analysis:** students' reactions, construction of meaning and discussion of ideas.
- d. Written Performance:** students' creativity and development of ideas.

Moreover, five levels of gradation is to be used in this rating scale.

▶ 0= null, ▶ 1= inferior, ▶ 2= below average, ▶ 3=average, ▶ 4=above average, ▶ 5= superior

#### IV. Findings

##### The Attitude Questionnaire

Information obtained from the questionnaire demonstrated the following

- 1- Homogeneity in age, diversity in sex, and personal endeavors to study English by the majority of students.
- 2- The majority of students ignore the true substance and objectives of the civilization course.
- 3- Very few have recognized the tight link between culture and language, and their expectations from the civilization course were linguistic in the first place.
- 4- The different mass media, namely Internet and TV, were found to be major sources for the students' previous knowledge about American civilization. This might reveal a lot about their reading habits.

5- The history of the United States seems to be interesting to many. Yet, many as well have expressed their dislike of history. The teaching methods, according to many, were to be blamed.

6- Despite the fact that many have recognized that they have been provided with different readings related to the American civilization course, many have confessed that they rarely take them seriously. This may be due to the inappropriate selection of texts.

7- The majority of students hold the belief that whatever they read in English is representing the culture to which the work belongs.

8- And most have the tendency to prefer fiction. Being close to human issues, enjoyable to read, easy to understand and rich with the English language, are according to many students the prime features which make of narratives (novels or short stories) their preferred readings. This truth, however, should not mean that other literary genres are to be marginalized when a selection it to be made. On the contrary, reading tastes must be familiarized with the different literary genres, if the designed objectives are to be attained and achieved successfully.

### **The Rating Scale**

► Evaluating students' achievement in the pre-test indicated a relative similarity of the two groups, the control group and the experimental group. The obtained results then, framed a background to planning the sessions.

► Both groups by the end of the experiment, made progress. Yet, it was the EG which showed better results (mainly qualitative ones). A more detailed account of their observed behavior during the whole experiment can be summed up in the following points:

### **1. Prior-knowledge**

► Both groups, EG and CG, were increasingly motivated to contribute to the discussions, which preceded each lecture. But, the way it proceeded and the results it yielded were better with the EG. It was apparent that supporting the courses with different texts provided a rich source and effective stimulus to discuss different ideas and talk about different things before starting any reading.

### **2. Factual Understanding**

► The CG was topic centered. Its basic goal was, in the first place, to understand the different details that would help them grasp the totality of events.

► The EG, however, viewed things from a larger horizon. The students found a unique enjoyment in linking the abstract facts learned from the lectures with concrete images stemming from the target culture and which were being reflected in the different literary texts they had in the reading sessions.

### **3. Factual Analysis**

► The stage of interpreting meanings was better with the EG whose members, engaged in hot debates which sometimes created conflicting situations between them. The students' views and opinions about the

target culture seem to be determined by several factors. TV and the different mass media tend to play the largest part in that. And it became apparent that their sympathy and objective views of the target culture could be gained only, if they have been convinced in an objective way, far from any kind of prejudices.

► The CG, on the other hand, relied heavily on the teacher's interpretation of facts. And the students, with few exceptions, were passive to discover the deep meanings behind the historical facts. They were simply satisfied with what they have been provided with.

#### **4. The Writing Activity**

► Both groups found in the writing activity a good opportunity to develop their ideas freely.

► There was a relative stability in the results achieved by the CG. The students, through their writings, showed their lack of the necessary vocabulary and language structures to express their different opinions and ideas about the topic under question. This reality obliged most of them to retreat to the secure realm of the course and stick to whatever was provided in it.

► The EG, however, achieved better results and made serious attempts to write better. Most of the students reached the stage of being able to say more about the topic to be discussed. And they showed more readiness to say a lot about the people from the target culture.

► Only few students from the EG were capable of using the new acquired vocabulary in an appropriate way. Interference of the native

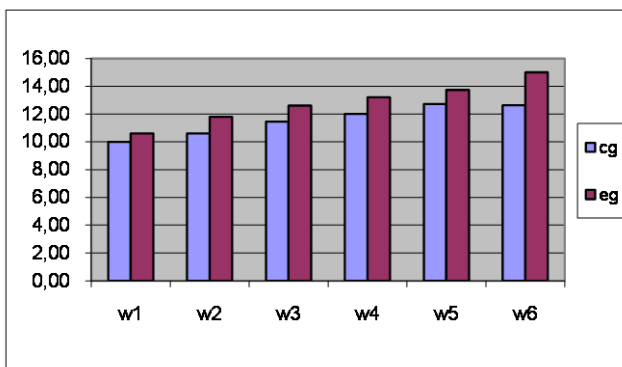


culture on their writing performance was apparent. They tend to pour meanings from the target culture in a purely native linguistic and social context.

**Table: Progress Matching of the Experimental and Control groups**

	CG	=	EG
<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>10</b>	<	<b>10.6</b>
<b>Lectures TA</b>	<b>11.56</b>	<	<b>12.82</b>
<b>Progress</b>	<b>1.56</b>	<	<b>2.22</b>

Both groups achieved a relative progress in their understanding of the values, attitudes and beliefs that characterize the target culture. But the EG showed better, qualitative and quantitative results.



**Figure: Students' Achievement Matching**

## Conclusion

Attempts to demonstrate the tight link between language and culture and therefore of the unique status that culture teaching has gained in the language classroom had been a prime concern to both researchers and educators for a long time. The different researches conducted in the field proved the necessity to integrate cultural elements in our teaching if our objective from teaching foreign languages is to make of this big world a small village to be inhabited by all people who speak different tongues but capable of understanding each other. Students must be made aware that if they are looking to a better mastery of the English language, learning the language along with the culture of the people who speak the language has become a necessity in foreign language education. This awareness, however, should not be a student's only. Teachers are part of the issue and are expected to make the first steps towards a real change in their teaching strategies for better cultural teaching and learning. Given the will, a true belief in change, and the urgent need to do so, things can change for the better in integrating culture in foreign language teaching.

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## Appendix I

### Questionnaire for Students

Dear students, you are kindly invited to answer a set of questions. They are part of a research gathering material to get the degree of Magister. The main concern of the thesis is to see the impact of including certain reading material on better cultural understanding of the American civilization course. Your cooperation is necessary and helpful. Your answers would be kept anonymous.

Please answer with a tick in the appropriate box or with a short answer wherever necessary.

#### **Section one: Student Background information.**

1. Sex: *Male.*

*Female.*

2- Age: *old.*

3- Your choice of studying English was:

a- Personal.

b- Imposed.

c- Advised.

#### **Section Two: History and Cultural Knowledge.**

4- *According to you "culture" is:*

a- Similar to civilization.

- b- Different from civilization
- c- A component of civilization
- d- A separate element of civilization

**5- what does culture mean to you?**

- a- Society's customs, traditions and beliefs
- b- Society's literature, history and geography
- c- Both of the above
- d- No specific idea
- e- Other meanings, please specify:

**6- Do you know the reason behind the inclusion of some modules devoted to both American and British civilizations?**

- a- Yes.
- b- No.

**7-If your answer is yes, do you think they have been included:**

- a- To enable you discover new civilizations and cultures.
- b- To introduce you to new people different from yours
- c- To make you see the differences between your culture and other cultures.
- d- Because you cannot learn the English language without culture.
- e- Other reasons, please specify:

**8- Do you like these new civilization courses?**

- a- Yes.
- b- No.

**9- If your answer is yes, say why?**

**10- If your answer is no, is it because:**

- c- You see no need to know about other civilizations
- d- You don't expect to meet people from other cultures and civilizations.
- e- You can learn English without the inclusion of civilization courses.
- f- Other reasons: please specify.

**11-As far as the American civilization course is concerned, did you have any previous knowledge about Americans and their culture before coming to the classroom?**

- a- Yes.
- b- No.

**12- If your answer is yes, was it the outcome of:**

- a- The different mass media (TV, newspapers, internet...)
- b- Your personal curiosity to know about Americans
- c- The influence of the American culture on your culture
- d- Other ways, please specify:

**13- Do you think that the American civilization course is providing you with more knowledge:**

- a- About the history of the United States
- b- About the daily life of Americans (their traditions, customs and beliefs).
- c- About the different American institutions (political, economic and social institutions).

d- About the American English language

e- All of the above

14- Do you like the "American Civilization" course when it deals with the history of the United States?

a- Yes.

b- No.

16- If your answer is yes, is it because?

a- History looks like a story.

b- History is one of your favorite subjects.

c- You want to learn about the past of the American people.

d- You come to understand better Americans through their history.

e- Other reasons:

17- If your answer is no, is it because American history is:

a- Full of facts to be memorized for exams.

b- Full of events difficult to link and follow.

c- Taught in a dull way.

d- Other reasons, specify:

**Reading and Cultural Literacy:**

18- Do you think that the teacher was capable of making the history course vivid and alive.

a- Yes.

b- No.

19- If your answer is no, is it because:

a- The teacher does not belong to the American culture.

b-His knowledge about American history is limited.

c-Lecturing is not enough for a better understanding of American history

d-All of the above

e- Other reasons, please specify:

**19 –If your answer is yes, say how?**

21- *Apart from the oral presentation of the American civilization course, are you given any handout to read?*

a-Yes.

b-No

22- *Do you read these handouts?*

a- Yes.

b- No.

23- *If your answer is yes, is it because:*

a- You like reading in general

b- You understand better your courses when you read

c- The teacher obliges you to read

d- The readings might be included in the exam

e- Other reasons, specify:

24- *If your answer is no, is it because:*

a- You do not like reading in general

b- Reading anything in English is difficult for

c- The selected readings do not fit your taste in reading

d- The selected readings have difficult language



- e- The selected readings contain unfamiliar meanings
- f- Other reasons, specify:

**25- When you read your handouts, do you understand them:**

- a- Yes.
- b- No.\*

**26- If your answer is yes, is it realized:**

- c- Easily
- d- After several readings
- e- Just with the help of the dictionary
- f- Just with the help of the teacher

**27- When you read, do you feel that you:**

- a- Learned more about the English language
- b- Learned new ideas and beliefs
- c- Both of the above
- d- None of the above

### **Literary Texts and Cultural learning**

**28- What kind of texts you prefer to read with relation to the American civilization course?**

- a- Narratives (short stories or novels)
- b- Poems and songs
- c- General essays in politics, economy, etc.
- d- No specific preference
- e- Other preferences, specify:

**29- Can you say why:**

**30-The literary texts you read are:**

- a-Enjoyable to be read
- b- Not interesting to be read
- c-Difficult to understand

**31- Do you think that any literary work you read is:**

- a- Representing its author
- b- Representing the culture of its author
- c- Representing a work of art
- d- All of the above

*Thank You*

***For Your Cooperation.***

**Appendix II****A Sample of the Texts Used in the Experiment****Moral Freedom**

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America is said to be the arena on which the battle of freedom is to be fought; but surely it cannot be freedom in mere political sense, that is meant. Even if we grant that the American has freed himself from a political tyrant, he is still the slave of an economical and moral tyrant. Now that the Republic- *les res publica*- has been settled, it is time to look after the *res privata*- the private state- to see, as the Roman senate charged its consul; '*ne quid res privata detrimenti caperet*' that the private state received no detriment.

Do you call this the land of the free? What is to be free from the king George and continue the slaves of king prejudice? What is it to be born free and not to live free, what is the value of any political freedom, but as a means to moral freedom? Is it a freedom to be slaves, or freedom to be free, of which we boast? We are a nation of politicians, concerned about the outmost defenses only freedom. It is our children's children who may perchance be really free. We tax ourselves unjustly. There is a part of us, which is not represented. It is taxation without representation. We quarter troops; we quarter fools and cattle of all sorts about ourselves. We quarter our gross bodies on our poor souls, till the former eat up all the latter's substance.

With respect to a true culture and manhood, we are essentially provincial still, not metropolitan- mere Jonathans. We are provincial because we do not find at home our standards; because we do not worship truth, but the reflection of truth; because we are wrapped and narrowed by an exclusive devotion to trade and commerce and manufactures and agriculture and the like, which are but means, and not the end.

*H. Thoreau*

*(life without principle, 1836)*

*Note about the author*

*Henry D. Thoreau (1817/1862):*

Poet and philosopher. He spent two years as a literary hermit on the shore of Walden Pond, and his fame rests on Walden (1854), a fascinating record of his experience. None of his writings is indifferent. His extreme individualism is a wholesome corrective to the regimentation of materialistic civilization.

Glossary

To grant: to confess, to admit.

To charge: to command.

Prejudice: préjugé.

To boast: to take glory in.

Perchance: may be, perhaps.

Gross: grossly material.

To eat up: to consume completely.

Provincial: narrow-minded, not really cultured.

Jonathan: a simple person.

To wrap: to bend, to deviate.

Devotion: addiction, application.

The end: the result we desire.

**Assignment:**

What did it mean to an American to be free from king George?