

1 Listening Comprehension - Answer Key

Text: "Cities and Ethnicities" in the series *Thinking Allowed*, BBC4 (first broadcast 2 Apr. 2008)

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Transcript of this excerpt:

Show host Laurie Taylor: Hello. Well, some of your e-mails were spot-on. You were quite right to suggest that my report from Marseille in last week's programme gave a very favourable, even a somewhat romantic impression of the city. No, I couldn't easily hide the pleasure that I derived from hearing so many first and second-generation immigrants to the city describing their pride in the place; or from the seeing the vibrant, cosmopolitan nature of the Marseille market places; or from learning about how this is one of the few cities in Europe where the poor lived in the centre of the town rather than being shunted to high-rise developments on the outskirts. In some ways, Marseille did seem to me like an advertisement for multiculturalism, an example of how different ethnic groups could live side by side and yet preserve their differences; an example also of the barrenness, well, even the hypocrisy of the French notion, that universalism, in which difference is officially ignored or disregarded. – But that's quite enough impressionism.

It's time now to flesh out some of my observations, to consider some of the possible downsides of multiculturalism; to contrast British and French methods of accommodating migrant cultures; to consider the ways in which urban identity may genuinely aid integration.

So let me turn straight away to my guests. I have with me Sophie Watson, who's Professor of Sociology at the Open University and the author of *City Publics: The (Dis)Enchantment of Urban Encounters*. And with her is Lola Young, Baroness Young of Hornsey, an independent cross-bench peer, and visiting professor in cultural policy at Birkbeck College. On the line from Swansea, I have Tariq Modood, Professor of Sociology at Bristol University and author of *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea*; and back here at the studio again, I have Ted Cattle, the chair of the 2001 inquiry into the causes for the disturbances that summer in a number of northern towns, and he is also author of *Community Cohesion: A New Framework for Race and Diversity*.

Let me begin by turning to you, Sophie, because... How do you... you respond - I think you heard the programme, last week's programme about Marseille. There was much talk there about how it differed from the French universalist model which had its roots in the French

revolution. Tell me a little bit more about the history of the differences between French and British approaches towards ethnic diversity.

Professor Sophie Watson: Well, I think in France, I mean, post-revolution, republican values have been won to espouse a kind of universal democratic culture; also a kind of notion of egalitarianism, one where the religion is separate from the state, they have a kind of official state policy of *laïcité* where religion is kept out of the public sphere, if you like. Britain, in contrast, has had a long history of sort of liberal, kind of *laissez-faire*, rather kind of muddly approach to diversity and a kind of way of not, not in a sense trying to prescribe everything. I think that the effect of the French policy has been that once the world became much more opened up to global processes and processes of globalisation, France found itself much less able to cope; in a sense, that kind of rigidity was one which didn't allow for difference, didn't allow for change and was very much a kind of universal, prescriptive approach to anybody who came: 'You must adopt our cultural values!' I think it... curiously, Britain's kind of more *laissez-faire* liberal politics has led to us being able to adapt to differences in a muddling-through kind of way, so that we have a very messy approach to multiculturalism, one which means that we're going to fight, we're going to have disagreements, we're going to have arguments. I think that living in a multicultural society is inevitably one where differences can test it, it's never going to be ironed out. And I think we've been sort of in a way able to do that because we haven't been so prescriptive.

Taylor: Lola, what's your response to that? (3:43)

Lola Young: I think Sophie's absolutely right in her analysis that we have kind of muddled through from the late Forties onwards. Some of that muddling has been kind of adaptive, as it were, so that, as different cohorts, if you like, of migrants have come to this country, the country has responded variously with legislation or horror or welcome or tolerance or whatever. But I think there also are distinct weaknesses to that kind of approach. Now, it's really difficult to find some sort of path that is somewhere between being entirely prescriptive and just sort of letting it all go and let's see what happens. And in fact, I think that is a slight caricature because obviously there is a legislative framework which has been introduced in order to try and promote and ensure that we don't just do equality, but we actually promote, as it were, racial harmony. So it's not quite as *laissez-faire* as we might be suggesting, but I do think there are weaknesses to that approach because we're not being prepared for the contradictions, the tensions, the almost, well, literally explosions, if you like, that have come out of a certain kind of approach to difference, and I think that's where it can be quite problematic. It's very, very different to the French approach, of course.

Taylor: Let me come to you, Tariq, now. What... er, how do you, er, how do you respond to these two approaches to integration, the French model and the British model, as they were being described by Sophie and Lola?

Tariq Modood: Yeah, and I'd more or less concur with those descriptions so far, and I would say they each have something to be said in favour of them. What the French have been very good at, is the assimilation of migrants, especially, I would say, in the first half of the twentieth century, and creating patriots out of migrants. These were mainly people from

Eastern and Central Europe, and they completely were absorbed into the rest of the French population, became invisible. In the second half of the twentieth century, things have gone a little bit awry for them, I mean, even though we have people like President Sarkozy, who's of Hungarian descent, the main population groups of migrants were people from the Maghreb, the Arabs, and black people from various parts of French West-Africa and the French Caribbean, and in the case of African descent people, what's interesting is that it's only in the last two or three years that a black political identity, black political mobilisation has emerged in France. Up to then it was suppressed, it was regarded as in some ways illegitimate, whereas of course in Britain we know right from, you know, late Fifties onwards, there's been a black identity, an anti-racist politics and so on. And then in the case of the Arabs, there seems to be a kind of consensus now across the political spectrum in France, which originally started well on the right with people like Le Pen in the Front National, that there's a difficulty in assimilating Arabs and, in particular, devout Muslims. And so that's thrown their so-called model into disarray. They criticise us for saying that we, having adopted this *laissez-faire* and to some extent encouraging or tolerating difference and various kinds of identities and cultural preservation and so on, that we create separatism and segregation and so on. But if we look at some of the, what I would regard as successes on our side compared to the other side of the Channel, we have, you know, black and ethnic minority people in much higher-level occupational jobs compared to our peers in France; we have more ethnic minority people in public life, whether it's in politics, the media, recreation, culture and so on, than they do in France. We have - building on what Sophie was saying - we have an oppositional politics specially centered around racism and cultural identity, which mainly consists of people trying to make a claim to be full citizens. We were able to point the finger at racism. Racism is something that the French say doesn't really exist because it's against the values of the republic, because they all believe in *égalité*, *liberté* and *fraternité*. So, when we look at, for instance, legal cases - employment, discrimination, racial discrimination cases and so on - there's hardly any in France, but not because there's less racism in France, because if we could collect the kinds of statistics, the ethnic monitoring statistics we collect in Britain, we'd see all kinds of underrepresentation of various groups in good French jobs. But it's because it's only very recently has the very idea of racism become part of public discourse in France.

Taylor: Thank you. I want to talk... move now to another element which came up in the programme which one might call "the geography of - of - of race" because one of the ways in which the other ways in which Marseille claims to be different from other French cities is that there were no *banlieues*, or racially ghettoised suburbs. And here's a comment that was made by one of our interviewees, Gil Ascaride:

Gil Ascaride: Marseilles is only a paradox. She's a poor town, but there had not the violence two years ago. Because there are no ghetto. And if you come in Marseilles on Saturday afternoon, you will see, in the centre of the town, all the poor were welcome to see the shops, the cinema, the streets better. In bad town, the rich are in Aix-en-Provence. In Marseilles, everybody looks everybody, sees everybody, you know. The population of this town is the poor, ha ha!

Taylor: Ah-ha, with a laugh coming at the end. But let me turn to you, Ted Cattle, you've been listening very patiently to three other experts in this area. Your own report, your 2001 report on the disturbances, even riots we might call them, in some northern towns. You did emphasize, I think, the ghettoised nature (let me use that word, "ghettoised") nature, like in some of these cities, compared, obviously, as I'm thinking, to places like Marseille. Tell me about that, tell me about those ghettos, or in what form that segregation took.

Ted Cattle: Well, we didn't use the term "ghettos", I think the report will probably be remembered for the term "parallel lives". This was where these particular towns and cities, white and Asian communities lived in separate communities. This wasn't just residential segregation - which was evident - but it was residential segregation compounded by separate schooling, separate social and cultural facilities and lives, separate recreational activities, separate faith, even separate employment patterns. So that people from those different communities actually had no contact with each other at all, they lived in fear and ignorance of each other. It was very easy for the far right and other organizations to get into those communities and stir up hatred of people which they never met and never knew about at all. It was obviously more acute in the northern towns, but some elements of "parallel lives" also existed in the Midlands and even in the South as well.

[11:04]

WORKSHEET WITH ANSWERS

1. What pleased Laurie Taylor on his visit to Marseille (1 option):

- ☐ There were lots of good vibrations.
- ☒ He met many immigrants who were proud of their city.
- ☐ In this city, people can rise high.
- ☐ Many of its people wear interesting skirts.

2. What does Taylor say about Marseille? Complete his sentence:

Marseille did seem to me like an **advertisement** for multiculturalism, an example of how **different** ethnic **groups** could live **side by side** and yet **preserve** their **differences**.

3. Sophie Watson states that France's tradition contains the following (1 option):

- ☐ a sort of universal demographic culture;
- ☐ egalitarianism, which means that nothing matters;
- ☐ state police uses dogs like Lassie;
- ☒ religion plays no role in the public sphere.

4. Watson goes on to say that British politics can be described as (3 options) ...

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> more or less liberal | <input type="checkbox"/> containing certain tests |
| <input type="checkbox"/> relatively muddy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> less prescriptive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> full of agreements | <input type="checkbox"/> dealing with irony |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> able to adapt to differences | <input type="checkbox"/> inevitably messy |

5. What is Lola Young's response to Sophie Watson's statement. Complete her sentence:

There are **distinct** weaknesses to that kind of **approach**.

6. Tariq Modood's description of the French model of integration (1 option):

- ☒ Between 1900 and 1950, the French succeeded in assimilating migrants.
- ☐ After being absorbed in France, the migrants disappeared.
- ☐ After 1950, the French were even more successful in turning migrants into patriots.
- ☐ In the last two or three years a black political identity was submerged.

**7. What is it that Modood calls "successes" on the part of the British model?
(2 aspects, approx. 30-40 words)**

- People from black and ethnic minorities can get higher-level jobs, they are also in public life (politics, media etc.).
- There are people who fight against racism and for cultural identity.

8. When he was interviewed by Taylor, what did Gil Ascaride name as the characteristic trait of Marseille? (1 sentence):

- There are no ghettos in Marseille, because the whole population of Marseille is poor.

9. In his 2001 report, Ted Cante wrote: (1 option)

- ☐ The situation in the ghettos is bad.
- ☐ People in the problem zones live for "parallel drives".
- ☒ White and Asian communities lived completely separate lives.
- ☐ The mixed communities were problematic.

10. Towards the end of this passage (up to 11:04), Cante uses these words:

It was very easy for the far **right** and other organisations to **get into** those communities and stir up **hatred** of people which they **never met** and never **knew** about at all.

(Peter Ringeisen)