

THE MAIN ASSUMPTIONS OF ESP AND EAP. A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE OF AN ESP CLASS FOR HUMANITIES STUDENTS

Introduction

For the last few years I have been teaching English to students of history, history of art and anthropology and, more occasionally, students of Polish philology and comparative studies in civilisations. First, I thought that teaching ESP to such diverse groups was hardly possible but with time I believe I have learnt to select materials to meet their various expectations.

The aim of this article is twofold. In the theoretical part, I briefly characterise ESP (English for Specific Purposes) and its subdivision – EAP (English for Academic Purposes). I give their definitions, main assumptions and further subdivisions. I explain what kind of learners ESP and EAP courses are addressed to and I focus on their needs and motivation for learning English. I also include some practical advice on how to construct an ESP course and what kind of materials to use. In the practical part, I present a selection of extracts from a book entitled *The Dirt on Clean. An Unsanitized History* by Katherine Ashenburg, and I offer a lesson plan which students of various specialities can hopefully benefit from.

1. English for Specific Purposes

ESP is a broad term applied to teaching English for professional and vocational needs. It is often referred to as applied ELT and is distinguished from teaching general English – EFL or ESL. The most important difference between general English and ESP lies in the learners and their purpose for learning English. ESP is taught to people who need it for their job or studies. It is believed to be highly motivating for students because it combines learning the language with the subject matter they are most interested in.

Hutchinson and Waters define ESP as:

an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning (Hutchinson, Waters 1987: 19).

The subdivisions of ESP are:

- EAP, which is English for Academic Purposes;
- EOP, which stands for English for Occupational Purposes.

EOP is further subdivided into;

- professional English (e.g. for lawyers or doctors);
- vocational English (e.g. for nursing, accounting, tourism or engineering).

According to Tony Dudley-Evans (2001) the basic characteristics of ESP are as follows:

- it is designed to meet the specific needs of learners;
- it makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the specialism it serves;
- it is centred not only on the language (grammar, lexis, register), but also the skills, discourses and genres appropriate to those activities.

To recapitulate Dudley-Evans' words, ESP is needs-based and task oriented. It should therefore be presented in authentic contexts and based on authentic materials. The aim of ESP classes is to acquaint learners with the particular ways in which the language is used in their jobs or fields of speciality.

ESP courses are designed to meet the educational needs of various groups of students. They are centred not only on the language itself but also on the particular skills required by a given group of learners. They cover subjects varying from accounting or computer science to tourism and business management. An ESP programme is therefore built on an assessment of purposes and needs and the functions for which English is required.

ESP students are generally aware of the purposes for which they are learning the language. They are usually adults who already have some acquaintance with English and who have already directed their interest towards a particular field or profession. They see English as supplementing their education and job qualifications. Lorenzo Fiorito defines students' approaches to learning ESP and the source of their motivation in the following way:

Students approach the study of English through a field that is already known and relevant to them. This means that they are able to use what they learn in the ESP classroom right away in their work and studies. The ESP approach enhances the relevance of what the students are learning and enables them to use the English they know to learn even more English, since their interest in their field will motivate them to interact with speakers and texts (Fiorito 2005).

Fiorito stresses the interrelation between the student and his or her need to learn English, believing that students' main source of motivation is the fact that what they learn in the classroom can be immediately used in practice.

Many teachers find it a daunting task to teach ESP, not being specialists in a given field themselves. Doug Bell (2002) advocates the three Cs for helping teachers to improve their knowledge and skills in a particular area of ESP:

- Curiosity: teachers should be interested in the subject matter they teach and willing to learn more;
- Collaboration: if they have any doubts, ESP teachers should seek the help of subject specialists;
- Confidence: to enhance their confidence, ESP teachers should explore the new subject matter, consult subject specialists if necessary and learn from their own students.

Keith Harding (2007) provides some practical advice on how to teach ESP. He suggests that ESP teachers should:

- think about what their students need as far as the language content and skills are concerned and not just follow ready-made course books;
- understand the nature of their students' subject area;
- work out their language needs in relation to their specialism;
- use contexts, texts and situations from their subject area;
- use authentic and relevant materials;
- make the tasks as authentic as possible.

To sum up, in ESP English cannot be taught in isolation from real use and some basic understanding of a given field on the part of the English teacher is a key prerequisite to a construction of a good ESP course.

One may encounter a number of acronyms which refer to subdivisions within ESP. These are:

- EBP – English for Business Purposes
- EMP – English for Medical Purposes
- EPP – English for Professional Purposes
- EST – English for Science and Technology
- EVP – English for Vocational Purposes
- EWP – English for/in the Workplace

The sheer number of subcategories shows the complexity of ESP. For this reason, ESP classes may come in different shapes and forms.

2. English for Academic Purposes

English for Academic Purposes has emerged out of the broader field of ESP and in the past 30 years has developed rapidly to “become a major force in English language teaching and research” (Hyland, Hamp-Lyons 2002: 1). EAP is generally defined as teaching English with the aim of facilitating learners' study or research in that language (Flowerdew, Peacock 2001: 8; Jordan 1997: 1).

R.R. Jordan explains that EAP is taught all over the world and in a variety of circumstances. It takes place in English-speaking countries (e.g. UK, USA, Ireland, Canada, New Zealand) as well as in those where English has the status of a second or official language (e.g. India or any Anglophone African country). It also refers to countries where English is taught as a foreign language. In other words, EAP is taught to native speakers of English as well as to learners who study in their own country and in their own language. It may also be taught on pre-departure courses to students planning to study abroad. The teachers themselves may be either native or non-native speakers of English (Jordan 1997: 2).

K. Hyland and L. Hamp-Lyons define the essence of EAP as follows:

The modern-day field of EAP addresses the teaching of English in the academy at all age and proficiency levels, and it draws on a range of interdisciplinary influences for its research methods, theories and practices. It seeks to provide insights into the structures and meanings of academic texts, into the demands placed by academic contexts on communicative behaviours, and into the pedagogic practices by which these behaviours can be developed (Hyland, Hamp-Lyons 2002: 3).

EAP is therefore based on broad theoretical foundations and is taught in many different ways to a whole range of students.

There is a further subdivision of EAP into:

- EGAP – English for General Academic Purposes;
- ESAP – English for Specific Academic Purposes.

EGAP is concerned with teaching the so-called study skills, which are defined as approaches or techniques applied to learning. EGAP classes contain students of various specialities who wish to acquire appropriate learning strategies in order to successfully complete their specialist studies. Examples of study skills are numerous and depend on the kind of class attended. Jordan enumerates a myriad of them, relating appropriate study skills to a particular type of class, or what he calls “a study situation”. Below are some examples of the study situations listed by Jordan and the study skills required in each case (Jordan 1997: 7):

study situation	study skills needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lecture 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. listening, understanding 2. note-taking 3. asking questions for repetition, clarification, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seminars / tutorials 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. listening and note-taking 2. giving oral presentations 3. agreeing and disagreeing, stating points of view, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practicals / laboratory work 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. understanding instructions 2. asking questions, requesting help 3. recording results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • private study / reading 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. reading efficiently: comprehension and speed 2. scanning and skimming

- reference material / library use
 3. understanding and analyzing data
 4. note-making, summarizing and paraphrasing etc.
 1. using a dictionary efficiently
 2. using a library catalogue
 3. understanding classification systems
 4. collecting information
- essays / reports / projects / articles / case studies / research papers
 1. planning, writing drafts
 2. summarising, paraphrasing, synthesising
 3. using quotations, footnotes, bibliography
 4. analysing evidence, using data appropriately

ESAP, on the other hand, focuses on teaching English in the context of a specific scientific discipline (medicine, pharmacy, geology, etc.). In ESAP classes students use the skills acquired during EGAP courses to carry out specific tasks related to their subject: listening to lectures, understanding texts or writing essays and projects.

3. A brief description of materials

The materials are organised into six sections: a short introduction and five chronologically-ordered extracts, all coming from the book *The Dirt on Clean. An Unsanitized History* by Katherine Ashenburg. Each part is followed by comprehension questions, vocabulary exercises and, where necessary, a glossary. Each excerpt deals with a different period or event that influenced people's attitudes towards personal hygiene. The extracts cover approximately 1600 years from the time of Christ to the mid-17th century. The author concentrates mainly on Western civilisation with occasional reference to the traditions of other cultures.

The introduction includes information about symbolic significance of water and its presence at most (if not all) crucial moments of a person's life: birth, baptism, marriage and death. It touches on how different cultures and religions view personal hygiene and ritual washing.

The first extract discusses Jewish attitudes towards ritual purity, Jesus' neglect of it and Christian departure from Jewish traditions. It also considers the belief of early medieval saints that a pure soul could inhabit an unclean body.

The second is concerned with washing procedures in medieval monasteries, giving examples of rules to be followed while washing. It explains when and how often a monk should perform ablutions.

The third excerpt deals with the revival of public baths following the return of the crusaders, who introduced the *hamam* or Turkish bath to Europe. It describes the speed with which the baths spread, the services they provided (including opportunities for love and romance), and their impact on attitudes towards nudity

and intimacy. The passage illustrates how social life flourished in public baths and how their many aspects were reflected in contemporary literature.

The fourth passage describes the social impact of the Black Death in Europe as reflected in contemporary literature and shows how false ideas about the origin and causes of the disease affected personal hygiene for several centuries.

The fifth extract describes the consequences of such misconceptions. It contains amusing descriptions of how people understood cleanliness and why they believed it was more important to be dirty than clean, as exemplified in the kings and queens who washed as infrequently as paupers, if not even less frequently. It shows how people's beliefs concerning personal hygiene were reflected in fashion as depicted in contemporary paintings.

Since these materials combine data from a number of fields, such as history, history of art, literature and ethnology, they lend themselves to use with a wide range of advanced learners from various disciplines within the humanities.

4. Lesson plan

I. Warm-up

As a warm-up, students read the *Introduction*, which acquaints them with the topic of the lesson and the types of exercise included. Having read the text, students answer the teacher's questions and do vocabulary work. They are encouraged to share their knowledge and to elaborate on issues that are merely mentioned briefly in the passage.

Comment

The vocabulary exercises after each passage (matching words with definitions) are intended to explain potentially difficult lexis which might otherwise hinder comprehension, thus allowing students to focus their attention on the content of the text.

II. Reading

Students are divided into groups of five (one student per extract, although variations are possible). Each student reads their text, answers the questions on it and completes the vocabulary exercises.

III. Post-reading / speaking

a) Students relate their stories to the rest of their group, answering any questions the other students might have. They also present useful vocabulary. The teacher's role is to listen carefully and help when necessary but remain as unobtrusive as possible.

b) To finish the lesson, the teacher may ask a few general questions like "What is the most surprising / amusing / shocking fact you have learnt today?" or "Is there anything you would like to comment on?" If time allows, more detailed questions may be asked.

IV. Homework assignment

For homework, students are asked to read the other texts.

V. Follow-up

To make sure that students have done their homework properly, they are given one or two short exercises at the next class; these may be a vocabulary exercise or a table or short text to complete based on information in the reading passages.

5. Conclusions

Using such materials with diversified groups of ESP students can be immensely rewarding. After completing the tasks set them, students rarely remain silent. They are likely to spontaneously elaborate on topics only hinted at in the texts, comment on the facts presented in the passages, provide further examples, share anecdotes and recommend books and authors to one another.

The teacher's role in such classes (especially if not a specialist in the history of art or anthropology), should be limited to asking questions, highlighting problems and issues and generally letting the students talk and explain things to the teacher and each other. They should be allowed to argue, disagree and express their opinions. The teacher may occasionally act as devil's advocate in order to encourage students to defend their points of view. Thus, the teacher's role is usually confined to setting tasks, helping students with vocabulary, monitoring speaking and occasionally correcting mistakes.

The presented method of organizing ESP classes has a number of advantages: students work with authentic materials; practise various skills (reading, speaking, listening); and learn to ask questions and explain things to others. They expand their vocabulary and become acquainted with English proper names of historical figures, periods and events as well as geographical names and titles of literary works. As most of the lesson time is devoted to speaking, students develop their communicative and interpersonal skills. They are all engaged, with nobody remaining silent.

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INTRODUCTION

(...) In almost every religion, water and cleansing are resonant symbols – of grace, of forgiveness, of regeneration. Worshippers around the world wash themselves before prayer, whether literally, as the Muslims do, or more metaphorically, as when Catholics dip their fingers in holy-water fonts at the entrance to the church.

The archetypal link between dirt and guilt, and cleanliness and innocence, is built into our language – perhaps into our psyches. We talk about dirty jokes and laundering money. When we step too close to something morally **unsavoury** at a business meeting or a party, we say, “I wanted to take a shower.” Pontius Pilate washed his hands after condemning Jesus to death, and Lady Macbeth claims, unconvincingly, “A little water clears us of this deed,” after persuading her husband to kill Duncan.

Baths and immersions also have a natural kinship with rites of passage, the ceremonies that mark the transition from one stage of life to the next – from being an anonymous infant to a named member of the community, from singlehood to marriage, from life to death. Being submerged in water and emerging from it is a universal way of declaring “off with the old, on with the new.” (...) Brides, and often grooms, from ancient Greece to modern-day Africa, have been given a celebratory **pre-nuptial** bath; young women in Renaissance Germany made a “bath shirt” for their husbands-to-be, a token of this custom. The Knights of the Bath were so called because they took a ritual bath the night before their formal **investiture**, as do men and women in many religious orders on the night before their final vows.

One of the most widespread rites of passage involves bathing the dead, an action that serves no practical purpose but meets deep symbolic ones. The final washing given to Jewish corpses is a solemn ceremony performed by the burial society, in which the body is held upright while twenty-four quarts of water are poured over it. Other groups – the Japanese, the Irish, the Javanese – enlist the family and close neighbours to wash the dead. All have a sense that respect for the dead means that he or she must be clean for the last journey, to the last resting place. This is a ritual whose power is by no means exhausted: in one of the most moving episodes in the television series *Six Feet Under*, the mother and brother of Nate Fisher wash his corpse, slowly and methodically, in the family funeral parlour in twenty-first-century Los Angeles.

Rites of passage and religions are not the only domains in which washing extends its reach beyond the bathroom. Until the late nineteenth century, therapeutic baths played a significant part in the Western medical repertoire, and they still do in eastern Europe. Observers often connect a culture’s cleanliness to its technological **muscle**. It’s true that plumbing and other engineering feats have made our modern standard of cleanliness possible, but technology usually follows from a desire rather than leads to it: the Roman bathhouses had sophisticated heating and water-delivery systems that no one cared to imitate for centuries because washing was no longer a priority.

Climate, religion and attitudes to privacy and individuality also affect the way we clean ourselves. For many in the modern West, few activities demand more solitude than washing our naked bodies. But for the ancient Romans, getting clean was a social occasion, as it can still be for modern Japanese, Turks and Finns. In cultures where group solidarity is more important than individuality, nudity is less problematic and scrubbed, odourless bodies are less necessary. As these values shift, so does the definition of “clean.”

Because this book is a history of Western cleanliness, it only glances at the rich traditions of other cultures, usually as they revealed themselves to astonished European travellers, missionaries or colonizers. Before the twentieth century, Europeans usually found that prosperous Indian, Chinese and Japanese people washed themselves far more than was usual in the West. (In the case of Japan, every social level was well washed.) For their part, Indians and Asians

considered Westerners puzzlingly dirty. To some extent, it was a matter of merocrine sweat **glands**, which Caucasians have in **profusion** while Asians have few or none. (Because of this, they can still find even clean Westerners very smelly.) Partly it was that Christianity's emphasis on the spirit encouraged a certain neglect and **disparagement** of the physical side of life, and Christian teachings, unlike those of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, ignored hygiene. And partly the difference between West and East was that much of Europe took a long **hiatus** when it came to regular washing, roughly from the late Middle Ages to the eighteenth or nineteenth century, and non-Westerners who encountered Europeans in those centuries were often stunned by their abysmal hygiene (Ashenburg 2008: 8–11).

A. Answer the following questions or discuss the following issues.

1. Provide examples of past and present rites of passage in which water plays a significant role.
2. In what context are Pontius Pilate and Lady Macbeth mentioned?
3. How do Caucasians differ from Indians or Asians?

B. Match the verbs with their definitions.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1. unsavoury | a) abundance, large quantity |
| 2. prenuptial | b) unpleasant or offensive; unacceptable |
| 3. investiture | c) power, strength |
| 4. muscle | d) an organ in the body which produces chemical substances for the body to use or eliminate |
| 5. gland | e) expression of one's disrespect or low opinion of someone/something |
| 6. profusion | f) break in continuity |
| 7. disparagement | g) occurring or existing before marriage |
| 8. hiatus | h) a ceremony at which somebody formally receives an official title |

Glossary

merocrine (*adj.*) – of or relating to a gland whose secretory cells remain undamaged during secretion

EXTRACT 1

(...) Christianity's unconcern with cleanliness is unusual among world religions. There is no single obvious reason for that omission. The first Christians were Jews, people who were expected to be clean for reasons of health as well as out of respect for others. But their laws were much more specific about ritual purity than about physical cleanliness. Jews were obliged to wash away in a ritual bath the pollution caused by immoral acts, such as adultery, homosexuality and murder, as well as by innocent activities and conditions such as sexual intercourse with their spouse, contact with the dead, genital discharges and childbirth.

The Jesus who appears in the gospels was either rebellious or indifferent when it came to some of the most important of these impure states. In the course of his healing, he touched the dead, as well as people with leprosy-like conditions (...). He scandalized the Pharisees, one of the strictest groups when it came to ritual purification, by belittling one of their central practices, washing their hands before eating. Mark's gospel describes their **dismay** when Jesus' disciples eat bread with unwashed hands. In Luke's version of the story, it is Jesus who sits down to eat without washing, shocking his Pharisee host. Jesus' response in both accounts is to **belittle** the custom and accuse the Pharisees of hypocrisy. A man is not **defiled** by what goes into him, he says in Mark's gospel, only by what comes out of him. "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter," he **retorts** in Luke's account, "but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness" (Luke 11:39). It's the familiar Christian dichotomy between outer and inner, between flesh and spirit, between the letter of the law and its essence, applied to ritual handwashing. The handwashing stories were traditionally read by Christians as examples of the Pharisees' **badgering** Jesus with the minutiae of the law, but they also point to what became a telling separation between Judaism and Christianity.

Jesus' indifference to ritual purity **accorded with** what became a wider Christian distrust or neglect of the body. Somewhat paradoxically, the Jewish purity laws, especially at the time of Christ, emphasised the body's importance. (...) Within a few hundred years of Christ's death, Christianity had gone in a different direction. It **discounted** the body as much as possible, devaluing the flesh so as to concentrate on the spirit.

By the end of the first century, the Christians began to pull away from distinctive Jewish laws about forbidden foods, circumcision and the keeping of the Sabbath. Gradually, too, they distanced themselves from the Jewish laws of purification.

Christianity's relationship to the body and so to cleanliness was complicated. On the positive side, the body was intended to be the temple of God. (...) At the same time, the body's potential for temptation provoked suspicion, if not hostility. A darker, more self-denying strain **surfaced** early in the Christian era, although opposition to the baths began **in earnest** only in the third century.

In the fourth and fifth centuries, dirtiness became a uniquely Christian badge of holiness. This particular mortification of the flesh was known as *alousia*, "the state of being unwashed," and was largely chosen by hermits, monks and saints. For them, the only acceptable cleansing was baptism, which was sometimes called "the washing of regeneration," as opposed to the more normal washing, which signified vanity and worldliness.

Many early saints embraced filth enthusiastically and **ingeniously**. St. Agnes never washed any part of her body during her admittedly short life of thirteen years. Godric, an English saint, walked from England to Jerusalem without washing or changing his clothes. (On this fragrant pilgrimage, he subsisted on minimal amounts of water and barley bread, but only after it had grown stale.) At home in his hermitage in the woods near Durham, he wore a hair shirt which, when combined with summertime sweat, supported abundant lice. St. Francis of Assisi **reversed** dirt and was said to have appeared after his death to compliment friars on their grubby cells.

Spartan types, such as St. Jerome (ca. 340–420), shrank even from the most virtuous private baths. One of Jerome’s crusades was the encouragement of lifelong virginity for women. To that end, he urged a low-stimulus life, with a **meagre** diet of mostly vegetables and mild herbs. Because heat was thought to be **conducive** to sexual desire, wine (which heated the blood) and hot baths were forbidden to virgins. In addition to the heat-sex connection, bathing was suspect because it might provoke a young woman’s interest in her appearance. The right-thinking virgin, as St. Jerome puts it, “... makes haste to spoil her natural good looks.” His dear friend Paula, the head of a convent near his own monastery in Bethlehem, was a kindred spirit on the subject of feminine cleanliness: “A clean body and a clean dress,” she warned her nuns, “mean an unclean soul.”

Alousia punished the body so that the better part, the soul, could flourish. St. Olympias, a friend and patroness of St. Chrysostom, lived her life according to those priorities. Beautiful, rich and noble, she seemed destined for pleasure but **thwarted it** at every turn. Born in Constantinople around 360 and married when she was a teenager, Olympias was widowed by the age of twenty. Female saints often refused to marry or mysteriously managed to live a celibate life within marriage, and Olympias falls into both categories.

(...) Olympias founded a monastery and became its deaconess. Her clothing was “contemptible,” as her biographer records admiringly: “For there could be nothing cheaper than her clothing; the most ragged items were coverings unworthy of her manly courage.” (...)

Predictably, this paragon ate no meat and “for the most part she went without bathing. And if a need for a bath arose through sickness (for she suffered constantly in her stomach), she came down to the waters with her shift on, out of modesty even for herself.” Olympias took care not to scandalize anyone, including herself. (...)

With their denial of normal bodily wants, saints such as Olympias represented one extreme of the Christian continuum. At the same time, while they remained heroically dirty themselves, saints frequently washed other people. The biblical precedent was Christ, who washed the apostles’ feet at the Last Supper and commanded them to do likewise. One who obeyed this order was St. Radegund, a sixth-century queen of the Franks and the founder of a convent at Poitiers. She had **resumed** a celibate life after separating from her husband, Clotaire, the king of France – an understandable decision, since he had murdered her parents and her brother. When lepers arrived at her convent, St. Radegund set a table for them, washed their hands and faces with warm water, and kissed them. (...) Every Thursday and Saturday, Radegund bathed paupers.

Two standards were operating here, one a radical asceticism and the other a more normal understanding that we live in bodies that require a certain amount of care and tending. Self-punishing as they were about their own bodies, Olympias, Radegund and other early saints recognised that their choices were not for everyone. For ordinary Christians, cleanliness was a good, bringing comfort, a sense of well-being and a measure of healthfulness. Humility and charity demanded that the most scrupulously filthy saints help others to be clean (Ashenburg 2008: 51–52, 54, 59–63).

A. Answer the following questions or discuss the following issues.

1. Characterise Jewish attitude towards ritual purity.
2. How did Jesus respond to ritual cleanliness cultivated by contemporary Jews?
3. What was the attitude of early Christians towards the human body? How did it affect hygiene?
4. What was *alousia*? Who was it mainly practised by? What purpose did it serve?
5. Who were the following?
 - a) St. Olympias b) St. Jerome c) St. Godric? d) St. Radegund

B. Match the verbs with their definitions.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1. defile | a) cause to seem unimportant or of small value |
| 2. thwart | b) make dirty or impure |
| 3. resume | c) answer back quickly, wittily or angrily, esp. to an accusation or challenge |
| 4. accord with | d) agree with, be in agreement or harmony with |
| 5. belittle | e) consider not true, not important, or not relevant (of an idea, fact, theory) |
| 6. retort | f) prevent from happening or succeeding |
| 7. discount | g) begin again after a break |
| 8. surface | h) annoy persistently |
| 9. revere | i) become known or public |
| 10. badger | j) venerate; regard with reverence, or profound respect |

C. Match the words with their definitions.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| in earnest | a) small in quantity and poor in quality |
| ingenious | b) more seriously and with more force or effort than before |
| meagre | c) making it easy, possible or likely for something to happen |
| conducive | d) showing inventiveness |

Glossary

minutiae (*n, pl*) – small or minor details (*minutia, sing*)

EXTRACT 2

The early medieval hygiene we know most about was that practised by monks, who were not only literate but eager to document the monastic life, which was something new under the sun. Besides, a monastery had to provide healthy living conditions for sometimes hundreds of men, and monks were in a better position to understand the Romans' engineering feats than most. They devised complicated gravity-based water systems, which could, in the case of some English monasteries, deliver water from a distance of several miles, through pipes of lead or wood. Controlled by taps, the water flowed into kitchen sinks, laundry tubs and the basins or stone troughs that were de rigueur for washing hands and face before meals. (Such a trough can still be seen in the cloisters at Gloucester Cathedral in England.)

Following Christ's example, monks greeted guests to the monastery by washing their hands and feet. For themselves, they performed their ablutions – in some monasteries, a painstaking cleaning each Saturday – without resorting to a full bath except on rare occasions. Monks troubled with carnal desires were prescribed cold baths, and warm ones were given to the sick. (...) The Rule of St. Benedict, written about 528 for an order that combined manual work with contemplation, reserved them for the old and ill: "Let baths be granted to the sick as often as it shall be **expedient**, but those in health, and especially to the young, they shall seldom be permitted."

The baths taken before Christmas at the Canterbury monastery sound more tense than festive. The monks gathered in the cloister and were **summoned** to the bathhouse in groups. They bathed in silence, alone, in a cubicle surrounded by a curtain, and as quickly as possible. "When he has sufficiently washed," according to the monastery constitution, "he shall not stay for pleasure, but rise, dress and return to the cloister." Other orders allowed three baths a year, before the feasts of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, but monks whose holiness **trumped** cleanliness could **decline** any or all baths. Three a year represented a level of cleanliness that was probably below the upper-class standard of the day but above that of the peasantry.

But (...) the cleanest corner of early medieval Europe was Arab Spain. Unlike in Christianity, cleanliness was an important religious requirement for the Muslim, and a ninth-century observer described the Andalusian Arabs as "the cleanest people on earth." While the Christians in the north of Spain "wash neither their bodies nor their clothes which they only remove when they fall onto pieces," a poor man in the Arab south would reportedly spend his last coin on soap rather than on food. Arab Spain sparkles with water – in pools, fountains and *hamams*. Every neighbourhood had its public bath. When the Christians recaptured Cordoba in 1236, the city had three hundred *hamams* as well as hot and cold water in private bathrooms.

In Moorish Spain the sexes always bathed separately. The town bath in Teruel, in Aragon, for example, followed a typical pattern, being reserved for men on three days of the week, for women on two and for Jews and Muslims of both sexes at different hours on Friday. The admission fee was low, and children and servants bathed for free.

Healthy and progressive as these arrangements sound, to the Christians they were decadent and **damnable**. There had been a time, during Roman period, when the Spaniards had had their own popular hot baths. Martial, the poet laureate of the baths, was born in Spain and retired there at the end of his life, to a small farm in Aragon; it is impossible to imagine Martial leading a life without baths. But when the Visigoths conquered Spain in the fifth century, they entertained the familiar suspicions that lolling about in hot water made strong men **effeminate**, and they demolished the baths.

Only when the Moors invaded the country in 711 did baths return. But now the Spaniards associated washing with the hated Moors' heretical beliefs, and their own dirty ways with the True Faith. Historians have connected what they see as a long-standing Spanish tradition of distaste for water and washing to ancestral memories of the Moorish baths. According to Richard

Ford, a nineteenth-century English traveler who knew Spain well, “The **mendicant** Spanish monks, according to their practice of setting up a directly antagonistic principle [to the Arabs], considered physical dirt as the test of moral purity and true faith; and by dining and sleeping from year’s end to year’s end in the same unchanged woolen frock, arrived at the height of their ambition, according to their view of the odor of their sanctity, the *olor de santidad*. This was a euphemism for ‘foul smell,’ but it came to represent Christian godliness, and many of the saints are pictured sitting in their own excrement.” One of the Spaniards’ first actions during the Reconquest was to destroy the Moorish baths.

But the *hamam* had a **robust** longevity. The Crusaders were about to discover it and return it to its European birthplace (Ashenburg 2008: 66–67, 70–72).

A. Answer the following questions.

1. How did medieval monks perceive cleanliness?
2. How did Arab Spain differ from Christian Europe as far as personal hygiene was concerned?
3. How does the appearance and disappearance of baths reflect the history of conquests on the Iberian peninsula?

B. Match the adjectives with their definitions.

expedient	a) having some characteristics of a woman
damnable	b) having great powers of endurance; strong
effeminate	c) deserving damnation; detestable
mendicant	d) proper under the circumstances; advisable; desirable
robust	e) begging; practising beggary; living on alms

C. Match the verbs with their definitions.

summon	a) to beat something that somebody says or does by saying or doing something
trump	b) to refuse to accept something or to do something
decline	c) to order someone to come

Glossary

cubicle (*n, C*) – a small area, usually set off by walls for special use

godliness (*n, U*) – careful observance of, or conformity to, the laws of God; piety

hamam – a Turkish bath

Pentecost – a Christian festival commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles, also known as Whitsunday

trough (*n, C*) – a long, narrow container used for holding water

EXTRACT 3

The most momentous change in personal cleanliness during the Middle Ages was the return of the public bath. In most of western Europe, the institution had been **defunct** or seriously diminished since the fifth century or so. It reappeared thanks to the Crusaders, who arrived home from their failed campaigns in the East with the news of a delightful custom – the *hamam*, or Turkish bath. Ironically, Christianity, which was at least partly responsible for the **demise** of the Roman baths, was now, incidentally, responsible for their revival, in this modified Eastern incarnation. Probably as early as the eleventh century, Europeans added the bath to the list of luxuries – concluding damask, glass mirrors, silk and cotton – that they discovered in the Arab world.

The first medieval bathhouses, which were **stripped-down** adaptations of the *hamam*, combined a steam bath and, usually in a separate room, round wooden bathtubs, bound with iron, that might seat six. (...) In some cases, Roman baths were rehabilitated and, where baths were positioned at hot springs, as at Baden in Switzerland, large outdoor pools were built, holding **scores** of people. Occasionally bathhouse owners and bakers joined forces, with the bakers making use of the **surplus** heat from the bath furnaces. As bathhouses became better established, rooms for private baths and rooms with beds for resting after the bath were added.

Such extras were not within everyone's means, but the medieval bathhouses were democratic institutions where all classes would meet. Much as modern bosses may tip their employees with a massage or day at the spa as Christmas presents, medieval employers rewarded servants and workers with a session at the bathhouse. In Germany, *Badegeld*, or bath money, was a regular part of a salary, and bathhouse taxes provided free baths for the poor. Within a century or so of its reintroduction, the bath had changed from an exotic novelty into an expected part of town and city life.

Once the baths reappeared, they spread rapidly. Fourteenth-century London had at least eighteen bathhouses; in Florence three or more streets were lined with baths. In 1292, with a population of 70,000 people, Paris had twenty-six bathhouses, and the owners formed their own guild.

The acceptance of mixed bathing waxed and waned through much of Europe during the Middle Ages (...). When public opinion dictated, separate days, times or premises for men and women would be ordered or reinstated. Unlike the south, the countries north of the Alps had an ease about undress that began with the journey to the baths. A miniature in a German manuscript from 1405 shows a woman entering a bathhouse from its exterior staircase, casually holding a sheet to her front, with her *derrière* fully exposed. Hippolyt Guarinonius, an Italian doctor who lived in Germany, scolded his neighbours for allowing families, including adolescent children, to walk naked and near-naked through town on their way to the baths. Laws were **enacted** to ensure more decorum in the streets, and sometimes they were obeyed.

German and Swiss nonchalance about nudity shocked travellers from Mediterranean countries. In 1414, a sophisticated Florentine writer and collector of ancient manuscripts named Gian-Francesco Poggio journeyed to the Swiss baths of Baden, near Zurich. He describes a prosperous city in a valley, where the central square was ringed with thirty magnificent buildings, all public or private baths. To the Italian's amazement, although segregated into a men's section and a women's, naked bathers were clearly visible to those of the opposite sex. In this Edenic scene of apparently innocent pleasure, bathers "contemplate, chat, gamble, and unburden their mind, and they stay while the women enter and leave the water, their full nakedness exposed to everyone's view." (...) Torn between surprised laughter, lascivious thoughts and admiration, Poggio marvels at husbands who take no offence as their wives are touched by strangers, and at men who mingle in the nude or near-nude with female relatives or friends.

“Every day they go to bathe three or four times,” he rhapsodizes, “spending the greater part of the day singing, drinking, and dancing. (...)”

Contemporary illustrations **corroborate** Poggio’s **goggle-eyed** description of the baths at Baden. A French manuscript illuminated for the Duke of Burgundy in the late fifteenth-century pictures a more elegant scene, a bathhouse that caters to couples. Turbaned men and women, otherwise unclothed, eat and drink in two-seater tubs. Another couple, still in their turbans, have already gone to bed in an adjoining room. A Polish drawing provides a rougher, satirical look at another side of bathhouse life. A **tonsured** monk lies in a tub, having his head and body massaged by two young bath maids in **diaphanous** gowns. A second monk lies at his ease on a bench, his hand on a maid’s breast while she holds a ewer of water.

At its most refined, a bathhouse became a watery banquet hall, where troubadours played music and the patrons, nude but wearing elaborate headdresses, jewellery and makeup in the case of the women, ate and drank on floating trays or on boards spread across the bath. Bathhouses were inevitably **titillating**, and they quickly became known as good places for **dalliance**. Poggio summed up the erotic possibilities at Baden: “All who want to make love, all who want to marry or who otherwise look for pleasure, they all come here where they find what they are looking for.”

In medieval poems and stories, men and women **bent** on adultery often use the baths as their meeting place, their alibi or both. In *The Romance of Flammenca*, which takes place in the French spa of Bourbon-l’Archambault, baths provide the cover for an extramarital love affair. (...) Kept under lock and key by Archambault, Flammenca is charmed by a handsome, *soigné* stranger named William whom she encounters at mass. When he urges her to meet him in the bathhouse, she tries the usual excuse with her husband – she has a racking pain that only the baths can relieve. Archambault first suggests a daily dose of nutmeg, but eventually he relents and orders the bath owner, “Clean out your baths and make them fresh.” The baths are drained, flushed and filled with water; Flammenca’s maids pack basins and ointments. Flammenca assumes that her rendezvous with William will take place in a private room in the baths. But William, staying in one of the hotels that sprang up around mineral springs, has cleverly had a tunnel dug from the baths to his hotel room, and there the lovers meet daily.

Lovers bathe in a story in *The Decameron*, which furnishes as idyllic a description of a bathhouse, or *bagnio* as it was called in Italy, as any in literature.

From these private indiscretions, it was no great leap to professional sexual services. Reports that prostitutes plied their trade in the places where respectable people, including children, went to wash surfaced almost as soon as the bathhouses reappeared. In addition to hot water and steam, customers could often command food, wine and **compliant** serving maids. The term “stew” or “stewhouse,” which originally referred to the moist warmth of the bathhouse, gradually came to mean a house of prostitution. So long as the baths’ other customers did not feel inconvenienced or menaced, a quiet, well-regulated sideline in prostitution was not necessarily considered a problem. (...)

As time went by, stricter standards of morality and recurrent fears about crime and the spread of syphilis made the stews more worrisome. In the second half the twelfth century, Henry II formally recognized the Southwark neighbourhood of London, where the bathhouses were concentrated, as a legal red-light district. But in 1417, wary of the disorder that attended them, London council banned the public baths, “except that households might have their own individual stews for cleanliness.” The ban proved impossible to enforce, and a series of fifteenth-century laws attempted vainly to keep the stews respectable (Ashenburg 2008: 78–87).

A. Answer the following questions.

1. What event led to the most significant change in personal hygiene in medieval Europe?

2. What were the first medieval baths like?
3. Why were bathhouses and bakeries built next to each other?
4. In what sense were medieval bathhouses “democratic institutions”?
5. What moral standards operated when it came to bathing? Were there any regional differences?
6. How did the institution of public baths evolve?
7. How were bathhouses depicted in the literature of the day?

B. Match the adjectives with their definitions.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1. defunct | a) excess; more than sufficient |
| 2. stripped-down | b) allowing light to pass through; transparent |
| 3. surplus | c) having a bald spot either shaved or natural; shaven; bald; <i>tonsured monks</i> |
| 4. goggle-eyed | d) no longer operating |
| 5. tonsured | e) having only essential or minimal features |
| 6. diaphanous | f) with eyes wide open in surprise |
| 7. bent on | g) obedient; willingly doing what one is asked to do |
| 8. compliant | h) determined to do something (usually something bad) |

C. Match the words with their definitions.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1. scores | a) support with evidence; confirm |
| 2. demise | b) to please or excite someone sexually |
| 3. dalliance | c) dozens; lots |
| 4. enact | d) end; death; disappearance |
| 5. corroborate | e) establish by legal act |
| 6. titillate | f) flirting; a brief sexual relationship |

Glossary

ply a trade – do a particular kind of work as a profession

wax and wane – first increase then decrease over a period of time

ewer (*n, C*) – a kind of wide-mouthed jug

EXTRACT 4

Although still tremendously popular, the bathhouses in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries were increasingly seen as places that disrupted the peace and encouraged bad behaviour. But, although an **unsavoury** reputation lost them a certain amount of goodwill, it was the disease more than sin that did them in. The disease was the most catastrophic pandemic the world has yet known, the bubonic plague that killed at least one out of every three Europeans within a four-year period in the mid-fourteenth century. The Black Death, as it was called because of the characteristic dark, **fester**ing lumps in the groins, armpits and necks of the victims, originated in Asia and was transported to Europe by rats. Beginning in 1347 the Black Death invaded Italy, Spain, France, England, Germany, Austria and Hungary, sometimes travelling two and a half miles a day. By the time its first visitation had ended, twenty-five million people had died.

No one has described the plague's attack on individuals and society better than Boccaccio did shortly after it devastated Florence. *The Decameron's* one hundred stories are so lighthearted and festive that it's easy to forget that their tellers have fled to the countryside near Florence in fear for their lives, and spin their tales to distract themselves from the surrounding horror. Before the stories – escapist literature in more ways than one – begin, Boccaccio gives a dispassionate, almost clinical account of the disease. In spite of prayers, processions and last-minute attempts at sanitation, it spread through Florence **unchecked** while doctors and priests stood helplessly by. Patients generally died on the third day after the appearance of the fatal lumps, some of which were as big as apples (they were swollen lymph nodes), and anyone who had so much as touched something handled by the sick person risked infection.

The plight of the sick was terrifying enough, but Boccaccio was even more **confounded** by the plague's effect on the able-bodied members of society. He watched as a panic-stricken populace rapidly **sloughed** its place. Brothers fled from sick brothers, wives from their husbands and even mothers from their own children. The time-honoured mourning observances, in which women would lament in the house where the dead body was laid out, and men would congregate respectfully at the threshold of the house, were abandoned, and corpses were deposited in mass burial pits without ceremony or attendants.

Another Florentine observer, Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, chose an unforgettable image to describe the burials. Every morning, he wrote, when the burial pits held a fresh influx of newly dead bodies, the gravediggers shovelled more earth on them, to be followed the next morning with more corpses and then more earth, "just as one makes lasagne with layers of pasta and cheese." In Avignon, the land available for burial ran out, and the pope declared the river consecrated space so the dead could be tossed into the Rhône.

In 1348, Philippe VI of France asked the medical faculty of the University of Paris to investigate the origins of the plague. Their far-reaching *Opinion* began with a disastrous conjunction of Saturn, Jupiter and Mars that caused disease-infected vapours to rise out of the earth and waters and poison the air. **Susceptible** people breathed in the **noxious** air, became ill and died. Who was susceptible? Some of the risks had been recognized in Greek and Roman times: obesity, **intemperance**, an over-passionate spirit. Now the professors added a new one that struck fear into medieval hearts – hot baths, which had a dangerously moistening and relaxing effect on the body. Once heat and water created openings through the skin, the plague could easily invade the entire body.

For the next two hundred years, whenever the plague threatened, the cry went out: "Bathhouses and bathing, I beg you to **shun** them or you will die." (...) By the first half of the sixteenth century, it was understood that French baths would be closed during an eruption of the plague. "Steam-baths and bath-houses should be forbidden," the royal surgeon Ambroise Paré wrote in 1568, voicing a now common opinion, "because when one emerges, the flesh and

the whole disposition of the body are softened and the pores open, and as a result, **pestiferous** vapour can rapidly enter the body and cause sudden death, as has frequently been observed.” Sadly, the best medical advice of the day probably doomed many people, for the dirtier people were, the more likely they were to **harbour** *Pulex irritans*, the flea now believed to have carried the plague bacillus from rats to humans.

The alarming image of a body under siege had long-lasting consequences. Even when a plague did not threaten, the porosity of the body made water a threat to the bather, who might contract syphilis or diseases as yet unknown and unnamed, or even become pregnant from sperm floating in the bathwater. Not only could bad things enter the body through water, but the all-important balance of the four humours could also be upset through pores opened by moisture. Worries about the body’s vulnerability affected fashion as well as hygiene. Since the pores might be vulnerable even when dry and not heated, clothing should be smooth, tightly woven and fitted – taffeta and satin for the wealthy, oilcloth and jute or hemp sacking for the poor. Cotton and wool were too loosely woven, and fur offered too many places for poisons to lodge. As plagues recurred somewhere in Europe almost every year until the beginning of the eighteenth century, these fears about a too-**permeable** anatomy remained common currency for some 350 years.

François I closed the French bathhouses in 1538. In 1546, Henry VIII ordered the stews in Southwark closed. In 1566, the States General at Orléans closed the French **bawdy houses**, which by definition included any bathhouses still operating. “Twenty-five years ago, nothing was more fashionable in Brabant than baths,” Erasmus wrote in 1526; “today there are none, the new plague has taught us to avoid them.” For roughly five hundred years, water had furnished comfort, pleasure, companionship, temptation – and cleanliness. Now, on much of the Continent, water was the enemy, to be avoided at all costs. The two centuries that followed Erasmus’ lament would be among the dirtiest in the history of Europe (Ashenburg 2008: 91–95).

A. Answer the following questions.

1. What facts are presented about the Black Death?
2. How did contemporary scientists account for the causes of the plague?
3. In what way did the Black Death affect personal hygiene?
4. What is Boccaccio’s contribution to present-day understanding of the Black Death?
5. How did the misconception about recurring plagues affect fashion?

B. Match the adjectives with their definitions.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1. unsavoury | a) not restrained or controlled |
| 2. festering | b) easily affected |
| 3. unchecked | c) causing disease |
| 4. confounded | d) (of wounds) not healing properly |
| 5. susceptible | e) harmful |
| 6. noxious | f) unpleasant or offensive; morally unacceptable |
| 7. pestiferous | g) allowing a liquid or gas to pass through |
| 8. permeable | h) confused and surprised |

C. Match the words with their definitions.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1. shun | a) abandon |
| 2. harbour | b) brothel |
| 3. slough | c) avoid |
| 4. ntemperance | d) to contain something and allow it to develop |
| 5. bawdy house | e) lack of moderation |

EXTRACT 5

Even if the plague was not **imminent**, the fear of water that dated from the late Middle Ages became more and more generalized. Doctors believed that baths threatened the body in various bewildering ways. “The bath, except for medical reasons when absolutely necessary, is not only **superfluous**, but very **prejudicial** to men,” the French doctor Théophraste Renaudot warned in 1655. “Bathing fills the head with vapors. It is the enemy of the nerves and ligaments, which it loosens, in such a way that many a man never suffers from gout except after bathing.”

On a spring day in 1610, King Henri IV sent an emissary to the Paris house of the Duc de Sully, the superintendent of finances, requesting his presence at the Louvre. To everyone’s consternation, Sully was taking a bath. He prepared at once to obey the royal summons, but his attendants begged him not to risk his health by going outside. Even the messenger was against it, saying, “Monsieur, do not quit your bath, since I fear that the king cares so much for your health, and so depends on it, that if he had known that you were in such a situation, he would have come here himself.” “Such a situation” – a man taking a bath in his house – required the messenger to return to the Louvre to explain the complication to the king. Not inclined to treat this predicament lightly, the king, in his turn, consulted his own doctor, Andre Du Laurens. The doctor pronounced that the man would be vulnerable for several days after his bath. Sully was told, “Monsieur, the king **commands** you to complete your bath, and forbids you to go out today, since M. Du Laurens has advised him that this would endanger your health. He orders you to expect him tomorrow in your nightshirt, your leggings, your slippers and your nightcap, so that you come to no harm as a result of your recent bath.” Normally, His Majesty did not travel to his ministers’ houses, nor did he order them to receive him in their nightclothes – but a bath was no normal occurrence.

Naturally, there were national variations and peculiarities that coexisted with European distaste for washing with water. In Spain, the early Christian concerns about the corrupting influence of bathing and the late medieval worries about the plague were compounded by the Moorish occupation. Because the Moor was clean, the Spanish decided that Christians should be dirty. Many of the Moorish baths were destroyed by orders of Ferdinand and Isabella after the conquest of Granada in 1492, but enough remained that Philip II definitely banned them in 1576. Moors who converted to Christianity were not allowed to take baths, and a damning piece of evidence at the Inquisition, levelled against both Moors and Jews, was that the accused “was known to bathe.”

Spanish confessors were urged to question their female penitents minutely about private washing and not **absolve** those who washed regularly. Isabella, the daughter of Philip II, became a national heroine when she vowed, in 1601, not to change her shift until the siege of Ostend was over. It lasted three years, three months and thirteen days, by which time her white undergarment had turned tawny-coloured.

The poor lacked the means to wash thoroughly, but the aristocrats’ doctors forbade it. Since the most expensive medical opinion held that bodily secretions furnished a layer of protection, kings and queens bathed as infrequently as the poorest peasants. When the future Louis XIII of France was born, in 1601, the court physician kept notes on the child’s washing history. It was not a lengthy account. At six weeks, his head was massaged. At seven weeks, his abundant cradle cap was rubbed with butter and almond oil. The baby’s hair was not combed until he was nine months old. At the age of five, his legs were washed for the first time, in **tepid** water. He had his first bath at the ripe age of almost seven: “Bathed for the first time, put into the bath and Madame [his sister] with him.”

Washing for royal adults was not much more thorough. When Louis XIV arose, the chief surgeon, the chief doctor and his nurse entered his room together. His nurse kissed him, accord-

ing to the Duc de Saint-Simon, and the doctor and surgeon “rubbed and often changed his shirt, because he was in the habit of sweating a good deal.” A valet sprinkled a little spirits of wine on his hands, and the king rinsed his mouth and wiped his face. That ended his ablutions. Nor was this a monarch who scorned physical exertion: after his morning devotions, Louis might vault, fence, dance or perform military exercises so energetically that he returned to his bedchamber perspiring freely. But the sweaty monarch did not wash; instead, he changed his clothes. It was by **donning** fresh clothes, and particularly a laundered shirt, that Louis XIV indicated to himself and others that he was “clean.” He and his brother, Philippe, were considered particularly fastidious because they changed their shirts three times a day.

Since washing the body happened so seldom, it ceased to be a subject for painters. In place of the medieval woodcuts and illuminated manuscripts that pictured warmly **sensuous** bathhouse scenes came painterly odes to linen. The seventeenth-century Dutch in particular favoured outdoor scenes of cloth lying in bleaching fields and interiors that celebrated pure white, precisely arranged stacks of linen. In 1663, Pieter de Hooch painted two women carefully depositing such a freshly laundered pile in the chest that stands prominently in the front hall. The painting, called *The Linen Chest*, is full of right angles, suggestive of the orderly way of life espoused by the Dutch bourgeoisie – the tiled floor, windows, doors and, above all, the inlaid chest and its precious, squared-away contents. In contrast, the round laundry basket by the door, with the dirty linen flung untidily over its rim, symbolizes the squalor and mess that must be avoided.

The seventeenth-century Dutch painter Caspar Netscher painted a picture of a prosperous woman at home with her children. A maid waits in the background of the richly **appointed** room and the young woman at the centre of the picture, which is called *Mother’s Care*, wears a brocade jacket and a satin skirt **trimmed** with brilliants. But she wields a comb in her dimpled hand: she is inspecting her small son’s head for lice. It was a familiar theme in seventeenth-century painting, and no wonder, for children and adults, from the most privileged to the poorest, teemed with lice, nits and fleas.

Underneath the rich chiaroscuro of velvets and silks were bodies that went unwashed from one year to the next. At the French court, where the daily dressing of the monarch was a minutely choreographed ceremony, aristocrats perfumed themselves so as not to smell their neighbours. The sixteenth century had not been notably **fastidious**, even at the highest level: Elizabeth I of England bathed once a month, as she said, “whether I need it or not.” But the seventeenth century raised the bar: it was spectacularly, even **defiantly** dirty. Elizabeth’s successor, James I, reportedly washed only his fingers. The body odour of Henry IV of France (1553–1610) was notorious, as was that of his son Louis XIII. He boasted, “I take after my father, I smell of armpits.”

But **encrusted** limbs and **clogged** pores remained not just the norm, but the goal. The reining medical authorities remained faithful to the medieval belief that blocked pores, in particular, sealed the body off from infection. And infection lay in wait all over Europe, as plagues recurred through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One hundred thousand Londoners died in Great Plague of 1665. A third of Stockholm’s population **perished** in the plague of 1710–1711, as did half the population of Marseilles in 1720–1721.

For the seventeenth century, clean linen was not a substitute for washing the body with water – it was *better* than that, safer, more reliable and based on scientific principles. White linen, learned men believed, attracted and absorbed sweat.

As linen became ever more the emblem of cleanliness and hence gentility, the man’s shirt and woman’s chemise became increasingly visible. After being hidden under wool or fur in the Middle Ages, a thin edge peeks out at the collar in the last decades of the fifteenth century. In Hans Holbein’s portraits of Elizabethan men and women, a broader expanse of linen sees the

light of day, under a V-necked or round-necked overgarment. In the seventeenth century, the shirt comes into its own – for men, flaunting falling bands or cravat at the neck, gaping through slashed sleeves, ballooning out from the bottom of the doublet; for women, sporting ruffles at the plunging neck, with full sleeves that extended well beyond the dress sleeves.

Even as fashions changed, it remained important to expose your linen. In 1711, the *Spectator* described an English beau who unbuttoned his chic silk waistcoat in several places “to let us see that he had a clean shirt on which was ruffled down to his middle.” Inventories of wardrobes and wills show that people owned more shirts than any other article of clothing, and the number of shirts continued to grow through the eighteenth century (Ashenburg 2008: 98–100, 105–107, 109–111, 114–115).

A. Answer the following questions.

1. What was the 17th-century medical opinion on personal hygiene?
2. Relate the story of the Duc de Sully. What does it prove?
3. In what context are the following figures mentioned:
 - a) Louis XIII
 - b) Louis XIV
 - c) Elizabeth I
 - d) Isabella, the daughter of Philip II
4. How did fashion and art reflect the medical misconceptions of the day?
5. Who were Pieter de Hooch and Caspar Netscher?
6. In what context is Hans Holbein mentioned?

B. Match the adjectives with their definitions.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1. imminent | a) harmful |
| 2. superfluous | b) blocked |
| 3. prejudicial | c) provided with furnishing and accessories |
| 4. tepid | d) likely to come or happen soon |
| 5. fastidious | e) decorated |
| 6. sensuous | f) more than is wanted; excessive; unnecessary |
| 7. appointed | g) having a hardened crust as a covering |
| 8. defiant | h) lukewarm |
| 9. trimmed | i) hard to please |
| 10. encrusted | j) giving pleasure to the senses; suggesting an interest in sexual pleasure |
| 11. clogged | k) bold; insolent; arrogant |

C. Match the verbs with their definitions.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 1. absolve | a) die |
| 2. command | b) put on clothing (old use) |
| 3. perish | c) declare that someone is free from sin or guilt |
| 4. don | d) order |

Glossary

beau (*n, C*) – a man who takes great care to dress in the latest fashion; a dandy

chemise (*n, C*) – a woman’s sleeveless undergarment

chiaroscuro (*n, C*) – the art or practice of so arranging the light and dark parts as to produce a harmonious effect

cravat (*n, C*) – a neck cloth; a piece of silk or fine muslin worn by men around the neck

doublet (*n, C*) – a close-fitting garment for men, covering the body from the neck to the waist or a little below; worn in Western Europe from the 15th to the 17th century

gout (*n, U*) – a disease which causes someone’s joints to swell painfully, esp. in their toes
ligament (*n, C*) – a band of connective tissue which supports or retains an organ in its place
nit (*n, C*) – young of an insect, esp. a louse; often attached to a hair or item of clothing
ruffle (*n, C*) – a high tight collar
shift (*n, C*) – a loose-fitting dress hanging straight from the shoulders without a waist
valet (*n, C*) – a male servant who acts as a personal attendant to his master

TEACHER'S NOTES

INTRODUCTION

A.

1. Water has been used in ceremonies marking the transition from one stage of life to the next. It is symbolically used during baptism, before getting married, or when someone dies. In Renaissance Germany, young women made a "bath shirt" for their future husbands. From ancient Greece to modern-day Africa, brides and often grooms are given a prenuptial bath.
2. Pontius Pilate washes his hands after condemning Jesus to death. Lady Macbeth says that water will clear her and her husband of their deed after they have killed Duncan. Both Pontius Pilate and Lady Macbeth believe that water will wash off their sins.
3. Caucasians have many more sweat glands than Indians or Asians, so even when they are clean they seem to be smelly to non-Westerners.

B.

1. b 2. g 3. h 4. c 5. d 6. a 7. e 8. f

EXTRACT 1

A.

1. Jews were obliged to wash after such immoral acts as adultery, homosexuality and murder, as well as after sexual intercourse with their spouse, contact with the dead, genital discharges and childbirth. They were supposed to wash their hands before eating.
2. Jesus was rebellious or indifferent when it came to impurity. He touched lepers and the dead, ate with unwashed hands and allowed His disciples to do so. When scolded by the Pharisees, Jesus answered that a man is not defiled by what goes in but out of him.
3. Early Christians had an ambivalent attitude towards their bodies. On the one hand, the human body was the temple of God, while on the other, it was a source of temptation.
4. *Alousia* was "the state of being unwashed," a sort of mortification of the body practised mainly by monks, hermits and saints.
5.
 - a) St. Olympias (born around 360 in Constantinople) married as a teenager but refused to remarry when her husband died. She founded a monastery and practised *alousia*, washing herself only if absolutely necessary. She didn't undress for her bath so as not to scandalise anyone, including herself. St. Olympias wore shabby clothes and ate no meat.
 - b) St. Jerome hated even the most virtuous private baths, advocating lifelong virginity for women. To that end, he urged a low-stimulus life with a meagre diet and avoidance of wine and baths, the latter provoking a woman's interest in her body.
 - c) St. Godric – an English saint who walked from England to Jerusalem without washing or changing his clothes. On this pilgrimage, he drank minimal amounts of water and ate barley bread, but only after it had grown stale. At home in his hermitage in the woods near Durham, he wore a hair shirt which was full of lice.
 - d) St. Radegund was a sixth-century queen of the Franks and the founder of a convent at Poitiers. When lepers arrived at her convent, St. Radegund set a table for them, washed their hands and faces with warm water, and kissed them. Every Thursday and Saturday, Radegund bathed paupers.

B.

1. b 3. g 5. a 7. e 9. j
 2. f 4. d 6. c 8. i 10. h

C.

1. b 2. d 3. a 4. c

EXTRACT 2

A.

1. Monks limited their ablutions to washing their hands and feet. On rare occasions, they took baths but not more than three a year: before Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. In some monasteries hot baths were reserved only for the old and the sick. Monks bathed in silence, alone and as quickly as possible. The most pious monks would give up baths completely.
2. For the Muslims cleanliness was an important religious requirement. They were called “the cleanest people on earth.” To stress their opposition to the Moors, the Christians chose to be dirty. It referred to both their bodies and clothes.
3. In Roman times there were numerous baths in Spain. After a period of absence they returned with the Moorish invasion in 711. When the Christians recaptured Spain, baths were destroyed again.

B.

1. d 2. c 3. a 4. e 5. b

C.

1. c 2. a 3. b

EXTRACT 3

A.

1. The Crusaders who returned home from their campaigns in the East brought with them a novelty – the institution of the public bath. Its reappearance brought about the most momentous change in personal cleanliness.
2. The first medieval bathhouses were stripped-down adaptations of the Turkish *hamam*. They combined a steam bath and, usually in a separate room, round wooden bathtubs that might seat six. At hot springs large outdoor pools were built for dozens of people. As bathhouses became better established, rooms for private baths and rooms with beds for resting after the bath were added.
3. Bakers made use of the surplus heat from the bath furnaces.
4. All social classes could use public bathhouses; they were places where all people could meet.
5. There were regional differences. People living north of the Alps “had an ease about undress that began with the journey to the baths.” German and Swiss nonchalance about nudity shocked travellers from Mediterranean countries. Travellers from the south were astonished by the fact that naked men and women washed together, talked, drank, ate and laughed fully at ease.
6. Some bathhouses became watery banquet halls, with music and maids waiting on customers. Bathhouses soon became known as good places for dalliance. The term “stew” or “stew-

house,” which originally referred to the moist warmth of the bathhouse, gradually came to mean a house of prostitution.

7. Bathhouses became good meeting points for lovers and they were described as such, for example in *The Romance of Flammenca*. The story is set in a French spa. Flammenca and her lover William use the baths as a cover for their love affair. There is also an idyllic description of a bath in *The Decameron*.

B.

1. d 2. e 3. a 4. f 5. c 6. b 7. h 8. g

C.

1. c 2. d 3. f 4. e 5. a 6. b

EXTRACT 4

A.

1. The disease originated in Asia and was transported to Europe by rats. Beginning in 1347 the Black Death invaded Italy, Spain, France, England, Germany, Austria and Hungary, sometimes travelling two and a half miles a day. By the time its first attack had ended, twenty-five million people had died.
2. The disease was brought about by a disastrous conjunction of Saturn, Jupiter and Mars that caused disease-infected vapours to rise out of the earth and waters and poison the air. People breathed in the noxious air, became ill and died. Some were more susceptible than others. Obesity, intemperance and an over-passionate spirit were among the factors that rendered people easy targets for the disease. Now a new one was added: hot baths, which had a dangerously moistening and relaxing effect on the body. Once heat and water created openings through the skin, the plague could easily invade the entire body.
3. For the next two hundred years, people avoided baths because they believed that during a bath the pores of their body open and pestiferous vapour can rapidly enter the body and cause sudden death. Not only could bad things enter the body through water, but the all-important balance of the four humours could also be upset through pores opened by moisture. Unfortunately, the dirtier people were, the more likely they were to harbour *Pulex irritans*, the flea now believed to have carried the plague bacillus from rats to humans.
4. In *The Decameron*, Boccaccio provided a detailed account of the events at the time of the plague and the disease itself. Patients generally died on the third day after the appearance of the fatal lumps, some of which were as big as apples. Those lumps were swollen lymph nodes. Anyone who touched anything handled by a sick person risked infection. Doctors were helpless.
5. People believed that the disease could also be contracted without bathing: the pores were believed to be vulnerable even when dry and not heated. The way to protect oneself was to wear appropriate clothes: smooth, tightly woven and fitted. The wealthy wore taffeta and satin, the poor oilcloth, jute or hemp. Cotton and wool were too loosely woven, and fur offered too many places for poisons to lodge.

B.

1. f 2. d 3. a 4. h 5. b 6. e 7. c 8. g

C.

1. c 2. d 3. a 4. e 5. b

EXTRACT 5

A.

1. Doctors believed that baths affected people's health in many disastrous ways and should be avoided except when really necessary. Bathing filled the head with vapours and loosened one's nerves and ligaments. As a result, after a bath people suffered from gout and other diseases which they normally didn't suffer from.
2. King Henry IV wanted to see the Duc de Sully, his superintendent of finances, and sent his emissary to his home. When it turned out that Sully was taking a bath, everybody insisted on his staying at home believing that going out soon after a bath could have turned disastrous for Sully's health. The emissary returned to the Louvre and explained the situation to the king. The king consulted his personal doctor only to find out that after a bath a man is extremely vulnerable for a couple of days and thus should not leave his house. Not to risk his superintendant's health, the king himself decided to visit Sully in his house. The story shows how strong was people's fear of baths and how deeply rooted.
3. a) We have records which clearly show that hygiene didn't necessarily mean the use of water. When the future Louis XIII was born in 1601, the court physician kept notes on how often the child was washed. At six weeks, his head was massaged. At seven weeks, his cradle cap was rubbed with butter and almond oil. The baby's hair was not combed until he was nine months old. At the age of five, his legs were washed for the first time, in lukewarm water. He had his first bath at the age of almost seven.
b) We have detailed records of what Louis XIV's ablutions were like. Again, they did not involve the use of water. The king's personal hygiene amounted to changing his shirt after he had perspired.
c) Elizabeth I bathed once a month, very often for the standards of the 16th century, but she was not convinced of its necessity. She would say of her monthly bath: "whether I need it or not."
d) Isabella refused to change her shift until the siege of Ostend was over. The siege lasted over three years, Isabella's shift turned brown and she was declared a national heroine.
4. Instead of washing people changed their clothes. Clean linen became an emblem of cleanliness and hence gentility. A man's shirt and woman's chemise became increasingly visible.
5. Pieter de Hooch and Caspar Netscher were 17th century Dutch painters.
Caspar Netscher's *Mother's Care* reflects the reality of the 17th century: a prosperous family in a rich house and a mother inspecting her son's head for lice.
In Pieter de Hooch's painting *The Linen Chest*, we see two women carefully depositing a freshly laundered pile of linen in a chest. Besides, de Hooch painted outdoor scenes of cloth lying in bleaching fields. These paintings show what importance was attached to clean linen.
6. Hans Holbein's portraits of Elizabethan men and women reflect the fashion of the times, the prevalence of white linen being one of its features.

B.

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C.

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