

**GYMNASIUM OBERWIL
2008**

MATURPRÜFUNGEN

Englisch

Erst nach Abgabe des Comprehension Exercise ist der Gebrauch eines Wörterbuches erlaubt, das durch die beaufsichtigende Lehrperson ausgehändigt wird.

COMPREHENSION EXERCISE

SEEKING TO START A WOMEN'S REVOLUTION

The former Irish president chairs a club for past and present female heads of state

Cynics might be tempted to see Mary Robinson as a fully paid-up member of a globetrotting elite of do-gooders: those liberal NGO chiefs, professors and retired politicians who fly around the world producing equal amounts of carbon and hot air about poverty, sustainability and ethical globalisation. The popular former president of Ireland can slip into a kind of UN human rights-speak that is opaque to the rest of us. But Robinson also has a passion for helping ordinary families — and she has big ideas about the ways in which the current generation of female heads of state can put a new kind of women's leadership into practice.

One figure particularly interests her: 40. That is the number of current or recent women prime ministers and presidents who, she says, have joined or soon will join the Council of Women World Leaders, an international network founded in 1996. It is now chaired by Robinson. The number is far higher than most people would guess, and Robinson had an uncompromising message for the hundreds who gathered to hear her deliver the inaugural Women of the Year Lecture in London last month: women in positions of power should make more of an impact.

It has almost been forgotten how revolutionary it was when Robinson became the first woman president of Ireland in 1990. Powerful conservative forces were ranged against her, but she became hugely popular during her seven years in power and remained defiantly political and radical — shaking hands with the republican Gerry Adams, visiting the Queen in London, and intervening, perhaps decisively, before Ireland's narrow referendum in favour of allowing divorce in 1995. All while still managing to work constructively with the Catholic church.

As UN high commissioner for human rights from 1997 to 2002, Robinson tried hard to bring another institution closer to the people. Since then, she has brought her legal training to bear on a range of worthy human rights and international development causes. Robinson and her husband, the political cartoonist Nick Robinson, now live in New York, and at 63 she could be enjoying a quiet retirement, but her life is one of constant meetings. However, she says she can switch off and enjoy seeing her three children and three grandchildren.

Robinson has taken on another commitment as one of the Elders, a group of 13 global senior citizens including Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Kofi Annan and Jimmy Carter, who hope to use their moral authority to intervene in crises around the world. She was sceptical about the Elders. "Was it not a very arrogant concept? Then we had our planning meeting with Nelson Mandela, who I've met many times. He has such an incredible power of

bringing out the best in people and from that moment on we knew our responsibility was in 'eldering'." The word was invented by Tutu, whom Robinson adores. He is full of wise words and so witty, she says. "He gets us to call him the Arch," she smiles.

Robinson sees typically female leadership qualities in some of the male Elders – Tutu and the economist Muhammad Yunus come to mind – but wants high-profile women to push for a new style of women's leadership. "There are two types of women who get into high positions," she says. The first she describes as very talented women who do it in a traditional – male – way. "A lot of women in business accept that model. But there is also the other model I would very strongly advocate and this is equal to the contribution of men but different, complementary, exciting and innovative."

It is this approach that Robinson hopes to harness in her role as chair of women world leaders. She calls it an "enabling collective women's leadership", which she explains as a coming together of women from politics, but also from the worlds of charity, business and the arts, to change lives. She argues this approach is fundamentally different from male leadership because of women's empathy, ability to work together and problem-solving skills.

Traditionally, she says, women have been defensive about exercising power but this has made them more reflective. "Women leaders are often more analytical and self-critical and more honest about it than their male counterparts. It's as if they are still asking the question 'Am I doing well enough?'".

Crucially, Robinson wants this women's leadership to be directed beyond the traditional areas. "We deal with health and education, and empower women and girls, but are not crunching on the key issue." This fundamental issue is security, and her mission is to reclaim the word and define it as most women would – in terms of ordinary families; security from poverty, climate change, abuse and discrimination. It's hard to reorientate a world that is focused on security, but not tackling it very cleverly, she says. The war on terror, she believes, has been "a disaster, not just for human rights but also for ideological divides, for squeezing out the moderates".

Critics might wonder what impact this rhetoric about women's leadership can have on the lives of a battered wife in Britain or a refugee in Somalia. As a global elder, Robinson may be able to command media attention, but how can this translate into changing people's lives? She and a number of other women will test their leadership skills this year by intervening supportively in Liberia, where president Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf became Africa's first elected

female leader two years ago. The backing for Johnson-Sirleaf will be "very practical and we'll be able to measure outcomes", says Robinson.

She and other women leaders are "learning a very loose freewheeling idea of working together", she explains. Wouldn't she be better off fighting for women through existing democratic structures? She points to the lack of impact women have using those channels. "Women are now present in critical mass. We are there politically, in business and at the community level; so why are we not having more influence? Maybe we're accelerating the process, trying to be the pioneering front that moves a bit faster."

Her hope is that women in power will join her and link to the determination of women on the ground to bring about change. "The passion, strength and power of women to make change at grassroots level is always underestimated," she says. "It was underestimated when I was president of Ireland. It's been underestimated all the time."

From an article by Patrick Barkham in *The Guardian* on February 13th 2008

Annotation: harness (l. 41): to use her power to achieve something

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions in your own words as far as possible. (1 – 4 sentences for each answer). Write part B (Vocabulary) on a separate sheet of paper.

Who is criticized at the beginning of the text and what for?
(3 points)

Mention three important political achievements or activities of Mary Robinson.
(3 points)

What are, according to Robinson, specifically female leadership qualities?
(3 points)

How does Robinson understand the key issue of "security"?
(6 points)

Why does she not want to use the existing democratic structures in order to promote women leaders?
(3 points)

Referring to Robinson's other commitment, Desmond Tutu invented the term "eldering". Explain the concept behind it.
(6 points)

VOCABULARY (All answers on a separate sheet)

B.1. Explain (in English) the meaning or give a synonym of the following words as they

appear in the text

(1 point each)

cynics (l. 1)
opaque (l. 5)
current (l. 6)
ranged against (l. 15)
legal training (l. 21)
commitment (l. 26)
intervene (l. 28)
concept (l. 29)
advocate (l. 39)
crucially (l. 50)
loose (l. 64)
determination (l. 70)

B.2. Give the abstract noun forms of the following words (½ point each)

Example: word: ***tempted*** (l. 1) abstract noun form: ***temptation***

liberal (l. 2)

equal (l. 3)

ethical (l. 3)

tried (l. 20)

sceptical (l. 28)

arrogant (l. 29)

incredible (l. 30)

wise (l. 32)

high (l. 36)

strongly (l. 39)

democratic (l. 65)

critical (l. 67)

TRANSLATION

Translate the following text into English.

Ihr Mann erlaubte ihr nicht, zu arbeiten, auch nicht stundenweise, auch nicht ehrenamtlich, ausserdem hatte sie ja nichts gelernt. Alles, was sie konnte, war, dekorativ auszusehen und ihre Langeweile geschickt zu verbergen. Damit qualifizierte sie sich wohl als Ehefrau eines sehr reichen Mannes, aber ansonsten nützte ihr das wenig. Scheiden lassen konnte sie sich auch nicht, denn selbst wenn ihr Mann einwilligen würde, was nicht sehr wahrscheinlich war, würde er bestimmt dafür sorgen, dass sie es nicht leicht hätte. Es war zu spät, um ein neues Leben anzufangen. Sie war einundvierzig Jahre alt und gab eine Menge Geld dafür aus, dass man es ihr nicht ansah.

Da sass sie Tag für Tag in ihrer repräsentativen Wohnung, die von einer dicken Frau sauber gehalten wurde, die sie Rosella nannte. Hin und wieder gab es eine Einladung zu organisieren, wobei sie die Hilfe eines Partyservices in Anspruch nahm. Dann gab es natürlich die Reisen, die sie zu festgesetzten Zeiten an immer dieselben exklusiven Orte führten, wo sie andere blondgesträhnte reiche Damen traf, die auf die Ankunft ihrer vielbeschäftigten Ehemänner warteten. In der Zwischenzeit wurde viel getrunken und geklatscht. Zum Anbändeln standen reichlich Skilehrer oder Tennislehrer zur Verfügung, was zu noch mehr Alkohol und noch mehr Klatsch führte. Sie beobachtete die anderen Frauen und wusste, dass sie sich in nichts von ihnen unterschied. Das deprimierte sie derart, dass sie wieder Pillen schlucken musste, und wenn sie nach Hause kam, sah sie noch ausgezehrter aus als sonst.

slightly shortened.

From Milena Moser: "Der Nachbar". *Das Schlampenbuch*. 1992.

ESSAY

Write an essay of 300 – 350 words on ONE of the following topics:

According to Robinson, female leadership is fundamentally different from male leadership because "of women's empathy, ability to work together and problem-solving skills, and because women leaders "are often more analytical and self-critical and more honest [...] than their male counterparts." Do you agree with that distinction?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of being a working mother?

Soaps and Hollywood movies offer role models for men and women. What influence do they have on our society and you personally?

Special class topics:

4A "Journalism largely consists in saying 'Lord Jones is dead' to people who never knew Lord Jones was alive." Discuss the pros and cons of journalism. You may, but you don't have to refer to Ian McEwan's *Amsterdam*.

4B Every nation gets the media it deserves. Discuss this statement. You may but you do not have to refer to Ian McEwan's *Amsterdam*.

4E Comment on the following quotation from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*:

Banquo: The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,
And these are of them. - Whither are they vanished?

Macbeth Into the air; and what seemed corporal, melted
As breath into the wind. – Would they had stayed! (I,3)

4GZ Comment on the portrayal of the colonial experience in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

4IMS Good literature is above all good entertainment.

Illustrate your views on this statement by referring to any English books that you have read in class or individually in the last three years.

- 4LW Discuss the causes of the recent financial crisis and its consequences – maybe even for you personally. In how far – or under what circumstances – could or will it open up new chances?
- 4S "Journalism largely consists in saying 'Lord Jones is dead' to people who never knew Lord Jones was alive." Discuss the pros and cons of journalism. You may, but you don't have to refer to Ian McEwan's *Amsterdam*.
- 4W The Role of the News Media in *1984* and in the 21st Century.