

British Section English Test 2015

Read carefully the following passage and then answer the question below.

“Call the usher! The pleasure of movie-going is becoming a pain, thanks to noisy, guzzling, mobilephone- using talkers, kickers and general pests.” So said Irish Times journalist, Hugh Linehan, in an article in his newspaper. The article appears below in edited form.

Shhhhhhhhh!

Maybe it's because I'm a spoiled snobbish elitist – and that's not something I'm happy about – but I have to confess I'm finding it increasingly painful to go to the movies with the rest of you, the great paying public. It's not because of the cinemas – standards of projection, sound, seating and ventilation have improved out of all recognition over the last ten years – but (and I am sorry to say this) your standards of behaviour seem to be disimproving all the time.

Kickers are a real source of irritation. The kicker problem is exacerbated by the design of modern cinema seats – a kicked seat reverberates right along the row, so that it can be nigh-well impossible to figure out where it's coming from. In the 1970s, they called this Sensurround and people paid to experience it in movies such as *Earthquake* and *Towering Inferno*. Nowadays, you can have your own personal towering inferno as you reach boiling point after two hours of bone-shaking juddering.

Up until recently, the mobile phenomenon seemed to be spinning out of control. Cinemas were buzzing like beehives with the wretched things and some buffoons even had the cheek to strike up conversations on them during the film. There will always be buffoons, but a corner seems to have been turned in recent times. Thankfully, cinemas have now taken to putting reminders on the screen telling people to switch off their phones, and many appear to be doing so. On an electronically related topic, by the way, what sort of benighted fool needs a watch that beeps on the hour, every hour?

I have some sympathy for those who feel nauseated by the smell of warm buttery popcorn which is so much a part of the multiplex experience, but it doesn't bother me that much. If people want to eat wildly overpriced, grease-saturated cardboard, then that's their business. At least popcorn has the virtue of being (almost) silent food – far better than the high-pitched crackle of the jumbo crisp packet or the extended kitchen-sink gurgle of the almost-drained Coke.

To my mind the real problem in cinemas these days is talkers. They're everywhere and they come in a variety of species. One kind can't help giving a blow-by-blow commentary on the movie. They're bad enough, but there is worse. Top of the list come those who just utterly ignore the film in favour of their own chat. Western society has devised countless places where people can communicate with each other, but cafes, restaurants or street corners are just not good enough for these people – apparently not when they can have the added pleasure of spoiling other people's enjoyment. Then, there are those who think that any break in the dialogue has been inserted by the filmmaker expressly for them to start talking. The minute there is a pause of more than a couple of seconds they launch into conversation. This is not to forget the downright

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stupid, who spend most of the time asking questions: “Who’s she? What happened there?” By the time they’ve got an answer they’ve missed the next plot point, and the whole weary rigmarole starts all over again.

What is the reason for this plague? The general decline in politeness in society may have something to do with it, but it doesn’t fully explain the seemingly unstoppable desire to talk when the lights go down. We don’t want funereal silence; a good comedy, horror or action movie can be immeasurably improved by the communal experience of seeing it with an audience. People can shriek or laugh to their hearts’ content, and there is a real sense of a shared magical experience. After all, we’re all together in the cinema ... in the dark. And you never know who is sitting next to you!

Question:

How does the author persuade you to share his views on the cinema?

Support your answer with reference to the language used.