

ARULMIGU PALANIANDAVAR ARTS COLLEGE FOR WOMEN,

PALANI

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

LEARNING RESOURCES

MODERN BRITISH LITERATURE

OBJECTIVE QUESTIONS

Poetry

1. Which place had Byzantium as its capital? (The Eastern Roman Empire).
2. Name the cathedral in *Byzantium*:- (The cathedral of St. Sophia)
3. What does the golden bird in *Byzantium* stand for? (Permanence of art)
4. What does the dolphin in *Byzantium* represent? (Carrier of the dead)
5. What do the cocks of Hades signify? (The rebirth of the dead)
6. Where are the images of the cocks of Hades found? (On the Roman tombstones)
7. What could purify the spirit, as said in *Byzantium*? (The power of the flames)
8. What, according to Yeats travels between this world and Hades? (The soul of man)
9. What is the central theme of “The Waste land”? (Futility of modern life)
10. What has caused the degradation of modern life in London? (World War I)
11. What is referred in the beginning of “The Waste land”? (Heap of broken images)
12. Which nursery rhyme is referred as snippet in “The Waste Land”? (London Bridge is falling down)
13. Who would die in water as said by Madame Sosostri? (The Phoenician Sailor)
14. How did Madame Sosostri prophecy the death of Phlebas? (By using the tarot card)
15. What picks out the bones of Phlebas’ dead body? (Current under the sea)
16. The poem “Insensibility” is known for ------. (Contrasts)
17. In “Insensibility”, youthful vitality is juxtaposed with ------. (Weary age)
18. What does the phrase "let their veins run cold" denote?(Lack of passion and humanity)
19. What is the outcome of war on the soldiers? (Desensitizing themselves)
20. Why does the front line of the war shrink? (The soldiers die)
21. How are men considered in war? (Gaps for filling)
22. What reality of war makes Owen saddened? (Reduction of human life)
23. Which war forms the basis of “The Soldier”? (World War I)
24. Where should the dead soldiers be buried? (In their homeland)
25. Where was Brooke buried after his death? (In Greece)
26. Which country is glorified by Brooke? (England)
27. In what guise does Brooke speak in “The Soldier”? (An English soldier)
28. What ideals characterized the pre-war England? (Patriotic ideals)
29. What act is noble as said by Brooke? (Dying for one’s own country)
30. What will the foreign soil become by the burial of the dead soldier? (The soldier’s land)

Prose

31. What is the pseudo – name of Eric Arthur Blair? (George Orwell)
32. What was George Orwell? (A police officer in Moulmein in Lower Burma).
33. What genre of prose does “Shooting an Elephant” belong to? (Auto-biographical essay)
34. What did Orwell try to record through *Shooting an Elephant*? (Futility of Colonization)
35. What was the hindrance to Orwell in his job? (His anti-imperialistic thoughts).
36. What forced Orwell to shoot at the elephant? (The swelling crowd)
37. Who was killed by the elephant? (An Indian, a black Dravidian coolie).
38. How did Orwell feel in front of the villagers? (Sahib, the conventionalized king)
39. What is the technique specialized by Woolf in her novels? (Stream of consciousness)

40. How is Virginia Woolf known in the literary world? (A Feminist critic)
41. Where did Virginia Woolf give a lecture on women? (In Girton Girls College)
42. Which manuscripts did Woolf wish to examine? (Milton's *Lycidas* & Thackeray's *Esmond*)
43. What did the kings and the nobles start in the Age of Faith? (Churches)
44. What did the industrialists start in the Age of Reason? (Colleges for men)
45. Name the museum visited by Virginia Woolf:- (The British Museum)
46. Who had left an annual grant of 500 pounds a year to Woolf? (Mary Beton, her aunt).
47. What caused the death of the romantic spirit in the modern world? (The First World War).
48. Who celebrated love in their poems? (Lord Tennyson and Christina Rossetti).
49. Mary Seton's mother raised ----- to start a women's college. (30,000 pounds)
50. The anti-feminist writings are written in 'the red light of ___ and not in the white light of ____ (emotion, truth).
51. What was the charge laid by Woolf on Galsworthy and Kipling? (Androgynous writers).
52. With whom did Virginia Woolf compare Jane Austen? (William Shakespeare)
53. "Women have served as looking glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size". In which essay does this line occur? (*A Room of One's Own*)
54. In flood, Battersea appeared like ----- . (Venice)
55. One who sees an opportunity for enjoyment in critical situations is --- (A true optimist)
56. Cry out of toothache is an instance of ----- . (Imaginative inconvenience)
57. Which place is 'cavern of wonder and a palace of poetical pleasure' to children? (Railway station)
58. Running after one's hat has the potential of becoming a ----- . (sport)
59. An adventure is only an ----- rightly considered. (inconvenience)
60. An inconvenience is only an ----- wrongly considered. (adventure)

Drama

61. How are young women symbolized in Shaw's plays? (Life Force)
62. What is Phonetics? (A science of speech)
63. Who is a specialist in phonetics? (Henry Higgins)
64. How does Higgins find out one's social background? (By his pronunciation)
65. Why do people rush to the St. Paul's church in Convent Garden? (Shelter from rain)
66. What does Eliza sell? (Violet flowers)
67. What does Higgins venture to do with Eliza? (To refine her language and manners)
68. Where does Eliza meet Higgins? (Higgins' laboratory at Wimpole Street)
69. Whom does Eliza choose to marry at the end? (Freedy)
70. Why does Eliza choose Freedy to marry? (He understands her emotional needs)
71. Who is the author of Spoken Sanskrit? (Pickering)
72. "You can't be a nice girl inside if you're a dirty slut outside". Who says so? (Mrs. Pearce)
73. What does Shaw describe in the sequel? (The rift between Higgins and Eliza)
74. Who is Mrs. Pearce? (The housekeeper of Higgins)
75. Who is the father of Eliza? (Alfred Doolittle)
76. What is the impolite word occasionally used by Eliza? (Bloody)

77. By whose help does Eliza start a flower shop? (Pickering)
78. Where does Eliza start a flower shop? (Near the Museum)
79. Who is an accountant-cum-manager of the flower shop? (Freedy)
80. Who is the former student of Higgins? (Nepommuck)
81. How does Nepommuck regard Eliza? (A Hungarian Princess)
82. How does Eliza disgrace Higgins? (By throwing slippers at his face)
83. What does Eliza talk about first in the party at the home of Mrs. Higgins? (The weather)
84. What is the opinion of Higgins about Freddy? (Fit to be Eliza's errand-boy)
85. What is Eliza worried about? (Inability to revive her past life-style)
86. Who is Pygmalion in Greek mythology? (An accomplished sculptor)
87. Who is a copper's nark? (An informer to the police)
88. What kind of person is Higgins? (Mother-fixated)
89. "My idea of a woman is somebody like you. They're all idiots" Who says so? (Higgins)
90. "Only the Magyar races can produce those resolute eyes. She is a princess". Who says this about whom? (Nepommuck about Eliza)

Fiction

91. What is the span of the story of "The Razor's Edge"? (Twenty four years)
92. The title "The Razor's Edge" comes from the translated verse in --- (Katha Upanishad)
93. Where does the story of *The Razor's Edge* take place? (Chicago, Paris, London and India)
94. Who are the characters in *The Razor's Edge*? (The upper middle class Americans)
95. What was Larry's job in the army during World War I? (An Aviator)
96. What was the cause of Larry's trauma? (Death of his comrade in war)
97. What is Larry searching for? (Transcendent meaning in life)
98. What does Larry reject unlike others? (Conventional way of life)
99. What do the materialistic characters suffer from? (Reversal of fortune)
100. Whose life can be contrasted with that of Larry? (Elliott Templeton)
101. What is the name of Larry's Fiancee? (Isabel Bradley)
102. Who is Larry's childhood friend? (Sophie)
103. Whom does Isabel marry? (Gray Marutin)
104. Whose influences Larry to look toward to spirituality to seek? (Kosti)
105. Name the monk whom Larry met in Bonn, Germany? (Father Ensheim)
106. What city in Spain does Larry visit? (Seville)
107. What is job Larry found in India? (An ocean liner)
108. Where does Larry settle in India? (In Bombay)
109. In which city does Gray Marutin want to set up his business? (Dollas)
110. What ruins the position of Gray Marutin? (The 1929 Stock Market Crash)
111. What is Gray Marutin suffering from? (Agonising migraines)
112. Who tempts Sophie back to alcoholism with a bottle of Zubrokwa? (Isabel)
113. What incident has driven Sophie to alcoholism? (Death of her husband and baby)
114. Who is found murdered in *The Razor's Edge*? (Sophie)
115. What object does Larry use to help cure Gray Marutin's headache? (A coin)
116. What does Suzanne call Larry? (An Angel of Light)
117. How long was Larry's trip to India? (Five years)

118. Who inherits the bulk of Elliott's estate? (Isabel)
119. What does the razor in *The Razor's Edge* denote? (Path to salvation)
120. What does Larry find finally? (Happiness)

Criticism

121. Where were the critical concepts of T.S. Eliot published? (In periodicals and journals).
122. Which word sounds disagreeable to the English ears? (Tradition).
123. What retains relationship and interdependence with the past and the present? (Music)
124. "My own poetry shows the influence of Indian thought and sensibility". Whose says so? (T.S. Eliot)
125. When was T.S. Eliot awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature? (1948)
126. How is the relationship between the past and the present? (Reciprocal)
127. What are the chief tools of a critic? (Comparison and analysis)
128. Which two concepts go together, according to Eliot? (Tradition and Individual talent)
129. When was *Tradition and Individual Talent* published? (In 1919)
130. Why did Eliot blame the English readers? (For giving undue stress on individuality).
131. What is the demerit of the English readers, as said by Eliot? (Uncritical turn of mind)
132. Who alone can obtain 'tradition'? (One with historical sense).
133. What is the historical sense about? (The timeless and the temporal).
134. What is lacking in English Literature? (A sense of Tradition)
135. What schools swayed in the 20th century? (Impressionism & Abstract Criticism)
136. What, of the poet, must be shaped and modified by the past? (Poetic sensibility).
137. What is the poet's mind compared to by Eliot? (To a jar).
138. What are the defunct traditions like? (The dry leaves shed by a tree)
139. Where did Shakespeare grasp the essence of Roman history? (Plutarch)
140. How does a true poet resemble a scientist? (By being impersonal and objective)
141. What should become extinct, during the progress of an artist? (His personality)
142. What cannot be viewed in isolation? (A poem)
143. Who gives up his personality and surrenders himself to tradition? (A mature poet)
144. Who devalued tradition? (The Romantic poets)
145. What was given importance by the Romantic poets? (Their individual personality)
146. Whose concept of poetry does Eliot attack? (William Wordsworth)
147. Whose emotions are impersonal, objectified art-emotions? (Othello and Agamemnon)
148. In which poem of Keats if element of objectivity found? (Ode to Nightingale)
149. Besides emotion, what else is involved in a poetic composition? (Reason)
150. To Eliot, poetry is a concentration of _____. (A great number of experiences)

POETRY

W.B. YEATS – SAILING TO BYZANTIUM

Text:

The unpurged images of day recede
The Emperor's drunken soldiery are abed;
Night resonance, recedes, night-walkers' song
After great cathedral gong;
A starlit or a moonlit dome disdains
All that man is,
All mere complexities,
The fury and the mire of human veins.
Before me floats an image, man or shade,
For Hades' bobbin bound in mummy-cloth
May unwind the winding path;
A mouth that has no moisture and no breath
Breathless mouths may summon;
I hail the superhuman;
I call it death-in-life and life-in-death.
Miracle bird or golden handiwork,
More miracle than bird or handiwork,
Planted on the starlit golden bough,
Can like the cocks of Hades crow,
Or, by the moon embittered, scorn aloud
In glory of changeless metal
Common bird or petal
And all complexities of mire or blood.
At midnight on the Emperor's pavement flit
Flames that no faggot feeds, nor steel has lit,
Nor storm disturbs, flames begotten of flame,
Where blood-begotten spirits come
And all complexities of fury leave, Dying into a dance,
An agony of trance,
Astraddle on the dolphin's mire and blood,
Spirit after spirit! The smithies break the flood,
The golden smithies of the Emperor!
Marbles of the dancing floor
Break bitter furies of complexity,
Those images that yet
Fresh images beget,
That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea.

Introduction:

William Butler Yeats was an Irish poet. He was a pillar of both the Irish and the British literary establishments in the twentieth century. He was a driving force behind the Irish literary revival. In 1923, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. He excels any poetic genius by his symbols and mysticism. In *Byzantium*, Yeats creates a connection between this world and the world beyond death.

Description of Byzantium:

The poem *Byzantium* starts with the scene of night in Byzantium, the ancient capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. All the impure images and unpleasant sights of the day fade away. The soldiers are in bed after getting drunk. The activities of night and the soliciting songs of the girls fade away, after the Cathedral bell announces the hour of midnight. This is the time for spiritual meditation. The dome of the Cathedral of St. Sophia announces the spiritual aspirations. It looks down upon man's complexities, feelings, passions and confusion.

Byzantium is presented as a place of purgatory. At midnight on the Emperor's pavement, immaterial flame appears undisturbed by winds. It is not made by friction of steel nor of burning wood. After their death, the spirits from the world come to Byzantium, leaving all their complexities, feelings and passions. The spirits indulge in a purgatorial dance getting into a trance. The flames purify them. This purifying flame does not harm anything that is material. It only does the function of purifying the spirits. It brings about a stillness, totally new to the spirit. The spirit had been tossed by the changing experiences of the world. The power of the flames does not destroy matter but purge the spirit.

The Superhuman Spirit:

Hades is the classical world of death. According to Yeats, the soul of man travels between this world and Hades. Bobbin is a spool of winding thread. In this world, the soul gets covered by experiences winding like the thread. The spirit in the vessel of the human body loses its freedom and knowledge. It is like a dead body wrapped or covered in many layers of winding sheets. The experiences of this world give complexity and hence the soul is shut off from knowledge and bliss. Hades Bobbin has wound man in the complexities and difficulties. It unwinds and thus the spirit is able to see the light of knowledge and gain freedom from imprisonment in earthly existence. It is liberated from the cycle of birth and rebirth. The spirit has lost its flesh. It has now become breathless and moistureless. It calls out to the fellow spirits. The persona is happy to watch this superhuman form. The ghost makes it a death in life. The spirit is alive beyond death and so life is in death-existence. The spirit thus assumes a paradoxical existence. The super human spirit experiences death in life and life in death. The two-fold experiences of this world and a perfection beyond death are symbolically represented in the 'superhuman' spirit.

The dolphins are believed to be carriers of the spirit from the world to the land of the dead according to mythology. Spirits one after another arrive riding on the backs of dolphins. The water of life which is filled with complexities and conflicting feelings and passions of human heart is destroyed. The spirits are thus purified through the purgatorial dance. The ocean is agitated by the struggle between the flesh and the spirit, as it brings about fresh images of their life experience. The waves from the water of life lash against the shores of

Byzantium. They desperately seek an entry. The spirit is thus forced to break its bitter furies of complexity.

Significance of the golden Bird:

Yeats speaks elaborately about the permanence of art as represented by the golden bird. The golden bird is not made by any goldsmith. Yeats describes the bird as,

“Miracle bird or golden handiwork,
More miracle than bird or handiwork,
Planted on the starlit golden bough,
Can like the cocks of Hades crow,”

The golden bird is a miracle. It is superior to any natural bird or flower which grows and dies, or any artificial bird which again changes. The miraculous golden bird planted on the starlit golden branch is a powerful symbol of changelessness and permanence. It looks down upon the moon. This bird can crow like the cocks of Hades, the land of the dead. Cocks were believed to be symbolic of new life or rebirth. They symbolize life in this world and also a life beyond this world. It is also typical of the beauty and perfection of art. The golden bird is scornful of the conflicting emotions and passions of the human heart.

Conclusion:

The poem ends with a description of the sea, which stands for the mixed experiences of life. The conflict between the claims of the flesh and the claims of the spirit goes on and reaches a climatic resolution at the Smithies of the Emperor. The flesh symbolizes the complexities, feelings, passions and lust of earthly life. The spirit symbolizes knowledge and freedom in its elemental superhuman form. The spirit's struggle is at last won and it brings about fresh images of their life experience through the purgatorial dance. The Persona welcomes such a heavenly existence. The poet seems to be full of love for this world also.

T.S. ELIOT – THE WASTE LAND (PART IV – DEATH BY WATER)

Text:

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,
Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep sea swell
And the profit and loss.

A current under sea

Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell
He passed the stages of his age and youth
Entering the whirlpool.

Gentile or Jew

O you who turn the wheel and look to windward,
Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you.

Introduction:

T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" is considered one of the most important poems of the 20th century, as well as a modernist masterpiece. It is a dramatic monologue. It changes speakers, locations, and times throughout. It draws on an array of literary, musical, historical, and popular

cultural allusions in order to present the terror, futility, and alienation of modern life in the wake of World War I.

The poem *The Waste Land* is divided into five sections. The poem explores life in London in the aftermath of the First World War, although its various landscapes include the desert and the ocean as well as the bustling metropolis. The poem is notable for its unusual style, which fuses different poetic forms and traditions. Eliot also alludes to numerous works of literature including the Bible, Shakespeare, St Augustine, Hindu and Buddhist sacred texts, as well as French poetry, Wagnerian opera, and Arthurian legend surrounding the Holy Grail. The poem is also modern in its references to jazz music, gramophones, motorcars, typists and tinned food. *The poem* can be viewed as a poem about brokenness and loss. Eliot's numerous allusions to the First World War suggest that the war played a significant part in bringing about this social, psychological, and emotional collapse.

The Waste Land begins with a reference to a 'heap of broken images' and ends with a collage of quotations taken from various poetic traditions, as well as a snippet from the nursery rhyme 'London Bridge is falling down'. Art, literature, oral and written culture – civilisation itself – seem to be under threat. The poem ends on an ambiguous note, with the triple repetition of the Sanskrit word 'Shantih', which Eliot translates as 'the peace which passeth understanding'.

The Shortest Poem:

"The Waste Land" is fragmented into five parts entitled: 1) The burial of the Dead; 2) A Game of Chess; 3) The fire Sermon; 4) Death by Water; 5) What the Thunder Said. The fourth section "Death by Water" which is summarized here, is the smallest section of the poem. This is because T. S. Eliot and his friend Ezra Pound deducted many lines to make the poem small. When the poem was originally written, it consisted of nearly 1000 lines, which was later revised to 434 lines. This section is inspired by one of T. S. Eliot's French poems "*Dans le Restaurant*".

The Death of Phlebas:

The title "Death by Water" is linked with another section of this poem. It is linked with Madame Sosostris's tarot card and the drowned Phoenician Sailor. Madame Sosostris warns her customer to fear death from the water. In this section, T.S. Eliot warns his reader to remember his aim or goal of life. The poet says that Phlebas the Phoenician, who died two weeks ago, has forgotten the cry of the seagulls, and the waves of the sea, and the profit and loss of his shipping business. Thus, the poet says that the sailor is no longer knew what he was born to know. He forgot his destiny. He forgot his emotional or human purpose as well as his social or financial purpose.

A current under the sea picks at his bones bit by bit. As he rises and falls with the waves, all stages of his life pass before his eyes and then his body enters in a stormy whirlpool. Thus, all the purpose is pulled under the sea by a natural force which he cannot control. He is trapped by circumstances. He has seen the wheel of life.

Gentile or Jew, one who navigates his own life (or still sailing the sea) and look to the future, remember Phlebas, who was also once handsome and tall. Thus, in the last line of this section, the poet warns everyone to learn something from Phlebas life. He requests all humanity to remember the ultimate meaning, aim, and goal of life. Hence, the poet gives a possible hope in absolute despair.

“Death by Water” inspires its reader to always remember the meaning of his life and not to involve and deviate with earthy pleasure. This section is an example of abridges lyrics where words are joined by ‘and’ or ‘or’, example ‘up and down’, ‘rise and fell’ ‘Gentile or Jew’, ‘life and death’, and ‘profit and loss’. In “The Waste Land, T.S. Eliot incorporated past historical, mythological, and literary ideas in a new form.

WILFRED OWEN – INSENSIBILITY

Text:

I

Happy are men who yet before they are killed
Can let their veins run cold.
Whom no compassion fleers
Or makes their feet
Sore on the alleys cobbled with their brothers.
The front line withers.
But they are troops who fade, not flowers,
For poets’ tearful fooling:
Men, gaps for filling:
Losses, who might have fought
Longer; but no one bothers.

II

And some cease feeling
Even themselves or for themselves.
Dullness best solves
The tease and doubt of shelling,
And Chance’s strange arithmetic
Comes simpler than the reckoning of their shilling.
They keep no check on armies’ decimation.

III

Happy are these who lose imagination:
They have enough to carry with ammunition.
Their spirit drags no pack.
Their old wounds, save with cold, can not more ache.
Having seen all things red,
Their eyes are rid
Of the hurt of the colour of blood for ever.
And terror’s first constriction over,
Their hearts remain small-drawn.
Their senses in some scorching cautery of battle
Now long since ironed,
Can laugh among the dying, unconcerned.

IV

Happy the soldier home, with not a notion
How somewhere, every dawn, some men attack,

And many sighs are drained.
Happy the lad whose mind was never trained:
His days are worth forgetting more than not.
He sings along the march
Which we march taciturn, because of dusk,
The long, forlorn, relentless trend
From larger day to huger night.

V

We wise, who with a thought besmirch
Blood over all our soul,
How should we see our task
But through his blunt and lashless eyes?
Alive, he is not vital overmuch;
Dying, not mortal overmuch;
Nor sad, nor proud,
Nor curious at all.
He cannot tell
Old men's placidity from his.

VI

But cursed are dullards whom no cannon stuns,
That they should be as stones.
Wretched are they, and mean
With paucity that never was simplicity.
By choice they made themselves immune
To pity and whatever moans in man
Before the last sea and the hapless stars;
Whatever mourns when many leave these shores;
Whatever shares
The eternal reciprocity of tears.

Introduction:

“Insensibility” is one of Wilfred Owen's longest and most challenging poems. In it, he contrasts those who desensitise themselves to the horrors of war in order to survive, to the unfeeling, inhuman generals who have no excuse for their lack of compassion. The poem is a poem of contrasts. Youthful vitality is juxtaposed against weary age; pity against bitter disgust; life against death and passion against dispassionate insensitivity.

Lack of Compassion:

The repetition of "Happy are these" and "Happy are men" alludes to the Beatitudes of Christ. The Beatitudes list great human values. Ironically, these "Happy" and 'blessed' soldiers have lost all these values. Owen also appears to be answering the question of William Wordsworth's "Character of the Happy Warrior" which paints a romantic and idealised picture of soldiers at war. In response he paints a much darker, unromantic picture.

The soldiers who have desensitised themselves to the horrors of war are pictured. The metaphor of men who "let their veins run cold" creates the image of a lack of passion and humanity. It is juxtaposed with "Happy are men" to show how the war has subverted human values. Owen amplifies this idea when he speaks of men whose feet do not get sore as they walk over "alleys cobbled with their brothers".

The front line of the war shrinks as more and more soldiers die. Owen juxtaposes the two ways of viewing such mass slaughter. An 'insensible' soldier sees only "troops that fade" whilst the more romantic poets sees men as metaphorical "flowers / For poets' tearful fooling." Owen is saddened at the way war reduces the value of human life. This is evident in the metonymy of "Men" as nothing more than "gaps for filling". The soldiers stop seeing their comrades as friends and human lives. When they die, they leave gaps that someone else has to fill. They are dehumanised as "gaps" and "losses", over which "no one bothers".

Lack of Fear and Self Concern:

The soldiers numb themselves to their own fears. Owen describes the horrific daily uncertainty of the soldier's life as "The tease and doubt of shelling". This is a game and Owen amplifies the tension of the situation and contrasts it with the soldiers' "Dullness". The personification of "Chance's strange arithmetic" suggests that men's lives are just playthings - stakes in a game of chance. The arithmetic is "strange" because there is no reason in the decision of who dies and who lives. In order to survive, men have to give up caring about their lives - they must 'dull' themselves.

Lack of Imagination and Passion:

Imagination is a hindrance to a soldier's survival. He "has enough to carry with ammunition", which implies that imagination is a burden. The burden of imagination is emphasised in the metaphor "Their spirit drags no pack". The spirit of the soldier is not weighed down by guilt and horror of war. The "old wounds" that "cannot more ache" represent emotional pain rather than physical pain. The soldier has seen so much blood that he is no longer bothered by the sight of it.

Terror is depicted as a "constriction" that shrinks the heart. Owen suggests that this terror is responsible for the men's lack of compassion. The soldier's heart has stayed "small-drawn" - shrivelled and shrunken. Yet the soldier "can laugh among the dying, unconcerned." **Loss of Youth:**

Owen 'rejoices' about the "lad whose mind was never trained" - young boys who are not yet soldiers but are filled with romantic images of war. Here, youth is juxtaposed against experience as the boy "sings along the march / Which we march taciturn." There is no escape for the young soldier on the front lines. Death or loss of youth is symbolised as "dusk" and "huger night". A wise soldier understands the way his soul has been made filthy. Then again, he survives the experience. The guilt of the thinking is revealed in the metaphor of "Blood over all our soul". The only way to "see our task" is "through his blunt and lashless eyes". The word 'blunt' suggests the desensitised soldier makes himself dull and numb and the "lashless eyes" suggest lack of creativity and sensitivity. He has been made "not vital...not mortal...Nor sad, nor proud, / Nor curious". He has been diminished by the experience. Owen evokes the image of youth giving way to age. War robs young men

of their youth.

RUPERT BROOKE – THE SOLDIER

If I should die, think only this of me:

That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam;
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Introduction:

"The Soldier" is a poem written in 1914 by Rupert Brooke. It was published the following year in the book *1914 and Other Poems*. The poem was originally written during World War I and features a narrator discussing the practice of burying dead soldiers near the places they died instead of being returned home. Brooke never saw combat in the war, but his poems written during that time made him a popular poet to this day. Brooke died shortly after finishing the poem. On April 25, 1915, Brooke died of a blood infection from a mosquito bite and was himself buried abroad on the island of Skyros in Greece.

"The Soldier" is narrated by a soldier reminiscing about the practice of burying dead soldiers near the places where they were killed. It was not routine to ship soldiers back home during World War I. The narrator speaks to an unknown party to comfort them about the burial of English soldiers on foreign lands. He tells them that graves are a part of England, that they are a piece of home for those soldiers who died abroad. He concludes the poem by stating that if he should meet the same fate, he is connected both physically and mentally to England, and anywhere he is buried will become English soil.

Burial place is the soldier's motherland:

The speaker begins by addressing the reader, and speaking to them in the imperative: "think only this of me." This sense of immediacy establishes the speaker's romantic attitude towards death in duty. He suggests that the reader should not mourn. Whichever "corner of a foreign field" becomes his grave; it will also become "forever England". He will have left a monument of England in a forever England". He will have left a monument in England in a foreign land, figuratively transforming a foreign soil to England. The suggestion that English "dust" must be "richer" represents a real attitude that the people of the Victorian age actually had.

Pride of the young men of the Pre-industrial England:

The speaker implies that England is mother to him. His love for England and his willingness to sacrifice is equivalent to a son's love for his mother; but more than an ordinary son, he can give his life to her. The imagery in the poem is typically Georgian. The Georgian poets were known for their frequent meditations in the English countryside. England's "flowers", "her ways to roam", and "English air" all represent the attitude and pride of the youth of the pre-industrial England. The soldier also has a sense of beauty of his country that is in fact a part of his identity. In the final line of the first stanza, nature takes on a religious significance for the speaker. He is "washed by the rivers", suggesting the purification of baptism, and "blest by the sun of home."

Dying for England is a noble deed:

The soldier goes on to tell the listener what to think of him if he dies at war, but he presents a more imaginative picture of himself. He forgets the grave in the foreign country where he might die, and he begins to talk about how he will have transformed into an eternal spirit. This means that to die for England is the surest way to get a salvation: as implied in the last line, he even thinks that he will become a part of an English heaven. The heart will be transformed by death. All earthly "evil" will be shed away. Once the speaker has died, his soul will give back to England everything England has given to him- in other words, everything that the speaker has become. In the octave, the speaker describes his future grave in some far off land as a part of England; and in the sestet England takes on the role of a heavenly creator, a part of the "eternal mind" of God. In this way, dying for England gains the status of religious salvation, wherever he dies. Wherever he dies, his death for England will be a salvation of his soul. It is therefore the most desirable of all fates.

What has England given to the soldier?

The images and praises of England run throughout the poem. In the first stanza Brooke describes the soldier's grave in a foreign land as a part of England; in the second, that actual English images abound. The sights, sounds, dreams, laughter, friends, and gentleness that England offered him during his life till this time are more than enough for him to thank England and satisfactorily go and die for her. The poet elaborates on what England has granted in the second stanza; 'sights and sounds' and all of his "dreams." A "happy" England filled his life with "laughter" and "friends", and England characterized by "peace" and "gentleness". It is what makes English dust "richer" and what in the end guarantees "hearts at peace, under an English Heaven."

PROSE

GEORGE ORWELL - SHOOTING AN ELEPHANT

Introduction:

Like all other autobiographical essays of George Orwell, 'Shooting an Elephant' is the best and most popular essay. It deals with his experience as a police-officer in Burma. Orwell's anti-Imperialistic feelings also form a main subject of his essay. Orwell discusses also about his position as a police officer in Burma, his disgust with the British Raj, his anti-Imperialistic feelings, the incident of the shooting of an elephant and an analysis of his motive in killing the elephant.

The Evils of Imperialism:

After having completed his education, Orwell joined the Indian Imperial Police, and served in Burma, from 1922 to 1927, as an Assistant Superintendent of Police. His experiences as an officer in Burma were bitter. He was often a victim of the hostility and injustice at the hands of the colleagues and officers. He was “friendless and inexperienced, not certain of what to expect and fearful of providing to be inadequate, a predictable failure.” He did not like the British colonial rule in Burma. He felt ashamed of being a part of the dirty work of Imperialism. He had unexpressed anti-imperialistic feelings. He loathed the tyrannous and oppressive rule of a handful of Britishers on a large number of natives. He was filled with uneasiness of consciousness, which made it difficult for him to continue in the service of the Imperial Police. He had to face the hatred of the natives and the strong anti-English feeling and atmosphere in Burma. Ultimately Orwell gave up his job in Burma, and left for England in August 1927. In the “Autobiographical Note”, he explains “I gave up my job mainly because I could not go on serving an imperialism”.

The Infuriated Elephant:

Once, during his tenure as a sub-divisional police-officer as Moulmein, a town in Lower Burma, Orwell was informed by a Burmese sub-inspector of police that an elephant had gone ‘must’ and was killing people and destroying property. The inspector requested him to do something about it. Actually the elephant was not a wild animal, but a tame one, which had gone ‘wild’. It had broken up its chain and escaped. The mahout had set out in pursuit but he had taken the wrong direction. The elephant suddenly reappeared in the town in the morning. It had already destroyed a bamboo, killed a cow, raided some fruit-stalls and inflicted violence upon the municipal rubbish van. Above all, it had killed a man. He was an Indian, a black Dravidian coolie. It was reported that the elephant had suddenly come upon him a few minutes ago, caught with its trunk, put his foot on his back and ground him into the earth. When Orwell arrived at the spot, the elephant was seen in the paddy field. It was standing eight yards away from the metalled road in the unploughed paddy fields. It did not take any notice of the crowd. It was tearing up bunches of grass, beating them against his knees to clean them and eating them. The elephant looked no more dangerous than a cow.

When Orwell shot the elephant, a mysterious change had come over the animal. It neither moved nor felt but looked stricken, shrunken, old, as if the frightful impact of the bullet had paralysed it without knocking it down within about five minutes. It sagged flabbily to its knees and its mouth slobbered. A second shot was fired. It did not collapse but climbed with desperate slowness to its feet and stood weakly upright. A third shot was fired. That was a shot that killed it. It trumpeted for the first and last time and then down it came with a crash that seemed to shake the ground.

The Natives of Burma:

Orwell had been facing the hatred of the natives and the strong anti-English feeling and atmosphere in Burma. Seeing Orwell ready to shoot down the elephant, a big crowd of natives assembled out of curiosity to witness the event of the shooting of an elephant. They were in the spot with excitement. The rifle was a matter of thrill and fun to them. They considered Orwell as the ‘sahib’, who alone was capable of killing the animal. They were hopeful to see the elephant shot and get its meat. He looked around the crowd about two thousand strong and growing every minute. It blocked the road for a long distance on both the

sides. They all were watching. They did not like him, but with the magical rifle in his hands he was to shoot the elephant. They remained still till he shot the elephant. They wanted to have their bit of fun. There was a great uproar when the elephant fell down dead.

Orwell and the Elephant:

On hearing the death of a native, Orwell decided to shoot the elephant. But he felt uncomfortable. On seeing the elephant from the road, he decided that he should not shoot the elephant. It was a serious thing to shoot a working elephant. He thought that he would soon wander harmlessly about until the mahout came back and controlled him. He did not in the least want to shoot him. He decided that he would watch him for a little while. He marched down the hill, looking no better than a fool. As time passed on, he felt like a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalized king figure of a sahib. He was committed to shoot the elephant as he had sent for the rifle. He was a sahib and he should act like a sahib. He had got to appear resolute and to do definite things. His whole life, the life of every white man in the East, was a long struggle not to be laughed at. He would shoot the elephant at least to avoid appearing like a fool and laughing-stock before them. He was struck at this time with hollowness and futility of the white man's dominion in the East. He really did not want to shoot the elephant because it would be a murder simply. He was not squeamish about killing animals at the age. He had never shot an elephant before. He was clear in his mind. He knew now what to do. He should go within about twenty-five yards of the elephant and test his behaviour. He was a poor shooter. He was concerned at this time only with the crowd which was watching him. He was a white man, he should not, like any other, get frightened before the natives. Finally, he poured shot after shot into its heart and down its throat.

Conclusion:

Thus, the essay presents the physiological conflict in the mind of Orwell and his sense of divided loyalties.

G.K. CHESTERTON - ON RUNNING AFTER ONE'S HAT AND OTHER WHIMSIES

Introduction:

"I am done with it! I am irritated! This is frustrating! Why does it happen only to me?" We face problems everyday and life for no reason keeps throwing something at us. Even when our toe gets hit by furniture, we start cursing and stressing. No matter how trivial or challenging a problem is, we constantly worry about it. But all these problems can be romanticized as adventures after reading G K Chesterton's essay 'On Running after One's Hat'.

London in Flood:

Chesterton envies people who were in London when it was flooded. He was surprised on hearing that London had been flooded in his absence. He was happy that his own most beautiful locality, Battersea, too was under water. It looked a lovely romantic town under water. The meat boat would have sailed smoothly in the lanes of flowing water. It would have moved with the elegance and smoothness of a gondola, a long and narrow boat. The greengrocer would have enjoyed the trip in the boat. A district under flood, according to the writer, would have looked a group of beautiful islands with a beautiful natural scene.

Battersea has always been beautiful and the addition of water has made it appear like Venice. He says,

“There is nothing so perfectly poetical as an island; and when a district is flooded it becomes an archipelago.”

The optimism of the essayist makes him romanticize the flood which we would normally think of as bringing misfortune, destruction and loss.

“The true optimist who sees in such things an opportunity for enjoyment is quite as logical and much more sensible than the ordinary.”

Pain – Real or Sentimental:

Chesterton says that some persons regard such romantic views of flood, or fire wanting in reality. The writer fully supports such happy and hopeful view. Most of the instances which we perceive as inconveniences are completely related to our mentality and outlook. Toothache, or the case of being burnt at Smith field, in spite of real pain, may be rarely enjoyed. He calls all these cries of men, or women only sentimental, or imaginative inconveniences.

The Pleasure in Delayed Train:

The essayist says that a true optimist should see an opportunity for enjoyment in such things. He gives an instance. When there is a delay in the arrival of the train, the grown-ups complain while the children never do. This is because for children, a railway station appears like a ‘cavern of wonder and a palace of poetical pleasure’. The red and green lights of the signal appear to them as the new sun and moon. So if we view such inconveniences as children do, we shall no more perceive them as inconveniences. All the so-called inconveniences depend on how we view it.

Game of Running after Hat:

The second instance the essayist gives is running after one’s hat. Many find it unpleasant to run after their hats after being blown away by wind. They run after a ball in a game but not after their own hat as they find it is humiliating. “When people say it is humiliating they mean it is comic.” People find it embarrassing as they are laughed at by other onlookers. Their fretful pursuit serves as a source of laughter. But it is all right because everything a human does is comical.

Chesterton says that running after one’s hat has the potential of becoming a sport and it can be an alternative to poaching. “*He might regard himself as a jolly huntsman pursuing a wild animal,...*”. He imagines it to be a common sport among the upper class. They would have their personal assistants run after the hat on a windy day and it would provide them a hearty laughter. This will be less painful than animal hunting too. The essayist says that we should be relieved of distress if our actions can provide laughter for others.

The Jammed Draw:

Chesterton recalls how his friend struggled with a jammed draw every day. So, he points out to his friend that he is always finding the drawer troublesome because he always opens it while thinking that it should be easy to open the draw. He says that the main problem lies with his friend’s outlook. Hence, he advises his friend to think of himself as “pulling against some powerful and oppressive enemy” or as participating in some fearsome tug war. If he imagines such situations when pulling the drawer, then it will no longer be an inconvenience but an adventure.

Conclusion:

So, if we develop a positive outlook on everything that we encounter every day, maybe life won't be as hard as we think. After all, "An adventure is only an inconvenience rightly considered. An inconvenience is only an adventure wrongly considered."

VIRGINIA WOOLF – A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN

Introduction:

Virginia Woolf was an English writer and one of the foremost modernists of the twentieth century. During the interwar period, Woolf was a significant figure in London literary society and a central figure in the influential Bloomsbury Group of intellectuals. She is recognized as an ardent feminist. *A Room of One's Own* is an extended essay by Virginia Woolf with its famous dictum, "A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction." The essay was based on a series of lectures Woolf delivered at Newnham College and Girton College at Cambridge University in October 1928. The essay employs a fictional narrator and narrative to explore women both as writers of and characters in fiction. The essay is generally seen as a feminist text.

Man-Woman Discrimination:

Virginia Woolf accepts that the narrator in *A Room One's Own* is only a fictitious being and it does not refer to her. She ruminates the occasions where as a woman she is rejected. She is advised to walk on the rough gravelled path in the college. She is not allowed to sit in the small lawn nor enter the college library. She wants to read the manuscripts of Milton's *Lycidas* and Thackeray's *Esmond*. But she cannot have access to these holdings as an outsider. She feels she is rudely treated by the men in the library.

Woolf presents a detailed account of the modern men in England. The narrator observes the church-goers but not the church. None of them seem to have any religious fervour. She sarcastically compares them to crabs and crayfish creeping laboriously on sand.. Her mind wanders back to the Age of Faith when kings and nobles, swayed by a religious passion, spent large quantities of gold and silver to build churches in places which were originally marshy and infested with pigs. In the modern times, people have become secular. They are no longer interested in religion. Rich industrialists donate large sums of money to build colleges and not churches, that too only to men in particular. Nobody realizes the need to educate women.

During luncheon also there is discrimination between men and women. Men drink plenty of wine but the women guests are debarred from tasting liquor. Woolf compares women to a tailless Manx. The narrator also observes that these parties are soulless. The men and women who eat sumptuously at these parties have become mechanical robots. They have no romantic longings. The First World War has killed the spirit of romance. The love that Tennyson and Christina Rossetti celebrated in their poems is conspicuous by its absence at these parties. While talking with Mary Seton, her friend, she understands women in those days were not imparted the skills necessary to hold well-paid jobs. Even if they earned handsomely, they had no right to have property of their own. Their earnings were seized and enjoyed only by their husbands. For this reason women in those days were not interested in

working in offices on a par with men. Seton's mother raised thirty thousand pounds to start a women's college but it could not stand comparison with men's colleges because it did not have even basic amenities. Such was the backward condition of women in Virginia Woolf's time. They were cheated as chattels.

The Inferior Status of Women:

Traditionally women are believed to be inferior to men. The eighteenth century chauvinistic poet Pope declared bluntly that women are characteristics. Napoleon and Mussolini thought women to be incapable of education. Ancient Germans believed that there was something holy in women but such liberal-minded thinkers formed only a microscopic minority. In the Elizabethan age, as the historian Trevelyan testifies, wife-beating was very common. No Elizabethan girl enjoyed the right to choose her light partner herself. The glorification of women in the Elizabethan literature, as is seen in the characterization of Cleopatra and Rosalind, is only a myth. In literature, she was a beacon guiding man floundering in the dark. But in reality she was worse than a slave.

The narrator is horrified to find that many great writers are frankly anti-feminist. The eighteenth century moralistic poet Pope is known, for his rabid aversion to women. Most women have no character at all. Warriors like Napoleon and Mussolini fussed about men's achievement and despised women. Dr. Johnson and Goethe honoured women but such writers are few and far between. The anti-feministic books were written in 'the red light of emotion and not in the white light of truth'. The narrator dismisses these authors contemptuously as 'patriarchs' on male chauvinists. They saw in the rise of women a threat to men's feeling of superiority and so strove hard to suppress women.

Women have patiently submitted to male tyranny for many centuries. The very submissiveness of women has served to boost man's egotistic claim that he is superior to woman in all respects. The inferior woman has all these centuries been a magic mirror reflecting man as a master. To prove his superiority, man has worked hard and civilized nations which otherwise would have remained jungles. But for man's pioneering role, the world would not have made any progress. Many women do soulless jobs, with bitter hearts. A woman's economic legacy is important than her voting right. She becomes confident that in a hundred years the lot of women will be changed completely. They will not be protected at home. They will go out and undertake jobs that are now normally done by men only. They will become sailors and soldiers and drivers of engine in the near future.

The Women Writers of the Past:

There arose a group of women writers in the eighteenth century. But they had to fight against inordinate male domination. Lady Winchilsea lamented in her poems that women were 'debarred from all improvements of the mind' and confined to 'breeding, fashion, dancing' and other such shallow pursuits. Margaret Cavendish, leading a restricted life, went mad. Mrs. Aphra Behn was a trail-blazer. Though windowed, she supported herself and her family by writing for money. She was the first to show that women could practise writing to eke out their livelihood.

The women novelist of the 19th century, Jane Austen, Bronte sisters and George Eliot achieved eminence in the midst of their problems. Jane Austen lived a confined life but portrayed it without making any complaint. The Bronte sisters were totally different. They were embittered by the restrictions imposed on women by men. Their anger destroyed their

vision of lie. As for George Eliot, her assuming a man's name and openly living with a married man in spite of severe public criticism showed her strong will. Tolstoy also committed sins but was not scandalized but George Eliot's image was tarnished because of the lapses in her personal life.

The Women Writers of the Present:

Virginia admits that the lot of women in her time has vastly improved. Women have started writing on subjects which were till now the exclusive preserve of men. Jane Harrison's books on Greek archaeology, Vernon Lee's books on aesthetics and Gertrude Bell's books on Persia- these works show that women's horizon is expanding appreciably. Virginia Woolf is all admiration for Mary Carmichael who in her very first novel, *Life's Adventure*, daringly deals with the conventionally forbidden subject of lesbian love. Virginia Woolf comments that 'sometimes women do like women'. She says that it is wrong to study women exclusively with reference to their relationship with men. There are so many other relationship which are equally worthy of being explored. Virginia Woolf applauds Mary Carmichael's examination of sexual aberrations saying that it is like searching a dark, serpentine cave with just a flickering torch in one's hand.

Virginia Woolf finally touches upon some of the common problems of women novelists. They had no literary tradition to sustain them. They had to forge a specific language. The language of Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot crumbled under the weight of their thoughts and feelings. Only Jane Austen was able to fashion 'perfectly natural and shapely' sentences. Virginia Woolf winds up with a piece of pertinent advice to women novelists. As they are often interrupted by outside forces they should write short, concentrate novels and not such massive ones. Virginia Woolf says that woman is 'infinitely intricate'.. Education should 'bring out and fortify' the unique characteristics of women. Virginia Woolf hints that there are many areas which women writers can explore. She is sure that, in a hundred years remarkable women poets will arise.

What should Women do?

Virginia Woolf advises women not to read the androgynous texts. The androgynous writers have a perpetual life. Galsworthy and Kipling are one-sided. They 'celebrate male virtues and enforce male values'. They focus primarily on the world of men. Neither Galsworthy nor Kipling has a 'spark of the woman' in him. According to Virginia Woolf, Shakespeare, Coleridge, Keats, Sterne, Cowper and Lamb were androgynous. Shelley was sexless. Milton, Ben Jonson, Wordsworth and Tolstoy had too much of the male in them. Virginia Woolf holds that it is fatal for a writer to think of their sex. A writer who wants to achieve eminence must be man-womanly or woman-manly. 'Some marriage of opposites has to be consummated'. Only then can the writer communicate with 'perfect fullness'.

Virginia Woolf says that it is foolish to judge a writer. Her advice to the writer is, 'write what you wish to write; that is all that matters'. No measurer can predict whether a work will last for ages or only for hours'. The creative writer should not sacrifice even 'a hair of the head of his vision' in deference to the orders of the measurers. A woman writer yielding to critics and making necessary changes in her vision is a far greater disaster.

Virginia Woolf asserts that economic independence is a prerequisite for a woman writer. Her contention is that it is all the more difficult for a woman writer to develop her genius when she is ground out by poverty.

DRAMA

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW - PYGMALION

George Bernard Shaw was an Irish playwright, critic and socialist whose influence on Western theatre, culture and politics stretched from the 1880s to his death in 1950. Originally earning his way as an influential London music and theatre critic, Shaw's greatest gift was for the modern drama. Strongly influenced by Henrik Ibsen, he successfully introduced a new realism into English-language drama. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925.

Shaw has subtitled *Pygmalion* as *A Romance in Five Acts*. Henry Higgins, Professor of Phonetics makes a bet that he can train Eliza Doolittle, a bedraggled Cockney flower girl. He has decided to pass her for a duchess at an ambassador's garden party. He has to teach her to assume a veneer of gentility, the most important element of it is impeccable speech. The play is a sharp lampoon on the rigid British class system and a commentary on women's independence. Because of the untiring efforts of Higgins, Eliza is transformed from being a dirty, cockney-speaking flower seller to a dazzling duchess in six months. In his sequel to the play, Shaw says that such changes do take place in real life also. Another romantic development is the transformed Eliza choosing to marry the seemingly good-for-nothing Freddy. Ever since Eliza's appearance at Mrs. Higgins party, Freddy has fallen madly in love with her. He loiters outside Higgins's home in the hope of meeting her and expressing his love for her. Being rejected by Higgins, Eliza walks out. No sooner does she meet Freddy than the two are locked in an embrace. This is the most romantic event. Higgins's outright rejection of Eliza after transforming her physically and intellectually is an unromantic element. He is doomed to remain single. He firmly holds that a woman will make inroads upon his liberty and so keeps him away from all women. He says that he remains like a piece of wood when he teaches women. Even the rich American women cannot make even the slightest ripple in his mind.

There is light hearted humour as well as bitter satire in *Pygmalion*. There is humour in Eliza's raving in indecipherable cockney when her violets are split in the mud by Freddy. Her weeping and whimpering when she is suspected to be a prostitute is also highly humorous. For, it is discovered shortly afterwards that Higgins is not a detective writing a report on her dubious goings on. In Act II, Higgins threatens to manhandle Eliza for her mispronunciation of the alphabet. This makes her howl loudly as if her very life is at stake. The police repeatedly pouncing on the Eliza-Freddy pair locked in an embrace at the end of the play is also highly comical. Eliza using the impolite expressions 'devil', 'damned' and 'bloody', in imitation of Higgins is another comic touch.

There is satire in Shaw's exposure of the havoc wrought by mother-fixation. Higgins is a phonetician of note. Had he married Eliza, he would have been the father of a worthy family. This becomes impossible because his mother-fixation stands in the way of his marriage. Mrs. Higgins wastes her son through excessive coddling. Mrs. Eynsford-Hill goes to the other extreme of wasting her son through excessive control. He becomes incapable of doing anything by himself because she orders him around as if he is a slave. It is Eliza who takes the necessary measures to develop his stunned self. She loves him and encourages him to study look-keeping. As a result of her encouragement he blossoms into a first-rate accountant and takes care of the flower-shop.

Shaw makes use of three mythologies in the play—the myth of Pygmalion, the myth of Cinderella and the myth of Narcissus. Pygmalion in Greek mythology is an accomplished sculptor. He sculpts the statue of a woman by name Galatea. The statue has such ravishing beauty that he falls in love with it and prays that the statue be endowed with life. His prayer is granted by God. The statue comes alive and Pygmalion marries her and lives happily with her. Shaw uses the myth only up to Pygmalion’s turning a piece of stone into a beautiful lady. The slum-born cockney-speaking, unrefined Eliza is like the piece of rough stone in the hands of Pygmalion. Pygmalion turns the stone into a beautiful statue. Likewise, Higgins transforms the unlettered Eliza into an apparent duchess. At this point the comparison stops. Pygmalion wants to marry and does marry Galatea but Higgins rejects Eliza after transforming her into an aristocratic lady.

In the myth, the orphan Cinderella marries the prince and the effort of her step-sisters to tarnish her image fails. In Shaw’s play Clara’s effort to blacken Eliza fails. In the end Clara becomes an ardent admirer of Eliza. Eliza stands on her own legs by starting a flower shop. Clara emulates her by working as a salesgirl in a furniture mart so that she will not be a burden on her aged mother. In the myth, Cinderella marries the prince of the land. In Shaw’s play Eliza marries not a prince but the ordinary Freddy whom, however, she treasures as a prince.

In Greek mythology Narcissus sees his own image in water and falls in love with it. He dies, pining to join his image. Higgins is also guilty of self-love. He is against falling in love with any woman because he fears that women will deprive him of his liberty. So, he prefers to remain a bachelor. He is the victim of Narcissistic self-love.

Textual Essays:

1. Eliza’s ambition to become a duchess:

Pickering feels quite at home with Professor Higgins. Now Eliza the flower girl enters. She has to come to take lesson from him in phonetics, so that she may speak English like a lady and get a job in the shop of the florist. Higgins boasts that in a short time, he can transform her into a lady fit for the higher society. Higgins accepts and proceeds at once with the task. First, he orders Mrs. Pearce to give that girl a thorough bath, and also the housekeeper to order fresh dresses for her so that she may be dressed like a lady according to the latest fashion.

Professor Higgins even threatens to throw her out, if she creates any trouble and is not obedient and docile. She must learn to behave like a duchess. The poor girl is frightened. She acknowledges that she has nobody in the world to take care of her. Her stepmother does not care at all for her, and her father has turned her out saying that she was old enough to take care of herself. At this, the Professor jocularly advises the housekeeper to adopt her as her daughter, and it would be great fun to have a grown-up daughter. If the girl needs money, it may be given to her and debited to the housekeeping account.

Professor Higgins is rude and speaks to the girl like a bully and Pickering persuades Higgins to have some care for the girl’s feeling and speaks to her more gently. Higgins relents and gently explains to her, “Eliza” you are to live here for the next month, learning how to speak beautifully, like a lady in a florist’s shop. At the end of six months you shall go to Buckingham Palace in a carriage, beautifully dressed. Mrs. Pearce takes out the girl,

sobbing and complaining. She is shown her bedroom on the third room, with a full-furnished bathroom attached to it. Mrs. Pearce throws her into the bath, snatches away her gown and begins, scrubbing her all over without caring for her crying and her weeping. She must be made fit for the company of the “the gentleman” below and so she must be made clean and tidy. During the time Eliza is having her bath, Pickering has a serious conversation with the Prof. Higgins. at this point, their conversation is cut short by the arrival of Mrs. Pearce.

Mrs. Pearce then leaves, but return soon after to announce the arrival of Alfred Doolittle in search of his daughter, who, he says, is in the house. Prof. Higgins, not at all put down by is arrival, tells him she is in the upstairs and orders him to take her away at once. Doolittle is quite taken aback by this reply. Prof. Higgins further frightens him by threatening to call the police, for it is all a conspiracy to extort money from him. The girl was purposely ‘planted’ on him with this end in view. Otherwise, how could e know that she was in this house? Thoroughly frightened, Doolittle now confesses that he has come there neither to take away the girl nor to extort money from him but merely to beg him five pounds as he knows that his intensions towards his daughter are honourable. As Higgins still hesitates, Doolittle tries to convince him by telling him that he is one of the ‘undeserving poor’, ‘middle class morality’ is up against people like him, tries o crush him.

Doolittle here is the spokesman of Shaw himself. His speech moves the hearts of both Higgins and Pickering and they both become more sympathetic to him. He will accept only five pounds and not more, for money might tempt him to become prudent but he and his mistress don’t want like to be prudent, for prudence may induce them to rise above their present status in life. But he is quite happy as the ‘undeserving poor’ and would like to continue to enjoy the same. In order to get rid of him, Higgins gives him five pounds and he prepares to go away. But just then Eliza enters dressed in Japanese dress. All are surprised to see the transformation she has undergone. Doolittle leaves soon after advising Higgins to give the girl a good beating, if she is not obedient enough, for he has brought her up that way. She is used to it. When he is gone, Eliza gives a detailed account of the life and conduct of her father. He is a thorough blackguard and must have come there to beg for money. Which he needs for drinking. He works only when he has no money at all for drinking.

Prof. Higgins teaches phonetic to his pupils in a detailed way. Eliza is made to repeat her alphabet and pronounce it correctly. She is quite intelligent and is soon able to pronounce it correctly. Higgins then dismisses her, with the advice to practice her lesson at half-past four the same afternoon. In this way, she is taught for months till she becomes a lady and makes her appearance in high class London society and takes it by storm, so to say. Her education and transformation is the measure of Prof. Higgins success. This Act is of crucial importance. The action of the play develops and the characters of the various dramatic personages are unfolded. It is a “drama of ideas” and the conflict in it is not the clash of personalities, but the clash between the ideas, views, attitudes and convictions of the different personages.

2. Eliza’s successful action for an aristocratic lady:

Prof. Higgins comes to tell his mother that he has invited Eliza to her residence as he has been giving her lessons in phonetics for the last few months, and now he wants to see if she can pass off as a lady in his society. Mrs. Hill, Miss. Clara Hill, and Freddy Hill, and Pickering soon arrive, followed by Eliza who is well dressed and looks every inch to be a of rank and status. She conducts herself with perfect ease and self-confidence, but she swears

dreadfully. She shakes hands with all, saying "How do you do?" to each without any nervousness. Next, as briefed by Higgins, she begins to talk about the weather. Her language is artificial like that of a news reader. She says that the "shallow depression" in the west is likely to move in an easterly direction and that there are no indications of any great change in the barometrical situation. Freddy is regaled by this meteorological kind of report. Next, Eliza goes on to talk about the death of her aunt under mysterious circumstances. She relapses to cockney. She talks of her aunt being 'done in' and her straw hat being 'pinched' by somebody. The expressions 'done in' meaning 'killed' and 'pinched' meaning 'stolen' are in low taste. Mrs. Higgins does not like them. Clara stupidly thinks that such words are not banal but modern. All are shocked at her use of the Word 'bloody', though Clara is all in favour of such swear-words, and she herself uses the words. It is clear that Eliza is not fully transformed.

Eliza comes in a Rolls-Royce to attend the ambassadorial party. She is wearing diamond jewels and gorgeous clothes. The onlookers are dazzled by her glamour. Nepommuck, a former student of Higgins, claims that he knows 32 languages. He follows Eliza. Observing every word and deed of hers, Nepommuck comes to the conclusion that Eliza is a Hungarian princess! The six-month period fixed by Higgins is over, Eliza strikes all as a wee-bred duchess. Gone is her cockney. Vanished is her shyness.

3. Eliza breaks with Higgins:

Higgins, Pickering and Eliza return home after having dined at a restaurant. It has been a tiring day for them, for they have attended three parties, and a reception that day. Both of them talk and express their satisfaction at the success of their experiment. Poor Eliza, who too, is extremely tired and for whom also it has been an ordeal is entirely ignored. She is indignant and resentful and when after Pickering has gone up to his bedroom, Prof. Higgins asks for his slippers. Eliza gets an opportunity of expressing her indignation. She picks up his slippers and throws them in his face.

Higgins is simply amazed and shocked by this action of Eliza's. when he asks her indignantly why she has behaved in this manner, she calls him a 'selfish brute' and asks what is to become of her and what she is to do to now that is experiment has come to an end. Higgins treats the matter lightly and gives no satisfactory reply to her question. Eliza is very much annoyed takes off her jewellery and hands it over to Higgins lest she be accused of theft the next day. Infuriated by the words and actions, Higgins retires for the night. Eliza changes her dress picks up her purse and comes out the house. She meets Freddy, the two embrace and kiss each other, and decide to pass the night together, they hire a taxi and drive away to Wimbledon Common. This Act is not lacking in humour also. The manner in which Higgins gives expression to his annoyance is as amusing as the manner in which he gives expression to it on earlier occasions. Indeed, his irritability is the principal source of comedy in the play.

4. Eliza chooses to marry Freddy:

Eliza collects her luggage from Wimpole Street (where Prof. Higgins lives), drives straight to the residence of Mrs. Higgins (the mother of Prof. Higgins), narrates to her the story of her ordeal, and seeks shelter with, her which is granted. When Higgins and Pickering do not find Eliza at home, they come to Mrs. Higgins and telephone the police to search out Eliza. In the opinion of Mrs. Higgins, they behave like children and show no signs of

maturity. They ignored Eliza and said not a word of thanks to her, though it had all been as such an ordeal to her as to Prof. Higgins. She resented being passed over and so threw the slippers in his face. She also discloses to them that at the moment she was with her in a room at the upper storey. However, before she could be sent for. Alfred Doolittle, the dustman arrives. He is completely transformed and is fashionably and richly dressed, almost like a bridegroom. He complains that all his happiness has been ruined. It is all the doing of Prof. Higgins. He wrote a letter to an American Millionaire telling him that,

“he was the most original moralist at present in England”

and this remark has ruined all his happiness. The American has left to him a large legacy, he has now been raised to the middle class status, and has to follow the code of middle class morality. He relates his woes in the following words:

“Who asked him to make a gentleman of me? I was happy. I was free. I touched pretty nigh everybody for money when I wanted it, same as I touched you, Enry Iggins. ... I bet she’s on my doorstep by this: she that could support herself easy by selling flowers if I wasn’t respectable. And the next one to touch me will be you, Enry Iggins. I’ll have to learn speak middle class languages from you, instead of speaking proper English. That’s where you’ll come in: and I daresay that’s what you done it for”.

Character Sketches:

1. Henry Higgins:

Introduction:

George Bernard Shaw was an Irish playwright, critic and socialist. Pygmalion is simply one of the very greatest of English comedies. The idea is surpassingly bullion and its execution superbly theatrical. Although its background is phonetics, the play’s basic theme is human relations as its title suggests. Henry Higgins is the central character of the play.

Higgins role as a phonetician:

Henry Higgins is a specialist in phonetics. He does not allow any other interest to divert his attention. He appears in Act I, jotting down the different kinds of speeches made by the people gathered in the portico of St. Paul’s Church on a rainy day. He uses the pronunciation of a person as a clue to find out their social background. Thus, listening to Eliza’s cockney, Higgins says that she is from the slum Lisson Grove. It is a dirty place where even pigs will not stay. Pickering has had his flawless pronunciation. Higgins says correctly that Pickering is a product of Cheltenham, Harrow, Cambridge and India. Higgins’s achievement is not as admirable as it is made out be by Shaw.

Higgins as a social reformer:

Higgins believes that social disparities will vanish if all people learn to pronounce words accurately. This is partially true. Higgins claims that he can refine Eliza’s language and manners and develop her into a duchess in six months. At the end of the stipulated period, he passes her off not merely as a duchess but as a Hungarian princess. But she ends up not as an aristocrat or a royal personage but as the proprietors of a flower shop. She rises from the level of a hawker, selling flowers in sun and rain, to that of the owner of a flower shop. This is only a marginal change. Through Eliza, Shaw points out that economic

inequality are deep-rooted and cannot be changed by merely changing one's language and dressing style. Higgins is presented as a very shallow reformer.

Higgins's weaknesses:

Higgins is particular that people should talk in a refined manner. But he himself freely uses indecorous expressions such as bloody, damn, dickens, devil, etc. another flaw of his is that he flies into a fury at the slightest provocation. His threatening to drag Eliza thrice round the room by her hair when she mispronounces the alphabet is an instance of his bad temper. The most glaring fault of Higgins is that he is a misogynist. He believes that women are idiots and will do nothing but enslave men. Higgins is incurably mother-fixated. He blurts out at an unguarded moment that he will marry his own mother if circumstances permit it.

Mrs. Higgins: do you know what you would do if you really loved me, Henry?

Higgins: Oh bother! What? Mary, I suppose. His refusing to marry Eliza is due to his mother fixation.

2. Eliza Doolittle.

Introduction:

Eliza Doolittle, otherwise Liza, is a poor teenager born and bred in the slum of Lisson Grove. She has been abandoned by her father, Alfred Doolittle, an irresponsible dustman, and her sixth step mother. She supports herself by selling flowers in sun and shower.

Eliza in the portico of St. Paul's Church:

Eliza represents what is best in a slum-dwellers life. She makes a hue and cry in indecipherable cockney when her violets are trampled upon in the mud by Freddy. She gets some compensation from Freddy's mother and collects some pennies from the sympathetic Pickering also. Her skill as a salesgirl is in evidence here. A stupid bystander says that Higgins, jotting down her talk with Pickering, is a police detective, viewing her as a prostitute. Eliza is aghast. She is shabbily dressed and speaks ridiculous cockney. But she is unassailably chaste. She weeps bitterly when her chastity is doubted. Her position shows the helplessness of an unmarried girl in the male-dominated England of Shaw's time. Higgins's temptation that by refining her English as well as manners she can be made to pass for a duchess in six months takes deep roots in Eliza's mind and brings her to Higgins's language laboratory on the very next day.

Eliza's meteoric rise:

Eliza's chastity is once again revealed in all its fierceness when, prior to starting his language teaching, Higgins wants her to be stripped of all her clothes, scrubbed clean and then dressed up fashionably. She fumbles and falters when she is asked to pronounce the English alphabet. But she progresses with lightning speed. She appears well dressed at Mrs. Higgins's party. She says 'How do you do?' to all with amazing aplomb. She talks about the weather, though in artificial English. Occasionally, she talks like an ill-mannered country brute as when she describes how her aunt was 'done in' (killed) and her straw hat was 'pinched' (stolen). She glides out, saying that she is not 'bloody likely' to walk back home. She pretends that she always travels by car only. In her next public appearance, she impresses one Nepommuck so much that he mistakes her for a Hungarian princess! This is the pinnacles of Eliza's career.

Eliza's pragmatism:

The mother-fixated Higgins washes his hands of Eliza after the stipulated six-month training comes to an end. He has succeeded in passing her off as a duchess. He says that he has nothing more to do with her. But Eliza's resilience is amazing. She does not get heart-broken. With Pickering's financial assistance, she starts a flower shop near the Museum. She decides to Marry Freddy solely because he, unlike Higgins, loves her deeply and recognizes her as a human being with a soul. She raises Freddy's intellectual stature by making him undergo a course in book-keeping and appointing him manager-cum-accountant of her shop.

FICTION

WILLIAM SOMERSET MAUGHAM - THE RAZOR'S EDGE

Introduction:

William Somerset Maugham was a playwright, short story writer, and novelist. He was one of Britain's finest twentieth-century writers. *The Razor's Edge* published in London and New York in 1944. Maugham was seventy years old when the book was published and it was to be the last of his major novels. It tells the story of Larry Darrell, an American pilot traumatized by his experiences in World War I. He sets off in search of some transcendent meaning in his life. The story begins through the eyes of Larry's friends and acquaintances. They witness his personality change after the war. His rejection of conventional life and search for meaningful experience allows him to thrive. At the same time, the more materialistic characters suffer reversals of fortune. The novel's title comes from a translation of a verse in the *Katha Upanishad*, paraphrased in the book's epigraph as: "The sharp edge of a razor is difficult to pass over; thus the wise say the path to Salvation is hard."

Maugham's Autobiographical Account:

Maugham begins by characterizing his story as not really a novel but a thinly veiled true account. The story spans a period of twenty-four years from 1919 to 1943. The story takes place in different locations including Chicago, Paris, London and India. It is a novel of ideas and of character. The main characters are upper-middle-class Americans although Maugham is his own person as the writer. Maugham is the narrator. He includes himself as a minor character, a writer who drifts in and out of the lives of the major players.

Introduction to Larry:

The principal character is Larry Darrell, a former World War I aviator who is haunted by the fact that his friend was killed in the war saving Larry's life. He was wounded and traumatized by the death of his comrade in the War. He rejects the dominant values of American culture and looks to the East for spiritual inspiration. He thinks some day may change the world. Larry Darrell's lifestyle is contrasted with that of his fiancée's uncle Elliott Templeton. Templeton is an American expatriate living in Paris. He is a shallow yet generous snob. His Roman Catholicism embraces the hierarchical trappings of the church. Larry's proclivities tend towards the thirteenth-century Flemish mystic and saint John of Ruysbroeck.

Whom to Choose – Larry or Gray:

Maugham is invited by his friend Elliott Templeton in Chicago. He meets Elliott's sister, Louisa Bradley, and her daughter, Isabel. Elliott is vain and superficial, interested

only in social status, but he is also kind and generous and a dedicated supporter of the Catholic Church. Larry returns to Chicago to meet his fiancée Isabel Bradley. Gray Maturin is in love with Isabel. After dinner, Isabel's mother and her uncle discuss their concerns about her engagement to Larry. He has a small inherited income but it is nowhere near enough to support Isabel's customarily lavish lifestyle. Gray Maturin would be a much better match for Isabel. The biggest concerns are that Larry does not work.

Larry's Decision to Loaf:

Years and experiences have changed Larry. While serving in the air corps high above the earth in his plane, Larry has experienced unity with something greater than himself. He had been followed by his first close confrontation with death. It left him with an urgent need to understand why evil and suffering exist. Larry makes it clear that he does not plan to seek paid employment. He refuses to take up a job as a stockbroker offered to him by Henry Maturin, the father of his friend Gray Maturin. He really wants to do "loafing" and seek answers to his existential questions. His small inheritance is sufficient for him. On his way, he meets Sophie, his childhood friend. Sophie has settled into a happy marriage. But she has lost her husband and baby tragically in a car accident.

The broken Married Life:

Larry wants to delay his marriage with Isabel. Isabel finally confronts Larry about their future. They argue about material success or the questions that torment Larry, concerning God and the meaning of the life. They agree to postpone their engagement for two years while Larry seeks his answers. Larry goes to Paris leaving Isabel behind in Chicago. Larry moves to Paris and immerses himself in study and bohemian life. After two years of this "loafing", Isabel confronts Larry again. He still has not yet found his answers. He proposes to Isabel that they get married. Larry asks her to join his life of wandering and searching, living in Paris and traveling with little money. She cannot accept his vision of life and breaks their engagement to go back to Chicago. There she marries the millionaire Gray, who provides her a rich family life.

Larry's Travel with Kosti:

Larry leaves Paris. He begins a sojourn through Europe, taking a job at a coal mine in Lens, France. There, he befriends a former Polish army officer named Kosti. Kosti's influence encourages Larry to look toward things spiritual for his answers rather than in books. Kosti introduces him to mysticism. Larry begins to see that the answers to his questions may lie beyond the physical world. Kosti invites Larry to spend the summer walking through Belgium and Germany with him. Larry and Kosti leave the coal mine and travel together for a time. Midway through the summer they find a farm and stop to spend a few weeks working there. Larry does not realize that both the farmer's young wife and widowed daughter-in-law are interested in him. The daughter-in-law comes to him in the middle of the night and seduces him. Recognizing that the incident will cause trouble between the two women Larry departs in the middle of the night and moves on.

Larry's Meeting with Ensheim:

Next Larry meets a Benedictine monk named Father Ensheim in Bonn, Germany. Ensheim is on leave from his monastery doing academic research. The monk suggests that immersion in the Church will answer Larry's questions. Larry spends some time at a monastery but finds that the answers offered by the monks make God seem like a vain and

irresponsible parent. After spending several months with the Benedictines Larry is unable to reconcile their conception of God with his own.

Larry's Relationship with Women:

Unsatisfied, he returns to France and passes the spring with a friend Suzanne Rouvier. She is recovering from typhoid and still weak. Larry takes care of her until she recovers her strength. She repays him with physical love. But Larry feels the urge to move on again. He develops an affair with a Spanish woman to travel to Spain.

Larry's Questions Answered in India:

Larry takes a job on an ocean liner and finds himself in Bombay. He visits India to spend two years in an ashram learning that enlightenment requires renunciation of the world. Going high in the mountains, he sits on a ledge as the sun comes up. Seeing the mountains spread out around him and the lake in the valley far below him, he feels himself t one with the Infinite. What he actually found in India and what he finally concluded are held back from the reader for a considerable time until, in a scene late in the book, Maugham discusses India and spirituality with Larry in a café long into the evening. He initiates the reader to Advaita philosophy and reveals how, through deep meditation and contact with Bhagawan Ramana Maharshi, disguised as Sri Ganesha in the novel, Larry goes on to realize God through the experience of samadhi—thus becoming a saint—and in the process gains liberation from the cycle of human suffering, birth, and death that the rest of the earthly mortals are subject to.

Fall of Gray:

Finally at peace, Larry returns to Paris, where he encounters Maugham, Isabel, and Gray for the first time in 10 years. Isabel and Gray are delighted to see Larry again. The 1929 stock market crash has ruined Gray, and he and Isabel are invited to live in her uncle Elliott Templeton's grand Parisian house. Elliott has generously put them up in his luxurious Paris flat and pays all their expenses including clothes and servants. Gray is often incapacitated with agonizing migraines due to a general nervous collapse. Larry is able to help him using an Indian form of hypnotic suggestion. He cures Gray of his headaches and restore his self-confidence through hypnosis. Isabel confesses to Maugham that she is still in love with Larry. She has never loved Gray although she is fond of him. He has made her very happy by giving her the life she always wanted.

Death of Sophie:

Sophie has rifted to the French capital. There, her friends find her reduced to alcohol, opium, and promiscuity – empty and dangerous liaisons that seem to help her to bury her pain. Larry first sets out to save her and then decides to marry her. This plan displeases Isabel, who is still in love with him. She is horrified by the engagement. She is jealous but she claims her concern is that Sophie will ruin Larry's life. She tempts Sophie back into alcoholism with a bottle of "Pertsofka" and she disappears from Paris. Sophie runs away before the wedding. She later tells Maugham that she felt dead inside without her addictions. Maugham deduces this after seeing Sophie in Toulon, where she has returned to smoking opium and promiscuity. He is drawn back into the tale when police interrogate him after Sophie has been found murdered with an inscribed book from him in her room, along with volumes by Baudelaire and Rimbaud.

Death of Elliott:

In Antibes, Elliott Templeton is on his deathbed. He has been ill and his usefulness to the upper echelon of society subsides. He is heartbroken to be forgotten by the people he has helped and entertained and flattered. His superficial values have turned back leaving him alone and unwanted. Maugham calls for a priest to give Elliott last rites and in respect of Elliott's generous contributions to the Church the bishop himself comes. Elliott is mollified and his hurt feelings salved. He expects to move in the highest social circles of heaven. None of his titled friends come to see him. It makes him alternately morose and irate. But his outlook on death is somewhat positive: "I have always moved in the best society in Europe, and I have no doubt that I shall move in the best society in heaven."

Larry and Isabel – United or Separated?

Maugham encounters Larry. Larry recounts the story of his travels in the ten years between their first meeting and Larry's return. Larry's plan is to give away all his money and return to America. Isabel inherits the bulk of Elliott's estate and returns home to America. She genuinely grieves for her uncle.

Maugham confronts Isabel about Sophie, having figured out Isabel's role in Sophie's downfall. Isabel's only punishment will be that she will never get Larry, who has decided to return to the United States of America and live as a common working man. He is uninterested in the rich and glamorous world that Isabel will move in. Maugham never sees Larry or Isabel again, but he supposes they are both happy with the lives they have chosen.

Maugham ends his narrative by suggesting that all the characters got what they wanted in the end: "Elliott social eminence; Isabel an assured position...Sophie death; and Larry happiness."

Character Sketches:

Larry Darrell

Larry Darrell is the protagonist of the novel. At the age of sixteen he ran away from home to Canada to be a pilot. The First World War was over he came back home. In spite of the fact that Larry returned almost safe and sound only injured his friends and a girlfriend, Isabel Bradley sensed that something was wrong with him. Unlike other young men he didn't want to go into business and make money. Larry felt that he was arrogant and needed knowledge, experience and answers. Larry Darrell is an orphan who grew up in Marvin Illinois. During World War I he was an aviator. He saw his best friend killed saving his life. This experience profoundly affected him and altered his personality. Before the war he was a normal boy. He has returned, he has no ambition and does not want to get a job. Instead he prefers to loaf around Paris for two years reading and studying for long periods. This costs him his engagement to Isabel. She will not marry him unless he returns to America and secures their future. But Larry is interested not in money but in philosophical questions. He wants to be able to answer the ultimate questions about the nature and purpose of life. He leaves Paris and goes to work in a coal mine making friends with a Pole. Kosti stimulates his interest in mystical religion. Larry and Kosti work on a farm in Germany before Larry leaves for Bonn. He stays in a monastery in Alsace for three months studies science in Paris. He has an affair with Suzanne Rouvier. He lives with a Spanish girl in Seville. He travels to India, he spends five years (from 1925 to 1930), two of them in the ashram of Shri Ganesha. Larry studies Vedanta and has a moment of mystical illumination. Returning to Paris he meets up

again with Sophie. He has known since childhood. He wants to marry her in order to save her from her unsavory lifestyle. But his plan is thwarted by Isabel's devious plan. Finally, Larry returns to America planning to become a mechanic and eventually a taxi driver in New York. He has acquired spiritual wisdom and wants only to be of service to others.

Sophie MacDonald

Sophie McDonald is a childhood friend of Larry, Isabel and Gray. She was a teenager. she liked writing poetry about the struggles of the poor. She was also secretly in love with Larry liked to spend time with her reading books and talking. She got married was madly in love with her husband and adored her child. But her happiness was destroyed after the car accident in her husband and child were killed. She started drinking and changing lovers one after another. She moved to Paris and added opium to a list of her addictions. In an attempt to help her Larry offered her to marry him. Later on she ran away from Larry and returned to her unhealthy habits. She was found with her throat cut. Sophie MacDonald went to the same school as Isabel. She also knew Larry. They were both in their teens. Larry says that she was a modest, idealistic girl wrote poetry. After the war she began to write about the misery of the poor and the exploitation of the working classes. Isabel thinks that as a young girl Sophie was in love with Larry. But Larry disagrees. Sophie marries Bob Macdonald has a baby but both husband and child are killed in a car accident. Sophie cannot get over the shock of her loss. She takes to drink and becomes promiscuous. But Larry returns from India and meets her again he wants to save her. She gives up drink. They agree to marry. But Isabel jealous of Sophie and unwilling to let go of Larry, sabotages the relationship by tempting Sophie with vodka. Sophie falls into the trap and returns to her dissolute lifestyle. She is murdered in Toulon in 1934 and her body is thrown into a river.

Isabel Maturin

Isabel Maturin is Louisa Bradley's daughter and Elliot Templeton's niece. She expects to marry Larry. She is willing to allow him to spend two years in Paris before they set a date. She is shocked Larry says he has no intention of returning to America. He wants to marry Isabel straightaway in Paris. She refuses because she thinks his income is too small for them to live on. She has been raised to expect a certain standard of living not prepared to adjust even for love. She expects Larry to change his mind and agree to return to America and find a job. She has always in the past been able to control him. She believes. But Larry shows an independence of mind that is beyond Isabel's power to influence. She marries Gray Maturin instead and has two daughters. They are wealthy and happy until the stock market crash. After Elliott's generosity and a legacy from her mother help to ease her situation. Despite her marriage Isabel never ceases to be in love with Larry. Possessive and selfish she is horrified. She discovers that Larry is about to marry Sophie hatches a plot to ensure that Sophie gives in to her alcohol addiction and that the marriage does not take place. Eventually Isabel and Gray move back from Paris to America settling in Dallas, Texas.

W. Somerset Maugham

Mr. Maugham is also a participant of the story. He is an Englishman and a quite successful writer. Larry is also fond of travelling and does it a lot. Somerset Maugham appears as himself in the novel. He is the narrator meets the different characters as the years go by and tells their story. He comes across as tolerant, diplomatic and modest. Maugham is

largely passive but he does play a part in the action. He filches a party invitation that the dying Elliot Templeton desperately wants to receive and sends it to him.

CRITICISM

T.S. ELIOT - TRADITION AND INDIVIDUAL TALENT

Introduction:

Thomas Stearns Eliot was an American-born essayist, publisher, playwright, literary and social critic. He was one of the major poets in the twentieth century. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1948, "for his outstanding, pioneer contribution to present-day poetry". Eliot acted as poet-critic, comparable to Sir Philip Sidney and Coleridge. *Tradition and the Individual Talent* is the major contribution of T. S. Eliot to the field of literary criticism. It formulates Eliot's conception of the relationship between the poet and the literary tradition which precedes him.

What is Tradition:

The term 'tradition' is generally regarded as a word of censure. The English consider it disagreeable. They praise a poet for the aspects of his work being individual and original. This is because the English have an uncritical turn of mind. In real, what is best in a poet is derived from the past writers. Tradition is a matter of much wider significance than a blind adherence to the artistic successes of the poet.

Tradition and individual talent are usually regarded as antithetical. But T.S. Eliot tries to reconcile them with each other. According to him, tradition is much deeper than a slavish imitation of the past. The defunct traditions are like the dry leaves shed by a tree.

Reciprocity between Past and Present:

For acquiring a sense of tradition, a historical attitude is necessary. The poet must realize that much of the past has a vital relevance to the present. The living writer is a link in the long chain of poets dating back to Homer and other ancient European poets. Writers of the past and the present constitute not separate entities but a 'simultaneous order'. When a really new work of art arrives, the existing tradition does not go dead but is altered slightly to accommodate the new. The past is altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. There is reciprocity between the past and the present.

Consciousness of the Past:

Eliot warns poets against certain facile ways of relating oneself to the past. The living poet should not accept the past in an indiscriminate manner. He should know that the 'main current' flows not only through major writers but also through lesser luminaries. Tradition keeps on changing but ancient classics such as Homer, Shakespeare and the Magdalenian painters never become outdated. The present poet should have a 'consciousness' of the past. Some poets gain this consciousness easily whereas some others have to strain themselves to acquire it. Shakespeare grasped the essence of Roman history through a glance at Plutarch.

Tradition in Poetry:

Eliot advocates a true poet must surrender himself to the literary tradition. He must allow his poetic sensibility to be shaped and modified by the past. He must be objective and impersonal as a scientist. The poetic process is a process of depersonalisation. The progress of an artist is continual self-sacrifice and extinction of personality.

According to Eliot all poetry is a living whole. No poem is to be viewed in isolation as an unrelated identity. The mind of the poet also acts as a catalyst. A poet transforms his experiences into something new and different. Eliot compares the poet's mind to a jar containing numberless feelings and emotions. This unorganised particles gets united thereby poetry is produced. Thus poetry is an organisation rather than inspiration.

Tradition in Criticism:

The English critics insist upon the individual aspects of a work of art. But, a good critic should know that tradition and individual talent go together. Tradition is not the handing down or following the ways of the ancient blindly. It is not a matter of mere repetition. Tradition can be acquired only by great labour. It can never be inherited. This involves the perception of 'the pastness of the present and the presentness of the past'. The historical sense compels a man to write with the feeling of the whole literature of Europe from Homer. The spirit of the age exists side by side with the spirit of the entire European literacy background in the mind of the poet. Thus it is the sense of the Temporal and the Timeless.

There is an inter-dependence of the past and the present, as far as literature is concerned. The relationship between the past and the present is reciprocal. No evaluation of a work of art is possible if viewed as an isolated, self-sufficient entity. A true evaluation is the assessment of the relationship of the artist with the works of the past. A contemporary work is to be compared with the great works or the past.

Eliot's Theory of Impersonality of Poetry:

The mature poet gives up his personality and surrenders himself to tradition. He is a mouthpiece of traditional wisdom. His mind is merely a venue where disparate emotions and feelings combine to make new artistic wholes. The poet's mind remains unaffected in the process of the poetic composition. Eliot explains this phenomenon through a scientific analogy. A piece of platinum fuses oxygen and sulphur dioxide into sulphurous acid. Just as there are no traces of platinum in the new product, so also there should be no traces of the poet's personality in his works. Poetry is an extinction of the poet's personality and not its expression.

The Romantic poets of the nineteenth century devalued tradition and attached importance to the poet's individual personality. Eliot attacks the Romantic concept that poetry is a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. He distinguishes between emotions and feelings. Feelings inherit in particular words or phrases or images. Emotion, when transmuted into art becomes an art-emotion. The greatness of a poem lies not in the ethical ideas that it embodies but in the intensity or pressure under which the poetic composition takes place.

Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Shakespeare's *Othello* are artistic successes because of the intensity of the writer's conception. Keats' Ode to Nightingale is personal with a difference. Keats' floating feelings combine into an extraneous object, namely, the nightingale. So there is an element of objectivity in the poem.

TEXT FOR READING

GEORGE ORWELL - SHOOTING AN ELEPHANT

In Moulmein, in lower Burma, I was hated by large numbers of people – the only time in my life that I have been important enough for this to happen to me. I was sub-divisional police officer of the town, and in an aimless, petty kind of way anti-European feeling was very bitter. No one had the guts to raise a riot, but if a European woman went through the bazaars alone somebody would probably spit betel juice over her dress. As a police officer I was an obvious target and was baited whenever it seemed safe to do so. When a nimble Burman tripped me up on the football field and the referee (another Burman) looked the other way, the crowd yelled with hideous laughter. This happened more than once. In the end the sneering yellow faces of young men that met me everywhere, the insults hooted after me when I was at a safe distance, got badly on my nerves. The young Buddhist priests were the worst of all. There were several thousands of them in the town and none of them seemed to have anything to do except stand on street corners and jeer at Europeans.

All this was perplexing and upsetting. For at that time I had already made up my mind that imperialism was an evil thing and the sooner I chucked up my job and got out of it the better. Theoretically – and secretly, of course – I was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British. As for the job I was doing, I hated it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear. In a job like that you see the dirty work of Empire at close quarters. The wretched prisoners huddling in the stinking cages of the lock-ups, the grey, cowed faces of the long-term convicts, the scarred buttocks of the men who had been Bugged with bamboos – all these oppressed me with an intolerable sense of guilt. But I could get nothing into perspective. I was young and ill-educated and I had had to think out my problems in the utter silence that is imposed on every Englishman in the East. I did not even know that the British Empire is dying, still less did I know that it is a great deal better than the younger empires that are going to supplant it. All I knew was that I was stuck between my hatred of the empire I served and my rage against the evil-spirited little beasts who tried to make my job impossible. With one part of my mind I thought of the British Raj as an unbreakable tyranny, as something clamped down, in saecula saeculorum, upon the will of prostrate peoples; with another part I thought that the greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts. Feelings like these are the normal by-products of imperialism; ask any Anglo-Indian official, if you can catch him off duty.

One day something happened which in a roundabout way was enlightening. It was a tiny incident in itself, but it gave me a better glimpse than I had had before of the real nature of imperialism – the real motives for which despotic governments act. Early one morning the sub-inspector at a police station the other end of the town rang me up on the phone and said that an elephant was ravaging the bazaar. Would I please come and do something about it? I did not know what I could do, but I wanted to see what was happening and I got on to a pony and started out. I took my rifle, an old 44 Winchester and much too small to kill an elephant, but I thought the noise might be useful in terrorem. Various Burmans stopped me on the way and told me about the elephant's doings. It was not, of course, a wild elephant, but a tame one which had gone "must." It had been chained up, as tame elephants always are when their attack of "must" is due, but on the previous night it had broken its chain and escaped. Its mahout, the only person who could manage it when it was in that state, had set out in pursuit,

but had taken the wrong direction and was now twelve hours' journey away, and in the morning the elephant had suddenly reappeared in the town. The Burmese population had no weapons and were quite helpless against it. It had already destroyed somebody's bamboo hut, killed a cow and raided some fruit-stalls and devoured the stock; also it had met the municipal rubbish van and, when the driver jumped out and took to his heels, had turned the van over and inflicted violences upon it.

The Burmese sub-inspector and some Indian constables were waiting for me in the quarter where the elephant had been seen. It was a very poor quarter, a labyrinth of squalid bamboo huts, thatched with palmleaf, winding all over a steep hillside. I remember that it was a cloudy, stuffy morning at the beginning of the rains. We began questioning the people as to where the elephant had gone and, as usual, failed to get any definite information. That is invariably the case in the East; a story always sounds clear enough at a distance, but the nearer you get to the scene of events the vaguer it becomes. Some of the people said that the elephant had gone in one direction, some said that he had gone in another, some professed not even to have heard of any elephant. I had almost made up my mind that the whole story was a pack of lies, when we heard yells a little distance away. There was a loud, scandalized cry of "Go away, child! Go away this instant!" and an old woman with a switch in her hand came round the corner of a hut, violently shooing away a crowd of naked children. Some more women followed, clicking their tongues and exclaiming; evidently there was something that the children ought not to have seen. I rounded the hut and saw a man's dead body sprawling in the mud. He was an Indian, a black Dravidian coolie, almost naked, and he could not have been dead many minutes. The people said that the elephant had come suddenly upon him round the corner of the hut, caught him with its trunk, put its foot on his back and ground him into the earth. This was the rainy season and the ground was soft, and his face had scored a trench a foot deep and a couple of yards long. He was lying on his belly with arms crucified and head sharply twisted to one side. His face was coated with mud, the eyes wide open, the teeth bared and grinning with an expression of unendurable agony. (Never tell me, by the way, that the dead look peaceful. Most of the corpses I have seen looked devilish.) The friction of the great beast's foot had stripped the skin from his back as neatly as one skins a rabbit. As soon as I saw the dead man I sent an orderly to a friend's house nearby to borrow an elephant rifle. I had already sent back the pony, not wanting it to go mad with fright and throw me if it smelt the elephant.

The orderly came back in a few minutes with a rifle and five cartridges, and meanwhile some Burmans had arrived and told us that the elephant was in the paddy fields below, only a few hundred yards away. As I started forward practically the whole population of the quarter flocked out of the houses and followed me. They had seen the rifle and were all shouting excitedly that I was going to shoot the elephant. They had not shown much interest in the elephant when he was merely ravaging their homes, but it was different now that he was going to be shot. It was a bit of fun to them, as it would be to an English crowd; besides they wanted the meat. It made me vaguely uneasy. I had no intention of shooting the elephant – I had merely sent for the rifle to defend myself if necessary – and it is always unnerving to have a crowd following you. I marched down the hill, looking and feeling a fool, with the rifle over my shoulder and an ever-growing army of people jostling at my heels. At the bottom, when you got away from the huts, there was a metalled road and beyond that a miry

waste of paddy fields a thousand yards across, not yet ploughed but soggy from the first rains and dotted with coarse grass. The elephant was standing eight yards from the road, his left side towards us. He took not the slightest notice of the crowd's approach. He was tearing up bunches of grass, beating them against his knees to clean them and stuffing them into his mouth.

I had halted on the road. As soon as I saw the elephant I knew with perfect certainty that I ought not to shoot him. It is a serious matter to shoot a working elephant – it is comparable to destroying a huge and costly piece of machinery – and obviously one ought not to do it if it can possibly be avoided. And at that distance, peacefully eating, the elephant looked no more dangerous than a cow. I thought then and I think now that his attack of “must” was already passing off; in which case he would merely wander harmlessly about until the mahout came back and caught him. Moreover, I did not in the least want to shoot him. I decided that I would watch him for a little while to make sure that he did not turn savage again, and then go home.

But at that moment I glanced round at the crowd that had followed me. It was an immense crowd, two thousand at the least and growing every minute. It blocked the road for a long distance on either side. I looked at the sea of yellow faces above the garish clothes-faces all happy and excited over this bit of fun, all certain that the elephant was going to be shot. They were watching me as they would watch a conjurer about to perform a trick. They did not like me, but with the magical rifle in my hands I was momentarily worth watching. And suddenly I realized that I should have to shoot the elephant after all. The people expected it of me and I had got to do it; I could feel their two thousand wills pressing me forward, irresistibly. And it was at this moment, as I stood there with the rifle in my hands, that I first grasped the hollowness, the futility of the white man's dominion in the East. Here was I, the white man with his gun, standing in front of the unarmed native crowd – seemingly the leading actor of the piece; but in reality I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind. I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys. He becomes a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalized figure of a sahib. For it is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life in trying to impress the “natives,” and so in every crisis he has got to do what the “natives” expect of him. He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it. I had got to shoot the elephant. I had committed myself to doing it when I sent for the rifle. A sahib has got to act like a sahib; he has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things. To come all that way, rifle in hand, with two thousand people marching at my heels, and then to trail feebly away, having done nothing – no, that was impossible. The crowd would laugh at me. And my whole life, every white man's life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at.

But I did not want to shoot the elephant. I watched him beating his bunch of grass against his knees, with that preoccupied grandmotherly air that elephants have. It seemed to me that it would be murder to shoot him. At that age I was not squeamish about killing animals, but I had never shot an elephant and never wanted to. (Somehow it always seems worse to kill a large animal.) Besides, there was the beast's owner to be considered. Alive, the elephant was worth at least a hundred pounds; dead, he would only be worth the value of his tusks, five pounds, possibly. But I had got to act quickly. I turned to some experienced-looking Burmans

who had been there when we arrived, and asked them how the elephant had been behaving. They all said the same thing: he took no notice of you if you left him alone, but he might charge if you went too close to him.

It was perfectly clear to me what I ought to do. I ought to walk up to within, say, twenty-five yards of the elephant and test his behavior. If he charged, I could shoot; if he took no notice of me, it would be safe to leave him until the mahout came back. But also I knew that I was going to do no such thing. I was a poor shot with a rifle and the ground was soft mud into which one would sink at every step. If the elephant charged and I missed him, I should have about as much chance as a toad under a steam-roller. But even then I was not thinking particularly of my own skin, only of the watchful yellow faces behind. For at that moment, with the crowd watching me, I was not afraid in the ordinary sense, as I would have been if I had been alone. A white man mustn't be frightened in front of "natives"; and so, in general, he isn't frightened. The sole thought in my mind was that if anything went wrong those two thousand Burmans would see me pursued, caught, trampled on and reduced to a grinning corpse like that Indian up the hill. And if that happened it was quite probable that some of them would laugh. That would never do.

There was only one alternative. I shoved the cartridges into the magazine and lay down on the road to get a better aim. The crowd grew very still, and a deep, low, happy sigh, as of people who see the theatre curtain go up at last, breathed from innumerable throats. They were going to have their bit of fun after all. The rifle was a beautiful German thing with cross-hair sights. I did not then know that in shooting an elephant one would shoot to cut an imaginary bar running from ear-hole to ear-hole. I ought, therefore, as the elephant was sideways on, to have aimed straight at his ear-hole, actually I aimed several inches in front of this, thinking the brain would be further forward.

When I pulled the trigger I did not hear the bang or feel the kick – one never does when a shot goes home – but I heard the devilish roar of glee that went up from the crowd. In that instant, in too short a time, one would have thought, even for the bullet to get there, a mysterious, terrible change had come over the elephant. He neither stirred nor fell, but every line of his body had altered. He looked suddenly stricken, shrunken, immensely old, as though the frightful impact of the bullet had paralysed him without knocking him down. At last, after what seemed a long time – it might have been five seconds, I dare say – he sagged flabbily to his knees. His mouth slobbered. An enormous senility seemed to have settled upon him. One could have imagined him thousands of years old. I fired again into the same spot. At the second shot he did not collapse but climbed with desperate slowness to his feet and stood weakly upright, with legs sagging and head drooping. I fired a third time. That was the shot that did for him. You could see the agony of it jolt his whole body and knock the last remnant of strength from his legs. But in falling he seemed for a moment to rise, for as his hind legs collapsed beneath him he seemed to tower upward like a huge rock toppling, his trunk reaching skyward like a tree. He trumpeted, for the first and only time. And then down he came, his belly towards me, with a crash that seemed to shake the ground even where I lay.

I got up. The Burmans were already racing past me across the mud. It was obvious that the elephant would never rise again, but he was not dead. He was breathing very rhythmically with long rattling gasps, his great mound of a side painfully rising and falling. His mouth was

wide open – I could see far down into caverns of pale pink throat. I waited a long time for him to die, but his breathing did not weaken. Finally I fired my two remaining shots into the spot where I thought his heart must be. The thick blood welled out of him like red velvet, but still he did not die. His body did not even jerk when the shots hit him, the tortured breathing continued without a pause. He was dying, very slowly and in great agony, but in some world remote from me where not even a bullet could damage him further. I felt that I had got to put an end to that dreadful noise. It seemed dreadful to see the great beast Lying there, powerless to move and yet powerless to die, and not even to be able to finish him. I sent back for my small rifle and poured shot after shot into his heart and down his throat. They seemed to make no impression. The tortured gasps continued as steadily as the ticking of a clock.

In the end I could not stand it any longer and went away. I heard later that it took him half an hour to die. Burmans were bringing dash and baskets even before I left, and I was told they had stripped his body almost to the bones by the afternoon.

Afterwards, of course, there were endless discussions about the shooting of the elephant. The owner was furious, but he was only an Indian and could do nothing. Besides, legally I had done the right thing, for a mad elephant has to be killed, like a mad dog, if its owner fails to control it. Among the Europeans opinion was divided. The older men said I was right, the younger men said it was a damn shame to shoot an elephant for killing a coolie, because an elephant was worth more than any damn Coringhee coolie. And afterwards I was very glad that the coolie had been killed; it put me legally in the right and it gave me a sufficient pretext for shooting the elephant. I often wondered whether any of the others grasped that I had done it solely to avoid looking a fool.

G.K. CHESTERTON - ON RUNNING AFTER ONE'S HAT AND OTHER WHIMSIES

I feel an almost savage envy on hearing that London has been flooded in my absence, while I am in the mere country. My own Battersea has been, I understand, particularly favoured as a meeting of the waters. Battersea was already, as I need hardly say, the most beautiful of human localities. Now that it has the additional splendour of great sheets of water, there must be something quite incomparable in the landscape (or waterscape) of my own romantic town. Battersea must be a vision of Venice. The boat that brought the meat from the butcher's must have shot along those lanes of rippling silver with the strange smoothness of the gondola. The greengrocer who brought cabbages to the corner of the Latchmere Road must have leant upon the oar with the unearthly grace of the gondolier. There is nothing so perfectly poetical as an island; and when a district is flooded it becomes an archipelago.

Some consider such romantic views of flood or fire slightly lacking in reality. But really this romantic view of such inconveniences is quite as practical as the other. The true optimist who sees in such things an opportunity for enjoyment is quite as logical and much more sensible than the ordinary "Indignant Ratepayer" who sees in them an opportunity for grumbling. Real pain, as in the case of being burnt at Smithfield or having a toothache, is a positive thing; it can be supported, but scarcely enjoyed. But, after all, our toothaches are the exception, and as for being burnt at Smithfield, it only happens to us at the very longest intervals. And most of the inconveniences that make men swear or women cry are really

sentimental or imaginative inconveniences—things altogether of the mind. For instance, we often hear grown-up people complaining of having to hang about a railway station and wait for a train. Did you ever hear a small boy complain of having to hang about a railway station and wait for a train? No; for to him to be inside a railway station is to be inside a cavern of wonder and a palace of poetical pleasures. Because to him the red light and the green light on the signal are like a new sun and a new moon. Because to him when the wooden arm of the signal falls down suddenly, it is as if a great king had thrown down his staff as a signal and started a shrieking tournament of trains. I myself am of little boys' habit in this matter. They also serve who only stand and wait for the two fifteen. Their meditations may be full of rich and fruitful things. Many of the most purple hours of my life have been passed at Clapham Junction, which is now, I suppose, under water. I have been there in many moods so fixed and mystical that the water might well have come up to my waist before I noticed it particularly. But in the case of all such annoyances, as I have said, everything depends upon the emotional point of view. You can safely apply the test to almost every one of the things that are currently talked of as the typical nuisance of daily life.

For instance, there is a current impression that it is unpleasant to have to run after one's hat. Why should it be unpleasant to the well-ordered and pious mind? Not merely because it is running, and running exhausts one. The same people run much faster in games and sports. The same people run much more eagerly after an uninteresting, little leather ball than they will after a nice silk hat. There is an idea that it is humiliating to run after one's hat; and when people say it is humiliating they mean that it is comic. It certainly is comic; but man is a very comic creature, and most of the things he does are comic—eating, for instance. And the most comic things of all are exactly the things that are most worth doing—such as making love. A man running after a hat is not half so ridiculous as a man running after a wife.

Now a man could, if he felt rightly in the matter, run after his hat with the manliest ardour and the most sacred joy. He might regard himself as a jolly huntsman pursuing a wild animal, for certainly no animal could be wilder. In fact, I am inclined to believe that hat-hunting on windy days will be the sport of the upper classes in the future. There will be a meet of ladies and gentlemen on some high ground on a gusty morning. They will be told that the professional attendants have started a hat in such-and-such a thicket, or whatever be the technical term. Notice that this employment will in the fullest degree combine sport with humanitarianism. The hunters would feel that they were not inflicting pain. Nay, they would feel that they were inflicting pleasure, rich, almost riotous pleasure, upon the people who were looking on. When last I saw an old gentleman running after his hat in Hyde Park, I told him that a heart so benevolent as his ought to be filled with peace and thanks at the thought of how much unaffected pleasure his every gesture and bodily attitude were at that moment giving to the crowd.

The same principle can be applied to every other typical domestic worry. A gentleman trying to get a fly out of the milk or a piece of cork out of his glass of wine often imagines himself to be irritated. Let him think for a moment of the patience of anglers sitting by dark pools, and let his soul be immediately irradiated with gratification and repose. Again, I have known some people of very modern views driven by their distress to the use of theological terms to which they attached no doctrinal significance, merely because a drawer was jammed tight and they could not pull it out. A friend of mine was particularly afflicted in this way.

Every day his drawer was jammed, and every day in consequence it was something else that rhymes to it. But I pointed out to him that this sense of wrong was really subjective and relative; it rested entirely upon the assumption that the drawer could, should, and would come out easily. "But if," I said, "you picture to yourself that you are pulling against some powerful and oppressive enemy, the struggle will become merely exciting and not exasperating. Imagine that you are tugging up a lifeboat out of the sea. Imagine that you are roping up a fellow-creature out of an Alpine crevass. Imagine even that you are a boy again and engaged in a tug-of-war between French and English." Shortly after saying this I left him; but I have no doubt at all that my words bore the best possible fruit. I have no doubt that every day of his life he hangs on to the handle of that drawer with a flushed face and eyes bright with battle, uttering encouraging shouts to himself, and seeming to hear all round him the roar of an applauding ring.

So I do not think that it is altogether fanciful or incredible to suppose that even the floods in London may be accepted and enjoyed poetically. Nothing beyond inconvenience seems really to have been caused by them; and inconvenience, as I have said, is only one aspect, and that the most unimaginative and accidental aspect of a really romantic situation. An adventure is only an inconvenience rightly considered. An inconvenience is only an adventure wrongly considered. The water that girdled the houses and shops of London must, if anything, have only increased their previous witchery and wonder. For as the Roman Catholic priest in the story said: "Wine is good with everything except water," and on a similar principle, water is good with everything except wine.

T.S. ELIOT - TRADITION AND INDIVIDUAL TALENT

In English writing we seldom speak of tradition, though we occasionally apply its name in deploring its absence. We cannot refer to "the tradition" or to "a tradition"; at most, we employ the adjective in saying that the poetry of So-and-so is "traditional" or even "too traditional." Seldom, perhaps, does the word appear except in a phrase of censure. If otherwise, it is vaguely approbative, with the implication, as to the work approved, of some pleasing archaeological reconstruction. You can hardly make the word agreeable to English ears without this comfortable reference to the reassuring science of archaeology.

Certainly the word is not likely to appear in our appreciations of living or dead writers. Every nation, every race, has not only its own creative, but its own critical turn of mind; and is even more oblivious of the shortcomings and limitations of its critical habits than of those of its creative genius. We know, or think we know, from the enormous mass of critical writing that has appeared in the French language the critical method or habit of the French; we only conclude (we are such unconscious people) that the French are "more critical" than we, and sometimes even plume ourselves a little with the fact, as if the French were the less spontaneous. Perhaps they are; but we might remind ourselves that criticism is as inevitable as breathing, and that we should be none the worse for articulating what passes in our minds when we read a book and feel an emotion about it, for criticizing our own minds in their work of criticism. One of the facts that might come to light in this process is our tendency to insist, when we praise a poet, upon those aspects of his work in which he least resembles any one

else. In these aspects or parts of his work we pretend to find what is individual, what is the peculiar essence of the man. We dwell with satisfaction upon the poet's difference from his predecessors, especially his immediate predecessors; we endeavour to find something that can be isolated in order to be enjoyed. Whereas if we approach a poet without this prejudice we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously. And I do not mean the impressionable period of adolescence, but the period of full maturity. Yet if the only form of tradition, of handing down, consisted in following the ways of the immediate generation before us in a blind or timid adherence to its successes, "tradition" should positively be discouraged. We have seen many such simple currents soon lost in the sand; and novelty is better than repetition. Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to any one who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year; and the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity. No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical, criticism. The necessity that he shall conform, that he shall cohere, is not onesided; what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of European, of English literature will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. And the poet who is aware of this will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities.

In a peculiar sense he will be aware also that he must inevitably be judged by the standards of the past. I say judged, not amputated, by them; not judged to be as good as, or worse or better than, the dead; and certainly not judged by the canons of dead critics. It is a judgment, a comparison, in which two things are measured by each other. To conform merely would be for the new work not really to conform at all; it would not be new, and would therefore not be a work of art. And we do not quite say that the new is more valuable because it fits in; but its fitting in is a test of its value—a test, it is true, which can only be slowly and cautiously applied, for we are none of us infallible judges of conformity. We say: it appears to conform,

and is perhaps individual, or it appears individual, and many conform; but we are hardly likely to find that it is one and not the other.

To proceed to a more intelligible exposition of the relation of the poet to the past: he can neither take the past as a lump, an indiscriminate bolus, nor can he form himself wholly on one or two private admirations, nor can he form himself wholly upon one preferred period. The first course is inadmissible, the second is an important experience of youth, and the third is a pleasant and highly desirable supplement. The poet must be very conscious of the main current, which does not at all flow invariably through the most distinguished reputations. He must be quite aware of the obvious fact that art never improves, but that the material of art is never quite the same. He must be aware that the mind of Europe—the mind of his own country—a mind which he learns in time to be much more important than his own private mind—is a mind which changes, and that this change is a development which abandons nothing *en route*, which does not superannuate either Shakespeare, or Homer, or the rock drawing of the Magdalenian draughtsmen. That this development, refinement perhaps, complication certainly, is not, from the point of view of the artist, any improvement. Perhaps not even an improvement from the point of view of the psychologist or not to the extent which we imagine; perhaps only in the end based upon a complication in economics and machinery. But the difference between the present and the past is that the conscious present is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past's awareness of itself cannot show.

Some one said: "The dead writers are remote from us because we *know* so much more than they did." Precisely, and they are that which we know.

I am alive to a usual objection to what is clearly part of my programme for the *métier* of poetry. The objection is that the doctrine requires a ridiculous amount of erudition (pedantry), a claim which can be rejected by appeal to the lives of poets in any pantheon. It will even be affirmed that much learning deadens or perverts poetic sensibility. While, however, we persist in believing that a poet ought to know as much as will not encroach upon his necessary receptivity and necessary laziness, it is not desirable to confine knowledge to whatever can be put into a useful shape for examinations, drawing-rooms, or the still more pretentious modes of publicity. Some can absorb knowledge, the more tardy must sweat for it. Shakespeare acquired more essential history from Plutarch than most men could from the whole British Museum. What is to be insisted upon is that the poet must develop or procure the consciousness of the past and that he should continue to develop this consciousness throughout his career.

What happens is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality.

There remains to define this process of depersonalization and its relation to the sense of tradition. It is in this depersonalization that art may be said to approach the condition of science. I, therefore, invite you to consider, as a suggestive analogy, the action which takes place when a bit of finely filiated platinum is introduced into a chamber containing oxygen and sulphur dioxide.

II

Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation are directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry. If we attend to the confused cries of the newspaper critics and the *susurrus* of popular repetition that follows, we shall hear the names of poets in great numbers; if we seek not Blue-book knowledge but the enjoyment of poetry, and ask for a poem, we shall seldom find it. I have tried to point out the importance of the relation of the poem to other poems by other authors, and suggested the conception of poetry as a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written. The other aspect of this Impersonal theory of poetry is the relation of the poem to its author. And I hinted, by an analogy, that the mind of the mature poet differs from that of the immature one not precisely in any valuation of "personality," not being necessarily more interesting, or having "more to say," but rather by being a more finely perfected medium in which special, or very varied, feelings are at liberty to enter into new combinations.

The analogy was that of the catalyst. When the two gases previously mentioned are mixed in the presence of a filament of platinum, they form sulphurous acid. This combination takes place only if the platinum is present; nevertheless the newly formed acid contains no trace of platinum, and the platinum itself is apparently unaffected; has remained inert, neutral, and unchanged. The mind of the poet is the shred of platinum. It may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of the man himself; but, the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material.

The experience, you will notice, the elements which enter the presence of the transforming catalyst, are of two kinds: emotions and feelings. The effect of a work of art upon the person who enjoys it is an experience different in kind from any experience not of art. It may be formed out of one emotion, or may be a combination of several; and various feelings, inhering for the writer in particular words or phrases or images, may be added to compose the final result. Or great poetry may be made without the direct use of any emotion whatever: composed out of feelings solely. Canto XV of the *Inferno* (Brunetto Latini) is a working up of the emotion evident in the situation; but the effect, though single as that of any work of art, is obtained by considerable complexity of detail. The last quatrain gives an image, a feeling attaching to an image, which "came," which did not develop simply out of what precedes, but which was probably in suspension in the poet's mind until the proper combination arrived for it to add itself to. The poet's mind is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together.

If you compare several representative passages of the greatest poetry you see how great is the variety of types of combination, and also how completely any semi-ethical criterion of "sublimity" misses the mark. For it is not the "greatness," the intensity, of the emotions, the components, but the intensity of the artistic process, the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion takes place, that counts. The episode of Paolo and Francesca employs a definite emotion, but the intensity of the poetry is something quite different from whatever intensity in the supposed experience it may give the impression of. It is no more intense, furthermore, than Canto XXVI, the voyage of Ulysses, which has not the direct dependence upon an emotion. Great variety is possible in the process of transmutation of emotion: the murder of Agamemnon, or the agony of Othello, gives an artistic effect apparently closer to a possible

original than the scenes from Dante. In the *Agamemnon*, the artistic emotion approximates to the emotion of an actual spectator; in *Othello* to the emotion of the protagonist himself. But the difference between art and the event is always absolute; the combination which is the murder of Agamemnon is probably as complex as that which is the voyage of Ulysses. In either case there has been a fusion of elements. The ode of Keats contains a number of feelings which have nothing particular to do with the nightingale, but which the nightingale, partly, perhaps, because of its attractive name, and partly because of its reputation, served to bring together.

The point of view which I am struggling to attack is perhaps related to the metaphysical theory of the substantial unity of the soul: for my meaning is, that the poet has, not a “personality” to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may take no place in the poetry, and those which become important in the poetry may play quite a negligible part in the man, the personality.

I will quote a passage which is unfamiliar enough to be regarded with fresh attention in the light—or darkness—of these observations:

*And now methinks I could e'en chide myself
For doating on her beauty, though her death
Shall be revenged after no common action.
Does the silkworm expend her yellow labours
For thee? For thee does she undo herself?
Are lordships sold to maintain ladyships
For the poor benefit of a bewildering minute?
Why does yon fellow falsify highways,
And put his life between the judge's lips,
To refine such a thing—keeps horse and men
To beat their valours for her? . . .*

In this passage (as is evident if it is taken in its context) there is a combination of positive and negative emotions: an intensely strong attraction toward beauty and an equally intense fascination by the ugliness which is contrasted with it and which destroys it. This balance of contrasted emotion is in the dramatic situation to which the speech is pertinent, but that situation alone is inadequate to it. This is, so to speak, the structural emotion, provided by the drama. But the whole effect, the dominant tone, is due to the fact that a number of floating feelings, having an affinity to this emotion by no means superficially evident, have combined with it to give us a new art emotion.

It is not in his personal emotions, the emotions provoked by particular events in his life, that the poet is in any way remarkable or interesting. His particular emotions may be simple, or crude, or flat. The emotion in his poetry will be a very complex thing, but not with the complexity of the emotions of people who have very complex or unusual emotions in life. One error, in fact, of eccentricity in poetry is to seek for new human emotions to express; and in this search for novelty in the wrong place it discovers the perverse. The business of the poet is not to find new emotions, but to use the ordinary ones and, in working them up into poetry, to express feelings which are not in actual emotions at all. And emotions which he has

never experienced will serve his turn as well as those familiar to him. Consequently, we must believe that "emotion recollected in tranquillity" is an inexact formula. For it is neither emotion, nor recollection, nor, without distortion of meaning, tranquillity. It is a concentration, and a new thing resulting from the concentration, of a very great number of experiences which to the practical and active person would not seem to be experiences at all; it is a concentration which does not happen consciously or of deliberation. These experiences are not "recollected," and they finally unite in an atmosphere which is "tranquil" only in that it is a passive attending upon the event. Of course this is not quite the whole story. There is a great deal, in the writing of poetry, which must be conscious and deliberate. In fact, the bad poet is usually unconscious where he ought to be conscious, and conscious where he ought to be unconscious. Both errors tend to make him "personal." Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things.

III

This essay proposes to halt at the frontier of metaphysics or mysticism, and confine itself to such practical conclusions as can be applied by the responsible person interested in poetry. To divert interest from the poet to the poetry is a laudable aim: for it would conduce to a juster estimation of actual poetry, good and bad. There are many people who appreciate the expression of sincere emotion in verse, and there is a smaller number of people who can appreciate technical excellence. But very few know when there is an expression of *significant* emotion, emotion which has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet. The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done. And he is not likely to know what is to be done unless he lives in what is not merely the present, but the present moment of the past, unless he is conscious, not of what is dead, but of what is already living.
