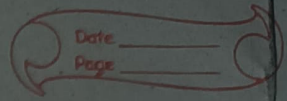


Shooting an Elephant

- George Orwell



Understanding

Q.1. What are the reasons Orwell considers when he tries to decide what to do? What does he conclude, was his main purpose in shooting the elephant?

⇒

He has killed the elephant because it was a matter of his prestige. Burmese has already blocked the road from one side to another side. They were watching him as Orwell would perform a trick like a magician. He was pressed forward by the will of the thousands of people. He was with his gun but if he didn't shoot the elephant, it would be matter of shame.

So, unwillingly, he was guided here and there by the will of the yellow faces (Burmese). So, though Orwell had no original intention of killing the elephant, he was determined to do it as it was a matter of dignity in front of people.

2. What kind of people does Orwell imagine will read his essay?

⇒ Orwell imagines that his essay would be read by those people who wants to know the negative impact of colonization.

2.

3.

⇒

Why did he really shoot the elephant?

He thought that he would shoot if he were attacked again. Otherwise, he would wait until the mahout came back. The ground was very soft and one would sink at every step. If elephant charged and the author missed it, then he would be like a toad under a steam roller. He was not afraid at least in front of the native people. He was always thinking that if anything went wrong, those 2000 Burmese would see him perused, caught, trampled on and changed to corpse like the Indian coolie. He was not in any mood to be an object of fun to others. So, there was no other alternative.

Rhetoric / Language / Writing

1. What techniques does Orwell use to describe the shooting as a drama? Who is the audience? How does their attitude influence the leading actors?

⇒ He uses narrative techniques as Orwell uses to describe the shooting as a drama. His audience are oppressed by imperialism. Their attitude influences the leading actors that colonialism leads to contradictory thinking as Orwell is able to better understand imperialism through his run-in with the elephant because the elephant serves as a symbol of colonialism. For example, much like the Burmese who have been colonized and who abuse Orwell, the elephant

has been provoked to destructive behavior by being oppressed. While its destructive behavior, and the Burmese more subtle rebelliousness may not be unequivocally good things that they are made understandable given the oppressive conditions both elephant and Burmese have had to endure.

2. How does Orwell pace the shooting of the elephant in paragraphs 11 and 12? How does the elephant's slow death affect Orwell's point of view toward what he has done?

⇒ In the story as he looked around, he found himself virtually surrounded with a sea of yellow faces, eager and excited at the prospect of an elephant being killed. They had taken it for granted that the sahib was going to kill the elephant and so they were going to have their bit of fun. Besides, they wanted its meat, too. Suddenly and with a feeling of horror, the author realized that he would have to kill the elephant even against his own will and better judgement.

Burma's insulted and laughed at him because he could not kill the elephant at once even if he shot many bullets, it shows that imperialism can be rooted easily and take time. In this regard, elephant stands for colonizer or imperialism. For, the huge crowd of natives was expecting him to shoot the elephant and he, as the representative of the omnipotent British Imperial Rule, was bound to live up to that expectation. That was the irony of imperialist domination, the author felt. The white men deprive the

natives of their freedom and, in the process, lose his own. At that moment, the author felt that he had no will of his own, but was being driven on by the will of the multitude that surrounded him.

Discussion

1. Much of Orwell's essay assumes a knowledge of the words "imperialism" and "despotism". What do these words mean? How do they apply to the essay? What current events you can identify in which these words might also apply?

⇒ Imperialism is a policy of extending a country's power and influence through colonization, use of military force, or other means. Despotism is the exercise of absolute power, especially in a cruel and oppressive way.

Throughout the essay, Orwell explicitly discusses the nature of British imperialism, specifically the way that he, as a police officer represents and internalizes the imperial project. He opens by revealing the brutality of British colonialism in Burma with images of tortured prisoners. He discusses his distaste for the empire's impact in Burma. He says that he's on the side of the "Burmese", yet he also resents Burmese people for the way they perceive him. Orwell's self-consciousness as the face of British imperialism is central to his internal conflict as he tries to

uphold the image of the impenetrable empire while going against his personal inclination, and killing an elephant that he doesn't want to kill.

2. Have you ever been placed in a situation in which you were forced to do something that you did not entirely agree with? Discuss such an incident and detail your feelings before, during, and after in an essay.

⇒

Once, I was studying in Grade-XI at Global college of Management. During my college days, I was given a lot of assignments. One day, I wished to watch a movie and asked my parents for it though I had a lot of pending assignments.

My parents told me that it was not the appropriate time for watching movie, but the time of studying hard as exams was near. At that time, I got confusion whether to watch movie or not. Later, I decided to focus on my study thinking that my parents had seen the dream of my good future.
